

## Chino Hills Champion (CA)

### The State of the City

#### Vision of balanced growth and rural setting has been achieved, Mayor Graham tells audience

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The State of the City address for Chino Hills was different this year-upbeat and snappy to reflect Mayor Ed Graham's call for a change of pace. Doo-wap singers strolled around Los Serranos Country Club on June 29 while audience members filled their plates with hors d'oeuvres. The lead singer called Mayor Graham and Chino Mayor Dennis Yates to the podium, where they sang in harmony and prompted applause and cheers.

Bruce Wood, president of the Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce, which sponsored the event, introduced the mayor with both seriousness and satire: "He is known for injecting his sense of humor into the boring parts of council meetings." Maybe that's why Mayor Graham decided to turn the State of the City into an entertaining video presentation instead of a long speech. "I didn't want to stand at the

Ruthe Rosen, mother of Karla Asch-Rosen, announces the "**Let It Be Foundation**" to assist families of children with lifethreatening diseases. The **foundation** was launched the day of the address, June 29, which would have been Karla's 16th birthday. podium and recite my speech, so I decided to take you up for a bird's eye view of the city I call home," he said.

With that, all eyes turned to two large screens on opposite sides of the room to watch a video of Mayor Graham taking a sheriff's helicopter tour across the city, pointing out shopping centers, housing developments, green hills, and the land that will soon **be** the Shoppes at Chino Hills.

Opus West Corp. representatives sat at a table watching the mayor describe their project as one that will "change the retail landscape of Chino Hills-a mini Victoria Gardens," expected to add \$1.3 million a year in sales tax revenue for the city.

Mr. Graham announced tenants such as Banana Republic (a GAP concept), and women's clothing stores such as Forth & Towne, White House Black Market, and Coldwater Creek. Restaurants include Wood Ranch BBQ, P.F. Chang's China Bistro, Ruby's, and B.J.'s Brewhouse.

The downside to the Shoppes and Community Park is the "major remodel" that residents will have to endure on Peyton Drive from Grand Avenue to Chino Hills Parkway.

The video included clips of council members in various locations throughout the city speaking about their areas of interest: Councilwoman Gwenn Norton-Perry on the new Community Park, Councilman Gary Larson on the future civic center, Councilman Curt Hagman on the partnership between the city and the county for a higher share of the property tax, and Councilman Bill Kruger on law enforcement.

Sheriff Gary Penrod spoke about new county helicopters and Fourth District Supervisor Gary Ovitt discussed a proposed community center at the site of the former city yard at Pipeline and Eucalyptus avenues, funded with \$4 million from the county.

Mayor Graham's helicopter flew over construction at Chino Avenue at the 71 Freeway. The 18-screen Harkins Theater at the Crossroads Entertainment Center is scheduled to open in time for the 2006 holiday season, he said. The site will also **be** home to the city's first hotel, a 104-room Hampton Inn and Suites. "Finally, a place in Chino Hills to send my relatives when they visit," said Mr. Graham, whose father was in the audience.

Mr. Graham said the helicopter's view of the city shows a balance between development and the 3,000-acres of city-owned open space. "I can say with confidence that I believe we have achieved our vision," he said. "We have balanced growth and preserved the rural atmosphere of the city."

He then introduced residents who are making a difference in Chino Hills, such as George and Joyce Butler, longtime Los Serranos residents. The Butlers are neighborhood leaders who founded a nonprofit organization called "SOAR" (Supporting our Area Residents) to help residents with minor repair and household projects.

He fought back tears when he introduced Ruthe Rosen, whose daughter, Karla, died of cancer last February at the age of 15. Mrs. Rosen spoke about the **Let It Be Foundation** launched that day, June 29, on what would have been Karla's 16th birthday.

The **foundation** will assist families of children who have life-threatening illnesses by helping them maintain a sense of normalcy.

"One person can make a difference in every neighborhood," Mayor Graham said. "We see **it** over and over again."

George and Joyce Butler were introduced as residents who make a difference in Chino Hills. The Butlers founded a nonprofit organization to assist Los Serranos residents with minor repairs and household projects.

The large screen displays an image of Mayor Ed Graham during the Chino Hills State of the City address June 29. Mayor Graham and his wife Denise are seated at the table, watching the presentation.

Champion photos by Marianne Napoles