

Excerpts
State of the County Address
November 16, 2010



Mayor FY2009 - 2010

Ken Kechl

Broward County Commission

When I was selected Mayor, it was an honor and privilege to serve. Since 2006, property taxes have dropped 25 percent, or \$237 million. Government has been consolidated and streamlined.

The struggle to balance the Fiscal Year 2011 budget was like nothing we have seen in recent history. The demand for County services reached a fever pitch. Just as loud were voices echoing the economic realities we live in. For the first time in more than a decade, we increased the millage rate to 5.553.

Even with the small increase, more than 65 percent of homeowners will see a reduction of \$147 on their County property tax bill. Altogether, commissioners cut more than \$85 million from the General Fund budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

It's within this context that I describe the current state of the County: It is strong and improving. It is streamlined and redefined. It rises to meet the current level of need and offers hope for the future.

The engines that drive our economy have strengthened. Port Everglades continues its record of success as it ascends to the number one passenger cruise port in the world. Expansion of the south runway at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport continues to take off as planned.

Tourism continues to play a major role in Broward's economy. In 2010, Greater Fort Lauderdale hosted 10.3 million visitors with an

economic impact of \$8.2 billion. Total tourist tax revenues are up 1.5 percent from FY 2009, with overall tourist tax collections at \$33 million.

The Office of Economic and Small Business Development awarded more than \$83 million to certified firms and completed a targeted industry study to identify prime business opportunities for Broward County.

Transit provided more than 36 million fixed route passenger trips, 2 million community bus passenger trips and 700,000 paratransit trips. At the same time, BCT reduced per trip cost of the paratransit program, tightened service standards, and began a centralized call center with cost savings estimated to exceed \$8 million dollars annually.

Human Services continues to work with diligence, commitment and compassion, issuing funding of more than \$43 million for 91 contracts to 42 agencies, serving nearly 130,000 people in Broward County.

The County's affordable housing inventory increased, and jobs were created as Broward County distributed \$18 million in neighborhood stabilization program funding. The Broward Housing Council produced an updated countywide housing needs assessment that resulted in more than 30 recommendations.

The protection of Broward's environment advanced with the adoption of the regional four county Climate Change Compact and the

Broward County Climate Change Action Plan. The Board adopted a long-term regional strategy for meeting the County's future water supply needs.

In response to the April 20, 2010, Deepwater Horizon explosion, I formed the Mayor's Oil Spill Working Group. Fortunately, Broward County was spared the detrimental impact of one of the largest environmental catastrophes in U.S. history. By planning ahead, we will be better prepared for future emergencies with a coordinated plan that includes County agencies, cities, the state, federal government and regional partners.

As the future unfolds in Broward County, much will change. We adopted a Code of Ethics for Commissioners, which provides transparency in government. Visitor databases document commissioner interaction with lobbyists and clients. Voters approved creation of the Office of Inspector General and voted to apply the Commission Code of Ethics to Broward's cities and constitutional officers.

As my term as Mayor comes to an end, I feel privileged that I was able to accomplish what I set out to do, but I believe the future opportunities for Broward County are tremendous.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Kechl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.