



A Message from  
Broward County Mayor  
Lois Wexler

In November my term as Broward County Mayor will come to an end and a new Mayor will be chosen by the Commission. It was quite a challenging year that stressed the importance of governing wisely and dutifully as Broward County faced a challenging downturn in the housing market and overall economy. Of course, I remain your County Commissioner representing District #5.

I am proud to report that Broward County government operates much more efficiently than it did one year ago. When I was selected to serve as Mayor, I immediately implemented the Sterling Management Model. Simply put, Sterling criteria sets in place defined processes that identify strategic goals and measures their effectiveness and success. This makes County government run more like a private business, where achievement, accountability and efficiency are emphasized.

Implementation of the Sterling process and zero-based performance budgeting were tools that we were able to utilize as we scrutinized every aspect of the 2009 budget; property taxes on the county tax portion of your tax bill were reduced an average of \$96 for a homesteaded property.

Property tax cuts meant little to the thousands of people in Broward County who desperately reached out for help as their homes went into foreclosure. Working with Legal Aid, I quickly assembled a blue-ribbon panel to study the complexities of the foreclosure crisis and put together a plan to assist in finding solutions. Early intervention, an extensive consumer education campaign, expansion of required notifications to borrowers, a county-wide Model Ordinance for residential properties in foreclosure, and counseling for homeowners in foreclosure are some of the recommendations that the panel developed. Progress has also been made in obtaining additional state and federal dollars to provide immediate financial assistance.

Quality education for children has always been a priority of mine and this year I served as Chair of the Broward County School Oversight Committee. We made some significant advances. The Broward County Commission, the School Board of Broward County and the Cities signed an interlocal agreement establishing school concurrency. This means that new residential development will be reviewed by the School Board who will advise local governments if public school capacity is currently available or planned within the next 3 years to serve the proposed development. If capacity is not available, development approvals will be delayed until such time as the capacity is available. Pursuant to State law, a developer also has the option of paying the fair share of the cost of needed school capacity improvements which must be planned for construction within three years. This means that developers will be accountable for the impact a development may have on school populations.

Meeting the needs of the elderly is also a priority of mine. Through the County's adoption of Communities for a Lifetime and the expansion of this program in our Cities, there were significant advances this past year. When I organized the Elder Services Summit in 2007, a concern voiced by many was the need to assist the elderly in the event of a hurricane or widespread crisis that would necessitate an evacuation. Broward County now has a Vulnerable Populations Registry. This registry allows people who are disabled, frail or have health issues to register in advance with their city so that emergency workers may plan a better response in a recovery effort following a public emergency. Hurricane preparedness guides were also produced in Braille and on audiotapes for the seeing or hearing impaired.

Much more attention was focused on the environment, the local impact of climate change, and water management. I chaired the first joint meeting of the County Commission, the South Florida Water Management District and Mayors from Broward's 31 cities. From that meeting a water task force was formed that will study and make recommendations that will lead to more efficient management of Broward's limited water supply.

A Climate Change task force will also move forward to develop recommendations that will drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Broward County by the year 2015. Planning for the possible impact of climate change in the future will also be under review.

This past year has been very challenging! I hosted a series of Commission workshops that moved forward a number of issues such as affordable housing, airport expansion, a Port Everglades Master Plan, integrated technology linking county agencies together and an overhaul of the county's procurement procedures. I believe the goals we achieved and processes that were put into place in 2008 will continue to reap benefits as we move into 2009.

It was a pleasure to serve as the Mayor Broward County and I look forward to continuing to represent you as the County Commissioner for District #5.

If you any questions, concerns or comments please feel free to call my office at (954) 357-7005 or e-mail me at [lwexler@broward.org](mailto:lwexler@broward.org).

Sincerely,

Lois Wexler  
Broward County Mayor  
Commissioner, District 5