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"CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS" to the Santa Clara County

Board of Supervisors

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For an elected official, it is easy to give a speech which will be popular; it is hard to give one that is honest. Over forty years ago, one British Prime Minister promised his countrymen there would be peace in our times; another promised blood, sweat, tears, and toil. Yet today, we honr Churchill, rather than Chamberlain. We do so, not because Churchill's message was a desirable one, but because we recognize that - in the long run - we are better off confronting a difficult reality than ignoring serious problems while we savor a satisfying illusion.

This morning I intend to portray the coming year for county government realistically, without the comfort of illusion. I have always prided myself on the fact that I keep the promises I make to the people that I represent. Therefore, recognizing the fiscal limitations which confront this county, I will not make the kinds of promises you have often heard before. I do not pledge the creation of expansive new programs. I cannot assure you that fundamental societal problems will finally and conclusively be resolved. What I do pledge is that county government will fulfill its primary mission - the delivery of basic, and often vital, services to the residents of Santa Clara Valley. We will make every effort to maintain the quality of these services within the limits of human ingenuity and the requirement of a balanced budget.

At the same time that local government is adjusting to this new fiscal realism, citizens will also find it necessary to abandon some of their illusions from the past. Many citizens have harbored the illusion that this county can generate rapid economic growth, develop adequate supplies of housing, and conserve a pristine environment all at the same time. Realistically, serious trade-offs have to be made. Without housing, industry will re-locate elsewhere, and no housing, however well-developed, will be as aesthetically pleasing or place as minimal a burden on urban services, as an open field or an unmarked hillside.

Also widespread is the illusion that residents can demand and receive increasing levels of services while paying lower taxes. Realistically, the relationship between services and taxes is direct and inevitable. New programs will require new taxes; lower taxes result in fewer services. Agencies which rely on government financial support often continue to believe that pursuit of a noble or compassionate objective guarantees stable funding from public sources. Realistically, in a time of austerity, local government will reward performance, not mere intent. Today, love is not enough. An agency must be capable of delivering services efficiently as well as lovingly. Industry also shares some illusions. While businesspeople, often with justification, were struggling to get government off their backs, they may have forgotton that government was playing a useful, indeed, an essential role right under their feet. It is local government which provides such elementary structures and services as roads, jails, sewage disposal plants, public health facilities, and mass transit systems. So critical is the development of this public infrastructure for any possibility of sustained economic growth that Business Week insists the "true test of Reagonomics" will be the ability of state and local government to meet these obligations.

Perhaps the most pervasive and potentially most damaging of current illusions is the belief that community vitality and individual well-being are isolated, unrelated phenomena. On a daily basis, this illusion is expressed through the insistance that the costs of maintaining a society can always be shifted or directed to someone else. Thus, the argument is stated, criminals who are a threat to public safety should be kept off the streets. But facilities to incarcerate these persons should never be located in <u>my</u> neighborhood - they belong in <u>someone else's</u> backyard.

Realistically, since we live in an interdependent society, we need to accept a fair share of the burdens life in society requires. We cannot allow democratic decision-making to become stalemated because each constituency rejects negotiation

and compromise and refuses to budge from the unalterable position that it is entitled to all of the benefits and none of the costs of citizenship. New realism, like charity, should begin at home. As county government sheds its illusion in light of fiscal limitations, changes in our mode of operation and our priorities will be needed. To begin with, I expect to be working closely with the county Executive to inaugurate an era of increased management accountability in county government. Speaking bluntly, we cannot afford to pay individuals $40,000 a year or more to stand before the Board of Supervisors and complain that budget cuts cannot be handled and that changes from the good old days are impossible.

In 1982, the job of manager in the public sector will be a tougher one than it has ever been before, but this is also a time in which managers can demonstrate to everyone that they have the competence and commitment to produce results under the most difficult of circumstances.

Secondly, it is time to restore sanity to the relations between different levels of government in our nation. Currently counties enjoy a unique status - they lack the authority to raise taxes or print money, but they retain the mandated responsibility to deliver increasingly costly services. Moreover, other sectors of government seem enchanted with the idea of imposing additional service obligations on counties while neglecting to provide the revenues needed to carry out these tasks.

Nowhere is this unstable situation more obvious than in the criminal justice system. In an effort to respond to rising crime rates, many cities are hiring additional police officers. The new officers do their jobs and arrest offenders. But as arrests increase, the county must provide more district attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, courtrooms, jail cells, stenographers, clerks, and judges.

Who is to pay the massive bill for these structures and personnel?

Unless the authority to require the performance of services and the responsibility to pay for such obligations are brought into balance, California counties may soon reach

a point of crisis, a point at which a Board of Supervisors may have no alternative but to refuse to perform mandated functions.

Finally, at a time when operating budgets are strained to the maximum, we must recognize the necessity of initiating a select number of capital projects. Public safety demands the completion of a jail construction program. If public health is to be well-served, extensive remodeling will be required at Valley Medical Center. To support anticipated economic growth, the capacity of our Transportation system must be expanded, particularly through the Guadalupe Corridor project. While the temptation is great, at a time of tight budgets, to spend for today and allow tomorrow to fend for itself, legislators cannot abdicate their responsibilities to those who will live in this valley, long after we have passed from the political scene. Those capital programs are as serious an obligation for us as the need to maintain current services on a regular basis.

Although our financial situation prohibits expansion of county operations and restricts our freedom of action, in some areas positive improvements in service may be implemented through the re-design of programs or the re-allocation of resources.

For 1982, I suggest five proposals worthy of the Board's attention. Since 1977 the county has sought to improve the accessibility of human service programs through the development of multi-service centers, but little progress has been made towards the goal of coordinating or integrating services within these centers. I propose that the county initiate, as a pilot project, a coordinated service delivery model within a single multi-service center.

For example, if the county service complex on Highland Avenue in San Martin were to be developed as a multi-service center, that new facility could both fulfill the county's responsibilities to south county as well as provide a demonstration project which, subsequently, other service centers might emulate.

Secondly, in the area of transportation strategies, it is time to recognize the importance of air travel to our region's economy. In the future, I believe county air traffic planning will require greater attention and greater focus than that which can be provided by the modes committee of the transportation commission. Consequently, I will recommend that a committee be formed to design a County Air Transportation Commission to advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters relating to air traffic and airport operations.

Another focal point for the creative allocation of resources can be the planning of county parks. As economic factors and energy costs induce higher urban densities, the rationale for a regional park in an urban setting becomes extremely persuasive. The development of the Park of the Guadalupe in central San Jose is not a new idea. I supported it in 1973. It is now being discussed in the business community, and I believe the proposal warrants our serious consideration. Such a project could bring together the efforts of numerous governmental bodies - including the county, the city of San Jose, the Valley Water District, and possibly, the State. In addition, it could attract substantial private sector involvement in the form of compatible commercial and residential development. A Park of the Guadalupe - from the 280 interchange to the County Government Center - could serve as the hub of a countywide streamside trail network, connecting any city in the county which has access to a stream to the entire system.

As federal support is withdrawn from many areas of community life, new partnerships need to be developed between the state, county government, and the private sector to replace national programs with services tailored to satisfy local requirements and desires.

One example of such a creative partnership, which deserves the Board's continuing strong support, is the Combined Arts Agency. Drawing upon the participation of the business community, educators, labor, the arts community and government, this planning

body is working to assess the needs of county residents for artistic programs and to generate guidelines for music and arts proposals which can qualify for state support.

Finally, the county can and should be considering mechanisms to reorganize its human services in an effort to control costs and to preserve the self-respect of the recipients of assistance.

One way to accomplish both of these objectives is to replace programs which require institutionalization of persons in a central facility with decentralized services in a family setting. For some time, I have hoped that we might develop an alternative to the county's children's shelter. One possibility would involve the use of foster homes or group homes as more suitable dwelling places for children who must be separated from their parents. Today I am pleased to report that the David and Lucille Packard Foundation has indicated an interest in providing funds to evaluate the feasibility of such an alternative. With this generous support from private donors, we may be able to both provide a healthier environment for displaced children in our community and save scare county resources.

During this presentation, I have deliberately emphasized the formidable challenges facing local government. I have done so out of a respect for honesty and candor. However, within my own spirit, I do not intend to allow candor to vanquish hope. Adversity can be a valuable, albeit a stern, teacher. Individuals and communities can and do find resources within themselves to confront the most serious of problems. My hope is that the residents of Santa Clara County generate the ability and the will to pull together to overcome our common difficulties. By urging that we pull together, I do not suggest that there are no significant differences amongst us. But I do assert that - despite the passions of the moment - as members of this community, there is more that binds us together, than there is that drives us apart. From Palo Alto to Gilroy, from Mt. Ununhum to Milpitas, in the private sector and the public sector, we are all part of this valley. We all share responsibility for its future, and, during the coming years, we all have a lot of constructive work to do.