

# In speech, Lynnwood mayor calls for unity and pride



Lynnwood Mayor Nicola Smith

By **Rikki King**, Herald Writer

LYNNWOOD — The changes coming to this city won't all be easy, but they will be worth it, Mayor Nicola Smith told a packed house at the Lynnwood Convention Center on Wednesday.

Smith's first "State of the City" address came amid her sixth month in office. The speech is expected to become an annual event.

Lynnwood remains a vibrant city with a great location and untapped potential, Smith said.

"There's still so much work to do and tough decisions ahead, and it's going to take all of us working together," she said.

By the time Smith took the stage, the importance of her tenure was made clear by civic leaders who shared their own thoughts about needed change. Under Smith's leadership, Lynnwood is at a "pivotal moment," City Council President Loren Simmonds told the gathering before the mayor spoke.

It will be important for city leaders not to waste the opportunities that come with a new mayor, he said.

"She exudes the resolve and the dynamo of '[The Little Engine That Could](#),'" Simmonds said. Last November, Smith defeated former two-term Mayor Don Gough by a wide margin.

Smith, 55, retired as an Edmonds Community College administrator after she [was elected](#). Despite its name, the college is in Lynnwood.

During her campaign, Smith was peppered with ideas from others, especially a call for more cultural events in town, she said.

Lynnwood, a city of 38,000, needs to regain a voice and its pride, she said.

Smith cited changes in Lynnwood, including a new approach to code enforcement, the arrival of a farmers market on Thursday and preparation for the arrival of light rail.

A Costco is set to open in 2015 at the former high school site, along with retail and housing.

Smith wants her behavior as mayor to be an example of cohesion and respect, she said. She is hopeful about the city's future, including new events, programs and partnerships.

"Social media is coming soon, so get your phones warmed up," she said.

Edmonds Community College President Jean Hernandez told the audience that she and the mayor have been meeting about developing internships at City Hall for community college students and about linking students to community service projects in town.

At the college, Smith was known as an advocate for folks who needed one, including homeless students, Hernandez said.

"I am so confident that she will bring greatness — more greatness — to this community," Hernandez said.

Lynnwood is a bedroom community and often serves as a temporary home for folks rather than a permanent one, said speaker Wally Webster, a banker who's lived here 36 years.

He'd like to see Lynnwood become more of a destination — a place in which people want to live, work and play.

He knows there's no waterfront, no lighthouse, and that people complain about the traffic.

"I love the traffic," Webster said. "Traffic means this city is viable and vibrant, and there is life."

Webster wants to see more neighborhood gatherings, like those Smith used to meet folks during her campaign, he said.

"The city has all the ingredients to transform its destiny," he said.

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