

BILL, THANK YOU FOR INTRODUCING ME AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP IN TAKING TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN MIAMI TO NEW HEIGHTS.

BILL, YOU ARE SO MIAMI!

DEAR FRIENDS, IT'S A PLEASURE TO JOIN YOU FOR YOUR ANNUAL MEETING AND TO SHARE IN THE GOOD NEWS THAT IS COMING FROM THE GMCVB AS WE CONTINUE TO GROW THE TOURISM INDUSTRY HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

MIAMI AND ITS BEACHES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A TOURIST DESTINATION.

BUT I THINK THAT AT NO OTHER TIME HAVE OUR CITY AND OUR BRAND BEEN HOTTER.

NO MATTER WHERE YOU TRAVEL IN THE WORLD, "MIAMI" REPRESENTS THE EXCITEMENT OF A DIVERSE, MULTI-CULTURAL CITY THAT IS ATTRACTING PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER.

THIS IS HAPPENING BECAUSE WE ARE ALL WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE THE INVESTMENTS THAT ATTRACT VISITORS TO OUR COMMUNITY AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OUR RESIDENTS.

I KNOW THAT THE GMCVB IS A MAJOR FORCE IN TELLING THE STORY OF MIAMI TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

AND YOU ARE DOING SO THROUGH YOUR VARIOUS INITIATIVES WITHIN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, AND BY ADVANCING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE ALL WORK OFF A PLAN, IN UNISON, SO THAT FROM THE MOMENT YOU FIRST STEP FOOT IN OUR COMMUNITY, TO THE TIME YOU LEAVE, YOU HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE ALREADY DONE MUCH TO IMPROVE OUR GROUND TRANSPORTATION AND TAXI CAB SERVICE.

AND WE NEED TO CONTINUE WORKING TO BRING APP BASED MOBILITY OPTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY AS WELL.

AS WE LOOK ACROSS THE WATER AT PORT MIAMI, OUR INVESTMENTS AT IMPROVING OUR SEAPORT HAVE KEPT US AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CRUISE INDUSTRY WITH RECORD NUMBERS OF CRUISE PASSENGERS ONCE AGAIN.

THE SAME IS TRUE OF M.I.A. AND OUR AIRPORT CONTINUES TO ATTRACT AND ANNOUNCE NEW AIRLINES. TODAY, MIA CONNECTS OUR COMMUNITY TO OVER 150 DESTINATIONS.

SPEAKING OF INVESTMENTS, JUST LOOK AT THE BUILDING WE ARE IN TODAY – THE PAMM – ALONG WITH THE FROST SCIENCE MUSEUM ACROSS THE WAY, AND THE ARSHT CENTER JUST DOWN THE STREET.

ARTS, SCIENCE, CULTURE, IT'S ALL HERE.

AND JUST THINK ABOUT THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS FOR A MINUTE.

WE HAVE THE MIAMI INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR COMING UP, WITH ART BASEL IN DECEMBER, AND I EVEN HEAR PITBUL IS THROWING A NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH DOWNTOWN.

AS THE TEMPERATURE DROPS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, THINGS HERE START TO HEAT UP.

AND IF YOU GET BILL'S VERY INFORMATIVE EMAILS, YOU KNOW THAT LAST YEAR WE HAD A RECORD BREAKING 14.2 MILLION OVERNIGHT VISITORS WHO SPENT MORE THAN \$22.8 BILLION IN OUR COMMUNITY.

AND WE'RE ON PACE TO SET YET ANOTHER RECORD THIS YEAR.

THIS TOURISM DRIVES INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY, BECAUSE ONCE YOU VISIT MIAMI, PEOPLE FALL IN LOVE AND THEY WANT TO LIVE HERE.

LET ME FINISH BY RECOGNIZING A VERY SPECIAL AND IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE GMCVB'S PLAN, AND THAT IS YOUR FOCUS ON HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM.

WE ARE ALL PROUD OF THE DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY, AND I AM PLEASED THAT THE GMCVB HAS A FORMAL DEPARTMENT THAT PROMOTES "MULTI-CULTURAL TOURISM" THAT CELEBRATES THE OFFERINGS AND HERITAGE OF OUR AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND HISPANIC COMMUNITIES.

ALL OF US HERE KNOW THAT MIAMI IS MUCH MORE THAN SOUTH BEACH AND DOWNTOWN. FROM LITTLE HAVANA TO LITTLE HAITI, FROM HISTORIC OVERTOWN TO COCONUT GROVE AND BEYOND, OUR COMMUNITY HAS A DEEP HISTORY THAT DESERVES TO BE EXPLORED.

AND I APPLAUD YOUR EFFORTS BECAUSE WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE SUCCESS IN TOURISM TOUCHES ALL PARTS OUR COMMUNITY.

LET ME END BY SAYING THAT YOU HAVE A PARTNER IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE GMCVB TO CONTINUE TELLING OUR STORY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!