



**ANNUAL MAYOR'S PRAYER BREAKFAST  
STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS  
FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2018  
FAVORITO'S RESTAURANT**

GOOD MORNING AND WELCOME! Thank you for being here today. I'd like to first introduce some distinguished guests:

Fresno County Supervisor District 4, Buddy Mendes  
Representing Senator Anthony Cannella's office - Mr. John Anderson  
Representing Congressman David Valadao's office - Ms. Eileen De Raadt  
Fowler City Councilmembers Leonard Hammer, Karnig Kazarian, and Mayor Pro-Tem Dan Parra  
Mrs. Anna Cardenas  
Raj Rakkar, director of the South San Joaquin Valley Division of the League of California Cities  
Liz Gomez, Alex Hodoian, and Michael Rivera (Waste Management)

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I'd like to begin my address on the State of the City with an update on development projects, starting with:

**COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS:**

It's hard not to notice the impressive new **Fowler Medical Plaza** building which is now fully under construction. This will be a 46,000 square foot facility with pediatric and adult medical offices, pharmacy and lab services, and dental offices. The project includes beautiful park spaces and children's play areas. The project will bring about 60 new jobs to the City. It is planned to open in spring of 2019.

**The MaxCo box and packaging company**, is now under construction for their 300,000 square foot facility near Manning and Golden State. The project will create approximately 30 new jobs for the community.

Building permits will be issued soon to construct a new **Taco Bell drive-through restaurant**, to be located on the southeast corner of Merced and 10th Streets.

**The Buford Oil Company** will be redeveloping their 19-acre property just north of Manning Avenue, between Highway 99 and Golden State Boulevard. They are planning **a new travel center/rest-stop** for travelers and truck drivers. The project will include two fast food restaurants, a 24-hour diner, a multi-story hotel, and a tire, repair, lube and wash business for trucks. The project is currently in the environmental review stage.

Other new businesses have opened in town, including a restaurant and specialty grocery store, **India Express**; **“Hat California”** a new custom hat making facility; and a new **Herbalife vitamin and juice** store. The City is receiving more and more inquiries from commercial and retail businesses interested in locating to Fowler.

## **RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS**

**Magill Terrace.** Last year, the Fresno County Housing Authority received Tax Credit Allocations to fund housing rehabilitation projects in the City of Fowler. The former housing project on Nelson Avenue near Sutter School was demolished, and an attractive and well designed new apartment project is now under construction. The project will increase the number of residential units from 20 to 60. It is expected to be completed by mid 2019.

The third phase of the **Woodside Homes - Kensington Estates subdivision, totaling 57 new homes**, is over halfway to completion. The project has been so successful that Woodside has established a waiting list for new homes.

Good news for Fowler property owners: the Fresno County Assessor’s office listed the **City of Fowler as receiving the highest increase in property tax values** of all of the 15 cities in the County last year.

## **CITY PROJECTS:**

### **Golden State Corridor Project**

Since 2003 Fresno COG has been driving the Golden State Corridor Improvement Project. The Project will improve pavement, provide lighting, landscaping, walking trails and bike lanes, and realign Golden State through the City of Fowler. The project spans from the City of Fowler through Selma to Kingsburg. Public Workshops have been held in all three cities to receive comments on the plan from interested individuals.

## Long Range Planning

General Plan Update. The City's Planning Department is researching and coordinating the completion of a General Plan Update. A majority of the current General Plan is very old, dating back to 1976, with a few updates done in 2004. This project will be a major undertaking, but is very important, since the General Plan is the blueprint for how the City will grow and develop in the future.

## New Fire Station

- The City completed the design work and received loan approval from the US Department of Agriculture to construct a brand new, state-of-the art Fire Station, to be located on Main Street across from City Hall. The project recently went out to bid, and we're hoping that the results will make certain that the project moves forward. This project will be partially funded by Utility Users Tax, which has provided our public safety departments with some very important needs. We thank our citizens for the support of the Utility Users Tax dollars.
- The City was awarded Federal Transportation funds, that will be used to **reconstruct Adams Avenue from Golden State Boulevard to 5th Street.** The project will begin this summer.
- The City was recently awarded funding to install sidewalks along Fowler Avenue to connect to Fresno Street for improved pedestrian access on the west side of town.
- With the use of Community Development Block Grant funds, the City constructed new ADA accessible curbs on 5th and Fresno Streets, and on 5th and Vine Streets. ADA automatic door openers were also installed at City Hall for improved public access.
- The City was recently awarded grant funding, in partnership with Tree Fresno, to develop a **landscape and beautification** plan for the City along Highway 99.

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## **POPULATION UPDATE:**

The City's population has grown to **6,241**, which is an increase of 150 residents from last year.

## **CITY DEPARTMENTS**

**The Fowler Police Department** experienced many changes in 2017, including the appointment of our new Chief of Police, Rudy Alcaraz. We are happy to have Chief Alcaraz on board, and he has already implemented new policing strategies such as: the integration and use of GPS technology, and an increased presence of police officers in and around the school sites to ensure the safety of our children and students. Improvements have been made to the patrol fleet by adding three newer patrol vehicles, and one brand new patrol unit. Officers have also been issued new tasers and digital cameras to increase efficiency and safety as they serve the community. The department is also planning an active shooter training for its officers this summer in collaboration with nearby agencies, to ensure the safety of children and preparedness of our officers. The Chief has also implemented a new 12-hour shift schedule for patrol, which will allow for extra coverage between the hours of 2:30 pm – 2:30 am.

The Department has added three new police officers: Officers Fong Yang, Frank Murrieta, Connor Branderhorst, bringing the department to full staff.

In 2017, the Police Department assigned 1164 case numbers, issued 216 citations, and had a total of 231 arrests. There was a 17% overall decrease in Part 1 crimes in the community last year. The department is focused on preparing for the future, and the Chief is currently finalizing the assignment of an officer to MAGEC - the Multi Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium, as well as the AB109 Police & Probation Task Force. This will create better knowledge of career criminals and their trends in our community and provide easier access to additional resources, if needed. The goal is to strengthen relationships with local agencies who we work with to help deter crime, not only locally, but regionally.

**The Fowler Volunteer Fire Department** attended 741 emergency calls, trainings, and events last year. Due to operational improvements made by the Fire Department and Chief Lopez, the Department received a new ISO fire rating. To explain, the ISO is an organization that rates fire departments on their ability to provide necessary fire protection. A lower ISO rating means better protection. The City's fire rating was recently lowered from a 6 to a 4. Another benefit of this

lower rating is that it helps reduce costs of homeowners insurance for Fowler residents.

**The Public Works Department** is working hard to beautify the City by cleaning up and beautifying Golden State Boulevard, cleaning up alleyways, and planting new trees around the City.

### **Finance Department**

The City recently welcomed a new Finance Director to it's staff, Mr. Randy Uyeda. Randy comes to us with many years of success in accounting and auditing, and we're very happy to have his expertise.

### **Senior Center and Recreation Department**

The Edwin Blayney Senior Centers offers a nutritional lunch program Monday through Friday for seniors age 60 and above. Seniors enjoy weekly activities, crafts, bingo and outings around town. Most of all they love the fellowship among their friends at the center.

The City will also be hosting the summer lunch program at the Senior Center that provides a **free lunch for kids** up to age 18.

The Recreation Department is getting ready for the **Fabulous Fourth of July Celebration**, with live music, plenty of food booths and the best fireworks show in the Valley.

**The Fowler's Farmers Market** will kick off on July 25th in Panzak Park, with a variety of vendors and live entertainment weekly. The market runs for 16 weeks.

For all upcoming recreation events, please visit the City's website, and take note of the event flyers mailed in the monthly utility bills. The City's website is undergoing a redesign and will be "re-launched" very soon. The new website will be very mobile phone friendly and provide more information on upcoming events and happenings.

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**In conclusion:** The Fowler City Council and City staff are working very hard to be proactive in preparing for future needs, while keeping Fowler the beautiful, clean and peaceful community that we enjoy. In a world of increasing costs and shrinking revenues, the City strives to efficiently provide full services to our residents, improve and maintain our streets and sidewalks, our parks facilities, our police, fire and utility services, and to bring forward enjoyable recreation events. We look forward to planning new projects and new facilities to benefit the wonderful community of Fowler.

Thank you again to our elected officials, legislators, and to the Fowler Unified School District for being here today.

A special thank you to Favoritos for the great breakfast we enjoyed this morning.