

**Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs**  
**2017 State of the County Address**  
**April 7, 2017 ■ The Coca-Cola Orlando Eye**  
*State of the County – Remarks as Prepared*

**Overarching Themes**

*Orange County is built on*

- *a Culture of Collaboration*
- *a Culture of Compassion*
- *a Culture of Confidence*

The culture we have here is so strong... we're resilient... we're inclusive... we believe in ourselves and in the abilities of others.

**Organizational Structure**

- *Section One – Introductions and Thanks*
- *Section Two – Update on Economy, Jobs, Stewardship of taxpayer \$\$\$*
  - *Unemployment stats, job creation*
  - *National business and community rankings*
  - *Building permits*
  - *Ad valorem/property tax revenue*
  - *County staffing, lean operations*
  - *Financial ratings*
  - *TDT revenue & venues*
- *Section Three – Update on County Initiatives (operations & quality of life issues)*
  - *(INVEST) Roads update and Pedestrian safety*
  - *ISO (Fire Rescue) update*
  - *Heroin Task Force, LEO remembrance*
  - *Affordable Housing update*
  - *Solar Co-op update*
  - *Signature Dish update (include video)*
  - *Parks update*
- *Section Four – Reflections on Pulse (includes video)*
- *Section Five – Closing (includes video)*

**Overall Timing – 40 minutes**

- Length of Speech: 31 minutes
- Video #1. Visit Orlando “Signature Dish” (00:02:00)
- Video #2. Pulse remembrance (00:03:12)
- Video #3. Let’s All Connect (00:01:10)

## **SECTION ONE**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Coca-Cola Orlando Eye!

Isn't this just wonderful?

Chuck Whittall... congratulations on the success of The Eye, and thank you for having us here today.

So quickly The Eye has become an Orlando icon –

And how fitting, since Chuck is a true “home-grown son of Central Florida”.

Senator Martinez, thank you so much for your warm introduction. I'm so grateful for the groundwork you laid as Mayor, and for the leadership you continue to provide in Central Florida.

I'm also delighted to see former Orange County Mayor Rich Crotty and I'm so sorry that Mayor Linda Chapin can't join us.

To all the elected officials here today, thank you for joining us.

But above all, I'm so proud to deliver this annual report to you – our Central Florida community – a community that is more collaborative than ever, more deeply compassionate than even we knew, and in so many ways, a community that is growing more confident every day.

From historic milestones to the heartbreaking reality we awoke to on June 12<sup>th</sup>, we've traveled many miles together this year.

We've leaned on each other and learned from each other, and in doing so, we've grown so much stronger.

Serving as your Mayor for the last six years has been a profound privilege – and for me, it's a genuine labor of love – but I'm not alone in this.

And I'm grateful and proud to serve with our incredibly hard working board of County commissioners.... The citizens of Orange County are fortunate to have such dedicated public servants.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in recognizing our board, including:

## Commissioners

Betsy VanderLey

Bryan Nelson

Pete Clarke

Jennifer Thompson

Emily Bonilla

and Victoria Siplin

Each brings their own passion and unique perspective to the dialogue, the debate and the decision making.

Orange County has an incredibly strong senior-management team. That team starts with:

Our County administrator, Ajit Lalchandani. Mayor Chapin was the first to recognize his tremendous potential and promoted him to Public Works Director and Senator Martinez what a great decision you made to appoint him as County administrator!

But the strength and dedication of our leadership team doesn't stop there,

We have our County Attorney, Jeff Newton

Our Chief Financial Officer, Eric Gassman,

Our Public Health & Safety Director, Dr. George Ralls

Our Fire Chief Otto Drozd

Our Corrections Chief Cornita Riley

Assistant County Administrators:

Chris Testerman, Jim HarrISON and Randy Singh

And of course, my Chief of Staff, who does so much more than her job description entails, Graciela Noriega-Jacoby

Please join me in recognizing our phenomenal leadership team.

In fact, would our entire Orange County family stand.

Thank you so much!

Together, we've come through a very difficult and heartbreaking year.

As your Mayor, I've had the privilege of seeing what so few ever will SEE.

I've seen how hard you work and how much you care... and this past year, in particular – through it all, you've demonstrated such compassion and strength. You've done a remarkable job. On behalf of the citizens of Orange County, thank you.

I also want to thank those citizens who are so actively engaged... those who serve on our advISORy boards, who attend our board meetings, our technology and social media workgroup and those who've participated in the Orange County experience. I am constantly amazed at the engagement of our community.

And finally, I continue to be so grateful to my own kitchen cabinet. My personal source of inspiration, energy, and ideas, my amazing family. Thank you, Bruce. Thank you to my kids, Josh, Max, Lisa, and Chase, and of course, my original source of inspiration, my mom. I love you all!

## **SECTION TWO**

You know, there are many ways to measure the State of the County, the health and wellness of our community, and to measure how our children, families and businesses are doing.

But let's start as we do each year, with our overall economic health, which provides confidence, inspiration and energy for the future.

By any measure, we've come a long way in a short time.

Today, our unemployment rate is at 4.2%, down from a high of 11.3 in the height of the worldwide recession – a 60% drop.

We added 127,000 new jobs and continue to welcome homegrown and relocating tech, digital and medical start-ups.

As a result of our culture of collaboration, for the second year in a row we're ranked number one in the nation for job growth among large regions.

*Forbes* magazine ranks our metro region as number 3 for best big cities for jobs in 2016.

And it's not just that we're adding jobs. We're increasing wages – a crucial measure of economic health. For 2016, *Forbes* ranked us 12th in wage growth, and they're projecting that we'll move to the number 2 spot this year.

Our County permitting numbers reflect the same momentum, with more than 3,500 new homes permitted last year – a number that catapults our 2016 building permit valuations to \$2.5 billion dollars – that's a 31% increase over the previous year.

For the fourth year in a row, countywide property tax valuations are up. In fact, our taxable property value grew by 9.2% in 2016, to over 109 billion dollars.

Almost all economic indicators for Central Florida are strong. Two areas in particular, housing and tourism, have shown a remarkable ability to rebound.

But the story that these indicators don't tell is the story that local governments throughout the state have lived.

For instance - property tax collections – by far our largest source of revenue fell by 24.8% during the recession and just this year, they have returned to their pre-recession levels.

However, since the start of the recession our demands for services have continued to increase, in fact they've increased significantly... largely due to a 15% increase in population.

To prepare for what we knew would be a "new normal" for local governments, primarily as a result of property tax reform, in my first two years as Mayor, I undertook a top to bottom restructuring, and significantly reduced staffing levels.

The one area I didn't touch – always sacrosanct – was public safety.

Today, with 15% more residents to serve, we are still operating with less employees than before the recession BEGAN.

As a result of the restructuring, we've been able to balance our budget without cutting services and without raising taxes.

We have maintained healthy reserves and very low long-term liabilities so we won't burden future citizens – our children – with excessive debt.

It's this type of fiscal discipline that earned us Triple-A bond ratings.

By delivering quality services and maintaining a low tax burden, we are creating an environment in which families and businesses can thrive.

It's the job of Orange County to use your tax dollars wisely, and I promise you.... We take this job very seriously!

Of course, we can't discuss our local economy or your County government without reflecting on our robust tourism industry.

No other community in the nation, or the world, benefits from the solid industry leadership and investment provided by Disney, Universal Studios, and Sea World.

Their investments, coupled with our investment of tourist development tax dollars in worldwide marketing and in our Convention Center, have allowed us to maintain our position as the number 1 tourism destination in the nation.

Representing approximately one-third of our economy, it's obvious why the strength of tourism is crucial – not only to Orlando, but to the region and the state.

But beyond the obvious benefits, during the past 10 years Orange County has invested almost

\$650 million in the city's downtown venues.

Without this substantial infusion of tourist tax funding, the Amway Center and the

Dr. Phillips Center for the performing arts would never have been built, and Camping World stadium would never have benefitted from such massive renovations.

And while we're on the subject of Camping World Stadium, I know there were a few doubting thomases out there.

And I'm not just talking about Mike Thomas.

In fact, I had my share of doubts along the way.

But Steve Hogan is nothing if not relentless and persuasive. He promised if we invested in camping world stadium, we would reap the benefits of being able to recruit blockbuster events.

So how are we doing so far?

Well, you tell me!

How about Copa? The NFL pre season game? The Rolling Stones? Pro Bowl and WrestleMania 33 with a record setting crowd of over 75,000 people.

There are many more examples, but we are now a destination that successfully competes for some of the most prestigious events, as well as longtime favorites like the historic Florida Classic.

And the benefits to our local community from a thriving tourism industry don't stop there.

How about the Dr. Phillips Center with its incredible shows, and breathtaking architecture ... we knew from the beginning that we were getting a world-class facility.

But Jim Pugh, Kathy Ramsberger and the board of directors also promised this would be a center that offered "arts for all ages."

Wow... have they delivered!

And how excited was our whole region just last month when we celebrated the ground breaking for the final phase - the Steinmetz Hall and the Green Room.

Within just a few short years, our own performers – from the ballet, opera, philharmonic and more – will take up residence in the finest new performance hall in the nation.

A quick story to share... immediately after we put our shovels down...as I'm overwhelmed, thinking about the creativity the center will generate... a reporter asked me, what's next?

My first thought was, "My gosh – isn't this enough?"

What other community in the world could ride the wave of so many landmark accomplishments, like...the opening of sunrail, the amway center, the

Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, a complete renovation of Camping World Stadium, a new MLS soccer franchise along with a new privately-funded soccer stadium, the completion of our beltway and the widening of i-4 underway simultaneously, a new urban campus for UCF on the horizon along with a huge new terminal and multi-modal transportation center at Orlando International Airport...

Where else has this much been accomplished in the wake of the great recession?

Better still, how many Mayors could actually have an answer to “what’s next?”

Well, I know of only two! Mayor Dyer and I!

So back to the question, what is next?

You may recall that last summer I announced a proposal that would free up substantial TDT funding.

The proposal was unanimously approved by our commission and enabled us to contribute additional tdt funding to help complete the Dr. Phillips Center, fulfilling a promise we made over 10 years ago.

This restructuring also resulted in significant benefits to the City of Orlando and the Downtown CRA.

It opened the door to funding other important community priorities, like establishing a sports-bid fund. It allows us to advance the Convention Center capital improvements plan.

And also of great importance, the proposal allows us to create a competitive grant program to support investments in other local community venues.

Again, this would not be possible without the strength of tourism and our very strategic use of TDT dollars. This tax, by the way, is paid by tourists, not our local citizens and is providing amazing entertainment options for our local families, as well as the chance to showcase our region to sports fans, business leaders, millennials, and entrepreneurs from around the globe.

Is it any wonder that *Forbes* magazine also includes us in the “top 10” cities where Americans are moving right now.

You know, we use the word collaboration a lot, but the value of our partnership with the City of Orlando can't be overstated.

Please join me in recognizing:

Mayor Dyer and the Members of the City Council

### **SECTION THREE**

But our investment in Orange County's future doesn't stop there.

In 2015, I proposed one of the largest infrastructure programs in our history.

Known as "Invest in Our Home for Life", this \$300-million-investment program provides for public safety, parks, pedestrian safety, road construction and transportation improvements – all without raising taxes.

Topping the invest list?

A \$200 million dollar investment in roads, roads, roads.

But compared to the "old way" of building roads, today we're not just focused on moving automobiles, we're also focused on designing roadways that embrace our highly mobile pedestrian and biking population.

The reality is, we top so many lists, in so many categories. But when it comes to pedestrian safety, this time we're on the list for the wrong reason.

To date, we've spent about a million dollars on pedestrian improvements, with much more planned in areas where pedestrians and bicyclists are at the greatest risk.

Already we're working hand-in-hand with UCF to dramatically improve University Boulevard and Alafaya Trail.

By the way – also along University Boulevard you'll see the newly installed "INVEST" sign identifying the location for our newest fire station – one of three brand new fire rescue stations that are in the works.

Our commitment to public safety doesn't stop there, and neither do our efforts to save you money!

Today, I am proud to announce that through hard work and strategic investments, we have dramatically improved our ISO rating.

What's an ISO rating, you're probably asking.

ISO is an organization that rates fire departments based on their ability to respond to property fires.

And this year, Orange County fire rescue leapfrogged to the highest ISO rating – a huge accomplishment.

To put this in perspective, of the more than 48,000 fire departments evaluated by ISO in the U.S., only 241 departments are rated class 1.

In other words, we score in the top one percentile of the ISO rated fire departments in the nation. Chief Drozd those are some serious bragging rights!

In Orange County, public safety is always job #1, and this new ranking is a clear indication of a job exceedingly well done by our Fire Chief Otto Drozd and the dedicated men and women who stand ready to serve you or save you in your hour of need.

We could not be more proud!

Chief Drozd and team... congratulations!

But that ISO rating also helps us with our economic development efforts.

Believe it or not, CEOs and site selectors rely heavily upon ISO ratings when evaluating an area for potential relocation and job creation.

The reason is simple. The lower the ISO, the lower the insurance premiums.

But reduced premiums aren't limited to commercial property. If you're a homeowner, you may also qualify for real savings. Not only are we tireless in boosting the effectiveness of our public safety operations, but we're putting this strength to work, as we continue to battle the deadly presence of heroin and other drugs in Central Florida.

Since 2015, when I convened the Orange County Heroin Task Force, which was co-chaired by Sheriff Demings, we've worked tirelessly to impact this epidemic.

Here's the reality – our local law enforcement continues to pursue dealers that prey on the addicted.

But we recognized that if we concentrated only on trying to cut off the supply – without also addressing the demand – we would never be successful.

So the Task Force focused on what we could do to immediately impact the pain and suffering of local families and addicts.

Boy, did they deliver.

For instance, in the past, only paramedics administered Naloxone – a life-saving drug that counteracts the effects of heroin. However as of last year, the Sheriff's Office and OPD, are now equipping their officers with Naloxone. As of late February, they have saved nearly 80 lives.

On the legislative front, the Task Force served as a springboard for statewide legislation allowing naloxone to be dispensed without a prescription making it available to the GENERAL public.

Another important recommendation of the Task Force was to introduce Vivitrol –

A very promising drug that along with treatment, interrupts the addiction cycle.

Not only have we provided overdose prevention information to hundreds of heroin-addicted inmates in the Orange County jail, we are ONE OF the first jails in THE STATE to implement a Vivitrol pilot project – a groundbreaking approach that can help prevent relapse and reduce cravings.

We know that Naloxone is life-saving, and that Vivitrol can be life-changing.

And we know that more funding will be needed.

But unlike so many communities across the nation, we know that here in Orange County there is hope.

That hope comes from the efforts of our entire Heroin Task Force, and from our culture of collaboration and compassion.

Another big reason to have hope? Our outstanding law enforcement agencies.

Led by Sheriff Demings, Chief Mena, FDLE Special Agent in Charge Danny Banks, the MBL team, and all of our local police chiefs, they are working tirelessly to rid our community of drug dealers.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... PLEASE, EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS EFFORT... OUR TASK FORCE MEMBERS AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED.

In fact, each and every day the men and women of law enforcement hit the streets to keep us safe. And they do this knowing that there is always a possibility that they may not return home to their families.

These real-life heroes put their lives on the line, not for money or for glory, but because they know, in the words of Edmund Burke, “that all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”

When tragedy struck on January 9<sup>th</sup> and we lost two of our beloved heroes, the hearts of our entire community were shattered, yet again.

Orlando Police Department Lieutenant Debra Clayton, and Orange County Sheriff Deputy First Class Norman Lewis, we will never forget you, we will never forget your sacrifice, and we will never forget those you left behind.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a moment of silence, as we remember our fallen heroes.

In addition to vital public safety necessities, we’re investing in the heart of our community, housing for our families.

In a national study released just last month OUR REGION ranked third from the bottom for our supply of housing that is affordable for extremely low-income residents.

Third from the bottom.

While this isn't just a local problem, it is a national one, we are exploring solutions that can be implemented at a regional level.

In October I hosted the first regional Affordable Housing Summit.

Planners, developers and local government leaders gathered to explore affordable housing solutions.

From new strategies to current best practices, we're committed to creating a variety of housing options that will foster a more inclusive housing market.

By the way, one of the outcomes of the Summit is a series of in-depth workshops.

The first one is scheduled for May 19<sup>th</sup>, so please... if you don't have this on your calendar, be sure to mark the date.

While these and other long-term efforts are underway, we're already moving forward with new workforce housing. To date, we've committed \$2.7 million dollars for some innovative developments.

In South Apopka, we've partnered with Habitat for Humanity to break ground on two neighborhoods for low-income families.

Folks.... If you've never been there when a Habitat family receives the key to their home, I urge you to add this to your bucket list.

Working side by side, and sharing the pure joy of a family getting their home... few experiences are more rewarding.

In East Orange County, we're already welcoming residents to Golden Pointe, a gorgeous new, 70-unit family apartment complex, with a special emphasis on welcoming low income families, including apartment units dedicated to homeless families.

These projects and more – including our transformative community partnership with Wayne Densch, which expands housing for the most at-risk homeless families – will have generational impacts.

We continue to find other ways to improve our quality of life and save money in Orange County.

In 2009, our Convention Center installed over 6,000 solar panels. In fact, the project was the largest municipal rooftop solar array in the southeast, producing enough electricity to power 90 homes.

While solar energy has been available for commercial and residential use for over a decade, last summer, in partnership with Florida Solar United Neighborhoods, we established a County-wide solar co-op, making it easier and more cost efficient, to be a part of the solar savings movement.

Let me show you an example of how the system and savings work.

First, let's take a look at a home that is actually participating ...

This is a real-life example – and it's my house!

Bruce and I joined and loved the experience – other than the fact that Bruce is addicted to CHECKING THE APP to see how much energy we're generating and I'm constantly converting that into how much money we're saving!

I have another sunshine-powered initiative to let you in on... but this one is fun and sure to be delicious, as we prepare to celebrate the amazing bounty of our sunny Florida climate, and our growing foodie "climate."

[Visit Orlando video 2 minutes]

Isn't that great.....I can't wait to see and taste our signature dish!

And how about one more benefit of our glorious sunshine?

All you parents out there will agree with me when I say There's nothing better than taking your kids to a park to enjoy our Central Florida sunshine and LET THEM burn off some of that crazy energy!

But you know, just as we've expanded our approach to road design, we're taking a similar approach with our Parks and Recreation facilities.

By embracing inclusive design, we are supporting all of Orange County's citizens, especially our precious children with unique challenges.

The truth is, more than to be taken care of, what most people want is to be able to take care of themselves – and that's absolutely true for children, who yearn to be independent and self-sufficient

That's, why it meant so much to me to join Commissioner Jennifer Thompson to celebrate the recent opening of Young Pine Community Park, our first park to use inclusive design as its foundation.

By thinking creatively about children of all abilities, we created the best of the best...

A playground accessible and enjoyable FOR EVERYONE.

If you haven't had a chance to visit Young Pine Park, I urge you to stop by.

Not only is the park beautiful, it brings to life our core values and our commitment to diversity, compassion and to caring for each other.

#### **SECTION FOUR**

And I'm not just talking about how we design projects to embrace diversity and compassion, I'm talking about us. This community. Who we are.

We never really knew the depth of our compassion, the strength of our unity, or our shining heart and caring soul until June 12<sup>th</sup>.

This year's state of the County could focus entirely on the single, defining event of 2016... the Pulse Nightclub shooting.

But rather than allow our community to be defined by the horrific acts of hatred by a mass murderer, I want TO share some personal thoughts about the defining elements of June 12 — what we lost, how we loved, what we learned, and what the world learned *about us* and from us.

First and foremost, my prayers continue to be with the families, friends and loved ones of our 49 brothers and sisters lost in the early morning hours of that day.

My prayers also go out to those who were physically injured, and those who bear the deep emotional scars of survival.

Barbara Poma – there is not a day that goes by that I don't think of you and the Pulse family. I cannot imagine what it's like to walk in your shoes.

But to you and TO everyone who's been so deeply affected, remember... in our community you are not alone.

I know that nothing can ever erase the harm that was done. Yet, as dark and devastating as June 12 was, so many found solace and strength from the unity, the compassion and the love that poured forth from all parts of our community, and in fact from across the nation and the world.

And as we focused our attention on what we could do to help each other – the world focused its attention on us.

The world watched as we mourned and rallied with the common goal of supporting our LGBTQ and latinx communities and all of those affected.

The world watched us respond to the victims' families, to those with broken hearts and to those who survived with broken bodies.

The world saw our first and second responders at their very best.

The world witnessed the extraordinary outpouring of acceptance and love that came naturally, from within the very fabric of our community.

Through it all, the world gained a much fuller understanding of Orlando.

But it was not just the world's perception of us that changed — it was also our perception and understanding of ourselves.

Through our response to the greatest attack we've ever withstood, the greatest loss we've ever suffered, we learned something incredible about ourselves....

We know that our culture of collaboration has allowed us to accomplish so much. But we discovered that it is our culture of compassion that makes Orlando such an incredible place to live.

[Pulse video – 3 minutes]

No tribute or remembrance would be complete without saying thank you.

Thank you to the many heroic club-goers and passers by... who so courageously rushed to provide first-aid during the initial moments of the attack.

Thank you to the Orlando Health hospital team... your response was nothing short of a miracle.

To our first responders, including firefighters, EMTs, our Medical Examiner's Office, and law enforcement from throughout Central Florida and the nation, I offer the heartfelt thanks of millions.

I'm not sure that we will ever fully know the man-hours devoted to public safety and the pursuit of justice, but I know this: behind every badge, every 911 operator and EVERY

firefighter, BEHIND every nurse, counselor and doctor beats the heart of a hero. To each of you, we are forever grateful.

Above all, we will never forget the lives and the loss of our 49 brothers and sisters.

## **SECTION FIVE**

Together with Pulse, the City of Orlando, our Orange County Regional History Center, the One Orlando Alliance and many others, we're planning a number of events in June to commemorate the terrible loss suffered by our LGBTQ, Hispanic and broader communities.

But this morning, in honor of those we lost, I'm deeply proud to invite you to join Mayor Dyer AND ME immediately after we're done here – right outside in the courtyard, to take part in what – with your help – will be the largest gathering of the worldwide movement for peace and unity.

Let's take a look...

[roll Let's All Connect video]

This has been an unforgettable year for Central Florida, with tremendous highs and heartbreaking lows.

We have learned that only by choosing to face our future together and with confidence can we build a sustainable future for our children, grandchildren and generations to come.

As I approach my last 19 months as Mayor, I pledge to you that my administration will continue with the same unrelenting focus and momentum of our first 6 ½ years.

Every day, we will remain focused on making progress on complex problems – from affordable housing to discovering more and better ways to serve you, our citizens, and to care wisely for your tax dollars.

And just imagine what is to come!

But with so much progress, sometimes it's hard to be the pioneers, the leaders and the "do-ers."

It means we're the ones who have to live through the construction, grumble through traffic and fight for funding.

But that's who we are... fearless collaborators and compassionate problem-solvers, moving forward with great confidence and excitement for the future!

It is with this knowledge that I can report to you that **the State of Orange County is strong, it is resilient and it is unified.**

It is proud, compassionate, and confident – confident in our ability to overcome challenges, and confident that together, we are going to achieve in ways that will continue to change lives and transform Orange County into the best that we can be.

Together, we will continue to grow our culture of collaboration, compassion, and confidence... that we may continue to be a beacon of light, hope and unity for the world to see.

Thank you for your support, and thank you for your partnership.

God bless you all.