

**State of the County
Mayor Sue Gunzburger
November 15, 2011**

A year ago, a new County Commission was sworn into office. In fact we began with an historic event in Broward's 21st century political history when three new members, or one third of the entire commission, were sworn in to begin the first year of their term of office. Two veteran commissioners were also returned to the Commission dais.

While this was a momentous occasion, we began anew knowing the national, state and local economic recoveries were fragile at best. One could easily describe the state of the county as stable, but guarded.

December 2010

The Commission had its last meeting of 2010 on December 14, which included a joint workshop with the County's Cultural Council to formally receive and discuss the 2020 Cultural Plan. The plan was developed over many months by the Council, the County's consultant, and extensive input from all major stakeholders, interested parties and the general public.

January 2011

January 2011 had the new Commission in session with an aggressive schedule. In addition to regular meetings and public hearings, the Commission conducted a workshop on the Port Everglades Master Plan. The seaport is one of the County's three main economic engines, along with the Airport – fondly known as FLL – and the beach, the crown jewel of our countywide tourism and hospitality industries.

The Commission also formally began recruitment for a new County Attorney, held a workshop revising and updating County procurement procedures and policies, as well as a workshop to determine a framework for BSO/regional communications.

Perhaps most importantly for the Commission itself, January also was when the new Commission held its goal setting workshop. Mindful of the economy and with the input of three new commissioners, our goals and vision statements were revised. The revisions addressed attainability and sustainability to better reflect current and future trends.

February 2011

Early February turned our collective focus to Tallahassee and a workshop with our state Legislative Delegation. We again implored our delegation to resist further "cost-shiftings," "user fees" and "unfunded mandates" onto local governments as our County checkbook was still hemorrhaging from similar previous state actions.

In mid-February, for the first time in several years, we hosted a Tri-County Commission Meeting held at the IGFA facility in Dania Beach with Miami-Dade and Palm Beach county commissions. We reached consensus on a number of regional issues including a united front to ask the governor to reverse his position on the pain medication database and the need for more stringent state and local regulations of pain management clinics or “pills mills.” Likewise, later in the month, we held a joint legislative program workshop with the Broward County League of Cities on commonality issues.

March 2011

On March 1, we held our Fiscal Year 2012 pre-budget workshop which confirmed flat general revenues at best or another single digit percentage decline in the value of the property tax roll at worse.

March also began our twin legislative “offensives” in Washington, D.C. and Tallahassee. Early in the month, the NACo Legislative Conference took place in the nation’s capital. Commissioners with NACo and our federal lobbying team made the rounds of Congress and Obama administration offices and departments. We pursued funding for transportation, beach renourishment and seaport and airport capital projects, to name but a few. On March 8 in Tallahassee, a new legislative session commenced. We began to collectively hold our breath and checkbook for the next 60 days.

We participated in FAC’s March Legislative Day and in Broward Days which were March 23-24. At our meeting of March 29, we formally welcomed our new County Attorney, Joni Armstrong-Coffey to the dais.

Finally on March 31, the county celebrated the grand re-opening of the \$20.3 million Edgar P. Mills Multi-Purpose Center. The original facility was destroyed by Hurricane Wilma in 2005. The new 57,000 square foot three-story facility with a 232-car parking garage was later bestowed with a LEED silver certification.

April 2011

April began with a vote to transmit an updated FLL airport layout plan to the FAA. The new Dania Beach Paul DeMaio Library opened to the public. The County contributed \$3 million dollars to the city for design and construction of the 10,000 square foot facility and an additional \$342,000 for furniture, fixtures and equipment. Later this year this library became the County’s first LEED gold certified project.

Throughout April, commissioners traveled to and from Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. to advocate or oppose numerous issues and initiatives. This vigilance paid dividends as the legislative session ended and the governor’s pen ceased to ink. In collaboration with staff and

our lobbying teams, the Commission was able to defeat harmful priority legislation. This included bills regarding pretrial services, on-line travel companies, juvenile justice cost shifts, and destination gaming resort locations. Additionally, we were successful in obtaining an amendment to the legislature's growth management act that empowered coastal counties to include "adaptation action areas" within their comprehensive plans to address climate change impacts.

Furthermore, we were successful in retaining funding for community care for the elderly, mental health and substance abuse programming, and child protection teams. Even with congressional gridlock, we were able to obtain funding for portions of the Port dredging project and continued our efforts to repeal the 3 percent withholding proviso. At this writing, that repeal is one vote away in the U.S. House.

At the end of April we welcomed the County's newly appointed Inspector General, John W. Scott, and approved his initial executive budget.

May 2011

In early May we began our Fiscal Year 2012 budget deliberations with the constitutional officers and the County organization itself. By the middle of the month, in a workshop setting, we were formally made aware of the dire financial straits of the City of Lauderdale Lakes, including the city owing millions of dollars to the County for already expended BSO police, fire, and EMS services.

Later in the month the commission received a presentation on the County's economic development incentive program strategies to further buttress our efforts to improve local private sector business and job prospects. We directed staff to draft proposals amending the County's job growth/economic development incentive program ordinance to reflect the overhauled and improved strategies, practices, and policies.

On May 24, the commission unanimously sponsored and adopted the County's "pill mills" ordinance. It was crafted with input from other public and private stakeholders to serve as a model for our partner cities countywide and elsewhere. On May 31, the Commission further implemented provisions of the county's historic ethics code adopted in 2010. An all-day ethics training symposium was held for commissioners which also featured Inspector General Scott as one of several guest facilitators.

June 2011

In early June, the Commission formally received and filed the Final Report from the charter-mandated Management and Efficiency Study Committee. The Commission and County Administration committed within 90 days to provide a status report on the implementation of the committee's recommendations.

By the middle of June, the commission began in earnest the development of the Fiscal Year 2012 County budget. In a workshop setting, we received the County Administrator's General Fund recommendations, which were based upon an estimated Fiscal Year 2012 property roll of \$126.3 billion, a 2.8 percent decrease from the roll used for the Fiscal Year 2011 Adopted Budget.

Accordingly, the administrator recommended trimming at a flat Fiscal Year 2012 total millage rate, operating, capital, and debt service combined, of 5.553 mills, which would result in the County collecting approximately \$20 million less in property taxes. Again, we were faced with revenue shortfalls and very few options to mitigate further adverse impacts to the overall County organization. The Commission began its summer recess knowing further significant budget deliberations would be the reality of late summer.

July 2011

In July, zero discrepancies were found by the FAA on the annual Part 139 Airport Certification at FLL. This is the thirteenth consecutive year that FLL has had zero discrepancies resulting from the Part 139 inspections. A similar finding by FDOT showed no discrepancies for North Perry Airport.

Also in July the Broward County Aviation Department (BCAD) implemented the SunPass program for parking payments at FLL, which has now surpassed all other Florida airports in terms of usage. BCAD was also awarded the Florida Airport Council's Environmental Excellence Award for Broward County's successful efforts to provide wetland mitigation in West Lake Park.

Revised forecasts for BCAD's total state and federal funding for Fiscal Year 2011 were projected at nearly \$112.3 million.

August 2011

The Commission returned to a full schedule in August. Now that the financing is in place for the new main courthouse, it was welcome news to learn the construction documents for this \$270 million, 700,000 square foot, 21-story facility were completed during the recess. The project was now being sent out for bids with hopefully an award by the end of the year. August saw the approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Florida East Coast Railway, LLC for the development of an intermodal container transfer facility at Port Everglades. This facility will add more cost-effective commercial horsepower capacity to our seaport's economic engine.

In August we finalized the proposed Fiscal Year 2012 County budget. The Commission received confirmation the trimmed flat millage rate will result in the County collecting \$20 million less in property taxes, for a cumulative reduction of \$257 million since Fiscal Year 2007. We learned all of the constitutional officers reached their budget targets by the Commission agreeing to allow

those offices to use “rollover funds” from the current year. In addition, the amount of reductions in all agencies had been mitigated as a result of state mandated employee contributions to the Florida Retirement System. This state action permitted the Commission to suspend the County furlough days for the rest of the current fiscal year and into Fiscal Year 2012.

Despite further constrained revenues, there would be no recommended reductions in either mass transit/transportation or human services. The Libraries Division, the Commission’s largest single tax-supported agency, would be able to reopen the six regional libraries on Sundays. The Parks and Recreation Division will also be able to reopen regional parks on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, albeit with scaled-back staffing and services.

The Commission also was presented with short- and long-range plans for Everglades Holiday Park. County operation of our environmental jewel, nestled in the river of grass, will begin in June 2012.

At our last meeting in August, in accordance with the electorate’s mandate, the Commission directed the County Attorney to draft a proposed ordinance creating a code of ethics for elected municipal officials.

September 2011

In September we adopted the Fiscal Year 2012 budget. Once again our agencies met the challenge of identifying creative means of delivering services with less available resources to the general public. Internally, we reached signed labor agreements with six of the seven county bargaining units that generally provided for no wage increases. These six labor agreements were in place prior to the start of the new fiscal year. For the County workforce, we also finalized the procurement process and began negotiations for a new health insurance contract. This would ultimately realize \$1 million in savings from the prior year’s health insurance premium costs, plus enhancements estimated at \$500,000 for employees.

September also saw the Commission adopt another first-of-its-kind ordinance, which would prohibit certain sales of smoking devices to minors. It would also place other restrictions, obligations and penalties for business entities engaged in vending those products to the public.

October 2011

October 1 saw the dawn of a new fiscal year. In lieu of the annual Mayor’s Gala, and in keeping with the provisos of the adopted County ethics code, the Commission voted to sponsor an “Annual Day of Caring” in conjunction with the United Way to benefit the Susan B. Anthony Center.

The Commission also learned one of the two proposers for the long delayed Supervisor of Elections building was withdrawing their proposal. The County will continue to negotiate with the remaining proposer.

Additionally the Commission was asked to provide direction for a contribution to the performing arts center's desired on-site facility upgrades, improvements, and enhancements. After further discussion in November, the amount of the county's contribution is still being determined.

After lengthy debate over many months, on October 11, the Commission adopted a Code of Ethics for elected municipal officials and other specified individuals. The culmination of years of discourse on this measure of governmental transparency had finally, and historically, been achieved.

October also contained three more board workshops. The first workshop was with the City of Fort Lauderdale on a number of longstanding issues and concerns. The second workshop was with the Resource Recovery Board and a number of major municipal and private stakeholders. The purpose was to discuss short and long term issues regarding solid waste disposal countywide. The third was the Commission's redistricting workshop in preparation for the November and December public hearings in order to finalize new county commission districts by the charter mandated deadline of December 31.

By the end of October another historic commission vote took place. The approval of an interlocal agreement for settlement with the City of Dania Beach over airport expansion and noise mitigation was reached.

Also at the end of the month, with the Commission's authorization, I was honored to be part of the governor's trade mission to Brazil and to represent our County in this exceptional effort to seek and solidify further trade with our largest South American trading partner.

In November, the commission voted to reject a proposed policy regarding restricting the public's use of designated County facilities for expressive activities. Instead the Commission unanimously supported the status quo regarding First Amendment and freedom of assembly rights. Later that same day, the commission affirmed its commitment to full equality. By a 9-0 vote, an ordinance was enacted requiring contractors seeking County contracts to provide health insurance benefits to domestic partners on the same basis as benefits for employees' spouses.

But now the time has come to pass the gavel to our next mayor.

However, I would be remiss if I did not try to express my gratitude for the support and assistance given to me during my year as mayor by my colleagues, the County Attorney, the County Auditor, the County Administrator, her deputy, immediate executive staff and her direct

office support staff, including agenda prep, minutes, document control, ETS, and Public Communications.

As a point of personal privilege, I would also like to formally recognize my Commission office staff: Dee Platt, Nancy Fear, Eric Rosenberg, Stephen Popiel and my volunteer, John Bradford, and Kimberly Maroe, Commission PIO. My family knows only too well how much I appreciate their consideration of the extra duties and responsibilities I have had during my mayor's term. Due to those obligations, their "mother" or "grandmother" has had to be "AWOL" at times from them.

So I close now as I began. I find Broward County to be stable but guarded. As a result of this Commission's collective strong leadership, the administration's commitment to our visions and goals, our continued sound financial and budgeting practices, and a workforce dedicated to quality public services, together we have weathered the depths of the great recession. Also together, under very adverse circumstances, we have shown by deeds, not rhetoric, that Broward County personifies "Our Best. Nothing Less."

Thank you for the honor and opportunity to have served as your Broward County Mayor for 2010-2011.