

AN ADDRESS

BY

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TO THE

SAN DIMAS ROTARY CLUB

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS

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I feel very complimented to be asked to talk to you, and perhaps the most interesting approach will be to discuss with you some of my impressions and experiences during the seven years it has been my privilege to serve San Dimas as Councilman and Mayor.

Seven years ago, when your club was just formed, you extended me the courtesy of discussing some of the hopes and ambitions of the newly incorporated City of San Dimas, and I welcome now the opportunity to reflect upon this and check against the progress we have made.

Just to review briefly: San Dimas was incorporated as the 70th city in Los Angeles County on August 4, 1960. This was accomplished on the first election at a ratio of 8 to 7. The purpose was to preserve the integrity and autonomy of a proud and historic community. It was recognized that the immediate years ahead would be years of transition from an agricultural community to one of urban living, and the community wanted to give local guidance to that development. Boundaries of San Dimas were being consistently hacked away by Glendora and La Verne, and threats of Charter Oak's expanded incorporation were imminent. It was now or never, and the majority of voters said NOW.

Twenty-one candidates for the first City Council had their names on the ballot. Of the five elected, three were enthusiastic supporters of incorporation, one was not sure that incorporation



was the best route, and the fifth was opposed to incorporation, but wanted to be in control so far as city spending was concerned if San Dimas became a city. With approximately  $5\frac{1}{2}$  square miles of territory and 7000 population, this first City Council set out to create a city. No one on the Council had any previous political experience. Recognizing our limitations and at the same time the need to be effective from the start, we determined to engage for the City the best professional staff we could afford. This policy has paid off many times. John Larson became our first attorney and the first employee of the City. Pat Gore set up the records and ran our first office or city hall. Lela Hathaway became our city treasurer. Our first city manager was Bob Carleson. Barbara Henderson soon came into the fold, and from this beginning we now have 22 full-time city employees. I cannot speak too highly of the efficiency and dedication of these employees. Bob Christofferson is today one of the best city managers in the business and has the complete respect and backing of his entire staff, as well as the confidence of the City Council and our citizens at large.

The mechanics of operation were soon defined. What we as a council could and could not do within the law gave us a pattern to follow. The important function for the council was to determine policy. What kind of a city do we want and how do we get it? How do we resolve the differences between individual rights and consideration of the public interest?



San Dimas is not a Charter City as is Pomona, but is known as a General Law City, operating under certain regulations laid down by the State which in turn delegates specific powers of government to the local body. By law we have five members of the City Council, elected at large within the City, who in turn select their own chairman and vice chairman, thus providing a mayor and vice-mayor.

Our first responsibility was the adoption of a municipal code to give the running rules and provide the necessary civil protection. We created and appointed a five-member Planning Commission and assigned to them many responsible duties. We held many public hearings and redesigned the zoning pattern for the City, and then set up the machinery for the professional development of a General Plan for San Dimas. We developed a licensing ordinance together with a complaint hearing board, and in general attempted as quickly as possible to get the City off to a responsible and constructive start.

Our present City Council is made up of two of the original five councilmen, two who have had experience as members of the Planning Commission prior to their election as councilmen, and one who has served the City for many years in various civic capacities, but who was first elected to the council in 1966. I am pleased and proud to be able to assure you that each member



of the San Dimas City Council is dedicated to the best collective interest of the City, and is conscientious in all of his deliberations and decisions.

As we have progressed from a very elementary beginning, we have learned many things. We have learned that orderly and constructive development for the City as a whole must take precedence over the personal desires of the individual promoter or developer. These two points of view are certainly not always in conflict and it becomes our duty to see the issue clearly and without prejudice.

We have learned that in public hearings on any controversial issue, the preponderance of argument comes from those who object and frequently involves more emotion than factual data. It becomes our duty to sort out the facts as they apply to the issue in hand.

We have learned that the dignity of our office, and the very stability of our City before the public, demands that we give thoughtful and courteous consideration to every matter that is brought before us, and that as individual members of the Council, we refrain from any thoughtless or cute remarks. To be understood by the public and the press is a very real and important problem.



Our dreams in 1960 were to develop the urbanized San Dimas with dignity, with character worthy of the community's rich heritage, with an economic balance and with a beauty that would distinguish San Dimas among her neighboring cities of the East San Gabriel Valley. It was our determination to do this without excessive taxation. Emphasis was made upon quality development taking priority over a speedy growth.

Seven years have, I think, recorded a significant beginning in the realization of these goals. In seven years San Dimas has upgraded the standards of development materially, from the old County restrictions. This has been done with understanding for the individual's rights and with fairness to all, although in the beginning it met with stiff opposition on the part of promoters whose sole interest was to buy cheap land, put up cheap houses, take their money and go.

In seven years, San Dimas has expanded to almost 15 square miles in area, and has doubled in population. In many instances land values have more than doubled. We have two new and modern shopping centers, and positive steps are being taken to revitalize the downtown business center. Bonita Avenue will very soon be paved to its full width from Arrow Highway to our easterly City limits, and of course you are all familiar with finalized schedule for our two major freeways.



When a new city steps out it is watched very closely for a period, to see whether it will have a stable government, or whether it will be indecisive and vacillating in its planning and programming. A new city is faced with tremendous pressures from special interests, and it is my belief that we have met the test. It is noteworthy, I think, that many sound and responsible firms have invested in San Dimas. To name a few: Vinnell-Pauley, Pomona First Federal, Abrams Brothers at the Canyon Shopping Center, the Puddingstone Shopping Center, U.S. Forestry Test Center, and now under construction a new drive-in church of national prominence. You will be further interested to know, I am sure, that a major shopping center is presently making overtures for a location within San Dimas to be timed, if concluded, with the development of our two major freeways.

From our first city hall in 1960, consisting of one room with dividing doors in the center, public services have expanded to require a full-fledged functional Civic Center. Ground has already been acquired in the heart of our City and arrangements have been completed under a joint agreement with the County to proceed at once with the development of a \$1,000,000 facility that will not only provide the functional needs for City government, but will also lend dignity and beauty to the community as a whole.



In the seven years of Cityhood we have noted a marked increase in civic awareness and pride of belonging, on the part of our residents generally. There have been exceptions, it is true, when a disgruntled minority has become vocal or when an individual has been displeased, but in the main our citizens are giving the City strong and generous support. This is particularly encouraging when we reflect again on the fact that at the time of incorporation more than 40% of the voters voted "no". This civic consciousness and pride which is growing daily indicates to me that San Dimas is pursuing a good and constructive program and that a splendid future lies ahead.

Let me suggest some of the things that may happen to San Dimas in the immediate years ahead if the people want them to happen, and if the City Council and Planning Commission exercise wisdom, understanding and imagination. As a springboard, San Dimas has certain physical assets unparalleled in the valley: prime land for development, with a reasonable balance of industrial and commercial zoning; accessibility with three major freeways and two railroads; we are surrounded by schools and colleges, with more than an abundance of cultural activities close at hand; major recreational facilities within the City--Puddingstone, San Dimas Park, golf courses everywhere, and the climate in which to enjoy it all.



The anticipated population figure at the saturation of the area is more than 50,000. We expect people of quality to seek out San Dimas, people who like to combine rural serenity with urban convenience. The most significant residential development is even now taking place in the south hills, where the Vinnell-Pauley Corporation is developing more than 1200 acres, including a golf course, improved streets and many fine residential units. With the completion of two major freeways in 1971, much of our industrial acreage should be in demand. The close proximity of Brackett Field as well as the International Airport in Ontario should help materially in attracting industry of substance and quality. We can expect Arrow Highway to be completed east to the County line by the time the freeways are in.

The new City Hall and Civic Center should be completed in 1968 or early 1969, and will include a community building and a County regional library. This project can give a great boost to what we now call "downtown" and with foresight and planning the old business section will survive. San Dimas Avenue will eventually be widened to 100 feet, and with the new alignment provides the principal access to the Via Verde development and Puddingstone. Apartment living will come to San Dimas, and under proper design should greatly enhance the charm and desirability of the City.



San Dimas Lake behind Puddingstone Dam is gaining constantly in popularity. In a very few years this large recreational facility should be fully developed with swimming pools, parks and everything for the picnicker's convenience.

As we look into the future we may confidently expect that San Dimas will continue to grow in stature and good name. We have at all times enjoyed the good will of the County, and have received many compliments and much encouragement from our neighboring cities. Supervisor Frank Bonelli has been of great help to us in the formative years of our City. We believe this image of San Dimas will be strengthened as we further solidify and go forward with progressive determination.

San Dimas is classified as a contract city, which suggests that most of the public services are performed under contract. This is proving to be a most advantageous method of operation, for by it we have at our disposal one of the largest and best trained fire departments in the United States, as well as a police force of great strength and highly qualified officers. We can obtain the very latest in all phases of public service, for we are free to choose, either by contract with the County, or with private contractors, or if we wish we can do the job ourselves. Some types of service lend themselves particularly to the personal attention we can give with our own force. As we look ahead, this gives our operation great flexibility and is well adapted to getting any kind of job done.



An additional service which many cities enjoy is a municipally owned water system. San Dimas is presently engaged in an extensive study of the California Cities Water Company to see if acquisition is appropriate, or in the best interests of the people. We do have a very fine privately owned water company now serving the area, and the future water requirements for San Dimas are assured in any case.

San Dimas will not make any sizeable advances in territorial acquisitions as we look ahead, although there will be some who are now in the County who will look with favor upon San Dimas and will wish to join us.

It was the dream of the initial Council at the time of incorporation that taxes be kept at a minimum. The City tax rate began at 37¢ and has been reduced to 30¢. As the public becomes more community conscious and take more pride in the City of their choice, there will be a greater demand for additional services. This does take money, but it is reasonable to anticipate that through careful planning the present tax rate may be maintained at least during the period of population expansion.

Finally may I say that as I envision San Dimas in the next decade, I see a City of dignity and character, made up of people who are proud to be a part; a City growing in beauty and stature, mature and practical in its approach to the needs of the people;



a City that is constantly looking forward to even higher standards and a better way of life, rich in the heritage of the past and confident of the future.