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(Chairman Bill Horn presented the 2011 State of the County Address at the County Administration Center on February 2, 2011.)

The State of the County Address is a time to reflect on where we've been, where we are and where we are headed.

Long ago, Jewish law called for a cleansing period to occur every 50 years. This was known as the year of 'Jubilee'. The Jubilee was a time to reflect on the past and to plan for the future. It often included the forgiveness of past debts, the returning of land to its rightful owner, and generally served as a way to have a clean slate for the future. Now, I don't have the power to forgive debts, but I am working very hard to ensure the land this County wants to take for its General Plan and MSCP, stays with its rightful property owners. Tonight, I present to you a mini-Jubilee as we take a few moments to assess the successes of our past and discuss plans for the future. This year, I'd like to take a sabbatical or a rest from more regulation. I've always thought it would be great if the Legislature would get rid of some rules for a change. My Chairmanship will be introspective. During these difficult times, I want to take a hard look at the way we do business. I believe that there are a lot of simple things we can do right now to streamline our processes and to better serve our customers, the citizens of this County.

Austerity is the buzzword we often hear coming out of Washington D.C. and Sacramento. The difference is our County has been living this way for many years.

The County of San Diego currently has a higher credit rating than both the State of California and the federal government. The problem is that we are tied to both. However, our budget is balanced and we enjoy a healthy cash reserve. We have done this with fiscal discipline and tough choices. We need to stay the course on our path to reduce bureaucracy, streamline process and continue to improve how your County government does business.

Each day, however, we are under attack by unfunded state mandates and raids on our local funds. My goal for this year is to be standing here next January telling you that we were able to maintain our Triple-A bond Rating. As I look toward the challenges of 2011, this will not be easy, but I know this Board has the fortitude to make the necessary decisions to make it happen.

To kick-off this year of austerity, I chose to hold the State of the County in our very own chambers. I believe this sends the proper message that we are tightening our belts and rolling up our sleeves. This is a place of business and I intend to work with my colleagues and our County departments to ensure that the peoples' work is being done in the most efficient, cost-effective way.

This Board has institutional knowledge on its side. The five of us have been together for 16 years and we believe we have earned your trust. Supervisor Roberts and I were honored to be re-elected in November. That says to me that you want experienced leadership and I look forward to continuing our service to this County.

This Board is a team and I would like to take a moment to highlight some of the accomplishments from each Supervisor for the past year:

In District 1, Supervisor Greg Cox helped unite cities and public agencies for an anti-graffiti campaign. The high-tech program allows law enforcement to nail the vandals and make them pay for damages. Supervisor Cox also worked to secure funding for beach water quality monitoring.

In District 2, Supervisor Jacob worked tirelessly for the completion and implementation of the fire deployment study and today our County is better prepared and better protected from the constant threat of wildfires.

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price helped to establish a countywide Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force. This group focuses on stopping prescription drug abuse among teens – who find these drugs in their parents' medicine cabinet. She and Sheriff Bill Gore also set up over 20 permanent drug drop boxes at safe locations, where you can dispose of your unused prescription drugs to keep them out of the hands of children. She also implemented the E-comment system

where from the comfort of your own living room you can provide feedback to the Board of Supervisors about our meetings. You can take a test drive of this new system following my State of the County speech. I look forward to reading all of your positive comments.

Obviously, that old adage that government moves slowly is understated. Ron Roberts in District 4 has been at the forefront of the Waterfront Park, a 103 year old vision. I don't think Ron has been working on it that long. He has also shown great leadership in the new County Operations Center in Kearny Mesa. The latest phase is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of this year—likely on time, under budget and built at a huge savings to the taxpayers without any Project Labor Agreements.

We are backed with solid leadership from our Chief Administrative Officer, Walt Ekard and Assistant CAO Helen Robbins-Meyer along with a tremendous team of group leaders including Chief Financial Officer Don Steuer.

I'm proud of our accomplishments in public safety, fire protection, health and human services, parks and recreation, public works, and libraries.

The safety of our residents has been and will continue to be our top priority.

We need to remain vigilant in the fight against predators in our communities. It is important that the County not only does its best to protect our children from violent sex offenders, but also provides residents with up-to-date information about these criminals living in our neighborhoods. Last May, I spearheaded the creation and implementation of a Sex Offender E-mail Notification System. This system will allow subscribers to be notified when a registered sex offender moves into or out of their area and is scheduled to be up and running this Spring.

I am also continuing my work to address our region's gang problems, which I have been doing for the past 16 years. Last year, I formed a coalition of policy makers, law enforcement, educators and community organizations to establish the North County Comprehensive Gang Initiative, a research-based model developed by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention. This initiative will augment the tremendous suppression efforts of our law enforcement through increased prevention and intervention.

Crime rates in San Diego County are continuing to drop - a surprising fact during difficult economic times, but a testament to the outstanding work of our Sheriff Bill Gore, District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis and our men and women in uniform.

The other side of public safety is emergency services. We all know first-hand about the threat of major wildfire in our region. Many areas in our County have not burned in 60 years. We continue to fight extreme environmentalism that has prevented us from removing large populations of dead, dying, and diseased trees.

Last year, in addition to the \$15 million we fund annually, Supervisor Slater-Price and I asked the Board to allocate \$5 million to the San Diego Fire Authority. That money is helping to build new training centers, buy new equipment, and recruit volunteer firefighters that protect our County without breaking the bank. We have coordinated volunteer firefighters and continue to contract with Cal Fire. The Governor's budget proposal to cut funding to Cal Fire is not good; however, we will do everything in our power to ensure that the County is prepared for the inevitable.

It is hard to believe, but in September, America will mark the ten year anniversary of 9/11. This will be a time to honor the victims and the heroes and will serve as a painful reminder that the unthinkable can happen at any time and we need to be prepared. Disaster preparedness has always been a top priority for me. As Chairman of the Board and of the Unified Disaster Council, this year will be no different. I'm happy to say that since 9/11 the communication breakdown between agencies has been corrected.

We also need to be prepared to recover from disasters. Last year, with the help of the San Diego Fire Chiefs Association, Chief Augie Ghio, the Office of Emergency Services, and a concerned citizen named Sean Scott; we helped produce the most comprehensive individual guide to disaster recovery this County has ever seen. "The Red Guide to Disaster Recovery" is

now on fire trucks throughout the region, ready to be given to those who have lost their homes or possessions in a disaster.

The County is more prepared for disaster than ever before thanks to Director Ron Lane and his outstanding team at the Office of Emergency Services. I will continue my work to ensure that Ron has all of the tools he needs to protect this County.

Emergency response, like so many things, depends on being able to get from Point A to Point B. We are continuing to work on projects throughout the region that reduce traffic congestion and improve our transportation options.

On the regional level, I joined elected officials from across our region on the SANDAG Board of Directors to create a plan of highway and transit projects for the next forty years. By 2050 our region will add 200 miles of new trolley lines, double-track the Coaster and Sprinter lines, and add lanes to I-15, I-5, SR-76, and SR-94. Our plan to reduce congestion on our roads and highways will keep our region moving forward long after we're gone.

County airports are continuing to improve as well. The McClellan-Palomar Airport in Carlsbad underwent a major update recently as we built a brand new terminal and restaurant facility and a new parking lot without spending any general fund money. The credit goes to our outstanding team in the Department of Public Works, including former Director John Snyder, current Director Rich Crompton, Mike Robinson, and Pete Drinkwater for the work they have done to secure FAA grants for these improvements. This year, we will continue to seek new grants to further improve our airports

Health is always a major issue for local government. In 2010, under the leadership of Nick Macchione, we have a comprehensive plan that guides County services to support healthy communities. The plan known as Building Better Health is a countywide initiative aimed at improving the health and well-being of San Diego residents. It's the framework for all County departments focusing on optimizing existing resources, delivering services efficiently, and informing residents about the choices they can make to lead healthier lives.

Building off of this health initiative, HHSa is also developing a comprehensive strategy for safety called Fostering Safe Communities. The goal for this 10 year plan is to identify opportunities to integrate services, optimize resources and increase collaboration with partners in support of safety. Prevention, protection, preparedness and response will be key focus areas. These plans support our Vision: A County that is healthy, safe and thriving.

Another area where we need to focus services is to our veterans. San Diego is home to the nation's largest number of veterans returning from wartime duty. There are approximately 240,000 veterans in our county, and it is our honor to do everything we can to help them adjust to life at home.

As a former combat Marine, I can tell you firsthand how critical it is to support our returning service men and women. In October of 2009, we began "COURAGE TO CALL", a program to provide confidential, peer supported services to Veterans and Active Duty Military. This includes a help line for individuals and their families to connect them to important services. I am proud to announce that beginning this month we will be adding the San Diego Veterans' Coalition to this program. The San Diego Veterans' Coalition is a collaborative work group of providers who will address outreach, transition assistance, basic needs, and legal initiatives.

In the spring of 2011, they will begin enhanced services to Veterans including seminars on reducing stress and reintegration into family life, providing basic needs such as bus tokens and trolley passes for transportation, and providing information regarding services and benefits available to returning service members and their families.

We are blessed to have Tom Splitgerber, and his team, who do a tremendous job with our veterans even with the threat of budget cuts from the governor. I would also like to thank former Director of the San Diego VA Health Care System, Gary Rossio who is a great ally in our mission.

Recently, this Board was honored to be a part of the new veterans' cemetery at Miramar by funding the Avenue of Flags out of our Neighborhood Reinvestment Program funds.

Tonight, I am also proud to announce an upcoming conference with this Board of Supervisors to discuss veterans' issues and continue to look for ways to better serve our heroes.

Not far from Camp Pendleton, where thousands of our warriors train and keep our nation safe, is the Village of Fallbrook.

Last month, a dream came true when we opened the brand new Fallbrook Library. This was the result of years of partnering with community leaders and the Friends of the Fallbrook Library who worked tirelessly to match every dollar from the County's Neighborhood Reinvestment Program. The beauty of the art on the inside is matched only by the spectacular architecture on the outside.

This new state-of-the-art facility also features a place to grow plants on the roof; I can assure you we will not be growing Marijuana, because if we were, we'd find our Library Director Jose Aponte on the roof pulling "weeds". This is the eighth library in the Fifth District that has opened during my time as North County's Supervisor, thanks in no small part to Mikel Haas and his terrific staff.

I recommend you pay a visit to Fallbrook and see this awe-inspiring new library.

We have worked hard to stretch our dollars, but I know we can do more. Since 2005, 80 percent of all new private sector jobs in America were created in Texas. I'd like to see that happen in our region. In 2010, this Board and the voters sent a message to organized labor that this County will not tolerate sweetheart deals with labor unions. With the overwhelming passage of Proposition A, Project Labor Agreements will not be required on County projects. I'm proud to say we have built several substantial projects in recent years, such as the state-of-the-art Medical Examiner facility at the County Operations Center in Kearny Mesa, and we paid for many of them in cash! Soon we will begin work on the Waterfront Park right outside this building, which I believe will be a lasting and beautiful legacy for this Board of Supervisors. This is a testament to the principles and policies we set in place when this County was on the verge of bankruptcy in 1995.

I have always been a staunch defender of private property rights and believe our economy works best when government gets out of the way. As Ronald Reagan said, "Government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem." That is why I have been such a vocal critic of our General Plan Update. I believe there is no greater stakeholder in this process than the property owners. I have and will continue to fight for their Constitutional property rights. I

want to make sure that after 12 years of work that we are not kowtowing to political expedience to get it done faster, but not better. We have come a long way, but there are still important details we need to focus on, so that we have the right plan, not the right now plan. I personally feel government does not have the right to devalue your land and leave you with the crumbs. The government already owns more than half of the land in this County – Enough is enough!

Recently, our Board held a water conference to discuss water availability, groundwater, desalination and conservation. I would like to continue that discussion over the next year. Water is our most precious resource and the better we understand these issues, the better we can plan for our future. We do, after all, live in a semi-arid zone.

I believe that too often our County suffers from TMG - Too Much Government. I want to provide regulatory relief to our customers. We had great success with our Boutique Winery Ordinance and I will be asking staff to take a look at our equine ordinance in the next few months. We have many resources in our backcountry and I want our neighbors to be able to enjoy hiking, local wines and food, and horses among others without excessive government regulation.

We have a dedicated and able staff in our Department of Planning and Land Use. They have made great strides under Director Eric Gibson's leadership, and I want to continue to do more. In this tough economy where building is largely at a standstill, I believe it is the right time to review our current policies and figure out new ways to help our customers navigate the bureaucracy. Too often our regulations discourage improvements to property. We need to cut the red-tape. To aid in this endeavor, I will be calling for a commission to be formed, made up of building industry and land use experts. This commission will work with the County to clean-up our regulations and to find ways to streamline how we do business.

I would like to see reduced wait times and fewer redundancies with the goal of improved customer service. I believe there are things we can implement today to achieve these goals without raising fees and I challenge DPLU staff and our commission to work together on these improvements. There's an old saying that "The Customer is Always Right." In this case, "The Taxpayer is Always Right" and as Sir Colin Marshall once said, "The customer doesn't expect everything will go right all the time; the big test is what you do when things go wrong."

This will go a long way toward putting our local businesses back to work.

Last year, in partnership with the San Diego North Economic Development Council, I sponsored a workshop for contractors looking to find ways to get back to work. More than 300 people showed up. They represented thousands of quality building and construction workers who are struggling to keep their families together during tough times. I intend to continue my work to get our local economy back on track.

I am encouraged by what happened nationally when millions of Americans made it clear they were not pleased with the direction the United States has taken; especially in the area of fiscal responsibility.

The hope and change Americans were promised two years ago have proven to be little more than rhetoric. I hope that our leaders in D.C. will make changes to the way they do business and that the promises of fiscal restraint and reform are implemented and not simply campaign echoes.

As for the State of California, we have a new, but familiar, Governor who will “promise you the moon” and a legislature with large majorities that continues to stand in the way of business. Each year they find new ways to hamstring local economies by mandating bigger government and not paying for it. I believe the passage of Proposition 25, which allows the State legislature to pass a budget with a simple majority instead of a two-thirds vote, will only make this worse.

There is no doubt about it, we are in a recession. And, while I remain optimistic and believe in this County and indeed our great Nation, it is my duty to both plan for the realities of today and prepare for the promise of tomorrow.

One of the greatest honors bestowed on me was the opportunity to lead 270 Marines in combat for a year. I will never forget their courage and dedication to our freedom.

I am also honored and humbled to serve as Supervisor of the Fifth District and Chairman of this dedicated Board and I am extremely proud of our team and its determination to do the right thing.

Thank you for being here tonight. God bless you all.

