

**2011 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS “BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY VISION”
JUNE 3, 2011**

THANK YOU STINA FOR THAT HEARTFELT INTRODUCTION. STINA D’UVA IS NOT ONLY A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE; SHE’S AN INSPIRATION BECAUSE OF ALL SHE HAS DONE FOR THIS COMMUNITY.
GOOD MORNING!

LET ME BEGIN BY EXPRESSING MY APPRECIATION TO THE CENTRAL FLORIDA HOTEL AND LODGING ASSOCIATION FOR SPONSORING THIS EVENT, ONCE AGAIN. I ALSO WANT TO THANK GENERAL MANAGER, MARK MORAVEC AND HIS STAFF HERE AT THE DOUBLETREE FOR THEIR GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY.

A SPECIAL WORD OF THANKS TO MY CLOSEST SUPPORTERS, MY HUSBAND – BRUCE, AND MY KIDS -- JOSH, MAX, LISA AND CHASE. I AM SO BLESSED TO HAVE THEIR CONSTANT LOVE AND SUPPORT.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE MEMBERS OF OUR BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: COMMISSIONERS SCOTT BOYD, FRED BRUMMER, LUI DAMIANI, JENNIFER THOMPSON, TED EDWARDS AND TIFFANY MOORE RUSSELL.

I ENJOY SERVING WITH THIS BOARD. THE COLLEGIAL SPIRIT, THOUGHTFUL, AND OCCASIONALLY LIVELY, DEBATE SERVES US ALL WELL. THANK YOU COMMISSIONERS FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY, AND THE UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE THAT EACH OF YOU BRINGS TO OUR MEETINGS.

AND ALTHOUGH SHE’S NOT A MEMBER OF OUR BOARD, I’D LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK A WOMAN WHO ‘S WITH US AT OUR COMMISSION MEETINGS, AND SERVES AS THE COUNTY’S FISCAL WATCHDOG, COMPTROLLER MARTHA HAYNIE.

I’D ALSO LIKE TO RECOGNIZE OUR CITY AND TOWN MAYORS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS, OUR SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR, BILL SUBLETTE, OUR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, SUPERINTENDENT RON BLOCKER ... AND ALL OF OUR CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS FOR YOUR VALUABLE SERVICE.

THEY SAY “TIME FLIES WHEN YOU’RE HAVING FUN.” IT ALSO FLIES WHEN YOU’RE BUSY. SO I MUST BE HAVING A LOT OF FUN OR ELSE I’M AWFULLY BUSY, BECAUSE THE LAST 8 MONTHS HAVE FLOWN BY.

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT’S BEEN 8 MONTHS, TO THE DAY, SINCE I WOKE UP 2 THE TO THE REALITY THAT THE VOTERS HAD ENTRUSTED ME WITH THE AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY OF SERVING AS THEIR NEXT MAYOR.

NOW, DURING THE FINAL WEEKS OF THE CAMPAIGN, I ASKED MY TEAM NOT TO SCHEDULE ANYTHING FOR THE DAY AFTER THE ELECTION BECAUSE I HAD BIG PLANS. WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW, I WAS GOING TO COLLAPSE OF EXHAUSTION ... NO IFS, ANDS, OR BUTS ABOUT IT.

BUT WHEN I WOKE UP ON NOVEMBER 3 RD, COLLAPSING WAS THE LAST THING ON MY

MIND. I WAS FILLED WITH ENERGY, A RENEWED SENSE OF PURPOSE AND URGENCY— AND TO BE HONEST— A HEALTHY DOSE OF NERVOUSNESS.

THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH SERVING AS YOUR MAYOR IS SOMETHING I TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY, EVERY SINGLE DAY.

YOU, THE VOTERS, CHARGED ME TO MAKE ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE, EFFICIENT, AND TRUSTWORTHY....TO MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU. YOU ELECTED ME ON THE HEELS OF THE GREAT RECESSION, WITH AN EXPECTATION THAT I WOULD NOT LEAVE ONE STONE UNTURNED IN THE QUEST TO GET PEOPLE BACK TO WORK.

BUT THE KEY TO OUR SUCCESS LIES NOT IN ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL; IT LIES IN OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTH, IN OUR BELIEF IN EACH OTHER, AND IN OUR WILLINGNESS TO COME TOGETHER FOR A COMMON PURPOSE.

AS YOUR MAYOR, A LARGE PART OF MY JOB IS TO GALVANIZE THE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE ORANGE COUNTY UNIQUE AND STRONG... THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA ... 2ND LARGEST IN THE COUNTRY ...OUR NEW MEDICAL CITY ... OUR WORLD CLASS AIRPORT... OUR THRIVING DOWNTOWN... OUR RESEARCH PARK ... AND THEME PARKS ... THE ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER ...2ND LARGEST IN THE NATION...OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY... OUR LOCAL CHAMBERS AND NONPROFITS... OUR RELIGIOUS LEADERS... AND OUR ELECTED LEADERSHIP.

MY ROLE IS TO FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE THESE GREAT ASSETS, GREAT LEADERS, ALL OF US CAN UNITE BEHIND A COMMON GOAL OF LEADING THE STATE IN CREATING JOBS, BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMY AND A COMMUNITY WE CAN ALL BE PROUD TO CALL HOME.

SO HOW WILL WE DO IT?

1. WE'LL DO IT BY HELPING OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES FLOURISH AND ROLLING OUT THE WELCOME MAT FOR NEW BUSINESSES;
2. WE'LL DO IT BY GIVING OUR CITIZENS A REASON TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES, THEIR COMMUNITY, AND THEIR GOVERNMENT; AND
3. WE'LL DO IT BY SHOWING CITIZENS THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT IS EFFICIENT, ACCOUNTABLE AND ON THEIR SIDE.

BUT LET'S START WITH SOME GOOD NEWS ON OUR LOCAL ECONOMY.

CENTRAL FLORIDA IS LEADING THE STATE OUT OF THE RECESSION AND, ACCORDING TO THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE, ORANGE COUNTY IS PROJECTED TO BECOME THE ECONOMIC CENTER FOR THE STATE.

JUST AS CENTRAL FLORIDA IS LEADING THE STATE OUT OF RECESSION, TOURISM IS LEADING CENTRAL FLORIDA IN JOB GROWTH.

OUR HOTEL OCCUPANCY HIT A THREE-YEAR HIGH IN THE MONTH OF MARCH, ...AND AFTER A COUPLE OF DISMAL YEARS ...TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX COLLECTIONS WERE UP 16% OVER THE FIRST 5 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR.

AND JUST LAST WEEK, WE ANNOUNCED REMARKABLY GOOD NEWS. IN 2010, CENTRAL FLORIDA BROKE THE RECORD BY ENTERTAINING MORE THAN 50 MILLION VISITORS IN A SINGLE YEAR! THAT'S NOT JUST A LOCAL RECORD, THAT'S MORE VISITORS THAN NEW YORK CITY, MORE THAN LAS VEGAS, MORE THAN ANY OTHER REGION IN THE NATION...EVER!

SO, LET'S STOP AND RECOGNIZE THOSE LEADERS IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO HELPED MAKE THIS MILESTONE POSSIBLE. THANK YOU MICKEY, SHAMU, AND – OF COURSE -- OUR NEWEST LOCAL CELEBRITY CHARACTER HARRY POTTER!

AND, YOU KNOW THE SAYING, "BEHIND EVERY GOOD THEME PARK CHARACTER, THERE ARE EVEN BETTER INDUSTRY LEADERS"... SO LET'S ALSO RECOGNIZE THE HARD WORK OF GARY SAIN, RICH MALADECKI, TOM ACKERT AND ALL OF YOU HERE WHO ARE PART OF OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY.

I AM PROUD TO SAY, WE ARE THE TOURISM CAPITAL OF WORLD. BUT WE CAN'T REST ON OUR LAURELS, NOR SHOULD WE BE CONTENT WITH THAT STATUS. OVER THE PAST DECADE, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO PROPEL OUR WORLDWIDE ACCLAIM TO GREATER ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION.

THE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH OF OUR NEW MEDICAL CITY, WHERE THE CONSTRUCTION CRANE IS NOW THE "OFFICIAL" BIRD ... AND THE CONTINUING SUCCESS OF OUR HIGH TECH SECTOR — MODELING, SIMULATION & TRAINING ... DIGITAL MEDIA ...LASERS AND PHOTONICS — ALL ARE PROOF THAT OUR EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY ARE PAYING OFF.

4. WHILE OUR NATION IS EMERGING FROM THE RECESSION, ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT HAS WEATHERED THE STORM BY TRIMMING SPENDING, ELIMINATING VACANT POSITIONS, AND BY POSTPONING NON-CRITICAL CAPITAL PROJECTS, ALL, WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY SERVICES TO OUR CITIZENS. AND, WE'VE DONE IT WITHOUT RAISING TAXES!

OUR MILLAGE RATE IS THE LOWEST IN MORE THAN 25 YEARS. AND WHILE THE POPULATION HAS TOPPED 1.1 MILLION PEOPLE, WE HAVE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF GENERAL COUNTY EMPLOYEES TO THE LEVELS WE HAD 11 YEARS AGO WHEN OUR POPULATION WAS ONLY 900,000.

BY USING TECHNOLOGY AND EFFICIENTLY MANAGING OUR WORKFORCE, WE SERVE MORE PEOPLE TODAY, WITH FEWER PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE SEEN OUR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DROP FROM 11.9 PERCENT TO 9.8 PERCENT ... OUR CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS ARE STILL UNACCEPTABLY HIGH. THAT IS WHY A LARGE PART OF OUR AGENDA IS FOCUSED ON GROWING OUR ECONOMY.

IN A FEW MINUTES, I'LL TALK ABOUT SEVERAL OF OUR NEW INITIATIVES, LIKE OUR SERIES OF ECONOMIC AND JOBS SUMMITS, BUT LET ME TOUCH ON ONE RECOMMENDATION THAT WAS MADE AT EVERY SUMMIT, - WE NEED TO EXPAND OUR BRAND. TODAY, WE ARE KNOWN AS THE BEST PLACE IN THE WORLD TO VISIT. BUT WE NEED TO LET THE REST OF THE WORLD KNOW...

WE ARE ALSO THE BEST PLACE TO WORK, THE BEST PLACE TO LIVE, THE BEST PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY. BUT BEFORE WE CAN CONVINCE OTHERS OF THAT, WE NEED TO BELIEVE IT OURSELVES.

MY GREATEST PASSION IS TO CREATE A COMMUNITY WHERE CITIZENS ARE PROUD TO LIVE HERE... A COMMUNITY WHERE CITIZENS ARE ENGAGED, HAVE FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENT, AND ARE EMPOWERED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. AND IF WE WANT YOU TO BE PROUD OF ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT, OUR EMPLOYEES MUST EARN YOUR RESPECT BY TAKING PRIDE IN WHAT THEY DO.

TO DO THIS, WE NEED TO CHANGE OUR CORPORATE CULTURE TO FOSTER A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP WITH ALL EMPLOYEES, FROM THE SENIOR STAFF TO THE FIELD STAFF, EACH A CRUCIAL PART OF THE ORANGE COUNTY TEAM.

SO IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NOVEMBER ELECTION, I HELD DOZENS OF MEETINGS ... WHERE I LISTENED AND GATHERED INPUT FROM MORE THAN 4,000 COUNTY EMPLOYEES. I ALSO PRESENTED THE EXPECTATIONS AND CORE VALUES THAT WILL SERVE AS THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE:

PROFESSIONALISM, INTEGRITY, STRONG WORK ETHIC, INNOVATION, FAIRNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY – THESE VALUES SUPPORT ORANGE COUNTY'S MISSION – AND THAT MISSION IS TO SERVE YOU, THE CITIZENS.

TO MAKE THE COUNTY MORE "CITIZEN AND BUSINESS FRIENDLY," I ISSUED AN EXECUTIVE ORDER TO ESTABLISH A "ONE-STOP SHOP" FOR PERMITTING. NO LONGER DO YOU HAVE TO GO TO GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ALL OVER THE COUNTY TO GET A PERMIT. NOW, YOU CAN WALK INTO THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER AND EVERYONE YOU NEED IS RIGHT THERE, AT YOUR SERVICE.

AND TO ALLOW YOU TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME, WIFI IS NOW AVAILABLE SO YOU CAN WORK WHILE YOU ARE VISITING.

THE NEXT PHASE IS TO MOVE MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF OUR PERMITTING ONLINE.

OUR COMMISSION ALSO ESTABLISHED TWO STREAMLINING TASK FORCE GROUPS TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CUT GOVERNMENT RED TAPE AND SIMPLIFY OUR APPROVAL PROCESS.

I'D LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF OUR PERMITTING AND REGULATORY STREAMLINING TASK FORCE – RANDI FITZGERALD AND JIM COOPER ... AND THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF OUR ENVIRONMENTAL STREAMLINING TASK FORCE – TONY COTTER AND COMMISSIONER LINDA STEWART. RANDI, JIM, TONY,

LINDA AND ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF THESE TASK FORCES, PLEASE STAND SO WE MAY RECOGNIZE YOUR COMMITMENT TO MAKING ORANGE COUNTY MORE USER-FRIENDLY.

WHILE WE ARE TALKING ABOUT GETTING PEOPLE BACK TO WORK, ONE OF MY CAMPAIGN PLEDGES WAS TO CREATE A TAX RELIEF PROGRAM FOR NEW OR EXPANDING BUSINESSES THAT CREATE FULL-TIME JOBS. TO MAKE THIS PROGRAM MORE EFFECTIVE IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, WE NEEDED HELP FROM OUR STATE LEGISLATURE. SOME OF THE LEADERS THAT HELPED MAKE THIS HAPPEN ARE BILL SPONSORS, REPRESENTATIVE ERIC EISNAUGLE AND SENATOR BOGDANOFF, SENATE PRESIDENT MIKE HARIDOPOLOS, HOUSE SPEAKER DEAN CANNON, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER ANDY GARDINER, AND HOUSE FINANCE AND TAX COMMITTEE CHAIR STEVE PRECOURT.

THIS JOB-CREATION INCENTIVE PACKAGE WILL GO TO VOTERS NEXT SPRING AND I'M HOPEFUL THEY WILL SEE THE POTENTIAL OF IT BEING AN ECONOMIC DRIVER.

TO OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND SEEK ADVICE FROM BUSINESSMINDED CITIZENS... WE HELD 9 ECONOMIC AND JOB SUMMITS, INCLUDING INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC SUMMITS ON LIFE SCIENCES AND HEALTHCARE, INTERNATIONAL TRADE, CLEAN TECH AND RENEWABLE ENERGY, AND TOURISM. IN ALL, NEARLY 1,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED AND THE INSIGHT AND INFORMATION GAINED HAS BEEN EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN DEVELOPING A BLUEPRINT FOR CREATING JOBS.

ANOTHER KEY COMPONENT OF OUR JOB CREATION AGENDA, ONE THAT IS CRUCIAL TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE ... IS TRANSPORTATION. DID YOU KNOW THAT OUR AREA IS THE 4TH MOST CONGESTED AMONG COMPARABLY SIZED COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NATION?

RECOGNIZING WE WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO PAVE OUR WAY OUT OF GRIDLOCK ... REGIONAL LEADERS UNITED 4 YEARS AGO TO PLAN AND BUILD THE FIRST LEG OF A COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM – SUNRAIL. THIS LEG WILL RELIEVE CONGESTION ON I-4 AND SERVE AS THE SPINE OF OUR REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM. SUNRAIL WOULD CREATE THOUSANDS OF JOBS FROM CONSTRUCTION THROUGH OPERATIONS AND SPUR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AROUND EACH STATION.

THAT'S WHY I'VE HAD SEVERAL ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS WITH GOVERNOR SCOTT. HE HAS LISTENED AND ASKED CRUCIAL QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS THAT HE OUGHT TO ASK, QUESTIONS I'VE ASKED MYSELF, ABOUT RIDERSHIP AND COSTS... I REMAIN HOPEFUL THE GOVERNOR WILL GIVE SUNRAIL THE GREEN LIGHT VERY SOON.

COMPLETING THE WEKIVA PARKWAY IS ALSO A TOP PRIORITY. BUT I BELIEVE THAT LOCAL COMMUTERS, WITH LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO USE OUR EXISTING TOLL ROADS, SHOULDN'T AND CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO SHOULDER ALL OF THE BURDEN. THAT'S WHY I REACHED OUT TO STATE AND FEDERAL LEADERS WITH THE GOAL OF BUILDING A FUNDING PARTNERSHIP TO GET THIS PROJECT UNDERWAY.

JUST LAST WEEK, FDOT SECRETARY, ANANTH PERSUAD, ANNOUNCED HIS COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH US TO MAKE THIS PROJECT A REALITY. AND I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE STRONG LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT OF SPEAKER DEAN CANNON, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER ANDY GARDINER, AND FUTURE SPEAKER CHRIS DORWORTH.

WHILE GETTING AROUND IS IMPORTANT, ARRIVING ALIVE IS PARAMOUNT. TO SAVE LIVES, WE BROUGHT A LONG-AWAITED RED-LIGHT CAMERA PROGRAM TO OUR 10 MOST DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS. WE ALREADY SEE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN CRASHES AT THOSE INTERSECTIONS, MEANING FEWER PEOPLE ARE BEING KILLED AND INJURED. IN ORANGE COUNTY WE'RE TAKING A CONSERVATIVE APPROACH. WE ONLY CITE DRIVERS WHO BLAST THROUGH THE INTERSECTION AFTER THE LIGHT HAS TURNED RED. WE DON'T CITE THOSE WHO ROLL THROUGH A RIGHT-TURN-ON-RED, OR MERELY CROSS OVER THE STOP LINE.

AND, YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS...BUT IF YOU'RE NOT BREAKING THE LAW, WE'RE NOT TAKING YOUR PICTURE.

WE ALSO TACKLED ANOTHER SERIOUS PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERN --- THE EPIDEMIC OF PILL MILLS. DID YOU KNOW THAT FLORIDA LEADS THE NATION IN PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE?

RECORDS SHOW FLORIDA PRACTITIONERS PURCHASED 41 MILLION OXYCODONE PILLS DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2010...THAT'S 10 TIMES THE AMOUNT OF PILLS BOUGHT BY ALL PRACTITIONERS IN THE OTHER 49 STATES COMBINED. THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS!

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MY PREDECESSOR – MAYOR CROTTY, OUR BOARD PASSED THE “CHAD PHILLIPS ACT” WHICH PLACED A MORATORIUM ON NEW PAIN MANAGEMENT CLINICS THAT DISPENSE POWERFUL, ADDICTIVE DRUGS. MAYOR CROTTY HAS GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO CHAIR OUR NEW PRESCRIPTION DRUG TASK FORCE THAT IS TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM LINKING LAW ENFORCEMENT, HEALTHCARE, PHARMACIES, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC POLICY. BECAUSE, WHEN THE BAN ON THESE CLINICS EXPIRES LATER THIS YEAR, WE WANT TO MAKE SURE WE'RE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO ENSURE THAT PILL MILLS DON'T RESURFACE IN OUR GREAT COUNTY. THANK YOU MAYOR CROTTY FOR YOUR CONTINUED LEADERSHIP IN ADDRESSING THIS SERIOUS ISSUE.

TO SPEAK OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND NOT MENTION OUR HOMETOWN HEROES WOULD BE UNTHINKABLE. TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO PUT THEIR LIVES IN HARM'S WAY EVERY DAY -- FROM OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN, TO OUR FIRE FIGHTERS AND PARAMEDICS, TO OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTION OFFICERS – WE COMMEND YOU FOR YOUR COURAGE AND SERVICE. I WOULD LIKE TO FURTHER RECOGNIZE SHERIFF JERRY DEMINGS.

UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, WE HAVE SEEN A TWO YEAR DECLINE IN VIOLENT AND MAJOR CRIMES. SHERIFF DEMINGS, CHIEF PLAUGHER, CHIEF TIDWELL AND ALL OTHER MEN AND WOMAN SERVING OR WHO HAVE SERVED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC; PLEASE STAND SO WE CAN THANK YOU.

TO INSTILL EVEN GREATER PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITIES, WE LAUNCHED OUR NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM. WE ACQUIRED 138 FORECLOSED HOMES TO FIX UP AND RESELL TO LOW INCOME FAMILIES. AND WE'VE PROVIDED 132 FAMILIES WITH DOWN-PAYMENT ASSISTANCE. I'LL NEVER FORGET THE BEAMING FACES OF THE SEVEN-MEMBER STEPHENS FAMILY WHEN WE HANDED OVER THE KEYS TO THEIR NEW HOME IN PINE HILLS.

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE REALIZING THE AMERICAN DREAM AND EXPERIENCING THE PRIDE OF HOME OWNERSHIP. OUR NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM IS BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS, ONE HOME AT A TIME. THERE ARE SO MANY GROUPS, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, DOING GREAT WORK IN OUR COMMUNITY. FROM LARGE ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ORLANDO THAT RECENTLY RAISED \$5.6 MILLION IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS TO AID THE HOMELESS, TO THE INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS OF PEOPLE LIKE 10-YEAR OLD SARAH DEWITZ WHO, IN ONE YEAR, COLLECTED 50,000 BOOKS FOR YOUTH ACROSS CENTRAL FLORIDA. JUST LAST WEEK, MY TEAM AND I TOURED THE BITHLO COMMUNITY, WHERE WE SAW A LIBRARY STOCKED WITH HUNDREDS OF SARAH'S BOOKS. WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE SO MANY COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS TAKING INITIATIVE TO HELP THEIR NEIGHBORS IN NEED WITHOUT ASKING FOR ANY GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE. PASTOR UTH, PASTOR JAMES, SARAH DEWITZ, ALLIE BRASWELL, AND ALL OTHERS FROM OUR NON-PROFIT AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, PLEASE STAND SO WE CAN RECOGNIZE AND THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO.

JUST AS WE NEED TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES, WE IN ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT ALSO STRIVE TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES. WE'VE BEEN WORKING FOR YEARS TO MAKE ORANGE COUNTY GREENER. THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RECENTLY RECOGNIZED US WITH A 2011 ENERGY STAR AWARD. ON EARTH DAY 2010, WE LAUNCHED ORANGE COUNTY HOMEOWNERS ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM, THE ACRONYM FOR THAT IS OCHEEP! NOW THAT'S A NAME SURE TO GRAB YOUR ATTENTION IN THIS

ECONOMY! TO DATE, OCHEEP HAS HELPED HUNDREDS OF HOME OWNERS MAKE CHANGES TO INCREASE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF THEIR HOMES, SAVING THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD OVER \$900.

SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT, WHILE SAVING YOU MONEY – NOW THAT MAKES SENSE - LITERALLY! AND WE CONTINUE TO MAKE COUNTY VEHICLES MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT BY USING FLEX-FUEL AND PLUG-IN HYBRID TECHNOLOGY. WE ARE ONE OF ONLY NINE REGIONS IN THE U.S. TO RECEIVE HUNDREDS OF FREE HOME AND PUBLIC CHARGING STATIONS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES UNDER A NEW FEDERAL PROGRAM.

NOW LET'S TALK A LITTLE TRASH. WITH MORE THAN A MILLION PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND 51 MILLION VISITORS EACH YEAR ...ORANGE COUNTY PRODUCES A LOT OF SOLID WASTE. SO, WE'VE PARTNERED WITH THE ORLANDO UTILITIES COMMISSION TO PIPE OUR LANDFILL GAS TO THE CURTIS STANTON ENERGY CENTER RIGHT NEXT DOOR. WE'LL GET OVER \$100 MILLION FOR THE GAS OVER THE NEXT 40 YEARS...AND OUC GETS FUEL THAT'S

CHEAPER THAN COAL, AND PRODUCES FEWER EMISSIONS. I CALL THAT A WIN-WIN-WIN SITUATION!

MOST PEOPLE THINK OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AS TWO COMPETING INTERESTS. BUT IN ORANGE COUNTY, WE KNOW THAT THERE IS MONEY TO BE MADE AND JOBS TO BE CREATED BY USING INNOVATION TO MAKE THE WORLD MORE ECO-FRIENDLY.

WE'VE TALKED ABOUT BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF THE COMMUNITY AND GOOD STEWARDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT. NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT WE'RE DOING IN ORANGE COUNTY TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF YOUR TAX DOLLARS. ORANGE COUNTY TAX-PAYERS DESERVE A GOVERNMENT THAT CAN AND WILL MAKE THE SAME DIFFICULT CHOICES EACH OF US HAS TO MAKE WHEN FACED WITH LESS REVENUE COMING IN.

LETS FACE IT, OUR ECONOMY IS IMPROVING, BUT WITH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AT NEARLY 10%, AND WITH HOUSING PRICES AND PROPERTY TAXES STILL DECLINING (ALBEIT AT A MUCH SMALLER RATE) ORANGE COUNTY MUST TAKE A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO ANY NEW EXPENDITURES. THEREFORE...

THE BUDGET I WILL PRESENT TO OUR BOARD LATER THIS SUMMER PROPOSES THAT WE SUSPEND ALL AUTOMATIC FEE INCREASES AND HOLD THE LINE ON TAXES. OUT OF RESPECT FOR YOUR HARD EARNED TAX DOLLARS, ORANGE COUNTY TAKES PRIDE IN ADHERING TO THE BEST PRACTICES IN BUDGET AND FINANCE... AND WE ARE PLACING A NEW EMPHASIS ON TRANSPARENCY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT. TO DO SO, WE ARE ADDING ONLINE TOOLS SO TAXPAYERS CAN SEE HOW THEIR MONEY IS BEING SPENT.

WE WILL SOON PUBLISH OUR ANNUAL REPORT ON THE COUNTY WEBSITE, SO YOU CAN TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT BY DEPARTMENT. WE'VE CONSOLIDATED SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS, SAVING NEARLY \$1 MILLION OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS AND WE'RE NOT FINISHED.

WE HAVE INITIATED A BENCHMARKING STUDY TO COMPARE LARGE-BUDGET DEPARTMENTS, SUCH AS FIRE RESCUE AND CORRECTIONS, WITH THOSE OF OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. THIS WILL HELP US IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFICIENCY AND FURTHER COST-SAVINGS. OUR COMMISSION IS COMMITTED TO FISCAL AND ETHICAL INTEGRITY. SO WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED SEVERAL GOOD GOVERNMENT MEASURES INCLUDING THE APPOINTMENT OF A CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER. WE ARE TIGHTENING UP OUR ETHICS ORDINANCE TO CLOSE LOOPHOLES IN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE RULES, DEVELOPING A PROCESS TO INVESTIGATE GOVERNMENT WASTE AND WRONGDOING, AND INSTITUTING WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES WHO UNCOVER SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE ORGANIZATION.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, QUALITY OF LIFE, GREEN INITIATIVES, FISCAL AND ETHICAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY PRIDE. THESE ARE TO THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A STRONG PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT.

TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THAT PARTNERSHIP, WE HAVE CREATED THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CITIZEN ADVOCACY. THIS TEAM... WHICH WE AFFECTIONATELY CALL OPECA, IS WORKING TO MAKE YOUR GOVERNMENT MORE ACCESSIBLE AND IS INVITING EVERYONE TO GET INVOLVED. IN JUST 6 MONTHS, TEAM MEMBERS HAVE ATTENDED MORE THAN 90 COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND TOURS.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO USE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO REACH OUT TO OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY. OUR GOAL IS TO GIVE EVERY CITIZEN OF ORANGE COUNTY A VOICE AND A STAKE IN THEIR GOVERNMENT.

AT THIS TIME, I ASK THAT MEMBERS OF OUR OPECA TEAM STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED. IF YOU AREN'T ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THESE FACES, YOU WILL BE SOON!

ON THE TECHNOLOGY FRONT, I HAVE SOME EXCITING NEWS. THIS WEEK WE ARE UNVEILING TWO INITIATIVES THAT WILL ALLOW CITIZENS TO STAY CONNECTED TO ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN A MORE INTERACTIVE WAY. FIRST, WHEN YOU LOG ON TO OCFL.NET, YOU WILL GET A GLIMPSE OF A MAJOR REDESIGN OF THE COUNTY WEBSITE THAT IS MORE USER-FRIENDLY. AT BUILD-OUT, LATER THIS YEAR, THE WEBSITE WILL HAVE A "HOW DO I?" FEATURE ... A DIRECT LINK TO ORANGE TV...ENHANCED 311-GOVERNMENT INFO... AND LIVE ONLINE CHAT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO TRANSLATE KEY SECTIONS OF OUR WEBSITE EN ESPANOL, OR FOR YOU ENGLISH-SPEAKERS...IN SPANISH ... AND WE'RE DEVELOPING VIRTUAL TOURS OF COUNTY DEPARTMENTS IN OTHER LANGUAGES AS WELL.

SECOND, WE ARE LAUNCHING OUR FIRST APP THAT CITIZENS CAN DOWNLOAD TO THEIR SMARTPHONE. OCFL ALERT WILL BE A LIFELINE LINKING CITIZENS DIRECTLY TO REAL-TIME INFORMATION DURING EMERGENCIES – INFORMATION SUCH AS EVACUATION ROUTES, OPEN SHELTERS, SAND BAG LOCATIONS AND WATER AND ICE DISTRIBUTION.

AND IF I CAN BRAG ON THE TEAM FOR A MINUTE, DID YOU KNOW THAT WE ARE THE FIRST LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NATION TO OFFER SUCH AN APP? OCFL ALERT IS COMPLETELY FREE AND AVAILABLE AT THE APP STORE,ITUNES, OR THE COUNTY WEBSITE. AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WITH IPHONE ENVY,. I WANT TO ASSURE YOU WE'RE DEVELOPING THIS APP FOR OTHER PLATFORMS AS WELL. WE WILL CONTINUE TO ROLL OUT USEFUL APPS AS OUR WEBSITE EVOLVES. SO PULL OUT YOUR IPHONE OR IPAD AND DOWNLOAD THE OCFL ALERT APP NOW! 11

IN THE COMING MONTHS, I WILL HOLD A VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING AND INVITE ALL OF YOU TO BE A PART OF IT. IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY ON OUR EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LIST, PLEASE BE SURE TO JOIN US. YOU CAN DO THAT BY SIGNING UP ON OUR WEBSITE, OR FILLING OUT THE CARD ON YOUR CHAIR AND DROPPING IT IN ONE OF THE BASKETS OUTSIDE THIS HALL.

BOTTOM LINE...OUR GOAL IS TO STIMULATE A COMMUNITY OF ENGAGED CITIZENS WHO SHARE A COMMON GOAL OF MAKING ORANGE COUNTY THE BEST PLACE IN THE

WORLD TO LIVE, TO LEARN, TO DO BUSINESS AND TO RAISE A FAMILY.

SO, IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, I ASK YOU TO ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES AND GET INVOLVED. TAKE OWNERSHIP IN YOUR COMMUNITY. BE INFORMED. BE A STAKEHOLDER. VOLUNTEER. WE ARE OPENING THE DOORS AND LETTING IN THE LIGHT. WE ARE MAKING IT EASIER FOR YOU TO BE PLUGGED IN WITH YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

AND TO MY STAFF HERE IN ORANGE COUNTY, I CANNOT THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR YOUR DEDICATION, HARD WORK, AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE. I CONSIDER IT A GREAT PRIVILEGE TO SERVE WITH EACH OF YOU. I HAVE TO SAY, IN THIS MOMENT, LOOKING OUT INTO THE CROWD AND THINKING OF ALL OF THOSE LISTENING, I AM SO VERY PROUD OF WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR.

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT A PERSON'S CHARACTER IS REVEALED IN THEIR DARKEST HOUR. IN OUR COMMUNITY'S DARKEST ECONOMIC HOUR ... ORANGE COUNTY REVEALED ITS TRUE CHARACTER, FIGHTING THROUGH MANY DIFFICULT ISSUES UNTIL – TODAY, WHEN WE CAN SEE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT WE IN ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER STOP FIGHTING FOR YOU TO BRING ABOUT THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND THE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE WE SO RICHLY DESERVE. WITH YOUR SUPPORT, THE STATE OF ORANGE COUNTY IS GROWING STRONGER... AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN AND WILL BUILD OUR COMMUNITY VISION TOGETHER... PAVING THE WAY TO A BRIGHT AND PROMISING FUTURE!

THANK YOU, GOD BLESS YOU, AND GOD BLESS OUR GREAT COUNTY!