

Officials expect another strong year of growth

By Anne Knowles
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Area county officials expect another banner year in 2019.

“Overall, the city’s outlook is strong, continued growth expected this year,” said Nancy Paulson, Carson City manager.

Paulson was one of five county managers who spoke to a full audience inside the Casino Fandango Grand Ballroom where Northern Nevada Development Authority held its “State of the Counties” breakfast on Wednesday.

Paulson said after the first four month of the new fiscal year, the city is projecting its sales tax to grow 8.8 percent and in 2020 is expecting property tax valuations to rise 6 percent and the tax to increase 4.1 percent.

In calendar year 2018, the valuation of building permits issued in Carson City hit \$102.8 million. Paulson said 567 permits for residential units were issued and more than half were for the Carson Hills Apartment project behind the Galaxy Fandango movie theater. The builder pulled 60 permits in August and another 310 in December, which is the total units of the project.

Paulson highlighted other new development in the works, including a residential project on the east side of Lompa Ranch, which is a recently approved tentative planned unit development; the Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center expansion starting construction by the end of the year; and the

new Nissan dealership on South Carson Street, which is expected to open by year end.

Paulson also talked about the South Carson Street project that will start construction before 2020 and be completed in 2021.

Infrastructure is key, according to other county managers. Churchill, Douglas, and Lyon counties are all expanding waste water treatment facilities.

“We’ll eventually double the plant’s capacity,” said Jenifer Davidson, acting county manager in Douglas County.

Davidson talked about business development, including a 700,000 square foot expansion at the Starbucks roasting facility, which has added 30 full-time jobs, and the start of production at the Bently Heritage Estate Distillery in downtown Minden, which added 35 new jobs.

“We are eagerly awaiting its opening,” said Davidson.

At Lake Tahoe, an events center projected to add \$44 million in new visitor spending is currently under review at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Davidson said.

Business is booming at the Tahoe Regional Industrial Center in Storey County. The park brought the county \$8 million in revenue, but the county must also pay back, interest-free, \$41 million in infrastructure costs fronted by the developer, and both Tesla and Switch have lengthy tax abatement deals with the state.

And the high-tech businesses there may not

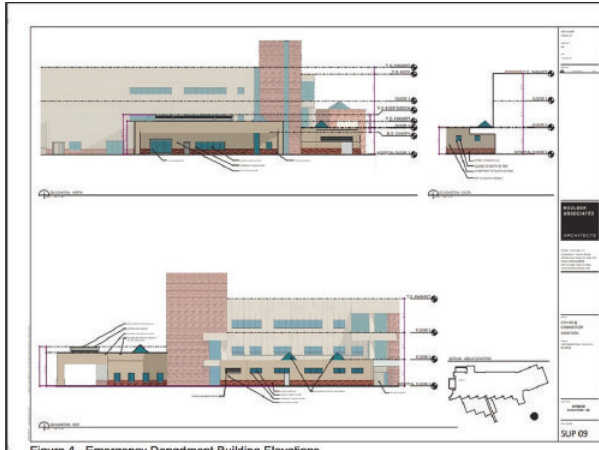


Figure 4 - Emergency Department Building Elevations
COURTESY

Designs for the Carson-Tahoe Medical Center expansion.

be bringing in as many jobs as originally assumed when the park expected to attract large distribution sites, said Austin Osborne, administrative officer and planning director for Storey County.

The county is focusing on bringing more housing, including a proposed development of up to 5,000 homes at Painted Rock, said Osborne, and a similar but smaller-scale project at Lockwood Mustang.

Churchill County is looking forward to a large residential development, too. Sky Ranch, a planned unit development of 2,700 homes, was approved last year. Building permits jumped by 20 percent in 2018 and the county’s sales tax increased by 5 percent, said Jim Barbee, county manager.

“We’re encouraged by seeing the general fund get back to 2010 level,” he said.

The county also built a new jail and sheriff’s office last year, and is working on expanding its water facilities.

“Infrastructure is going

to be key on moving forward,” said Barbee.

Lyon, too, is focusing on infrastructure, including waste water and water, public transportation, Highway 50, and health care.

“We don’t have providers. Most children in school do not have a primary care physician,” said Jeff Page.

The county also is launching a task force to address its chronic problem of poverty.

In terms of business, the county is working to develop its own industrial park, the Northern Nevada Industrial Center, on 6,000 acres south of the Storey County park, and Nevada Copper will begin building its mill site in April.

Page said the thing he’s most proud of is a regional wide effort to stop fighting over business recruitment.

“I don’t care who got the business, whether it is Carson City or Lyon County as long as it brings jobs,” said Page. “Kudos to the other counties here for continuing that process.”

New fire station at top of city wish list

By Anne Knowles
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The Board of Supervisors and Carson City department leaders held their annual retreat Thursday to discuss the city’s needs.

Top of the list: a new fire station.

Fire Chief Sean Slamon proposed two possible locations for a new station and the most cost effective way to staff it.

An additional station would make sense in either northwest or east Carson City. In the northwest, the city would have to acquire a site while it owns suitable land in the east, off Butti Way near Lompa Ranch, where several, large residential projects are planned.

“If we add a station near Public Works that would provide a lot of the overlap and four minutes to the east side,” said Slamon, referring to the Public Works office on Butti Way, the desired overlapping coverage between a station there and the city’s existing stations that would allow for 4-minute response times.

In terms of personnel, Slamon suggested moving 12 firefighter/paramedics from ambulances and dedicating them to firefighting, and hiring 12 emergency medical technicians/paramedics on a single-role ambulance to replace them. That would cost approximately \$1.3 million versus \$2.1 million to hire new firefighters.

A new fire station would cost between \$4-7 million to build. Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, for example, recently built a 10,000 square foot station for \$5.4 million, Slamon said. A new fire engine has

already been approved and is arriving in a year. And a new ambulance would cost about \$120,000.

Carson City hasn’t added a fire station since 1974 when the city’s population was about a third of what it is today. The number of fire personnel has held steady for 20 years while emergency responses have jumped 82 percent. And call volumes have been rising 3-5 percent annually.

A new station could also be built to house a new emergency operations center to replace the insufficient, classroom-sized EOC in Station 51.

Slamon also highlighted potential funding sources to explore, including Ground Emergency Medical Transportation reimbursements, which provide supplemental payments to publicly-owned or operated providers, as well as impact fees for new development, a competitive federal grant, an increase in transport fees, and a new public safety tax.

Staff also gave a presentation on the asset management program, launched in 2016, which is taking an inventory of the city’s buildings, facilities, and equipment to more cost effectively plan maintenance and replacement.

Matt Lawton, asset manager, said the city has 4,000 manhole covers which will take four years to inventory. The process has already saved the city some \$4,000, he said, because the city is working with a developer to repair four covers close to a new project.

The city has 237 miles of sewer pipe, for example, that will take 15 years to assess with current budget and staff, said Lawton.

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Carson City on Best-Performing Cities Index

Nevada Appeal staff report

Carson City made the top 100 on Milken Institute Best-Performing Cities Index.

Carson City made the second biggest leap in the rankings of 201

cities, jumping 78 spots from 141 in 2017 to 63 in 2018.

The institute uses metrics such as job creation, wage gains, and technological developments to evaluate the relative growth of cities.

Carson City was ranked third in

job growth from 2016-2017 and 50th in job growth in the 12-month period between August 2017 and 2018.

The report is available online at best-cities.org/2018-best-performing-cities-small-cities-rankings.html.

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