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Lafayette State of the City: Constantly moving forward

By Nick Marnell



Mayor Mike Anderson Photo Andy Scheck

In his state of the city address at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year Award dinner, Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson spent little time patting the city on the back for what it has accomplished. Instead, he outlined what Lafayette can do better in 2017.

"The city is in very good shape," the mayor told the audience Jan. 26 at the Lafayette Park Hotel. "Sales and property taxes came in higher than projected at 11 percent over budget, and our reserves are at 60 percent of our annual budget." Lafayette reported 2015-16 fiscal year general fund revenue of \$15.5 million with expenses of \$10.9 million.

Anderson then outlined areas of focus for the coming year, including traffic and parking, below-market housing opportunities and how to keep downtown Lafayette as one of the most popular spots in the region.

"With more and more people moving into the city, how will they get around?" Anderson asked. Projects like the Downtown Congestion Study and a parking ordinance review are nearly completed and should help folks deal with that issue, and the mayor said that more signage is on the way to show available in-town parking.

Anderson pointed to the KD Home Town Center III development as offering some of the units that retail for \$700,000 at a below-market rate of \$300,000, and he directed the city to make people aware of the opportunity to get on a lottery list for those homes. The city will also review its notification procedures. "The developer is sending prospective clients to the city, and the city is sending prospects to the developer," Anderson said at the Jan. 23 city council meeting. "We need to get this figured out."

The mayor noted how packed the restaurants are in town and urged people to work together to keep the city looking good. "Even something like adding a flower pot in a window," he said.

But Anderson saved his most eloquent words for the winner of the Business Person of the Year Award, Brenda Oum, owner of Papillon Gourmet Coffee and Tea in La Fiesta Square. Oum spent her childhood during the brutal Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, survived the horrors and atrocities and immigrated to the United States in 1987.

"In this particular year, it's great that we are honoring an immigrant to our country who has proved to all of us that this is the place where, if you have the drive, interest and desire, you can be a real success," Anderson said.

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