



# TOWN OF ERIE NEWS FLASH

## News & Announcements

For more information contact:  
Katie Jenkins | Communications & Marketing Coordinator  
303-926-2763 or [kjenkins@erieco.gov](mailto:kjenkins@erieco.gov)  
[www.erieco.gov](http://www.erieco.gov)

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## MAYOR'S STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS 2015

***In case you missed the 2015 State of the Town Address, here are the prepared remarks of Mayor Tina Harris along with her powerpoint.***

Good evening; and welcome. Thank you for coming. And I'd like to thank the Erie Chamber of Commerce for hosting this event. In particular – thank you to Elle Cabbage.

There is a Chinese proverb, which provides appropriate inspiration for the Town of Erie, especially this evening. I'd like to share it with you. It's quite simple and goes like this:

**“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”**

I believe that everyone in their time must seize opportunity. And if by chance we have let opportunity slip away – take heart. It's never too late.

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When I decided to run for mayor one year ago, I planted my own personal tree. As candidate Tina Harris, I promised that if elected, I would lead a transparent government; a government that listens to all voices and a government that puts our community's best interest first.

As I welcome you to my first State of the Town Address – I am proud to say without hesitation – along with the support of the entire Board of Trustees and Town Staff – that the roots of those promises haven't taken hold. And tonight, I am also proud to say that the state of the Town of Erie is excellent; the Town is financially sound; our economic development efforts are strengthening and our future has never looked brighter.



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### COMMUNICATION. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

During the campaign, I pledged that:

1. communication would be the cornerstone of your new Board of Trustees;
2. new opportunities for citizen involvement would be cultivated; and,
3. support systems for businesses in Erie would be strengthened

I know it's easy to make promises. I also know that promises – just like a crying baby in a movie theater – need to be carried out immediately.

So that's what I've done during the past 12 months. Make sure these promises were carried out immediately, and along the way, ensured more trees were planted.

1. In regards to communication, the newly elected Board of Trustees immediately began working with staff to open communications with citizens; as a result we launched a new website. The best attribute on the new site is the Transparency tab. From here, you can view and download Agendas & Packets, Financial Reports, Streaming Videos of meetings; quick links to Public Notices; Development Activity Reports & Maps and our new "Open Budget" application.

Thanks to our talented and award-winning communications staff – it is easy for you to stay connected with Erie Town Government. You can connect with us through email, phone calls, Notify Me, on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Engage Erie. And you can watch us – your Board of Trustees anytime on Channel 8 and streaming video. (Let me assure you – Board of Trustees meetings are truly "Must See TV.")

Thank you Board of Trustees, Fred Diehl, Katie Jenkins, Denise Jakan and Adam Nettesheim for your efforts.

2. Regarding increased citizen involvement, in addition to our standing advisory boards, we formed new ad-hoc committees to achieve specific goals including: Historic Downtown Erie Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Committee; Citizens Committee to help design our new Dog Park; Community Gardens Committee and the Mayor's Economic Development Resource Committee.
3. In regards to business development, I have created a new program to support small businesses. The program is designed to help them thrive and achieve long term success in Erie. It is called the Erie Economic Development Resource Committee.

I worked with Paula Mehle the Town's Economic Development Coordinator, to form a committee that includes Town Staff, Elle Cabbage from the Chamber of Commerce, Helene Jewett from the Erie Economic Development Council, local business leaders, Small Business Association representatives, and other Colorado economic entities. Together we brainstormed and sought feedback from Erie businesses. We listened to the challenges new businesses face, and we listened to businesses to learn what on-going support would be beneficial to them.

I'm happy to announce, starting in May, we are launching an Online Business Resource Guide to assist entrepreneurs through every stage in the process of setting up and running a business.



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Promote Transparent Communication. Increase Citizen Involvement. Strengthen Business Development.

Three promises carried out. Three trees planted.

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### **POLICE STATION & MUNICIPAL COURT BUILDING**

There is another campaign promise we made. In exchange for a “yes” vote on the new police station and municipal court building, we promised to deliver you a good value on your investment. I am happy to report your confidence in us was well placed as we are now delivering on our promise to you.

For a homeowner with a residential property valued at \$300,000, taxes will increase by \$20.97 per year - and not the \$36 per year we previously estimated. We are happy to pass these savings on to you.

How did we accomplish this?

- Thanks to presentations made by staff and our consultants, S&P rated the bonds for the new building AA+, one level below its highest AAA rating. What that means is that the effective rate of the bond is more than 1.5% lower than what we had planned for. I commend our Town Administrator A.J. Krieger, Finance Director Steve Felten, our underwriters Stifel, Nicolaus & Company and our bond counsel Butler Snow, LLP for securing the rating for the Town.
- Also, at every turn, staff has worked to keep design, engineering and construction costs as low as possible. Thank you to our Director of Public Works Gary Behlen and Project Coordinator Raelyn Ferrara for keeping this critical capital improvement project moving forward.

Thanks to your help in making it happen, the Erie Police Station & Municipal Court Building is another tree planted! (A really big one.)

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### **KING SOOPERS**

King Soopers has been a priority issue for me since being elected. In fact, one of the first meetings I attended as Mayor was a sit down with executives from King Soopers and their Retail Sales Broker. At that time they were still debating if the store would be in Erie or in Broomfield. I assured them they wanted to be in Erie and went about proving it in the subsequent months.

This is a huge accomplishment for Town staff and the current Board of Trustees. To top it off, we didn't just get a King Soopers we landed a 125,000 Sq. Ft. mega store that will draw customers, increasing Erie's sales tax revenue by millions.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the efforts of previous Boards, as each since 2006 has lent a hand in preparing the landscape for many of the successes we enjoy today.



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### FOUR CORNERS

After the Kings Soopers announcement, we immediately heard several complaints about the location. However, King Soopers was not interested in building a store at Erie Parkway and County Line Road as many desired for. I'm sorry to say that, but it is the honest truth. The traffic counts at the core are not high enough to warrant a King Soopers. In addition, Erie cannot tell King Soopers where to build. They have highly skilled statisticians and projectionists who determine where to build.

But someone else does see opportunity at the Four Corners. Staff and I have met with the developer of the southwest corner of Erie Parkway and County Line Road. He has submitted plans for a mixed use residential/commercial project that would accommodate a smaller grocery store as well as several small boutique type stores.

This project, appropriately named "The Four Corners," is an opportunity to bring the amenities we are looking for into the core of our community. Though it is too early to share details, please know as this project moves forward, it will be held to the same, high quality standards that all development applications have been held to since adoption of the Unified Development Code in 2005. To those who planted this tree a decade ago I say "thank you" for your foresight. Our Development Code's focus on quality has stood the test of time and I have no doubt it will prove itself again.

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### THINGS ARE LOOKING UP IN DOWN TOWN!

There are many reasons Historic Downtown Erie, known as Old Town to many of us, is transforming into a more desirable, vibrant and energetic destination. One of those reasons is that in 2014, the Town invested over \$61,500 in Downtown improvements.

Each day – more and more of us are learning about all Erie's Downtown has to offer.

It's no secret the increase in Historic Downtown's popularity as a destination can be attributed to the three new brewpubs that have recently opened their doors. It follows that sales tax revenue would increase as well. In fact, Historic Downtown Erie sales tax revenues increased approximately 43% (\$23,000) in 2014 when compared to 2013.

#### SALES TAX REVENUE 2013

Historic Downtown: \$54,000

#### SALES TAX REVENUE 2014



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Historic Downtown: \$77,000

I urge you to see for yourself why things are looking up in Downtown by visiting the new pubs and restaurants that all call Historic Downtown Erie home: Industrial Revolution Brewing Company, The Old Mine Cidery & Brewpub, Echo Brewpub & Pizzeria, Miner's Tavern, Azteca Mexican Restaurant, Rose Café and Briggs Street Café.

And don't forget, Downtown has insurance agents, salons, publishing companies and more.

Downtown was the first tree planted in Erie. While it has sometimes been neglected - it has remained sturdy through the years and is blooming once again.

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### **FARMERS MARKET. DOG PARK. COMMUNITY GARDEN. OPEN SPACE & TRAIL PURCHASES.**

Speaking of blooming, there are several projects I am excited to say have been planted and will soon be vibrant parts of our community.

They are the Farmers Market, a future Dog Park, Community Gardens, and Open Space and Trail additions and acquisitions.

1. Farmers Market: In April of 2014 I met with Kelly Williams, owner and operator of the Louisville and Lafayette Farmers Market and sought her interest in bringing her expertise to Erie. Town staff subsequently worked with Kelly on developing a Farmer's Market in Erie on Thursday nights.

Erie's Farmers Market will begin on Thursday, June 18th and run throughout the summer. See you there!

2. Dog Park: Erie citizens have identified a dog park as an amenity they would like to have in the community. The challenge with new amenities is funding, therefore a committee has been formed to start the brainstorming!!!

The dog park will be located at Reliance Park - Briggs St. between Old Town and Northridge.

- It will be around 8 to 9 acres in size. For reference, the Great Bark Dog Park in Lafayette is around 4-1/2 acres.
- It will be paid for through fundraisers and donations.
- The Erie community will have several opportunities to provide input. I will let you know when that time comes. The committee is hoping to have something at the Town Fair in a few weeks to show you and seek your input.
- The projected opening is spring 2016.
- It will most likely be built in phases. With the first phase being the must have features, and the next phases adding wanted features.

3. Community Garden: Building a vibrant community gardening program in Erie is an initiative Trustee Carroll has put significant effort towards this year. Community gardens were identified by residents as an inexpensive tool to participate, educate and engage the community in sustainable activities. Trustee Carroll and Farrell Buller, the Director of Parks and Recreation, are leading the program for the town and are doing a fantastic job getting it up and running! The goal is to have



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the first community garden up and running in the spring of 2016 with more locations spread throughout Erie as the program continues to grow.

4. Open Space and Trails: The Town of Erie features over 39 miles of walking, running and bicycle trails. We have 1,140 acres of high value natural open space. In addition in 2014, the Board approved several recommendations from our Open Space and Trails Advisory Board, including:
  - The Purchase of approximately 60 acres of open space
  - 3.8 miles of trails were added
  - and the 1.8 mile South Coal Creek Trail was reopened

We know families are drawn to our panoramic location, scenic trails, recreational activities and more than 300 days of sunshine per year. That’s why preserving the natural environment is key to our future.

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### **WATER AND WASTE WATER**

I am fortunate to know the professional staff we have working for our town. And this evening I want to highlight the work of the Department of Public Works staff and the services they provide to the Town of Erie residents every day. In particular the Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment Divisions. These divisions currently serve over 7,200 residential and over 130 commercial customers.

They deliver these essential services 24 hours a day 365 days a year while protecting the environment, community and economic interests we all value. Thank you!

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### **CONCLUSION**

No matter how often we may have missed opportunity in the past, we can’t go back in time.

*(In fact – I wish I could go back in time to report on all of the other positive happenings in our community that I forgot to include in this address.)*

So I say to you, now is the perfect time for all of us - for all of Erie. We are one community. Let’s grow together.

I can assure you that your Board of Trustees shares your enthusiasm for the place you call home. The trees we plant together may take years to fully mature. And as they continue to grow and prosper, I intend to champion the success of our Town and its people.

Thank You.

[View PowerPoint presentation here.](#)



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