Good morning everyone!

First let me welcome Chairwoman Rebecca Sosa, Commissioner Bruno Barreiro, our Clerk of Courts Mr. Harvey Ruvin, our tax collector Marcus Saiz de la Mora, and from the City of Miami, CFO Fernando Casamayor.

A big thank you to Father Eddy Alvarez from the beautiful historic GESU Church here in Downtown Miami.

We've read in the Gospels that Jesus befriended the tax collectors…so we're glad you are here.

Welcome to you all, and thank you for joining us as we open the brand new Miami-Dade County tax collector's office.

There's that old saying from Ben Franklin about how "in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

That certainly doesn't mean that you're experience with the tax collector can't be a pleasant one!

Actually, the role of the tax collector is a very important one to Miami-Dade County.

This office is responsible for collecting over $4 billion a year in real estate taxes, local business tax receipts, convention and tourist taxes and auto tag fees.

Just think, the taxes for over 950,000 parcels of real estate, 175,000 local businesses and 2.3 million vehicles, vessels and mobile homes, are all collected from this office.

It's a big job, and now Marcus and his team will have a brand new office from where to provide even better customer service.

This new office location is really an example of the mixed-use pedestrian friendly Downtown we are all working to achieve.

Besides functioning as a parking garage, the lower level of this building will house this government service along with other businesses.

This promotes common sense mixed-use development, making it easier for the residents of Miami-Dade County to access the services of this office.

And, it is fitting that the office responsible for collecting the "green" is in a "green building" itself.

This is one of the first County buildings to achieve a Gold LEED status.

Going green means we save taxpayer money, and this building will save an estimated $15,000 in taxpayer money each year by incorporating all sorts of efficiency measures such as a daylight harvesting system to lower electrical consumption.

Also, because no one likes to wait in line at a government office, the first floor has various workstations to serve customers with improved speed and efficiency.

And, the office now has a state-of-the-art queuing system will help move customers more quickly through the process, allow agents to answer customer inquiries directly, and process payments more efficiently.

This all comes together to making even a trip to the tax collector a more pleasant experience for our residents.

As always, our County team has done a great job in getting this project finished.

Let me thank the director of our Internal Services Department, Lester Sola, and his Design & Construction Services team: Monica Viener, interior designer, and Marc Lafrance, construction manager.

Also, a thank you to Marcus Saiz de la Mora, THE Tax Collector and his team: Peter Cam, Asst Tax Collector, Geovany Dumas, IT Systems Manager.

Thanks to your efforts, and the efforts of everyone involved in this project, our residents will have a faster, better, and more pleasant.

And this is what I mean by transforming the way we deliver government services.

Our residents deserve the very best from us, and continue to work to make Miami-Dade County the best possible place for all we serve.

Thank you!