



A message from the City Manager

## November 2018

The month of November is a time for expressing gratitude. I find it fitting to share with you some of the reasons I am grateful to have served the Fontana community for 28 years and counting, along with answering a question about the City that I often receive.

I am thankful for how far we've come as a City but mindful that we still have more work to do. Residents often ask me what was changed to help Fontana become the prosperous City it is today from being on the brink of bankruptcy in the 1990s. There is a newspaper hanging on the wall of my office dated Thursday, April 29, 1993. The headlines that day from the Fontana Herald News were "City on the Brink of Bankruptcy" and "Citizens Suggest 1,440 Ideas on Budget Crisis Solutions." The Fontana that many know now is a very different Fontana that existed then. The City spun out of control in the mid to late 1980s for a variety of reasons.

Back in January 1990, I was hired as the City's Internal Auditor. It became my job to assist in figuring out what went wrong and what we could do to correct it. Over the next several years, the Mayor and Council began to build a policy base that helped turn things around.

The policy base focused on cutting spending to live within our means, along with establishing a General Fund Reserve, a type of "rainy-day" fund, at a minimum of 15% of the total expenses of the General Fund. Currently, our rainy-day fund is closer to 30%, with a goal that a minimum of 10% of the General Fund is reinvested back into the community as infrastructure repairs.

The Mayor and Council also supported a policy to begin investing in infrastructure projects using outside funding and grant monies when possible, that provided the biggest payback in the form of new economic expansion.

We also adopted an outside-in investment strategy. This meant that we were one community, committed to the betterment of the community as a whole and, where possible, would use the growth and resources generated through new development on the outskirts of the City to be reinvested back into the core of the community.

The City of Fontana is a wonderful community, and I am truly thankful for the amazing people I work with. Internally, City staff strive to work as a team by blurring department lines. We have made a

commitment to acknowledge and fully fund our liabilities, so there are no surprises for the next generation. The Fontana of today has state-of-the-art places to come together, a balanced budget, annual investments in roads and infrastructure, and has been rated as one of the best places to work in the Inland Empire.

I will always keep that newspaper article hanging in my office as a way of reminding folks how far we have come, but also as a warning that if we don't continue to give this community our best, it is a very short trip back to that era we never want to see again. That article is my daily reminder to help keep the City moving in the right direction.

As we enter November, I wish you and your family a joyous month and a Happy Thanksgiving. Be sure to stop by one or more of the City's November events such as the Veterans Day Celebration at Miller Park Amphitheater on Sunday, November 11 at 11:00 a.m. and the Tree Lighting Ceremony on November 28 at City Hall from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

All the best,

Ken Hunt