

GOVERNOR SCOTT, SENATOR RING, PROFESSOR MATKIN, FELLOW ELECTED OFFICIALS, BROWARD WORKSHOP OFFICERS AND MEMBERS, AND GUESTS, ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUES ON THE BROWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, I WELCOME YOU THIS MORNING TO OUR DYNAMIC AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF OVER 1.8 MILLION PERSONS, MAKING BROWARD COUNTY THE SECOND LARGEST COUNTY IN POPULATION IN THE GREAT STATE OF FLORIDA.

WE GATHER TODAY TO MAKE A SOBER ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF THE COUNTY, THE REGION, AND THE STATE. FOR BROWARD COUNTY, I CAN TELL YOU OUR ECONOMIC, FISCAL, AND SOCIAL SAFETY NET IS GUARDED BUT STABLE. THE COUNTY'S TOTAL FISCAL YEAR 2011 BUDGET, INCLUDING ENTERPRISE FUNDS LIKE THE AIRPORT AND SEAPORT, IS APPROXIMATELY \$4 BILLION WITH A GENERAL FUND

BUDGET OF NEARLY \$926 MILLION SUPPORTED BY LEVYING NEARLY \$655 MILLION IN PROPERTY TAXES. BATTERED BY THE GREAT RECESSION, WITH DECLINING PROPERTY VALUES, DECLINING GENERAL REVENUES, FEES, AND CHARGES, BROWARD COUNTY HAS SINCE 2008 HAD CUMULATIVE GENERAL FUND BUDGET GAPS TOTALING \$385 MILLION; OF WHICH \$254 MILLION HAS BEEN ADDRESSED BY OPERATING EXPENSE REDUCTIONS INCLUDING THE ELIMINATION OF OVER 1800 POSITIONS.

IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, THIS YEAR'S TOTAL PROPERTY TAX LEVY OF NEARLY \$722 MILLION IS THE LOWEST AMOUNT LEVIED SINCE **FISCAL YEAR 2003; EVEN THOUGH SINCE THAT SNAPSHOT IN TIME THE CPI HAS INCREASED 26% AND OUR POPULATION HAS INCREASED BY 6%.**

TO MAKE ENDS MEET AND BALANCE OUR BUDGET AS REQUIRED BY LAW, WE HAVE HAD TO RE-EXAMINE HOW WE DO BUSINESS, WHAT ARE OUR CORE SERVICES, AND BASIC SOCIAL SAFETY NET NEEDS. NO

COUNTY DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, OFFICE, AGENCY, OR ENTITY'S BUDGET HAS NOT BEEN THOROUGHLY OPERATIONALLY REVIEWED FOR COSTS REDUCTIONS AND INCREASED EFFICIENCIES.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU A FEW EXAMPLES.

THE COUNTY'S PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION WHICH IS NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AS A GOLD MEDAL WINNER AND NATIONALLY ACCREDITED, IS ALSO ONE OF THE LARGEST COUNTY AGENCIES IN THE GENERAL FUND. THE PARKS DIVISION IS THE STEWARD OF OVER 6500 ACRES WITH 18 REGIONAL PARKS, SIX NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, FOUR NATURE CENTERS, AND 21 NATURAL AREA SITES, WITH OVER 4 MILLION VISITORS ANNUALLY, AND GENERATING \$10.6 MILLION IN REVENUE FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF PUBLIC AMENITIES AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE CONCESSION PARTNERSHIPS.

HOWEVER, DUE TO BUDGETARY SHORTFALLS, WE HAD TO CLOSE ALL BUT FOUR OF OUR REGIONAL PARKS TWO DAYS A WEEK TO MAKE

BUDGETARY ENDS MEET. UNHAPPY WITH THIS SCENARIO, THE COUNTY INITIATED A STUDY OF THE PARKS' DIVISIONS OPERATIONS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM AND RETAINED A NATIONAL RECOGNIZED CONSULTANT TO CONDUCT THAT COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW. THE GOAL OF THE STUDY WAS TO FOCUS ON THE CHANGES PARKS COULD MAKE TO ACHIEVE GREATER FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY WITHOUT SACRIFICING THE VALUE OF PARK SYSTEM'S ASSETS, AMENITIES, OR LOWER THE QUALITY OF, OR THE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO, PARK VISITORS.

I AM HAPPY TO REPORT AFTER THAT REVIEW AND THROUGH A COMBINATION OF INTERNAL RESTRUCTURING; INCLUDING CONSOLIDATING PARK ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS AND MAINTENANCE CREWS, CHANGING JOB CLASSIFICATIONS TO ATTAIN MORE JOB AND TASK ASSIGNMENT FLEXIBILITY, MOVING TOWARD AN OUTCOME BASED CULTURE, IMPROVING AND EXPANDING EFFICIENCIES, MORE STRATEGIC PLANNING INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL REGIONAL PARK

BUSINESS PLANS AND NEW MARKETING STRATEGIES – WE ARE ON THE THRESHOLD OF BEING ABLE TO RE-OPEN FOUR ADDITIONAL REGIONAL PARKS BACK TO SEVEN DAYS A WEEK WITH FULL SERVICES AND WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES IN TERMS OF STAFFING AND EQUIPMENT.

THE COUNTY COMMISSION HAS NOW LIKEWISE TAKEN THE SAME STUDY APPROACH TO THE COUNTY'S LIBRARY SYSTEM, ANOTHER ONE OF THE "BIG" THREE IN THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET, THE OTHER BEING TRANSPORTATION, AND ONE OF THE LARGEST COUNTYWIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN THE STATE AND THE NATION.

DURING THE GREAT RECESSION, AS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES ARE FORCED TO GIVE-UP COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCESS AT HOME BECAUSE OF THE COST, OUR COUNTY LIBRARIES HAVE BECOME LIFELINES FOR THE PUBLIC SEEKING KNOWLEDGE AND COMPUTER ACCESS TO DEVELOP RESUMES AND BE ABLE TO MAKE NUMEROUS ON-LINE APPLICATIONS SEEKING GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT AND A BETTER PERSONAL FINANCIAL FUTURE. THE LIBRARIES' STUDY IS COMPLETED

AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPTIONS OF THE CONSULTANT ARE NOW BEING REVIEWED BY STAFF AND WILL BE PART OF THIS YEAR'S BUDGET PROCESS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012.

BUT IT HAS NOT JUST BEEN STRUCTURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES THAT THE COUNTY HAS REVIEWED FOR EFFICIENCIES AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES. THE COUNTY COMMISSION, ADMINISTRATION, AND OUR EMPLOYEES HAVE ALSO COME TOGETHER TO RECOGNIZE THE DIRE BUDGETARY STRAITS WE HAVE FACED AND HAVE JOINTLY AGREED TO MEET BUDGETARY SHORTFALLS WITH A STRONG PREMISE TO RETAIN AS MANY JOBS AS POSSIBLE, THOUGH LAST YEAR WE HAD SOME LAYOFFS. AGAIN THIS FISCAL YEAR, OUR EMPLOYEES AGREED TO FIVE FURLOUGH DAYS AND INCREASED EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS WHICH TOGETHER REPRESENTS A 5% PAY CUT OR MORE, DEPENDING UPON THE EMPLOYEE'S HEALTH INSURANCE NEEDS SUCH AS INDIVIDUAL VERSUS FAMILY COVERAGE, ETC. YET, THROUGHOUT THESE DIFFICULT

FINANCIAL TIMES OUR EMPLOYEES CONTINUE TO ANSWER THE COMMISSION'S CALL TO DONATE TONS OF FOOD **YEAR ROUND** TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY FOOD BANKS FROM HAVING BARREN CUPBOARDS, DONATING SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND CLOTHING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES' NEEDY CHILDREN, MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR HAITIAN AND DOMESTIC DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS, AND PET FOOD AND SUPPLIES FOR OUR PUBLIC ANIMAL SHELTER POPULATIONS WHICH DAILY ARE NEAR OR AT CAPACITY.

THAT IS JUST A SNAPSHOT OF THE COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO STABILIZE RIGHT SIZE OUR GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC WITHIN OUR REDUCED REVENUES RESULTING FROM THE GREAT RECESSION.

HOWEVER, RECENTLY WE HAVE ALSO BEEN ENCOURAGED BY TRENDS IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY. OUR TWIN ECONOMIC ENGINES, PORT EVERGLADES AND FORT LAUDERDALE-HOLLYWOOD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HAVE BOTH SEEN SOLID INCREASES IN CARGO AND PASSENGER TRAFFIC.

DESPITE THE SEVERE WINTER WEATHER THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, THE AIRPORT, IN JANUARY 2011 MARKED THE 17TH CONSECUTIVE MONTH OF POSITIVE GROWTH IN TOTAL AIR PASSENGER TRAFFIC AND WAS THE BUSIEST MONTH ON RECORD FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC. LIKEWISE AT PORT EVERGLADES, 2010 SAW CRUISE PASSENGER AND REVENUE INCREASES TO A RECORD OF NEARLY \$46 MILLION IN REVENUE - A 22% INCREASE IN CRUISE REVENUE OVER 2009 AND ALSO SET A ONE DAY RECORD FOR TOTAL CRUISE PASSENGER TRAFFIC WHICH RECEIVED NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM.

CORRESPONDINGLY, OUR TOURISM IS TRENDING FAVORABLY WITH JANUARY 2011 HOTEL OCCUPANCY AT 75 PERCENT WHICH I AM TOLD IS THE HIGHEST IN THE STATE AND HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR THE SAME TIME PERIOD. IN 2010, TOURIST AND VISITORS SPENT SOME \$8.6 BILLION DURING THEIR BROWARD COUNTY STAY WHICH WAS AN INCREASE OVER 2009.

EVEN WITH THESE POSITIVE TRENDS, HOWEVER; THE COUNTY COMMISSION IS VERY MINDFUL WE MUST CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO MAXIMIZE OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES AS OPERATING COSTS CONTINUE TO ESCALATE AND REVENUES ARE FLAT OR CONTINUE TO LAG BEHIND THE GENERAL SIGNS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY. GOVERNOR, WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY YOUR RECENT DIRECTION CONCERNING THE PORT OF MIAMI DEEP DREDGE. THIS ACTION CLEARLY RECOGNIZES THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF INVESTING IN OUR PORTS. WE ARE NOW FINALIZING OUR STUDY WITH THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS WHICH SHOULD MAKE OUR PORT EVERGLADES READY FOR A SIMILAR INVESTMENT WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

IN THAT VEIN, GOVERNOR, I WOULD RESPECTFULLY ASK YOU TO CONVEY TO YOUR OWN ADMINISTRATION AND TO THE LEGISLATURE NOW IN SESSION, WE AS A COUNTY CANNOT ENDURE ANY ADDITIONAL UNFUNDED MANDATES OF ANY KIND – IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THEY ARE CLOAKED IN THE EUPHEMISMS OF "COST

SHIFTING”, “GREATER LOCAL EFFORT”, OR “USER FEE ADJUSTMENT” – WE AS A COUNTY SIMPLY CANNOT BE FORCED TO BEAR MORE – PERIOD.

HISTORICALLY, IN TERMS OF TAXES, FEES, AND CHARGES COLLECTED IN BROWARD COUNTY AND SENT TO THE STATE, WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A DONOR COUNTY. WE ESTIMATE UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES NOW TAKE **\$70 MILLION** RIGHT OUT OF THE COUNTY’S CHECKBOOK BEFORE WE PAY A PENNY OF OUR OWN EXPENSES. WE SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD TO WRITE ANOTHER CHECK FOR MORE UNFUNDED MANDATES.

SO, I CONCLUDE AS I STARTED THAT BROWARD’S STATE OF THE COUNTY IS GUARDED BUT STABLE. AS WE REDOUBLE OUR FISCAL EFFICIENCIES AND STRATEGIES EFFORTS, WE REMAIN HOPEFUL FOR MORE POSITIVE FINANCIAL RECOVERY IN FISCAL YEAR 2012 AND IN FURTHER FISCAL YEARS OUT.

THANK YOU.