

The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

June 2003

State of East County 2003

Serving the Cities of:
El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
Bostonia
Boulevard
Campo
Canebrake
Casa de Oro
Crest
Cuyamaca
Dehesa
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
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
San Pasqual
Santa Ysabel
Shelter Valley
Spring Valley
Tecate
Tierra del Sol
Vallecitos

Serving the Indian Reservations of:
Barona
Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
Viejas

East County Triumphant After Roller Coaster Year

On May 22, I delivered the 2003 State of the East County Address in Santee. This month, I'm pleased to share with you a transcript of my remarks.

What had more adrenaline than a box of Krispy Kremes? More twists and turns than Highway 79 through the Cuyamacas? What was more unpredictable than an off-the-cuff speech by Santee Mayor Randy Voepel? Without question, it was last year.

It's been about 365 days since we last gathered here in Santee. Like any year, there have been highs and lows. This year, we've experienced particularly high highs and are suffering through low lows.

We've witnessed the triumphant liberation of Iraq. Yet, we're in the middle of a state budget crisis that is creeping into many aspects of our lives.

We've had remarkable success bettering our libraries and creating places for our young people to exercise. But we're about to

lose a longtime East County institution; Buck Knives, who like many manufacturing companies cannot compete in California's hostile business climate.

We chased a strip club out of unincorporated El Cajon by adopting the strictest adult entertainment ordinance in the nation. Yet, in many parts of the Back Country, we're battling a devastating bark beetle infestation that's killed nearly half of our pine trees.

What's important is that we're here and we're together. We're sharing the successes and we're fighting the big battles with one united voice.

The war in Iraq hit close to home in East County. Not only because of our friends in the Chaldean community, but because of brave U.S. service personnel like Lieutenant Thomas Mullen Adams.

Lieutenant Adams was one of our own. The 1993 graduate of Grossmont High School was the pride of his teachers, a star soccer player and the Navy's first fatality in the war. His sacrifice is America's enduring freedom. We thank him and the other 55,000 American servicemen and women from San Diego County who fought to liberate Iraq and continue to fight terrorism.

"We're sharing the successes and we're fighting the big battles with one united voice."

- Supervisor Dianne Jacob



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State Needs Budget Lesson from County

In contrast to the victorious takedown of the regime in Iraq, California struggles through the worst budget crisis in the State's history.

What's behind the \$39 billion financial crater that the state calls its annual budget? A flawed budget structure and out-of-control spending.

The County learned its lesson from the last budget crisis in the early 1990s. We have since put in place a budget structure that forbids us from spending beyond our means and an award-winning management system that forces all departments to justify any and all spending.

Our budget and our management system are the reasons why Syracuse University ranked San Diego County one of the three most efficiently run local governments in the nation.

The State, on the other hand, hopes to tax and borrow its way out of the crisis and is trying to hand the County a litany of programs with little or no money to pay for them. Although there will be cut backs in services the County provides on behalf of the State, compared to other counties, San Diego County is in good shape.

City Success Stories

Santee recently celebrated the grand opening of its centrally located Town Square. This convenient gathering place offers shopping, dining and a place for local entertainment.

Doors are open at the \$10 million Hartford Insurance Company in Santee's business park. Additional interest in the park will bring more jobs, economic diversity and reverse commutes to Santee. Congratulations Mayor Randy Voepel and City Council members.

Lemon Grove's spacious Civic Center Park is a marvelously planned public place. Its gorgeous water fountain showcases the City's historic buildings. The arbor, rosebushes and lemon trees have brightened up Lemon Grove Avenue. Most importantly, the park is there for the people. Good work Mayor Mary Sessom and City Council members.

Dining out in **El Cajon** is a pleasure. Innovative redevelopment has made Main Street the place to see and be seen in East County. By organizing public events, Mayor Lewis and City Council members have ushered in a profound sense of identity for the people of El Cajon. After the liberation of Iraq, El Cajon's rally was one of the more spirited events I've attended.



Thanks Veterans! Supervisor Jacob spent time with veterans at an El Cajon rally.

La Mesa officials recently cut the ribbon on the new Junior Seau Sports Complex. Congratulations to Mayor Art Madrid and City Council members for this outstanding example of government and private groups working together. The City, along with the La Mesa Park and Recreation Foundation, the La Mesa Athletic Council and the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District turned dirt lots into world-class sports fields.

La Mesa is especially looking forward to completion of the East extension of the San Diego trolley. It will, at last, give residents a straight shot into Mission Valley, easing commutes and traffic.

Smaller Communities Unite

Just like its cities, East County's unincorporated communities have good news to report.

Ramona put its collective foot down to take the town off a list of potential sites for an international airport. I joined Assemblyman Jay LaSuer and Congressman Duncan Hunter to see that the roar of commercial jets does not destroy the character of this rural community!

If one community above all others was tested last year, it was **Julian**. The Pines Fire tore through 61,000 acres. It was the second-largest fire in County history. It destroyed 37 homes and racked up

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a tab of more than \$22 million.

As the town was being evacuated, the Julian Chamber and Merchants Association quickly helped set up the Pines Fire Relief Fund, raising more than \$100,000 solely for victims.

With the nation watching, the community took care of its own. Area restaurants and hotels donated food and services to victims and firefighters. At the shelter, I have never seen so many Julian apple pies in one place!

When the State reneged on its promise of \$850,000 for a gym and teen center at La Presa Middle School in **Spring Valley**, the community refused to stay silent. It held a press conference and rallied and shouted.

Thankfully, the County was able to find the money the state took away. This July, construction will begin on the gym and teen center and the doors of Spring Valley's brand new 14,000 square foot library will open to a community anxious to use it!



Respect for History: Jacob is helping Campo and relatives of the famed Buffalo Soldiers create a State Park.

soldiers who patrolled the border during the War.

Lakeside is putting to good use 20 public



Julian survives: Less than two weeks after the Pines Fire Julian was open for business!

riverfront acres donated by Hanson Aggregates. The land will serve as the entrance to the San Diego River Park. Renowned artist James Hubbell designed an entry sculpture to kick off the effort and Lakeside residents couldn't be more proud.

Tough on Sex Offenders

Last summer, I unveiled the State's very first regional sex offender pin map on the Internet. This powerful tool lets parents use home computers to view the approximate location of registered sex offenders lurking in our neighborhoods.

The County appreciates school districts like Grossmont and La Mesa/Spring Valley that joined with the County to conduct background checks on volunteers who work closely with our kids.

Since the launch of the Pin Map, we've demanded that the State beef up efforts so we can monitor registered sex offenders and make punishment fit the severity of this evil crime. A bill that would have made it a felony to possess child porn failed to make it out of a committee, but efforts still are underway to make certain schools and childcare centers are sex offender free zones.

Cleaning up Communities

Last year, we fought to keep all of unincorporated San Diego strip club free zones. Parents became outraged that a Dreamgirls strip club wanted to open next to a youth dance studio and a family pizza place. It was all I needed to call for the toughest regulations in the nation when it comes to adult entertainment.

Not only did we scare away the strip club from unincorporated El Cajon, we kept other clubs from even thinking about bringing blight and increased crime rates to our unincorporated areas.

Business owners are pleased with the County's new graffiti abatement ordinance, an ordinance that calls for the quick removal of tagging on storefronts and keeps our shops looking as good as the services they provide.

It's not okay for adults to give booze to teens. Why? When alcohol is involved, teens get into fights.

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Most alarmingly, teens get into cars and kill the m-selves, their friends or others.

The City of La Mesa knew this when it took the lead in East County to crack down on underage booze parties. The County's Underage Booze Party Ordinance will widen that scope by holding adults accountable for serving alcohol to minors at house parties.

Healthy Activities for Young People

Since 1999, I've joined with communities to spend nearly \$3.7 million to build 46 ballfields, three football fields, 13 soccer fields, two basketball courts, two skate-parks, 13 playgrounds, three scoreboards and a gym at the Cameron Family YMCA in Santee.



Julian Catches Air: Julian celebrated the opening of its skatepark last year.

In **Lakeside**, teens and I broke ground on their new teen center at Lindo Lake while Julian's young people are doing ollies and rail slides at its 9,600 square foot skatepark at Jess Martin Park.

In **La Mesa**, Grossmont High School students are passing the ball on the largest artificial turf field in the County and the only artificial turf field at any high school in East County.

We are building more trails for hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders. The County's Master Trails Plan is out for public review. It marks the first time ever that this local government has helped communities connect trails to one another comprehensively. We've counted more than 1,400 miles of trails to explore.

In East County, libraries are not the intimidating, old, quiet, dusty places of the past. They are the new community centers, alive with multimedia technology, vibrant discussion rooms and Internet access. The **Rancho San Diego** Library, with its computer center and an Incredible Cheesecake

Company café incorporated into its design, is a prototype. Others will follow.

Only two communities in the entire region received State funding for new libraries under Proposition 14 last year. Both were in East County. Congratulations to **Julian** and the City of **Lemon Grove**. I recently had the pleasure of breaking ground on the "library of the future" in Julian and christening the town's new Sheriff's substation.

Ramona and **Alpine** have identified sites for their new libraries. Ramona residents are working to make their library part of an inter-generational campus, a place for seniors and young people to spend quality time together.

Advancing Healthcare in East County

The County remains relentless in its efforts to enroll uninsured children in healthcare programs. Three years ago, I made it a goal to seek healthcare for every child in San Diego County. Thanks to aggressive advertising and community outreach, 223,306 children now have healthcare.

When the severely injured and residents who suffer from the cruelest of diseases are turned away from all other medical facilities, they are welcomed by the compassionate staff of the old Edgemoor hospital in **Santee**.

For years, we've been working to replace this antiquated facility with a building worthy of the caregivers at Edgemoor. The \$52 million project is on track. Groundbreaking is set for December and the facility should be open in the spring of 2006.

Protecting our Majestic Back Country

The celebrated Multiple Species Conservation Plan has been called wildly successful. But that's an understatement. We are setting aside meaningful open space for our children and our children's children. Our goal is the preservation of nearly 99,000 acres of open space across the region, all of it ecologically valuable, so that wildlife can flourish and we can stay connected to nature.

We've acquired more than 86,000 glorious acres

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ahead of schedule. Nearly 69,000 are right here in East County! The MSCP takes a regional approach to land preservation. It helps landowners comply with environmental regulations and helps the County strike a balance between development and preservation.

The County's new wireless ordinance will strike a balance between critical infrastructure and the preservation of community character. Imagine traveling East on I-8 and seeing hundreds of unsightly cell towers sticking out like sore thumbs from the chaparral.

We all use cell phones and need more coverage. In the last few years the towers have spread like wildfire. Good wireless companies have designed towers to compliment community architecture. Bad wireless companies have slapped towers anywhere with no regard to wishes of communities. Bad wireless won't be doing that anymore. Our new wireless ordinance lets communities know when a tower is planned and calls for the toughest permitting rules possible, encouraging companies to locate in industrial and commercial areas while respecting the character of individual communities.

The Road Ahead...

Why have we been able to go after arrogant wireless companies and blight, and sex offenders and strip clubs and give our residents parks, libraries and healthcare for kids? Because of our strong economy!

Thanks to the passage of Proposition R last Fall, Grossmont/Cuyamaca community colleges have \$207 million dollars to spend to repair and renovate their campuses. The college district is determined to give East County businesses a first crack at this multi-million dollar pie. The district is willing to guide local business through the bidding process to keep those bond dollars in the hands of East County companies.

After a sharp decline in manufacturing jobs in the region, I hosted a summit to listen to the needs of the region's leading manufacturing companies. The State must listen to these business leaders who are crying out for relief. Sky-high electric bills, workers compensation costs and over-regulation are forcing companies to leave our region to stay competitive. I'm working with companies to deliver an action plan to state leaders to protect manufacturing jobs, which are the backbone of our economy!

Where businesses need a break, Cal Trans needs some gas. Cal Trans must make improvements to our major roadways. Adequate, safe and functional circulation on our roads are crucial to our quality of life. Yes, State Route 125 will give us more options to get to our destinations and a non-stop commute between National City and Santee, but SANDAG has taken too long to prioritize funding for the widening of 67, the Bradley/67 Interchange, safety improvements to Highway 94, the widening of Interstate 8 from El Cajon to Alpine and the 94/125 interchange.

Nothing will have a bigger impact on our overall quality of life than the update of the region's General Plan 2020. Five years in the making, the General Plan will serve as a blueprint for growth for all unincorporated San Diego County. When the process began, I insisted that any plan designed *for* the communities of East County, be designed *by* the communities of East County.

I commend all 16 of East County's volunteer planning groups for their efforts. When the Board of Supervisors adopts the plan, it will be my responsibility to do everything I can to preserve the unmistakable character of the communities in East County.

There you have it. Our greatest moments. Our biggest challenges ahead. And one or two bloopers in between. When faced with the worst State budget crisis ever, a full-scale ground war, a manufacturing crisis, the most challenging growth plan in two decades, and lingering healthcare concerns, there is still much to celebrate.

East County continues to move forward. I am proud of us. And I hope you are too!

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