

FINAL SCRIPT

**2009 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS
FEBRUARY 18, 2009**

**DEKALB CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
W. BURRELL ELLIS**

**TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS AND
DIGNITARIES.....AND TO MY FELLOW CITIZENS PRESENT HERE THIS
EVENING.....**

I BRING YOU GREETINGS ON BEHALF OF DEKALB COUNTY.

**THERE ARE NATURAL PARALLELS BETWEEN WHAT WE EXPERIENCE
AS INDIVIDUALS AND WHAT WE COLLECTIVELY EXPERIENCE AS A
GOVERNMENT.**

AS INDIVIDUALS, WE EXPERIENCE GOOD TIMES...

**TIMES WHEN WE ARE IN THE BLOOM OF HEALTH, ENERGETIC AND
VIBRANT...**

**TIMES WHEN WE FEEL GOOD ABOUT OUR JOBS AND OUR WORK
FUTURE SEEMS SECURE...**

**TIMES WHEN OUR PERSONAL FINANCES ARE SOUND AND WE CAN
MEET OUR OBLIGATIONS AND WE HAVE DISCRETIONARY MONEY TO
BUY THINGS WE WANT...**

TIMES WHEN OUR LOVED ONES ARE CONTENT AND HAPPY.

**DURING THESE TIMES, OUR WORRIES ARE FEW AND OUR OPTIMISM IS
HIGH.**

**ON THE REVERSE SIDE, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THINGS ARE NOT
GOOD...**

**WE HAVE HEALTH CONCERNS OR WE DON'T FEEL AS GOOD AS WE
WANT.**

**TIMES WHEN WE ARE UNHAPPY WITH OUR JOBS...OR WORSE....WE ARE
UNEMPLOYED AND ANXIOUS ABOUT OUR ECONOMIC FUTURES...**

TIMES WHEN WE STRUGGLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET, AND THERE ISN'T ENOUGH MONEY TO GO AROUND...

TIMES WHEN THINGS AREN'T WELL WITH THE PEOPLE WE LOVE AND WE WORRY ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS ON TOP OF OUR OWN.

DURING THESE TIMES, WE DOUBT WHETHER THINGS WILL IMPROVE AND WE ARE FEARFUL ABOUT WHAT MAY LIE AHEAD.

IT IS NO DIFFERENT WITH A COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

THERE ARE GOOD TIMES WHEN CRIME IS LOW AND WE FEEL SAFE IN OUR COMMUNITIES...

TIMES WHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY IS STRONG AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE PLENTIFUL....

TIMES WHEN THE COFFERS ARE FULL....AND THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CAN FUND EXISTING PROGRAMS...

**UNDERTAKE NEW INITIATIVES...
KEEP TAXES LOW... AND GIVE EMPLOYEES RAISES.....**

TIMES WHEN PEOPLE ARE CONFIDENT IN THE PROGRESS AND GROWTH OF THEIR COUNTY.....

THEN THERE ARE THE OTHER TIMES, WHEN PROBLEMS ARE MANY.....

CRIME IS INCREASING, AND THERE IS TOO MUCH FEAR IN OUR COMMUNITIES....TIMES WHEN THE ECONOMY SLOWS DOWN...AND TOO MANY LOSE THEIR JOBS, OR...IN THIS DAY AND AGE...LOSE THEIR HOMES....

TIMES WHEN COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUGGLES TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS AND TO MAINTAIN EXISTING BUSINESS...

TIMES WHEN BUDGETS ARE TIGHT...AND THE UNPLEASANT CHOICES WE FACE ARE EITHER CUTTING SERVICES OR RAISING TAXES.....

TIMES WHEN EMPLOYEES DON'T RECEIVE RAISES...OR-IN SOME CASES...ARE FURLOUGHED... OR EVEN LAID OFF.

DURING THESE TIMES, WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH INCREASING NEEDS... DIMINISHING RESOURCES...AND TOUGH DECISIONS.

OUR COUNTY...LIKE THE REST OF OUR NATION... IS FACING HARD TIMES...WE ARE IN A DEEP RECESSION...AND NEWS OF MASSIVE JOB LOSSES...SHAKE OUR CONFIDENCE DAILY.

3.5 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS NATIONALLY.

GEORGIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 8.1%, IS AT A 26 YEAR HIGH.

FORECLOSURES ARE AT LEVELS NEVER SEEN IN OUR LIFETIMES.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY... ACROSS MANY SECTORS...IS DOWN AND ONCE POWERFUL INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY WEAKENED... OR HAVE GONE OUT OF BUSINESS ALTOGETHER.

CREDIT IS SORELY RESTRICTED ...AND THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS SEEM LOCKED...IN A VICIOUS DOWNWARD SPIRAL.

GOVERNMENT BUDGETS ARE DEEPLY IMPACTED AS REVENUES ARE SUBSTANTIALLY DOWN AND THE NEEDS OF OUR CITIZENS CONTINUE TO INCREASE.

DEKALB COUNTY IS NOT IMMUNE...WE ARE IMPACTED BY ALL OF THESE FACTORS...WHICH ARE THE VERY REAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SERVE AS THE BACKDROP FOR MY "2009 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS."

HOWEVER, THE PENDULUM OF HUMAN CIRCUMSTANCE IS ALWAYS MOVING.

WE KNOW THAT THE BAD TIMES WILL NOT LAST FOREVER... AND THAT BRIGHTER DAYS LIE AHEAD.

WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH...

WHETHER FOR AN INDIVIDUAL OR FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENT...

WE MUST BE RESILIENT...

WE MUST BE FORWARD LOOKING... AND FORWARD THINKING.....

WE MUST REMAIN CONFIDENT...AND WE MUST FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTAL VALUES.

WHETHER FOR INDIVIDUALS OR FOR A COUNTY GOVERNMENT...

DURING TOUGH TIMES...WE MUST TAKE STOCK OF OUR ASSETS AND ADVANTAGES AND BUILD UPON THEM.

WE MUST ALSO BE REALISTS...WE MUST FACE OUR PROBLEMS...

AND FORMULATE CONCRETE, DISCIPLINED PLANS OF ACTION TO ADDRESS EACH ONE...

AND WE MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS.

IN DOING THESE THINGS... WE WILL SEE OUR WAY THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES AND WE WILL ACCELERATE THE RETURN OF OUR BRIGHTER FUTURE.

WE ARE ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN DEKALB COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

WEBSTER DEFINES A STAKEHOLDER AS “ONE WHO HAS A STAKE IN A BUSINESS OR A POLICY”...

AND AS; “A PERSON, GROUP, OR ORGANIZATION THAT HAS A DIRECT OR INDIRECT STAKE IN AN ORGANIZATION BECAUSE IT CAN AFFECT OR BE AFFECTED BY THE ORGANIZATION’S ACTIONS... OBJECTIVES...OR POLICIES.”

OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT... BY ITSELF... CANNOT BRING ABOUT THE CHANGE AND PROGRESS WE NEED.

INSTEAD, WE MUST HAVE THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS...

OUR CITIZENS...OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY ALONG WITH EDUCATION, CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

YES, DEKALB’S FUTURE WILL BE BRIGHT...BUT THIS BRIGHTER FUTURE IS NOT AUTOMATIC.

IT WILL COME ABOUT BECAUSE,WORKING TOGETHER...

WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS AT THE TABLE...WE WILL MAKE HONEST AND PROBING JUDGMENTS ABOUT WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME...

AND THEN...

WE WILL TAKE BOLD AND RESOLUTE STEPS TO BUILD UPON OUR

STRENGTHS AND ADDRESS OUR PROBLEMS.

**THERE ARE MANY POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES ABOUT DEKALB COUNTY,
MANY THINGS ABOUT WHICH WE CAN BE PROUD.**

DEKALB STANDS TALL AS A COMMUNITY OF SUBSTANCE...

**A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH...AND A COMMUNITY WITH A NOTABLE
HISTORY.**

I WILL SHARE WITH YOU OUR COUNTY'S STRENGTHS AND ASSETS...

**BECAUSE THESE ADVANTAGES..COMBINED WITH OUR RESILIENCY...
WILL SEE US THROUGH THESE TIMES.**

**I WILL ALSO SHARE WITH YOU TODAY A CLEAR AND SOBER
ASSESSMENT OF THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES WE FACE.**

**AND I WILL DETAIL FOR YOU THE ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY MY
ADMINISTRATION IN OUR FIRST FIFTY DAYS IN OFFICE TO SET OUR
COUNTY ON A PATH OF FORWARD PROGRESS.**

SO I SAY TO YOU TODAY...

THAT DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES WE FACE AS A NATION...

A STATE...AND A COUNTY...

**THE STATE OF DEKALB IS SUCH THAT WE CAN AND WE WILL MAKE
MEASURABLE, MEANINGFUL PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING OUR CURRENT
PROBLEMS AND IN MAKING OUR COUNTY BETTER.**

EVEN THOUGH THE TIMES ARE CHALLENGING...

LET US NEVER FORGET THIS LESSON...

TOGETHER WE ARE THE FORCE TO SHAPE OUR OWN DESTINY.

**AS DEKALB'S CEO...MY GOAL IS TO MAKE YOUR PRIORITIES THE
PRIORITIES OF OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT...**

**TO MAKE DEKALB SAFER...TO STRENGTHEN DEKALB'S
NEIGHBORHOODS...**

AND TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY...

TO MAKE OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT FISCALLY ACCOUNTABLE AND MORE EFFICIENT...

AND TO UNITE DEKALB IN SUCH A WAY THAT ALL CITIZENS AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE A VOICE IN THEIR GOVERNMENT.

AS YOUR NEWLY INSTALLED CEO.....THIS IS MY FIRST STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS, AND I WILL DETAIL THE CONDITION OF OUR COUNTY AS IT RELATES TO THESE PRIORITIES.

I CHOOSE THIS APPROACH BECAUSE, ALONG WITH MY COLLEAGUES ON THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, I AM ACCOUNTABLE TO THE CITIZENS OF DEKALB...

WHO WILL MEASURE THE DECISIONS WE MAKE ON THEIR BEHALF WITH REGARD TO HOW WE ARE ACCOMPLISHING THESE PRIORITIES.

PUBLIC SAFETY

MY FIRST TOPIC IS PUBLIC SAFETY BECAUSE PUBLIC SAFETY FOR DEKALB IS YOUR NUMBER ONE CONCERN AND MY NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.

I HAVE PLEDGED TO THE CITIZENS THAT MY ADMINISTRATION WILL WORK HARD TO MAKE DEKALB SAFER AND I AM TAKING APPROPRIATE STEPS TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL.

LET ME SAY TO YOU, WITH ALL CANDOR.....WHEN IT COMES TO PUBLIC SAFETY,

THE CURRENT STATE OF DEKALB COUNTY IS UNACCEPTABLE.

WE ARE NOT SAFE.

CRIME CONTINUES TO RISE AND MANY OF THE CRIMES COMMITTED ARE OF A VIOLENT NATURE.

TOO MANY OF OUR SENIOR CITIZENS LIVE IN FEAR.

FAMILIES ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HOME INVASIONS WHICH ARE OCCURRING WHEN THEY ARE AWAY AND SOME TIMES WHEN THEY ARE AT HOME, IN THE SHOWER, AROUND THEIR DINNER TABLES AND EVEN WHEN THEY ARE IN THEIR BEDS ASLEEP.

THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE.

BUSINESSES ARE CONCERNED THAT WHEN THEY CLOSE THEIR DOORS FOR THE EVENING, THEY WILL FIND IN THE MORNING THAT THEY HAVE BECOME THE LATEST TARGET AND VICTIM OF BURGLARS.

THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE.

STUDENTS WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION AT ONE OF OUR INSTITUTIONS CANNOT WALK TO AND FROM THEIR CARS, OR GO TO DINNER OR A MOVIE WITHOUT THE FEAR OF BEING APPROACHED BY SOMEONE WHO POINTS A GUN IN THEIR FACE AND TELLS THEM TO "GIVE IT UP".

THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE.

ACCORDING TO A LOCAL NEWS SOURCE... VIOLENT CRIME WAS UP 5% IN 2008...AND THIS IS ON TOP OF AN 8% INCREASE IN 2007.

PROPERTY CRIME WAS UP 15% IN 2008 AFTER AN 18% JUMP IN 2007.

THESE NUMBERS ARE UNSETTLING, CONSIDERING THAT THE FBI SAID THAT VIOLENT CRIME AND PROPERTY CRIME DECREASED NATIONALLY LAST YEAR.

SOMETIMES, WHEN CONFRONTING A MAJOR PROBLEM, THERE CAN BE A NATURAL TENDENCY TO BLAME EVERYTHING THAT IS WRONG ON OTHERS, TO MAKE THE PROBLEMS THE FAULT OF SOMEONE ELSE.

I DO NOT CHOOSE THAT COURSE OF ACTION.

I AM NOT OVERLY CONCERNED WITH BLAME OR FAULT IN TERMS OF HOW WE GOT TO THE PRESENT CRIME SITUATION IN DEKALB.

INSTEAD, I AM CONCERNED WITH ACTION AND I AM CONCERNED WITH RESULTS.

IN THAT REGARD, LET ME SAY THAT IN RECOGNIZING THE TRUTH ABOUT CRIME IN DEKALB, I AM NOT IN ANY WAY CASTING ASPERSIONS ON THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WEAR THE UNIFORM OF THE DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT.

WE HAVE DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN IN OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT.

WE ARE GOING TO STRENGTHEN OUR FORCE AND WE ARE GOING TO WORK WITH OUR POLICE IN MAKING DEKALB SAFER.

THE CRIME PROBLEMS WE HAVE ARE NOT A REFLECTION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN THAT SERVE OUR COUNTY.

WE KNOW ALL TOO WELL THAT OUR OFFICERS ARE THE ONES THAT RUN TOWARDS DANGER WHEN ALL OTHERS ARE RUNNING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE NEED MORE OFFICERS WHO WILL HELP THE DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN ON THE FORCE TACKLE ONE CRIME ISSUE AFTER ANOTHER UNTIL WE CAN TRULY TURN TO THE CITIZENS AND SAY THAT THERE IS NO CRIME PROBLEM IN DEKALB AND MEAN IT.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN A ROUND OF APPLAUSE AND APPRECIATION FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR ALL THAT THEY DO EVERY DAY TO PROTECT AND SERVE US.

TO THE OFFICERS AND OUR CITIZENS...HELP IS ON THE WAY.

**AS CEO, I HAVE TO DELIVER POSITIVE ACTIONS AND POSITIVE RESULTS TO THE CITIZENS OF DEKALB COUNTY WHEN IT COMES TO ADDRESSING CRIME...
AND I WILL.**

MY ADMINISTRATION IS GOING TO FACE OUR CRIME PROBLEM DIRECTLY.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS FUNDAMENTAL.

**IF WE LOSE THE FIGHT TO MAKE OUR COUNTY SAFER,
WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTRACT NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND WE WILL STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN THE BUSINESSES WE HAVE.**

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO NURTURE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS.

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO IMPROVE OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM.

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE OUR SENIORS AND OUR FAMILIES THE SECURITY THEY NEED AND DESERVE.

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TELL ANYONE THAT DEKALB COUNTY IS

THE PLACE TO RAISE FAMILIES OR TO SEND CHILDREN TO COLLEGE OR TO START AND GROW BUSINESSES...IF WE CANNOT MAKE OUR COUNTY SAFER.

THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE WHEN IT COMES TO FIGHTING CRIME IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THERE CAN BE NO MIDDLE GROUND WHEN IT COMES TO ENSURING THAT OUR SENIORS AND FAMILIES ARE SAFE...

AND IT CANNOT BE BUSINESS AND POLITICS AS USUAL WHEN IT COMES TO IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY IN DEKALB.

PUBLIC SAFETY MUST NEVER BE COMPROMISED, MARGINALIZED, OR POLITICIZED.

WE MUST ALL STAND TOGETHER TO MAKE OUR COUNTY SAFE.

OUR CITIZENS DEMAND AND DESERVE THIS FROM THE PEOPLE THEY ELECTED TO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS.

I CAN TELL YOU THAT CITIZENS ACROSS THIS COUNTY TELL ME THAT CRIME IS THEIR BIGGEST CONCERN AND THAT THEY WANT, THEY NEED.....

AND THEY DEMAND THAT THE CRIME PROBLEM IN DEKALB BE FORCEFULLY ADDRESSED.

THEY WANT TO FEEL SAFE AND THEY WANT TO BE SAFE.

THEY WANT THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR BUSINESSES TO BE SAFE.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISN'T ABOUT ME...BURRELL ELLIS... THE CEO OF DEKALB COUNTY,

BUT IT IS ABOUT ME, BURRELL ELLIS, HUSBAND OF PHILIPPA AND FATHER OF YOUNG CHILDREN VICTORIA AND BURRELL III.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS ABOUT MOTHER STELLA SANFORD WHO HAS WORKED HARD ALL OF HER LIFE AND ONLY WANTS TO ENJOY HER GOLDEN YEARS.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS ABOUT PATRICIA SETZER WHO HAS JUST OPENED HER FIRST BUSINESS, JAVA DELIGHT, AND WANTS ONLY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN HER EFFORTS.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS ABOUT OUR STAKEHOLDERS...

**CITIZENS AND BUSINESS OWNERS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES,
FEDERAL AGENCIES AND NEIGHBORING COUNTIES.**

PUBLIC SAFETY IS ABOUT ALL OF US.

**TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS, I WILL ADDRESS CERTAIN BASIC
ISSUES.**

**THE FIRST THING THAT WE MUST DO IS TO STRENGTHEN OUR POLICE
FORCE BY RETAINING OUR POLICE OFFICERS.**

**DEKALB HAS A SUBSTANTIAL PROBLEM WITH OUR SWORN OFFICERS
LEAVING TO JOIN OTHER FORCES.**

WE MUST REVERSE THIS TREND.

**WE CAN'T BUILD THE 21ST CENTURY POLICE FORCE WE NEED IF WE
HIRE 200 OFFICERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, AND BY THE END
OF THAT SAME YEAR 200 OFFICERS HAVE LEFT THE FORCE.**

**IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE COUNTY HAS APPROPRIATED
ADDITIONAL MONEYS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, INCLUDING FOR
ADDITIONAL POLICE OFFICERS, BUT NO MEANINGFUL INCREASE IN
THE SIZE OF OUR POLICE FORCE HAS OCCURRED BECAUSE OF THE
LARGE NUMBERS OF OFFICERS THAT LEAVE.**

**AS A RESULT, THE INCREASE IN FUNDING HAS NOT YIELDED A
DECREASE IN CRIME.**

**WE HAVE TO FIX THIS. I HAVE PROMISED TO COMMISSION A STUDY
TO DETERMINE WHAT MEASURES DEKALB CAN TAKE TO RETAIN OUR
POLICE OFFICERS.**

**I AM ANNOUNCING THIS EVENING THAT I WILL COMMISSION THIS
STUDY BEFORE THE END OF MY FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE, AND WILL
CALL FOR THE RESULTS TO BE RETURNED TO THE COUNTY BEFORE
THE END OF THIS SUMMER.**

**WE MUST ACT WITH DELIBERATE SPEED TO DETERMINE WHAT IS
NEEDED IN ORDER TO RETAIN OUR POLICE OFFICERS... BECAUSE THIS
IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN PRODUCE A REAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF
OUR FORCE.**

WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE ROOT CAUSE OF OUR POLICE ATTRITION AND WE MUST IMPLEMENT SOUND RECOMMENDATIONS TO REVERSE THE STEADY STREAM OF OFFICERS LEAVING THE DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT.

IT IS NOT MY INTENT TO RUN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE.

I KNOW THAT A LARGE URBAN POLICE DEPARTMENT REQUIRES PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT.

HOWEVER, LET ME ALSO SAY THAT I WILL ALWAYS CARE ABOUT THE STATE OF THE DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT.

I WILL CARE ABOUT ITS MORALE;

I WILL CARE ABOUT ITS WORKING CONDITIONS.

I WILL CARE ABOUT ITS STABILITY.

AND, I WILL ALWAYS CARE ABOUT THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO PLACE THEMSELVES IN HARMS WAY EACH DAY TO PROTECT ALL OF US.

AS CEO, I WILL ALWAYS MAKE APPROPRIATE INQUIRY ABOUT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT...OR...FOR THAT MATTE...ANY OTHER DEPARTMENT THAT REQUIRES MY ATTENTION.

THE CITIZENS THAT ELECTED ME TO THIS OFFICE EXPECT NO LESS.

MY TRANSITION COMMITTEE, AFTER REVIEWING THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, HAS RECOMMENDED THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR.

I HAVE ENDORSED THIS RECOMMENDATION AND INCLUDED IT WITHIN MY 2009 EXECUTIVE BUDGET.

CONTRARY TO WHAT HAS BEEN STATED, THE CONCEPT OF A "PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR" IS NOT AN OUTDATED CONCEPT.

IT IS A MODERN MANAGEMENT TOOL FOUND IN MANY MAJOR URBAN CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS.

CITIES LIKE COLUMBUS, OHIO;

PHILADELPHIA AND PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA;

AND INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA.

COUNTIES SUCH AS SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA;

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA...

AND OUR NEIGHBOR, COBB COUNTY...

UTILIZE THIS PUBLIC SAFETY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE.

SOMETIMES, THE TITLE IS DIFFERENT.

IN SOME CITIES, LIKE PHILADELPHIA, THE POSITION IS REFERRED TO AS THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR PUBLIC SAFETY.

IN OTHER GOVERNMENTS, THE TITLE IS PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSIONER OR PUBLIC SAFETY LIAISON.

THE NAMES MAY VARY, BUT THE FUNCTION IS THE SAME:

THE PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR MANAGES AND COORDINATES THE VARIOUS PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS INSIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

DEKALB'S PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COORDINATION OF ALL PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS IN DEKALB, INCLUDING POLICE, FIRE AND THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS OFFICE.

LET ME SHARE WITH YOU ONE EXAMPLE THAT CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF OUR TRANSITION COMMITTEE THAT DEMONSTRATES WHY THIS COORDINATION IS SO IMPORTANT.

OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT SHARED WITH THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE THAT WHEN DEKALB'S POLICE DEPARTMENT WAS PROCURING THE CURRENT 911 SYSTEM A FEW YEARS AGO, THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS GIVEN THIRTY MINUTES TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BID.

OBVIOUSLY, MANY 911 CALLS ARE MADE FOR FIRE EMERGENCIES AND

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT SHOULD HAVE HAD A MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE INPUT ON SPECIFICATIONS FOR A BID THAT DIRECTLY IMPACTED THEIR DEPARTMENT AND THE CITIZENS OF OUR COUNTY.

UNDER A PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR, THAT TYPE OF PROCUREMENT WOULD BE COORDINATED.

OUR TRANSITION COMMITTEE FOUND SUBSTANTIAL PROBLEMS WITH OUR 911 SYSTEM THAT MAY REQUIRE MILLIONS OF ADDITIONAL TAXPAYER DOLLARS TO FIX.

AND SOME OF YOU KNOW HOW SCARY IT CAN BE WHEN YOU DON'T RECEIVE A PROMPT RESPONSE FROM 911.

THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS SYSTEM SHOULD NOT BE THE PROVINCE OF EITHER THE POLICE OR FIRE DEPARTMENT, BUT INSTEAD SHOULD INVOLVE A MANAGER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL PUBLIC SAFETY FUNCTIONS.

OUR TRANSITION COMMITTEE ALSO REPORTED THAT DEKALB DOES NOT HAVE A "COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY PLAN."

IN THE EVENT OF A TERRORIST ATTACK OR NATURAL DISASTER..DEKALB PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS...ITS OTHER KEY DEPARTMENTS...SUCH AS PUBLIC WORKS...AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT...AND THE PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS OF DEKALB'S MUNICIPALITIES ...WOULD NOT HAVE DIRECTION OR GUIDANCE AS TO THE NECESSARY COORDINATION OF THEIR ACTIVITIES.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE DISASTER COULD BE PROLONGED....AND THE LIVES AND PROPERTY THAT OTHERWISE COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED...MAY BE LOST.

AS WE WITNESSED FROM LAST YEARS' TORNADO IN ATLANTA, OR FROM OTHER TRAGIC EVENTS IN OUR COUNTRY'S RECENT HISTORY... DISASTERS HAPPEN.

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS ARE OUR FIRST RESPONDERS.

THE COORDINATION OF THAT FUNCTION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT DEKALB PREPARE ITSELF FOR EMERGENCIES.

ONE OF THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITIES THAT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO OUR PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR IS THE PREPARATION OF A DEKALB COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN.

THE PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WOULD BE THE PERSON TO MOBILIZE ALL OF OUR PUBLIC SAFETY FUNCTIONS... AND KEY DEPARTMENTS...

TO ADDRESS DISASTERS THAT DEKALB MAY ENCOUNTER FROM A MANMADE OR NATURAL SOURCE.

THE PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WILL PLAN VARIOUS INITIATIVES IMPORTANT TO PUBLIC SAFETY.

WE INTEND TO EXPLORE MODERN, CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY TO DEPLOY IN THE FIGHT TO REDUCE CRIME...

AND THE PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WILL BE THE PERSON ON THE FRONT LINE OF THIS EFFORT.

THE PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WILL PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE BUDGETING PROCESS FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS AND WILL BE CHARGED WITH MAKING SURE THAT THE NEEDS OF ALL PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS ARE BALANCED AND THAT THERE IS MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY IN THESE DEPARTMENTS.

I WANT THE POLICE CHIEF, THE FIRE CHIEF AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS' OFFICE FOCUSED ON FULFILLING THEIR CORE MISSIONS...

NAMELY, MAKING OUR COUNTY SAFER BY REDUCING CRIME... REDUCING FIRES...AND PROVIDING THE EXPERT INVESTIGATION OF DEATHS IN OUR COUNTY.

I WANT THE PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR PROVIDING THE HIGH LEVEL MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION THAT WILL ASSIST THESE DEPARTMENTS IN BEING THE BEST OPERATIONAL UNITS THEY CAN BE.

THIS IS CRITICAL TO DEKALB COUNTY HAVING PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS THAT ARE IN LINE WITH THE 21ST CENTURY.

THE POTENTIAL SAVINGS IN TERMS OF LIVES ARE ENORMOUS...

WHILE THE COST IS LESS THAN 5/100 OF 1% OF OUR PROPOSED 2009 BUDGET.

I HAVE SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME TALKING ABOUT CRIME AND POLICE.

LET ME ALSO RECOGNIZE OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT AND MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE AND ASK THAT YOU GIVE THEM A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR ALL THAT THEY DO.

IN TERMS OF OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT, OUR TRANSITION COMMITTEE BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS WE HAVE IN DEKALB FOR NEW FIRE STATIONS.

AS OUR COUNTY HAS GROWN IN POPULATION, WE NEED MORE FIRE FIGHTERS AND BETTER EQUIPPED FIRE STATIONS FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR CITIZENS.

WE ARE COLLABORATING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE FUNDING TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FIRE FIGHTERS.

AND WHILE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS PREVENTED US FROM ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR NEWER FIRE STATIONS IN THE CURRENT 2009 BUDGET, THIS IS ON OUR RADAR SCREEN AND WE WILL BE PROACTIVELY RESPONDING TO THIS NEED IN THE FUTURE.

IN MAKING OUR COUNTY SAFER, WE MUST BAND TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY.

OUR PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS ARE OUR FRONT LINE... BUT OTHER DEPARTMENTS IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT...AND THE CITIZENS OF DEKALB MUST BE PARTNERS IN THIS FIGHT.

EVEN THOUGH CRIME IS A PROBLEM FROM WHICH WE MUST NOT RETREAT...

WE HAVE THE RESOURCES IN OUR COUNTY TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER.

THOUGH I HAVE NOT SUGAR COATED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEMS WE FACE...

I AM OPTIMISTIC AND I HAVE FAITH THAT WE CAN AND WILL MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.

A FISCALLY ACCOUNTABLE DEKALB

I PLEDGED TO THE CITIZENS OF DEKALB THAT UNDER MY ADMINISTRATION, COUNTY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FISCALLY ACCOUNTABLE.

THIS PLEDGE IS GROUNDED IN THE SPECIAL ROLE THAT THE CEO AND THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HAVE AS STEWARDS FOR OUR TAXPAYERS.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY IS NOT AN OPTION;

IT IS A MANDATE.

THE TAXPAYERS OF DEKALB ARE ENTITLED TO NOTHING LESS THAN OUR FAITHFUL ACCOUNTING AND USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS.

AS THE MONTHS AND WEEKS WERE WINDING DOWN BEFORE I OFFICIALLY BECAME DEKALB'S CEO, I WAS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS AROUND HOW TO CLOSE A PROJECTED \$60 MILLION DOLLAR BUDGET GAP THAT WE WERE FACING AS A COUNTY IN 2009.

DURING THAT TIME, I WORKED CLOSELY WITH MY STAFF, OUR CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DR. MICHAEL BELL, AND OTHER DEPARTMENT HEADS TO CREATE THE BALANCED BUDGET I PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON JANUARY 15TH.

THE COUNTY'S PROJECTED \$60 MILLION REVENUE SHORTFALL WAS A RESULT OF SEVERAL FACTORS.

THE COUNTY WILL HAVE REDUCED TAX COLLECTIONS DUE TO CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

THE STATE OF GEORGIA HAS FAILED TO REIMBURSE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE STATE, INCLUDING DEKALB, FOR THE HOMESTEAD TAX RELIEF GRANT CREDIT.

THE INCORPORATION OF DUNWOODY HAS HAD A SUBSTANTIAL FISCAL IMPACT.

OTHER CAUSES INCLUDE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF AN ADDITIONAL PAY PERIOD IN 2010...

AND THE STATE'S FREEZE ON REAL PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENTS.

IN RESPONDING TO THE COUNTY'S FINANCIAL SITUATION, I MADE TWO RESOLUTIONS.

FIRST, THAT I WOULD MAKE THE HARD CHOICES NEEDED TO ELIMINATE THE REVENUE SHORTFALL AND TO CUT THE COUNTY'S SPENDING.

SECOND, EVEN AS I MADE SHORT TERM ADJUSTMENTS, MY ADMINISTRATION WOULD ADOPT BUDGETING PRACTICES AND POLICIES THAT WOULD BE CONDUCIVE TO LONG TERM FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEKALB.

I PROMISED THE STAKEHOLDERS OF THE COUNTY THAT MY ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE TRANSPARENT.

TOWARDS THAT END, I HAVE BEEN TRUE TO THAT PROMISE BY HOSTING NEIGHBORHOOD BUDGET GATHERINGS IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, IN EACH COMMISSION DISTRICT, TO INFORM CITIZENS ABOUT THE BUDGET...THE PRIORITIES OF THE COUNTY...AND HOW WE WENT ABOUT CLOSING THE \$60 MILLION DOLLAR SHORTFALL.

WE HAVE STOOD BEFORE HUNDREDS OF CITIZENS AND EXPLAINED TO THEM IN SIMPLE AND DIRECT TERMS OUR BUDGET PROPOSALS.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE DIFFICULT BUDGET CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAVE RECEIVED AN OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTIVE AND ENCOURAGING RESPONSE FROM CITIZENS.

THIS REINFORCES MY VIEW THAT WHAT CITIZENS WANT MOST FROM THEIR COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS OPENNESS AND HONESTY ABOUT PUBLIC ISSUES.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED 2009 BUDGET.

THE BUDGET CALLS FOR THE CREATION OF A PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR, THE IMPORTANCE OF WHICH I HAVE ALREADY DETAILED.

THERE IS NO BUDGETED REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF SWORN PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS...AND BECAUSE OF THE DUNWOODY INCORPORATION, WE WILL HAVE AN ADDITIONAL 50 OFFICERS TO RE-ASSIGN TO UNINCORPORATED DEKALB.

WE WILL CONTINUE OUR MASTER POLICE OFFICER BONUS AND UPGRADE OUR PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND CAPABILITIES.

WE ARE EXPANDING OUR LIBRARY SYSTEM AND STAFF, AND WE ARE RESTORING OUR COUNTY RESERVES.

WE HAVE CONSOLIDATED 311 INTO INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND CONSOLIDATED OUR ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT INTO THE PARKS DEPARTMENT.

WE ARE ELIMINATING A NUMBER OF FUNDED, YET UNFILLED, POSITIONS.

COMMISSIONER ELAINE BOYER HAS LONG BEEN AN ADVOCATE FOR FISCAL PRUDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT IN THIS REGARD.

THANK YOU, ELAINE.

WE ARE UTILIZING 90% OF HOST REVENUES FOR AN INCREASED CREDIT ON YOUR PROPERTY TAXES.

WE HAVE REDUCED COUNTY MEDICAL COSTS AND WE WILL SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE COUNTY OVERTIME AND COMP TIME.

AND WE HAVE REDUCED EXPENDITURES IN SEVERAL WAYS.

WE HAVE HAD TO MAKE SOME DIFFICULT DECISIONS TOO...

WE HAVE SUSPENDED THE MERIT INCREMENT AND SICK LEAVE INCENTIVES FOR OUR EMPLOYEES.

WE ARE SUSPENDING OUR VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PLAN FOR A YEAR.

UNDER THIS BUDGET, WE HAVE CLOSED A \$60 MILLION REVENUE BUDGET GAP WITHOUT IMPOSING A SIGNIFICANT TAX INCREASE ON OUR CITIZENS...WITHOUT LAYOFFS TO OUR EMPLOYEES...AND WITHOUT SHUTTING DOWN ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

AT THE SAME TIME, I HAVE MAINTAINED SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING SUPPORT FOR OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY, IMPROVED PUBLIC SAFETY IN DEKALB.

THE LEAN BUDGET TIMES WE FACE ARE MIRRORED IN THE STRUGGLES OF FAMILIES, BUSINESSES, AND OUR STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS.

WE MUST FACE THESE DIFFICULT TIMES HEAD ON AND WITHOUT FEAR.

AS I STATED WITH CONFIDENCE IN MY INAUGURAL SPEECH, THERE WILL BE BETTER TIMES AHEAD FOR DEKALB.

THESE BETTER TIMES WILL COME ABOUT BECAUSE WE WILL MAKE GOOD DECISIONS...

BECAUSE WE WILL MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS.

WE WILL ADDRESS OUR SHORT TERM PROBLEMS WHILE MAINTAINING A LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE TO ENSURE THE FISCAL STABILITY OF THE COUNTY.

I WANT TO REINFORCE TO THE PUBLIC MY COMMITMENT TO A HIGH QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION.

AT ALL TIMES, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE ARE HERE TO SERVE OUR CITIZENS AND OUR STAKEHOLDERS WITH RESPECT, WITH A PLEASANT AND COOPERATIVE SPIRIT, AND WITH AN UNYIELDING COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONALISM AND COMPETENCE.

THESE VALUES MUST BE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE WE PROVIDE.

THERE ARE NO EXCUSES...

NOT EVEN TIGHT BUDGETS...FOR FAILING TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE THROUGHOUT COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

A MORE EFFICIENT DEKALB

IN TIGHT ECONOMIC TIMES, THERE IS A PREMIUM ON HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT.

DURING THE TRANSITION, DEPARTMENT HEAD AFTER DEPARTMENT HEAD CAME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE AND EXPRESSED THE VIEWPOINT THAT THEY WORKED IN SILOS AND DID NOT HAVE

ADEQUATE COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS.

MY REORGANIZATION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE IS INTENDED TO FOSTER GREATER INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION THROUGHOUT COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND TO BREAKDOWN SILOS.

THIS REORGANIZATION IS ALREADY PRODUCING DIVIDENDS.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER KEITH BARKER, WE HAVE CREATED THREE AREAS OF FOCUS, NAMELY ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT.

LET ME TALK ABOUT THE STATE OF THE COUNTY AS IT RELATES TO THESE THREE AREAS.

IN THE AREA OF ADMINISTRATION, MY TRANSITION COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT TO BE REVAMPED.

THE COUNTY HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY, BUT HAS OFTEN DONE SO WITHOUT ANY OVERALL COORDINATION.

GIVEN THE MAGNITUDE OF TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS MADE BY THE COUNTY, THIS PROBLEM WILL RECEIVE INTENSE SCRUTINY DURING MY FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE.

DEKALB MUST BE BOTH A LEADER IN TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND A LEADER IN THE WISE FISCAL MANAGEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY EXPENDITURES.

WE SHOULD NEVER PURSUE TECHNOLOGY JUST FOR THE SAKE OF TECHNOLOGY;

TECHNOLOGY SHOULD ALWAYS BE USED AS A TOOL TO BETTER MANAGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND BETTER SERVE OUR CONSTITUENTS.

ANOTHER AREA OF CONCERN IS RECORDER'S COURT.

NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAS RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF REVENUE ARE BEING LOST FROM OUR RECORDERS COURT.

POTENTIAL LOSSES OF THIS MAGNITUDE WOULD BE OF DEEP

CONCERN TO COUNTY GOVERNMENT AT ANY TIME;

IT IS ESPECIALLY ALARMING DURING A VERY TIGHT BUDGETARY TIME.

CONSULTANTS THAT WERE ENGAGED BY THE COUNTY ASSERT THAT MAJOR LOSSES OF REVENUE ARE OCCURRING ON AN ONGOING BASIS;

THE COURT HAS DISPUTED THESE ASSERTIONS.

I AM RESOLVED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS, AND ACCORDINGLY,

I AM ADOPTING THE RECOMMENDATION OF MY TRANSITION COMMITTEE TO ENGAGE AN INDEPENDENT AUDITOR TO ASCERTAIN THE FACTS SURROUNDING RECORDERS' COURT AND ITS REVENUES.

I WILL DIRECT MY EXECUTIVE STAFF AND PURCHASING DEPARTMENT TO HAVE AN AUDITOR ENGAGED BY MARCH 31ST, AND TO CALL FOR THE COMPLETION OF A DETAILED AUDIT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IN ANY EVENT, I SHOULD HAVE A FULL REPORT ON MY DESK WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THAT ENGAGEMENT.

ONCE WE HAVE ASCERTAINED THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS, WE WILL TAKE THE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO REMEDY ANY PROBLEMS THAT EXIST IN RECORDER'S COURT AND COLLECT ANY FUNDS DUE THE COUNTY.

SIMILAR CONCERNS HAVE BEEN RAISED ABOUT WHETHER SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF BUSINESS LICENSE REVENUES ARE GOING UNCOLLECTED.

THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE CHARGED ME AND MY EXECUTIVE TEAM TO "PREPARE A LIST OF POTENTIAL NEW COUNTY REVENUE SOURCES AND THEIR POTENTIAL MAGNITUDE".

BUSINESS LICENSE REVENUE IS ON THE BOOKS ALREADY, BUT WE NEED TO DETERMINE IF A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES OPERATING WITHIN OUR COUNTY ARE NOT REGISTERED AND ARE NOT PAYING THE LICENSE FEES WHICH ARE DUE TO OUR GOVERNMENT.

MY ADMINISTRATION WILL INVESTIGATE THIS CATEGORY OF UNDER COLLECTED REVENUE AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, I WILL ASK OUR COO, KEITH BARKER AND OUR CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER, LISA CHANG, TO WORK WITH APPROPRIATE AREAS OF OUR GOVERNMENT TO CREATE AN AMNESTY PROGRAM FOR DELINQUENT BUSINESS OWNERS.

THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO COME FORWARD NOW TO REGISTER AND PAY THEIR LICENSE FEES...

BEFORE WE BEGIN ENFORCEMENT ACTION WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE HEFTY FINES AND PENALTIES.

IN THE REORGANIZATION OF THE CEO'S OFFICE, I MADE LOGICAL GROUPINGS OF THE COUNTY'S PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENTS AND PLACED THEM UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF A DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TED RHINEHART.

THESE DEPARTMENTS INCLUDE PUBLIC WORKS, WATERSHED MANAGEMENT, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, PARKS, DEKALB PEACHTREE AIRPORT, AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR INDEPENDENT LIBRARY BOARD.

I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT THE INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP OF DEPARTMENTS IS OFF TO AN EXCELLENT START IN 2009, INCLUDING... THE EXPANDED INTERCHANGE PROJECTS AT LAWRENCEVILLE HIGHWAY AND I-285...

AND AT MEMORIAL DRIVE AND I-285...

AND THE MAJOR ROAD WIDENING PROJECT ON SNAPPINGER ROAD HAS STARTED AND WILL BE COMPLETED IN 2010.

THESE PROJECTS REPRESENT TENS OF MILLIONS OF FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL DOLLARS IN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS IN DEKALB'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

SEVERAL LIBRARY BOND PROJECTS WILL BE COMPLETED AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC THIS YEAR.

THEY INCLUDE THE TOCO HILLS....AVIS G. WILLIAMS LIBRARY...THE NORTHLAKE-BARBARA LOAR LIBRARY...AND THE EMBRY HILLS LIBRARY.

IN ADDITION, THE TUCKER-REID COFER LIBRARY WILL BE

COMPLETED LATE THIS YEAR AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN EARLY 2010.

CONSTRUCTION IS UNDERWAY ON THE NEW STONECREST LIBRARY WHICH IS ALSO SLATED TO OPEN IN 2010.

CONSTRUCTION WILL ALSO BEGIN LATER THIS YEAR ON THE NEW ELLENWOOD LIBRARY...

AND THE NEW SCOTT CANDLER BRANCH LIBRARY...

AS WELL AS EXPANSION OF THE HAIRSTON CROSSING LIBRARY... AND SALEM-PANOLA LIBRARY.

THESE FOUR LIBRARY PROJECTS ARE SLATED TO BE COMPLETED IN 2010.

THE PUBLIC OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVED BOND ISSUANCES FOR LIBRARY EXPANSION.

CONSISTENT WITH THIS PUBLIC EXPRESSION, I HAVE INCLUDED SUPPORT FOR LIBRARIES IN MY 2009 BUDGET PROPOSALS.

IN SPITE OF A TIGHT BUDGET YEAR, WE ARE ADDING SEVERAL DOZEN NEW STAFF FOR OUR NEW LIBRARIES.

WE ARE ALSO EXPANDING THE COMPUTER BANDWIDTH AVAILABLE AT OUR LIBRARIES AND ADDING NEW WIRELESS SERVICES...

SO THAT OUR CITIZENS CAN DO MORE AT THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES.

AND WE ARE OFFERING EXPANDED PROGRAMS AT THE LIBRARIES FOR TEENAGERS AND FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, SO THAT EVERYONE CAN GET MORE INVOLVED IN LIFELONG LEARNING.

THE SANITATION WASTE DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED AS WELL.

ONE NOTABLE ITEM IS THE EXPANSION OF OUR COUNTY RECYCLING PROGRAM.

CURRENTLY, OVER 24,000 DEKALB HOUSEHOLDS HAVE SIGNED UP FOR

THE BLUE BIN CURBSIDE RECYCLING PROGRAM, AND I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT IS WORKING TOWARDS HAVING MORE THAN 30,000 HOMES PARTICIPATING BY 2010.

THE PROGRAM HAS ALREADY DIVERTED MORE THAN 20,000 TONS OF MATERIAL FROM OUR LANDFILL.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET AN EXAMPLE, AND AS A RESULT, WE WILL ALSO BE EXPANDING OUR RECYCLING AT COUNTY BUILDINGS.

I COMMEND COMMISSIONER KATHIE GANNON FOR HER INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE A "GREEN DEKALB," AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH HER IN THAT REGARD.

DEKALB HAS LONG BEEN A LEADER IN THE AREA OF SOLID WASTE, BUT WE ARE NOT RESTING ON OUR LAURELS.

AS THE COUNTY GROWS AND DEVELOPS, WE CONTINUE TO PURSUE INNOVATIONS THAT IMPROVE OUR EFFICIENCY.

WITH OUR WASTE REDUCTION, COMPOSTING AND RECYCLING INITIATIVES, WE CAN ENSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN, AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, WILL HAVE ADEQUATE SOLID WASTE CAPACITY IN DEKALB COUNTY.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT HAS STARTED THE DESIGN OF THE EXPANSIONS PLANNED FOR OUR WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, WHICH WILL IMPROVE WATER QUALITY AND PROVIDE THE NECESSARY PLANT CAPACITY FOR THE COUNTY'S PLANNED GROWTH FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS.

THIS WILL ENSURE THAT DEKALB'S PLANNED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE ARE SUSTAINABLE.

SEVERAL OF DEKALB COUNTY'S PARKS BOND PROJECTS WILL BE COMPLETED IN 2009.

AMONG THE PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS ARE:

CONSTITUTION LAKES,

**THE BARKER BRYANT PARK--
NAMED AFTER TWO OF OUR SLAINED OFFICERS--...**

AND EXCHANGE RECREATION CENTER.

IN ADDITION, PDK AIRPORT WILL CELEBRATE ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR.

IN ALL OF OUR INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENTS...

AS CALLED FOR IN THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE REPORT, WE WILL DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE PLANS TO REDUCE DEFERRED MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES, BUILDINGS, PARKS, AND ROADWAYS.

OUR FIRST PRIORITY WILL BE TO ENSURE THAT THE MOST CRITICAL REPAIRS ARE ADDRESSED...

AND ALSO, THAT WE FIND OPERATING BUDGET SAVINGS THAT CAN BE INVESTED IN CAPITAL PROJECTS AND REPAIRS.

BY SHARING RESOURCES AND INTERNAL EXPERTISE, AND FOCUSING ON MORE PLANNED MAINTENANCE...

WE WILL LOOK TO DO MORE WITH LESS, IN SPITE OF THE TIGHT FINANCIAL TIMES AND OVERALL BUDGET CUTS.

OUR TRANSITION COMMITTEE CALLED FOR MORE COLLABORATION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

I SEE THIS COLLABORATION AS ESSENTIAL TO “BUILDING A NEW CONSENSUS FOR A BETTER DEKALB”.

WE WILL MAINTAIN OUR ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH MARTA, THROUGH PROJECTS LIKE THE MEMORIAL DRIVE BUS RAPID TRANSIT PROJECT, AND THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW BROOKHAVEN LIBRARY.

WE WILL BE WORKING MORE CLOSELY THAN EVER WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING DEKALB CITIES, DEKALB PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, THE TUCKER MAIN STREET ALLIANCE AND OTHERS ON TRAFFIC SYSTEM AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS...THROUGH REGIONAL PROGRAMS LIKE THE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE OF THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION.

WE HAVE CULTURAL EVENTS AND ARTS PROGRAMS UNDERWAY IN OUR NEW PORTER SANFORD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, AND THE INTEREST IS GROWING DAILY FROM THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMUNITY IN SCHEDULING PLAYS, CONCERTS, CLASSES AND OTHER

COMMUNITY EVENTS AT THIS BEAUTIFUL NEW FACILITY.

TODAY, I AM PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT I AM CREATING AN ARTS TASK FORCE USING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN WITH KEY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THIS IMPORTANT GEM, THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER.

(PAUSE)

WE HAVE DEVELOPED NEW PARKS AND EXPANDED EXISTING PARKS FOR OUR ENJOYMENT AND THE ENJOYMENT OF DEKALBITES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

AND TO COMMISSIONER LEE MAY..WHO LED THE DIALOGUE AROUND THE CONCERN FOR GREENSPACE IN NEIGHBORHOOD SUBDIVISIONS...

I THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK.

WE ARE MODERNIZING OUR WASTEWATER SYSTEM.

WE HAVE DECADES OF LANDFILL CAPACITY, AND WE ARE HOME TO THE SECOND BUSIEST AIRPORT IN THE STATE.

LIKE ALL OF METROPOLITAN ATLANTA, WE HAVE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, BUT WE HAVE AN EXTENSIVE AND WELL PLANNED ROAD NETWORK, AND WE ARE A PARTNER IN MARTA.

DEKALB RESIDENTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN "FORWARD LOOKING" IN TERMS OF INVESTING IN OUR PHYSICAL ASSETS, AND AS A RESULT, WE ARE AN INFRASTRUCTURE RICH COUNTY. HOWEVER, WITH ALL OF OUR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT, NOW IS THE TIME TO RETURN TO ANOTHER FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.

WHAT YOU BUILD AND DEVELOP, YOU MUST MAINTAIN.

AND DEKALB HAS NOT DONE AS WELL IN THIS REGARD.

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP WILL PROVIDE OUR COUNTY WITH LEADERSHIP IN ADDRESSING OUR PROBLEM OF DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WITH RESPECT TO OUR PHYSICAL ASSETS.

THIS PROBLEM MUST BE AND WILL BE ADDRESSED TO ENSURE THAT THE STATE OF OUR COUNTY'S INFRASTRUCTURE WILL SERVE OUR CITIZENS WELL FOR YEARS INTO THE FUTURE.

STRONGER NEIGHBORHOODS

THE HEART AND SOUL OF A COUNTY ARE FOUND IN ITS NEIGHBORHOODS, WHERE ITS PEOPLE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.

NEIGHBORHOODS GIVE A COMMUNITY ITS SENSE OF PLACE.

DEKALB IS A SPECIAL PLACE BECAUSE IT IS BLESSED TO BE HOME TO MANY WONDERFUL NEIGHBORHOODS.

INVESTING IN THESE NEIGHBORHOODS AND MAKING THEM STRONGER ARE AMONG THE MAJOR PRIORITIES OF MY ADMINISTRATION.

ALSO, WHEN I THINK OF NEIGHBORHOODS I CANNOT HELP BUT THINK OF COMMISSIONER JEFF RADER WHO TOOK A STAND TO PROTECT NEIGHBORHOODS AGAINST LATE NIGHT ILLICIT ACTIVITY.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP, JEFF.

IN COVERING MY PRIOR TOPICS DURING THIS ADDRESS, I HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING MANY THINGS NECESSARY TO THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS.

I WANT TO FOCUS ATTENTION, THOUGH, ON ONE PARTICULAR TOPICAL ASPECT OF STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOODS, WHICH IS CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR TIME.

THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF FORECLOSURES IN DEKALB.

IN NOVEMBER, 2008, DEKALB RECEIVED A NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION GRANT ALLOCATION FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$18.5 MILLION.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GRANT IS TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DEKALB IN ADDRESSING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT THAT FORECLOSURES HAVE HAD ON DEKALB NEIGHBORHOODS, WHICH COINCIDES WITH ONE OF THE COUNTY'S TOP COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES.

AS OF JANUARY, 2009, THERE WERE 1239 PENDING SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL FORECLOSURES IN DEKALB COUNTY.

THIS LEVEL OF FORECLOSURE ACTIVITY HAS HAD AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE A MAJOR DESTABILIZING EFFECT ON MANY DEKALB COMMUNITIES.

THE IMPACT OF DEKALB FORECLOSURES IS EVIDENT IN A 27% DECLINE OF AVERAGE HOME VALUES IN DEKALB FROM DECEMBER, 2007 AND DECEMBER, 2008.

ALSO, DEKALB IS EXPERIENCING THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF FORECLOSURE IN METROPOLITAN ATLANTA.

I VALUE AND APPRECIATE COMMISSIONER CONNIE STOKES, WHO IMPLEMENTED THE TASK FORCE INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS FORECLOSURES, COMPRISED OF DIVERSE STAKE HOLDERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO WERE CHARGED TO FIND SOLUTIONS AND ADDRESS THE MORTGAGE CRISIS AFFECTING FAMILIES IN THE DEKALB COUNTY COMMUNITY.

THERE WILL BE FUTURE MEETINGS WITH LENDERS AND OTHER ENTITIES AND AGENCIES THAT WILL HELP IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM.

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IS ALSO WORKING WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF DEKALB COUNTY, THE HUD APPROVED COUNSELING AGENCIES, AND OTHER HOUSING PARTNERS TO ADDRESS OTHER CRITICAL HOUSING NEEDS TO HELP FAMILIES STAY IN THEIR HOMES.

AND WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT OUR WORKFORCE, INCLUDING OUR FIREFIGHTERS, TEACHERS, AND POLICE OFFICERS ARE PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY SERVE.

COMMISSIONER LARRY JOHNSON AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS.

I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO WORK WITH COMMISSIONER JOHNSON IN THAT ENDEAVOR.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WE ARE IN A TIME WHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MUST OCCUPY A PROMINENT PLACE IN PUBLIC POLICY AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.

WE HAVE WATCHED WITH INTEREST AS PRESIDENT OBAMA HAS ACHIEVED PASSAGE OF HIS STIMULUS PACKAGE, AND WE ARE COMPETING AGGRESSIVELY FOR LOCAL BENEFIT TO DEKALB CITIZENS FROM THIS FEDERAL LEGISLATION.

AT OUR LOCAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT, WE MUST UTILIZE OUR STRENGTHS TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS AND TO RETAIN EXISTING BUSINESS.

I KNOW THAT COMMISSIONER SHARON BARNES- SUTTON JOINS ME IN MY CONCERN FOR STIMULATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS SUCH AS THE MEMORIAL DRIVE CORRIDOR.

HOWEVER, OUR TRANSITION COMMITTEE OBSERVED THAT DEKALB WAS SUFFERING FROM ONE MAJOR DEFICIENCY IN TERMS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY.

THERE IS NO IDENTIFIED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR DEKALB COUNTY.

EACH DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONS TO FULFILL ITS MISSION AS BEST IT CAN...

BUT WITHOUT A GUIDING STAR OR ANY SENSE OF HOW THEIR WORK FITS INTO A BROADER OVERALL STRATEGIC DIRECTION...

IT CANNOT BE FULLY EFFECTIVE OR MAXIMIZE ITS POTENTIAL TO THE COUNTY.

OUR ADMINISTRATION WILL ADDRESS THIS NEED.

WE HAVE ALREADY ORGANIZED THE DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED DEPARTMENTS INTO A DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONAL GROUP, TO BEGIN MUCH NEEDED COORDINATION.

THE TRANSITION TEAM PROPOSED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SENIOR

LEVEL GOVERNMENT MANAGER WHO WOULD HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COORDINATION OF DEKALB STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT.

I WILL INSTITUTE IN THE CEO'S OFFICE A DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, WHO WILL BE CHARGED WITH COORDINATING ALL OF THE INTERNAL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS AND EXTERNAL AGENCIES DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

ONE EXCITING PROJECT THAT WE SHOULD KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON IS THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CLOSED DORAVILLE GM PLANT.

THIS 166-ACRE SITE IS AN IDEAL REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY.

WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH GM REPRESENTATIVES AND OUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO ENSURE AN APPROPRIATE VALUE-ADDED PROJECT THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

UNITED DEKALB AND CLOSE

I SPEAK OFTEN OF A UNITED DEKALB.

FOR ME, A UNITED DEKALB IS ONE WHERE EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS A VOICE THAT IS HEARD AND WHERE ALL COMMUNITIES HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE.

A UNITED DEKALB IS ONE WHERE ALL VIEWPOINTS ARE WELCOME AND SOLICITED.

A UNITED DEKALB IS ONE WHERE DESPITE WHATEVER DISAGREEMENTS MAY EXIST AMONG US...

WE TREAT EACH OTHER WITH CIVILITY AND RESPECT.

A UNITED DEKALB WAS REFLECTED IN THE WORK OF MY TRANSITION COMMITTEE WHERE 40 CITIZENS OF DEKALB FROM VARIED BACKGROUNDS AND PERSPECTIVES CAME TOGETHER...

WORKED HARD TOGETHER AND PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT, INSIGHTFUL ASSESSMENT OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

THROUGHOUT THIS STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS, I HAVE REFERENCED MANY STRENGTHS OF OUR COUNTY.

IN ASSESSING OUR STRENGTHS, I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT OUR GREATEST ASSET IS OUR PEOPLE.

I WANT TO TAKE A MOMENT AND RECOGNIZE AND THANK ONE GROUP OF SPECIAL PEOPLE, NAMELY THE 7,500 MEN AND WOMEN WHO WORK FOR DEKALB COUNTY AND WHO PROVIDE THE SERVICE UPON WHICH OUR CITIZENS DEPEND.

I THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO EACH DAY TO SERVE THE CITIZENS OF DEKALB.

I REMIND YOU THAT WE WILL NEVER BE PERFECT, BUT WE MUST NEVER STOP TRYING TO IMPROVE...

AND WE SHOULD BRING OUR BEST EFFORT EVERY DAY ON BEHALF OF THOSE WE SERVE.

I ESPECIALLY WANT TO REFLECT ON THE STRENGTH OF OUR CITIZENRY, THE 727,000 RESIDENTS OF THIS COUNTY.

570,000 OF OUR CITIZENS LIVE IN UNINCORPORATED DEKALB AND RECEIVE ALL OF THEIR DIRECT LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES FROM OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

THE REMAINING DEKALB RESIDENTS ARE ALSO CITIZENS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES OF ATLANTA, AVONDALE ESTATES, CHAMBLEE, CLARKSTON, DECATUR, DORAVILLE, DUNWOODY, LITHONIA, PINE LAKE AND STONE MOUNTAIN.

WE SUPPORT VITAL INSTITUTIONS OF REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE, SUCH AS GRADY AND MARTA.

WE HAVE IMPRESSIVE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SUCH AS AGNES SCOTT, EMORY UNIVERSITY, OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, DEVRY, GEORGIA PERIMETER, DEKALB TECH, THE ART INSTITUTE OF ATLANTA, AND MERCER UNIVERSITY.

WE ARE HOME TO THE FEDERAL CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND TO THE SECOND BUSIEST AIRPORT IN GEORGIA.

WE ARE A LARGE URBAN COUNTY, ONE OF THE 100 LARGEST IN THE COUNTRY AND THE 2ND MOST POPULOUS IN GEORGIA.

WE ARE WONDERFULLY DIVERSE, AND WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS

DIVERSITY IS PART OF OUR STRENGTH.

THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF DEKALB MAKE EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE METROPOLITAN ATLANTA REGION.

THEREFORE, IN CLOSING....LET ME DRIVE HOME A KEY MESSAGE FROM EARLY IN MY REMARKS.

TOGETHER WE ARE THE FORCE TO SHAPE OUR OWN DESTINY.

YES, THE TIMES ARE HARD AND CHALLENGING, BUT EACH OF US HERE IN DEKALB CAN HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

WE ARE ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF THE COUNTY AND NONE OF US CAN AFFORD TO STAY ON THE SIDELINES.

CHALLENGING TIMES REQUIRE STRONG LEADERSHIP, AND OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE THAT.

CHALLENGING TIMES REQUIRE A VISION FOR THE FUTURE, AND OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE THAT.

CHALLENGING TIMES REQUIRE THE COURAGE TO MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS, AND OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE THAT.

BUT WE CANNOT DO IT ALONE.

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CANNOT DO IT ALONE.

WE NEED THE ACTIVE, COMMITTED PARTICIPATION OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS...OUR CITIZENS...OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY...OUR LABOR UNIONS...AND OUR CIVIC, EDUCATIONAL, CHARITABLE AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS... TO MAKE OUR DAYS BRIGHTER.

THIS IS A TIME FOR DOERS, NOT CRITICS.

LET ME CLOSE WITH A QUOTE FROM PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

“IT IS NOT THE CRITIC WHO COUNTS”;

NOT THE MAN WHO POINTS OUT HOW THE STRONG MAN STUMBLES...

OR WHERE THE DOER OF DEEDS COULD HAVE DONE THEM BETTER.

**THE CREDIT BELONGS TO THE MAN (OR WOMAN) WHO IS ACTUALLY
IN THE ARENA...**

WHOSE FACE IS MARRED BY DUST AND SWEAT AND BLOOD...

WHO STRIVES VALIANTLY;

WHO ERRS AND COMES SHORT AGAIN AND AGAIN;

**BECAUSE THERE IS NOT EFFORT WITHOUT ERROR AND
SHORTCOMINGS;**

BUT WHO DOES ACTUALLY STRIVE TO DO THE DEED;

WHO KNOWS THE GREAT ENTHUSIASMS...

THE GREAT DEVOTIONS...

WHO SPENDS HIMSELF (OR HERSELF) IN A WORTHY CAUSE...

**WHO AT THE BEST KNOWS IN THE END THE TRIUMPH OF HIGH
ACHIEVEMENT AND WHO AT THE WORST...**

IF HE FAILS...

AT LEAST HE FAILS WHILE DARING GREATLY.

**SO THAT HIS PLACE SHALL NEVER BE WITH THOSE COLD AND TIMID
SOULS WHO KNOW NEITHER VICTORY NOR DEFEAT.”**

**TO MY FELLOW ELECTED OFFICIALS AND TO THE DEKALB COUNTY
CITIZENS.**

LET’S STRIVE VALIANTLY.

LET’S SPEND OURSELVES IN A WORTHY CAUSE.

LET’S DARE GREATLY.

**THE PROBLEMS AND THE CHALLENGES ARE GREAT, BUT WE CAN
MEET THEM AND WE CAN OVERCOME THEM WORKING TOGETHER.**

MUCH EXCITING WORK LIES AHEAD.

LET'S JOIN HANDS, AND COLLECTIVELY, AS A FORCE, SHAPE OUR DESTINY.

GOD BLESS YOU, GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE STATE OF GEORGIA, AND GOD BLESS DEKALB COUNTY.
