

Youngtown—A Sustainable Future

Someone once said, “You campaign in poetry; you govern in prose...”
Campaigning is fun but governing, if you do it right, is hard work.

These past 7 years, while I’ve been your Mayor, we have faced, and solved, one problem after another. We, the Town Council and I—with the support of The People, have pulled the Town back from the edge of a fiscal cliff: Youngtown was nearly broke with antiquated policies and badly in need of serious infrastructure and policy upgrades and improvements. Those improvements have been myriad and profound:

- The entire Town (residential and commercial) was brought up to International Fire-Code standards by laying nearly 3.5 miles of water pipe and adding nearly 5 dozen fire hydrants. Residents and Firefighters are now safer due to quicker access to an adequate water source for firefighting.
- 8+ miles of alleys have been paved, increasing quality of life by controlling dust and bringing the Town into compliance with PM 10 rules and regulations.
- Peoria Avenue was completely reconstructed (from the base up) from 111th Avenue to 115th Avenue.
- Streetlights have been installed, in most neighborhoods, making residents safer.
- Engineering and Environmental Impact studies have been completed for the ‘Peoria Avenue Straightening’ in order to eliminate the T-intersection at Baptist Village/Lifestream. Construction funds will be in the FY 2014—2015 budget, greatly improving emergency response times in The Agua Fria Ranch Subdivision.
- ‘As built’ infrastructure plans have been updated and corrected giving the Town the first complete and accurate set of public works/infrastructure records in its history.
- A permanent Base Adjustment (PBA) was presented to and overwhelmingly passed by voters, eliminating the need for repetitive approval of Home Rule status.

- Savings have been increased by over 200% with our 'rainy-day' fund now approaching almost a full year's operational expenses.
- Governmental operational costs have been reduced by nearly a third while service levels have been increased in several important areas.
- Important Town policies have been scrutinized, modernized and rewritten.

Yet with all these improvements, the Town has not taken on a single dollar's worth of debt or increased resident taxes by a single dollar.

Having laid this strong foundation for sustainability, the Town Council voted unanimously, last month, to implement the Youngtown4Good program, the Buy Local program and the Biz Council program.

These programs will be constructed, automated and rolled out over the course of the next six months and will provide a convenient connection between volunteers and non-profit or Town sponsored programs like *Neighborhood Watch* and *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*. They will also provide business enhancing, no-cost programs and resources to local businesses.

These web-based, automated programs will allow us to achieve program goals without having to hire new staff or burden existing staff with additional duties.

Innovation, creative problem solving and amplification of extant resources have been our hallmark for the past 7 years; implementation of these programs is but one more step down that same road toward a truly sustainable future for Youngtown.