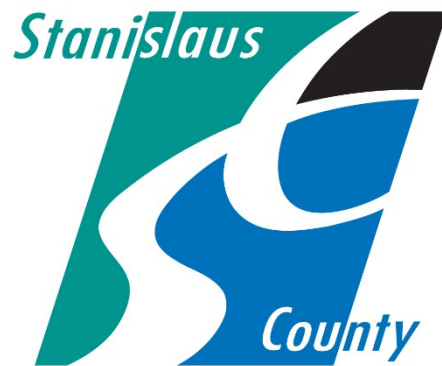


**State of the County Address**  
**April 25, 2024**



Delivered by Mani Grewal, Chairman of the Board

## INTRODUCTION

Good Evening Everyone,

I am honored to stand before you as the Chairman of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors to deliver our State of the County address. This occasion serves not only as a reflection of our past achievements but also as a beacon guiding us towards a future of prosperity, resilience, and community spirit.

I want to first thank you all for coming, as it shows you are committed to the betterment of our community. We decided to do things a little bit different this year. In the spirit of community, we brought the State of the County outside of the chambers—on the steps of the library that generations have used and will continue to use in the future.

— Today I am joined by you the community, my colleagues, and former county supervisors who have done so much for this community.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize our former County Supervisors joining us here tonight.

Sal Cannella  
Paul Caruso  
Gary Condit Sr.  
Jim DeMartini  
Jeff Grover  
Bill Mattos  
Bill O'Brien  
Kristin Olsen

Your decades of dedicated service and vision helped pave the road that has led Stanislaus County to where we are today.

You all made the choices to invest in public safety, economic development, infrastructure, and core services that create a bedrock community. Your commitment to fiscal responsibility allows us to weather economic storms while finding innovative ways to enhance our quality of life. You fostered an environment of regional partnership and collaboration that raised our county's profile statewide. We would not be the prosperous community we are without the foundations you laid.

And for that the community, and the current Board of Supervisors is eternally grateful.

I would also like thank my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors.

Thank you to our former Chair Supervisor Channce Condit; For his leadership and dedication to his district. His tireless work on Westside issues such vital infrastructure and healthcare does not go unnoticed my friend— you are making a significant difference for West county residents.

My Vice Chair Supervisor Buck Condit, who is committed to the residents of District One, a true champion of public safety on the Board. Buck is a person who is honest, genuine and sincere and will always stand for what he believes in. True to his career as a firefighter, Buck will always face the fire, not run away. And I could not be more grateful for his friendship.

Supervisor Vito Chiesa.

- The elder statesman of our Board, who has a huge wealth of knowledge on issues ranging from transportation, air pollution district, to institutional knowledge about our county— he is always someone you can go to for help
- CSAC story — I am Vito's assistant
- You would think I am inventor of the sticky note

Supervisor Terry Withrow

If you don't know Terry, I can tell you he has a servant's heart.

- He is led by the goodness in his heart and his compassion is contagious and I am glad to call him my friend
- We share a love for numbers, but you would expect that from CPA
- He is always making sure we are staunch stewards of taxpayer dollars

I have always been a relationship person—In my view, relationships are the cornerstone of everything in our community. Especially when it comes to public service. Regardless of political beliefs or background, I firmly believe that prioritizing relationships is key to achieving progress. When we invest in fostering genuine connections, we pave the way for collaboration and effectiveness in our solutions.

At times it can be difficult to find a perfect solution, but we always find a better solution when we work together.

So when someone asks me, “How does the board get along?” It’s not always peaches and ice cream— there are times we disagree. But our shared respect allows us to find common ground.

Commitment comes in many forms and sometimes that commitment goes unnoticed. But I want to take a moment to acknowledge and publicly thank the 26 dedicated department heads of Stanislaus County here tonight. These accomplished men and women lead our various agencies and oversee the over 4,800 employees that complete the critical day-to-day work of providing vital services to our community.

Agricultural Commissioner	Linda Pinfeld
Aging and Veterans Services	Margie Palomino
Assessor	Don Gaekle
Auditor-Controller	Kashmir Gill
Behavioral Health and Recovery Services	Tony Vartan
Clerk of the Board	Elizabeth King
Child Support Services	Baljit Atwal
Clerk-Recorder/Elections	Donna Linder
Community Services Agency	Christine Huber
County Counsel	Thomas Boze
District Attorney	Jeff Laugero
Environmental Resources	Robert Kostlivi
General Services Agency	Andy Johnson
Health Services Agency	Mary Ann Lilly-Tengowski
Information Technology Central	Eric McLoughlin
Library	Sarah Dentan
Parks and Recreation	Tera Chumley
Planning and Community Development	Angela Freitas
Probation	Mark Ferriera
Public Defender	Jennifer Jennison
Public Works	David Leamon
Sheriff-Coroner	Jeff Dirkse
Treasurer-Tax Collector	Donna Riley
Workforce Development	Doris Foster
UC Extension	Jennifer Heguy

— Public safety, Infrastructure, Healthcare, and Economic Development, their tireless efforts behind the scenes, are essential to keeping Stanislaus County operating efficiently and effectively for our over half a million residents.

On behalf of our entire county, thank you for your exceptional leadership and service to our community.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank our CEO Jody Hayes, for his vision, dedication, leadership, and commitment to Stanislaus County. Under his guidance, we have navigated through challenging times with resilience, laying the groundwork for a prosperous future. He is always providing sound advice to the entire Board. Thank you so much for your continuing service.

And to my family— my wonderful wife Jas and my lovely children. Their unconditional love, support and sacrifice allow me to dedicate myself fully to the work on behalf of our county. They are the bedrock on which my successes and purpose is built.

#### MY PARENTS.

— My father came to Stanislaus County in 1972 with just \$40 in his pocket and started a family

— My parents inspired my brother and I as we both watched them work two jobs to make ends meet, and get us a good education.

— They instilled the values of hard work, seizing opportunities and being grateful for them, and always reminded us to serve in any capacity whether it be at our temple, our school, or our community

— So when someone asks me is the American Dream still attainable, as the chairman of the county where parents came over 50 years ago — I can wholeheartedly say the American Dream is alive and well... just ask my parents.

#### LIBRARY

We chose the Modesto Library today for a reason. This library has been a special part of our community for over 50 years, ever since it first opened its doors here in 1971. For generations, these walls have welcomed people from all walks of life. This is a place where anyone could come to learn, to grow, and to better themselves through books and knowledge.

This library represents what makes our community so strong - our shared values of education, understanding different views, and believing that learning can uplift all of us together.

This library has served past generations, current generations, and will serve future generations.

The past was a young boy during his summer break, he would be dropped off at the library by his single mother while she off went to work. She packed him a sack lunch and gave him a quarter to call if there was an emergency.

The present is that boy grew up to be the CEO of the County, Jody Hayes, and I am confident that this library will continue to educate the future community leaders of this area and beyond.

The past, this Library served as a study hall for a young immigrant woman who was a dental student— she utilized the books, and resources at the library to study for her exams.

Now in the present, that former student now operates dental offices throughout Stanislaus County — The future is our son, studying to be a dentist, soon will practice in this area as well.

This is great story, and the happy ending to the story for me is that I married up!

We all have stories like this, in many ways this library serves as the cornerstone of our community. So it feels right to gather here, in a place that has always brought people together. Because that's exactly what we're reaffirming today - our mission to create more opportunities for every single person in this county to achieve their full potential and move forward together.

As I look out into the crowd, I can see generations of people that have utilized the library in the past— and now in the present you take your children or grandchildren here to enrich their lives with books and learning.

But we must ensure that our library system continues to service and provide for our community for future generations to come. This is why we are investing 20 million dollars from the County general fund towards our countywide library system, and 8 million dedicated to the Modesto library, along with an additional 10 million in matching funds from the state towards this library.

But it doesn't stop here: that's when our community gets involved, and takes something that is already good and makes it better. Friends of the Modesto Library is committed to raising an additional 3 million in philanthropic dollars towards this library.

I want to thank the Committee for their handwork and dedication to upgrading this valuable resource.

Katy Menges

Lynn Dickerson

Stacey Filippi

Britta foster

Kenni Friedman

Danielle Lau

Denise Nordell

Donna Flanders

I am proud to announce that after a mere 6 weeks an almost 1.5 million dollar investment has already been raised. This funding and generosity underscores how committed we are towards a bright future. I would like to name off the following contributors:

Bart Barringer

The Beard Family

The Boyett Family

Tom & Tammi Constantino

Dan & Denise Costa

Daniel Del Real

Ron & Lynn Dickerson

The Filippi Family

Jeff & Britta Foster

Ron Foster

Kenni & Lou Friedman

Dianne Gagos

The Gallo Family

Jeff & Elaine Grover

Dave & Patti Halvorson

Kent & Ginger Johnson

Janet Rogers & Bev La Belle

Steven & Danielle Lau

Katy & Ken Menges

Luis Miranda

Steve & Susan Mort

Chris & Becky Murphy

Gary & Sharilyn Nelson

Oak Valley Community Bank

Dave & Jeanne Olsen  
Nicole Piccinini Pesco  
Evan & Norm Porges  
Jeff Reed  
Jim & Chris Reed  
John & June Rogers  
Mark & Nancy Van Overbeek  
Dr. James & Alice Yip  
Steve and Jenny Zeff

And for the City of Modesto, for contributing for no reason except for out of the goodness of their heart and for the betterment of their downtown.

— Thank you—

This library's history shows us what's possible when we commit to building lasting places of growth for all. That's the future legacy we aim to honor by bringing more learning opportunities to every one of Stanislaus County. Thank you all for your continued commitment.

Stanislaus County, embodies the very essence of resilience and growth. Our county stands as a testament to the spirit of its residents – a diverse group, woven with the threads of hard work, determination, and unwavering optimism. From our rural orchards to our urban areas, every corner of Stanislaus County tells a story of innovation and perseverance.

And whether you live in an unincorporated community or one of our nine cities, we are committed to working collaboratively to deliver for each and every one you.

The past years have tested our resolve in unprecedented ways, from navigating the complexities of a global pandemic to confronting the impacts of political gridlock. Throughout this entirety, we have embarked on this journey together as a community—and we have emerged stronger and more united than ever before.

Now, let me be clear - we still have considerable work ahead to fully achieve our vision and ambitious goals for this county. Challenges and opportunities will always arise that require us to adapt our plans. But through this, we must constantly strive for better



fiscal discipline, greater efficiencies, and more innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of our region. This is an ongoing journey, not a destination.

I firmly believe that by working together as one united community, there is no obstacle we cannot overcome. Lasting progress does not come from any single elected official, department or governing body acting alone. It flows from all of us - businesses, nonprofits, faith leaders, educators, law enforcement, first responders, citizens and public servants - locking arms in the unified goal of improving the lives of ourselves and our neighbors.

Throughout my tenure as Chairman, I have been continually inspired by the compassion exhibited by the people of Stanislaus County. It is this collective spirit that propels us forward, driving us to embrace change, cultivate innovation, and forge a path towards a brighter tomorrow.

As we look towards the future, let us reaffirm our commitment to building a county where opportunity knows no bounds, where every voice is heard, and where the bonds of community are unbreakable. Together, we have the power to shape our destiny and chart a course towards a future defined not by the challenges we face, but by the strength of our resolve as a community.

I invite you to join me as we reflect on the achievements of the past year and chart a bold vision for the future of Stanislaus County. Now looking to the year ahead, our board has made it a priority to continue to make progress on building community. Safety is the single most important factor in continuing this project. This objective is led by our Sheriff Jeff Dirkse— who has continued to serve our county well, and I am so grateful that we are blessed with him as our Sheriff.

This year's budget includes a \$31.8 million increase in public safety funding to further strengthen law enforcement, emergency operations, criminal justice services and provide for personnel to keep our communities safe.

The sheriff thinks that it could be higher — but on a serious note, the sheriff and the board agree that no cost is too much to protect our citizens.

— District Attorney's Office; Attorney's are coming INTO the county, not leaving, because of the culture that our District Attorney, Jeff Laugero has created— They are prosecuting more cases and putting criminals behind bars.

- Public Defender’s Office ; 10 new positions to make sure that case loads are manageable and we can provide representation to those who need it most.
- Probation ; Adding new staff and rehabilitating paroles so they can be productive members of our society.

#### Economic Development

\$4.6 million dollars of the \$110 million dollars we have invested in the last 2 years to create jobs, support businesses, and build out our infrastructure.

- Investments in Stanislaus 2030, paving the way for new sustainable industry
  - From that we have Beam Circular that will provide the good paying jobs that are needed to live comfortably in Stanislaus
- Investment in Stanislaus Equity Partners for affordable housing and partnering with private industry to make sure we keep up with the demand in housing
- And Investments to up skill our workforce to give them the opportunity to get training or education so they are able to make better wages... a hand up, if you will

#### Delivering Efficient Public Services

My final priority is ensuring our county government runs efficiently and responsively for all residents. While this 1.7 billion budget includes targeted investments, we will control overall spending growth. We will strive to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars — and treat your money as we would our own personal money — prudently efficiently, and mitigating risk.

- The Planning Department is rolling out new online permitting software to make building and development easier for residents and businesses.

We want people that want to invest in our county to know that we are open for business. We must be an ally, not an impediment, look for how we can make it happen

- not why it can’t happen. To assist in helping them with projects, so they can create more jobs and economic viability for our own county.

Our aim is to position our county as a premier destination in the region with the infrastructure backbone and quality-of-life amenities to draw new businesses, investors, visitors and talent.

The State of Our County is Strong.

Our economic momentum, low unemployment, thriving businesses and powerful development are the envy of our region. Our communities are safe thanks to the

dedication of our public safety professionals. And our investments in health, education and efficient services provide every resident the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

While our county undoubtedly faces challenges, we don't shy away from them or make excuses. Instead, we tackle our biggest issues head-on, together as one community, united in this joyful purpose.

We understand that lasting progress flows not from these words or good intentions alone, but through the daily work of people rolling up their sleeves to create real, substantive change.

- We acknowledge that homelessness is an issue, and for that we are one of seven counties in the state that are implementing CARES Court to help those that need it most.
- We are expediting SB 43, so that we can help those with substance abuse issues. We are taking on a case that is a statewide epidemic and making sure that our actions speak louder than words.

So make no mistake. We will confront our shortcomings and missed opportunities as a community head-on, with accountability and an unwavering commitment to finally getting it right. If we do not get it right, we will be the first to tell you. If programs are not working, we will pull funding, because we are committed to not wasting your hard earned tax dollars.

As elected officials, our number one responsibility is to serve as your voice on the issues that impact your families, your neighborhoods, and our collective quality of life. We take that duty seriously, but we also recognize that effective governance is a two-way street.

So if you have a question about a local policy, a concern over an infrastructure project, or an idea to improve our community - I urge you to reach out. Call your County Supervisor, your Mayor or City Council member. Attend community meetings. Make your voice heard. Because that open line of communication is vital to ensuring we stay attuned to your priorities and can craft solutions collaboratively. We are here to listen and to respond.

At the end of the day, Stanislaus County's success does not rest on government alone, but on active, engaged citizens like yourselves. When we all stay involved and invest in

our community's future, we form an unstoppable force for positive change. Tonight, I request each of you to stay civically engaged. Keep providing us with your feedback, ideas and motivation to drive this county forward, TOGETHER.

The County will continue to work to ensure every family can live affordably, safely, and prosperously.

In closing:

Be proud to be Stanislaus.

Take joy in Stanislaus.

Feel confident about Stanislaus,

Because YOUR board is working hard for a better future for Stanislaus.

God Bless Stanislaus County and God Bless each and every one of you.