State of the City Address
February 11, 2013
Creswell City Council & Community

Thank you all for coming tonight. During the past couple of weeks I have been giving a good deal of thought to the question, "What is the State of the City of Creswell?" That's what this address is all about, and the conclusion I've reached is this: the State of the City is ***good . . . with challenges.***

If I said "great", that wouldn't allow much room for improvement - and there is room for improvement.

If I didn't say, "with challenges" I wouldn't be telling you the truth. We do have challenges.

And so the State of the City of Creswell, in my opinion as your Mayor is ***good . . . with challenges.***

Recently my brother and sister-in-law came to visit. They moved down from Alaska and are living in a town the size of Creswell about 30 minutes away. Over lunch my sister-in-law asked whether we were drinking bottled water. I said, "No", it was city water. She was amazed! In her town, she explained, the water is cloudy and no one drinks it. "You have great water!" she exclaimed, and I agreed.

Creswell has "great" water, but many of our citizens have a challenge paying for it each month.

In recent years our city audits have not been completed on time. When they are completed the audits reveal that our City is in good financial shape. Now our challenge is to get the audits done on time.

Creswell has good schools and good churches. Our churches do things together; they are united through their Interfaith organization, of which I am very proud. Our school are doing a good job preparing our children for the

work-place, for military service, for getting a college degree. Last week I attended the 4th grade science fair at Creslane Elementary School and I was very impressed! But as I shared at the recent Positively Creswell meeting, if I could wave a magic wand I would increase funding for education. It's a huge challenge for our schools to provide the education our children deserve with the amount of dollars they receive.

Speaking of Positively Creswell, I am so excited about what our librarian, Sue Liudahl, and her band of happy people are doing with their meetings and conversations and brainstorming for ways to increase the "positive" energy flowing into Creswell!

Creswell has good businesses in town. I can eat as fine a Mexican dinner in Creswell as any place in Eugene, Springfield, or Cottage Grove. There are multiple options for where to go for breakfast or where to grab a cup of coffee or hot chocolate if you're in a hurry and need to drive through. I can buy what's needed to fix my house, fill my refrigerator, put tires on my car, get my teeth cleaned, or take my cat to the vet - all within 5-minutes of my front door. On the Fourth of July I can stroll downtown and take in one of the best parades in Oregon; at Christmas I can join my neighbors for an old-fashioned downtown celebration. And when the sun is shining I can head out to one of the finest golf courses in the State and try to break 90 at Emerald Valley.

Yet if you speak with the business owners in Creswell you'll find that they all have challenges. It's tough to make a profit in a small town when there are alternative shopping options within twenty-minutes. It's especially difficult to do so in today's economy.

Creswell has a good airport, a very popular airport in fact. Last week I attended the Airport Commission and it was apparent that our airport users have a great amount of passion for what they do. That being said, our airport has some pretty big challenges facing it, such as a pending lawsuit and finding ways to raise revenue. Last year the airport hosted a fly-in; it was a great success, and plans are underway for another fly-in this summer.

What makes Creswell truly dear to me are the people living here. I've concluded, after nearly 31 years in Creswell, that some of the finest people in the world live in the neighborhood. People like Lou and Lonn and Debbie and Diana and Kathy and Jack and Janet and Johnny and Al and Ryan and Sue and Sam and Steve and Jon and Norm and Barb and Brent and Sandi and . . . I could go on and on. Since becoming Mayor, I have met more people and my opinion hasn't changed: good people - great friends, all here in Creswell!

The State of the City of Creswell is ***good . . . with challenges.***

Last month I identified three challenges to be addressed right now: our audits, the cost of water and sewer, and the yet-to-be completed 2012 performance review for our City Administrator. Tonight you will hear progress reports from three Council Committees that were appointed last month and put to work.

For several months the Council has been talking about the need to do planning and goal-setting for the future. Tonight you will hear a report and recommendation on how to proceed - immediately.

I ran as Mayor on the promise that I would work toward "Rebuilding Creswell." That is still my pledge to you in 2013. We will work to rebuild the Council. We will work to

rebuild trust. We will work to rebuild confidence in what good can be accomplished when we tackle challenges together.

Max DePree, author of Leadership is an Art, says that "We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are." If we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are then what we must do is to change. And believe me, changing IS a challenge!

We have to forgive people that have hurt us in the past. We have to look in the mirror and stop ducking responsibility for what's happened. We have to ask people who are wiser than we are to give us insight. We have to take it. We have to ask good questions. We have to listen carefully. We have to guard our words, for words have power. We have to encourage people to get involved, to take a risk, to try something new - and when they fail, as fail we all do, we have to be gracious. We have to strive to be the best people we can be, each day, all day, and encourage others to do the same.

"We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are." We have to change.

And when the road is long and we are tired, we must not quit. We have a LOT of work ahead of us in 2013.

My father-in-law, Don Byers, frequently repeated a line from a poem he memorized as a young man:

- **"PRESS ON! Surmount the rocky steeps, Climb boldly o'er the torrent's arch; He fails alone who feebly creeps, He wins who dares the hero's march."** (From "Press On", by Park Benjamin)

Our 30th President Calvin Coolidge said much the same thing:

- *Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not . . . Genius will not . . . Education will not . . . Persistence and determination*

alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race" ~ Calvin Coolidge (30th President of the US, 1923-1929)

What is the State of our fair City as we begin 2013? ***Good . . . with Challenges.***

I hope that you will join me and the City Council and City Staff as we ***Press On*** in 2013!