



**A Message from
Lois Wexler
Broward County Commissioner
District 5**

The New Year is upon us and it will no doubt bring many changes and challenges. This month a new President of the United States will be inaugurated and hopefully efforts to improve our economy, the housing market and unemployment will be put in place and begin to have some impact as the year progresses.

Broward County Commissioners will soon begin the task of preparing the 2010 budget and once again we will be faced with tough decisions as we work to balance the budget and reduce property taxes. The sharp downturn in the nation's economy will mean reduced revenues to Broward County and that means that budget cuts will be necessary and that will certainly impact county services.

During my term as Mayor last year we closed a \$90 million gap in the budget and delivered a balanced \$3.6 billion budget that provided property tax cuts to homeowners. Broward County government operates more efficiently than it did one year ago and it is my belief that better *processes* and procedures are in place to assist us in the future.

The Sterling management model that I brought forth was approved by the Commission and implemented last year. I believe this will greatly improve our ability to make budget decisions based on data that will measure the success and effectiveness of County programs, departments and services.

Despite economic challenges, Broward County's celebrated many successes in 2008.

Port Everglades became the number one containerized cargo port in Florida and with addition of numerous new cruise ships, the port expects to become the world's top cruise port by 2010.

The Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International airport had a 2.7% increase in passengers through September 2008 and by year's end served 22 million passengers, matching a record set in 2007.

Tourism set a new record with tourist tax revenues reaching the highest ever average daily rate in Broward's history. Broward welcomed more than 10.7 million visitors, contributing more than \$8.8 billion to our economy.

Innovation and advances in technology hit the road in Broward County this year as Broward County Transit rolled out twelve new 40 foot diesel/hybrid buses, which should result in a 20% fuel savings when compared to conventional buses.

In October, three new regional fire rescue stations and a regional logistics warehouse opened, resulting in a Broward County that is safer and better served.

Our award winning park system now includes 17 regional parks, 4 nature centers, and 21 natural area sites at various stages of completion, totaling more than 6,500 acres. Broward also acquired 13 additional open and green space areas, totaling 32 acres which provide passive recreational opportunities in perpetuity.

Broward County libraries also saw great expansion with three new libraries opening as a result of the 1999 Library Bond Issue and our library system reached a milestone by serving over 10-million customers as well as checking out over 10-million items for public use in a one year period.

Changes in the way the Broward County conducts business with vendors and in procedures used to purchase goods and services are also now in place that will prove to be more efficient and productive. Plans to create a fully integrated technologically advanced computer system also moved forward in 2008 and it is my goal that one day all agencies and departments will be linked together.

While much was accomplished last year, we move forward with continued economic uncertainty. It is my hope that I have laid a solid foundation that will help us face future challenges.

It was a pleasure and privilege to serve as Broward County's Mayor in 2008. It was a busy, challenging and rewarding year---and I look forward to continuing my duties as the District 5 Commissioner.

As you know I'm always open to hearing from you. You can call my office at (954) 357-7005 or e-mail me at lwexler@broward.org

Thank you for your continued support and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Lois Wexler
Broward County Commissioner
District 5