



Mayor Ben McAdams
Inauguration Ceremony
Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center
January 9, 2017

It is an honor for me to take the oath of office for a second term as Mayor of Salt Lake County.

Thank you for being here today. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to give back to the state that I love.

I would like to thank my wife, Julie, my four children – James, Kate, Robert and Isaac—and the many friends and colleagues in Salt Lake County for supporting my desire to serve.

On a sad note, I'm sorry to say that we've lost a long time county employee, Tiffany Stock. She recently lost her battle with cancer at the age of 39. She will be missed.

For the past four years, I have had a great ride in this metro area, working alongside the County Council and residents who are making the county an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Thanks to the council, independent elected and to my staff for all the accomplishments of the past four years.

Congratulations to our new metro council members who were officially sworn into office last week. We're happy that some of them could join us today to receive recognition for stepping on the stage of local governance.

A new year and new inauguration is an opportunity to shake things up and do things differently.

What a terrific time to be in local government. It is both exciting and humbling. There is so much energy, talent and commitment here--with each day holding new opportunities for progress.

Author Thomas Friedman put it well. He says, "If you want to be an optimist, stand on your head. The world looks a lot better from the bottom up than it does from the top down."

He has also said that local communities are the scale of governance best suited to meet the challenges of our time.

The challenges are real. The fact of living in a global economy offers both opportunity and –frankly – some disruption and pain.

Now is a time for boldness and energy and to remind ourselves of our mission: Wherever existing county government functions don't reflect the world we now live in, we will change.

Our county's diversity explosion is a source of strength and opportunity to both our economy and our culture.

More than 120 different languages are spoken in local schools, representing cultures and traditions from throughout the world.

That poses a challenge for our educational system but at the same time our children will grow up learning that the world is a dynamic and fascinating place—and that what we have in common with these families is far greater than any differences between us.

One of the county's newest initiatives seeks to embrace and promote this diversity. Our Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as our Office for New Americans will work to ensure that all county residents feel welcome and will be treated with respect, no matter their religion, language, or creed.

As their stories become part of our Salt Lake County narrative, we will show how collaboration and support result in a more vibrant, more dynamic, more resilient community.

Many of these newcomers have survived hardship and danger in order to make it here. That takes courage, drive and determination –just the qualities we value in our country.

Utah has always been a place people looked to for a chance to build a better life for themselves and for their families.

Adapting to change has become a necessity, as technology breaks and resets the mold.

Salt Lake County is a national model of flexibility and capability.

Whether it is embracing data and evidence to hold ourselves accountable to outcomes, or standing up for our taxpayers when proposals don't protect their pocketbooks, Salt Lake County is in the lead.

We are putting in place the infrastructure that connects people to each other, to jobs, to opportunities and to recreational opportunities.

Our metro region is in the business of "applied hope." We do not operate with extreme partisanship or pessimism, but simply work together to make progress.

The path can be complicated, but when you stand on points east or west, north or south, and see the beauty and feel the energy of this place, it's totally worth the effort.

Walt Whitman said that "The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem." Whitman believed that both poetry and democracy derive power from the ability to create a unified whole out of separate parts.

At a time when America feels divided—when Democrats, Republicans and Independents feel just talking about politics is a bridge too far, it's good to reflect on our shared democratic values and strengths.

We celebrate many different kinds of individuals that make up our community. I'm eager to get to work on another four years of listening, learning, understanding and then acting on what the people of Salt Lake County desire for the future.