



JERRY SANDERS – 34TH MAYOR OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

When Jerry Sanders came to San Diego to attend San Diego State University, he never dreamed he'd get so many opportunities to have a positive impact on his new hometown.

At age 20, Sanders joined the San Diego Police Department, fulfilling his lifelong dream of becoming a police officer.

"I always knew I wanted to be a cop. My dad was a cop in L.A., and I always thought it seemed like the best job in the world," Sanders recalls. "And I was right – it was."

Sanders ascended the police department ranks, becoming the youngest police chief in the city's history after 20 years on the force. He expanded community-oriented policing and earned a reputation as one of the nation's most progressive and innovative law-enforcement leaders, with crime falling to a 25-year low during his time as chief. Still in place today, the community policing model has helped further reduce crime in San Diego, which last year saw homicides drop to the lowest level since 1968, and per-capita crime at its lowest since the Kennedy administration.

In 1999, Sanders retired from the police force to take on a new challenge as head of the United Way of San Diego.

"The local chapter was in trouble," Sanders said. "Fundraising was down and administrative costs were up. I saw an opportunity to help turn around an organization that had been a great community partner."

At the United Way, Sanders slashed the organization's costs and increased fundraising by 20 percent.

In 2002, Sanders was tapped to chair the board of local chapter of the American Red Cross after a scandal over the use of fire-relief funds led to the removal of the local chapter's CEO and several board members. He increased financial transparency at the chapter and oversaw major staff changes, helping to restore the nonprofit's credibility.

Soon, civic leaders were again looking to Sanders to lead an organization out of crisis. This time, it was the city of San Diego, which was rocked by a pension-underfunding scheme that put the city's bond disclosures under Securities & Exchange Commission scrutiny and caused the city's

bond rating to be suspended. *The New York Times* dubbed San Diego “Enron-by-the-Sea.” Under pressure, the city’s then-mayor resigned early in his second term.

With his reputation as a successful turn-around executive and a steady leader, civic leaders urged Sanders to run for mayor. In late 2005, after winning in a special election, Mayor Sanders took office with one goal in mind: to right the city’s financial ship and ensure accountability measures were put in place to prevent future financial scandals.

Sanders immediately launched a top-to-bottom review and streamlining of city operations, which over five years has eliminated more than 1,500 positions from the city budget.

He negotiated permanent changes to the pension system that will deliver savings to generations of San Diego taxpayers. Under a voter-approved initiative backed by Sanders and passed in 2006, any increases to pension benefits will require voter approval.

In addition, employees hired after July 1, 2009, are put into a separate pension plan in which they contribute more toward their retirement savings and bear more investment risk – similar to private-sector plans. The new system, which has become a model for other state and municipal pension programs, will save the city an estimated \$36 million over the next decade.

Last year, Sanders announced he would pursue, as a private citizen, a ballot initiative eliminating traditional pensions for non-public safety employees, instead providing employees with a 401(K)-like program.

“The notion that public employees should have a richer retirement benefit than the taxpayers they serve – while now also enjoying comparable pay and greater job security – is thoroughly outdated,” Sanders said. “What’s worse, it’s bleeding our resources at a level that’s unsustainable.”

Sanders also won City Council approval for compensation cuts for employees that saved the city more than \$34 million, sparing the public from drastic service cuts. This bold move, along with his pension-reform successes, earned the city the coveted “Grand Watchdog” award from the San Diego County Taxpayers Association in 2009.

Under Mayor Sanders, city financial staff completed six year's worth of back-logged audits, allowing the city to return to the public bond markets in January 2009 -- helping to fund the mayor's commitment to repair San Diego's long-neglected water, sewer and transportation infrastructure. The city secured a \$103 million private bond to address long-neglected streets and decaying public facilities – and last year began the largest street-resurfacing project in the city’s history.

Also last year, Sanders presided over the groundbreaking of the city’s new Central Library, a badly needed project that had languished for decades. The library is being funded through a combination of redevelopment, state grants and school district funds -- avoiding the use of funds from the city’s operating budget, which pays for police and fire protection.

Sanders has increased financial accountability at the city by replacing the city's collection of obsolete and incompatible computer systems with a single Enterprise Management Program that enables transparency in accounting and fiscal oversight of departments.

In addition to his broad reform agenda, Sanders has placed a high priority on economic growth and job creation during his time in office. Specifically, the mayor has been a champion of the region's promising clean technology industry – including solar energy, biofuels and other environmentally friendly products.

Sanders' focus and leadership on water reliability led to widespread adoption of water-efficiency measures throughout the city. Sanders has made water conservation a priority of his administration – and San Diegans have responded by cutting their water use by 21 percent since 2007. Leading by example, he reduced his own home water consumption by 54 percent during that same period.

Sanders also has been a vocal advocate in Sacramento for protecting the water interests of San Diego and the rest of Southern California. His work was instrumental in the state Legislature's recent decision to enact a comprehensive water package that helps balance environmental issues with the need for a reliable long-term water supply.

“I couldn't be prouder of the work the city has done to ensure water reliability,” Sanders said. “No issue has more long-term consequences for the San Diego region, and the work we do now will pay dividends for countless future generations.”

Sanders will complete his second and final term in December 2012.

