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Major Achievements in 2013

Well the County's a big place—the biggest County in America, with 10 million people, and a budget of \$25 billion dollars. We're doing a lot. When you go to the extended County family, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, we're doing even more.

It's been an eventful year. The last year, we opened a light rail line from Downtown to Culver City, and the end of next year we will open that same extension of that line to Santa Monica; the first mass transit line to be built to the Westside of Los Angeles County in more than a half a century. We've tentatively approved a local coastal plan for the Santa Monica Mountains overlooking Malibu and the Pacific Ocean, protecting the ridgelines and the rivers, and oak woodlands that make that area so special. And of course, the County family itself, the County organization, has had a good year. We navigated through the recession quite well, and we've always lived within our means. We were able to navigate the vicissitudes of the recession without having to lay off a single person, without having to furlough anybody. It's been a tumultuous four or five years, and we've finally turned the corner and we can see ourselves growing again and expanding services to the residents, the citizens who depend on us for so much.

San Fernando Valley Family Service Center

We broke ground on what will be a template on the way we serve people who depend on us for human services in the San Fernando Valley. The San Fernando Valley Family Service Center, which will have on one campus the Probation Department, the Children's Services Department, the Welfare Department, the Health Department with its comprehensive health care clinic, pharmacy, mental health offices, and clinic. It's all going to be on one campus, so the people don't have to go from one end of the San Fernando Valley to another part of the San Fernando Valley to get services for their kids or for themselves; it'll all be available on one campus. We broke ground on that just a few months ago. It will be ready for occupancy in the early part of 2015. Hopefully it will be a template that will replicated in other parts of Los Angeles County to serve other communities. Because we worked a long time, we worked 10 years to plan this thing and finally have it underway.

Final Thoughts

I've always felt blessed by having a constituency that first of all, elected me to the Los Angeles City Council when I was 26 years old. I'm not sure I would have voted for a 26-year-old at that time, but my constituents did, and they had the faith that somebody with my energy, and ambition, and some smarts, would be able to make a difference. And they've given me the license to push the envelope on some issues that most politicians wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole.

I'm proud of many of the things that I've done, many of the buildings that were built, and the cultural institutions that we've built here in LA County and that we've improved. But what I'm most proud of, as far as I'm personally concerned, is that I was the go-to person on issues that nobody else wanted to touch. Whether it was in the city, when the Police Department was harassing people who were on the margins of society, whether it was standing up for fiscal responsibility, or whether it was pushing the Measure B, three cent per square foot property tax to keep our trauma centers and emergency rooms open in LA County. Nobody wanted to touch those things with a 10-foot pole, because the risk of failure was too high. I've always enjoyed taking policy risks that have big payoffs for the people we represent. I thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to serve for what will be, when I leave, 39-and-a-half years.