

Mayor Goode Talk of the Town Letter for January 1, 2023

Happy New Year! I sincerely hope that your holidays were blessed with the warmth of this wonderful season. It was great to see Arizona's Christmas City in full swing, with all of the favorite events and a few new ones.

Prescott City Council looks ahead to 2023, which will no doubt be an important year for the City. First I would like to congratulate our new Mayor Pro Tem Brandon Montoya, and thank last year's Pro Tem Cathey Rusing for her leadership in 2022.

I am pleased to share with you an accomplishment from 2022 that will reduce taxes for everyone, starting immediately. As of December 31, the City ended the .75% sales tax that was put in place to pay down the City's unfunded pension liability for our public safety personnel. The tax was able to sunset earlier than anticipated because we were able to pay down that liability from about \$85 Million in 2018, to under \$1.5 Million today.

As we come into 2023, I see several important and challenging issues ahead.

We will begin the year with a search for a new City Manager. After six years with the City, Michael Lamar resigned his position to pursue other opportunities. His last day will be February 14, 2023. We thank him for his service to the City and wish him well in his future endeavors.

The City will continue its work to protect the land around the airport from encroachment by residential development. We will work with the entitled property owners to make sure there is an appropriate buffer around the airport, keeping future homes out of crash impact zones and out of intense aircraft noise contour areas. The work we do now will benefit the entire Prescott region, especially those who use our air service, as well as the airport operations for years to come.

It is clear that as Prescott grows our public safety infrastructure must also expand correspondingly. Our first responders have done an admirable job keeping up with the increased demands of our growing population. However, it's time to invest in this growing demand. City Council will work with our public safety leadership to identify areas for new stations so that our citizens can continue to enjoy a consistently high quality of service as our city continues to grow.

After just over six months of the new water policy, we will continue to review and possibly evolve the policy as applications come in and issues are addressed. The Water Issues Subcommittee and the ad-hoc Water Policy Management Committee will continue to review the situation and together with staff, will make recommendations to council. The goal is to make sure that growth and water use increases at a reasonable and sustainable rate.

Finally, the City of Prescott and the entire region has a very special opportunity to expand open space, preserving thousands of acres for recreational use. The City is working with several

partners including Yavapai County and Prescott Valley, and in coordination with Arizona State Parks and with assistance from the Governor's Office, to acquire a combined 3,200 acres on and around Glassford Hill. This land will be acquired in pieces, with each partner purchasing a number of acres. Thanks to a grant from the Governor's office, some of the land purchase costs will be off set. However, there is much more work to do in the coming year to assure this open space is available to benefit generations to come.