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Manross to tout downtown in State of the City address

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SCENE: The Scottsdale Waterfront will be the backdrop for the mayor's State of the City address.

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Scottsdale Mayor Mary Manross will use the Waterfront and SouthBridge canal bank as a backdrop for her annual State of the City address, bringing attention in an election year to what she is touting as one of her major successes.

It's a decision Manross said was made because of a desire for a new location outside the City Council chambers, where she has held her previous seven speeches.

"I just thought it would be a really nice beautiful environment, it will be accessible for everyone and a nice change for a lot of folks who have come for years," Manross said referring to the State of the City address. "I didn't want to be standing inside the City Hall building for eight years in a row."

The State of the City speech is set for April 3.

Manross is running for a third, four-year term. Councilman Jim Lane is challenging Manross in the Sept. 2 election.

The Scottsdale Waterfront and SouthBridge projects are home to landscaped canal banks, two high-rise residential towers, restaurants and shops.

The area, which includes a public bridge and plaza, was shown frequently during ESPN broadcasts leading up to Super Bowl XLII and was also home to the 944 Super Village.

Last year, Manross gave her speech on March 1. She said she set the event a month later because of the likelihood of warmer weather.

Like past speeches, the public is invited and there is no charge to attend.

Lane said Manross is taking advantage of the powers of the incumbency.

"It's not an untypical thing to arrange in an election year to try and get the maximum exposure out of it," Lane said.

On her campaign Web site, Manross' introductory letter praises Waterfront and SouthBridge for bringing new vitality to downtown.

In the 2007 State of the City speech, Manross praised the city's downtown revitalization - including Scottsdale Waterfront - and SkySong. She spoke against allowing light rail through downtown on Scottsdale Road, proposed a 2008 bond election and cited what she said were a number of other city successes.

Manross said Thursday she plans to talk about what she believes are the city's past successes as well as laying out a vision for the future