

STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

The state of the county is innovative and strong.

Tonight I would like to start by going back one hundred years. Imagine not learning your letters until the age of 9, not being able to read until the age of 12, and remaining a slow reader throughout your life. Now imagine being President of the United States. In 1918, that man was Woodrow Wilson. Wilson was dyslexic and struggled with reading his entire life. Instead of being overcome by his disability, Wilson used determination and self-discipline to not only survive in school, but to excel. He went on to become a professor at Princeton University, an author of a popular acclaimed book on George Washington, the Governor of New Jersey and the 28th President of the United States.

One hundred years ago, the price of a postage stamp was just 3-cents and a gallon of gasoline 8-cents. The population of San Diego County was about one-hundred-thousand. One hundred years ago, women were not allowed the right to vote. One hundred years ago, Mildred Greene became a San Diego legend. Mrs. Mildred Greene was married to then-County Supervisor Harry Greene.

In April 1918, the Supervisor became gravely ill which prompted Mildred to learn the ins and outs of his duties. A few months later, he died of heart failure. The San Diego Union, as the paper was called then, said: “Mrs. Greene had taken virtual charge of his public affairs and administered the work of the First Supervisorial District with the same thoroughness which had distinguished Mr. Greene.”

Mildred Greene made the decision she would run for her late husband’s seat. The only problem was, no woman had ever served on the County Board – not in San Diego, not anywhere in the entire state. And her opponents were not having any of it. Instead of fearing what had never been done before - she chose to be innovative – challenging the status quo and pushing the institutional boundaries.

Seven men threw their hat in the ring to run against Mildred. One had a slogan that said, “A Business Man for a Business Office.” Another is quoted as saying, “Other things being equal, a young man really does more and better work.” That candidate, by the way, reportedly received the fewest votes of any candidate.

In November 1918, Mildred Greene became the first woman in the state ever elected to the County Board of Supervisors. A few weeks after that, the Sheriff was so impressed with her and her determination to fix the County’s crumbling roads, he appointed her Deputy Sheriff.

Mildred’s legacy as an innovator and trailblazer lives on in us.

Fast forward one hundred years to 2018, two of us are women and I am proud to be the youngest woman ever elected to this Board. Although, I think it’s safe to say Dianne and I will gladly leave the Sheriff duties to Sheriff Gore and his team.

Today, a postage stamp is 49-cents and a gallon of gas is fast approaching \$4 dollars and growing thanks to our friends in Sacramento. There are now three and a half million people living in our County. An increase in population leads to increased challenges, but I am proud to say this Board has moved the County boldly into the future.

As the newest member of this Board, I am honored to be serving with my fellow Supervisors who have proven to be prudent stewards of the County for the last few decades.

The government is famous for operating under the philosophy – “If it ain’t broke, fix it till it is”.

That is simply not the way the County of San Diego does business

In San Diego County, we have recognized the importance of building upon past innovation. Our Supervisors have carried forward that

innovation in their work with the support of a dynamic and innovative County Team. We must stay the course by “innova-teen”.

Interesting research has been done to identify a few common key characteristics that all innovative leaders embody. It’s no coincidence that these qualities shine through in my colleagues and have guided them to success here at the County:

1. Doing things differently or doing things never done before.

Past Chairwoman Dianne Jacob initiated what she called her ‘Seven in ‘17’ – key priorities last year. All seven have been accomplished or set in motion. They include beefing up funds for parks and roads. And ensuring the long-term fiscal health of the county pension system.

Dianne and I teamed up to help dementia-stricken seniors who find themselves in emergency situations. A pilot program to connect these seniors with crisis response teams gets underway this year. The initiative is part of The Alzheimer’s Project, the county-led effort to find a cure for the disease and to help those with dementia and their families.

On another critical regional issue, affordable housing, Dianne and Supervisor Roberts spearheaded the creation of a \$25 million innovative housing trust fund.

2. Authentic leaders are passionate about their work.

Supervisor Greg Cox is representing the County on a national level. In July, Supervisor Cox will become President of the National Association of Counties. No doubt he will make sure that the voices of counties, and their residents, are heard in Washington, D.C. and around the nation.

3. Understand innovation never happens in a vacuum. Value, build, and sustain active, vibrant networks of people.

Supervisor Bill Horn continued to make veterans a priority in 2017. His annual Veterans Conference had record attendance and this year focused on women. The first annual North County Stand Down was a great success and Supervisor Horn is still reducing the red tape in the building process.

4. Not taking shortcuts and are not afraid of going after more complex solutions, even if it means taking higher risks.

Supervisor Roberts will continue to work on enhancing public safety, including partnering with me on a technology program to enhance backcountry coverage with high-definition cameras used to spot and track wildfires, and a high-speed broadband network that links more than 60 backcountry fire stations and allows firefighters to share both valuable training materials and critical updates during times of emergency.

Supervisor Roberts also will continue in his role as chairman of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, including overseeing the deployment of the first Community Plan Framework.

Innovation has been the hallmark of success in the legacy of the Supervisors.

This legacy is successfully implemented by our wonderful county staff led by CAO Helen Robbins-Meyer and Assistant CAO Don Steuer.

In 2010, under the direction of Nick Macchione, our County took on a bold initiative – Live Well San Diego. Live Well San Diego is not your ordinary strategic plan. Live Well San Diego is an overarching vision for our region. A purposeful innovation that forever changed the way we do business as a County.

Live Well San Diego is not your standard government approach. It is a prevention strategy, addressing the root causes of challenges that we

face as a region. It is a strategy that recognizes government can't solve these challenges alone and must create strong partnerships within our community. By doing so we can build better health, live safely and thrive while saving millions in taxpayer dollars.

Live Well San Diego focuses on outcomes with the ability to adapt if desired goals are not being achieved. We embrace this model in all of the things we think, say, and do.

In the last 8 years I am proud to say that Live Well has blossomed around the region. We now have more than 340 partners and have realized millions in taxpayer savings. Thank you, Nick, for your vision and innovative spirit.

In December, the County's Health and Human Services Agency was among 4 organizations throughout California recognized for excellence in innovation, continuous improvement and leadership. HHSA received the California Silver Award for Performance Excellence. What an incredible honor! But, we're not sitting around patting ourselves on the back as the recipient of this award. Instead, we are pushing as a County to do even more.

Substance abuse is a major public health and safety problem impacting our entire nation. Addiction tears apart the lives of individuals, families and our communities.

This year, the County will implement a Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System that will improve outcomes and expand services to those struggling with addiction. We are building capacity through our community partners and will be able to serve 30% more people over the next 3 years. There is a road to recovery and we are paving the way through innovation and better coordination.

Our County's financial team has taken an innovative approach to working with your tax dollars by making additional voluntary payments

to manage increases in retirement costs and establishing a new retirement tier for employees, which is the lowest tier allowable under state law. We also have a history of paying for large capital with cash on hand instead of issuing debt, saving taxpayers over \$1 BILLION in borrowing costs over the past decade.

Indeed, we have a strong foundation, but there is still much innovation to accomplish. Considering the significant challenges we have as a region now is the time more than ever to strengthen our Live Well strategy.

Our cost of living has outpaced wages to the point that one in every six adults and one in every five children faces hunger every day. Fewer than five-percent of these people are homeless.

One Live Well Partner that I have had the privilege of getting to know this year is the San Diego Food Bank. CEO Jim Floros has done an exemplary job implementing a Live Well strategy to address these challenges. I was proud to partner with him on the Holiday Food Drive and the School's Out, Hunger's Not campaign.

Thank you, Jim for all that you are doing to address food insecurity in our region. Would you please stand and be recognized?

Hunger is just one of our challenges. Our discharged veterans are often not equipped with the job skills needed to land a good-paying job or they can't afford to live here and support their families.

We have seen a rise in the number of homeless across the county.

Alzheimer's is our third leading cause of death.

And...while we are making strides, we still have some roads that are not up to our standard.

During my first year as County Supervisor, I visited hundreds of local organizations, many of them non-profits. I was so pleased to see models that involve people taking responsibility for themselves and taking an active role in their journey to becoming whole again.

Clarence Carter is the Director of the Office of Family Assistance in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In September, Clarence and I participated in an Empowerment Summit. He said redefine compassion “some people say ‘tough love’...I would argue it is not tough love, but genuine love for people. The recognition they are capable and simply lost sight of their own inner strength”

Genuine love. I like that – and I would like to introduce you to a couple of organizations and people who have redefined compassion and live that model:

Solutions for Change requires sober living from its clients and addresses the root causes of what led someone to become homeless while teaching them a way out.

Workshops for Warriors answers the question many veterans have leaving the service: “What do I do now?”

Doors of Change had me at self-sufficiency. This group has placed more than 18-hundred homeless youth in long-term safe housing and taught them the skills they need to live on their own.

All of these organizations have something in common – their results – the lives transformed by their innovative approach.

One of the things that appealed to me most as I began serving as County Supervisor was how to strengthen social services by identifying gaps in our delivery system. As the CFO of a company and a fiscal steward of this County, I am a numbers person. I like to see results and I like to invest resources in solutions that work. I have never been a fan of “reinventing the wheel”. If someone has a model that works, I am all-in.

On to the final key characteristic of innovators: effective change managers know how to navigate through resistance to their ideas.

A year ago, I had a very bold idea. I wanted to work with some of our most vulnerable populations – the formerly incarcerated, the addicted and the homeless. I thought – wouldn't it be great to have a university that could teach people how to live and empower the hopeless. I shared this idea with someone in this audience and a wry smile crept across his face. He told me that not only did this idea already exist in practice, but also has proven results. I had to know more – and so I hopped on a plane.

We landed in Salt Lake City on a brisk Fall day where we were greeted by a group of clean cut ambassadors of the Other Side Academy. They took us to their home in the heart of the city - a beautiful mansion! In fact, it's the former home of the first mayor of Salt Lake City. We were greeted with enthusiasm and excitement. Hope and transformation. It was a home, a school, a place of business. People were living and working together to make each other better, stronger, and more accountable.

You might think The Other Side Academy is a military school. Every bed made with precision and not a thing out of place. The basement was buzzing as students called to get donations for their house – everything from hot sauce to clothing. The second floor houses the moving company – phones ringing and keyboards clicking - a whiteboard calendar completely full of upcoming appointments. At lunch the kitchen revved up as students prepared a delicious meal and I had the pleasure of dining with some great young men who insisted on eye contact and proudly shared their stories. I felt safe here. I felt genuine love.

So, who are these students? These teenagers, parents and grandparents all living and working together?

Well, the average resident has been a hard-core drug addict for sixteen years, abusing alcohol and dropping out of school in 7th grade. Many have been institutionalized several times, been a gang member and most have been trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty for several generations. Some students have never had a functional lifestyle. Others come from well-to-do families until addiction ripped them away. For many, the Academy would be their first exposure to orderly living. Real recovery that includes learning the behavioral skills, attitudes, and values of socialized living.

This is The Other Side Academy.

Based on the highly successful and innovative Delancey Street model, The Other Side Academy bucks traditional wisdom with accountability, not experts, with social enterprise - not government hand-outs. Like a large family, residents learn to develop their strengths by helping each other. The Other Side Academy is a drug-free home with a focus on changing negative patterns of behavior through peer interactions. It is through these interactions that residents learn social norms, build social skills, and become self-sufficient.

Against all odds, The Other Side Academy is transforming into assets in the community.

They said it couldn't be done. Dave Durocher proved them all wrong.

5. Effective change managers know how to navigate through resistance to their ideas.

Tonight, I am pleased to announce in partnership with Sheriff Bill Gore, and with the support of District Attorney Summer Stephan and Public Defender Randy Mize, that we will be bringing The Other Side Academy model to San Diego. Our staff will soon begin the due diligence of locating a site to make this a reality. And, I am proud to say

that with the generosity of two \$1 MILLION dollar commitments from our community that this can be done and sustained without ongoing taxpayer money.

The students at the Salt Lake City Other Side Academy on average have been arrested 25 times and combined would be facing 421 years of incarceration. The cost to Utah taxpayers if those students did all of their time? Over 21 MILLION dollars!

Think about this...Dave Durocher...According to his sentencing, would still be in prison. Instead, here he is running a 2 1/2 MILLION dollar enterprise and rebuilding the lives of people who would likely spend the rest of their days living off the system.

THIS is the road that Mildred Greene began when she defied the odds and ran for Supervisor. THIS is the vision this Board had when it began the audacious Live Well San Diego initiative. THIS is the legacy of the Food Bank, Solutions for Change, Workshops for Warriors, Doors of Change and The Other Side Academy. And THIS is the future as we move government service beyond the status quo so that 2018 is greater than 1918 could have ever imagined.

It is with great pride that I pay tribute to those individuals who have shared their stories with you tonight. They have all found the inner strength to transform their lives and are now on a mission to transform the lives of countless others in San Diego County.

Jennifer, Austin, Jacinto, and Dave...will you please stand and be recognized?