

FIRST OFF, OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA AND ALL FREEDOM LOVING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, WE LIVE IN A FREE COUNTRY, AND WE ARE VERY THANKFUL FOR THAT.

COMMISSIONER BOVO, THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTRODUCTION AND IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE IN YOUR DISTRICT TO DELIVER MY STATE OF THE COUNTY REMARKS.

I WANT TO THANK MANDY LLANES FOR BEING OUR EMCEE, AND FOR ALL THE WORK THAT YOU AND THE HIALEAH CHAMBER DO FOR THIS COMMUNITY.

I ALSO WANT TO THANK RABBI KLINE AND REVEREND RICHARDSON.

AND THANKS TO JULIA DALE FOR HER BEAUTIFUL RENDITION OF OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM.

FELLOW RESIDENTS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, GOOD MORNING, BUENOS DIAS, BON JOUR.

LET ME BEGIN BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WHO ARE HERE THIS MORNING LED BY CHAIRWOMAN REBECCA SOSA AND VICE CHAIR LYNDA BELL.

YOU ALL DESERVE OUR GRATITUDE FOR THE LEADERSHIP YOU PROVIDE TO OUR COMMUNITY.

ALSO PRESENT ARE A NUMBER OF MAYORS AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS FROM AROUND MIAMI-DADE COUNTY. THANK YOU FOR BEING OUR PARTNERS IN PUBLIC SERVICE.

I WANT TO ESPECIALLY THANK THE MAYOR OF THE GREAT CITY OF HIALEAH - THE CITY OF PROGRESS, CARLOS HERNANDEZ.

MR. MAYOR, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND THAT OF YOUR STAFF IN HOSTING US TODAY.

I WANT TO ALSO WELCOME MEMBERS OF THE MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD AND OFFICIALS FROM OUR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. THEY ARE CHARGED WITH THE CRITICAL TASK OF EDUCATING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

WE ALSO HAVE A NUMBER OF DIGNITARIES PRESENT, INCLUDING THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA CONSULAR CORPS LED BY THEIR CHAIR. YOUR PRESENCE HERE REPRESENTS THE RICH DIVERSITY OF OUR COUNTY.

AND MY FAMILY --- MY WIFE LOURDES, TOGETHER WITH MY CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. PLEASE STAND UP.

I COULDN'T DO THIS JOB WITHOUT THEIR TOTAL COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT NOT ONLY TO ME, BUT ALSO TO THE ENTIRE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMUNITY.

PRIMERO, ESTAMOS PENSANDO EN EL PUEBLO VENEZOLANO Y EN TODOS QUIENES BUSCAN LIBERTAD.

QUIERO DARLE LA BIENVENIDA A TODOS USTEDES - A LA PRESIDENTA DE NUESTRA JUNTA DE COMISIONADOS, REBECA SOSA...

A LA VICE PRESIDENTA LYNDA BELL...

Y A TODOS NUESTROS COMISIONADOS.

TAMBIEN CON NOSOTROS ESTAN VARIOS ALCALDES Y OTROS SERVIDORES PUBLICO...

INCLUYENDO EL ALCALDE CARLOS HERNANDEZ DE LA CIUDAD DE HIALEAH, LA CIUDAD QUE PROGRESA.

Y A MI FAMILIA - MI ESPOSA LOURDES, MIS HIJOS, Y NIETOS.

MUCHAS GRACIAS --- THANK YOU ALL.

BRITISH STATESMAN SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL IS QUOTED AS SAYING:

"A PESSIMIST SEES THE DIFFICULTY IN EVERY OPPORTUNITY; AN OPTIMIST SEES THE OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY DIFFICULTY..."

I AM AN OPTIMIST!

WE BEGAN MY ADMINISTRATION AT A HISTORIC MOMENT,
WHEN VOTERS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY DECIDED WE
NEEDED REFORM.

WE RESPONDED BY RESTORING HONESTY,
TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO THEIR
GOVERNMENT.

I LED THE REDUCTION IN THE SIZE OF GOVERNMENT...

CUT THE NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS BY ALMOST HALF...

ELIMINATED 1,700 POSITIONS...

SAVED TAXPAYERS WELL OVER \$400 MILLION...

AND DELIVERED THE LARGEST TAX CUT IN COUNTY
HISTORY.

WE WORKED TOGETHER WITH THE COUNTY COMMISSION.

WE MADE TOUGH CHOICES. AND WE'VE COME THIS FAR
BECAUSE OF OUR PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP.

EVEN WHEN WE HAD DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW, WE'VE
MAINTAINED THE UTMOST RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

FOR MOST, THIS WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH.

BUT THE CITIZENS OF MIAMI-DADE ELECTED US TO DO
MORE. AND THAT'S WHY WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO
GO.

WHILE LAST YEAR WAS DIFFICULT, I WILL NEVER STOP FIGHTING FOR THE CITIZENS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND FOR WHAT I BELIEVE IS RIGHT.

AND I DON'T MIND GETTING SOME BATTLE SCARS ALONG THE WAY.

IN FACT, I STILL WEAR MY MARLINS STADIUM SCARS QUITE PROUDLY...

AND HISTORY HAS SHOWN I WAS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THAT BATTLE.

WE'RE GOVERNING IN CHALLENGING TIMES.

IN THE FACE OF THESE CHALLENGES, SOME MAY CHOOSE TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO, BECAUSE IT'S HOW THINGS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DONE.

OTHERS MAY CHOOSE AN EASY WAY OUT, BECAUSE IT'S THE POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT THING TO DO.

THAT'S NOT WHO WE ARE.

WE CHOOSE TO FACE THESE CHALLENGES HEAD ON. IN DIFFICULT TIMES, WE CHOOSE TO REMAIN OPTIMISTIC.

THE STATE OF OUR COUNTY IS STRONG BECAUSE IN CHALLENGES, WE SEE OPPORTUNITY.

WE CHOOSE TO LEAD. WE CHOOSE TO MOVE FORWARD, TOGETHER.

LOS VOTANTES DEL CONDADO NOS PIDIERON REFORMAR SU GOBIERNO.

NOSOTROS RESPONDIMOS AL REDUCIR EL PRESUPUESTO Y AHORRARLE MAS DE \$400 MILLONES A LOS CONTRIBUYENTES.

ESTA ES LA MAYOR REDUCCION DE IMPUESTOS EN LA HISTORIA DEL CONDADO.

PERO, NOS QUEDAN RETOS POR DELANTE.

HOY, EL ESTADO DE NUESTRO CONDADO ESTA FUERTE POR NUESTRO LIDERAZGO, Y PORQUE EN LOS RETOS, VEMOS OPORTUNIDADES.

AS WE BEGIN 2014, OUR WORLD CONTINUES TO MOVE TOWARD GREATER GLOBALIZATION, WITH HALF OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LIVING IN URBAN AREAS.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY NOW RANKS AMONG THE TOP TEN MOST POPULOUS COUNTIES IN THE NATION.

OUR SECRET IS OUT - WE'RE A HIGHLY DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE, LEARN, WORK, AND PLAY.

BUT THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF OUR COUNTY IS PLACING A BURDEN ON OUR INFRASTRUCTURE.

OUR CHALLENGE IS HOW TO BALANCE THIS GROWTH WITH THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT OUR RESIDENTS CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE SERVICES THAT THEY DESERVE.

AND, WE MUST REMAIN PROPER STEWARDS OF THE PEOPLE'S HARD EARNED MONEY.

ONE THING IS FOR SURE, THE RESULT OF THE RECENT IMPASSE HAS SHOWN THAT WE CANNOT GO DOWN THE PATH WE'RE ON AND EXPECT TO MOVE FORWARD.

WE ALL WANT TO TREAT OUR EMPLOYEES FAIRLY.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, THEY ARE THE PUBLIC SERVANTS WHO ARE ON THE FRONT LINES DELIVERING THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE.

BUT WE MUST FACE THE FACT THAT WE HAVE AN ESTIMATED \$208 MILLION HOLE IN OUR BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR.

COMMISSIONERS BOVO AND ZAPATA, AS CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE...

I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING TOGETHER WITH YOU TO SOLVE THIS CHALLENGE.

BUT LET ME BE CLEAR ON THIS.

RAIDING RESERVES IS NOT THE ANSWER.

THE CITIZENS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAVE GIVEN US RESPONSIBILITY OVER THEIR MONEY.

I WAS ELECTED TO RESTORE FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND PROTECT THE TAXPAYERS. IT'S A DUTY I TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY.

THIS IS WHY WE WILL PRESENT A BALANCED BUDGET THAT REFLECTS THIS STEWARDSHIP, AND HOLDS THE LINE ON TAXES.

SINCE I WAS ELECTED, I HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM THE WAY WE SERVE THE PEOPLE, TO BECOME FISCALLY SOUND, AND TO SET US ON A COURSE FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY GOVERNMENT DOES NOT LOOK THE SAME.

WE ARE MORE STREAMLINED...

AND FOCUSED ON OUR CORE MISSIONS OF MAINTAINING PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE DELIVERY OF DIRECT SERVICES TO OUR RESIDENTS, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG AND ELDERLY.

WE'RE DOING THINGS BETTER, AND MORE EFFICIENTLY. AND THE CHANGES START AT THE TOP.

BEYOND THE REDUCTIONS TO MY OWN OFFICE BUDGET...

WE'RE ALREADY FINDING WAYS TO FURTHER EMPHASIZE OUR EFFORTS ON STREET LEVEL SERVICES THAT TOUCH AND IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES.

THE OLD WAY OF MAKING ACROSS THE BOARD CUTS IS NOT THE WAY TO RUN AN ORGANIZATION.

INSTEAD, WE ARE USING EVERY MEANS POSSIBLE TO MOVE PAST THIS FISCAL CHALLENGE.

THAT MEANS THAT WE ARE LOOKING TO STRETCH EVERY PUBLIC DOLLAR AND PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES TO DELIVER PROJECTS AND SERVICES MORE EFFICIENTLY...

INCLUDING REACHING OUT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

JUST YESTERDAY, I CUT THE RIBBON ON THE NEWLY REMODELED DANTE FASCELL APARTMENTS.

INSTEAD OF RELYING ON THE SAME OLD WAY TO DO BUSINESS, WE THREW OUT THE OLD BLUEPRINT, AND INSTEAD PARTNERED WITH A PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPER.

THIS BUILDING WENT FROM DILAPIDATED...

TO 151 BRAND NEW UNITS WITH MODERN AMENITIES AND BEAUTIFUL COMMON AREAS.

AND IN THE PROCESS, WE TURNED AN EYESORE INTO A PLACE THAT SENIORS CAN BE PROUD TO CALL HOME.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS DEMONSTRATED THE ABILITY AND INTEREST IN PARTNERING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

WHEN PROPERLY STRUCTURED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST...

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS CAN LEVERAGE THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT, INNOVATION AND THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THAT IS WHY, AS WE TACKLE THE URGENT CHALLENGE OF RENEWING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AT A PACE THAT MATCHES THE COUNTY'S RAPID GROWTH...

WE CONTINUE TO EXPLORE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

ALREADY, WE ARE SEEKING TO REPLACE AND IMPROVE OUR OUTDATED WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE WITH HELP FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

IN NOVEMBER, WE ASKED FOR INPUT FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR...

AND RECEIVED OVER THIRTY RESPONSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO HELP PUT TOGETHER MORE THAN \$7 BILLION WORTH OF PROJECTS.

THIS SUMMER, WE WILL PARTNER WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO BUILD A NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT IN SOUTH MIAMI HEIGHTS TO MEET THE WATER SUPPLY NEEDS OF THIS SERVICE AREA.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO ANALYZE AND COMPARE THE VALUE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR APPROACHES.

IF THE PRIVATE SECTOR OFFERS A BETTER OPTION, THEN WE'LL PROCEED WITH THAT CHOICE.

THIS ALSO MEANS THAT WE WILL LOOK TO CUT RED TAPE IN ORDINANCES THAT PREVENT INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

AND, IN THE WORDS OF A FORMER PRESIDENT, WE WILL "TRUST BUT VERIFY," MAKING SURE THE PRIVATE SECTOR OFFERS THE BEST VALUE TO THE TAXPAYER.

FROM ESTABLISHING SMALL BUSINESS LOANS AND INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT TO MIAMI-DADE...

TO CONTINUING TO WORK TO LESSEN THE REGULATORY BURDENS OF STARTING A NEW BUSINESS...

WE ARE STRENGTHENING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR DOING BUSINESS.

EXPANDING OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR ALSO GETS US OUT OF FUNCTIONS WE SHOULD NOT BE IN...

AND ALLOWS US TO FURTHER CONCENTRATE ON OUR CORE MISSION OF DELIVERING STREET LEVEL SERVICES, AND KEEPING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE.

TO THAT POINT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN THREE YEARS, A CLASS OF 45 POLICE CADETS STARTED TRAINING IN SEPTEMBER 2013, A SECOND CLASS IN DECEMBER.

THIS HIGHLIGHTS MY COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF MIAMI-DADE.

AND I WANT TO THANK COMMISSIONER SALLY HEYMAN FOR HER STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SAFETY.

NUESTRO CRECIMIENTO NOS PRESENTA UN RETO DE COMO PODER SOSTENER LOS SERVICIOS A LOS RESIDENTES MIENTRAS COLECTAMOS MENOS INGRESOS.

Y LES DIGO QUE VAMOS A MANTENER LOS IMPUESTOS BAJO CONTROL.

POR ESO, ESTAMOS BUSCANDO TODAS LAS MANERAS DE SER MAS EFICIENTES Y MANTENER NUESTROS SERVICIOS AL PUEBLO...

ESPECIALMENTE LOS SERVICIOS A NUESTROS NIÑOS Y ANCIANOS.

WE ALSO CONTINUE TO BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS THAT EXIST BETWEEN COUNTY DEPARTMENTS, BECAUSE GOVERNMENT CANNOT CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN SILOS.

WHEN A NEW BUILDING GOES UP, A NEW BUSINESS OPENS, OR A NEW FAMILY MOVES IN TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD...

THOSE REQUIRE A COLLECTIVE EFFORT...

FROM THE POLICE OFFICERS THAT KEEP OUR STREETS SAFE...

THE WORKERS THAT COLLECT OUR TRASH...

THE WATER AND SEWER WORKERS THAT MAKE SURE WE ALL HAVE CLEAN WATER, AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT.

WHEN THEY'RE ALL CONNECTED, OUR COMMUNITY PROSPERS AND MOVES FORWARD, TOGETHER.

WE TAKE THIS CONNECTED APPROACH TOWARD OUR NEXT CHALLENGE OF ENHANCING OUR STATUS AS A GLOBAL COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL CROSSROADS.

IN TODAY'S WORLD OF MOBILE CAPITAL, PEOPLE CAN CHOOSE TO INVEST ANYWHERE.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMPETES NOT ONLY WITH COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, BUT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT PEOPLE ARE CHOOSING US.

TODAY, WE ARE RECOGNIZED AS THE GATEWAY TO THE AMERICAS, THE CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND.

WE ARE TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY.

NEW AIRLINES ARE FLYING INTO MIA, INCLUDING AIR EUROPA, FINNAIR, AND QATAR AIRWAYS...

OPENING THE DOOR TO MORE TRAVEL AND TRADE OPPORTUNITIES TO EUROPE, THE MIDDLE AND FAR EAST.

OUR URBAN CORE IS ONE OF THE HOTTEST REAL ESTATE MARKETS IN THE WORLD -

AND THAT GROWTH HAS SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTY.

PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE HERE!

AND THEY WANT TO DO BUSINESS AND VISIT HERE TOO.

IN 2013, THE VALUE OF TOTAL TRADE THROUGH THE COUNTY TOPPED \$93 BILLION.

AND WE MUST CONTINUE TO EXPAND TRADE BY REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD.

WITH THE BEACON COUNCIL, WE'RE WORKING TO BRING MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES TO MIAMI-DADE.

LAST YEAR, WE LED SUCCESSFUL TRADE MISSIONS TO SPAIN AND FRANCE.

SPAIN IS A LEADER IN BOTH THE NUMBER OF MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS IN SOUTH FLORIDA AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN OUR REGION.

AND IN FRANCE, WE HIGHLIGHTED MIAMI-DADE AS A CENTER FOR THE AVIATION AND AEROSPACE INDUSTRY.

THROUGH OUR EFFORTS, FRENCH COMPANY A T R, A GLOBAL AEROSPACE MANUFACTURING COMPANY, RELOCATED ITS HEADQUARTERS FROM VIRGINIA TO MIAMI-DADE.

A NUMBER OF OTHER COMPANIES ARE PLANNING TO EXPAND OR LOCATE HERE WITHIN THE NEXT 12 TO 18

MONTHS, AND IT'S THE HIGHEST LEVEL WE'VE SEEN IN MANY YEARS.

LATER THIS YEAR, I WILL LEAD A TRADE MISSION TO BRAZIL, WITH ITC CHAIRMAN COMMISSIONER PEPE DIAZ, SO WE CAN FURTHER SOLIDIFY OUR TIES TO OUR NUMBER ONE TRADING PARTNER.

WE'RE ALSO WORKING WITH THE GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU TO INCREASE TOURISM TO MIAMI.

LAST YEAR, A RECORD 14.2 MILLION OVERNIGHT VISITORS SPENT MORE THAN \$22.8 BILLION IN OUR COMMUNITY.

BUT WE CAN DO MORE.

THIS IS WHY WE NEED TO GET GOING ON BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS CONVENTION CENTER THAT WILL ATTRACT CONVENTION BUSINESS TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

JUST LAST MONTH I MET WITH MIAMI BEACH MAYOR PHILIP LEVINE TO OFFER OUR SUPPORT FOR HIS PLANS ON THE BEACH.

BUT THERE IS ALSO ROOM FOR MORE THAN ONE CONVENTION AND CONFERENCE CENTER.

PEOPLE ARE ALREADY COMING, SO WHY NOT GIVE THEM A WORLD-CLASS SPACE TO HOST THEIR CONVENTIONS.

ALSO, TO KEEP THIS MOMENTUM GOING, IT MAKES SENSE TO INVEST IN OUR TWO LARGEST ECONOMIC ENGINES – OUR AIR AND SEA PORT.

MIA HAS MADE OVER \$6 BILLION IN IMPROVEMENTS, MAKING IT EASIER TO TRAVEL IN AND OUT OF MIAMI.

MIA ALSO BROKE A RECORD WITH OVER 40 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 2013, MAKING IT ONE OF THE BUSIEST AIRPORTS IN THE NATION.

WE ALSO CONTINUE TO HAVE A RECORD NUMBER OF CRUISE PASSENGERS IN PORT MIAMI.

AND, THIS MAY, WE'RE OPENING THE PORT TUNNEL ON TIME, ON BUDGET AND WITHOUT TOLLS...

AND BY FINISHING THE DEEP DREDGE, WE'RE ENSURING THAT PORT MIAMI THRIVES IN THE POST PANAMAX ERA.

THANK YOU COMMISSIONER BELL FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP ON THESE VITAL PORT ISSUES.

AND OF COURSE, GOVERNOR SCOTT AND OUR FEDERAL AND STATE DELEGATIONS ALL DESERVE OUR GRATITUDE FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP IN THIS PROJECT.

FOR VISITORS COMING IN AND OUT OF OUR COMMUNITY, TAXI CABS MAKE THE FIRST AND LAST IMPRESSION.

JUST LAST MONTH, WE MADE HISTORIC CHANGES TO OUR TAXICAB INDUSTRY.

THANK YOU COMMISSIONERS FOR OVERWHELMINGLY PASSING THE MUCH NEEDED REFORMS I PUT FORTH TO PROVIDE BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CONVENIENCE IN ALL OUR TAXIS.

AND TO BUILD UPON THIS SUCCESS, COMMISSIONERS EDMONSON AND MOSS, I KNOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO FIND COMMON GROUND THAT WILL BRING NEW MOBILE APP BASED CAR SERVICES TO OUR COMMUNITY.

THINK ABOUT THIS.

MIAMI-DADE IS THE TOP ECONOMIC PRODUCER IN THE STATE.

AND MIAMI-DADE COUNTY GOVERNMENT MANAGES THE TOP TWO ECONOMIC ENGINES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

WE'RE CHARGED WITH SAFEGUARDING THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF JOBS THAT COUNTLESS FAMILIES RELY ON TO PUT FOOD ON THEIR TABLE.

AND THIS IS A MAJOR PRIORITY OF OURS, HELPING OUR FAMILIES IMPROVE THEIR ECONOMIC WELL-BEING.

THAT'S WHY WE CONTINUE TO POSITION OURSELVES AS A PREMIERE CENTER FOR SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE, LEARNING, AND RECREATION.

OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS EXPECT AND DESERVE THE BEST IN SPORTS AND RECREATION.

WE'RE KNOWN FOR HOSTING LARGE SPORTING EVENTS.

WE'RE THE HOME OF THE BACK-TO-BACK WORLD CHAMPION MIAMI HEAT.

NEXT MONTH, WE'LL HOST THE WORLD GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP AT TRUMP DORAL...

AND THE SONY OPEN TENNIS TOURNAMENT AT THE CRANDON TENNIS CENTER.

WE EVEN HAVE TWO MIAMIANS WHO WON SILVER MEDALS IN THE RECENT WINTER OLYMPICS!

BOBSLEDDER LAURYN WILLIAMS WAS A TRACK STAR AT UM AND SHORT TRACK SPEED SKATER EDDY ALVAREZ IS A MIAMI NATIVE, AND A FELLOW COLUMBUS EXPLORER.

THEY REPRESENTED OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR COUNTRY WITH GREAT PRIDE!

WE WANT MORE CHILDREN FROM MIAMI TO GROW UP WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE IN THE OLYMPICS, IN THE NFL OR NBA, AND YES, IN THE MLS.

WHEN YOU VISIT OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AND SEE GIRLS AND BOYS PLAYING SOCCER, WHO KNOWS, MAYBE THERE IS A WORLD CUP STAR IN THE MAKING.

THIS IS WHY WE CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS WITH DAVID BECKHAM ON FINDING A HOME FOR HIS MLS FRANCHISE.

AND LET ME ADD - DAVID BECKHAM COULD HAVE GONE ANYWHERE - BUT HE CAME HERE.

COMMISSIONER BARREIRO, I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU TO HELP BRING THE MLS TO MIAMI.

ALL OF THIS ADDS UP TO SUPPORT FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES OF HOSTING THE PAN-AMERICAN GAMES...

OR DARE I SAY, EVEN THE OLYMPICS.

THE SUMMER ONES, OF COURSE.

WE ALSO NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT WE PROVIDE OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS WITH THE BEST IN ARTS AND CULTURE.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT TO THE COUNTY OF NON-PROFIT ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS ALONE IS IN EXCESS OF A BILLION DOLLARS YEARLY.

IN DECEMBER, WE HOSTED ART BASEL AND OPENED THE PEREZ ART MUSEUM MIAMI.

SOON WE'LL OPEN THE FROST MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AT MUSEUM PARK.

BUT THE ARTS MEAN SO MUCH MORE.

PLACES LIKE THIS ONE, THE MILANDER CENTER FOR ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT...

AND OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS CENTERS ARE THE BIRTHPLACE OF CREATIVITY AND NEW IDEAS.

TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, THIRTY-THREE YEAR OLD AFRICAN-AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHT TARELL MCCRANEY.

TARELL GOT HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTS IN LIBERTY CITY AT THE COUNTY'S AFRICAN HERITAGE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER.

AFTER STUDYING AT NEW WORLD SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, DEPAUL UNIVERSITY, YALE, AND RECEIVING A MACARTHUR GENIUS GRANT...

TARELL'S PLAYS HAVE BEEN PERFORMED IN ENGLAND, MIAMI, AND HE'S NOW IN NEW YORK FOR HIS LATEST PLAY.

BEST OF ALL, TARELL IS COMING BACK TO MIAMI TO HELP REVIVE REGIONAL THEATER AT THE COCONUT GROVE PLAYHOUSE...

HELPING US BREATHE NEW LIFE TO THAT STAGE THAT HAS BEEN SILENT FOR SO LONG.

TARELL IS THE KIND OF TALENT THAT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS CENTERS CAN PRODUCE...

AND THESE ARE THE KINDS OF OPPORTUNITIES WE WANT TO GIVE EVERY CHILD IN MIAMI-DADE.

THESE OPPORTUNITIES WILL REQUIRE OUR INVESTMENT.

COMMISSIONERS, WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER ON THIS EFFORT.

SENATOR SOUTO, AS CHAIR OF THE CULTURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE...

WITH VICE CHAIR JORDAN, COMMISSIONERS MONESTIME AND SUAREZ...

I NEED YOUR COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP TO MAKE THESE INVESTMENTS A REALITY.

TAKE OUR LIBRARIES FOR INSTANCE.

I REACHED OUT TO THE COMMUNITY AND FORMED A BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON LIBRARIES.

I AM WORKING WITH THEM TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT WHAT OUR FUTURE LIBRARIES SHOULD LOOK LIKE, AND HOW THEY CAN BE FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE.

THROUGH THE WORK OF THIS GROUP...

WE ARE DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS THAT WILL CREATE INNOVATIVE CENTERS FOR OUR CHILDREN TO GATHER AND LEARN....

AND GIVES OUR COMMUNITY A LIBRARY SYSTEM THAT MEETS OUR DIVERSE NEEDS.

EVERYTHING WE ARE DOING IS SEEN THROUGH THE LENS OF EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE.

LET ME GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF THIS HOLISTIC APPROACH:

WHEN WE THINK OF PARKS, WE THINK OF GREEN -

AND WE ALL AGREE THAT EVERY GREAT COMMUNITY DESERVES A GREAT PARKS SYSTEM.

IN FACT, JUST YESTERDAY WE HAD FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA VISIT GWEN CHERRY PARK...

SHE RECOGNIZED OUR COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL EPIDEMIC OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND CHILD SAFETY ISSUES THROUGH THE FIT 2 PLAY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE PARKS HAS PROVEN TO THE NATION THAT GREAT AFTERSCHOOL AND ATHLETIC PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN A CHILD'S LIFE!

BUT OUR PARKS ARE GREEN IN ANOTHER WAY.

GREAT PARKS ARE KEY ECONOMIC DRIVERS IN A COMPETITIVE ECONOMY.

PARK TOURISM GENERATES \$1.4 BILLION ANNUALLY IN REVENUE TO THE COUNTY.

AND OVER 10,000 JOBS ARE GENERATED FROM PARK AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES, TWO-THIRDS OF WHICH ARE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THIS IS WHY WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO CONTINUE IMPLEMENTING THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN.

OUR AIM IS TO CREATE WORLD CLASS SHARED PUBLIC SPACES FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY...

AND TO MAKE THE INVESTMENTS NECESSARY TO CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS...

WHERE THE ARTS, LIBRARIES, AND PARKS CAN ALL COME TOGETHER TO PROVIDE GATHERING PLACES THAT ENGAGE OUR YOUTH.

NUESTRAS INVERSIONES SON IMPORTANTES PARA EL DESARROLLO ECONOMICO DE NUESTRA COMUNIDAD.

EN NUESTRO PUERTO Y AEROPUERTO, EN LAS ARTES Y NUESTROS PARQUES...

POR CADA NUEVO NEGOCIO, CADA TURISTA, CUANDO MEJORAMOS NUESTRAS COMUNIDADES...

TODO LO QUE HACEMOS NOS AYUDA A CREAR MAS TRABAJOS...

Y MEJORAR LA CALIDAD DE VIDA DE NUESTROS RESIDENTES.

WHEN EXCEPTIONAL ARCHITECTURE, BEAUTIFUL PARKS, DYNAMIC PUBLIC ART AND TECHNOLOGY ALL CONNECT, THEY CREATE A COMMUNITY WE CAN BE PROUD OF...

AND ONE THAT'S AN AMAZING PLACE TO LIVE, HAVE FUN, AND DO BUSINESS.

IT CREATES A SENSE OF PLACE, INCREASES CIVIC PRIDE, AND IT ALL AFFECTS THE BOTTOM LINE.

WITH EVERY NEW BUSINESS AND TOURIST, EVERY NEW AIRLINE AND CRUISE SHIP...

WHEN YOU INVEST IN ARTS, SPORTS, AND PARKS, IT ALL MEANS JOBS.

I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT OUR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS AT ITS LOWEST SINCE THE START OF THE GREAT RECESSION.

STILL, IT'S NOT LOW ENOUGH.

AS THE WORLD'S ECONOMY CONTINUES TO EVOLVE, OUR CHALLENGE BECOMES MAKING SURE WE CAN COMPETE IN THIS NEW ECONOMY.

STUDIES SHOW THAT ONE OF THE MAIN CONCERNS IN THE MINDS OF BUSINESS LEADERS IS ACCESS TO A TALENTED WORKFORCE.

QUITE SIMPLY - YOU CAN ATTRACT ALL THE ENTREPRENEURS IN THE WORLD, BUT IF WORKERS DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT SKILLS, THE ENTREPRENEURS WILL GO SOMEWHERE ELSE

TO SUCCESSFULLY EXPAND THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES OF THE FUTURE...

WE NEED TO HAVE THE WORKERS TO FILL THESE JOBS, ESPECIALLY IN KEY SKILL AREAS.

WE'VE LONG FACED A "BRAIN DRAIN..."

WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO KEEP THIS HOME GROWN TALENT HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

I AM PROUD TO CHAIR THE ONE COMMUNITY / ONE GOAL INITIATIVE.

THIS IS WHERE WE CONNECT BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT WITH EDUCATION, AND WORK TOWARD ONE GOAL.

CHAIRWOMAN SOSA, AS AN EDUCATOR, I KNOW YOU SHARE MY VISION.

WE BOTH KNOW THAT OUR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN MUST BE WELL PREPARED AND HAVE THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN THE NEW ECONOMY.

ALREADY, WE ARE SEEING THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR.

THROUGH MY INITIATIVE - ACTIVELY INVESTING IN MIAMI-DADE - THE AIM INITIATIVE...

WE HAVE CREATED A CONTINUUM OF EDUCATION THAT ALIGNS WITH THE ONE COMMUNITY / ONE GOAL TARGET INDUSTRIES...

NOW, OUR STUDENTS ARE GETTING AN EARLY START ON OBTAINING THE KNOWLEDGE TO BECOME PART OF TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE.

AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IS MY EXECUTIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM.

EVERY SEMESTER, WE TAKE 30 TOP STUDENTS FROM FIU AND HAVE THEM PUT TO USE WHAT THEY LEARN IN THE CLASSROOM.

THIS GIVES THEM REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE THEY CAN USE FOR LATER JOBS.

THE EXECUTIVE INTERNS ARE HERE WITH US TODAY. THESE ARE THE FUTURE LEADERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

STUDENTS, PLEASE STAND. LET'S GIVE THEM A HAND.

BY IMPROVING THE SKILLS OF OUR PEOPLE, WE CAN SEEK WAYS TO EXPAND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES INTO NEW SECTORS.

IN TODAY'S WORLD, WE CAN'T RELY ON OUTDATED MODELS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT FOCUS ON JUST ONE OR TWO INDUSTRIES.

INSTEAD, WE'RE UNLEASHING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF OUR COMMUNITY BY SUPPORTING START-UP INCUBATORS AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY BASED BUSINESSES.

LAST YEAR, I SPOKE ABOUT THE NEED TO FOSTER THE GROWTH OF OUR CREATIVE CLASS.

THE MIAMI URBAN AREA IS NOW VIEWED INTERNATIONALLY AS THE EMERGING LOCATION FOR NEW AND INNOVATIVE COMPANIES - ESPECIALLY FROM LATIN AMERICA...

AND WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO BEING RECOGNIZED AS A "START-UP" CENTER - HASHTAG TECH BEACH.

THIS COMING MAY, WE'LL HOST THE "E-MERGE AMERICAS" CONFERENCE, A GATHERING OF THE BRIGHTEST LEADING-EDGE TECH THINKERS AND INNOVATORS.

AS PART OF "E-MERGE," I HAVE INVITED MAYORS FROM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO MEET FOR THE MAYORAL INNOVATION SUMMIT...

WITH THE GOAL OF SHARING WAYS ON HOW TO TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITIES INTO "SMARTER CITIES" THROUGH TECHNOLOGY.

WE'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ALL OUR FUNCTIONS TO DO THINGS SMARTER, BETTER, FASTER, AND CHEAPER!

ONE AREA WHERE WE'RE DOING THIS IS THE WAY WE PRESENT OURSELVES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD. OUR COUNTY'S WEBSITE HAD 22 MILLION HITS LAST YEAR.

WE'RE ALSO MOVING MANY OF OUR FUNCTIONS ON-LINE AND TO MOBILE APPS.

BUT WE NEED TO DO MORE.

LAST YEAR, TOGETHER WITH THE BEACON COUNCIL, WE LAUNCHED MIAMI SITES - A NEW WEB SITE FOR THE PROFESSIONALS WHO CHOOSE WHERE TO LOCATE BUSINESSES.

THIS SITE GIVES THEM ALL THE INFORMATION THEY NEED ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY.

WE ARE EXTENDING THIS THINKING TO LAUNCH A "ONE-STOP SITE" THAT PRESENTS ONE ACCESS POINT WITH KEY INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO OPEN BUSINESSES HERE.

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT OUR ECONOMIES ARE ALL CONNECTED. THE WORLD SEES US AS ONE MIAMI, AND IT'S TIME WE SEE OURSELVES THE SAME WAY.

WE NEED TO REPLACE COMPETITION, WITH COOPERATION. NEIGHBORING CITIES NEED TO COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER.

IMAGINE BEING ABLE TO HARNESS THE ECONOMIC ENERGY OF ONE CONNECTED URBAN CORE -

BRICKELL, DOWNTOWN, MID-TOWN, AND SOUTH BEACH.

THIS IS WHY WE ARE WORKING TO MAKE BAY LINK A REALITY.

WITH OUR STATE PARTNERS, AND THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN THE MAYORS OF MIAMI AND MIAMI BEACH...

I CHAIR THE POLICY COMMITTEE THAT WILL COMPLETE THE BLUEPRINT FOR STARTING WORK ON BAY LINK...

AND START TO BRING MIAMI AND MIAMI BEACH CLOSER TOGETHER.

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT BETTER MOBILITY AND EASING TRAFFIC...

THINK ABOUT LIVING ON THE BEACH AND WORKING DOWNTOWN, OR VICE VERSA, AND BEING ABLE TO GET AROUND, ALL ON PUBLIC TRANSIT.

AND WHILE WE WILL REACH OUT TO OUR PARTNERS AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL...

IN THE END, IT'S UP TO US TO MAKE THESE INVESTMENTS IN OUR FUTURE.

WE NEED TO BE SELF SUFFICIENT IF WE ARE TO HAVE THE TYPE OF MOBILITY OPTIONS THAT DEFINE GREAT COMMUNITIES.

WE ARE ALSO CONNECTING WITH OUR NEIGHBORING COUNTIES.

I'VE OFTEN JOKED THAT THE TWO MAN MADE THINGS YOU CAN SEE FROM OUTER SPACE ARE THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA AND THE MIAMI-DADE / BROWARD COUNTY LINE.

WELL, NO LONGER.

JUST TWO WEEKS AGO I HAD THE MAYORS FROM BROWARD AND PALM BEACH IN MY OFFICE FOR A TRI-COUNTY MEETING.

WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER IN UNPRECEDENTED WAYS ON ISSUES OF SUSTAINABILITY, TRANSIT, AND COMMERCE, BECAUSE OUR FUTURES ARE INTERTWINED.

AND WE ARE PLANNING ON VISITING OUR PARTNERS IN TALLAHASSEE AS ONE REGION THAT SHARES COMMON GOALS.

IN THIS SPIRIT OF CONNECTIVITY, OUR COMMUNITY IS WELL POSITIONED TO COMPETE IN THE NEW ECONOMY.

AND ULTIMATELY, CONNECTIVITY SERVES TO EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OF OUR RESIDENTS.

NO MATTER YOUR SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC STATUS -

NO MATTER WHAT NEIGHBORHOOD YOU LIVE IN -

WHETHER YOU JUST ARRIVED OR WHETHER YOUR ANCESTORS HELPED FORGE OUR COMMUNITY -

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED.

WE ARE ALL ONE.

AND WE ALL HAVE A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROSPER.

SEGUIMOS BUSCANDO OPORTUNIDADES PARA CRECER NUESTRA ECONOMIA...

Y TAMBIEN SEGUIMOS TRABAJANDO PARA PREPARAR A NUESTROS ESTUDIANTES PARA LOS EMPLEOS DE MAÑANA.

HOY SOMOS LIDERES EN INDUSTRIAS COMO LA TECNOLOGIA...

Y ESTAMOS CREANDO MAS OPORTUNIDADES PARA NUESTRAS FUTURAS GENERACIONES.

IN THE END, WE MUST ASK OURSELVES WHY WE DO ANY OF THIS? WHAT IS OUR MOTIVATION?

OURS IS A COMMUNITY BUILT ON THE ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WHO COME HERE WITH A DREAM FOR A BETTER LIFE.

WE INSPIRE THIS HOPE, AND IT'S UP TO ALL OF US TO CONTINUE FOSTERING THIS PROMISE.

MY STYLE MAY BE QUIET.

BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE, I AM A PASSIONATE MAN!

I HAVE A PASSION FOR THE PEOPLE OF OUR COMMUNITY.

I HAVE A PASSION FOR OUR CHILDREN AND ELDERLY.

I HAVE A PASSION FOR THE FUTURE.

I'VE DEDICATED MY LIFE TO PUBLIC SERVICE BECAUSE I BELIEVE DEEPLY IN MY DUTY - OUR DUTY - TO SERVE OTHERS.

I DO THIS FOR MY GRANDCHILDREN - FOR ALEXIS, AVA, DANIEL, LUCAS, AND MARCUS -

WHEN I LOOK IN THEIR EYES, I SEE THE TRUST THEY PLACE IN THEIR GRANDFATHER - THEIR ABU.

WE'VE ALL BEEN ENTRUSTED TO TAKE CARE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

AND I WILL NOT LET THEM, OR ANY OF YOU DOWN.

SO HERE IS MY CHALLENGE TO YOU:

LET'S NOT "KICK THE CAN DOWN THE ROAD..." OR GET BY WITH "JUST GOOD ENOUGH..."

INSTEAD, LET US MOVE FORWARD TO LEAVE A BETTER PLACE THAN THE ONE WE FOUND.

LET US FACE OUR DIFFICULT MOMENTS WITH GREAT OPTIMISM.

LET FUTURE GENERATIONS LOOK BACK AND SAY THAT WE TURNED OUR CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES...

AND BECAUSE OF THAT, WE LEFT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY A GREATER PLACE FOR ALL.

AND LET US WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS A COMMUNITY WHERE ALL OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL GROW AND PROSPER TOGETHER...

A PLACE WE CAN ALL BE PROUD TO CALL HOME.

THANK YOU, AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.