

State of the City Address



Mayor Eric Hogue

March 31, 2015

Introduction

Today it is my duty, honor and privilege to deliver, the annual State of the City address for Wylie, Texas.

The State of our City is sound.

As we begin, I want to thank the Wylie Chamber of Commerce for naming me Citizen of the Year at the recent Director's Choice Awards. It was a total surprise and an honor for me.

But I am just one just one of nearly 45,000 citizens of the year who make Wylie such a special place.

I remember the very first citizen I met in Wylie on July 20, 1991. Hooking up the icemaker on the refrigerator, I accidentally bent the copper tubing and ran to the local hardware store to get a copper tubing cutter. The man behind the counter, Kenneth Nall, asked if he could help me and I explained what I needed. He reached behind the counter, brought out a tool from his personal toolbox and handed it to me. When I asked him what I owed him, he said, "No need to buy it for just one use – just bring it back when you're done."

It's the people like Kenneth who made Wylie feel like home for a young couple 24 years ago ... and whose spirit and legacy continue to make it the community it is today.

We should take pride in our city and in the success it has seen over the past year.

A special thanks to Wylie Fire Rescue Honor Guard for the presentation of the colors and for Police Chaplain Dan Rainey for leading our invocation. Dan is another example of how special the people are in Wylie ... for over 25 years he has volunteered as our city's Police Chaplain working with our officers and going out with them in the middle of the night to meet with families in crisis.

As I begin, I would like to introduce our City Council members:

Mayor pro tem and Place 1, Keith Stephens

- Has lived in Wylie for over 24 years
- He is in his 2nd year on the City Council
- Keith is on the board of the Wylie Chamber of Commerce and is runs a couple of businesses in town.

Councilman Nathan Scott, Place 2

- Has lived in Wylie since 2007
- He is in his third first term of office.
- He is a financial planner/adviser

Councilman Todd Wintters, Place 3

- Has lived in Wylie for 15 years
- He is also in his 2nd year on the City Council
- He is the owner of Engineering Concepts and Design, here in Wylie.

Councilman Bennie Jones, Place 4

- Has lived in Wylie for nearly 12 years.
- Has served on the City Council for 6 years.
- He is a recent graduate of the Police Academy at Eastfield College.

Councilman William Whitney, Place 5

- Has lived in Wylie for 12 years.
- And is completing his first year on the City Council.
- He works full time managing a cyber-security team to help protect the energy industry and also has his own technology company that supports small businesses technology systems.

Councilman David Dahl, Place 6

- Moved to Wylie 13 years ago.
- And is also about to complete his first year on the City Council.
- Retired from the HVAC manufacturer Lennox Industries.

Our City Manager, Mindy Manson

- Has worked for Wylie for nearly 20 years.
- She has been our City Manager since 2006.
- Mindy does an outstanding job serving our community. She is the BEST city manager in this city's history.

Our Assistant City Manager, Jeff Butters

- Has worked for Wylie since 1998.
- He started out as our chief of police.
- And became our Asst. City Manager in 2006.
- He is our city's right-hand man.

As we begin our 128th year as a community, I want you to stop and reflect with me about what makes Wylie ... so special?

Some things are very obvious:

For example how, our city staff continues to do an outstanding job for our community:

This past year:

We were able to adopt a fiscally conservative budget that provides funding for excellent services while reducing the tax rate for the third year in a row.

Our bond rating increased due to a strong economy as well as strong city management and financial practices

We hired 65 new city employees to meet the ongoing needs of our community.

Our Municipal Court worked hand-in-hand with Wylie ISD to process all Failure to Attend School cases, resulting in another great working relationship between the city and the school district.

Wylie Fire Rescue responded to over 3,336 calls for help ... that is an average of over nine calls for help per day, an increase of 4.5% over 2013.

The city's 2014 crime rate decreased by 5%, despite a 4% increase in population.

In 2014, the city funded the Wylie Police Department Commercial Enforcement Unit, which will focus on ensuring that commercial vehicles coming through Wylie are in compliance with state and local laws. And that division is actually going live today.

Wylie's National Night Out was once again recognized nationally as one of the best events around the globe, and it continues to grow as a great opportunity for families to come out and meet Wylie's finest.

1,221,448,000 gallons of safe drinking water were delivered to residents and local businesses in 2014.

The Street Division completed 1,084 service requests for streets, sidewalks and alleys.

Construction began in the fall of 2014 on the Municipal Complex Trail ... a 1-mile, 12-foot-wide concrete trail funded by Collin County Parks and Open Space and by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department ... the beginning of Wylie's version of Central Park!

The city worked in partnership with our sports leagues to provide athletic fields and facilities for nearly 6,000 children to play in organized soccer, baseball, football, and softball leagues in 2014.

And they installed the first cricket pitch in our parks system in Dodd Park ... in other words, Wylie is going International!

Nearly 10,000 people participated in scheduled daily programs during 2014 at Wylie Senior Recreation Center; an increase of 51% from 2013.

86,100 visits were made to the fitness area of the Wylie Recreation Center in 2014, a 5% increase from 2013.

At the Library we had over half a million items checked out ... and expanded the hours each week to accommodate the growing needs of our community.

This past year we completed the Brown Street West project and began work on the Stone Road project, which is the last of the 2005 Bond projects.

We completed the 1378 / Woodbridge Parkway expansion ... an 8 million dollar project, showing the importance of a successful partnership and cooperation between Wylie, Sachse and Collin County.

New business is booming in Wylie.

In December, The Rock opened and set new company records for its first week in business. But that should come as no surprise to us ... so did ...

- The Lake Point Emergency Room
- Rosa's Café
- Dairy Queen
- Super Target
- Race Track
- Kroger
- B&B Theater

And the list will continue to grow as other businesses realize the benefits of moving to Wylie ...

These are just a few examples of how we have an outstanding city staff, who work hard every day to make Wylie a better place for you and me.

In 2014, Wylie was recognized as one of Top 60 “Best Places to Work” in DFW by the *Dallas Business Journal*.

Second Best:

Recently Wylie was named the second-best small city in the country in which to raise a family.

As mayor of this city, I am proud and honored – and I was also curious ... Why Wylie?

The ranking was based on criteria such as housing prices, income, schools, amenities and proximity to larger cities.

Out of all the cities in Texas – in fact, the nation – why does Wylie continue to be a prime hometown choice?

You have just heard, on the video, from some of our citizens of why Wylie is a great place to raise a family.

As I stated at the beginning of the video, we went to our virtual Town Square ... Facebook ... and posted the announcement of this national ranking, and we received so many positive comments from local citizens about why they love Wylie.

Some of those citizens were on today’s video, and I would like to recognize those who are able to be with us today: Lacy Jennings and her husband Jacob ... and April Peter and her husband Sohail.

We heard many more comments about:

- Our sports programs
- The recreation center that is housed in our beautiful City Municipal Complex, which is used from morning until night, by young and old alike.
- Our downtown area that the city council has taken proactive steps this past year to preserve our historic downtown by adding additional streets to expand the district and preserve the history of our town’s original 100 acres that W.D. Wylie bought over 129 years ago.
- Or our home-grown Pirate’s Cove Playground in Founder’s Park that was built over 10 years ago ... and while other cities have had to shut down similar playgrounds, our continues to stand tall ... due to the efforts of some outstanding individuals.

Many mentioned the quality of the schools, caring teachers and topnotch administrators.

- No argument there; Wylie ISD is an outstanding school district serving over 14,000 students.
- The district has continued to grow and has been acknowledged by the state of Texas for its outstanding efforts with our students ... and where else can a parent still pick up the phone and talk directly to the superintendent about their child or the Friday night football game?

Some mentioned the number of city-sponsored events, which are held year 'round, hosted by the city in partnership with the Wylie Downtown Merchants Association and the Wylie Chamber of Commerce.

We continue to look forward with these events.

- Our annual Wylie Arts Festival, with the Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting ceremony.
- JazzArts Fest at City Hall coming up April 18th from 9 am until 9 pm.
- The Bluegrass on Ballard festival that revived our July Jubilee.
- And who could ever forget ... Boo on Ballard!
- This year we plan to expand on this family event with the first ever Great Texas Magic Festival.
- One of my oldest friends, Dal Sanders is with us today. Dal recently served as the National President of the Society of American Magicians ... while other successful magic festivals have been held around the country ... this will be another first for Wylie ... and for the state of Texas.
- This new festival is just another example of how we are bringing new and unique ideas to our community to build and promote our city's name throughout the Metroplex, the state and the country.

So why is Wylie so special? Is it the schools, the sports, or the small-town feel? Is it the cost of living, the charm of downtown, the city events, or the culture of servant leadership? The rec center, the library, or the parks?

The answer is yes to all of those reasons.

It's because of the people ... we take pride in our hometown ... it's unique, it's special and we claim it as our own ... and our focus is to continue to build a better Wylie.

This past year the City Council and I developed our first ever mission statement and vision for the city:

Our Mission is ... Honor our past; Embrace our present; Plan our future

Our Vision is to Look to the Past: Building on our heritage; Focus on the Present: Celebrating our home town character; **and** Plan for the Future: Creating opportunities for our growth.

And never forget to uphold our Values of Integrity: Ethical, honest and responsible; Stewardship: Fiscally accountable; and Respect: Value diversity.

Our community deserves nothing less.

As we look to the coming year, we are continuing to find ways to better communicate with our citizens.

Beginning in April, I will be start opening the doors of the mayor's office from 1om until 5 pm every second and fourth Tuesday. Any citizen of Wylie can stop by for a visit or contact my office and meet with me to discuss any issues or concerns they have with our city.

Additionally, we are bringing back the quarterly Mayor's breakfast. Be watching on our website and other social media outlets for opportunities to attend these functions.

Wylie is a community with its arms flung wide open, looking to the future with a respectful eye to the past – a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

The state of our city is sound ... our future is bright ... and in Wylie ... we are wide awake and looking forward ...

May God continue to bless each of you and the great city we call Wylie, Texas, as we move forward ... thank you.