

First of all, let me say that the overall state of Milwaukee County is good. Since we are at a school, the best way to explain this is to take you on a tour around the county.

First, we will hop on to the freeway system and head towards the courthouse. Thankfully, our snowplow drivers did an excellent job this winter and the freeways continue to be very clear.

We only had XX recorded snowfalls that required county crews to go out, but they had the snow cleared right away each time.

Once we get to the courthouse, we have to find a place to park. For years, we parked in the Annex parking structure that stood over the top of the freeway. Thankfully, after nearly two years of debate, we are tearing that structure down this month.

Taking down the Annex as part of the Marquette Interchange project will save the county \$XX.X million. Since the county is required to send approximately 50% of the money collected from selling the Park East Freeway land to the state, they will then send the funds back to help pay for the demolition of the Annex.

In 2005, the county sold two pieces of the Park East Corridor land. That's the land just to the north of the Bradley Center where the freeway once went through over the river. Shovels should be in the ground for these first two projects this spring and the next pieces of land will be for sale on XXXX.

Just down Water Street is Red Arrow Park. Our ice skating rink broke the all-time skate rental record in December and January. Even with the warmer weather and limited snow, the rink can stay frozen even when it is 50 degrees outside.

Across the viaduct in Mitchell Park, we find that the Domes had good numbers this winter too. XXXXXXXXXXXX. Currently, the largest train show ever is on display in the show dome through XXXX.

If we drove down to the southeast corner of the county, you would find that General Mitchell International Airport broke the all-time record in December. More than 7 million passengers flew in and out of Mitchell. Just two years ago, we broke the record with 6 million passengers.

More security checkpoints, remodeled concourses and a new concession mall are all part of the reasons for our success – along with additional carriers and good fares. We work hard on improving the airport since it is the front door to our region for business travelers.

Out to the west end of the county and you will find that the programs that work with kids who get in trouble are having some success too. In 1995, we were sending 536 young

people into the state detention system. When I arrived in 2002, that number was down to 320. Through the end of December, we cut that number down to 147.

I would like to acknowledge the good work of Kathy Malone who works for the county and XXX XXX who is with St. Charles, one of our partners in programming. Thank you for your good work.

Just a short trip from here is the Milwaukee County Zoo. The partnership with between the county and the Zoological Society grew even stronger this year. We opened up the Big Cat Country and broke ground for a new Giraffe Experience. The county also put up a sky glider system to generate revenue for the zoo this summer.

Now, over to the north side and a stop at our Marcia P. Coggs Center at 12th and Vliet. Our Health and Human Services Department is now moved into that building and they provide people with all kinds of help.

One area is called food stamps for families who need assistance paying for food. The people who run this program are in the Economic Support Division. From 1994 to 2002, they had an error rate on how they administered food stamps that was never lower than 13%. That caused a lot of problems for the people getting the help – as well as penalties for the county and the state.

In 2003, the error rate was 11.8%. In 2004, it was 9.1%. Last year, they put in place a new program called Operation Excellence and the error rate dropped to 5.95%. In fact, during the last six months of 2005, the error rate was LOWER than the statewide average. Congratulations to Corey Hoze and his staff for a job well done. Keep up the good work!

A few blocks east and we see that the Department on Aging moved into wonderful new offices in the bright blue federal building. The new space saves the county money and is working out well.

The people who work there helped turn around a problem with the FamilyCare program. Two years ago, they had real problems with state government. On Sunday, January 15, however, the Governor announced that those problems were under control. FamilyCare is on track to care for older adults and balance the budget.

Now, back a few blocks west and we find the Milwaukee Public Museum. Many people still think that the county runs the museum, but it was turned over more than a decade ago. Still, we are the biggest donor and we want it to stay open.

So, when the museum ran into problems early last year, we stepped in – along with the banks – and took control. We pushed for new leadership and appointed a five-person panel to review the release of funds to the museum.

I want to thank those five individuals – XXXXXXXXX – for their ongoing service to the museum, to the county and to the public. Their hard work insured that the museum is on the right path again. Just last month, the museum announced that they are moving to repay the loans sooner than expected. That is good news.

Overall, 2005 had many challenges for county government, but we found a way to keep things on track.

Now, as we enter 2006, there are many challenges facing us again. I like to say that great challenges bring great opportunities.

Here are some of our ideas for the future:

We Need to Find New Ways to Support Our Parks

- Require dual reporting for the Parks budget manager to the County Budget Director and to the Director of the Parks System
- Add additional Budget and Finance Analyst to staff in parks
- Expand partnerships in parks (i.e. coffee shop in every park with RFP on Juneau Park for demolition of public bathrooms to be replaced by a coffee shop)
- Boerner: Announce partnership with Bartolotta's with short-term agree to be followed by RFP; Move Parks administration offices to Boerner and sell current building as part of northeast quadrant development

We Need to Find Better Ways to Serve People with Disabilities

- Development of long-term care housing around Wil-O-Way
- Push for expansion of FamilyCare to include people with Disabilities

We Need to Obtain Reasonable Benefits for Public Sector Employees

- Announce Members of Panel to Review Move to Defined Contribution Retirement System
- Introduce Repeal of 2.0% pension multiplier for non-represented employees
- Preview lawsuit to seek relief from those who failed to accurately explain liability of changes to the pension system before vote in November of 2000
- Highlight the current benefits given to employees and thank smaller unions for agreeing to some changes

We Need to Maintain No Increase in Property Taxes Paid by Residents and Employers

- Introduce 5th straight budget with NO increase in the property tax levy
- Work with departments and budget staff in 1st quarter to develop plans for 2007 budget ideas

We Need to Embrace the Importance of Working Together in the Region

- Continue Partnership with Racine County for management of Child Support Enforcement efforts
- Find funds for Milwaukee County to participate in the Milwaukee 7 regional efforts
- Promote tourism in the Milwaukee 7 region with annual Executives' Ride – adding Dan Vrakas this year

We Need to Note the Continued Abandonment of Local Government By State Government

- Courts
- DHHS: IM, placements