



The Jacob Journal

SPECIAL EDITION

5th Annual State of the East County Address

June 2000

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El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:

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Inaja
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Manzanita
Mesa Grande
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Viejas

On May 15, 2000, I had the opportunity to deliver the 5th Annual State of the East County Address. I'd like to share some of it with you.

As we enter the new millennium, East County is well positioned to benefit from the new high-tech economy. Unlike some regions, East County is soaring into the 21st century, eager to embrace the new advancements in technology using our local talent to help develop the next generation of technological tools.

I'd like to begin by highlighting some of this past year's accomplishments that have helped provide the launching pad for the East County economy. When I think back to what we've accomplished since the first annual Economic Prosperity celebration, we've come a long way, and last year has certainly been no exception.

El Cajon – In El Cajon, the Downtown El Cajon Management District has been energetically working to help design the new El Cajon. Their plans will become even more visible once work begins on the new mixed use "Superblock" at the corner of Main and Magnolia. The City has also been successful in tying the rich tradition of its past with its plans for the future. Last fall, the Olaf Weighorst house was moved to the center of downtown El Cajon where it will be transformed into a museum and focal point for the City.

El Cajon also became home to the new San Diego Space and Defense Technology Consortium which has already brought 130 high paying engineering jobs to East County. The East County EDC, the East County Regional Chamber, Congressman

Hunter, Mayor Lewis and others worked hard to convince military officials that East County could provide a better - and much less expensive - home to develop the satellite communications technology the military needs.

And there is great potential to add even more jobs with the development of the Brucker leasehold at Gillespie Field. The Cuyamaca West Business Park has already brought approximately 1,000 jobs to East County, and the Marshall Avenue extension is expected to bring another 700-800 jobs. The development of the Brucker property around 2005 is expected to create an additional 2,800 jobs for East County.

But in order to use the 43 acre Brucker site, it is important that we improve the State Route 67/Bradley interchange. I will continue my efforts to work with the ECEDC and local legislators to obtain the funding needed for the interchange improvements.

Santee – Recently, the *Union-Tribune* stated that East County is the ideal location for future high-tech companies. They stated, "...East County is at a turning point...East County could become a magnet for these and other prosperous firms, provided elected officials create a more hospitable environment for office parks. These parks would attract upscale tenants that pay good salaries. The economic ripple effect would be considerable."

Well, I have good news! East County can "Catch the Wave" of high-tech business expansion.

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Last month, the County took a big step forward to bringing a high-tech business center to Santee. The Board of Supervisors directed County staff to work with the City of Santee to identify a specific site and prepare the bid documents. I would like to thank Mayor Dale and the City Council and City staff for their cooperation, vision, and commitment which will mean many more high-paying high-tech jobs for East County. This high-tech business center will enable East County to become a magnet for other prosperous tech firms, like Marotz Inc., which is headed by CEO and founder, Bill Roetzheim.

La Mesa – In La Mesa, Grossmont Hospital's new 70,000 square foot Emergency and Critical Care Center is scheduled to be completed in 2002 and will allow the old emergency room to be converted to an expanded radiology department.

Across the street from the hospital, the Grossmont Center Theater has a great new look as a result of its upgrade and can now boast the largest single screen in the County - seating 625 movie goers in one theater!

And diagonally from Grossmont Center, construction on the 40,000 square foot retail center is finished and is now the new home of Trader Joe's and the educational children's store Zainy Brainy.

Lemon Grove – In Lemon Grove, the community pulled together to provide a more colorful entry way to the City through the Plant Lemon Grove project. And, Project LemonLINK program, which uses computers and technology to improve teaching and learning, was honored by the Smithsonian Institute and the School District was recognized by *Business Week* magazine as one of the 10 outstanding educational institutions in the nation.

Mt. Helix – We were also successful this year in winning the long-fought battle for one of East County's most historic landmarks - the Mt. Helix Cross. The newly formed Foundation for the Preservation of Mt. Helix Nature Theater, lead by Bob Ball, will now maintain and operate the park - allowing the Cross on top of Mt. Helix to stay - forever!

Lakeside – Lakeside was selected as the home for Southland Envelope's new headquarters. Construction began earlier this year on the new 80,000

square foot facility which will employ 100 people.

Spring Valley – Building Blocks for Better Neighborhoods program is an exciting new program starting in Spring Valley. "Building Blocks" coordinates painting, landscaping, street and sidewalk improvement efforts to help upgrade parts of the neighborhood. Spring Valley will also soon be able to enjoy a new library/teen center/gymnasium which will be located close to La Presa Middle School and the newly completed Sweetwater Lane Park.

Alpine – Earlier this month, the San Diego East Visitors Bureau officially opened their new Visitors information center in Alpine. The new visitors center, located in the Viejas outlet center, acts as a gateway providing a wealth of information for travelers.

County Preparing for the New Millennium

While East County has had another busy year, your County government has also been busy at work preparing for the new millennium. We've successfully outsourced our Information Technology Systems in order to take advantage of the latest technological improvements and to serve our customers - County taxpayers - better, cheaper, and faster. This is one of the largest private contracts in the history of local government and will allow us to replace over \$250 million in obsolete equipment with state-of-the-art, world class technology. And by expanding our on-line services, San Diego County will become the first truly e-government allowing many residents to avoid driving, parking, and waiting in line.

I'm proud to announce that just last week, the San Diego Taxpayers Association awarded the County a record **three** Golden Watchdog Awards - one of which was for our IT outsourcing.

As we crossed the threshold into the 21st century, we did not enter meekly, instead we are soaring into the new millennium in the best fiscal shape the County has ever been! Our managed competition program, which saved taxpayers \$42 million last year, our welfare reform efforts, which saved taxpayers nearly \$500 million while helping to restore confidence and self-respect to over 38,000

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families, and other reforms have helped the County to build a reserve of \$300 million. And just last week, the County credit rating was upgraded again from A+ to AA-. These upgrades are saving taxpayers over \$3 million annually.

In January, I mentioned several challenges the County faced and I'd now like to provide you with a brief update on some of those issues.

I mentioned that I planned to fight against any new area codes being imposed on East County. Well, I'm glad to report that our efforts have paid off! Earlier this month, the California Public Utilities Commission decided to postpone indefinitely any new area codes for East County - 619 stays!

I also stated my intention to work to bring more of the transportation taxes and fees back to San Diego County. It looks as though our message is getting through to Sacramento. I had the opportunity to join the Governor last month as he announced his plan to provide \$481 million more in transportation funding to the San Diego region. This money, if approved by the legislature, would be in addition to other transportation funding we already receive and will help us speed up the completion of SR-52 and the SR-94/125 full interchange.

Although East County is soaring into this millennium with tremendous speed and progress - we have a crisis - a crisis that could mean the difference between life and death - a crisis that affects the health of all east county residents! That crisis is the eminent closure of Scripps hospital on East Main Street in El Cajon on June 5th.

The closure of this hospital directly affects both the physical health of East County residents as well as the economic health of East County's future.

Here's the problem: There are 24,000 people who use the emergency room at Scripps East every year! When the doors close on June 5th, where will these 24,000 go for their health care needs? Will they go to Grossmont, which is full 30% of the time, Alvarado, Kaiser, Mercy or another hospital on the coast? The next closest hospital is an additional 15-20 minutes west - and that's without any traffic.

If you should be transporting a child who has

drowned, a grandfather who has had a heart attack or stroke, the additional time to Grossmont, Alvarado or Mercy could be the difference between life and death!

The County's impact report on the closure of Scripps East concludes that, "the closure of the Emergency Department at Scripps Memorial Hospital East County will have a negative impact on the delivery of emergency services in East County in two areas: 1) the ambulance patient transport times to the nearest emergency department will increase, and 2) there will be an exacerbation of existing emergency department saturation issues in East County hospitals. It is recommended that, in the event all measures to keep the hospital open have been exhausted, emergency services remain available until mitigation strategies can be effectively implemented, which could be a delay of six to nine months."

I requested that Scripps extend the June 5th Closure date. Unfortunately, this request was denied.

Mr. Bruce Stewart with Paragon - a company specializing in hospital mergers and acquisitions - has been working with Scripps and local physicians on a possible transfer of the hospital to another entity. The transfer of this hospital to another owner is possible!

NOTE:

At present time, I have been told repeatedly by Scripps officials that they will close this hospital on June 5th! Although there will be a lapse in service, I am hopeful that a new buyer will emerge in the near future.

In order to attract and retain businesses in the East County, adequate infrastructure must be in place. This includes good schools, roads, parks, law enforcement and health services for residents including access to an emergency room when needed. This emergency room is a critical component of being prepared to care for unexpected health needs and to the future economic health of East County.

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June/00

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Join me for Coffee and Conversation...

Friday, July 14, 2000, 8:30 to 10:30am

Annie Oakley's

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