

The people of Milwaukee County created the opportunity for positive change in 2002. Look for us to continue to keep that hope alive in 2003 with a strong reform agenda.

**Restoring trust in government remains a major priority.** Continuing to hold open discussions with the public; pushing for a part-time, policy-making county board; and seeking a merit-based hiring system are all key parts of this agenda.

Next, we must **aggressively manage the financial situation of the county.** We inherited an under-funded pension system and an un-funded sick leave policy. Rises in health care costs and the risk of lost state funds add to our challenges.

We are working on better oversight of the pension system and a way to fix future sick leave payments. County government will look to consolidate services where possible and seek to further set a system of spending priorities. We must also be innovative in our funding priorities.

A top priority for the new year is to ensure that all county departments stay within budget. We must work as a team to become better stewards of the taxpayers' resources.

Finally, we must **work on regional cooperation with surrounding governments.** Shared services can be a benefit to everyone. A couple of projects are moving with Waukesha County and the City of Milwaukee, but we can do much more in 2003.

Jobs, education and transportation are the three top issues facing all of us in the metro area.

Ultimately, working across lines (governmental, political, religious, institutional, etc.) will provide the opportunity for great success in 2003.