

Growth, revitalization top plans for Caldwell

Mayor wants to expand city airport, add fees to new development, start endowment to improve golf courses

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When it comes to successes, Mayor Garret Nancolas has an unending list for Caldwell: uncovering Indian Creek, adding more police officers and firefighters, new softball fields, improved roads, and more.

During his State of the City address Tuesday, the mayor announced future highlights, including an Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor building in Sky Ranch, a new terminal and runway for the airport and the proposed sale of city-owned land next to Purple Sage Golf Course.

Nancolas spoke for more than an hour about Caldwell — and had a difficult time stopping. "This city is my baby," he said at one point in his speech.

Growth and revitalization are key themes as the city moves into 2007, said Nancolas at the start of his tenth year as mayor.

Like most of the Treasure Valley, Caldwell has seen major growth in the past decade. The city's population hit an all-time high with 39,390 residents in 2006, growing more than 9 percent since 2005, said Nancolas. The city issued 8,329 building permits last year — 1,095 more than in '05. The 2006 tally includes 1,166 permits for single-family residences.

That growth, and limited funding for widening highways, makes finding alternative means of public transportation essential to Caldwell and to Boise, said Nancolas, adding that estimates show the commute between the two cities could take up to two hours within 10 years if car traffic continues to increase at the current rate.

"It's essential if we're not going to be gridlocked, we need to have another means of transportation," he said.

Highlights of Nancolas' speech include:

- Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor and the city's urban renewal agency expect to close on about 2 acres at Sky Ranch, north of Interstate 84 and east of Highway 20-26, in the next week. The department plans to build an approximately 15,000-square-foot building on the site.
- The city is pursuing the purchase of 115 acres of land to expand Caldwell Industrial Airport's existing runway and add a new one. The city has applied for a grant to build a new terminal, said Nancolas, but if that fails, the city will find other funding for the

project. With a grant, a terminal could be built this year. Without one, it could happen in 2008.

- The city hopes to put 45 acres adjacent to Purple Sage Golf Course up for auction. Money from the sale of that prime real estate will be put into an endowment to pay for future improvements and maintenance at the city's two golf courses, he said. Purple Sage Golf Course is located off Purple Sage Road near Middleton.
- In February, the city will consider adding impact fees to new residential development to help fund future fire and police services. This past year the city added seven police officers and six firefighters to deal with growth.
- Water will be running in the rerouted Indian Creek downtown in time for the city's Indian Creek Festival on Sept. 15, said Nancolas. Only a handful of buildings remain to be torn down to uncover and reroute the creek this spring.
- The city's Urban Renewal Agency has offered Treasure Valley Community College in Caldwell a little more than three acres in Sky Ranch business park, said Nancolas. Nancolas said the city is working on ways to help TVCC with financing.