



2016 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

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Oakland County Executive

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I. Introduction

Thank you, Ali Woerner, our winner of the Elite 40 Under 40 Class of 2016. That was a very generous introduction.

This is the fifth class of our Elite 40 Under 40. This unique program singles out 40 of the best and brightest young business types and entrepreneurs in Oakland County – those who we figure will be the leaders of the county tomorrow. From working with these classes for five years now, I'm convinced the future of Oakland County – and for that matter, our country – is in good hands. Would the members of the Elite 40 Under 40 Class of 2016 – and any members of previous classes – please stand and be recognized.

Welcome everybody to my 2016 State of the County address. Well, the question is: How are we doing? To put it bluntly: The state of Oakland County is strong! Amazingly strong. Vibrant. Why am I so pleased and confident? Well, let me count the ways:

- Oakland County has roared back from the devastating days of the Great Recession to reach a goal that economists call “full employment” due to our economic diversification into the knowledge-based economy.
- Oakland County’s business investment, just in the first six months of 2015, was more than three quarters of a billion dollars – surpassing the total business investment for all of 2014 by nearly \$100 million.
- Our economic prowess has gained worldwide attention: Last year, foreign companies invested \$352 million directly into Oakland County. That’s more than some states enjoy.
- The Center for Digital Government continues to rank Oakland County among the most digitally-advanced counties in America for 11 years running.
- Our multi-year budget is balanced through 2021 – that’s five years from now. (That bears repeating: Our budget is balanced through 2021!)
- Our bond rating remains AAA - a distinction that we have held since 1998. Just this week, Moody’s Investors Services and Standard & Poor’s reaffirmed our AAA bond rating. S&P indicated that Oakland County can outperform the United States government under fiscal stress. S&P said that the AAA bond rating is supported by Oakland County’s, and I quote, “strong economy...; very strong management; and very strong budgetary flexibility, with a high available fund balance.”

Here is the takeaway from my address tonight: Oakland County is the best-managed county in the United States. That's not me saying that. That's a comment from Moody's Investors Services, one of the nation's most respected bond rating agencies. Our excellence in budgeting and our embracing the knowledge-based economy has placed us in a national leadership role.

II. I-75 Lane Expansion

As you write your State of the County Address, you always hope that there is one major announcement that can be included to set the tone. Well, I have such an announcement tonight.

It's something that I have been working on with the Director of the Michigan Department of Transportation Kirk Steudle for at least five years. It is something that is long overdue and should be celebrated by all motorists in southeast Michigan who use I-75, especially those commuters who drive Michigan's busiest expressway at rush hour.

Oakland County has reached an agreement with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to modernize I-75 by adding a fourth lane starting at Eight Mile Road all the way to M-59; and three lanes each direction from M-59 to the Genesee County line. If you would examine a map and check everything within six miles of I-75 (that would be three miles on the west side and three miles on the east side), along that stretch of I-75 you would find over 23,000 businesses located there – more than half of all the businesses Oakland County – and they employ nearly 339,000 individuals – that's about half of our county workforce.

Let's face it, I-75 is Oakland County's Main Street. It carries more cars than any other expressway in Michigan – 120,000 a day.

Adding a fourth lane on north and southbound I-75 from Eight Mile to M-59 will have a significant impact on commerce and driver convenience. Companies along I-75, like Fiat Chrysler, that support I-75's modernization, will see their employees in a safer commute; it will give companies along I-75 the ability to move goods more quickly through that corridor; and certainly improve the quality of life by easing some of the worst traffic congestion in our area.

I've come up with a story that underscores the extent of the problem of congestion on I-75. I site a report from the Traffic Improvement Association that, after examining Oakland County's roads and the number of deaths per vehicular miles traveled, Oakland County's roads – I'm not making this up – are the safest roads in Michigan. They are the safest roads in the United States. In fact, they are the safest roads in North America, South America, and Europe. Per 100 million vehicular miles driven in Oakland County, we have a death rate of .04 percent. That's better than any other political jurisdiction in the world – .04 percent per 100 million miles of vehicular traffic... just let that sink in.

Of course, I'm quick to point out to MDOT and to our Road Commission that the reason that our rate is so low is because the average rate of speed you can attain on I-75 is 4 mph. Now, who in hell can get killed in a 4 mph impact? But the story does make my point. I-75, the busiest expressway in Michigan, becomes a parking lot at rush hour. We need relief and we're going to get it.

I am delighted that MDOT, under the leadership of Kirk Steudle, has greenlighted this project. Thank you, Mr. Steudle.

III. Attracting Younger Workers

I created the Elite 40 program as a way to tap into the enthusiasm and know-how of the younger generation because they are the future of Oakland County.

Indeed, current studies indicate younger adults are making up a greater percentage of the workforce. For example, the millennials are outnumbering the baby boomers, the former making up 34.4 percent of the workforce in Oakland County.

What does that mean for our county? We realize that to remain competitive in the knowledge-based economy we need to attract younger workers with new ideas – a “brain gain” instead of a “brain drain.”

That’s why we announced back in December that we would be adding a fifth committee to the Oakland County Business Roundtable. This committee will be made up of members who are younger than 40. This will be a key way for my administration to stay informed and initiate policies that will attract younger adults to Oakland County as a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

I launched the Business Roundtable back in 1993 as a way for the business community to have input into programs that make Oakland County favorable to job growth. Until now we had four committees focusing on economic development, transportation, workforce and education, and quality of life.

My administration has implemented over 80 percent of the recommendations coming from these committees. That is why we are looking forward to the new committee focusing on the younger than 40 crowd to hear their ideas and to turn those ideas into actions as well.

IV. Paid Parental Leave

Human capital is the most important resource in any organization. To be the best county government, we need to continue recruiting bright, innovative minds. When today’s millennials graduate from college, technical, trade and vocational schools, they have new workplace expectations, some of which our current county benefit programs have been unable to offer. As a result, their first thoughts about careers often overlook county government. We need to change that. I want them to give Oakland County government a closer look.

To do that it, we must compete with what the private sector offers. We need to show our future employees a career path that creates a fair balance between work and family, something the new workforce seeks. That’s why I am excited to make the following announcement tonight. I will propose that Oakland County move forward with a program that offers paid parental leave for both mothers and fathers. The final design of the plan will be determined in partnership with the Board of Commissioners. The goal will be to provide six weeks of paid leave for both parents. For birth mothers, the leave will be in addition to any maternity disability benefits currently provided.

Paid parental leave is a benefit current and future employees look for. It is a benefit for a new parent that provides a real advantage to families.

Is paid parental leave for both parents an off-the-wall idea for government? No, it's all about recruiting talented employees. We must be competitive with the private sector. Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Netflix are just a few of the major U.S. companies that offer paid parental leave for both mom and dad. What do those companies have in common? They are among the companies attracting the younger generation with new workforce expectations.

V. ECHO

With the foresight and planning of Kathy Forzley, who heads the county's Health Division, she has developed a game changer for public health in Oakland County and Michigan.

Back in 2014, Kathy and George Miller, my director of Health and Human Services, launched an initiative called ECHO which stands for Energizing Connections for Healthier Oakland.

Over the past year, Oakland County and its public health partners have conducted a comprehensive countywide assessment of residents and businesses to get the big picture of health practices in the county and the health status of our residents. This is the first time that such a survey has been done on this scale in Michigan.

We looked at 11 core categories which included health resource availability, behavioral risk factors, maternal and child health, environmental health, and more. We have analyzed the data and here are some findings:

Ten percent of middle school children and 11.4 percent of high school kids are obese. We are performing better than the national Healthy People 2020 benchmark for the United States which has 14.5 percent obesity reported for that age group. We'd like to improve our numbers under the ECHO program.

One in five Oakland County adults reported eating fruits and vegetables daily. That's better than the 16.6 percent of adults statewide but far below the national benchmark of 32.6 percent.

We will utilize this data to reshape the focus of our public health policies and initiatives in a way that will have the greatest impact on improving the overall health of our residents and thereby improving the quality of life in the county.

In June, my administration and our 32 health partners in this effort will announce a Community Health Improvement Plan based on the ECHO survey. We will ask Oakland County businesses and organizations to align their wellness strategies with ECHO. If we are able to get the buy-in we are seeking from Oakland County companies, we will – as I said moments ago – move the needle on public health forward in Oakland County.

This will be a model program not only for the rest of Michigan, but for counties around the U.S. as well.

None of it would have been possible without our 32 partner organizations which are listed on the screen behind me, many of whom have representatives here tonight. Thank you for coming.

VI. Veterans

As I am sure you can tell by now, Oakland County is a collaborator. The ECHO program is just one of many examples of what we can accomplish when the county brings together public and private organizations to use their combined expertise to address an issue.

We've done it in our Homeless Healthcare Collaboration to deal with the chronic health issue of homeless individuals on a clinical rather than emergency room level, saving hospitals and taxpayers millions of dollars with the help of dozens of partner agencies.

Our Healthy Pontiac - We Can! coalition is helping Pontiac residents have greater access to healthy food and exercise with the support of numerous public and private partners.

And our Healthy Oakland Partnership - which is a collaboration of local governments, hospitals, health care providers, community-based organizations, businesses, and residents - is dedicated to improving the health of all Oakland County residents.

But there's another group out there that needs help. Oakland County is home to 72,000 veterans. Whether they served in peace time or war, our veterans made many sacrifices and were willing to risk life and limb to defend our freedom. My Veterans' Services Division, which is led by Public Services Director Mark Newman and Manager Garth Wootten, stand ready to help.

Oakland County Veterans' Services Division is the only one in the state with two full-time offices. Open to veterans without appointment, each office is staffed by veterans' benefits counselors who are accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In 2015, Veterans' Services Division completed over 5,600 applications for veterans benefits and over 8,400 other benefit-related forms. But our Veterans' Services Division does so much more than fight to get veterans the most out of their military service benefits. They collaborate with a number of organizations both public and private on projects such as:

- Veterans Resource Fair in Pontiac in July which dealt with VA medical, disability, pension, and burial benefits; employment and vocation rehabilitation, to name just a few.
- For the second year in a row, our Veterans' Services Division is collaborating with partner agencies to address the issue of veteran homelessness. In last year's State of the County, I reported that they had found housing for 68 homeless veterans. So far our Veterans' Services Division and its partners have housed an additional 92 veterans in suitable housing, a total of 160 veterans.
- We provide direct support to four Veterans Treatment Courts located here in Oakland County.

- We've even launched the Oakland County Veterans Community Action Team with the goal to assist veterans with whatever support they might need.

Truly, I could go on. But I think you're getting the idea that not only does Oakland County value its veterans, but we have put in place the resources necessary to assist each and every one of them.

VII. Active Shooter Training

As Oakland County Executive, one of my duties to our residents, guests, and businesspeople is to oversee Homeland Security. Because of that responsibility, recent events involving active shooters over the past several months weigh heavy on my mind.

I know that, God forbid, if an active shooter ever comes to Oakland County – whether as an act of terrorism or that of an unstable person – that it will be our Oakland County Sheriff Deputies and other local first responders who will be mobilized. Our county Emergency Operations Center will be up and running immediately to provide support to those in the field.

Over three years ago, I directed my Homeland Security Division under the leadership of George Miller, Homeland Security Manager Ted Quisenberry, and Chief Sara Stoddard, to begin offering active shooter training in partnership with the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

Active shooter training does not prevent an active shooter from attacking people. What it does is offer those in the line of fire a fighting chance by teaching them how to assess the threat and determine whether to run, hide, or fight.

First, we offered active shooter training to teachers and school administrators. Then to doctors, nurses, and staff at our hospitals; and to shopping center employees.

Just last week, dozens of personnel from southeast Michigan colleges and universities – a total of 60 institutions – took part in our active shooter training program. This year, we will expand that training to long-term care facilities where your loved ones may be housed.

George, Ted, Sara – please stand and be recognized for an important job well done.

VIII. Zika Virus

Speaking of looking ahead and being prepared, let's talk about a public health concern that is currently making headlines – the Zika virus. The Centers for Disease Control indicate that from January to February 3, there were 35 travel-related Zika virus cases in the U.S. Earlier this month, I directed Oakland County Health Division to prepare to respond should the mosquito that carries the Zika virus arrive here in Michigan.

Here is what Oakland County Health Division has accomplished so far:

- Oakland County's Webpage has information on the Zika virus travel advisory.

- The county’s Hospital Partnership committee participated in a presentation last week on what is known at this point about the Zika virus, the mosquito that carries it, testing protocol for pregnant women who visited any of the infected countries, and EPA approved repellants.
- This presentation was sent to our Emergency Preparedness Public Health partners as well.
- The Health Division’s online Physician Portal also contains information on this topic for any physician signed up to our Health portal.
- All Oakland County obstetricians and gynecologists will receive this information through fax and email this week.
- Our Health Division Nurse on Call, Environmental Health Unit, as well as our Epidemiology Unit are currently tracking the number of phone calls we receive each day and will be reporting those numbers to Health administration.
- Our Environmental Health Unit attended the Michigan Mosquito abatement conference in Ann Arbor last week where the Zika virus was among the topics.
- In early March, the Health Division will hold its annual meeting with our partners in cities, villages, and townships to update them on the very latest about Zika virus.

In addition, I am not waiting for the Zika virus to be identified in Michigan. Proactively, Oakland County will utilize a portion of its West Nile Virus budget to also combat the Zika virus. These funds are allocated to cities, villages, and townships for education regarding controlling and avoiding mosquitoes, cleaning out catch basins so mosquitoes can’t reproduce, killing mosquito larvae in catch basins, and providing individual mosquito repellent at large community outdoor events. I am pleased to announce tonight we are bolstering our mosquito response budget by \$160,000, bringing it up to a total of \$350,000.

Oakland County is and will be ready.

IX. Great Lakes Water Authority

So, let’s shift gears to talk about a regional success story – the Great Lakes Water Authority.

In the audience tonight are my regional colleagues. The media like to dub us “The Big Four.” Please give a welcoming round of applause to Wayne County Executive Warren Evans, and Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan.

The Great Lakes Water Authority – or GLWA (Glee-wuh) as we like to call it around the office – began to operate officially just a little over a month ago on January 1. There were a lot of hurdles to clear to get to that point.

There were ten conditions precedent that had to be met in order for the lease to be valid. To be honest with you, over the summer, we were unsure whether those conditions would be or could be met. But thanks to the strong leadership of my Deputy Executive Bob Daddow, Chief Deputy Executive Jerry Poisson, and my regional counterparts, GLWA and DWSD met those conditions.

So, what does this mean for the Oakland County ratepayer? It means for the first time the Oakland County ratepayer has a real seat at the table when it comes to running the water system. It means to make a major decision the GLWA board requires a supermajority vote, that's five out of six members. It means to block anything detrimental to Oakland County ratepayers, we need only find one other suburban official to stand with us in the boardroom.

I can tell you it also puts an end to crony contracts – the kind of friends and family deals that sent those under the Kwame Kilpatrick water department to prison.

Indeed, contracts will be bid out to the lowest qualified bidder. There will be transparency in the process. And with my Deputy County Executive Bob Daddow beginning his second one-year term as chairperson of GLWA, he will ensure that the same transparent purchasing practices we have in Oakland County will become the standard at GLWA. We believe that transparent, open bidding will lower GLWA's costs over the long-term.

X. Investing for Sustainability

A hallmark of my administration has been our excellence in budgeting. In case you didn't catch it before, the county budget is balanced through the year 2021.

When we saw the Perfect Storm of the Great Recession on the horizon in the 2000's, thanks to our multi-year budgeting practices, we were able to reduce and reorganize county government between 2008 and 2011. That enabled us to absorb the greatest percentage loss of property value of any county in Michigan. We reduced the budget by more than \$50 million while minimally impacting services to our customers and laying-off no employees.

From 2012 to 2015, we transitioned to maintaining and stabilizing our budget. Our "thoughtful management versus crisis management" approach helped us weather the storm of the Great Recession and we began to see skies clearing on the fiscal horizon.

I did something very smart back in the early 2000's (I know, beginner's luck). I formed what we call the "Budget Task Force." I took my senior deputies, that would be Chief Deputy County Executive Jerry Poisson; Deputy County Executives Bob Daddow, Phil Bertolini, Malcom Brown, and Matt Gibb; Director of Management and Budget Laurie VanPelt; and Director of Human Resources Jordie Kramer, and asked them to serve on this new but very important committee assignment within my administration.

The Budget Task Force has met weekly, starting back in 2002, to make sure that we're on track to meet our budget goals. Because of the diligence and hard work of the Budget Task Force, Oakland County made it through the budgetary challenges that spiked in 2010.

Just because the Great Recession is finally over and we are on our way back, it made no sense to me to disband the Budget Task Force, so they continue to meet today and scan the horizon for any problems.

Of course, we wouldn't have been able to balance our budget without the cooperation of our Board of Commissioners, and the other countywide elected officials and judges who all took some hits. I'd like to take a moment to thank our Board of Commissioners Chairman Mike Gingell and Vice Chairman Mike Spisz, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash, Oakland County Clerk/Register of Deeds Lisa Brown, Oakland County Prosecutor Jessica Cooper, Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner, Chief Circuit Court Judge Nanci Grant, Chief Probate Court Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti, and Chief District Court Judge Julie Nicholson.

Together, we Republicans and Democrats rose above politics to put the interests of the residents and the taxpayers first and shepherd the county through one of its most difficult periods.

Beginning this year and beyond, we are investing for sustainability in our employees and programs. With over a third of our workforce eligible to retire, we want to attract and retain top talent to serve the public in the various ways county government does. At the low point of the Great Recession we rolled back the salaries of county employees four percent and all salaries were frozen in 2012 and 2013. Now we have begun to return employee salaries to pre-recession levels. Though county salaries still lag the private sector, we are becoming more competitive.

Because we have transitioned employees from Defined Benefit plans, such as pensions and retiree healthcare, to Defined Contribution plans, such as 401(k)-style retirement accounts and retirement health savings accounts, we have saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. We also are able to bolster benefits that will attract and retain great employees, such as increasing tuition reimbursement.

We want our employees to stick around for a long time. Their institutional knowledge helps the county to serve residents and others as well as it does.

We also are investing in our government campus through our Facilities Management Department headed up by Director Art Holdsworth and managers Ed Joss and Joe Murphy.

For instance, at Children's Village, where Director of Health and Human Services George Miller, manager Jody Overall, and their staff, care for some of Oakland County's most vulnerable children, we have collaborated with the Oakland Integrated Healthcare Network to open a medical clinic on site staffed by doctors and nurses Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is the only juvenile care center in Michigan that now provides a fulltime medical clinic for kids. The doctors in this clinic will provide preventative medical care, including physicals, for the children instead of merely being on call for emergencies.

We will be building a new animal control and pet adoption center on our main government campus in Pontiac slated to open in 2017. Now that we are investing for sustainability, we plan

to build a facility that enhances the care we give to the nearly 5,000 animals that come through our doors every year, and optimize the likelihood of adopting them out.

Animal Control Division, overseen by Director of Public Services Mark Newman and manager Bob Gatt, wants to adopt out as many pets as it possibly can. We believe locating the building on our main campus instead of its current site in Auburn Hills will be a more central, easier-to-find location that will encourage more people to visit our pet adoption center.

At the helm of our Department of Information Technology are my Deputy County Executive and CIO Phil Bertolini, Director Ed Poisson, Chief Technology Officer Jim Taylor, and Chief Information Security Officer Chris Burrows. As part of the county's investing for sustainability, they will install a new Unified Communications and Wireless System to replace our aging phone and messaging system. This new system should improve our employees' ability to communicate internally with each other, and externally with the public. The new system looks to address the need to communicate and do business with a more technically savvy public.

IT's commitment to leading-edge technology that makes it easier for employees to do their job and provide better service to our customers is one of the main reasons the Center for Digital Government continues to rank Oakland County among the most digitally advanced counties in the United States for 11 years in a row.

All of this is possible because of Oakland County's fiscal conservatism and budgetary excellence.

XI. Full Employment

As the county continues its robust recovery, there is one sure sign that our economic engine is revving up. It's what economists call "full employment" – where the unemployment rate drops to, or below, 5.0 percent.

At one point during the Great Recession Oakland County led the state in unemployment at 15 percent. With the hard work and dedication of our employees, the discipline of our Budget Task Force, and the excellence of our job creating programs, Oakland County reached the distinction of full employment in 2015. Currently, our county unemployment rate stands at 4.2 percent which is better than the U.S. unemployment rate.

Those were tough years from 2000-2009. Under lackluster leadership in Lansing, Michigan lost 806,000 jobs or a 17.2 percent reduction in the workforce, according to the Mackinac Center for Public Policy.

Oakland County felt the sting of those years. From 2000-2010, Oakland County lost more than 163,000 jobs – nearly 60,000 of which were from the auto industry implosion in 2009.

Fortunately, we had the foresight beginning in the late 1990's to start to diversify our economy with a deep dive into the knowledge-based economy. In 1999, we launched Automation Alley which now stands on its own, separate from Oakland County, as a regional driver of high-tech job attraction. It is now the largest high-tech business consortium in the Midwest.

In 2004, we created the highly successful “Emerging Sectors” program to tap into the 10 sectors of the economy that would provide sustainable, high-paying jobs for decades to come. It underscores our successful foray into the knowledge based economy. In 2008, we had an “Aha!” moment when we realized healthcare was our largest economic sector, accounting for about one in every 5.5 jobs. So we built on that economic strength to further advance our region with the launch of Medical Main Street.

And within the last couple of years, we decided to harness the power of our fastest growing and second largest sector, Information Technology, utilizing our Tech 248 initiative. Oakland County has more than 2,000 IT companies and growing. That number represents half of all the IT companies in southeast Michigan.

Those deep dives into the knowledge-based economy, under the leadership of Deputy County Executive Matt Gibb, Director of Economic Development & Community Affairs Irene Spanos, and Deputy Director Dan Hunter, are paying huge dividends. We are gaining back the jobs from the “lost decade” of the 2000’s at a pace quicker than experts anticipated.

In the first four years of our recovery from the Great Recession, we’ve gained back over 79,000 jobs, most of which are in the medium to high-wage category. University of Michigan economists Dr. George Fulton and Donald Grimes conservatively forecast we will gain an additional 49,000 jobs through the end of 2017.

That means by the end of next year, we will have recovered at least 78 percent of the jobs lost in the first decade of the new millennium.

And make no mistake, Fulton and Grimes specifically point to our Emerging Sectors program as one of the central reasons for the speedup of our recovery.

While speaking of Emerging Sectors, let me update you on our Emerging Sectors numbers. By the end of 2015, Emerging Sectors had seen 371 successful business attractions with a total investment of more than \$3.3 billion creating 37,000 jobs and retaining 21,000. That’s 58,000 jobs.

We celebrated reaching the \$3 billion investment mark with a big party in the hangar of Pentastar Aviation at Oakland County International Airport last fall. It was our way to say “Thank you” to the Emerging Sectors companies for having the confidence to invest in Oakland County. More than 700 executives and employees of Emerging Sectors companies attended the event. I’d like to give a shout out to Edsel Ford and Pentastar Aviation for being our gracious hosts that evening.

I tell people in my many speeches that by diversifying our economy into these 10 categories from within the knowledge-based economy won’t necessarily make Oakland County “recession proof,” but I do argue that it will make Oakland County “recession resistant.” And I think that’s the most that I can hope for.

There’s a couple other numbers worth celebrating tonight and that would be from the Oakland County Economic Development Corporation and the Oakland County Business Finance

Corporation which have been serving our small business community for 35 years. In three-and-a-half decades, they've helped finance 648 businesses for a total investment of \$1.5 billion and creating over 26,500 jobs. I just love hearing figures that begin with the letter "B."

We're running on all cylinders.

XII. Headquarters of Headquarters

But we're not just about the knowledge-based economy in Oakland County. Since the launch of Emerging Sectors in 2004, we've also continued to be aggressive about attracting what we call "traditional companies" (meaning they're not under the Emerging Sectors umbrella). In 2015, we had five traditional companies move their headquarters to Oakland County. These are names that some of you will recognize:

- Daimler Financial Services, the financial arm of the German automaker, consolidated its North American headquarters in Farmington Hills;
- TI Automotive, which develops, manufactures and supplies automotive fluid storage, carrying and delivery systems, is locating its North American headquarters in Auburn Hills;
- Superior Industries, the largest manufacturer of aluminum wheels in North America, chose Southfield as the site for its North American headquarters;
- Nexteer Automotive, which manufactures advanced steering and driveline systems, planted its North American flag in Troy;
- And Aramco, the Saudi Arabian national petroleum and natural gas company, opened its research headquarters in Novi.

Our success at continuing to attract traditional companies is like so many other things we do - evident in the numbers. Since 2004, the year we launched our Emerging Sectors initiative, we've had parallel investment of 243 traditional successes for a total investment of over \$2.3 billion creating 13,700 jobs and retaining over 19,400 jobs. That's a total of 33,100 jobs.

XIII. Main Street Oakland County Turns 15

Back in 2000, my administration launched a first-of-its-kind initiative that has put thousands of individuals to work as well as enhancing our quality of life, making Oakland County one of the premiere shopping, dining, and entertainment destinations in southeast Michigan.

I, of course, am speaking of Main Street Oakland County – the first countywide Main Street program in America. With 32 downtown communities in our county, we launched Main Street Oakland County to create a unique sense of place in each community, with an eye on historic preservation.

Today, 22 communities such as Ferndale, Birmingham, Rochester, and Holly are participating in Main Street Oakland County at some level. With 2015 marking its 15th year, an update is in order. Since inception, Main Street Oakland County has seen 940 businesses invest \$668 million creating 7,000 jobs.

Let's add up all these numbers: \$3.3 billion in the Emerging Sectors program... \$1.5 billion from the Business Finance Corporation... \$2.3 billion in traditional successes... \$668 million from the Main Street Oakland County effort... we're talking about a total investment in Oakland County of about \$7.8 billion derived directly from our programs.

The thing to keep in mind about those figures is that they are lower than the actual total investment in Oakland County. There are hundreds of businesses over the years that have landed here without any direct county involvement. We have no idea what that investment total would be from those companies, but it is safe to say that it would be in the billions of dollars.

So I opened my speech by telling you that the state of Oakland County is strong, it's amazingly strong and vibrant. The numbers tell the whole story.

XIV. Maintaining the Talent Pipeline

The success of reaching full employment brings with it the challenge of continuing to attract top level companies that want to expand or relocate here. Once a county reaches full employment, however, those left unemployed tend to be the structurally unemployed. As always, Oakland County is up to the challenge.

Our Workforce Development Division is led by manager John Almstadt – who, I hate to announce, is retiring at the end of the this month after 37 years with the county. You'll be missed, John. It is he who is leveraging the Community Ventures Program through Michigan Works! to address putting the structurally unemployed back into the talent pool.

Community Ventures looks at each individual's barriers to employment to identify what kind of training or assistance they need in order to get back to work. It helps provide mentoring opportunities. And it even helps structurally unemployed individuals develop an employment history.

The Workforce Development Division also is utilizing Michigan Skilled Trades Training funds to improve the work experience of employees at dozens of sites such as Beaumont Health, Magna International, Brose, and Fiat Chrysler, among others.

We also have efforts aimed at reversing the so-called "brain drain." We are reaching out to students as young as high-school age to show them that by staying in Oakland County, they can work with leading-edge technology.

We sponsored Manufacturing Day last year where 720 Oakland County high school students toured 28 advanced manufacturers to see that modern manufacturing is not their grandfather's

manufacturing. Our manufacturers use robots, software, and other advanced technologies that require technically-skilled employees. The message to our youth: you don't need to move to Silicon Valley to work with advanced technology. It is right here in Oakland County.

XV. Connected Vehicle Update

Two years ago, I pointed to the moon and said, "Let's go there." Well, I wasn't thinking about an actual lunar mission, but a project that requires imagination, feats of engineering, and a lot of collaboration between the public and private sectors. I'm talking about connected vehicles.

Back in my 2014 State of the County speech, I announced that I want Oakland County to be the first in the world to have a countywide connected vehicle infrastructure system. We are well on our way. I began by appointing industry experts to a panel that we called the Oakland County Connected Vehicle Task Force.

Much of the global research in connected and autonomous vehicles is happening right here in Oakland County and, through our Task Force, the county hopes to position itself as one of the leaders in converting research into reality. The primary goal of the Task Force is to create a feasible business model for implementing connected vehicle infrastructure so the private sector can invest in it.

The Task Force, chaired by Fred Nader, quickly made headway in 2014. Just seven months after my announcement, the Task Force demonstrated that cars using current technology could communicate with the infrastructure around it. Looking ahead to 2016, we have an opportunity to accelerate and advance connected vehicle research in Oakland County.

As I said a moment ago, MDOT is going forward with the expansion of I-75 in Oakland County. This represents a tremendous opportunity for advancing connected vehicle infrastructure in our county. MDOT Director Kirk Steudle is researching the feasibility of making I-75 a connected freeway through Oakland County. From the point of view of the Oakland County Connected Vehicle Task Force, we are excited about the possibilities if I-75 were to become a connected freeway through our county. We know the auto companies and suppliers would utilize it as a test bed to advance their connected vehicle programs. And it would be happening right here in the heart of Oakland County.

XVI. Air Transportation Expo

In September, Oakland County achieved another first in Michigan transportation. Oakland County International Airport hosted the state's first Air Transportation Expo with our friends from the Michigan Business Aviation Association or MBAA.

Business aviation tends to suffer quite a bit in an economic downturn. It tends to be among the first to go into a recession and often times the last out.

As robust as our recovery has been, it hasn't been so for general aviation. The task of the expo was to educate corporate decision makers about Oakland County International Airport and its modern facilities, the aviation businesses that are based there, and what utilizing them means for the corporate bottom line.

Indeed, if you are a company which frequently sends four or more employees on a business trip together, you may be able to save money by chartering a flight rather than using commercial airlines.

Plus, what is your employees' time worth? Would you rather have them spend two hours clearing TSA and waiting to board their flight, or leave right away and return home that evening?

From Oakland County International Airport, you can take off with a full load of fuel and reach every major market in the world. You can reach 10 times as many airports in the U.S. as the commercial airlines do. And you can opt for a business model that fits your corporate goals, whether it is aircraft charter or fractional ownership – which basically is like a timeshare for planes.

Well, Michigan's first Air Transportation Expo was a resounding success. We invited Dassault Falcon, Bombardier, Gulfstream, and Textron Aviation to display corporate aircraft. The feedback from them was phenomenal.

Just weeks earlier, many of them had attended a similar event in Missouri. The aircraft manufacturers were disappointed with both the organization and the clientele in Missouri. When they came to Oakland County, they said, "Vive le difference!" Our Air Transportation Expo was well received because we put the right kind of corporate decision makers with the manufacturers and our airport businesses.

Our expo visitors were so delighted with the outcome of our Air Transportation Expo that they asked us to hold another one in 2016. I'm pleased to announce tonight that we will host Oakland's second Air Transportation Expo on September 22. If you are interested in attending the next one, visit the airport's display table out in the hallway or call the airport offices.

The expo was a success because of the remarkable collaboration between the public and private sectors. I'd like to thank my Director of Central Services Dave VanderVeen, Airport Manager Karl Randall, Airport Administration Supervisor Patricia Shull, the MBAA, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Pentastar Aviation, Corporate Eagle, and the dozens of exhibitors who came together to make the expo a success.

XVII. Awards and Recognitions

Individual employees, and in some cases their actual divisions, receive awards and recognitions throughout the year. They are far too numerous to mention so I'll run their names on the screen behind me as I speak.

However, I would like to highlight a few employees who have obtained exceptional results for the county and are singled out tonight for some well-deserved recognition.

The first awardee I would like to mention is Julie Secontine, my risk manager for Oakland County. But she's much more than that. She has had a statewide impact for her contributions to the fire service here in Michigan. Julie has helped implement the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – or MABAS – in Michigan. MABAS is designed to streamline the requesting and

providing of fire services and emergency resources across Michigan for day-to-day mutual aid and large scale events such as major fires, train derailments, tornadoes, and such.

The Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs President Michael O’Brian made the following comment:

“Julie has done more work to help the fire service in Michigan to be prepared than any other civilian in recent history. Her work with development and the continual support of Task Force One to MABAS-MI has been exemplary.”

It is no wonder then, that Julie was drafted from my office to take the position as the Fire Marshal for the state of Michigan. She will be leaving Oakland County and transferring her many talents to her new position in Lansing and we wish her well.

As Julie departs, I’m delighted to report that I have appointed Dean Schultz as her successor. Dean, a 27-year county employee, is currently serving as safety coordinator in the Risk Management Department.

While I’m making announcements tonight of promotions, I certainly don’t want to overlook the recent promotion of Jordie Kramer who last year took over the role of director of Human Resources, one of the major departments in county government... and I might add, doing an outstanding job.

Information Technology continues to garner national recognition through the leadership of Deputy County Executive and CIO Phil Bertolini and Director Edwin Poisson. Their leadership has earned us, among other things, recognition as the most digitally advanced county in America. We captured the 2015 Optimas Award for Innovation for making leading-edge human resources software available to other governments in the cloud.

Next, I’d like to announce that the Michigan State Housing Development Authority named Lon Shook, a senior community and home improvement specialist for Oakland County, as the 2015 Housing Program Counselor of the Year.

You know, Lon and his co-workers in the Community & Home Improvement Division, with Karry Rieth as its manager, truly do exceptional work. For more than 40 years, Community & Home Improvement, or CHI, has helped low-income residents with their housing needs and supported numerous community development projects through the administration of grants.

One number that impresses me is how many families facing foreclosure they’ve kept in their homes. In 2015, this department had amazing results. The percent of successes? 98 percent! Let me repeat that... 98 percent of the families that came to my CHI counselors, like Lon Shook, were able to stay in their homes. It doesn’t get much better than that, folks.

Another award for a very important program is our wellness program. We call it OakFit. I launched it back in 2007 to help manage the county’s rising healthcare costs. Since its inception, it has reigned in cost increases and helped the county save more than \$24 million in healthcare costs.

In 2015, Corp! magazine honored OakFit as one of its Best & Brightest In Wellness[®]. The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports spotlighted OakFit for a second year in a row, according to the Diamond Level Healthy Workplace Award.

2016 Awards & Recognitions:

Board of Commissioners

Board of Commissioners, *2015 Golden Post Award – Government Social Media and Archive Social Government Technology Organization*, The Oakland County Board of Commissioners and the Oakland County Information and Technology Digital Editorial Team placed third in the category of Best Government Social Media Campaign out of 171 nominations for raising awareness through social media about human trafficking

Board of Commissioners Chairman Michael J. Gingell, *2015 Golden Ring of Hope Award – Homes for Autism*, Chairman Gingell honored for his outstanding commitment to community service and ongoing involvement with organizations that support individuals and families living with autism

Board of Commissioners Vice Chairman Michael Spisz, *Elected to the at-large Board of Directors for the Michigan Association of Counties*

Commissioner Shelley Goodman Taub, *Selected as 2016 Women in Government Leadership Program Honoree – Governing magazine*, Commissioner Taub is one of 25 members of the second class of the magazine's leadership program

Commissioner Shelley Goodman Taub, *Elected First Vice President of the 2015-2016 Michigan Association of Counties*

Commissioner Shelley Goodman Taub, *Appointed to National Association of Counties (NACo) leadership team*. NACo President Sallie Clark appointed Taub as Chair of Education, Children & Families on the Human Services & Education Committee; Vice Chair of the Geospatial Information Systems Subcommittee; and member of the Arts & Culture Commission and Large Urban County Caucus

Commissioner Helaine M. Zack, *2015 Taubman Fellow*, Attended prestigious program at Harvard University for Senior Executives in State and Local Government

Central Services

Oakland County Director of Central Services J. David VanderVeen, Reappointed to the *Michigan Aeronautics Commission* for a second four-year term by Governor Rick Snyder

Clerk/Register of Deeds

Oakland County Clerk's Office, *Achievement Award in County Administration & Management – National Association of Counties*, Discounted fee policy for vital records

Courts

Oakland County Circuit Court Referee Michelle Barry, *Presidential Award – Referees Association of Michigan*, for her dedication, integrity and loyalty as a referee for 25 years and many years of service as Treasurer of the Referees Association of Michigan

Deputy Oakland County Circuit Court Administrator Dave Bilson, *Outstanding Recognition Award – Referees Association of Michigan*, Special recognition for his work on behalf of juvenile referees

Economic Development & Community Affairs

Oakland County Economic Development & Community Affairs Business Development Team, *Appointed to FDI Frontlines Coalition – SelectUSA*

Oakland County Community and Home Improvement Division Senior Community and HI Specialist Lon Shook, *Housing Counselor of the Year – Michigan State Housing Development Authority*

Oakland County Economic Development & Community Affairs Senior Planner Kristen Wiltfang, *Certificate of Recognition – Clinton River Trail Alliance*, for assistance in obtaining \$1 million grant

Oakland County Michigan Works!, August 2015's *Get Covered Champion - Enroll America*

Facilities Management

Facilities Management, *Achievement Award in County Resiliency: Infrastructure, Energy & Sustainability – National Association of Counties*, for efforts to convert to energy saving devices and procedures during the Great Recession

Health & Human Services

Children's Village Youth Specialist II Mike Hoy, *Michigan Childcare Worker of the Year for Secure Programs – Michigan Juvenile Detention Association*

Health Division, *Achievement Award in Health – National Association of Counties*, Nurse on Call program

Health Division, *Achievement Award in Health – National Association of Counties*, Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative

Homeland Security Division, *Achievement Award in Emergency Management and Response – National Association of Counties*, Southeast Oakland County Flood Response Efforts

Homeland Security Division, *Achievement Award in Emergency Management and Response – National Association of Counties*, Homeland Security School Drill Compliance Initiative

Human Resources

OakFit Employee Wellness Program, *Diamond Level Healthy Workplace Award – Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports*

OakFit Employee Wellness Program, *Achievement Award in Personnel Management, Employee Training and Employee Benefits – National Association of Counties*, Fitness Unleashed dog walking program

OakFit Employee Wellness Program, *Best & Brightest in Wellness® - Corp! magazine*

Information Technology

CLEMIS, *Exemplary Law Enforcement Partnership Award – Immigration and Customs Enforcement*

CLEMIS, *Achievement Award in Information Technology – National Association of Counties*, Computer Aided Dispatch

Department of Information Technology, *Achievement Award in Information Technology – National Association of Counties*, CySAFE (Cyber Security Assessment for Everyone)

Department of Information Technology, *Achievement Award in Information Technology – National Association of Counties*, Investor Relation Management System

Department of Information Technology and Department of Facilities Management, *Achievement Award in Information Technology – National Association of Counties*, GIS-based Space Allocation program

Management & Budget

Oakland County Fiscal Services Division, *Award of Excellence* for the county’s annual Popular Annual Financial Report for the 18th straight year from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada

Oakland County Fiscal Services Division, *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting* for the county’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the 24th straight year from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada

Fiscal Services Division, *Outstanding Budget Presentation Award* from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada since 1984

Parks & Recreation

Addison Oaks County Park, *2015 Best Places to Go Hiking – Metro Times*

Independence Oaks County Park, *2015 Best Places to Go Hiking – Metro Times*

Orion Oaks County Park, *2015 Best Places to Go Hiking – Metro Times*

Orion Oaks Dog Park, *2015 Best Dog Park – Metro Times*

Parks & Recreation, *Achievement Award in Parks and Recreation – National Association of Counties*, Oakland County Market Cooking Demonstrations with Edible WoW

Parks & Recreation, *Award recognizing Oakland County Parks Service Portfolio – National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials*

Parks & Recreation Chairperson Emeritus Pecky D. Lewis, inducted into the *Hall of Fame – Michigan Recreation and Park Association*

Parks & Recreation Chairperson Emeritus Pecky D. Lewis, *Professional Lifetime Award – National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials*

Parks & Recreation Executive Director Dan Stencil, *Fellowship Award – Michigan Recreation and Park Association*

Parks & Recreation Executive Director Dan Stencil, *Commitment to Excellence Award – Michigan Recreation and Park Association*

Public Services

MSU Extension, *Employer of the Year – Michigan Deaf Association*, for advancing health and nutrition courses for the hearing impaired community. MSU Extension employee Sandria Graham, who is hearing impaired, taught the classes.

Veterans' Services Manager Garth Wootten, named *President of the Great Lakes National Cemetery Advisory Council*, which supports the Holly-based cemetery by purchasing and maintaining the Avenue of Flags, hosting annual observances, supporting volunteer honor guards and providing other support as needed.

Risk Management

Oakland County Risk Manager Julie Secontine, *President's Award – Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs*, for contributions setting up the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System in Michigan

Oakland County Risk Manager Julie Secontine, *Appointed State Fire Marshal by Governor Rick Snyder*

Safety Coordinator Dean Schultz, *Appointed Risk Manager by County Executive L. Brooks Patterson*

Sheriff's Office

Oakland County Sheriff's Office Communications Unit, *Selected as first in Michigan to launch Text 911*

Oakland County Sheriff's Office Road Patrol Division, *Among the first in Michigan to launch Narcan Program* which helps deputies to save lives of overdose victims, 18 of whom were saved in 2015.

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard, *Re-elected to the Major County Sheriffs' Association of America's Executive Board as Vice President and Government Affairs Chair*

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard, *Received the designation of Certified Homeland Protection Professional Designation by the National Sheriffs' Association's Institute for Homeland Security, Center for Public Safety in partnership with the National Domestic Preparedness Coalition through the Global Center for Threat, Risk, and Vulnerability*

Treasurer's Office

Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner, *Primo Diversity and Inclusion Award - Centro Multicultural La Familia*

Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner, *Appointed to the coordinating committee for the Oakland University/Pontiac partnership*

Oakland County Deputy Treasurer Ross Gavin, *Appointed to the City of Berkley Downtown Development Authority Board*

Oakland County Treasurer's Office Property Specialist Jill Robinson, *Appointed to the City of Royal Oak's Parks, Recreation and Senior Services Advisory Board*

Oakland County Treasurer's Office office assistants Dawn Bohn, Rosa Cardiel, Lynn Hernandez and Russell Larson, *Certificates of Awards – Oakland County Department of Information Technology for Microsoft training*

Water Resources Commissioner

Water Resources Commissioner, *Gold Award for the Pontiac Wastewater Treatment Plant for compliance with the National Discharge Pollutant System requirements - National Association of Clean Water Agencies*

Water Resources Commissioner, *Platinum Award for 10th year in a row for the Commerce Township Wastewater Treatment Plant for perfect compliance with the National Discharge Pollutant System requirements*

Water Resources Commissioner - *Platinum Award for the ninth year in a row for the Walled Lake-Novu Wastewater Treatment Plant for perfect compliance with the National Discharge Pollutant System requirements*

XVIII. Conclusion

As I was composing my speech tonight, I realized what a terrible date I had selected – February 10th. It is 42 months to the day since my accident... August 10, 2012. But there's an even worse anniversary on this date... nine years ago today I lost my son Brooksie.

I asked my media and communications officer Bill Mullan if he was the one who picked February 10th. He said, "Yeah, it was me, boss." And I said to him, "How long have you worked for the county, and don't include today?"

We'll, we're a couple of minutes away from the close of my 2016 State of the County. You've heard my report. I hope when you leave here tonight, that you are buoyed with the confidence that Oakland County is doing very, very well.

With a budget balanced through 2021 and an economic diversification program that has helped us reach full employment, you can tell why I am proud of what we accomplished and enthusiastic about the direction in which the county is headed.

I am asked from time to time when I might retire. I tell those people that I'll know it's time when I wake up on a Monday morning and don't feel like going into work, then I'll know it's time to say farewell. But I've never had that feeling on a Monday or, for that matter, any other morning. I love my job and I go to work every day committed to managing the best county in the United States of America.

There's still some work to be done; some mountains to climb; and some dragons to slay... That is why I am confirming tonight that I will seek re-election this year for my seventh term and I ask you for your help. Spread the good word about what's going on in Oakland County and be sure to vote on Tuesday, November 8th. Tell all of your Democrat friends that the election has been moved to Wednesday, November 9th.

Thank you for your continued support, ladies and gentlemen. And now please join me across the hallway for the afterglow.