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By Supervisor Dave Cortese

As I tackle my many goals for 2010, I reflected on my first year in office as the District Three representative on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. On being elected, I made it a priority to continue my active involvement in the community and ensure its members are fully informed and represented, to use my experience in private businesses to ensure the county's operations are as efficient as possible so we can continue providing vital services to our residents and to ensure the county is well-represented on regional, governmental bodies to receive its fair share of resources.

Here are just a few highlights of 2009:

In the past year, I have brought together neighborhood members with city, county and local agency representatives through community meetings. One such forum was in Alviso. While it stemmed from security issues at the Alviso Marina County Park, more than 50 community members attended with concerns ranging from traffic at schools to multiple issues with mail delivery.

Another community meeting, in the Alum Rock area of San Jose, welcomed residents with issues ranging from a seven-year wait for a handicapped parking space to property owners' fears about local agencies taking over their properties for additional parkland. My office has diligently followed up and brought many of them to a happy conclusion, including installation of the handicapped parking spot, cleaning up code enforcement and clearing up the traffic issues.

During last year's budget process and throughout the year, we at the county have taken innovative approaches to increase revenues and reduce costs to continue providing the much-needed core services for our residents. I have proposed using vacant, county-owned land for renewable-energy generation which would offset the county's electricity consumption to allow savings to fund other programs. I also initiated the formation of a special district which would allow county residents to access low-cost financing to install solar panels and conduct energy-efficiency retrofits on their homes.

As car-owners know, there is a significant cost associated with maintenance and usage. I have requested the Fleet Department evaluate how we can utilize rental car companies to augment our fleet without having to purchase additional vehicles that would increase maintenance and running costs. We have also asked them to begin "greening" our fleet with alternative fuel vehicles.

Additionally, I was able to convince the Metropolitan Transportation Committee to send an additional $5M to the South Bay to help pave the way for the 101-Tully-Yerba Buena interchange. The additional funding will give this much-needed traffic relief project a kick start. I know many of you travel this route and we shall all appreciate the improvements.

While this has been a good start, I am determined to accomplish more in the next year. The Board of Supervisors will begin the budget process in the next few months and my staff and I will examine each page with a fine tooth comb to ensure not a single dollar is wasted. We shall keep our eyes and ears open for innovative ideas and concepts that will benefit our communities, while reducing costs, to keep the county's core services alive.

Additionally, my staff and I will make a concerted effort to continue my outreach to ensure you remain informed of available county services and how we can work together to benefit our communities.

As always, I am here to help you and to listen to your suggestions. Please call me at (408) 299-5030 or email dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org.