



CITY OF ORANGE

News Release

FOR RELEASE ON
March 23, 2017

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Text of the 2017 City of Orange, CA, State of the City Address by Mayor Teresa “Tita” Smith.

State of the City Address
March 23, 2017 1:00pm
Chapman University, Orange, CA

Good afternoon, everyone.

I’m Tita Smith, the Mayor of the City of Orange, my hometown. Thanks to each and every one of you, for taking time out of your busy day to be here. It is my great pleasure to present to you the 2017 State of the City address.

Allow me to take a few moments to introduce my colleagues on the Orange City Council. Council Members, please stand as I call your name.

Mayor Pro Tem Mark Murphy: Mark has dedicated many years of service to our City as a Councilman and Mayor. He’s Orange, through and through, including being an alumni of Orange High School. All together now: “Once a Panther, always a Panther.” In addition to being a current Councilman, Mark is also serving us as our representative on the OCTA Board of Directors. Mark and our County Supervisor Todd Spitzer led about 1000 other motorcycle enthusiasts on a ride from Irvine to CHOC Hospital to deliver donated toys to the children undergoing treatment during this past Holiday season. Mark collects guitars, and has a beautiful singing voice.

Councilman Fred Whitaker: In his 7th year on our Council, Fred keeps a keen analytical eye on issues large and small. It’s hard to pick any one of Fred’s volunteer groups to focus on- there are so many- but I’m going to single out the Community Foundation’s Annual “Field of Valor” at Handy Park. Held in November, during week of Veteran’s Day, the display of American Flags is meant to honor the men and

women who have served in our United States Military. This has a special meaning for Fred, because his Father, Fred Whitaker Sr., like my Father, Gene Smith, is a proud veteran of our United States Armed Forces. Fred also serves on the Orange Housing Development Corporation, the Cities Schools Committee, and is an elder at St. John's.

Councilman Mike Alvarez: The small business owner is the heart of our American economy, and Mike often brings that perspective to our Council. Mike has small business in his blood, because his family has owned a store in the Plaza since 1955. Mike is also very active with several of our local non-profit service groups, as well as representing Orange on the Orange County Mosquito and Vector Control District Board of Directors. Mike is also an avid cyclist.

Councilwoman Kimberlee Nichols: Kim has long been an advocate for our Orange schools. Kim served on the Orange Unified School District Board for nine years, and is the current Board President of the Orange Public Library Foundation. Her volunteerism and passion for the education of our children, to the vitality and free access to our Libraries, is so appreciated. Kim is a small business owner, and a competitive ballroom dancer.

Thank you all for your service, for sharing your talents, and your willingness to give so much of your lives to our Orange community. (APPLAUSE)

I would like to acknowledge the hard working and dedicated people who believe that our City Mission Statement- "Excellent Customer Service"- is a daily commitment. I'm talking about the men and women of our City Staff. I'd like to ask that our City Manager, Rick Otto, and the City of Orange Executive Team, please stand and be recognized on behalf of all of our City employees. Thank you from all of us. (APPLAUSE)

I'd also like to introduce to you my family members who have joined us here today.

My husband of 49 years, Bill Smith.

My dad, Gene Smith, Orange Union High School Class of 1943, and small business owner in Orange for 65 years. He also founded the very first little league in Orange back in 1958.

Our son Luke and our Granddaughter Maddison

My sister Maria and Brother-in-law Mark
And my brother, Matthew and his son, Michael.

I cherish the support and love you show me, and our beautiful City of Orange, every day.

All of you know how much I love our Sweet City of Orange, and I know that all of us in this room share that love.

Why does Orange hold such a special place in our hearts? We certainly boast some impressive statistics:

We're one of the 200 top U.S. cities by population.

You can find almost any type of food, from Pho to Cajun to really, really elegant fine dining.

Over 44 languages are spoken in our OUSD Schools.

We're a center for medicine with 4 hospitals.

We're a center for shopping with two major malls.

We're a center for several manufacturing industries.

The City of Orange looks like a substantial big city, right?

And yet...I have to say that, while all of these things make Orange a diverse cosmopolitan experience, they don't explain why we love Orange so much.

It is my belief that our love for our City comes from our shared sense of history, our community traditions, and our determination to hold-on to our vision of Orange as a small town. You could call us the largest small town in the west! A place where people truly care about each other, our future, and especially our everyday life.

The roots of our desire to be a “small town” community go back over a century. In *A Brief History of Orange, California, The Plaza City*, Historian Phil Brigandi quotes Lena Mae Thompson, who was born in Orange in 1891: “The Plaza was a social center. The farmers all came to town on Saturdays...(and) the ladies would get together and visit. The stores stayed open until nine o’clock...every block had two grocery stores in it.”

Orange, as a community, always seeks to be authentic, to be of service, and to be inclusive of cultures, of faiths, and of all generations. You can see it in the works of our local non-profits, feel it in the energy of our businesses, and live it every day in the classrooms of our schools and colleges.

We have a strong sense of “belonging” to our City. That connection is passed down from generation to generation, is adopted by our new residents, our businesses, and is even embraced by our City employees.

From the descendants of the original German, Latino, and Japanese families that settled in Orange to those who just moved here, it’s something we all feel inside. We are connected in many fascinating ways. I get to hear in from Orange residents all the time. We don’t just live or work in Orange, we ARE Orange.

Now, to the three Oranges.

Our **Resident Orange** represents the good people who live here, our educational institutions, and the City services that directly impact the people who live here.

Orange is a place where families can establish and maintain their own traditions, which become part of larger community traditions. For example, generations of Orange families have come together every year to enjoy two of our largest City events, the 3rd of July Celebration, and the Tree Lighting in December. Special events help bring together our greater Orange community all year. Our Street Fair, Summer Concerts at Hart Park, and so many others.

The Community Services Department is responsible for our community event, our recreation programs, and managing our ongoing Community Partners program. They also care for our 22 beautiful parks, quietly, behind the scenes, and with great pride.

Our Community Services Department welcomed back an old friend last year, as our former Assistant Director- Bonnie Hagan- returned to us from Irvine to be our Department Director. Welcome home, Bonnie!

I've called our City Parks some of our crown jewels, and in a City almost 130-years old, sometimes those gems need to be polished.

Take Yorba Park, at Chapman and Yorba, for example. It's home to our City's dog park, and sits on a site that was formerly a County landfill. Thanks to a recent agreement with the County, long awaited improvements are now underway at. In January of this year, the park closed for a complete regrading and rebuilding of the property, including the Dog Park. This has been a long time in coming, and I'd like to thank to Mayor Pro Tem Mark Murphy and Councilmember Fred Whitaker for working with County Supervisor Todd Spitzer to keep this project moving forward. Thanks should go as well to our City Attorney's Office for their legal expertise and guidance.

Another one of our parks, Shaffer Park, will be undergoing some much needed renovation later this year. While not as old as Hart Park, we want to make sure our parks are properly maintained, and upgraded when necessary, to ensure they will be being enjoyed for generations to come.

Speaking of Hart Park reminds me that our City of Orange has its roots firmly planted in the agricultural industry, and that living monument to those proud traditions can be found in Hart Park.

Many of you may have seen the Orange trees off the 22 freeway at Glassell. That is the Robert D. Hoyt Municipal Orange Grove, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary. The oranges are harvested each year by volunteers, and the fruit is offered to charitable organizations for distribution.

Today, the grove is a healthy, green, and growing nod to our City of Orange heritage.

The Grove's namesake, Robert Hoyt, who was a Councilman in 1974, suggested that there should be a grove as part of a proposed Hart Park expansion. He then went on to be our City's first directly elected Mayor, serving from 1976 to 1980. I'm pleased to say that restoring the grove back to health with water and pruning was one of my first projects as a newly elected Council Member in 2004.

We also have another landmark at Hart Park. Last year, the dance floor in front of the historic Bandshell was renovated and expanded. New bricks were made available to our community for personal engraving, and then set into the new dance floor. These bricks will create a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy. I would like to invite you to dance the night away when our Concerts resume this summer.

Our Orange Public Libraries are an important community resource that allow free access to information and technology for all citizens, regardless of their circumstance. They are a place to borrow books, seeds, CDs, and DVDs.

Wait, did I just say "seeds"? Yes. Yes, I did. I'll get back to that in a moment.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of our new Library building. Our first library was founded in 1885, three years before Orange was incorporated. Thanks to a \$10 million dollar State grant, our dream of preserving our history became a reality with the addition of an official History Center.

I hope you will join us for the official celebration of the 10th Anniversary on Saturday, April 22, at the Main Library.

Let me introduce you to our new Library Director, Dave Curtis, who comes to us with 32-years of public library experience. Welcome, Dave.

Now, back to the seeds:

Thanks to a partnership with both our Orange Public Library Foundation and the wonderful non-profit Orange Home Grown, the Orange Public Library and History Center now offers an heirloom seed Lending Library.

And since seeds need water to grow, and the topic of water has been on everyone's mind these past few years, I'm very happy to tell you that our Public Works Department brought a brand new, state of the art water well on-line last August.

The City of Orange gets 75% of its water from wells that tap underground aquifers. Our new well, which can pump 4.7 million gallons a day, replaces 3 vintage wells that were originally built in the 1920s. I was honored to be able to turn the well on for the first time last summer. Here's a fun fact: Last year, our Public Works Department delivered around 21 million gallons of clean, safe water a day to our residents and businesses.

Let's focus on Public Safety next.

Our Orange Fire Department has had a very busy year. Fire season last year saw several massive fires break-out throughout California, our Firefighters deployed throughout the State, answering calls for mutual aid. Our Firefighters assisted in San Bernardino and Phelan, San Luis Obispo, Big Sur, and Santa Clara County.

Last year, our Orange Fire Department Paramedics answered over 14,000 calls for aid. Our Firefighters responded to 775 fires. One of those calls came from Mary's Kitchen, where a fire had destroyed significant portions of the facility, including the refrigeration and freezer units, and all of the stored food.

Mary's Kitchen is an unassuming little building on City property near our Corporation Yard and Police Headquarters. Volunteers serve over 200 meals a day to those in need.

Once our Firefighters extinguished the blaze, our City staff jumped-in to assist Mary's Kitchen. Both our Public Works and Community Development Departments worked hard to make sure that Mary's Kitchen was able to continue service on schedule.

The increase in the number of homeless people in Orange County has created an urgency for our City, too. As a member of the Orange County Commission to End Homelessness, I see firsthand the resources and effort that go into assisting our local homeless families.

HEART, which was formed in 2013, and stands for the Homeless Engagement Assistance and Resource Team, has been out in the community, making contact with nearly 1,700 homeless individuals last year.

And this is how our City is doing its part to help our homeless citizens re-integrate. Through compassionate outreach, working hand-in-hand with organizations already in place with the resources to help, and by achieving incremental victories wherever we can.

And the resources here in Orange are considerable. We're home to over 25 charities providing aid to homeless individuals, five of them in Old Towne. Family Promise, at the Methodist Church in Old Towne assists 15 families at a time move from being without a home to finding work and stability. Casa Teresa, also in Old Towne, provides food, shelter, and support for pregnant women without homes. Casa Teresa has expanded their mission over the years, and is now providing an Emergency Maternity Shelter and Alumni Resource Center. There is also the work of House of Hope, Holy Family Church, St. Johns Church, One Church in Orange, the Assistance League...The list of organizations doing good works on this issue goes on, and on.

The point I'm trying to make, is that we- our community, our City, and our Police Department- are all working together to make progress. Nobody is ignoring the issue. Remember: Incremental victories.

We also have large victories in keeping our citizens safe.

Recently, our Orange Police Department Traffic Bureau received the Orange County Traffic Investigators Association "Case of the Year" Award for an investigation of a hit and run collision on Jamboree. They uncovered that a street race had preceded the incident. After a five-month investigation, nine of the drivers were implicated in felony conspiracy. We to extend our personal congratulations to our Police Department. Protecting our community is always their number one priority.

And here is the result of their hard work: Orange experienced a 7.6% reduction in Part One crimes in 2016. These include arson, auto theft, aggravated assault, burglary, rape, larceny, and murder.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving awarded Orange Police Department Officer Daniel O'Neil-Tennant their "Double Century" Award for the second year in a row for more than 488 DUI arrests in 2016. The Orange Police Department also recognized Officer O'Neil Tennant with the Medal of Distinction.

Our Police Department also sponsored several community outreach programs, including one of my favorites, Shop with a Cop. This past Christmas, twenty children sat down with uniformed Orange Police Officers, ate dinner at Buffalo Wild Wings at the Village at Orange, and each received a \$100 Walmart gift certificate to buy presents for themselves and their family. Our Council was there to see the smiles on the kid's faces. It was a truly moving experience.

It was for the sense of family- The brotherhood of the badge- that our Orange Police Department Color Guard traveled to Dallas, Texas, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and closer to home, Whittier, California, to attend the funerals of fellow officers who had fallen in the line of duty.

That same color guard presented the flag to us earlier today for our "Pledge of Allegiance" ceremony.

You may have heard that one of our Police Officers, Sharif Muzayen, was on a call for service when he was struck by an alleged DUI driver. Because of the quick work and skill of his fellow Officers, and the immediate arrival of paramedics from the Orange Fire, he made it to the emergency room alive. The outpouring of support and prayers by our entire community was both heartfelt and unsurprising. We came together to support Officer Muzayen as he moved from critical to stable condition, through his release, and even now, on his journey to recovery.

Please keep Officer Muzayen, his family, and our Orange Police Department personnel in your thoughts and prayers.

To honor the firefighters and paramedics who's heroic action saved Officer Muzayen's life, the Orange Police Department awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation to Orange City Fire Department Battalion Chief Chris Boyd, Captain John Wiegand, and Engineer/Paramedics Greg Baudot (bOh-dOh), Tyler Randall, John Jackson, and Firefighter Jesse Mulder.

The Orange Police Department has welcomed a new leader since our last State of the City luncheon. I am very proud of our completely home grown Police Chief, Tom Kisela. Chief Kisela grew-up in Orange and began his law enforcement career with the Orange Police Department in 1986. Chief Kisela has had a distinguished record of exemplary service to the citizens of Orange. Under his leadership, I know that the Orange Police Department will continue to build on their already impressive list of accomplishments.

By the way, the Orange Police Department is now on Twitter and Instagram! If you're a Twitter user, you can get the latest police news by following, (AT)OrangePolice. For Instagram, their screen-name is orangepolicedepartment.

Our young people are very important to us here in Orange. So, let's talk about football. Our very own El Modena High School Vanguard Varsity Football squad ended their last season with an 11 wins and 2 losses record. They earned the title of "North Hills League Champions," and represented their league, and Orange, in the CIF Playoffs, where they made it to the semi-finals.

Orange High School Football also had a record year. For the first time since the 1960s, our Panthers went undefeated on the field for 6 consecutive games, and ended the season with 8 wins, two losses. Those six victories were followed by the long standing tradition of Panther fans gathering at the Plaza and cheering on our players as the busses circled the Plaza, once for each touchdown, horns honking.

The coaches that led their teams to victory are here with us today. Please join me in welcoming Coach Matt Mitchell from El Modena, and Coach Robert Pedroza from Orange High School.

Congratulations to you, and your teams.

Throughout Orange, High School students have a lot to be proud of in other arenas as well. The El Modena High School Wrestling team were CIF Masters, the Villa Park Boys Basketball Team won the CIF Southern California Regional Division III championship, and will go on to the State Championship, and the Girls Water polo team made it to the CIF games.

Quality of life is also important to our residents, and when they have a concern, it's our job to listen.

Last year I told you about the formation of the Chapman University Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Students, your Mayor, City Staff, local residents, and business leaders were brought together to look at some issues with the University, Chapman Students, and our resident/business community. Chapman hired a Community Liaison, and made outreach a priority.

At the same time, the City Council strengthened our Party Ordinance. Both the Orange Police Department and Chapman's Public Safety Department began a no-tolerance approach to enforcement.

Because of this combination of dialogue, outreach, education, and enforcement, calls to our Police Department related to Chapman University dropped by 26% from the previous year.

I'd like to personally thank Chapman University for their leadership in this area, and for their enthusiastic involvement in many areas of our Orange community.

Let's look at our second Orange, the **Business Orange**. Our Business Orange represents our retail shops, restaurants, commercial centers, manufacturing, developers, and all the ways they interact with both our residents and our City.

By the way, if you haven't met her yet, I'd like to introduce you to our new Economic Development Manager, Susan Galvan. If you don't have a chance to connect with her today, [her contact information is on the screens](#).

I think two of the biggest stories for last year are the expansion of the Outlets at Orange, and the renovations at the Village at Orange.

Just before Black Friday 2016, the Outlets at Orange opened their first major expansion since the Nordstrom Rack wing opened in 2012. The new 60,000 square foot expansion is anchored by our very own Bloomingdales Outlet, which is only the third in all of California. Bloomies is joined by Polo, Timberland, Under Armour, and the Gap.

In the Old Towne Plaza, the long-awaited Urth Caffe is taking shape. Urth Caffe is moving into the historic Armor building, which was built in 1888, the year we became an incorporated City,. Urth Caffe

is working with Our Historic Planner to preserve historic details like the one you see on the screen. Their commitment speaks volumes to the character of their company. This is about as Orange as it gets.

On the screens you can see a photo of the Urth Caffè building as it was in 1921. And the car ad is my cue to let you know that we welcomed our first Kia dealership to Orange this year.

Although we don't have the supercenter style auto mall that some cities have, Orange is home to some of the biggest and best dealerships in the country. Our dealers contributed nearly \$5.40 million dollars in tax revenue to Orange our last Fiscal Year.

By the way, Wilson Automotive Group, owners of Toyota of Orange, celebrated the sale of their one millionth car a few weeks ago. That's an impressive milestone. Congratulations are definitely in order.

One of the things our Old Towne shoppers and merchants have been asking for is more parking. The 611-space Old Towne Metrolink Parking Structure is coming. We expect groundbreaking to happen this summer.

One last shout out to our Business Orange: Specifically, to those Businesses who have become one of our Community Partners. Their generosity allows us to offer our yearly community events, such as our beloved Treats in the Streets Autumn Festival. And not just businesses. Individuals and non-profit groups are also valuable Community Partners. If you would like be one of our Partners, I urge you to contact our Community Services staff.

Our final Orange, our **City Orange**, represents the City Government functions that are usually sight-unseen, but still so important to the functioning of our City.

I want to remind everyone that our City Clerk's Office really is one the friendliest, and most convenient, places to get your passport. Since you now need it any time you leave the Country, you might as well let us help you get one.

Our City Clerk's Office is in our historic City Hall complex, which was designed by world renowned architect, Welton Becket. We all know his iconic "Theme Restaurant" at LAX, and the Capitol Records

Building in Hollywood. Our City Hall is meant to pay a modern homage to the Spanish Missions of California.

Over the past six months, the exterior of our City Hall has been lovingly restored. It was recently repainted to match its original paint job. The courtyard planters have been rebuilt and replanted, and have now been fitted with energy efficient lighting. My favorite part is that we have been programming them to change color during different holidays.

The City of Orange wouldn't be 129-years old in April if we did not take such meticulous care of our City's public infrastructure.

In Old Towne, our Public Works Department was hard at work, digging out the antiquated sewers and replacing them with upgraded modern pipes. Over 3,300 linear feet of 90 and 100 year-old sewer pipes have been replaced so far.

We've often heard the phrase, "Where the rubber meets the road." Here in Orange, we're taking it literally. Through a grant from Cal Recycle, we've been resurfacing several of our streets with material made from used, ground-up tires. The new rubberized asphalt will wear better, require less maintenance, and will reduce road noise.

Housing development has seen a big uptick over the last few years, and our Community Development Planning staff have been extremely busy meeting the demand. Several new apartment communities are in the process of development, with the 334-unit AMLI (AM-LEE) Uptown Orange upscale apartment community being the first to welcome new residents. Construction is currently underway for another upscale complex, the 260-unit Eleven-10 Apartments over on Town and Country Road.

The culture of Customer Service is strong in our City of Orange Staff. Going that extra mile for the good of our Community is something that happens every day. Sometimes, this means calling for assistance on behalf of those who need a helping hand.

Early last year, one of our longtime Old Towne residents came to our Code Enforcement Department looking for help. Their homeowners insurance was about to be dropped, and due to safety issues their

home was in need of immediate repair. Our Resident, an Army Veteran, could not do the work, or afford to have the work done.

Staff partnered with Lisa Blanc and Doug Willits, who, along with their associates, volunteered their time and labor to help. The project concluded only a few weeks ago, and the results speak for themselves. Please join me in a big round of applause for the entire team, including M and T Construction, Seven Gables Real Estate, CR&R, and Home Depot.

Our Human Resources Department can take a lot of credit for the top-quality people on our team. It's not an easy job, but I feel our HR Department has been more than up to the task.

I'd like to introduce you to one of our newest Customer Service tools, our brand new City website. CityofOrange.org now has a clean, attractive look. It features an easier-to-use interface, and will now adapt to whatever device you are using. If you're on a mobile phone or tablet, you'll see the layout and interface change to fit your screen.

So, we've looked at our three Oranges. Now it's time to take a look at the roots of the tree, the fiscal State of our City of Orange:

Our local economy continues to show improvement and solid gains. Even so, there are several factors that are having an impact on our City revenues. There are still a few months left in Fiscal Year 2016-17, but we are projecting our revenues to be \$110.9 million dollars, which is \$4.9 million dollars- or about 4.2%- above budget.

As in past years, lower sales tax revenue on fuel have been offset by strong sales from our auto dealers, retail, and nearly all other sectors, which have outperformed expectations. Property tax revenue and other City revenues are also up.

So for the 6th consecutive year since the start of the "Great Recession" in 2007, our City of Orange is in the black.

Our initial analysis suggests that in the next Fiscal Year, 2017-2018, our challenges will probably be relatively flat revenues, and higher PERS retirement costs.

The City Council has consistently worked on finding ways to deal with the PERS challenges. Five years ago we collaborated with all eight of our employee bargaining groups, which led to all of our groups paying their employee share of the PERS costs. We are continuing to work with City Staff to address the unfunded liability issue.

Keeping our budget balanced is one of the top priorities of your current City Council. We consider our stewardship of your tax dollars a sacred trust, one that our hard working City Staff shares. To make sure we keep this commitment, I've asked our elected City Treasurer, Richard Rohm, to re-assemble our City's Audit Committee, which has been on hiatus for the past few years.

There is lot of cause to be optimistic about the future. The economy throughout the City of Orange continues to prove that we are a great place to do business.

For example, our two major malls, the Outlets at Orange generated \$2.75 million dollars in tax revenue, and the Village at Orange generated \$1.6 million dollars in tax revenue for the City.

Our Old Towne Plaza District commercial area is also another good indicator of our financial health. It's only one square mile, but generated \$675,000 in tax revenues, an increase of 4% over the previous year.

My message to you today is this: "Our City of Orange is strong. Community strong, family strong, financially strong."

Finally, as I have done in each of my State of the City addresses, I want to remind you to please "Shop Orange." Every dollar you spend in Orange returns tax revenue back to our schools, libraries, infrastructure, and job creation.

So there you have it: The State of our City of Orange. Our "largest small town" continues to move forward, grow, embrace our past, and look towards the future.

On behalf of the entire City Council, I would like to thank all of you for your support of our Sweet Orange. Our partnership with you, our City of Orange residents and business community, is key to our continued success.

My thanks as well to Orange Chamber of Commerce for hosting today's event.

It is my absolute privilege to serve you as the Mayor of my hometown, Orange California.

Thanks to all of you for being here today, and God Bless you.

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