

GOOD EVENING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

BEFORE I BEGIN, I WANT TO THANK DONNA AND LARRY FOR THE FINE JOB THEY AND THEIR ENTIRE TEAM ARE DOING AT THE BEACON COUNCIL. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS A BETTER COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF THE WORK YOU DO. AND I THANK YOU ALL.

I AM HONORED TO JOIN ALL OF YOU FOR THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL BEACON AWARDS. IT IS AN EXCITING TIME TO BE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THE LOCAL LEADERS, BUSINESSES, AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE MOVING OUR ECONOMY FORWARD.

WE ARE HONORING JOB CREATORS, EDUCATORS, AND ENTREPRENEURS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

YOUR PRESENCE SHOWS THAT YOU'VE MADE A CLEAR CHOICE TO SUPPORT THE VITAL WORK OF BRINGING NEW BUSINESSES AND NEW JOBS TO OUR COMMUNITY. AS A MATTER OF FACT AND SOME OF YOU ARE PROBABLY AWARE THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DROPPED BELOW 6

PERCENT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 2008. THAT'S IN PART THANKS TO ALL OF YOU HERE TODAY.

AND THAT HAS BEEN THE MISSION OF THE BEACON COUNCIL FOR 30 YEARS NOW – CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

AS WE ALL KNOW, THE BEACON COUNCIL'S SUCCESS – AND THE SUCCESS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY – ULTIMATELY DEPENDS ON THE WOMEN, MEN AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT MAKE UP OUR PRIVATE AND NON-PROFIT SECTORS.

THEY ARE TRAILBLAZERS, LIKE JORGE M. PEREZ, WHO HAS BEEN A VISIONARY AND AN INSTRUMENTAL SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPER HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY,

THEY ARE LEADERS LIKE THE 10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES AT MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO POSITIVELY IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY BY CREATING WELL-PAYING JOBS AND SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTY.

THEY'RE INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY

IMPAIRED, WHICH HAS HELPED ENRICH THE LIVES OF OUR VISUALLY IMPAIRED RESIDENTS FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS.

AND THEY ARE FORWARD-THINKING BUSINESSES, LIKE VENTURE HIVE AND EMERGE AMERICAS, WHICH ARE MAKING MIAMI-DADE A CENTER OF INNOVATION AND CONTINUE TO POSITION OUR COUNTY AS A LEADER IN TECHNOLOGY, AND HELPING TO DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMY.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO POINT OUT THAT ALL OF TODAY'S HONOREES REFLECT THE DIVERSE INDUSTRIES THAT THE BEACON COUNCIL'S ONE COMMUNITY, ONE GOAL INITIATIVE AIMS TO PROMOTE HERE.

THESE INDUSTRIES INCLUDE LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTHCARE; HOSPITALITY & TOURISM; INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHERS.

AS CO-CHAIR OF ONE COMMUNITY, ONE GOAL, I'M THRILLED TO SEE THAT THESE DIVERSE SECTORS ARE SUCCEEDING HERE IN MIAMI-DADE.

THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTY DEPENDS ON OUR ABILITY TO HAVE A VIBRANT AND DIVERSE LOCAL

ECONOMY, JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR RESIDENTS, AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND BUSINESSES.

WE ARE A WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY DEFINED BY ITS UNIQUE DIVERSITY.

AND THE COMPANIES GATHERED HERE REFLECT THAT DIVERSITY.

AS YOUR MAYOR, I'M COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING YOUR SUCCESS BY DELIVERING A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT THAT GIVES EACH OF YOU THE ABILITY TO GROW AND SUCCEED.

IN FACT, I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS ALSO THE COUNTY'S CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER.

AND ALL OF YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A FRIEND ON THE 29TH FLOOR OF COUNTY HALL WHO APPRECIATES WHAT - MIAMI-DADE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR - CAN DO TOGETHER.

AFTER ALL, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS THE PUBLIC SIDE OF THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP THAT IS THE BEACON COUNCIL, AND OUR GOALS ARE ONE AND THE SAME.

**IN CLOSING, I'D LIKE TO AGAIN CONGRATULATE
ALL OF TODAY'S AWARD RECIPIENTS.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND
COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY!**

**AND THANKS TO EACH AND EVERY PERSON WHO
HAS COME HERE TODAY TO HONOR THESE
LEADERS AND SUPPORT A BRIGHTER ECONOMIC
FUTURE FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.**

**THANK YOU AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!**

