



## State of the County

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As I begin my seventh year as County Executive, I have never been more optimistic about the future of Montgomery County.

We are fortunate to live in one of the nation's best places to raise a family, obtain an education, earn a living, and build a business. We may not yet be the "hippest" spot in the DC region but most of America would change places with us in a heartbeat.

I want to thank the County Council, federal and state elected officials, our municipalities, the Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, Park & Planning Commission, WSSC and all our business and community partners who have worked tirelessly to help advance the County to new heights of positive achievement.

The state of Montgomery County is strong – and growing stronger. We have navigated through a mighty economic storm, one that ravaged our nation and, yes, deeply affected us. But for all of these challenges, the job market is expanding, our foundation is strong again and our public school system is excelling as we pass the one million mark in population.

As a County that has always prided itself on a skilled workforce and an excellent educational system, we are well-prepared to advance further in the global Knowledge Economy.

Tonight, I will talk with you about the journey of change that I believe will take us to an even-brighter tomorrow. This journey has not been painless – and the road ahead will not be easy. But, with every tough decision that we have made, that we make now, and that we will make in the future, we are building a better Montgomery County.

Sometimes we minimize what we have accomplished in Montgomery County. For all the challenges we face, America's future is happening right here.

Montgomery County has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. We have more than 32,000 businesses employing over 360,000 workers, including the headquarters of Discovery Communications, Lockheed Martin, Marriott International, Ritz Carlton, GEICO, Hughes Network Systems and MedImmune, among others.

In the past, I believe Montgomery County was too heavily dependent upon federal employment. We now have developed a thriving private sector economy. Montgomery County and a significant part of the employment opportunities -- both private and federal -- are focused on the future -- healthcare, cybersecurity, food and drug safety, homeland security and bioscience.

Companies come here, or are created here. Many remain here and expand here. Why? Because we have one of the most highly-educated and highly-dedicated workforces in the nation.

We have more Ph.D's and postgraduate degrees on a percentage basis than any other large jurisdiction in the nation. I am proud that the county's graduation rate continues to rise and that, among the nation's large districts, Montgomery County Public Schools has the highest graduation rate overall and the highest graduation rate for African American males. And we are home to the Universities of Maryland at Shady Grove, Johns Hopkins University, Washington Adventist University and Montgomery College.

A strong and vibrant economy is the foundation for a healthy and successful community. But the things that make Montgomery County exceptional cannot be measured solely in dollars and cents or even in school test scores – important as these are.

What brings talented and dedicated people here – and keeps them here – is our love of learning, caring for our neighbors, stewardship of our environment and our passion to participate in community life.

Montgomery County has a tradition of welcoming newcomers – including a Vietnam veteran – a poor kid from Louisiana who graduated from Howard Law School, who saw the potential in this great County, made it his home and raised a family here and now proudly serves as your County Executive. I wasn't born here – but I moved here as soon as I could – and stayed.

## **Turning the Ship of State Around**

When I assumed office I knew that Montgomery County was going through not just a transition but a transformation in who we are, how we live how we earn our living, and how we manage the County finances and invest in the future.

We are one of the most affluent counties in the country -- and we are also one of the most diverse. According to the 2010 Census, we have become a majority-minority county for the first time. More than 30 percent of our residents are foreign-born.

A welcoming attitude plus a strong economy, a quality environment, and an outstanding school system makes Montgomery County a magnet for talented people from every corner of the globe.

Diversity is more than just a “feel-good” term for Montgomery County. Diversity lifts this County up – and helps enlighten us about the world around us. Without the energy and intellect and innovation of our immigrant community, Montgomery County would, quite simply, be incomplete. “New Americans” are a critical piece in building a better future for all County residents.

But, since I took office six years ago as your County Executive, we have been caught in the equivalent of an almost perfect economic storm:

First, there were longstanding deficiencies in County finances – years of living beyond our means even during the good times.

Then came the national recession, which caused real economic havoc for us. The recession reduced revenues while increasing the demands on our “safety net” for those most in need.

The County's public schools, which had predicted a tapering off of growth in student population, actually began to grow at a rate of 2,000 new students a year.

Decisions at the federal and state levels made it more difficult for us to meet our obligations to provide public services and restricted our ability to make needed investments for the future in a variety of important sectors.

When I was elected to this office, County spending had increased during each of the previous four years by an average of more than 10 percent – an astounding 42 percent over four years. Simply put, that was not sustainable.

We were in danger of drowning in red ink because of the perfect storm that consisted of a growing County workforce, ever-increasing service demands and shrinking revenue. All of this occurred before the onset of the national economic recession.

Together, these conditions resulted in a long-term structural deficit in the County's budget, with multi-billion dollar budget gaps. And the worst deficit was the will to make tough decisions.

And added to all of this were costly, weather-related travails. You remember the four feet of Snowmageddon, ice storms, brush fires, tornados, the "derecho" – even an earthquake – that hit our County. If someone informed me that a swarm of locusts of Biblical proportions had invaded the County, I would not have been surprised.

To understand more fully what we've been through together, I want you to think of Montgomery County as a magnificent ship – an ocean liner. This ship has as one of its missions the transport of passengers on voyages throughout the area on a daily basis. It also delivers food and housing for those in need. On-board clinics provide medical care. It is a place of employment, recreation, education and innovation for many of its passengers, as well as those who depend on it throughout the region.

Six years ago, when I assumed the role of captain of this ship, if you looked at the ocean liner "Montgomery County" above the water line, the ship appeared sturdy and strong.

But, below the waterline, this magnificent ship was leaking. The engine was defective and risked running short on fuel. To make matters worse, the ship was about to sail into the troubled waters of a major national recession.

We did not, of course, have the luxury of putting the ship into dry dock to make all the necessary repairs before heading back to sea. The changes I recommended -- and implemented -- were made while the ship still plowed through stormy waters, without stopping.

Together we have repaired the ship and fully retooled the engine, and placed our ship on course in the right direction.

## **Weathering the Economic Storm**

Here is how we weathered the storm.

We set the County's compass to the basic needs and core values that I outlined when I first assumed office:

- to maintain a thriving economy;
- to educate and train a skilled and adaptable workforce – essential for attracting and keeping good jobs;
- to expand and preserve opportunities for affordable home ownership and rental housing;
- to provide an effective and efficient transportation network;
- to support healthy and environmentally sustainable communities, while ensuring safety in the streets and security in our neighborhoods;
- to build a better government that is more responsive and responsible, where everyone has a seat at the table and a voice in the outcome;
- and, because effective government begins with fiscal responsibility, to get back to basics, with a County government that pays its bills, lives within its means and tells the truth about its finances.

Together, we faced the facts and made the tough decisions. Over a five-year period, we have closed more than \$2.6 billion in budget shortfalls.

During the past six years, for County taxpayers and employees, “shared sacrifice” hasn’t just been a phrase – it has been a way of life. Each of us has contributed so that all of us can benefit together in the future.

Many already financially strapped residents have had to pay a little more in taxes, while receiving somewhat less in some services. Dedicated County employees have suffered layoffs and furloughs, while not receiving negotiated pay raises and cost-of-living increases and paying a larger share of their own healthcare and retirement costs. I recommended and implemented a plan that eliminated 10 percent of the County government’s entire workforce. All these choices pained me greatly, but they were the right decisions for Montgomery County.

Because we battened down the hatches and overhauled basic functions, our ship of state has come through the storm. We maintained our coveted Triple-A bond rating, saving taxpayers millions of dollars in borrowing costs every year. We are holding the line on property taxes at the Charter level.

I have worked aggressively to increase reserves in order to better protect the County if faced with budget shortfalls in the future. We have, for the first time, allocated far more resources in advance to meet weather-related emergencies. I also developed a prudent plan that established a trust fund that sets aside tens of millions of dollars to meet the anticipated healthcare obligations for retired employees, thereby averting a potentially huge financial crisis for the County in years to come.

Just take a look at how our balanced approach to addressing these difficulties has helped bring us out of the worst of this economic crisis.

Despite the lingering recession, over the last three years we have seen a 3.4 percent increase in jobs in the County.

Our unemployment rate has dropped by 15 percent over the last two years.

The construction of new residential units in Montgomery County increased by more than 150 percent over the last three years.

Non-residential construction starts – and their value – have doubled between 2009 and 2012.

Median home prices are up about five percent in the last year.

And the value of taxable property – the County’s tax base – increased by almost 30 percent in the last five years.

The numbers that we want to go up are going up – and the numbers we want to go down are going down. I call that progress.

## **Building on the Best**

We will continue to build the Twenty-First Century economy for which the skills of our residents are so well suited.

During the period of economic downturn, the County’s economic strategy has centered on keeping the companies we have, supporting small businesses and attracting new jobs and businesses from around the country and all over the world.

In order to maintain a competitive edge our focus must be on high-skilled, high-wage, future-oriented jobs, both public and private, such as the life sciences, information technology, healthcare and communications and environmentally-friendly technologies.

And, for the foreseeable future, the emerging industry for Montgomery County is biotech. The challenge is to take our local success to the next level.

When it comes to biotechnology, Montgomery County is well positioned to become what Seattle and Southern California are for aerospace, and what Silicon Valley is for information technology.

We have long been on the leading edge of biotechnology and the life sciences, with MedImmune, Human Genome Sciences, United Therapeutics and an expanded Johns Hopkins University, just to name a few.

About a year ago, I established a major, public-private partnership called BioHealth Innovation to accelerate technology transfer and research commercialization in Montgomery County and the Baltimore region. Its primary mission is to create new businesses out of the research institutions and advance the early-stage promising medical technologies.

Biotech is only one example of how Montgomery County is attracting and developing high-skill, high-wage, cutting-edge industries. We are host to many nationally prominent companies – as well as to foreign companies that have established operations here. To further encourage additional investments, we enacted a biotech tax credit, making Montgomery County the first local jurisdiction in the nation to do so.

But we are not resting on our laurels. We must keep moving the County forward with a vision of what the future can be. The County is making visionary investments in the Great Seneca Science Corridor. We are moving aggressively to transform the White Flint and Shady Grove areas with transit-oriented development, and the planning for the future East County life sciences center is well under way.

Between the Great Seneca Science Corridor, the White Oak Science Gateway and the White Flint Plan, we will help create at least 100,000 new, quality jobs in Montgomery County.

My Smart Growth Initiative is also strengthening the County's tax base by creating new, high-quality jobs and fostering growth and expansion of the County's biotechnology sector. This initiative allows the County to develop thousands of new, transit-oriented housing units near the Shady Grove Metro site.

We worked to attract the Maryland Biotechnology Center – making Montgomery County the epicenter of the State's strategic new industry initiatives. And we've retained thousands of jobs in our County at federal facilities, such as federal Health and Human Services at Parklawn and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – or NOAA -- in Silver Spring.

The County's Local Small Business Reserve program encourages County departments to spend additional dollars with our small businesses. Our goal was to fund 20 percent of eligible contracts; last year, we nearly doubled that amount. The procurement reforms we introduced are making it easier to do business with the County.

My 11-point Business Assistance package provided much-needed support during the height of the recession for many struggling companies.

My new "Small Business Plus" initiative allocates millions of dollars to community banks to help increase their local small business lending and support job creation in the County -- and we are doubling that successful investment. I also recently introduced an "Emerging Money Manager" program that encourages the County to better accommodate small and minority money managers who invest our County's pension funds.

Building on what's best starts with the County's crown jewel – our public schools.

Of everything that we do to strengthen the County, the most important investment that we make is in our nearly 150,000 public school students. Although the public schools account for more than half of the entire County budget, they are the foundation for an infinitely larger share of the County's future.

That is why -- even during the most challenging fiscal years -- I have supported the Montgomery County Public Schools budget at nearly 100 percent of their budget request. And that is why we have provided additional resources for building new schools and modernizing existing schools.

Every dollar that we invest in education reaps a rich harvest of excellence – now and in the years to come.



When families think about moving to Montgomery County and when companies consider location options, they take notice of our 35 National Blue Ribbon schools. They also are aware that our SAT scores are 153 points above the national average combined score, and that we had 137 National Merit Scholar semifinalists last year.

Our educational system also includes the County's excellent libraries –20 full-service branches, serving 685,000 residents with library cards. We're constructing the long-awaited, new Silver Spring library, as well as renovating the Gaithersburg and Olney libraries.

Montgomery College, a world-class, open-access community college, educates more than 60,000 students each year for today's opportunities and tomorrow's jobs. And, the County has stepped forward to support the growth of the Universities of Maryland at Shady Grove.

An excellent education is the cornerstone of the American Dream. And so is the opportunity to own a home -- or to rent affordable housing.

We have constructed or preserved nearly 8,000 affordable housing units in the past five years – even as we were sailing upstream against the national recession. And, the County preserved affordability for another 6,000 working families with rental assistance.

In addition the County has been one of the most successful local jurisdictions anywhere in America at heading-off foreclosures, conducting nearly 400 workshops and counseling more than 13,000 County residents.

Thirty percent of Montgomery County residents rent their homes. Renters deserve a voice. I have worked to make sure they have one in my administration.

Montgomery County is on a journey of progress. But, we cannot move forward without a transportation system that meets our needs, now and in the future.

This is why we have three new major transportation projects that must be built within the next decade – and will keep our County moving for decades to come.

First, the Purple Line, 16 miles of light rail, will run from Bethesda to New Carrollton, connecting the County with the University of Maryland in College Park.

Second, the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) will be a 15-mile-long bus rapid transit system traveling from the Shady Grove Metro station to the COMSAT site in Southern Clarksburg with 16 transit stations along the route. It will save the average commuter time, reduce the dependency on cars and carry up to 47,000 people daily by 2035.

Third, the Rapid Transit Vehicle System (RTV) will create a transit network across the County, north to south and east to west. Riders will travel in stylish vehicles called RTV's that could carry as many as 140 passengers per vehicle.

We can't build these critical transportation projects unless we can pay for them.

Montgomery County is doing its part. But we can't – and we shouldn't – have to shoulder the burden all alone.

Several years ago, I virtually stood alone in advocating for an increase in the State's gasoline tax. It wasn't popular then, and it isn't popular now. But we needed it then, and we still need it now. In fact, we need an increase in transportation revenue now more than ever before.

That's why I call upon the State legislature to do the difficult thing, the courageous thing, the necessary thing and the right thing: Pass an increase in the state's gasoline tax now. It hasn't been increased since 1992 –when George Bush Senior was President. This will help replenish the State's Transportation Trust Fund and assist counties throughout the State to advance major transportation infrastructure.

Montgomery County is Maryland's economic engine. Investing in transportation in our County pays off big time for all Marylanders.

Still, in this sea of relative affluence, there are islands of poverty. The County's Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with many local non-profit and faith-based organizations effectively serves more than 100,000 residents a year, especially the most vulnerable children and seniors.

The County's "Montgomery Cares" initiative provides access to health care to nearly 28,000 uninsured patients a year. And, thanks to the Housing First Initiative, we are placing more homeless adults and families in permanent housing. The number of homeless in the County fell by 13 percent last year.

Government's first responsibility is protecting the people's safety.

When I first took office, I spoke of "safe streets." And, right now the streets are safer. From the beginning of 2007 through the end of 2011, crime in Montgomery County has fallen by nearly 19 percent, and serious crime is down almost 25 percent.

But that's not good enough. We are currently in the middle of my three-year plan to add 120 new police officers to the force to further enhance public safety throughout the County.

The County's Police, Recreation and Health and Human Services departments are working closely with community groups in our Positive Youth Development Initiative. This program provides positive opportunities for at-risk youth, as well as intervention to keep kids out of gangs and prevent gang activity. I'm proud to say that these efforts have resulted in an almost 50 percent reduction in gang-related crimes from 2007 to 2012.

Under my administration, the Fire & Rescue Service, career and volunteer, have made substantial improvements in protecting the lives and property of County residents and the numbers show it.

Montgomery County civilian fire deaths dropped from 13 in 2009 to two in 2012. Overall, response times to fires decreased by more than two minutes. For the most serious fires, response times dropped from 7.2 minutes to less than three minutes.

Thanks to our Emergency Medical Services Transport Reimbursement Program, the so-called "Ambulance Fee," the County will have an additional \$14 to \$18 million annually dedicated to meeting critical Fire & Rescue Service needs. That translates into more staffing, more ambulances and even better response times, at no added cost to County residents.

This common sense measure didn't come easily. In some quarters it was unpopular. It was initially rejected by County voters in a referendum. Although it took five years, I was determined to get this measure approved because I was convinced that we needed the revenue and it would help save lives.

Speaking of saving lives, our five-year investment in pedestrian safety, based on the comprehensive blueprint for action I advanced in 2007, is paying off.

For example, we have:

- Reduced pedestrian fatalities from a high of 19 in 2008 to six in 2012.
- Reduced all collisions by 12 percent overall and by 45 percent in locations with the highest concentrations of collisions.
- Reduced collisions by 72 percent within a quarter-mile of schools under our "Safe Routes to Schools" program.

We are making sure that our communities are not only safe but environmentally sustainable.

Montgomery County is called a close-in suburb. But more than 93,000 acres – almost a third of the County’s land area – are designated as agricultural and open space. No other jurisdiction in the region – and few in the entire nation -- come close to matching that level of achievement in land use policy.

In order to further enhance and support farming well into the future, last year I introduced “The New Farmer Project.” This is a first-of-its-kind, year-long pilot that will train, mentor and support the land access needs of entrepreneurs who want to start new, sustainable farms in Montgomery County.

We have the most expansive recycling program in the region. Our current recycling rate is more than 44 percent. I’ve recently established a goal to recycle 70 percent by 2020. That would give Montgomery County the second-highest rate in the nation, behind only California and Florida.

We are leading the way to improving water quality in our local watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay by implementing the State’s MS-4 stormwater program. We are the only jurisdiction in the State with a program to treat the stormwater that flows off of 4,300 acres of parking lots, streets and other hard surfaces. And let’s not forget how important it is to protect our tree canopy – we should replace what’s cut down. This is why I urge approval of legislation I recently recommended to protect our tree canopy.

The new County bag law I introduced last year is already reducing the amount of paper and plastic bags that end up in County streams and along our roadsides. Already, the number of bags removed from Rock Creek dropped by 25 percent in just a few months. And we have boosted the purchase of clean and renewable energy to 30 percent of the County’s annual consumption – the best east of the Mississippi.

### **And there’s more.**

The “Senior Agenda” that we support is an action-oriented blueprint designed to make Montgomery County truly a “community for a lifetime.” We can be proud that Montgomery County was recently named one of the best “intergenerational” communities in America.

The many non-profit organizations servicing the County contribute immensely to enhancing our quality of life – and pay over \$2 billion in wages while employing one in 10 County workers. And, with strong support from the County, the arts and humanities community produced \$150 million in economic impact last year. In everything we do in Montgomery County, we are striving to be more accountable and transparent.

The County’s new “OpenMontgomery” initiative offers residents access to a growing array of data and information available for download. This includes new links for mobile devices, and a new social media platform to encourage participation and feedback on public issues. This initiative is the first for any county in the nation.

Our CountyStat initiative uses real-time data to hold departments and agencies accountable for their results in public safety, overtime use, affordable housing, pedestrian safety, emergency preparedness and more. This initiative has already saved the County tens of millions of dollars in direct costs and enhanced our overall efficiency.

Montgomery County’s nationally recognized, new, one-stop, non-emergency 311 phone and online system represents a significant step forward in responsiveness. Last year, we expanded MC 311’s hours in order to better serve working families and commuters. And, the 311 web portal is open for business 24/7. So far, the 311 system has fielded more than a million calls – and we’re well prepared to accommodate millions more.

### **The Future Is Here**

As the County’s journey of change continues, I am proposing three new initiatives that will help insure that we continue our remarkable progress in education, employment and entrepreneurship, as well as in many other important areas.



First, I propose a new Montgomery County “Open for Business” initiative.

The development process in this County is complicated and fragmented, redundant and expensive. The time to make changes is now – to take full advantage of a rebounding economy.

I have asked the Department of Permitting Services Director to bring all County and outside agencies together to identify additional areas where we can substantially change the way we do business in the County.

We have already worked with stakeholders and have identified more than 60 areas in which improvements are recommended. These improvements are expected to cut approximately one year from development and construction projects. Time savings translates into major cost savings and quicker return on investment for owners -- not to mention reduction of engineering fees, carrying costs for construction loans and legal fees.

Montgomery County is open to business and we are open for business. We are committed to continuing improvements. The changes we have identified and are making are only a beginning. A streamlined process is good for everyone. It means projects are completed faster. This will add more investment, more jobs and more properties to the County’s tax base sooner, not later.

Our path forward is a simple three-step process: First, plan the sustainable growth we want. Second, identify where it should happen. Third, make it happen.

Can we change the way we do business in the County? You bet we can. Just look what we’ve already accomplished with fire inspections.

In the past year we have consolidated fire inspections of new commercial and residential construction under the Department of Permitting Services. We completed 2,635 fire system inspections last year. And, what previously took as long as six weeks to complete now takes one business day, and at no additional cost.

Do we need a cumbersome State/County planning review model that was adopted close to the turn of the century? Beyond that, we need to ask: Do we really need three transportation reviews? Do we really need three environmental reviews cutting across several different agencies?

Now is the time for all of the County’s outside agencies and County government to put everything on the table. Let’s keep what’s working – and build on that. And, get rid of what doesn’t work.

My second initiative is English Language on Demand. In Montgomery, our residents speak many different languages – and that’s good. But here, and increasingly around the world, mastering English is the ticket to opportunity and success. When you speak English, you not only learn another language, you also improve your chances of getting a good job – and then getting a better one. It is the ticket to growing your business and to building a better future for your family -- which increases the County’s overall tax base.

I recommend as a goal that every adult in this County who wants to learn English – no matter where they come from – has the opportunity to do so. For every dollar we invest in adult English language training, it brings us three dollars in higher productivity. So, let’s invest the necessary resources to help shorten and, in time, eliminate the long waiting lists for individuals seeking the opportunity to learn English. And, we should also encourage County residents to become “teaching volunteers” in our County English language learning network.

The third new initiative is for the County to undertake additional measures to help expand educational opportunity for all students. I am therefore proposing a new Partnership for Educational Achievement with our public schools to help support under-performing students. Despite a school system that is successful with most students, there remains an achievement gap between students who have the resources to make the most of these educational opportunities and those who do not. Public schools, County government and community service organizations must work more closely together to help tear down the remaining barriers to learning and close achievement gaps – once and for all.

In addition to the more than \$2 billion that the County appropriated for public schools this year, the County also spent \$240 million to further assist our schools -- money that doesn't appear in the schools' budget. That's money for nurses, health technicians, crossing guards, School Resource Officers, and for school wellness centers, after school Positive Youth Development and pre-kindergarten programs.

But, we must do more and we can to help close the achievement gap.

The County's "Excel Beyond the Bell" program -- a part of my Positive Youth Development Initiative -- is a great success for 2,000 kids at the middle schools where it exists. Parents love it. Students love it, but the program has a long waiting list. This program is critically important to middle school. And, for many kids at that age, after-school means coming home when their parents are still at work and the house is empty. I propose that we extend the program during the summer at all the "Excel" schools. And, I also recommend we phase-in "Excel" to all middle schools.

Montgomery County also needs to further invest in collaborative and innovative projects to help students and their families, such as the one we started in the Kennedy High School cluster in 2008.

Collectively, all of these measures, in collaboration with our public schools, can profoundly improve student performance in the classroom and help ensure that young people develop into successful adults. They are the future of our County.

I know the agenda that I have outlined here is ambitious. But, I also believe it is achievable -- and necessary if we want to continue to move this County forward.

And, moving us forward means the federal government must resolve its budget sequester challenges in a fair and balanced manner in ways that do not adversely impact important programs and services on the local level.

In conclusion, please be reminded that for the past six years, we have wrestled with deficits and downturns in our County, but we are now emerging ever stronger from the recession. We have accomplished a great deal thus far by working together. But much remains to be done.

The new economy -- and the new America -- places a premium on Montgomery County's greatest strengths -- who we are, what we know and what we can do.

The "Knowledge Economy" favors those who can work with different people, in different environments, with different cultures - who can do difficult things, and who can make products and provide services that are in demand in distant parts of the world.

And, that's who we are. We are Montgomery County. And, thanks to our collective efforts, our ship is heading straight into the future -- ever stronger for the challenges we faced.

We can be proud that this is the Montgomery County where we grew up -- or where we raised our kids; and where we may spend our retirement years, surrounded by family, friends and community.

This is also the New Montgomery County -- ideally suited to lead the way in the new Knowledge Economy and the new -- and ever-more-diverse -- America of the twenty-first century.

We are the place where America's future begins -- and where opportunity abounds.

Thank you for what you are doing -- together -- to build that future -- right here, right now. Let's move forward -- together.

May God bless this great County we are so fortunate to call home. Thank you and good night.