2026 STATE OF TURLOCK ADDRESS

ENGLISH

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Building a Stronger Turlock

I. Opening

Good afternoon, Turlock. To our residents, civic leaders, community partners, City employees, and distinguished guests: welcome, and thank you for being here. [Look up]

I want to thank Senior Pastor Ron Eivaz (Ron EYE-vaz), Shelby Delgado (SHEL-bee del-GAH-doh), and the Harvest Church family for hosting us. I also want to recognize Turlock's senior citizens, whose wisdom, service, and examples continue to strengthen our community. [Pause for applause]

In recent years, Turlock has faced difficult tests. But those challenges revealed something enduring about our city: when we choose shared purpose over division, we do more than overcome adversity—we move forward together.

Together, we honored the trust residents placed in us, restored focus to the fundamentals, and built a stronger foundation for Turlock's future. [Pause]

And through every challenge, one promise has remained constant: wherever you live, whatever stage of life you are in, and whenever you need your city, we are here for you. We have you covered. [Pause]

II. Earning Trust: Responsible Finances, Public Safety, and Accountable Leadership

Trust begins with responsible stewardship. Since 2020, Turlock has balanced every budget while increasing reserves from $9.8 million to $35 million. That discipline protects essential services and gives us the strength to invest confidently in public safety, roads, parks, and our workforce.

Residents reinforced that commitment through Measure A, which—with independent citizen oversight—directs 52 percent to roads and 48 percent to public safety and parks, with every dollar publicly accounted for.

Responsible stewardship matters most when it strengthens the services residents rely on—and nowhere is that more important than public safety. In the most recent reporting period, violent crime declined 12.5 percent, and the Police Department is fully staffed. Behind that progress are families who feel safer and officers who are better supported.

We should be proud of the progress in our Fire Department. The department is fully staffed, and we have modernized emergency equipment and facilities. Turlock is also one of only 10 municipalities nationwide selected to deploy Qwake C-Thru technology. This helmet-mounted system helps firefighters see through smoke, find victims faster, and work more safely.

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The City Council and I are pleased to welcome Dr. John J. Murphy as Turlock's City Manager. He brings extensive public-safety leadership and a strong record of supporting first responders. That experience will help us strengthen emergency readiness, secure needed resources, and continue building a Fire Department our residents can rely on. [Pause]

At its heart, public safety is a promise: when someone calls for help, Turlock will be ready. With strong leadership, continued investment, and the dedication of our dispatchers, firefighters, police officers, and City employees, we will keep building a safer, better-prepared community. Please join me in recognizing our public-safety and City teams. [Pause for applause]

Keeping that promise requires more than equipment and staffing; it requires accountable leadership and disciplined management. During an important leadership transition, Gary Hampton and Human Relations Director Jessie Dhami managed the City Manager and City Attorney recruitments in-house—saving taxpayers $100,000 by avoiding outside search firms.

I also want to thank Sue Borrego for providing steady leadership as City Manager during this transition, strengthening the City's financial position, addressing longstanding challenges, and keeping important projects moving forward. Her service helped provide stability, continuity, and responsible stewardship when Turlock needed it most. [Pause for applause]

We are also pleased to welcome Katie O. Lucchesi as our new City Attorney. Bringing this position back in-house gives the City Council and staff more consistent, accessible legal counsel. Katie's municipal-law experience spans public governance, land use, contracts, and litigation. Her guidance will help Turlock move forward with clarity and confidence. [Pause]

Strong leadership is reflected in the workforce it supports. Employee morale is high: employee pride stands at 4.5 out of 5, teamwork and overall satisfaction at 4.1, and the vacancy rate is just 7 percent. Those numbers tell an encouraging story—but the real story is the dedication City employees bring to serving Turlock every day.

III. Delivering the Basics: Roads, Water, and Responsive City Services

That same combination of sound management and public accountability is also helping us deliver the basics residents experience every day. Residents gave us a clear assignment: "Mayor Amy, fix the roads." And we listened.

Today, Turlock has launched its first comprehensive road program in 35 years.

Not long ago, a resident told me that a repaired street had changed more than her daily drive. It meant fewer worries when taking an aging parent to an appointment, a safer route for neighborhood children, and renewed confidence that City government was listening. Her experience reminds us that public service is

measured not only in miles paved or dollars invested, but in the everyday difference those decisions make in people's lives.

Twenty-four miles are complete, 25 more are underway, and approximately $60 million is committed to safer, more reliable streets.

The Geer Road Rehabilitation Project was approved nearly $6 million below estimate, preserving funds for added street improvements. But delivering the basics does not end at the curb. It also means securing the water supply on which every home, farm, and business depends.

The award-winning Regional Surface Water Supply Project provides reliable water, while in-house Stanislaus Regional Water Authority management is expected to save about $850,000 annually.

Our regional approach does not stop at drinking water. Here is something you may not think about every day—and may prefer not to: when you flush, our wastewater system gets to work. It treats that water to a high standard and gives it a productive second life supporting agriculture west of Turlock. Around here, even wastewater works hard and gives back. This practical partnership conserves resources, supports agriculture, and helps every drop serve our community.

Just as we make every drop count, we are making every interaction with City government count. Residents seeking help should feel respected, heard, and supported. The myTurlock app, Virtual Turlock, expanded online services, stronger cybersecurity, prompt updates, accessible information, multilingual outreach, and two-way communication are making City government easier to reach, more responsive, and more secure.

From the streets we travel and the water we depend on to the help residents need from City Hall, we are putting that promise into action: Turlock has you covered.

IV. Securing the Future: Opportunity, Growth, and Quality of Life

When streets, utilities, and City services work reliably, they do more than improve daily life—they create the confidence businesses need to invest and families need to build their futures. Our goal is not growth for growth's sake. It is responsible growth that creates jobs, strengthens neighborhoods, expands opportunity, and preserves the character that makes Turlock home.

Targeted incentives helped 45 businesses open and created more than 100 permanent full-time jobs. A fairer property-tax agreement with the county added about $1 million in annual revenue in its first year.

New businesses are bringing jobs, services, and more choices to Turlock. The 30-acre Turlock Marketplace shopping center alone is expected to add 14 to 18 tenants and support approximately 350 jobs.

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Chick-fil-A recognized the responsiveness of Turlock staff and reported a company opening-day sales record, illustrating how efficient municipal service can help successful private investment.

As we welcome investment, we are still committed to the local businesses and longtime employers that create jobs and preserve Turlock's character. Our Economic Development Strategic Plan focuses on keeping employers, attracting new industries, strengthening downtown, and connecting responsible growth with needed infrastructure and services.

But opportunity is meaningful only when growth strengthens household stability and improves quality of life across the community. Through the ongoing Mobile Home Rehabilitation Program, we help residents improve their homes. The now-concluded First-Time Homebuyer Program helped residents pursue homeownership and build lasting stability.

Since 2018, Turlock has secured more than $37.4 million in outside funding for infrastructure, public safety, parks, drainage, and neighborhood stability. That funding strengthens programs such as mobile-home rehabilitation, improves public spaces, and helps residents experience progress in their daily lives.

We will continue to advocate for Turlock's priorities and pursue all funding opportunities for our community.

Progress is meaningful only when residents can experience it in their daily lives—through safer neighborhoods, welcoming public spaces, accessible services, and a genuine sense of belonging. We restored Columbia Pool, improved the Senior Center and public-space accessibility, and enforced City standards when infrastructure work damaged neighborhoods.

V. The Charge: Turning Progress into Permanence

These investments show what focused leadership can achieve; our task now is to turn today's progress into lasting performance. I have enjoyed working with the city council in delivering for the residents of Turlock. Turlock is stronger because, together, we restored financial discipline, invested in essential services, and followed through on residents' priorities.

We should take pride in this progress without becoming complacent, because lasting success requires us to protect what is working, learn from what is not, and remain accountable to the people we serve. Every day, our city workforce strives to make life better for Turlock residents. We will not always get everything right, but when we fall short, we will listen, take responsibility, and make every reasonable effort to correct the mistake. In those moments, I hope we can extend one another grace, ask questions before drawing conclusions, and remember that even when the outcome is not what someone hoped for, a sincere effort may still have been made to help.

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By year-end 2026, we will report quarterly on three public commitments: road-program delivery, public-safety and emergency readiness, and expansion of priority online services.

I also want to thank my husband, Dr. Milton Richards; my family, friends, and colleagues; and the residents whose ideas and candid counsel help me serve with care. I thank God for His guidance and grace. Serving as Turlock's first woman mayor—and the first retired police officer elected to this office—has been a profound honor. That honor strengthens my resolve to listen closely, lead responsibly, and act with integrity.

To Turlock's senior citizens, I offer my sincere gratitude. You built institutions, raised families, sustained neighborhoods, and preserved the values that continue to guide us; our responsibility is not only to honor that legacy, but to ensure you are still seen, supported, and fully included in Turlock's future. [Pause for applause]

To the people of Turlock: thank you for your trust, your partnership, and the privilege of serving you.

The progress we celebrate belongs to all of you—in safer neighborhoods, stronger finances, renewed roads, reliable water, growing businesses, and more responsive City services. We have come far, but our work is not finished.

Turlock's next chapter will not be written by City Hall alone. It will be written by residents who stay engaged, support local businesses, care for their neighborhoods, serve one another, and hold their leaders accountable.

Wherever you live, whatever stage of life you are in, and whenever you need your city, know this: We are here for you. We have you covered. [Pause]

Turlock's strength has never rested with one person. It comes from neighbors supporting neighbors, generations caring for one another, and a community willing to answer the call to serve. That is how we will protect our progress, meet the challenges ahead, and keep moving forward together.

That is the promise of Turlock: one community, standing side by side, accountable to one another, and moving forward together. Thank you, and may God continue to bless the City of Turlock. [Pause for applause]