

**L. Brooks Patterson  
Oakland County Executive**

**2013 State of the County Address**

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Speech is also available on the website at: [www.oakgov.com](http://www.oakgov.com)

## I. Introduction – Elite 40 Under 40

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for that standing round of applause...yep, standing...all 550 people...standing. That's all right, please feel free to STAND anytime you want. Personally, I think standing is overrated.

I'll have more to say about all of that later, but let me open tonight's remarks with thanking all of you sincerely for the very warm reception. It's nice to see you all again this year.

I also want to thank Erica Coulston for her generous introduction of me. Erica is this year's winner of our Elite 40 Under 40 contest. What a remarkable young lady.

As you may recall from last year, we sought nominations of young adults who represent the very best of Oakland County: they are creative entrepreneurs today and will be the leaders of our communities tomorrow. And from what I can see, having read through more than one hundred resumes, the future of Oakland County, and for that matter, the future of our region and our country is indeed secure, full of hope and promise.

Miyan Media, which coordinated the contest, received more than 350 nominations. The competitive list of talented individuals was eventually honed down to the elite 40 winners, and many of them are with us tonight. I'd like to ask them to stand now and be recognized.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year's class of the "Elite 40 Under 40."

Before I get too far down the road tonight in my remarks, I want to take time to recognize a few of our area leaders who are far too old to participate in the "40 Under 40" contest, but have in their own right contributed significantly to the quality of public service in southeast Michigan.

Joining us tonight are my colleagues – whom the media has dubbed the "Big Four." I'd like to introduce the Mayor of Detroit Dave Bing...Wayne County Executive Bob Ficano...and Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel.

As you know, Mark is the first county executive from the County of Macomb. Look around you, Mark, all these bright lights...that's called electricity and Macomb should have it soon.

I saw in the paper where you got engaged to the beautiful Tracy Damschroder. Congratulations are in order, Mark. And Tracy, let me inform you that my Health Department does closed-head injury screenings every Friday afternoon.

I'd also like to welcome and introduce to all of you our new Clerk/Register of Deeds Lisa Brown and the Water Resource Commissioner Jim Nash.

## **II. Turning the Corner**

Throughout my speech tonight you will hear me refer frequently to two words that have really become the stock and trade of Oakland County: innovation and diversification. As I embark upon another four years as your County Executive, my administration is committed to continuing to innovate in the areas that attract diverse, high-paying jobs that support an economic rebound.

Let's begin with a look at some signs that Oakland County's economy is in fact rebounding. According to the State's Bureau of Economic Analysis, Oakland County's 2011 per capita income – the latest year for which there is data available – remains the highest in Michigan at more than \$53,000 per. Oakland County's per capita income increased 8.5 percent from 2010 to 2011, or more than \$4,100.

Some more good news that shows the corner is being turned: After six years of decline in residential property values, the average homeowner in Oakland County can expect to see a modest one percent increase in their property value in 2013. While not significant – one percent – I believe Oakland County homeowners will welcome a shift into positive territory.

And the good news continues. The businessmen and businesswomen – those entrepreneurs who are the backbone of our economy – are really stepping up their game this year. The Oakland County Business Finance Corporation, or BFC, saw a substantial increase in the amount of loans approved and the number of business projects funded in the first quarter of fiscal year 2013. The BFC, whose mission is to stimulate business growth and expansion in Oakland County and the region, approved \$18.9 million in loans for 13 business projects in just the first quarter of fiscal 2013.

By comparison, last year, it approved \$8.9 million in loans for 10 projects in the same timeframe. The BFC is on pace to close 40 loans by the end of the year.

Finally, let's talk about jobs. Back in 2011, esteemed University of Michigan economists (that's an oxymoron) George Fulton and Donald Grimes forecasted that Oakland County would see an additional 10,908 jobs in 2011.

Well, we embarrassed our good friends and prognosticators from U of M that year by producing 23,426 jobs – more than double their prediction. Understand folks, these guys rank among the best in the country when it comes to predicting job growth.

Moving ahead to last year, Fulton and Grimes predicted Oakland County would create 11,000 jobs in 2012. While the final numbers are not in, it looks like we will eclipse that job prediction by more than double, in the range of 25,000 new jobs.

I wonder what Fulton and Grimes would say about global warming?

## **III. Emerging Sectors Reaches \$2 Billion!**

By now, most of you are familiar with my Emerging Sectors initiative. That's the name of our program assigned to my Economic Development and Community Affairs team - led by my very-capable Deputy Matt Gibb, Director Irene Spanos, and Deputy Director Dan Hunter. It is their job, and that of their team, to attract innovative, sustainable, high-paying jobs that make up the core of our knowledge-based economy in Oakland County. Jobs in sectors such as health care, advanced electronics, advanced materials, and information technology.

In calendar year 2012, 37 Emerging Sectors companies invested more than \$156 million in Oakland County thereby creating over 1,700 new jobs and retaining more than 3,400 existing jobs. The lion's share of that job creation was in the Information Technology and Advanced Electronics sectors.

From the inception of Emerging Sectors in 2004, 230 companies have invested more than \$2 billion in Oakland County creating more than 27,000 jobs and retaining 12,700.

Two billion of new investment in nine years is a milestone. It represents a lot of hard work by my Economic Development team. Get the lead, follow up with the client, gather the information pursuant to their due diligence responsibility, make sure the funding is available, and on and on it goes. And please keep in mind, this \$2 billion of investment and these 27,000 jobs have all been created during the deepest and longest recession in our history since the Great Depression!

Matt and Irene's team is already planning a big celebration at the Palace of Auburn Hills so we can rejoice and share our success with all of our partners and investors. When details are finalized, invitations will be going out so you can celebrate with us. This event will be underwritten by sponsors.

#### **IV. Medical Main Street's INNO-VENTION**

After we launched Emerging Sectors, it didn't take us long to realize that health care and life sciences were the largest components of Oakland County's economy, and expanding rapidly. According to updated figures by the Anderson Economic Group in Lansing, over 100,000 individuals are currently employed in health care, life science research, and medical device manufacturing right here in Oakland County.

To put that in perspective, that's more health-related jobs than the Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic combined. Since I launched Emerging Sectors, 32 health care and life science companies have invested more than \$850 million in Oakland County creating 4,800 jobs and retaining more than 1,400.

You only have to look at Crain's Detroit Business 2013 "Book of Lists" to see what I'm talking about. Of Oakland County's 25 largest employers, one quarter are hospitals. Number one is Beaumont Health Care System, with 11,600 fulltime employees in Oakland County; number four is Trinity Health Care with 5,900 employees; there's St. John Providence at number five with nearly 4,500 jobs; Henry Ford at number six with 3,400; Botsford's number nine and Crittenton is number 15. Of course, with the merger of Beaumont and Henry Ford, we can expect them to remain our largest employer for the foreseeable future, overtaking General Motors. It is clear from these numbers that Oakland County has become a destination for world-class health care.

That's exactly what my Medical Main Street initiative is all about – letting the nation and the world know that Oakland County can lay claim to the best-of-class when it comes to professionals in the medical field, leading-edge life science researchers, and top-notch medical device manufacturers.

This past autumn, Medical Main Street strutted its stuff before an international audience with Oakland County's first INNO-VENTION conference held at the Royal Park Hotel in Rochester.

The conference was sold out! Sometimes the simple ideas are the most innovative ones. Our INNO-VENTION conference brought engineers and designers from medical device manufacturers together for the first time in the same room with medical doctors. As the physicians spoke, the engineers took copious notes about the speakers' insights on improving current medical devices. From the INNO-VENTION conference, we developed six business leads that we are currently pursuing.

We are already planning our next INNO-VENTION conference which will focus on the utilization of IT in the medical field. It is scheduled for November 6-8 at the Troy Marriott. Buy your tickets now before this one sells out.

## **V. Automation Alley**

There is a thread of technology running through the programs that I've talked about already tonight, especially Emerging Sectors and Medical Main Street. The same can be said for Automation Alley which focuses on high-tech companies. It now markets an eight-county region of southeast Michigan as a hub of innovation in engineering, advanced manufacturing, and research.

And, if you have any doubts about whether we can run with the big dogs when it comes to technology, I encourage you to read the 2012 Technology Industry Report just released by the Alley. It indicates that the Automation Alley region has more than 200,000 technology workers. And of the 15 technology hubs analyzed, our region ranks first in the number of engineering and engineering technology degrees completed at colleges and universities in our area – that all adds up to 7,000 new scientists and engineers graduating from our colleges and universities each year!

Since its launch in 1999, Automation Alley – with my Deputy Ken Rogers at the helm – has grown to a 1,000 member organization, making it the largest high-tech business consortium in the Midwest. It has been honored by both Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama for its significant role in creating jobs within the export arena.

Two years ago, I announced that Automation Alley would be creating the International Business Center – a place where foreign companies can have a “soft landing” in the United States while establishing a permanent presence in our region. Thirty companies have had a “soft landing” in the Alley’s International Business Center since 2011.

Sponsoring trade missions, both domestic and abroad, are among Automation Alley’s benefits for its members. And our members are determined to land big contracts with companies outside of our region. That in turn produces jobs here.

Last May, the Alley sponsored a trade mission to Brazil, one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and certainly among the largest economies in the Western Hemisphere. The trade mission focused on meeting with Brazilian businesspeople in fuel technology, information technology, and environmental technology industries. One local company signed a \$50 million agreement as a result of that Brazilian trade mission.

Last year, Automation Alley attracted eight high-tech companies to our region resulting in 365 more jobs in the knowledge-based economy. They were Sunlogics and Van Rob, Incorporated, from Canada; Inphodrive US and Elbit Systems of America from Israel; E-Xstream Engineering from Luxembourg; Heck + Becker Corporation from Germany; Stola NA and Reply from Italy.

This is a mere snapshot of what Automation Alley has accomplished recently. Since its inception, the Alley has conducted 17 trade missions, garnering \$220 million in contracts which created more than 1,000 jobs; on its own it has invested \$8 million in 35 companies and projects that have resulted in 600 jobs; those 35 companies and projects seeded by the Alley have been awarded \$69 million in additional investments.

## **VI. Meeting the Demand for a Well-Trained Work Force**

It is clear that Oakland County is succeeding at attracting companies from emerging sectors around the country, and in some instances, from around the globe. I believe Oakland County is building a strong foundation of diversification within the knowledge-based economy.

I know I've pointed this out in past State of the County addresses, but the importance of this fact bears repetition here. The future for Oakland County, and for that matter, America, will be our level of active participation in the knowledge-based economy. It will require a highly-trained, highly-motivated, and a highly-

educated workforce in order to compete and attract the high-paying jobs upon which you can build a unique quality of life. We've done a pretty good job up to now, but we still have a long way to go.

Recently I was a guest on a talk show and I opined that Oakland County learned its lesson in 2008 and 2009: we had an overabundance of our jobs located within one sector: the automotive sector. And when that sector went south in 2009, it took 60,000 high-paying Oakland County jobs with it, and we're still trying to recover from that disastrous year. There's a lesson to be learned: you have to spread your employment risks over a number of diversified sectors. There's that word again.

Obviously, we will enthusiastically embrace automotive jobs, but we also will attract, embrace, and nurture other sectors for our future, like information technology, like health care, like advanced materials, like aerospace. As I said earlier, one of the key words of my administration when it comes to economic development over the next four years is diversification.

The challenge that lies ahead for Oakland County, and for that matter, any community moving into the quickly evolving 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is to create and maintain a skilled and educated workforce that will attract and help keep companies here. If you don't have a skilled workforce, companies that need those skilled workers will simply take their jobs elsewhere.

A word of caution: as much as I stress the knowledge based economy as the new reality, we should not overlook the opportunity for high-paying jobs within the skilled trades. We're talking machinists, carpenters, millwrights, and even airplane mechanics, among others. As our children consider their future plans, many of them will look to engineering, medical school, legal and scientific careers. Unfortunately, skilled trades are often overlooked as a career option. The result is that we are starting to feel the pinch in meeting the demand for filling these very well-paid positions. Foreign labor markets are more than willing to fill the void.

The American Society of Employers annual salary surveys represent the largest, most comprehensive compensation surveys in the state of Michigan. According to their 2011 data, skilled tradespeople on average earn a solid middle class wage. For instance, a machinist can make over \$28 per hour; a journeyman electrician can make more than \$22 per hour; and an experienced tool and die maker - \$24 per hour; a six term County Executive makes about \$14.50 per hour...but that was before they took my car away.

To foster interest in the skilled trades, I am pleased to announce tonight that my Department of Economic Development and Community Affairs has created a website to connect those looking to apply for training in the skilled trades with trade schools in our region. The website is called "MI Trade School" dot org. That's "my" as in MI. The website will also have a portal for parents in order to answer their questions about why skilled trades are a viable career path for their children.

## **VII. China**

While we are on all things jobs, I'd like to turn your attention for a moment across the Pacific to China. It is estimated that China will overtake the U.S. as the world's largest economy by 2016. 2016!...that's the day after tomorrow. I've thought about this frequently and I think we can boil our response down to two options.

First, we could adopt the Granholm approach and simply ignore the 1.4 billion people, who by themselves make up nearly a fourth of the world's population, or (2) carefully examine the opportunities for economic growth and job creation by this economic juggernaut called China and what role we'll play.

Oakland County has an impressive case to make for increased Chinese investment. More than 25 percent of the 44,500 Chinese residents in Michigan live in Oakland County; there are over 33 Chinese firms operating in Oakland County; and our 28 public school districts all offer Mandarin language and/or culture

courses under a program I announced in 2007. Changchun, China's Motor City, established its auto base in Oakland County to connect with American car companies and suppliers; and the American Chinese School of Greater Detroit is located in Birmingham. I think you can see we are consciously developing a working relationship.

Representatives from my Economic Development team took two trips to China this past fall which yielded great opportunities for our Emerging Sectors initiative. My Deputy Matt Gibb spent 10 days in China with Governor Rick Snyder in September and met with more than 20 life science and automotive companies in four cities including Shanghai and Changchun, and three provinces. Three Chinese delegations scheduled meetings here with Oakland County officials as a result of Matt's trip, including just a few weeks ago with 30 representatives from the City of Huai'an in Jiangsu Province in China. We have signed a memorandum of understanding with officials in Huai'an and we will work together on projects for economic growth. Huai'an is experiencing a vast industrial expansion in areas which mirror our economic sectors such as bio-technology, advanced materials and chemicals.

Then in October, our Senior Business Development Representative Alan Weber, joined a delegation from the Detroit Regional Chamber, Automation Alley, and the Miller Canfield law firm for another week-long trip to China. Alan attended the 2012 Automotive Industry Action Group Leadership and Suppliers forum - a gathering of 500 auto suppliers from China and around the world – where he distributed the county's key economic development marketing materials which we have had translated into Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, and Korean. Weber also conducted follow-up meetings with many of the companies Matt first encountered.

One of our China-related success stories is on the very northern reaches of Oakland County. Oxford Community Schools embraced my call for Mandarin language and culture instruction back in 2007 and they've taken it to the next level. Oxford Schools Superintendent Bill Skilling says that the Oxford Community Schools now have 11 sister schools in China; operates one international high school in Fushun, China; and will be opening a second school in Chongqing, China this coming fall. Oxford Schools also is exporting education to China virtually as well.

Oxford Schools currently have more students learning Mandarin Chinese language and culture in a fluency based program than the rest of the school districts in Michigan combined. Its Fifth Core Mandarin Chinese World Language Program was recognized by Hanban and the Asia Society as one of the 100 model programs in America. That kind of success deserves a round of applause. And Bill Skilling is in the audience tonight. Thank you, Bill.

#### **VIII. Saving taxpayers \$100 million +**

There is a palpable sense around town that these are exciting times to be part of the knowledge-based economy growing in Oakland County. In Oakland County government we are committed to "walk the walk."

What if I told you the experience and innovation of my management and budget team is directly responsible for Oakland County taxpayers' savings over \$100 million cash this year. (That's on top of the \$100 million savings we generated in 2007 when we became the first county in America to fully fund the retirement health care debt.)

Back in 2007, Oakland County issued nearly \$557 million in "Certificates of Participations," or COPs, to fully fund traditional retiree health care benefits and at the same time shifting newly-hired employees to a defined contribution plan for retiree health care. Under this initiative we fully funded traditional retiree health care benefits and the county achieved huge savings. The retiree health care debt service dropped to

roughly \$48.5 million annually for 20 years versus the pre-COPs annual contribution of \$60.2 million over 30 years. That reduced payment schedule has already saved the taxpayers more than \$100 million.

Now we are poised to save a second \$100 million. (Isn't it nice to hear somebody in government talk about saving \$100 million instead of spending \$100 million?) At the end of November, the Board of Commissioners approved my administration's request to refinance the COPs using low-interest general obligation or GO bonds. County taxpayers – you – will save more than \$100 million from the refinancing of the COPs because interest rates have dropped. Since 2007 interest rates have fallen from 6.2 percent to 2.9 percent. Folks, that's \$100 million that we will deposit in our accounts this year. This is not a paper savings. That's \$100 million cash. In addition, because of the growth in the investment value of the county's two retiree health care trust funds, the county will be able to pay down the principal on the outstanding COPs balance by at least \$75 million. This will leave the two combined trust funds 110 percent funded.

We didn't reach such huge savings by accident. It is because of the skill, knowledge, and talent of my much-heralded management and budget team – headed by my Deputy Bob Daddow; and the very talented Director of Management and Budget Laurie VanPelt. Backing her up are her experienced managers, Tim Soave, Dave Hieber, and Pam Weipert. Bob and Laurie, and their solid staff, have made Oakland County the poster child for budgeting in tough times.

They work hand-in-hand with my Budget Task Force – a high level group of my deputies, along with Laurie and Human Resource Director Nancy Scarlet – to achieve multi-year balanced budgets while maintaining the lowest effective operating millage in the state of Michigan. Multi-year balanced budget means, in Oakland County's case, a three-year rolling budget in balance for 36 months.

From Carmel, New York to Carmel, California; from Birmingham, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama; governments across the United States study Oakland County's budget practices which have earned us a solid AAA bond rating, which Moody's Investors Service reaffirmed just yesterday. These communities study our much heralded and often copied three year rolling budget – a budget process that forces us to look out into the future to address storm clouds now before they become a "Budgetary Katrina."

So then you must have deduced by now that if I have implemented a three year budget, then Oakland County must be in balance for 2013, 2014, and 2015. We are – and we're now tinkering with 2016.

Communities across the United States are still studying how we paid off our "legacy costs" when it came to health care promises and still ended up putting \$100 million in our pocket as I mentioned before.

Achieving these budget milestones did not happen in a vacuum. It happened because we had incredible cooperation from other elected officials here in Oakland County. We had the unflinching and resolute support of Sheriff Mike Bouchard, Clerk Lisa Brown, Treasurer Andy Meisner, Prosecutor Jessica Cooper, Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash, and, of course, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, chaired by Mike Gingell.

In a lot of communities, and in a lot of counties, the Courts sometimes consider themselves to be outside of the normal county government mainstream. But not in Oakland County. Here in Oakland County we have a very distinguished and cooperative judiciary in the circuit, probate, and district courts, and they have cut their budgets along with the rest of us these past few years. And they did so without complaint or minimizing any services. I want to thank all of you publicly tonight for your continued support of our budget goals.

## **IX. Expanding the Cloud**

You only have to read the latest headlines to know that many local and state units of government, along with the federal government as well, still agonize over reduced tax revenue and in some cases, huge budget deficits.

Oakland County, as I just explained, has positioned itself through long-range planning to avoid those pitfalls. We have been able to do so because we perfected a multi-year budgeting approach, coupled with a five-year outlook.

But it is not only that this was made possible by my fiscal dream team. There is another element of innovation in Oakland County that is improving the delivery of county services, reducing costs, and in some cases producing a revenue stream: it is called cloud computing.

Two years ago, I introduced the idea of embracing “cloud computing” where, for a reasonable fee, Oakland County could make available to other units of government some of our leading edge software programs. Known as “G2G Cloud Solutions,” it saves the local governments money because they do not have to pay hefty licensing fees or buy sophisticated hardware in order to utilize some of the best-in-government software technology. Last year, I explained how the county’s Information Technology Department - under the leadership of my Deputy and Chief Information Officer Phil Bertolini, Director Ed Poisson, and Chief Technology Officer Jim Taylor – could share services with other governments through cloud computing. The IT Department received recognition for its efforts from the National Association of Counties which partnered with us to create a software library for counties to use around the nation.

Well, we are expanding the cloud even more in the year ahead because it has proven to be a successful delivery mechanism for shared services among governments. We have put out an RFQ – or a request for qualification – inviting private sector companies to provide us information on how they would interact with Oakland County in a public-private partnership that would enable small governments with limited resources to consume technologies that were not affordable to them before. We would host the IT infrastructure of some private-sector companies in our county facilities in exchange for county access to their IT technology.

For instance, a company called Kronos has revolutionized scheduling personnel in Oakland County’s Children’s Village. This innovation has streamlined staffing procedures and enabled Children’s Village manager Jody Overall and Director George Miller to ensure that they remain compliant with required staffing levels and state reporting requirements. Kronos wants to make their technology available on the cloud managed by G2G Cloud Solutions now to other local governments which require accuracy in their staffing levels and reporting.

Innovations like these are garnering some heavyweight attention. This past September, Phil Bertolini traveled to the White House to represent Oakland County as the only county among 13 government recipients across the nation to receive the president’s “Champions of Change” award.

The White House said the Champions of Change “showcase the amazing movement of innovation in government across America.”

Oakland County, as I said, was the only county government to receive this recognition – the rest were cities. I have no problem taking Oakland County head-to-head with cities across the country. It is an increased level of competition, but we’re up to it.

## **X. Other Departments/Divisions**

Now, because of time constraints, it is impossible each year to highlight every department in county government and single out the good work they do. But I'd like to take a moment to give some recognition to a few that are rarely in the spotlight.

Among those who perform outstanding work but infrequently receive public accolades is the office of Corporation Counsel. Headed by Judy Cunningham and Deputy Corporation Counsel Keith Lerminiaux, they truly had a banner year. With a mere 13 attorneys on staff, they handle 95 percent of the county's legal workload internally, only using outside counsel when there is a conflict of interest or we are involved in a case that requires a legal expertise that we do not have in house.

When I said that Corporation Counsel staff had a banner year, let me highlight one of their cases to make that point: Corporation Counsel, through its own research, discovered that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – I'm sure you recognize those Washington based firms that were involved in the mortgage scandal – had failed to pay Oakland County millions of dollars in real estate transfer taxes. When properties are transferred there is a transfer fee that's assessed and Freddie and Fannie felt it didn't apply to them. With the help of County Treasurer Andy Meisner, Oakland County sued Fannie and Freddie in federal court to collect those delinquent transfer fees that we felt we were entitled to. We won the first round in federal court, but the case is now pending on appeal. But, if – or should I say when – we ultimately prevail, Oakland County will recover millions of dollars on behalf of you, the taxpayer.

There's news in our Animal Control Division, overseen by my Director of Public Services Mike Zehnder. Manager Larry Obrecht has retired after nine years of service in that capacity. Under Larry's leadership, the Oakland Pet Adoption Center has become the standard against which large public shelters in Michigan measure themselves. He has been succeeded by Bob Gatt, who was promoted from chief of field operations in our Community Corrections Division. If Bob's name sounds familiar to you, it may be because he is the mayor of Novi. Bob will pick up (if you pardon the pun) where Larry left off and continue the record of excellence at the Pet Adoption Center.

There's some news in the Medical Examiner's facility tonight: I'd like to welcome to Oakland County our new forensic pathologist Dr. Cheryl Loewe. This will make Mark Hackel and Bob Ficano, who are here in the audience tonight, wince because she used to work for both of them at different times. Sorry, gentlemen, but we couldn't pass up this level of talent. Dr. Loewe is a board certified medical examiner and has had years of valuable forensic experience that she now brings to Oakland County. Welcome aboard, Cheryl.

Mark and Bob, to soothe your pain, I will give you my secretary Kelly Sleva and a future draft choice.

## **XI. Awards**

Once again, Oakland County and many of our employees have received recognition both large and small. If you turn your attention to the screen behind me, you will see the complete list of awardees. And as that list cycles through, I'd like to recognize some of them for their steadfast support of Oakland County and the quality of their job performance.

Dave VanderVeen – he has spent most of his career as an airport executive, overseeing Oakland County International Airport and the other two airports which the county owns and operates. He does so in his capacity as director of central services. He turned Oakland County International Airport into a nationally-recognized private/business aviation destination. It is the gateway to Oakland County from the air and it shouts out that our region embraces technology and a quality of life that is second to none. Nearly every Fortune 500 company lands at Oakland International each year, creating a \$175 million impact.

His leadership in aviation caught the attention of Governor Rick Snyder. In 2011, the Governor appointed Dave to the Michigan Aeronautics Commission. In 2012, the Governor promoted him to chairman of that commission.

Well done, David. The aeronautics industry has a true advocate and leader in you.

After the speech tonight when we have the reception across the hall, make sure to catch up with Dave. He will regale you with personal anecdotes about Kitty Hawk.

Earlier I mentioned the legal finesse of Corporation Counsel Judy Cunningham. Last July, her peers in the legal community recognized her leadership by electing her president of the Oakland County Bar Association. This was a milestone. Judy is the first public official, and just the seventh woman, to serve at the helm of the OCBA. It came as no surprise when I found out this week that Judy was named by DBusiness Magazine as one of 2013's Top Corporate Counsel.

Judy, as a fellow lawyer I can say, without fear of contradiction, that the legal profession is well represented by a person of your experience and ethics.

Our Department of Human Resources is headed by the very lovely Nancy Scarlet – Nancy, is it politically correct to call the human resources director “lovely?”

Deputy Director of Human Resources Tom Eaton, and managers Karen Jones and Jennifer Hain have all done yeoman service in that busy department. HR has received kudos on a national scale in years previous, especially for the OakFit employee wellness program, which is helping to keep our health care costs down with resulting savings to the taxpayers.

But one of HR's greatest challenges lies ahead – 30 percent of our workforce will be eligible for retirement within five years. So, in recognition of that possibility, Nancy's team developed weekly educational opportunities for employees that encourage our workforce to save and invest for retirement. The program, called “Mission Possible,” received an award from the National Association of Government Defined Contribution Administrators. Congratulations on the novel program, Nancy, and congratulations on a job well done.

Other awards received by Oakland County and its employees:

- Julie Secontine, Manager of Risk Management, was recognized by the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs for her contributions in bringing the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) to Michigan.
- Chief Probate Judge Linda S. Hallmark, Circuit Court Judge Cheryl A. Matthews, Referee Martin Alvin, and Referee Scott Hamilton received the Arthur Eugene Moore Champions of Children Award.
- The Circuit Court Family Division received the Hon. Robert E. Weiss award for Excellence in Creative Solutions from the Supreme Court.
- Traci Rink in Friend of the Court was Elected Chair of the Family Law Section by the State Bar of Michigan.
- The Adams-Pratt Oakland County Law Library in, partnership with the Oakland County Clerk's Office, was designated as a Michigan Legal Help Self-Help Center by the Statewide Solutions on Legal Self-Help Taskforce.
- L. Brooks Patterson, Oakland County Executive, was named Outstanding Local Elected Official by the Michigan Recreation and Park Association.
- Regina Ellis in Parks & Recreation received the Outstanding Volunteer award from:
  - Michigan Recreation and Park Association
  - National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials
- Parks & Recreation received the Commission Lifeguards Gold Medal by Ellis and Associates, International Aquatic Safety & Risk Management Consultants.

- Brittany Bird, Planner in Parks & Recreation received the 2012 Park Resources Leadership Award from the Michigan Recreation and Park Association.
- Fiscal Services received all three awards from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA):
  - Outstanding Budget Presentation
  - Excellence in Financial Reporting
  - Popular Annual Financial Report
- Economic Development & Community Affairs received the Pinnacle Award for the One Stop Business Center from the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- Economic Development & Community Affairs received the Project of the Year for Business Development award from CBOR.
- Economic Development & Community Affairs received the Best Website award for “AdvantageOakland.com” from MEDA’s Marketing.
- Economic Development & Community Affairs received the Best e-newsletter award for “Oakland CountyProsper.com” from MEDA’s Marketing.
- Economic Development & Community Affairs received the 2012 Achievement Award for Medical Main Street from NACo.
- Economic Development & Community Affairs’ “Oakland County in the Civil War” map received two awards from 2012 IMAGIN (Improving Michigan’s Access to Geographic Information Networks):
  - Best Cartographic Design
  - People's Choice
- John Almstadt, Manager in Workforce Development, received two awards:
  - Pontiac Regional Chamber Award
  - Literacy Champion Award from the Detroit Rotary Literacy Initiative
- Dave VanderVeen was Elected Chairman of the Michigan Aeronautics Commission.
- Oakland County International Airport received the Gold LEED Certification.
- Judith K. Cunningham, Corporation Counsel, was Elected President of the Oakland County Bar Association. Ms. Cunningham was also selected as a 2013 Top Corporation Counsel by DBusiness Magazine.
- Human Resources Department’s Retirement Unit received the Leadership Recognition Award on its Project “Mission Possible” from NAGDCA.
- Health Division was awarded a 4 X 4 Grant from the Department of Community Health.
- Health Division received the Building Healthy Communities Grant.
- Health Division received a 100% on Emergency Operations Plan.
- Health Division received a 98% on Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Plan.
- Health Division’s Community Nursing achieved a 100% compliance with Oakland Schools “Early On Oakland” program.
- Health Division received the Immunization Services for Women, Infants, and Children Award by NACo.
- Pat White, Coordinator in the Health Division, received the AIM Achievement and Advocacy Award from NACo.
- Bob Haralabakos in the Health Division received the Award of Appreciation from the Michigan Mobile Food Vendors Association.
- Health Division received the Great Start Collaborative Oakland Children’s Champion Award Spring 2012.
- Water Resource Commission’s Walled Lake-Novı and Commerce Township Wastewater Treatment plants received the Platinum Peak Performance Award by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies.

- Information Technology’s G2G Cloud Solutions & Property Gateway earned the Achievement Award by the Center for Digital Government.
- Phil Bertolini, Deputy County Executive:
  - Finalist, Detroit CIO of the Year – Crain’s
  - Champions of Change – The White House
- Information Technology received the Web 2.0 Award for Excellence by The Public Technology Institute.
- Information Technology was ranked second in the nation from the 2012 Digital Counties Survey by the Center for Digital Government.
- Automation Alley received the Soft Landings International Incubator Designation by the National Business Incubation Association.
- Automation Alley received a \$5 million grant for the Technical Talent Development Program by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.
- Automation Alley received the Gold Award 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Gala for their Marketing Materials by MarCom.
- Automation Alley received the Platinum Award for their 2011 Annual Report by MarCom.
- Automation Alley received the Platinum Award for their Defense brochure by MarCom.
- Automation Alley Senior Director Thomas Anderson, Ph.D., was elected to serve on the board of directors for TechTown and was appointed to the board of directors for Beaumont Health System. He was also appointed chair of Beaumont’s Education, Innovation and Research Committee.
- Automation Alley Director of International Business Services Noel Nevshehir was appointed to the board of directors of the Greater Detroit Foreign Trade Zone (GDFTZ) by Detroit Mayor Dave Bing.
- Automation Alley led trade missions to the Association of the United States Army’s (AUSA) Winter Symposium and Exposition in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C.; and Qatar and United Arab Emirates.
- Charles DeVries, formerly Automation Alley’s Senior Director, was invited to represent Automation Alley at a Detroit Business Leaders’ Briefing by the White House Business Council and Business Forward.

## **XII. Quality of Life**

I can’t let the night get away without commenting on the quality of life we have here in Oakland County. My goal early on was to streamline Oakland County government making it more cost effective, more efficient, and more pro-business.

We built an economic development team – I would say the best in the state – to attract new business while holding on to existing businesses. We focused on IT, looking to become the best in the nation – and we are. We were recognized again this year by the Center for Digital Government as the Most Digitally Advanced County in America.

An expansion of technology in the Health Division was undertaken to place us ahead of the curve on potential pandemics and other health challenges that could threaten the health and well-being of our county.

It goes without saying that the Department of Management and Budget continues to set the standard when it comes to government accounting. Numerous budget awards and consistent AAA bond ratings for Oakland County are the result.

Given all the attention to the regular demands of the job – like the ones I just mentioned – I still had time to create and launch what I call “quality of life events.”

Let's start with "Arts, Beats & Eats," now one of the most recognized festivals in America, attracting close to 400,000 people to Royal Oak over Labor Day weekend. I think you would call that an unqualified success.

"The Dream Cruise," not started by Oakland County but certainly supported by us, is a unique event that brings car buffs in literally from around the world.

"Quake on the Lake" which is one of our co-sponsored events. Hydroplane races on Pontiac Lake where speed records are set every year.

"Fire and Ice," a winter festival in Rochester. Something to do on those cold, snowy January days. Go for a dogsled ride; toboggan down Third Street; check out the ice sculptures.

A year ago we created "The Elite 40 Under 40" program where young entrepreneurs could be identified, nominated, and ultimately recognized as among the top 40 up-and-coming leaders within our community. It's been a phenomenal success and we're now in year number two. The committee has already honed 350 applications down to the "Top 40," and eventually Erica Coulston, who introduced me here tonight, was selected by popular vote as the winner among the three finalists.

Again, we know that our future is going to be shaped by these young entrepreneurs so we want to find them now and support the development of their talents.

"MI Great Artist," started last year and I'm going to continue it this year. Artists are encouraged to send in their artwork and there is a juried contest where the winning artists are recognized and their work is framed and put on display at the Park West Gallery.

Finally, "The Brooksie Way." In the aftermath of my son's death, the committee named the half marathon and 10k Race after Brooksie to celebrate his life. This coming September 29<sup>th</sup> will be the sixth year for "The Brooksie Way" which has become a very popular race, receiving national attention in running magazines. What you might not know about is what we do with the net proceeds.

A couple of years ago we set up a "minigrant program" to help communities across Oakland County that are attempting to sponsor events which support healthy lifestyles. These communities can apply for a grant to offset some their expenses. We have supported 5k races at schools and churches; swim classes for challenged children; dance lessons for senior citizens, etc.

To date, "The Brooksie Way Minigrant Program" has redistributed \$95,000 of net proceeds back to the communities in support of their local health programs in memory of my son. This year's race looks like it's going to be bigger and better.

### **XIII. A Word About the Aug. 10 Crash**

Finally tonight, I want to update you on a more personal matter – how I am doing since the August 10<sup>th</sup> crash. But before I do, I would like to take a moment to thank my team – especially my Chief Deputy Executive Jerry Poisson. In my absence, Jerry took the helm of Oakland County government and steered a steady course as I recovered. He held my deputies, directors, and county employees together through one of the most difficult times in our careers. Some newspaper editorials said it was a credit to my leadership that I put in place the right team that enabled county operations to continue without interruption. But truly, it is a credit to Jerry's leadership, and the leadership of my other deputies and directors that Oakland County government operations continued seamlessly.

Jerry is not able to be here tonight to listen to me say that I owe him a debt of gratitude. He is on his way to China to visit his daughter who lives and works there. You see, it came down to this with Jerry: Go see my daughter who lives thousands of miles away or go hear my boss give another State of the County Address.

And Jerry clearly made the right decision; a decision that I now more fully understand having been through such a dangerous time in my life: the love for your family trumps everything else.

My injuries were many; no need to detail them here tonight. How serious were they? Just let me say that given all the screws and bolts that I saw when I reviewed my x-rays...if want to know when it's going to rain, just give me a call.

The road to recovery has been a challenge. Frankly, I had hoped to be a little farther down that road than I am at present. (Hey, did you see me walk in?) I am in physical therapy three times a week and water therapy on Saturdays, so it's a busy schedule of rehab. I also have resumed a full work schedule, as well.

But I will make you this pledge tonight: at next year's State of the County address, I will walk in here and stand at the podium.

At a meeting recently, the doctor told me something very important, and I think about it all the time. I went to the meeting to thank the surgeons and nursing staff for their skill in putting me back together and sending me back to my family. And he said in response: "Brooks, with all of our experience and skill we could only get you to the five yard line. Prayer got you the rest of the way."

So obviously tonight I want to thank all of you for your prayers; thank all of you for your friendship and support; and thank you for having the confidence to give me another four years in which to lead the greatest county in America.

One last footnote. When I'm talking about prayers, let's not forget my driver, a very close friend of many of us in this room, Jim Cram. Jimmy has been with me for almost nine years, a retired State Police Officer, one of the nicest guys you're ever going to meet. Instantaneously popular, not only at the Executive Office, but throughout the campus and around the county.

That afternoon on August 10<sup>th</sup>, he was broadsided along with me. While I had significant injuries that have confined me to a wheelchair even to this day, Jimmy is confined to a bed perhaps for the rest of his life. His options are few, if any. If the power of prayer got me over the goal line, then the power of prayer can move Jimmy to a wheelchair.

His name is Jim Cram, seen here walking The Brooksie Way. So the next time you're talking to God, you might let Him know that there's a good guy down here who needs His help.

With that said, I'd like to thank the Board of Trustees, administration and staff of Detroit Country Day for being our gracious hosts this evening. I now invite you to join me in the lobby for refreshments and light hors d'oeuvres.

Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen.