

Mayor: My city resilient in pandemic

Indian Wells' Balocco credits efforts to carry on

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Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

While things got tough in 2020 as Indian Wells weathered the COVID-19 pandemic and the loss of up to \$9.7 million in revenue as tourism – its top revenue-earner – was hit hard, Mayor Richard Balocco touted the city's efforts over time to continue to build up its reserves.

"This past year has shown us the importance of planning ahead," Balocco said. Councils over the past several years have been setting aside a portion of its surplus revenues in an emergency reserve fund which is now at about \$2.3 million – none of which was used during the pandemic, he said.

"Through all the challenges of 2020 and 2021, residents have shown their resilience from the pandemic as evidenced on how tight-knit you truly are. I couldn't be prouder of Indian Wells residents," Balocco said during Wednesday's state of the city address at the Renaissance Esmeralda.

More than 100 attended the State of the City & Hospitality Awards luncheon, including elected officials from other cities and Riverside County. The event was hosted for the first time by the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce.

It was the city's first in-person state of the city in two years, due to the pandemic.

"It's almost like we've forgotten what it's like to have events, huh?" said Balocco.

The mayor was joined by other council members in Wednesday's presentations which highlighted the city's fiscal outlook, public safety and tourism.

The pandemic dealt deep blows to all, and the city's staff worked tirelessly, Balocco said, reducing spending and making budget changes where necessary as revenues dropped with the cancellation of the 2020 BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, the Coachella and Stagecoach music festivals for 2020 and 21 and other major events that drive tourism – roughly 65% of the city's annual revenue.

The city avoided using any of the \$40 million it has in reserves and trimming staff, but cut costs at City



Indian Wells mayor Richard Balocco speaks during the Indian Wells State of the City address at the Renaissance Esmeralda, Wednesday. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN

Hall and reprioritized capital improvement projects, moving some to a later date.

The city also delayed a planned donation of \$1 million to Eisenhower Health, but will be donating \$2.5 million over the next two years for equipment and other upgrades and improvements to the hospital's cardiology program.

The funds will come from repayment of \$17.4 million in redevelopment agency funds taken by the state when it dismantled the agencies in 2011.

The city budgets two years at a time. In the current fiscal year, 2021-22, the city is projecting general fund revenues of \$18.1 million – about \$4 million over 2019-20 – helped by the return of the BNP Paribas earlier this month at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. The adopted budget also includes \$16.8 million in operating expenses.

The tournament is due back in March, as are other major Coachella Valley events, including the Coachella and Stagecoach music festivals, which also help fill the rooms of the city's resorts and hotels. In December, the Indian Wells La Quinta Ironman 70.3, which brings thousands of participating athletes and their families and friends to the area, returns for the first time since 2019, also bringing TOT and sales tax revenues.

Tourism is the top revenue earner for the city, making up about 65% of the city's general fund income, and when Gov. Gavin Newsom shuttered resorts and hotels statewide and limited restaurants to takeout or delivery for several months to help slow the spread of the coronavirus, it meant about \$9.7 million in lost revenue for the city.

The BNP made up for about \$5 million of that loss, including an estimated \$3.3 million in admission tax from ticket sales. The golf resort lost about \$1.5 million in revenue with closure of the two courses and to-go only service from the Vue Grille & Bar.

The past year "required extraordinary efforts from all of us to limit the pandemic sweep. As a result, our day-to-day economic activity has been severely impacted and ... so has the city's budget, which relies heavily on tourism dollars," Balocco said.

"We've had to do more with less and the willingness of our community and city workforce to meet these challenges head-on and resiliency that will be critical for the foreseeable future," Balocco said.

Throughout the pandemic, the city has maintained a fully funded pension liability, which has been a long-time goal of the council that saves the taxpayers money and support the employees of Indian Wells,

Public safety

Law enforcement services, provided under contract by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, makes up about 25% of the city's expenditures. Police costs for this fiscal year are estimated to cost the city \$4.6 million and go up about 2.7% in 2022-23, to \$4.75 million, Balocco said.

"Indian Wells enjoys one of the lowest crime rates and quickest response times in the valley," he said.

The city made no funding cuts to public safety during the pandemic, Councilmember Greg Sanders said in a video presentation he narrated.

Soon, the sheriff's department will be installing license plate cameras in the city, and throughout much of the county, "in an effort to deter crime and catch criminals," Sanders said.

"We have also invested in education efforts, including public service announcements to educate our community how to be proactive in preventing becoming a victim of a crime," Sanders said.

Staff also continue to undergo emergency preparedness training to ensure they are ready for any emergency, he said.

Economic development

The pandemic served as a reminder to the city that it needs to create economic opportunities that are not reliant on the tourism industry, Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed said.



Indian Wells council member Donna Griffith speaks during the Indian Wells State of the City and Hospitality Awards at the Renaissance Esmeralda, Wednesday. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN

So, an economic development division has been created within City Hall to explore new opportunities, he said.

"The division serves as a resource to support local businesses and grow developments in our community with collaboration with the Indian Wells Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, Visit Greater Palm Springs, the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership and others," Reed said.

"Even with the financial hardships brought on last year, economic development opportunities carried on and the city will continue to pinpoint new opportunities and propel our community forward for the betterment of the residents and visitors alike," Reed said.

"As an example, the real estate industry has had a stellar year in Indian Wells, with total sales in the hundreds of millions of dollars so far," Reed said.

In June 2020, the city contracted with Kosmont Companies to conduct an enhanced infrastructure financing district feasibility study aimed at evaluating existing vacant land and future development opportunities' potential to partially self-fund large scale infrastructure improvements and help drive business and development in the remaining undeveloped areas of the city.

Over the past year, the city also welcomed a new farmers market at the Village shopping center, and finalizing an agreement with Lennar to build 118 new single-family homes at the corner of Cook Street and Highway 111, Reed said.

"Creative solutions like these and long-term planning are keys to economic development throughout the city," Reed.

The Indian Wells Golf Resort

The Indian Wells Golf Resort has a new manager brought in by Troon, Sven Wiedenaupt, who has made improvements to the two golf courses and added some new items to the Vue's menu.

A sidewalk improvement project is set to begin in the spring to make the safer and more accessible, Councilmember Donna Griffith said.

The golf courses and Vue are flanked by the Hyatt Indian Wells and Renaissance Esmeralda resort hotels.

The Hyatt recently completed more than \$1 million in landscaping improvements on top of the \$21 million in improvements done last year which included the addition of water park with lazy river, Councilmember Kim Muzik said.

The Renaissance has also undergone more than \$20 million of top to bottom improvements that includes room remodels and the addition of an outdoor event area for weddings and other celebrations, she said.

The Miramonte is also under a new ownership and is undergoing a renovation that will include fully updated rooms, new dining area and more, Muzik said.

'The true foundation of the city'

While the topics covered on Wednesday were important, Balocco said the true foundation of the city was built by its residents and stands as a reminder of why the Indian Wells community is so strong.

"Our city council and staff worked hard during the pandemic with unknown consequences to maintain the quality of life in front of us," Balocco said.

"Community members remained in high spirits in the toughest of times and made the health and safety of our neighborhoods a top priority," he said. "The foundation of our city may have been shaken, but it was never brought down."

Desert Sun reporter Sherry Barkas covers the cities of La Quinta, Indian Wells, Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert. She can be reached at sherry.barkas@thedesertsun.com. Follow her on Twitter @TDSsherryBarkas

Trustees

T.S. No.: 2021-00024-CA
Property Address: 83-141 LONG COVE DR, INDO, CA 92203

A.P.N.: 692-280-030

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

PURSUANT TO CIVIL CODE § 2923.3(a) and (d), THE SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REFERRED TO BELOW IS NOT ATTACHED TO THE RECORDED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT BUT ONLY TO THE COPIES PROVIDED TO THE TRUSTOR.

NOTE:
THERE IS A SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT ATTACHED

NOTE: SE ADJUNTA UN RESUMEN DE LA INFORMACION DE ESTE DOCUMENTO
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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER:
YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 09/29/2005, UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER.

Trustor: JAVRIEL RODRIGUEZ OCHOA AND VERONICA EUNICE OCHOA, HUSBAND AND WIFE AS JOINT TENANTS
Duly Appointed Trustee: Western Progressive, LLC
Deed of Trust Recorded 10/13/2005 as Instrument No. 2005-0847288 in book ---, page--- and of Official Records in the office of the Recorder of Riverside County, California,
Date of Sale: 11/17/2021 at 09:00 AM
Place of Sale: AUCTION.COM ROOM, 2410 WARDLOW ROAD #111, CORONA, CA 92880

Estimated amount of unpaid balance, reasonably estimated costs and other charges: \$ 262,956.17

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

THE TRUSTEE WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK DRAWN ON A STATE OR NATIONAL BANK, A CHECK DRAWN BY A STATE OR FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, OR A CHECK DRAWN BY A STATE OR FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION, A SAVINGS ASSOCIATION OR SAVINGS BANK SPECIFIED IN SECTION 5102 OF THE FINANCIAL CODE AND AUTHORIZED TO DO BUSINESS IN THIS STATE:

All right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by the trustee in the hereinafter described property under and pursuant to a Deed of Trust described as:

More fully described in said Deed of Trust.

Street Address or other common designation of real property: 83-141 LONG COVE DR, INDO, CA 92203
A.P.N.: 692-280-030

The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address or other common designation, if any, shown above.

The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust with interest thereon, as provided in said note(s), advances, under the terms of said Deed of Trust, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. The total amount of the unpaid balance of the obligation secured by the property to be sold and reasonable expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is: \$ 262,956.17.

Note: Because the Beneficiary reserves the right to bid less than the total debt owed, it is possible that at the time of the sale the opening bid may be less than the total debt.

If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse.

The beneficiary of the Deed of Trust has executed and delivered to the undersigned a written request to commence foreclosure, and the undersigned caused a Notice of Default and Election to Sell to be recorded in the county where the real property is located.

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on this property.

NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call (866)-960-8299 or visit this Internet Web site <http://www.altisource.com/MortgageServices/DefaultManagement/TrusteeServices.aspx> using the file number assigned to this case 2021-00024-CA. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale.

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

NOTICE TO TENANT: You may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction. If you are a "tenant" after January 1, 2021, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. If you are an "eligible tenant buyer," you can purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an "eligible bidder," you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call (855)-976-2916, or visit this internet website <http://tracker.auction.com/sb1079>, using the file number assigned to this case 2021-00024-CA to find the date on which the trustee's sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third, you must submit a bid, by remitting the funds and affidavit described in Section 2924m(c) of the Civil Code, so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as an "eligible tenant buyer" or "eligible bidder," you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase.

Date: October 5, 2021 Western Progressive, LLC, as Trustee for beneficiary
C/o 1500 Palma Drive, Suite 238
Ventura, CA 93003
Sale Information Line: (866) 960-8299 <http://www.altisource.com/MortgageServices/DefaultManagement/TrusteeServices.aspx>

Trustee Sale Assistant

WESTERN PROGRESSIVE, LLC MAY BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED MAY BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Pub: 10/29, 11/3, 11/10/2021

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