



## **City of Phoenix**

State of the City Address

Mayor Kate Gallego

April 21, 2026

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Thank you. Thank you, everyone. I am so grateful that you've chosen to join us today.

I want to thank Todd and the incredible team at the Phoenix Chamber, not just for the always-kind introduction, but for partnering with us to put on this event every year.

And, of course, I want to thank the staff here at the Sheraton, both those in the kitchen and in the ballroom helping us out today. Thank you!

Thank you to City Manager Ed Zuercher, the City leadership team, our Police and Fire chiefs, and every City employee. I'm going to share a lot of really good news today—and so much of it would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our public servants. Thank you for the work you do every day to make Phoenix such a special and safe place.

No successes happen on their own. My dad Jim is here, and so many of you know that he's a big part of everything I've been able to do as mayor.

My son Michael makes every day adventurous. Of course, I'm trying to be a good mom—so he's at school today instead of here with us. He is my biggest source of joy, and I work every day to build a Phoenix worthy of him and all of our kids.

As many of you know, we're missing my mom, who we lost five years ago this summer. I still miss her, especially at the end of those tough days when you just want to talk to your mom. That's true even when you're mayor.

What our family went through is the same thing so many families have gone through—a tough cancer battle for which the best treatments weren't always local. That's why, when I campaigned for this job, I said putting Phoenix on track to lead in the biosciences would be one of my highest priorities. Life-saving innovations should be available in our city and our state.

It's a commitment I made to all Phoenix families. And the progress we've made to grow the biosciences, to help catalyze new research and cures—it's already changing lives.

You know about a lot of the success we've had in expanding the biosciences, but in the last year I've worked to make it an even bigger priority. We changed the name of the fund that collects revenues from local hotel stays from the "Sports and Tourism Fund" to the "Sports Facilities, *Biosciences* and Tourism Fund." The investments we make should also support the kind of innovation that saves lives.

Last month, the City Council and I unanimously approved the first investment in the biosciences from that fund with a truly transformational endeavor: ASU Health. Phoenix's 50 million dollar contribution to ASU Health is the largest direct investment we've ever made in a bioscience project. I'm proud of that. We should all be proud. I know my mom would be.

ASU's approach—to combine medical and engineering educations—will fundamentally transform how health care works. There was a sense of optimism when several of us on the City Council joined President Michael Crow, Dr. Sherine Gabriel and Dean Holly Lisanby for the ceremonial groundbreaking. We know this investment has the promise to significantly improve health outcomes in our community.

In many states, it's the Legislature that provides funds for projects of this magnitude and potential. But we know in Arizona, that can be a challenge.

That's why my colleagues and I stepped up. And it comes with a benefit: Because of our investment, ASU has agreed to take on some of the research that matters most to our residents. For example, they'll help us better understand urban public health resilience through research that evaluates the intersection of heat, homelessness, mental health, and substance use.

They'll dig deep on occupational health, including cancer that has afflicted so many of our Phoenix Firefighters. That's a game changer for our first responders—and it would not have been possible without Councilman Kevin Robinson making the push for it. It pays to have a former first responder on the City Council—thank you, Councilman!

We also asked ASU Health to tap into an area that has been historically under resourced: women's health. Too many medical devices are designed for 30-year-old men. ASU Health will design procedures and technology with the unique needs of women in mind. Not only will we improve outcomes, we're opening a new frontier of entrepreneurial opportunity.

ASU's decision to build in downtown Phoenix isn't happenstance. It started with a deliberate effort that began two decades ago, when Governor Janet Napolitano, Mayor Phil Gordon, the Arizona Board of Regents, and our three state universities teamed up to create the Phoenix Bioscience Core.

The University of Arizona helped lead the way with a catalytic investment in its downtown Phoenix Medical School. Through a partnership with Banner, the UA Medical School has made a 59 billion dollar impact on our community and has trained nearly 2,000 doctors. UA's work downtown will grow with the new UA Medical Innovations Building—formerly known as CAMI. That seven-story center that is under construction just around the block from here.

I'm proud to serve on the Advisory Board because it helps me learn about the life-changing research taking place, such as UA scientist Hannah Pizzato's work to cure Type 1 diabetes. She may be on the verge of an exciting breakthrough: modifying stem cells in a way that hides them from the immune system. And just steps away, at the National Institutes of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in the Wexford Building, some of the most advanced research on Type 2 diabetes is taking place. It's where scientists discovered that breastfeeding in the first two months of life is associated with a lower risk of obesity and Type 2 diabetes later in a child's life. What's happening at the Bioscience Core is changing the world.

Caris Life Sciences, one of our great TGen success stories, is also putting Phoenix on the map for medical breakthroughs. Caris already possesses the world's highest

genome sequencing capacity and continues to push the limits of discovery. This allows for more personalized cancer treatment than ever before.

Last year, Caris was one of our nation's largest IPOs at a value of more than 6 billion dollars. And it continues to grow! This year, the company will nearly double its lab space at the Cotton Center.

We have hit so many milestones in medical education with strategic support from the City. University of Jamestown is up and running with their new Phoenix-based Pathologist's Assistant Program. Creighton University now has nearly 1,000 learners on its Phoenix campus and more than 420 residents and fellows completing training in Valley hospitals to help ensure we have the doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals we need. Creighton's President, Father Hendrickson, is here with us today. We recently named the Central and Thomas light rail stop for Creighton, recognizing the university's role in shaping the future of Midtown and the Phoenix Medical Quarter.

The Phoenix Medical Quarter is also home to St. Joseph's Hospital, which has served our community for more than 130 years, as well as the Barrow Neurological and Norton Thoracic institutes. I have worked on this project hand-in-hand with Councilwoman Laura Pastor, and I appreciate her partnership. Councilwoman Pastor and I were first elected as city councilwomen together in 2013, and she will reach term limits next year. Councilwoman, thank you for helping build a better Phoenix.

The synergy Phoenix has created is why many global firms are choosing our city as their next place to innovate.

Taiwan's JelloX Biotech is now at the Discovery Oasis campus because it wanted to work specifically with the Mayo Clinic. That partnership will help the company become the first in the world to put AI-empowered 3D pathology, which happens to look a lot like Jello, to work in routine clinical use. It will help detect major cancers earlier and more precisely. That means better outcomes. We recruited JelloX on a delegation to Taiwan led by Councilwoman Ann O'Brien. Thank you, Councilwoman, for your leadership and for being all-in on the vision for a thriving north Phoenix.

Spain-based ROIS is also on the cutting edge of cancer research—and Phoenix is its newest manufacturing site.

ROIS makes specialized injectables that can treat rare diseases, obesity and cancer with pinpoint precision, addressing problems at the source rather than shocking the whole system. This type of treatment, biologics, is a promising area of growth in medical care—and I'm excited that between our great university partners and ROIS, Phoenix is ahead of the curve.

One of the company's cancer treatments allows patients to keep their hair.

We all know the importance of that—I know I do. When my mom was going through chemotherapy, she faced the prospect of losing her hair with a courageous sense of humor. She let my son dye her hair before it was gone in an attempt to make light of what is a deeply personal and scary moment for so many cancer patients. ROIS's product could eliminate this side effect of cancer treatment altogether.

The team at ROIS is here today, and I am so pleased to share that the company is making a 100 million dollar commitment to Phoenix.

Our university partners, the companies who are innovating here, they give me more and more confidence that the path to cure cancer will run through Phoenix! So much of the technology that researchers will use to discover those cures will be built locally, with Phoenix workers leading the way.

Along with our signature spirit of innovation, we have another important ingredient for the secret sauce of cutting-edge technology: semiconductors.

Some of the world's most sophisticated semiconductors—10,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair, powering the world's most demanding computer applications—are made in Phoenix.

TSMC, which announced its Phoenix investment six years ago, has quickly become the nation's anchor for AI chip manufacturing—the Blackwell chip is the engine for NVIDIA's dominance, and it's made right here in Phoenix. This is how Arizona should support critical AI infrastructure—in a way that delivers incredible career pathways and opportunities for our best and brightest to contribute to the world's most consequential technology.

Even better, TSMC's 165 billion dollar investment is spurring others to choose Phoenix too. Lam Research, which supplies wafer fabrication equipment to advanced chipmakers, located its national training center near TSMC—that's another 440 quality jobs. Other suppliers have secured more than 80 acres to open shop in Deer Valley.

So many partners contribute to our semiconductor success. Our educational partners are stepping up, including the Deer Valley and Phoenix Union school districts, Grand Canyon University, our public universities, and Maricopa Community Colleges. Two exceptional leaders in this space who are working to empower our young people to seize these incredible opportunities are here with us today: Superintendent Thea Andrade and Chancellor Steven Gonzales. Thank you both for your commitment to our students.

Phoenix is also making waves in Taipei. I've heard many times about Taiwan's low birth rate, but when I was asked what our "secret" is during my visit in January, I have to admit I was a bit puzzled. I was told that the TSMC families who came here to train the Phoenix workforce have celebrated the arrival of more than 300 babies. I explained that our secret is simple: 300 days of sunshine a year can put anyone in a good mood.

The partnership with TSMC is helping to make our region culturally richer too—and I love that. It's not just semiconductor suppliers that are moving in, but a world-class restaurant in Din Tai Fung, the new Japanese marketplace at Seventh Street and Union Hills, and boba tea shops galore.

Bilateral trade is also about to get a big boost. The Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan will establish a Taiwan Trade and Investment Service Center in Phoenix. Known as TAITRA, this is all about global matchmaking so businesses can expand, invest, and develop a strategic start here in Arizona.

Last year at this event I shared that Starlux was the first airline to announce a nonstop flight from Taipei to Phoenix. That route, which started in January, has really taken off—and I'm happy to share an exciting update: Starlux will upgrade the aircraft it flies to Sky Harbor to the state-of-the-art Airbus A350-1000. The team from Starlux is here today—we are so grateful for your investment in Phoenix!

All of these efforts, they're paying off. Over the last 10 years, semiconductor jobs in Phoenix have grown by 31 percent. And jobs in health and bioscience have grown by a resounding 39 percent.

That lifts our entire economy. Just a few days ago, we learned that between 2022 and 2024, the top four cities for real GDP growth per capita among cities were Seattle, San Jose, San Francisco and Phoenix. That's incredible!

Phoenix is on the leading edge of biosciences and semiconductors—and we're not stopping there.

Now it's time to get ready for the next frontier of advanced tech: Quantum computing, communications and sensing. I'm proud to announce that we will create a Phoenix Quantum Strategy, a focused initiative to position our city as a quantum hub in the United States. And we have the very best person in the country to lead it: the former director of the National Science Foundation, Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan, known to many simply as "Panch." Panch's leadership at ASU and NSF helped shape America's innovation agenda, and now he's ready to lead the efforts for Phoenix.

Together, we will unite industry, universities, and government to ensure we are ready to lead in the next era of breakthrough technology. I am grateful for ASU's leadership in helping us seize this opportunity. And GPEC President and CEO Christine Mackay has agreed to convene regional partners who share our interest because this can be an incredible win for the entire Valley.

Quantum technology is a promising platform for new economic growth, and by harnessing our assets and having the right approach, we can attract investment and better diversify our economy with industries built for the future.

One company that shows what's possible is EigenQ, which is building the infrastructure for post-quantum security. Each day our city depends on digital systems—from traffic signals to water treatment to emergency response. EigenQ is creating the next generation of digital protection, designed to defend against threats that haven't yet arrived. The company came to Phoenix through the Southwest Mission Acceleration Center.

That is a powerful signal that Phoenix is not just participating in the future of quantum technology—we have the potential to become the place where it takes root.

We can never take a breather when it comes to building our economy. That's why we've made an aggressive push to bring more corporate headquarters to Phoenix. Last year, Phoenix secured six new headquarters—putting us fourth in the country. And that's on top of the 31 we brought in from 2018 to 2024.

The Arizona Cardinals are the newest to call our Headquarters Alley home, and they'll be near other fantastic Phoenix companies such as Sprouts, Republic Services and Discount Tire. I'm grateful to have an incredible partner in this endeavor in Councilman Jim Waring. Jim just began his final year as a member of the Council—he's term limited—and this is his last State of the City as a colleague. Jim, I know it may not help you in Republican circles for me to share this, but I'm going to miss working with you—you've been there to support the Mayo Clinic and so much of the important work we're doing in north Phoenix. Thank you, Councilman Waring!

We continue to burnish our national reputation as one of the premier sites for major events and entertainment. The Women's Final Four earlier this month was a huge success and built on the long series of key events we've hosted in what I now call Championship Valley: the Men's Final Four, the College Football Championship, the Super Bowl, the World Baseball Classic, the WNBA All Star Game and WNBA Finals, and even the World Series. The Arizona Diamondbacks are here, and they've promised another World Series here in Phoenix during my time as mayor.

There's another major event happening downtown right now: The Forbes 30 Under 30 Summit. Forbes recognizes some of the nation's top young entrepreneurs and their companies and convenes them all in the same place. I'm happy to share that because of our teamwork with the Player 15 Group, Commerce Authority, GPEC, and Visit Phoenix, for the next three years that place will be Phoenix.

The summit makes sense here because we've long been a home for entrepreneurs. One of my favorite examples is a program run through the Phoenix Mexican Consular Office that lifts up women entrepreneurs. The program supports women of Mexican descent who live in our region as they expand their businesses, ranging

from financial consulting to catering. Thanks to support from Thunderbird School of Global Management and other partners, what started in Phoenix has now grown to 30 other U.S. cities and 13 countries including Australia, Germany, and Malaysia. The leader of that program, Consul General Jorge Mendoza Yescas, is here with us today.

The new frontiers of semiconductors, the biosciences, and much more wouldn't be possible without the lifeblood of our economy: water.

In Phoenix, we see water differently—not as an abundant resource—but as an essential part of our thriving desert metropolis that we must respect, protect, and conserve. Water security is not a challenge that can be “fixed,” but one that requires long-term, thoughtful management.

Phoenix has been honing our careful management for decades. We've prepared for times of shortage and have developed a flexible water supply.

More than half of our resources are supplied by the Salt and Verde rivers, and Phoenix has invested in forest restoration in this watershed for the last decade. We banked significant water savings underground for times of extreme shortage.

We've doubled down on conservation and fortifying our supply since we activated our Drought Management Plan four years ago.

Our incentive programs make it easy for residents to be a part of the solution, and it's paid off—despite our significant growth, residential use is down. New growth in our community must follow sustainability guidelines, and we've encouraged builders to embrace native and desert-friendly landscaping. The Drought Pipeline Project, which we completed a few years ago, helps protect north Phoenix from shortages and gives us the tools to move water where it's needed.

Two years ago, at this event, I shared with you our investment in water purification. We've since advanced two facilities that will provide a combined 14,000-acre-feet a year of purified water—enough to serve 40,000 families.

These facilities are the precursors to a larger, regional facility that will serve communities throughout the Valley. Near the turn of the decade, the Pure Water facility at 91st Avenue will deliver around 60 million gallons each day—enough to serve 200,000 households.

We're showing the world how to grow a booming, dynamic economy without increasing water use. In fact, Phoenix's total consumption is the same today as it was when Google lived in a garage.

But in Arizona, we can't have a conversation about water without talking about the health of the Colorado River: a lifeline to our communities, the source for farmers who provide winter vegetables for the entire country, and the heartbeat of the Grand Canyon.

A warming climate has endangered the river. Lake Powell, one of the system's major reservoirs and hydro-electricity producers, is dangerously close to a point at which water can no longer flow through the Glen Canyon Dam. That threatens to disrupt water and energy supplies for hundreds of thousands of people.

The current set of rules that determine how to divide the river's water among seven states and Mexico will expire at the end of the year. And despite years of negotiation, there is not yet an agreement for how to move forward. That makes federal intervention necessary.

The reality is that if we are to achieve the level of conservation required to save the river, all of the river's users must contribute. We're willing to do so in Arizona. But proposals currently on the table from the Trump Administration would disproportionately devastate Arizona and require virtually nothing of the states upstream.

*That just won't work.*

Here's what's puzzling: The federal government's proposals ignore the economic earthquake that a dry Central Arizona Project canal would cause. Nor does the Administration seem to grasp the devastating impact it would have on Arizona's advanced manufacturing, which is essential to America's national security.

Even more perplexing: What they've proposed fails to stabilize the system in every modeled scenario.

The federal government could learn something from Arizona. In our state, we have a long history of coming together to find solutions to water challenges. At a time when national and global attention is on the West, I'm more grateful than ever that we have so many outstanding water champions.

Last year, I spoke about the work I do with Mesa Mayor Mark Freeman in the Coalition for Protecting Arizona's Lifeline. Also with us today are Mayor Scott Anderson of Gilbert, Mayor Lisa Borowsky of Scottsdale, and Mayor Mark Stanton of Paradise Valley—each of whom is an essential partner in this bipartisan effort. I also want to applaud business organizations including the Arizona Chamber of Commerce, the Phoenix Chamber, Greater Phoenix Leadership, and Valley Partnership for making this a top priority.

Protecting Arizona's water is the defining challenge that will determine our shared security and stability for generations, and I am glad that we are united in that mission.

We're also hard at work building the transit infrastructure to better serve residents now and in future generations. Last summer, we opened yet another extension on the light rail—this time, the South Central Extension, making good on the promise made to residents and businesses long ago. This new line serves neighborhoods with a clean and reliable transit option that connects South Mountain to the Rio Salado to Downtown with a trail of beautiful public art that celebrates what makes our city special.

Phoenix continues to look forward when it comes to rail, and I'm proud that our next stop will be Maryvale! Home to more than 350,000 residents, Maryvale would be our state's fourth biggest city if it stood alone. More young people live in Maryvale than any other village in our city, and I can't wait for families to be able to take the light rail to school, work, or even a Brewers game. This new extension would not be possible without the leadership of Councilwoman Betty Guardado, a tenacious advocate for Maryvale. Councilwoman, your leadership and commitment to those you serve will be felt for generations. Thank you!

More sustainable buses are in Phoenix too. The City's first 12 battery-electric buses are now in service, and that's essential for helping to improve air quality in our community.

So too is reducing traffic gridlock.

Phoenix partnered with the Maricopa Association of Governments, Governor Hobbs, and the state Department of Transportation on the I-10 Broadway Curve Project with straight-forward goals: make it easier for those heading to Sky Harbor

and reduce commute times. Since we completed the project last summer, congestion at the Curve has been cut in half. Travel speeds that were once less than 30 miles per hour during peak times are now more than 60 miles an hour. Multiple levels of government worked together to make your commute better!

As large-scale development continues near TSMC, we're planning ahead to ensure the infrastructure is ready to meet the moment. As you all know, voters approved Proposition 479—and just two months ago, again because of local governments working together, ADOT began work on the new Loop 303 and I-17 interchange.

These improvements don't just make for happier drivers—they're economic WD-40. We work hard to ensure a seamless regional, multimodal transportation system, in part because four out of five jobs in Maricopa County are within two miles of a freeway or light rail corridor. This infrastructure is the backbone of our economy.

In our city, we're showing that government can work. And more importantly, that it can work for everyone.

Two years ago, when I asked Councilwoman Debra Stark to help make Phoenix a more accessible city for those with disabilities, she delivered. At Sky Harbor, she helped introduce Aira, an app that allows travelers who are blind or visually impaired more easily navigate our airport. In the City Council Chambers, a new hearing loop technology connects PA systems directly with hearing aids. We've also raised accessibility standards in new homes. From now on, they'll feature designs with wider hallways and reinforcement for future grab bar installation aimed to help residents age in place and save them thousands on retrofitting their homes. So many in our community already benefit from these changes. Thank you, Councilwoman Stark!

My colleagues on the City Council and I also understand that ensuring our city works for everyone means access to affordable housing options. We take seriously our responsibility to provide entitlements and gap financing to support the creation of more affordable options.

Since I've been Mayor, we've created and preserved more than 65,000 homes and zoned for 90,000 more. These figures reflect a lot of hard work and collaboration with our neighborhoods, development community, creative financiers, and

philanthropy. This swell of new housing is visible across our city, and it matters. It matters for each person and family who has a new place to call home. And it matters because without these homes, costs would rise even more—putting housing out of reach for far too many. We should be proud of our progress and inspired to do more.

Last year, the Council and I created the Phoenix Housing Trust Fund and this year, we'll bring its total resources to 15 million dollars. I am especially grateful for the dedication of Vice Mayor Kesha Hodge Washington on this issue—she gets it. She and I and all of our colleagues want to make it easier for affordable housing to come to market. We know that sometimes permit fees can make the difference in whether a project pencils out. That's why, starting this year, we will use the Trust Fund to help cover the cost of permits for affordable housing projects in Phoenix.

Just a few weeks ago, we broke ground on Helen Drake Village which delivers 80 affordable rental homes for adults 55 and up. The best part? It will be co-located with the existing Helen Drake Senior Center, connecting residents with wraparound services—supporting healthy, connected, independent living. They'll even have pickleball courts! This is a true collaboration that included the Arizona Department of Housing.

Seniors comprise one of the fastest growing populations experiencing homelessness—these are our parents, our grandparents. No person should face the indignity of spending their senior years on the street. For those who need a bridge back from homelessness into stable housing, Steel and Spark delivered in a big way. We recently celebrated the opening of 40 transitional units just east of downtown. Made with retired shipping containers and powered by solar, Senior Bridge provides independent studio spaces complete with a fridge, microwave, bathroom, and plenty of natural light. Phase two of this project will add more than 50 permanent homes for seniors to enjoy comfortable, sustainable living near supportive amenities.

Teresa Jones found herself living in a car with her son and two dogs, Thor and Apollo, after struggling with serious health issues. She lost her job and then lost her home. But she didn't lose her way.

Teresa eventually connected with our Office of Homeless Solutions, which stepped in to find an affordable apartment for the family and resources to help with move-in costs.

She says that she is “forever grateful” and wants others to know that there is hope, and there are organizations who truly care about our community. Teresa has joined us today—we are so proud of the progress you’ve made.

One of the organizations that helps the most with efforts like these is the Garcia Family Foundation. They helped finance Senior Bridge, and through one of their generous grants will help those who just need a light touch of support to move from temporary shelter into permanent housing. And as people move into long-term housing, this frees up shelter beds for others. This kind of help matters so much.

We’re also working to create win-wins for Phoenix families and employers, starting with our airport. Construction is underway at Sky Harbor Airport to build a childcare facility at the 44th Street Sky Train Station. The facility will welcome 100 children and prioritize airport families.

We’re developing public-private partnerships to relieve the costs for working families—not only at the airport, but across our city. This year’s proposed budget includes funding to leverage private dollars to ease the childcare-cost burden on Phoenix families. Not only is this good for kids and families, it’s also a smart investment in our workforce. Thank you to Melinda Gulick and the First Things First team for their expertise and support.

This is a step in the right direction for Phoenix kids. Unfortunately, Arizona is moving in the wrong direction for kids when it comes to hunger. Since the Big Beautiful Bill was passed by Congress and signed into law, nearly half a million Arizonans have lost their federal food security support—and that includes 181,000 thousand children. Think about that: 181,000 children in our state have lost the lifeline that helps keep them fed. That number is far worse than experts anticipated, and it is absolutely unacceptable.

A part of the challenge is the process in Arizona. In Phoenix, we’re going to do something to help. I’m partnering with Councilwoman Anna Hernandez to put funds into the City budget to provide navigators to help Phoenix families get

through the red tape. This is the single most effective way we can keep children from becoming malnourished, and families and seniors from falling into homelessness. Thank you for your partnership, Councilwoman!

With all of our amazing successes—and what seems to be ever-expanding responsibilities—I want to take a moment to assure you I haven't forgotten about the job that anchors everything else: Keeping our neighborhoods safe, and prioritizing emergency response.

A part of that means ensuring that firefighters and paramedics can get to any part of the city quickly. By harnessing multiple revenue streams, the City Council and I approved plans to build seven new fire stations over six years—one of the largest investments in our fire response infrastructure in city history.

One issue that's important to me personally, and to the entire City Council, is protecting our firefighters from one of the gravest risks: cancer. I spoke earlier about the work we're about to do with ASU Health on the issue. We've learned that having three distinct hazard zones within a fire station reduces exposure to cancer causing chemicals—and we're putting that knowledge to work in our fire stations.

Our fire union, Local 493, has been an incredible partner in these efforts and I'm honored that its president, Bryan Willingham, is here with us today. Bryan, thanks for what you and your members do to keep our city safe!

And I want to highlight a much-too-hidden gem we have that's keeping our community safe: the Phoenix Police Reserves. The Reserves are an all-volunteer force of more than 170 full-authority police officers who receive the same training as our paid officers. Many of these individuals volunteer while working fulltime careers in areas ranging from health care to practicing law. They help us with everything from investigations of violent criminals to major sporting events such as this month's successful Women's Final Four. Phoenix now has more Reserve Officers than ever. And last year, Reserves volunteered more than 47 thousand hours—that's the most in the force's history. Assistant Chief Joe Klima, who leads our Reserves, is here with us today—thank you for a job well done!

Last year, I spoke about the major changes in how Phoenix responds to public safety calls. When I was first elected, the city had two response options: police

and fire. But police officers and firefighters aren't the best people to respond to every situation, so we created another resource. Today, when you call 911 in Phoenix, our operators will ask, "do you need police, fire or behavioral health?" Through our Community Assistance Program, we have invested in individuals with social work training who can take the lead when they are most appropriate responders.

A recent call demonstrates the power and promise of this model. When one of our dispatchers, Carter, answered the 911 call, the man on the line was distraught—and said he wanted to take his life. Carter dispatched a crisis team to the man's location and talked with him until the team arrived. Because of his training, Carter knew how to establish trust with the caller. The two even shared a few laughs, talking about the things the man enjoyed in his life. When the crisis team arrived, Carter heard the man say: "I will never forget this. Thank you, you really saved my life today." This is what it looks like when government works.

Today is one of the events I look forward to most each year—and it's not just because so many of my favorite people are in the same room. It's because it's a reminder of the incredible work all of us do every day to improve people's lives.

From creating jobs with real opportunity and good wages . . . to making it easier to commute to work . . . to making our city the very best to raise a child . . . to developing cures for cancer . . . we are making a difference in Phoenix.

I just began my eighth year as your mayor. There have been tough moments, and I know there will be more tough moments in my final three years. But I love this job because I know that every day—if we work together, and lead with competence and collaboration, there's nothing we can't accomplish.

I used to say that Phoenix's best days are ahead of us. But after eight years of working alongside you, I can tell you: They've arrived. Because of you, because of our work together, the state of our city is stronger than it has ever been. The future is Phoenix—and the future is now.

Thank you!