



The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

February 2000

“RITA”.....ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Serving the Cities of :

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La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

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Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
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Campo
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Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
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Rolando
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The San Diego region has a great opportunity to stop talking and start acting when it comes to future transportation decisions and planning.

Anyone driving on our freeways during rush-hour traffic is aware of the serious transportation problems facing our region. Much of the problem stems from a regional planning process at SANDAG. This system must be fixed. The fact is SANDAG has been a dismal failure in meeting this region’s transportation needs. They have failed you - the taxpayer and you - who spend an estimated 36 hours per year sitting in traffic. (Texas Transportation Institute, *Union-Tribune* article, November 17, 1999) That’s an unnecessary 36 hours stolen from your family and free time.

Yet, as our frustrations rise - what changes? Nothing. Nothing changes because the bureaucrats are in charge and there is a lack of accountability in making critical transportation funding decisions. As I mentioned in the State of the County Address, the process currently used by SANDAG is often dominated by parochial special interests. As a recent *Union-Tribune* editorial put it: “All too often, SANDAG decisions are determined by parochial, tit-for-tat trade-offs - as in, ‘I’ll vote to widen a road in your city if you’ll vote to extend a trolley line to mine.’ Though SANDAG has been studying growth and traffic congestion in the county for years, it doesn’t appear anywhere close to a regional solution on either,” said the *Union-Tribune*.

Now, SANDAG has poured \$200,000 of taxpayer dollars into a consultant to work on ways to get regional jurisdictions to work better together. Precious dollars that could be spent on badly needed road projects. We need to stop studying, and start acting!

Senator Steve Peace has introduced the Regional Infrastructure and Transportation Agency legislation, known as RITA. If approved by the State legislature, RITA will consolidate the governance of six bureaucracies; SANDAG, the Air Quality Management District, the Metropolitan Transit Development Board, the North County Transit Development Board, the Unified Port District and the newly created border infrastructure financing district. And most importantly, RITA will be governed by a board of 10 directly elected representatives.

Elected representatives are held accountable by you and to you. And, this region could greatly benefit by consolidating transportation planning into a single agency unencumbered by the pork barrel politics that have gotten SANDAG so far off track.

San Diego has grown from 1.3 million in 1970 to 2.9 million in 2000. By the year 2020, nearly 1 million more are expected to make San Diego their home. With these numbers come an increased demand for road infrastructure.

The Board of Supervisors has taken a leadership role in appointing a sub-committee to work with Senator Steve Peace to refine his proposal. This region now has an opportunity to make some real, positive changes to meet our transportation needs. RITA will slash bureaucracy, improve efficiencies and most importantly - help get this region on the right track-improving our transportation infrastructure now and for the future.



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JACOB OUTLINES VISION FOR COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO IN 2000

High-Tech Advances, Improved Access to Health Care Top Agenda

A wide array of new Internet-based services and improved access to health insurance for County residents were among the initiatives outlined by Chairwoman Dianne Jacob of the County Board of Supervisors during the annual "State of the County" Address.

Jacob, addressing a standing room only crowd of over 600 people at West Hills High in Santee, said, "I am proud to report to you that the state of San Diego County in the year 2000 has never been better."

In recent years, Jacob said, the County has strengthened its financial position, now boasting reserves of more than \$300 million, and an A+ credit rating with Wall Street analysts.

One theme of the address was the County's pioneering contract for information technology services, which will put government at the fingertips of County residents and business owners any time of the day or night. In fact, the State of the County Address itself was available over the Internet through a Webcast, a first for a government agency in San Diego County.

"The County's information technology contract with Computer Sciences Corporation, Science Applications International Corporation and the "Pennant Alliance" will mean dramatic improvements in services for County residents," Jacob said.

"This will enable San Diego County to become the first truly e-government. Residents who use the Internet will avoid driving, parking and waiting in line," Jacob said.

New telephones, desktop computers and networks will make County workers more efficient, saving time and money for taxpayers. New software will improve such systems as payroll, human resources, accounting and property tax collection. Finally, the County will expand its offering of on-line services, which currently include permit applications, property tax payment and animal lost-and-found.

One of the biggest challenges facing the County, Jacob said, is meeting the transportation needs of a growing population. A regional planning process dominated by special interests deserves much of the blame for the region's traffic woes, Jacob said, and this system must be fixed. She said a proposal by State Senator Steve Peace for a new regional agency headed by an elected board deserves serious consideration.

On the health care front, Jacob pledged to work in the coming year with providers to develop “pooled” group insurance rates for one-person businesses, and to expand coverage for families, foster parents and people who provide child care and elder care. Jacob also said she wants to work with other local governments and the State Public Utilities Commission to avoid future area code “splits”, which have proven frustrating for consumers and costly for businesses in San Diego County.

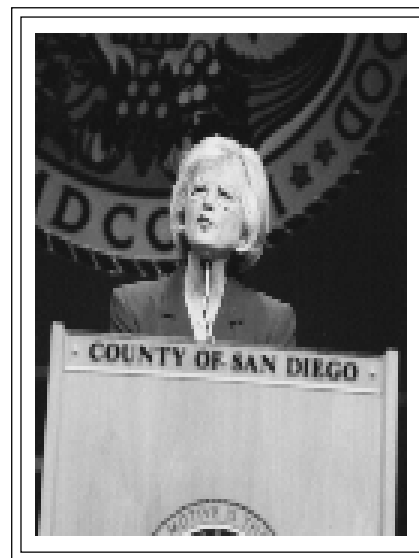
During the coming year, Jacob said, she will seek board approval to allocate \$1.5 million for a county wide expansion of the Sheriff’s Gang Suppression Unit, which currently operates in North County. Regionwide, there are an estimated 8,000 members of some 80 different gangs.

Jacob’s address also touched on initiatives to provide transportation for welfare recipients entering the workforce, an Intergenerational program to link seniors with kids and increased economic ties with Mexico.



From left to right: James Brown (World War I Veteran), John W. Finn (World War II Veteran), Marian, Rachel, and Elizabeth Phalan (Prospect Avenue School Students) reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at the State of the County Address.

Chairwoman Dianne Jacob delivering the State of the County Address.



Missed the State of the County Address? Don't worry, you're in luck! I invite everyone to view an on-line version of the State of the County Address via my Internet site www.diannejacob.com. Another example of my commitment to serve you better, cheaper, and faster!

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We hope to hear from you soon!

Feb

The Second District Staff (619)531-5522

Shannan Sorrell
Chief of Staff (Acting)

David Barber
Director of Land Use & Conservation
Planning

Darren Gretler
Field Representative/Policy Advisor

Mike Kulis
Chief Policy Advisor

Alan Pentico
Policy Advisor

Donna Sievert
Office Manager & Scheduler

Ryan Smith
Constituent Liaison

Teresa Alvarez
Administrative Assisstant

DIANNE JACOB

Supervisor, Second District
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101

(619) 531-5522
(800) 852-7322 toll free
(619) 696-7253 fax

e-mail:
Dianne-Jacob@co.san-diego.ca.us

website:
www.diannejacob.com