

**2013 State of the County
Presented by
Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez
Caleb Center Auditorium
5400 NW 22 Avenue, Miami, FL 33142
Thursday, February 28, 2013, at 10:00am**

GOOD MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! *BON JOUR! BUENOS DÍAS!*

THANKS SO MUCH FOR THAT WARM WELCOME!

I AM HONORED TO JOIN YOU HERE AT THE CALEB CENTER THIS MORNING.

AND THANK YOU TO COMMISSIONER AUDREY EDMONSON FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION AND FOR WELCOMING US TO THE HEART OF DISTRICT THREE FOR THE *2013 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS*.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN GIVING HER A WARM ROUND OF APPLAUSE!

PLEASE ALSO JOIN ME IN ACKNOWLEDGING CHAIRWOMAN REBECA SOSA, VICE-CHAIRWOMAN LYNDA BELL AND ALL OF OUR DEDICATED COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, AS WELL AS:

COUNTY CLERK HARVEY RUVIN, PROPERTY APPRAISER CARLOS LOPEZ-CANtera, AND COUNTY ATTORNEY BOB CUEVAS.

LET'S GIVE THEM A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY!

FAITH AND FAMILY COME FIRST – I WANT TO THANK GOD FOR THE MANY BLESSINGS THAT HE HAS PROVIDED US.

OUR POLICE DIRECTOR J.D. PATTERSON, WHO IS ALSO A MINISTER, SPOKE ELOQUENTLY TO THAT IN HIS INVOCATION.

THANK YOU, MR. DIRECTOR.

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MY BEAUTIFUL WIFE, LOURDES, FOR BEING HERE TODAY.

YOU KNOW, THERE'S AN OLD SAYING THAT 'BEHIND EVERY GREAT MAN, THERE IS A GREAT WOMAN.'

THROUGH OUR 38 YEARS OF MARRIAGE, LOURDES HAS CONSTANTLY SHOWN ME THAT THE SAYING SHOULD BE:

'BEHIND EVERY GREAT MAN IS AN EVEN GREATER WOMAN.'

OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN ARE HERE TODAY, AS WELL, AND THEY ARE TRULY MY INSPIRATION.

JUST LOOKING AT THEM RIGHT NOW GIVES ME THE CLEAREST REMINDER OF WHY I CHOSE PUBLIC SERVICE.

I LOVE YOU ALL VERY MUCH!

THANK YOU TO THE DISTINGUISHED MAYORS, SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, AND LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS WHO ARE HERE TODAY.

I AM GRATEFUL TO HAVE YOU WITH US.

THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR FOREIGN CONSULAR CORPS AND JUDICIARY, AND WELCOME TO OUR RELIGIOUS, COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS, AS WELL –

YOU ARE THE CAREGIVERS, GOOD COUNSELORS AND JOB-CREATORS WHO HOLD OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER.

THANK YOU TO THE CESAR TURNER ENSEMBLE FOR PROVIDING US WITH SUCH BEAUTIFUL MUSIC.

AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO A WONDERFUL LOCAL TALENT, KAYLA TAYLOR, FOR PROVIDING US WITH THAT STIRRING RENDITION OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AND LEADING US IN THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

THANKS, KAYLA!

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THANKS TO OUR MASTER OF CEREMONIES, JASON JACKSON!

MY FELLOW RESIDENTS, AS I STAND BEFORE YOU THIS MORNING, I DO SO WITH A GRATEFUL HEART AND AN OPTIMISTIC SPIRIT.

I'M GRATEFUL TO THE PEOPLE OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FOR ONCE AGAIN ENTRUSTING ME TO LEAD OUR COMMUNITY FORWARD.

I WILL HONOR THAT TRUST BY SERVING YOU WITH

- HONESTY
- TRANSPARENCY
- AND RESPECT FOR YOUR HARD-EARNED TAX DOLLARS.

THAT'S MY PLEDGE TO YOU.

MI COMPROMISO ES SERVIRLES CON HONESTIDAD, TRANSPARENCIA Y LA PROTECCIÓN DE SUS IMPUESTOS.

I'M ALSO GRATEFUL FOR THE TEAM OF DEDICATED COUNTY EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE ANSWERED THE CALL OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND CONTINUE TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY WITH DISTINCTION.

THEY INCLUDE POLICE OFFICERS, BUS DRIVERS, FIREFIGHTERS, LIBRARIANS, AND MANY OTHERS – AND THEY DESERVE OUR THANKS.

SO PLEASE JOIN ME IN GIVING ALL OF OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS A ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE STATE OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CONTINUES TO IMPROVE AND I'M MORE OPTIMISTIC WITH EACH PASSING DAY.

WHY?

MY OPTIMISM STEMS FROM THE BRIGHTER DAYS THAT I FIRMLY BELIEVE LIE AHEAD – FOR OUR FAMILIES, FOR OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, FOR OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

WITH SOME CHALLENGING DAYS BEHIND US, AND AN ECONOMY THAT IS SLOWLY BUT SURELY REGAINING STRENGTH, I AM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY'S PROSPECTS.

OUR EMPLOYMENT FIGURES ARE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION:

THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYED RESIDENTS IN MIAMI-DADE GREW BY 44,000 DURING FISCAL YEAR 2012.

BUT IT'S NOT JUST STATISTICS THAT ARE FUELING MY POSITIVE OUTLOOK.

IT'S THE CONSTRUCTION CRANES THAT ARE CROPPING UP ACROSS OUR BEAUTIFUL SKYLINE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS.

IT'S THE SMALL BUSINESSES THAT ARE GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START WITH A HELPING HAND FROM LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS LIKE *THE NEIGHBORS AND NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION*.

AND IT'S THE RISING CLASS OF INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURS THAT I SEE OPENING NEW BUSINESSES AND MOVING OUR ECONOMY IN A NEW DIRECTION.

ALONG WITH THE SIGNS OF OPTIMISM THAT I'M SEEING IN OUR COMMUNITY THESE DAYS, I'M ALSO SEEING POSITIVE SIGNS AT COUNTY HALL:

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION, WE PASSED A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET THAT MAINTAINS VITAL PUBLIC SERVICES AND HOLDS THE LINE ON TAXES, THEREBY LEAVING MORE MONEY IN THE HANDS OF RESIDENTS LIKE YOU.

CON EL APOYO DE LA COMISIÓN, APROBAMOS UN PRESUPUESTO RESPONSABLE QUE MANTIENE LOS SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS SIN SUBIR LOS IMPUESTOS.

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, WE REDUCED THE COMBINED PROPERTY TAX RATES, SAVING TAXPAYERS A TOTAL OF \$405 MILLION OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS.

THANK YOU, COMMISSIONERS, FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR RESIDENTS!

SPEAKING OF SAVING OUR RESIDENTS MONEY, ONE OF THE BIGGEST THREATS TO HOMEOWNERSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY TODAY IS PROPERTY INSURANCE RATES.

OUR FAMILIES ARE STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP WITH EVER-INCREASING *CITIZENS* INSURANCE RATES, WHICH AVERAGE \$3,300 HERE IN MIAMI-DADE.

OUR COUNTY IS ALREADY BEARING 29% OF THE *CITIZENS* INSURANCE PREMIUMS IN FLORIDA.

AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THERE IS A PROPOSAL TO OPEN THE DOOR TO MAJOR RATE INCREASES FOR CUSTOMERS.
AS YOUR MAYOR, I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

IT'S TIME FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TO MAKE OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE HEARD ON THIS ISSUE, SO TODAY I AM ANNOUNCING THE CREATION OF THE *MAYOR'S ADVISORY GROUP ON PROPERTY INSURANCE RATES*.

THIS GROUP OF EXPERTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS WILL ASSIST ME IN PROTECTING YOU, YOUR FAMILIES AND YOUR HOMES FROM POTENTIAL RATE INCREASES.

WE KNOW THE ISSUE, WE WILL LEAD THE FIGHT AT THE STATE LEVEL AND WE WILL MAKE MUCH-NEEDED RECOMMENDATIONS TO OUR STATE LEGISLATURE.

WE WILL FIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

THAT IS MY COMMITMENT TO YOU.

GOING BACK TO THE POSITIVE THINGS THAT ARE ALREADY HAPPENING AT THE COUNTY, WE ARE WORKING HARD TO MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT MORE TRANSPARENT AND MORE EFFICIENT.

THERE'S THE *ONLINE CHECKBOOK* WHICH LETS RESIDENTS SEE HOW WE ARE INVESTING THEIR DOLLARS IN QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES.

ALL EMPLOYEE SALARIES – INCLUDING YOURS TRULY – ARE POSTED ONLINE, AS WELL.

AND THIS MORNING I'M PROUD TO ANNOUNCE A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH I.B.M.'S *SMARTER CITIES INITIATIVE*.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS TEAMING UP WITH I.B.M. TO SERVE YOU BETTER – AND SMARTER – THROUGH THE USE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS LIKE THIS ONE ARE IMPORTANT, BECAUSE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T ALWAYS HAVE THE BEST ANSWER OR THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY OF GETTING THINGS DONE FOR YOU.

SO AS WE TACKLE FUTURE PROJECTS LIKE THE OVERHAUL OF OUR AGING WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM, THE COUNTY WON'T JUST BE LOOKING FOR 'BIG GOVERNMENT' SOLUTIONS –

WE'LL BE LOOKING TO FORM ALLIANCES WITH OUR PARTNERS IN THE BUSINESS WORLD THAT ALLOW US TO INNOVATE, EXPAND OUR LOCAL WORKFORCE, AND SAVE OUR RESIDENTS MONEY AT THE SAME TIME.

IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMON SENSE AND AFFORDABLE SOLUTIONS.

AS AN EXAMPLE, LAST YEAR I TOLD YOU THAT WE WOULD CUT RED TAPE AT COUNTY HALL AND DELIVER A MORE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT THAT ENCOURAGES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB-CREATION.

WE ARE KEEPING OUR WORD:

WE'VE MET WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS, GATHERED THEIR FEEDBACK, AND MADE SMART CHANGES TO OUR CODE THAT PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE STREAMLINING APPROVALS.

AS A RESULT, MANY OF OUR PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESSES ARE NOW UP TO 3 MONTHS FASTER THAN THEY USED TO BE, SO FOLKS CAN OPEN UP BUSINESSES MORE QUICKLY AND HELP US PUT RESIDENTS BACK TO WORK.

THINGS ARE ALSO GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION OVER AT THE SEAPORT, WHERE WE'VE HAD ANOTHER GREAT YEAR.

PORTMIAMI CONTINUES TO LIVE UP TO ITS BILLING AS THE “CRUISE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD,” WITH THE ADDITION OF TWO NEW MEMBERS TO OUR GROWING FLEET AND A THIRD NEW CRUISE LINE COMING IN THE FALL.

BIG THINGS ARE HAPPENING ON THE CARGO SIDE AS WELL, WITH \$2 BILLION WORTH OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS MOVING FORWARD:

- THE PORT TUNNEL
- THE F.E.C. RAIL LINK
- AND FINALLY THE DEEP DREDGE PROJECT

TOGETHER, THESE IMPROVEMENTS WILL GIVE US A STRONG COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OVER OTHER U.S. PORTS.

AND OUR TOP ECONOMIC ENGINE, MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, CONTINUES ITS STEADY RISE:

2012 WAS M.I.A.’S BEST YEAR EVER IN TERMS OF BOTH CARGO AND PASSENGER TRAFFIC.

LET ME REPEAT THAT:

2012 WAS M.I.A.’S BEST. YEAR. EVER.

- 2.1 MILLION TONS OF CARGO VALUED AT OVER \$60 BILLION
- AND A RECORD OF ALMOST 40 MILLION PASSENGERS

THESE DAYS, M.I.A. EVEN HAS ITS OWN REALITY SHOW – “AIRPORT 24/7: MIAMI.”

AND THE GOOD NEWS DOESN’T END THERE:

IN JULY, THE METRO-RAIL ORANGE LINE OPENED UP FOR BUSINESS, CREATING THE LONG-AWAITED LINK BETWEEN M.I.A. AND OUR EXPANDING DOWNTOWN.

CLEARLY, THERE'S BEEN NO SHORTAGE OF POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS AT OUR AIRPORT, AND I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNIZE THE MAN WHO HAS LED M.I.A. SINCE 2005.

HE'S A DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVANT AND SOMEONE I'M PROUD TO CALL MY FRIEND:

AVIATION DIRECTOR JOSÉ ABREU

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVEN'T HEARD, DIRECTOR ABREU WILL BE CONCLUDING HIS TENURE AT M.I.A. NEXT MONTH.

JOSÉ, WE ARE GOING TO MISS YOU – BOTH FOR THE DYNAMIC LEADER THAT YOU'VE BEEN AND FOR THE TREMENDOUS FRIEND THAT YOU ARE TO OUR COMMUNITY.

YOU'VE DONE AMAZING THINGS IN YOUR TIME AT THE AIRPORT...FROM THE NORTH TERMINAL, TO THE SOUTH TERMINAL, TO THE M.I.A. MOVER, TO THE INTERMODAL CENTER.

AND YOU'VE PROVIDED STEADY LEADERSHIP AT A TIME WHEN OUR AIRPORT NEEDED IT THE MOST.

THROUGH IT ALL, YOU'VE KEPT YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR AND A SMILE ON YOUR FACE.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY OWES YOU A DEBT OF GRATITUDE FOR YOUR SERVICE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE STAND AND JOIN ME IN GIVING OUR AVIATION DIRECTOR A WELL-DESERVED ROUND OF APPLAUSE!

OUR AIRPORT AND SEAPORT ARE POWERFUL ECONOMIC GENERATORS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, AND THEY ALSO SUPPORT OUR COUNTY'S LEADING INDUSTRY: TRAVEL & TOURISM.

AND THE GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU HAS GIVEN ME THE HONOR OF ANNOUNCING SOME VERY EXCITING TOURISM STATS THIS MORNING:

- A NEW RECORD OF NEARLY 14 MILLION OVERNIGHT VISITORS CAME TO OUR COMMUNITY IN 2012
- THOSE VISITORS SPENT A RECORD OF NEARLY \$22 BILLION WHILE THEY WERE HERE
- AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, TOURISM SUPPORTED A NEW RECORD OF OVER 112,000 LEISURE & HOSPITALITY JOBS IN OUR COMMUNITY LAST YEAR – THAT'S THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN THIS CRITICAL SECTOR

LET'S ALL PUT OUR HANDS TOGETHER FOR THESE INCREDIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FOR THE GREAT TEAM OVER AT THE GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU FOR THEIR EFFORTS!

STAYING ON THE TOPIC OF TOURISM AND CREATING JOBS, THE TIME HAS COME TO REDEVELOP OUR CONVENTION CENTER.

IT'S BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR ECONOMIC FABRIC FOR DECADES, BUT IN RECENT YEARS IT HAS FALLEN BEHIND THE COMPETITION.

SO IT'S TIME THAT WE MAKE THIS COMMUNITY ASSET SHINE ONCE AGAIN!

WE STAND READY TO PARTNER WITH MIAMI BEACH TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

A MODERNIZED, FIRST-RATE, WORLD CLASS CONVENTION CENTER REPRESENTS A PROJECT THAT OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY CAN INVEST IN AND BENEFIT FROM.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT WILL BE A TRUE LOCAL JOB-CREATOR FOR THE LONG TERM.

I MENTIONED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION A FEW MOMENTS AGO, AND IT'S CLEAR THAT OUR COMMUNITY IS FACING SOME MAJOR MOBILITY CHALLENGES.

OUR TASK GOING FORWARD IS TO FIND COMMON SENSE, AFFORDABLE SOLUTIONS TO THOSE CHALLENGES.

NEW EXPRESS LANES AND HIGHWAY OVERPASSES MAY BE HELPFUL IN THE SHORT TERM, BUT BUILDING MORE AND BIGGER ROADS SIMPLY DOESN'T WORK AS A LONG-TERM SOLUTION.

WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT:

- OUR RESIDENTS CAN EASILY GET TO AND FROM WORK;
- OUR KIDS CAN GET SAFELY TO SCHOOL AND ON TIME;
- AND THAT THE FREE FLOW OF GOODS TO MARKET CAN CONTINUE.

IF WE REALLY WANT TO FIX THINGS AND MAKE A MEANINGFUL CHANGE, WE NEED TO EMBRACE INNOVATIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE MOBILITY SOLUTIONS.

AFTER ALL, ONE OF OUR JOBS AS A GOVERNMENT IS TO IMPROVE QUALITY-OF-LIFE, AND MOBILITY GOES RIGHT TO THE HEART OF THAT.

WE ARE ALREADY MAKING PROGRESS:

NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE, THE LIBERTY CITY TRANSIT VILLAGE IS UNDER WAY, THANKS IN LARGE PART TO THE EFFORTS OF COMMISSIONER EDMONSON.

WHEN IT'S DONE, IT WILL BE A CENTRAL LOCATION WHERE FOLKS CAN EAT, SHOP, LIVE AND ACCESS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THAT REACHES ALL CORNERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

AND JUST AS I WANT TO BRING CONNECTIVITY TO THIS PART OF OUR HOMETOWN, I ALSO BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO LINK OUR NEIGHBORS IN MIAMI BEACH AND OUT WEST WITH OUR FAST-GROWING URBAN CORE.

BUT IF WE DON'T LOOK FOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS, ONE THING IS CERTAIN:

THE UNACCEPTABLE STATUS QUO OF CHOKED ROADWAYS AND GRUELING DAILY COMMUTES WILL REMAIN FIRMLY IN PLACE.

AND FOR ME, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THAT SIMPLY ISN'T AN OPTION.

I HAVE A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION IN OUR COUNTY.

SO IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, I WILL BE REACHING OUT TO OUR STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS – AS WELL AS PRIVATE PARTNERS – TO BEGIN A SERIOUS DIALOGUE ABOUT HOW WE CAN FIND SOLUTIONS TO OUR MOBILITY CHALLENGES.

FOCUSING ON MOBILITY IS IMPORTANT TO OUR QUALITY-OF-LIFE, AND SO IS THE CONTINUED REVIVAL OF OUR DOWNTOWN CORE.

THE NEW MUSEUM PARK IS TAKING SHAPE ALONG BISCAYNE BAY AND TOGETHER WITH THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AND THE AMERICAN AIRLINES ARENA – HOME OF THE WORLD CHAMPION MIAMI HEAT – IT WILL ROUND OUT A VIBRANT ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT IN THE HEART OF OUR CITY.

ARTS AND CULTURE ARE A CRITICAL PART OF OUR THRIVING COMMUNITY, AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO THEIR GROWTH:

- WE HAVE THE REINVIGORATED CALEB CENTER
- THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH DADE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER WHICH IS BRINGING MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE TO NEW AUDIENCES
- AND A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT THAT CONTINUES TO FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO BRING ARTS TO THE PEOPLE

ASIDE FROM ENRICHING OUR LIVES, THE ARTS MAKE UP A BIG PART OF OUR LOCAL ECONOMY, WITH AN ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OVER \$1 BILLION A YEAR.

WITH EACH PASSING DAY, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS HELPING TO BUILD OUR COMMUNITY'S REPUTATION AS A GLOBAL CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE, WITH VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD COMING HERE FOR ART BASEL.

JUST LIKE THE CULTURAL ARTS, A STRONG PARKS SYSTEM IS VITAL TO QUALITY-OF-LIFE AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING.

OUR PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT IS DELIVERING ON THAT EVERY DAY, PROVIDING PLACES TO RELAX, PLAY, STAY FIT AND ENJOY THE OUTDOORS.

AND WE ARE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PARKS SYSTEM AS WELL:

OUR *PARKS MASTER PLAN* LOOKS 50 YEARS INTO THE FUTURE TO ENSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL BE ABLE TO ENJOY WORLD-CLASS PARKS AND GREEN SPACES.

ADDITIONALLY, PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT CONTINUES TO BE A PRIORITY FOR ME, AND I APPLAUD THE VOTERS FOR CREATING A CHARTER PROVISION TO PROTECT THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY.

A STRONG EDUCATION SYSTEM IS ALSO INTEGRAL TO BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY.

I KNOW. MY WIFE IS A CAREER EDUCATOR AND WE OFTEN TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN A THRIVING SOCIETY.

AND THE COUNTY IS DOING ITS PART THROUGH DIRECT SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS.

THE MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IS INNOVATING EVERY DAY, TURNING LIBRARIES INTO INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY HUBS.

OUR LIBRARIES CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AN ENRICHING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, WITH ADULT LITERACY COURSES AND A SAFE AFTER-SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR CHILDREN.

AND ENSURING THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN IS MORE PRESSING THAN EVER.

THAT'S WHY SUPERINTENDENT CARVALHO AND I TEAMED UP TO FORM THE *JOINT ROUNDTABLE ON YOUTH SAFETY*.

IT'S A FORUM THAT BRINGS TOGETHER EDUCATORS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND OTHERS TO FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE FOR THE LONG TERM

– NOT ONLY IN OUR SCHOOLS, BUT ALSO IN THE PARKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE THEY LIVE AND PLAY.
FOR TOO LONG, TOO MANY OF OUR CHILDREN HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO SENSELESS ACTS OF VIOLENCE.

IT'S TIME FOR US TO STAND UP FOR OUR CHILDREN, AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE DOING.

WE ARE ALSO PARTNERING WITH OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AND WORKING TO CREATE A DIRECT PIPELINE BETWEEN OUR CLASSROOMS AND THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

BECAUSE WHILE FOCUSING ON K THROUGH 12 EDUCATION IS CRITICAL, FOCUSING ON "K THROUGH CAREER" EDUCATION IS JUST AS IMPORTANT.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENDING THE BRAIN-DRAIN THAT SEES OUR BRIGHTEST YOUNG MINDS LEAVING TOWN AND APPLYING THEIR SKILLS ELSEWHERE.

I WANT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO GAIN VALUABLE WORK EXPERIENCE HERE *BEFORE* THEY GRADUATE, SO THAT THEY'RE READY TO HIT THE GROUND RUNNING WITH QUALITY LOCAL JOBS *AFTER* THEY GRADUATE.

YO DESEO QUE NUESTROS JOVENES SE GRADUEN CON UN ALTO NIVEL DE EXPERIENCIA, PARA QUE ESTÉN LISTOS PARA TRABAJAR AQUÍ.

THAT GOAL IS RIGHT IN LINE WITH THE *ONE COMMUNITY, ONE GOAL INITIATIVE* WHICH I CO-CHAIR:

WE'VE IDENTIFIED KEY GROWTH INDUSTRIES THAT WILL CREATE LOCAL JOBS, AND NOW WE ARE GIVING OUR STUDENTS THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE THEY NEED TO FILL THOSE JOBS.

AT THE COUNTY, WE OFFER HANDS-ON INTERNSHIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, COLLEGE STUDENTS AND EVEN GRADUATE STUDENTS THROUGH THE *URBAN FELLOWS PROGRAM*.

OUR FRIENDS AT SOUTH FLORIDA WORKFORCE ARE ON BOARD WITH THIS MISSION, AS WELL.

LAST YEAR, WE TEAMED UP TO CREATE THE *MIAMI-DADE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP*, AND I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT MORE THAN 500 YOUNG ADULTS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN PAID INTERNSHIPS SINCE THEN.

IN FACT, SOUTH FLORIDA WORKFORCE'S NEW MOBILE JOBS UNIT IS PARKED RIGHT OUTSIDE – BE SURE TO LOOK AT IT ON YOUR WAY OUT!

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE IS ALSO HELPING STUDENTS GAIN VALUABLE WORK EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES THROUGH THE *YEAR UP* PROGRAM.

THIS YEAR'S CLASS IS HONING THEIR SKILLS IN A FIELD THAT MUST PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN OUR COMMUNITY'S ECONOMIC FUTURE: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.

AND ON THE TOPIC OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPING I.T. JOBS, I RECENTLY JOINED F.I.U. PRESIDENT MARK ROSENBERG AT THE *F.I.U. AMERICAS VENTURE CAPITAL CONFERENCE*.

IT'S A PLATFORM FOR YOUNG TECH ENTREPRENEURS TO PITCH THEIR I.T. BUSINESS IDEAS TO INVESTORS.

THESE PROGRAMS ARE SUCCESSFULLY CONNECTING OUR STUDENTS TO THE WORKPLACE.

BUT THEY'RE DOING SOMETHING EVEN MORE PROFOUND:

THEY ARE PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR A GROWING CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP THAT IS DESTINED TO BECOME A MAJOR PART OF OUR ECONOMY.

AND FOSTERING THE GROWTH OF OUR CREATIVE CLASS – ESPECIALLY IN THE I.T. SECTOR – IS A PRIORITY FOR ME.

IF WE WANT TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE, DIVERSE ECONOMY THAT MAKES US A CENTER FOR INVESTMENT AND COMMERCE, WE NEED TO ADD NEW DIMENSIONS TO OUR ECONOMY.

BECAUSE WE'VE ALL SEEN WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN A CONSTRUCTION-HEAVY ECONOMY AND A NATIONAL HOUSING CRASH CONVERGE – AND FOLKS, IT ISN'T PRETTY.

TO BE CLEAR, I'M NOT INTERESTED IN REPLACING OUR CORE INDUSTRIES.

BUT I AM INTERESTED IN ADDING A FEW MORE PILLARS TO THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR ECONOMY...FORWARD-THINKING BUSINESSES THAT WILL GIVE MIAMI A COMPETITIVE EDGE IN A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE.

AND CREATING A ROBUST LINK BETWEEN EDUCATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS THE RIGHT FORMULA TO GET US THERE.

THANKS TO OUR NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED EDUCATION SYSTEM, WE ALREADY HAVE A GOOD SUPPLY OF SMART, CAPABLE YOUNG PEOPLE:

OUR LOCAL COLLEGES, TRADE SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES ARE PRODUCING TECH-SAVVY GRADUATES WHO ARE FILLING THE RANKS OF A GROWING CREATIVE CLASS OF YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS.

IN FACT, MORE STUDENTS AT F.I.U. ARE NOW GRADUATING WITH A DEGREE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE THAN ANY OTHER DEGREE.

AND PLACES LIKE THE U.M. LIFE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY PARK ARE GENERATING CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH AND BIOSCIENCE JOBS FOR OUR RESIDENTS, FURTHER CEMENTING MIAMI'S STATUS AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN PEDIATRICS AND HEALTHCARE.

IF WE WANT TO BUILD ON THOSE TRENDS AND KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HERE WITH THE PROMISE OF GOOD JOBS AND A GOOD QUALITY-OF-LIFE, WE MUST FOCUS ON FOSTERING GROWTH IN TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

REALIGNING OUR EXISTING JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO ELEVATE THESE NEW ECONOMIC PILLARS IS ALSO VITAL.

BUT IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME TO JUST STAND HERE AND TALK ABOUT THESE ASPIRATIONS.

SO WE ARE INVESTING A TOTAL OF \$1 MILLION IN *THE LAUNCH PAD*, AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACCELERATOR IN DOWNTOWN MIAMI WHICH PROVIDES GRANTS AND FREE WORKSPACE TO TECH START-UPS.

THE FIRST CLASS OF COMPANIES IS ALREADY HARD AT WORK, DEVELOPING THEIR I.T. VENTURES.

I'M HOPING THAT THE NEXT TWITTER OR FACEBOOK WILL BE BORN HERE, AND THAT WE WILL BECOME THE NEXT SILICON VALLEY – OF COURSE, WE CAN CALL IT *TECH BEACH*.

BEYOND MAKING DIRECT INVESTMENTS, WE ARE PARTNERING WITH PROMINENT ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE KNIGHT FOUNDATION, WHICH IS LEADING THE CHARGE TO CREATE A CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY.

A GOOD EXAMPLE IS THEIR RECENT \$2 MILLION COMMITMENT TO FUND A NEW MIAMI OFFICE FOR *ENDEAVOR*, A RENOWNED GLOBAL NON-PROFIT THAT MENTORS AND SUPPORTS PROMISING START-UPS.

BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, *ENDEAVOR*'S FIRST U.S. AFFILIATE WILL BE UP AND RUNNING RIGHT HERE IN MIAMI, CONNECTING LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS TO A POWERFUL GLOBAL NETWORK.

AND TO GIVE YOU SOME PERSPECTIVE, *ENDEAVOR* COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY CREATED AT LEAST 200,000 NEW JOBS AND \$5 BILLION IN REVENUE. THOSE IMPRESSIVE NUMBERS ILLUSTRATE THE POTENTIAL THAT CAN BE UNLEASHED WHEN FOLKS WITH GOOD IDEAS ARE PAIRED WITH STRONG SUPPORT NETWORKS.

I'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY THANK THE KNIGHT FOUNDATION AND *ENDEAVOR* FOR THE GREAT FAITH THAT THEY'RE SHOWING IN MIAMI.

THEY'RE DOING TREMENDOUS WORK TO CULTIVATE A NEW GENERATION OF CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS HERE AND THEY HAVE MY SUPPORT AND MY APPRECIATION.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THERE'S A MOVEMENT BUILDING – A *CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP* – AND AS YOUR MAYOR, I AM COMMITTED TO MAKING SURE THAT THE POSITIVE MOMENTUM CONTINUES.

AT THE OUTSET OF MY REMARKS TODAY, I SAID THAT I WAS OPTIMISTIC.

AND WHEN YOU TAKE A MOMENT TO LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE, IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY.

OUR COMMUNITY HAS A LOT GOING FOR IT:

- AN ECONOMY THAT IS HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION;
- A COUNTY GOVERNMENT THAT IS WORKING SMARTER AND MORE OPENLY AS IT DELIVERS CRITICAL SERVICES TO OUR RESIDENTS;
- COMMUNITY PARTNERS WHO CARE DEEPLY ABOUT OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE AND OUR COMMUNITY'S LONG TERM WELLBEING;
- A STRONG EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT IS TEACHING A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS;
- AND A GROWING ENTREPRENEURSHIP MOVEMENT THAT IS CREATING A NEW ECONOMY – AND NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES – FOR OUR RESIDENTS.

THESE ARE INDEED EXCITING TIMES – OPTIMISTIC TIMES – FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

...A CHANCE FOR US TO REINVENT OURSELVES, TO BETTER OURSELVES, AND TO GROW OUR ECONOMY IN A NEW DIRECTION.

BRIGHTER DAYS ARE AHEAD AND I'M EXCITED TO LEAD US DOWN THE PATH TO PROSPERITY IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO FULFILL OUR POTENTIAL AS A DYNAMIC GLOBAL COMMUNITY THAT STANDS OUT ON THE WORLD STAGE.

ES EL MOMENTO PARA REALIZAR NUESTRO POTENCIAL COMO UNO DE LAS PRINCIPALES CIUDADES DEL MUNDO.

I'LL NEED YOUR HELP – IT WILL TAKE THE SHARED EFFORTS OF ALL OF US – BUT TOGETHER, I'M CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL SUCCEED.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME THIS MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.
I'M HONORED BY YOUR PRESENCE AND YOUR SUPPORT.

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU AND CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

THANK YOU! *GRACIAS! MERCI!*