

County of Santa Clara
Office of the County Executive
70 West Hedding Street, East Wing 11th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110
(408) 299-5119
www.sccgov.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2006

Contact: Gwendolyn Mitchell
Office of Public Affairs
(408) 299-5119

Beall Calls for Collaboration in Building a Community for All

*State of the County Address Highlights New Initiatives for Youth,
Medically-Uninsured, Environmental Protection*

SAN JOSE, CALIF.—This evening, Supervisor Jim Beall (District 4), who took the helm as Chair of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors earlier this month, addressed the packed Board Chambers with his message about the State of Santa Clara County. Beall cited a vibrant, strong community and signaled plans to introduce several new initiatives that will address the needs of youth and those who do not have medical insurance, and ensure the protection of Santa Clara County's parks, viewsheds and hillsides.

In his message, Beall attributed the county's vibrancy to the efforts of many frontline workers who are doing real work - getting things done that improve the lives of county residents. He spoke about the County budget that reflects our values and priorities, cited relief to see some signs of economic recovery and expressed hope that the trend continues.

Beall spoke about the need for compassion in the efforts to address several critical needs of those who suffer from poverty, food insecurity, addiction, and mental health issues. He called for high ethical standards in government and indicated that he would ask the Board to establish an Ethics Task Force this year.

-more-

Health Care for All Initiative

One of his top initiatives in 2006 will be work towards expanding health insurance to all uninsured adults in Santa Clara County. Beall lauded the success of the Children's Health Initiative's enrollment of children in health insurance and called for community leaders to initiate a similar effort for uninsured county residents.

"We have made history by being the first in the nation to guarantee children have access to good health care," said Beall who was instrumental in the start-up of the Children's Health Initiative five years ago. "It is time to initiate the process of finding health insurance for the 200,000 uninsured adults in this county."

Beall called on "all community leaders, health care experts and every stakeholder to form a public-private partnership to help qualify the uninsured residents of the county with a health care plan." He indicated that the loss of life and the growing costs of late stage diagnoses are too great to wait until the federal government takes action.

Foster Youth Employment Initiative

Beall also called for a comprehensive program to aid foster youth who reach 18 years and are no longer supported by the foster care system.

"These kids are traumatized when young and society traumatizes them again when they turn 18 years," Beall said. "Instead of finding a job, looking forward to college, or making future plans, many are forced to search for the next couch to sleep on or for a mattress in a homeless shelter."

Beall would expand a county program to employ foster youth and called on community partners to address the needs of emancipating foster youth. At his request, yesterday the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors unanimously approved convening a task force to address the employment needs of emancipating foster youth to prepare them for the workforce and to find employment opportunities for them. Among the community partners that already have agreed to participate are the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Working Partnership USA, Silicon Valley Children's Fund, Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley and Santa Clara County Foster Parent Association.

-more-

Long-Term Commitment to the Environment

Beall outlined two initiatives to ensure the protection of the environment on a long-term basis. The first will be to develop a comprehensive Viewshed Protection Policy by this summer to protect beautiful hillsides and ridge tops from development and maintaining scenic vistas. The second is the Parks Charter Renewal, which was recently approved as a June Ballot Measure by the Board of Supervisors.

“We are so blessed to share these 840,000 acres of land,” said Beall. “We must protect nature and open space.”

In his call for collaboration on these new initiatives, Beall reminded the audience “the hands of human need are close... They are the hands of people reaching out for help. We must reach back, grasp them with our hands, and embrace them with our compassion to help them survive through hard times.”

Fact Sheets on Initiatives Available

#