

2009 STATE OF THE VILLAGE

Mayor Eugene P. Flinn, Jr.

"The Year of Transition"

Oct. 21, 2009

Good evening. Thank you for attending this, the Seventh Annual State of the Village. This is my annual opportunity to share with you how this Village continues moving forward with my mission as your first mayor. I am very proud of Palmetto Bay and all we have accomplished together.

At this time, I'd like to express my appreciation to those individuals who have always supported and loved me no matter what: my beautiful wife, Alexandra; my 2 incredible daughters, Katherine and Meredith; and the woman you can thank – or blame – for my existence, my mom, Dorothea. Without them, my life would not be complete. And thanks to my mother- and father-in-law for putting up with me all these years.

I also wish to thank all of the residents of Palmetto Bay. This is a vibrant, outstanding community, full of individuals who share my desire and commitment to continually improve and progress. I am always open to listening to the many voices of reason among you. We may not always agree, but there is no substitute for a healthy dialogue that, in the end, results in the betterment of this Village. Please keep your constructive ideas coming.

INTRODUCTIONS

So, allow me to introduce your Village Council: Vice Mayor Brian Pariser, and Councilmembers Ed Feller, Howard Tendrich, and Shelley Stanczyk:

- Vice Mayor Pariser joined us on the dais this past year, but he is no freshman – he was the Village's representative on the County Mitigation Review Task Force. This Herculean effort is greatly appreciated;
- Councilman Feller and I have sat shoulder to shoulder on the dais since the beginning, and I want to particularly thank him for years of calming me down. No, seriously, Ed, you have been a truly dedicated, unselfish voice and I am so glad to be able to call you a comrade and a friend for these many years; and,
- Howard, you and I share the same passion for preserving our environment – green is definitely our color;
- Shelley? What can I say... Your energy and your unrelenting focus are remarkable and enviable.

Our residents have been truly blessed with such an outstanding group of public servants.

Please also join me in recognizing our Village staff, many of whom have been with us from the inception of Palmetto Bay. These individuals are highly-professional and dedicated, and we appreciate their hard work and diligence. First, our Charter Officers:

- Ron E. Williams, Village Manager;
- Meighan Rader, Village Clerk; and
- Luis Figueredo & Eve Boutsis, Village Attorneys.

And from our departments, please stand and be recognized:

- Olga Cadaval, Assistant to the Mgr;
- Fanny Carmona-Gonzalez, I'll get to her title in a moment;
- Desmond Chin, Director of Finance;
- Corrice Patterson, Director of Public Works;
- Julian Perez, Director of Planning & Zoning;
- Lt. Gregory Truitt, Village Police Commander; and
- Ed Silva, Director of Building & Capital Projects.

This Village continues to improve each year due to the dedication of our leadership team and their respective staffs.

SPONSORS

I also wish to thank our sponsors and community partners present this evening, specifically...

- Baptist Health South Florida;
- Palmetto Bay Village Center;
- Gus Machado Ford;
- Master Builders and JWMA Architects;
- The Miami-Dade Police Honor Guard;
- Westminster Christian School and Southwood Middle School for the musical talent; and
- Robert Morgan Educational Center for its culinary talent.

“The Year of Transition...” Now, I didn't specifically say what this actually refers to. And I don't want to tell you this is my last speech – I'm a born politician, so I will NEVER have a last speech. So... let me enlighten you as to what I do mean by “The Year of Transition.” Well... actually... instead of me standing here doing all the talking, allow me to introduce someone who I know you will all just love. Here's a short film that captures the essence of tonight's address. I hope you all enjoy...

You know, I only goof around for the camera – I'm a “natural” and never flub my words... I hope that film gave you a sense of the hard work and loyalty your municipal team puts forth every day. Thanks to each of the employees who were pleased to be chosen to participate in this video. I wish to thank them for their hard work and genuine enthusiasm. It is refreshing to see people who truly enjoy what they are doing, as our staff does every day.

So, allow me to begin. This is The Year of Transition – not in leadership or vision, but in moving from the ambitious capital improvement phase to programming. Over the past five years, the exciting expansion of Palmetto Bay Park, improvements to streets and sidewalks, and the recently completed Palmetto Bay Community Center, Ludovici Park and Library, are concluding.

As these projects come to completion, the Village focus is now able to shift from infrastructure – or “bricks and mortar” if you will – to enhanced programming and maintaining high levels of service. All of this could not be possible if it weren't for all of the tremendous support and positive activism we receive from this community. This remains a year of transition as we can now lead by green example.

Speaking of setting a great example, I must commend the man leading our incredible administrative team: Ron Williams. We are so very fortunate to have a Village Manager at the helm that possesses such vast experience, leadership capabilities, and dedication to our Village – a place he also calls home. Policies are established by the Council, from thoughts/ideas from you, the public, and Manager Williams is our representative who implements good government...

He is an outstanding Chief Administrative Officer and we are lucky to have him. On behalf of the Council and the entire Village of Palmetto Bay, thank you, Ron.

A big part of this Village's success can be attributed to our prowess in steering grant dollars and state appropriations our way – of course, this was back in the good ole days when there were state dollars available! This Village has successfully offset much of the cost of our capital projects and programs through grants and other appropriations – to the tune of more than \$18 million between 2003 and 2008. This total doesn't even include recent Federal Stimulus and current Safe Neighborhoods/Parks grant funding. While there are many individuals at all levels of county, state, and

federal government to acknowledge in this effort, we employ a magician at identifying and securing outside funding: Assistant to the Manager, Olga Cadaval. Great work, Olga.

FINANCE

Speaking of great work, our Finance Director Desmond Chin is the steward of these funds. He takes this fiscal responsibility very seriously and deserves significant recognition. Finance exists as one of the most important Departments in our Village, albeit behind the scenes.

Over the years, the Finance Department, has:

- repeatedly received the GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award; and
- year after year, has received an unblemished audit for outstanding performance.

Most recently, the Finance department researched, recommended, and is currently implementing Enterprise Resource Management software. We will have a more efficient government and a greener government.

Significant attention has been paid to the fact that Palmetto Bay's fiscally conservative approach has served this municipality well, particularly during this period of global economic turmoil.

We are very proud – our philosophy of smart, planned, and gradual growth has certainly paid off for us.

We are also pleased we were able to actually slightly lower our millage rate this year and that we did not raise fees with this new budget. The financial result was an estimated savings of \$48.50 per average property.

Again, we maintain a balanced budget, meaning we spend only the money we bring in that budget year – we don't raid our hard fought village reserves. In fact, we added a quarter-million dollars to our reserve fund. Village finances are strong and continue to be secure.

MITIGATION

From my perspective, 2009 will be most remembered as the year we ended mitigation payments to the County – the \$1.7 million tax we were forced to pay every year since 2002 as a condition of incorporation. But we did it – and we are fortunate that mitigation ended when it did – timing is everything. You see, as a result of being subjected the strenuous

"mitigation diet" over the last seven years, we learned how to do more with less. We are able to maintain, and, in some cases, increase services as a result of this "recovered money."

Our residents have come to expect high quality programs, great services, and modern facilities. In the year ahead and well into the future, we will continue to meet – and where possible exceed – this demand.

PARKS

From dollars to dugouts...the Parks & Recreation Department continues to excel under the leadership of our new director of Parks and Recreation Fanny Carmona-Gonzalez.

Let's talk about our first item of programming – our Summer Camps. These programs continue to be a really big hit with kids – and working parents! This year we introduced a new offering: "Skate & Adventure Camp" based at Palmetto Bay Park, at the site of our popular Skate Pavilion. We even redecorated the Recreation room to give it a kids' clubhouse appeal, so they could hang out and talk about their latest "Kick Flips and "McTwists." We plan to offer this special camp again next summer, along with the ever-popular at Coral Reef Park Camp.

Here's an example of the programming rising from the bricks and mortar – I'm excited that this past Monday, the Palmetto Bay Branch Library opened its doors for the first time. I was there, with my wife and daughters. The librarian told me this was the biggest soft opening she had ever seen – more than 300 people attended on Monday. The opening of this library ends the endless question, "When is the library opening?" Our area is cultural, literate and people are voting with their feet against those who say that libraries are obsolete. The bike rack was filled – Eric? We will be continuing to install bike racks as they are needed. Libraries are for our families. That initial crowd is a clear indicator this library is going to have an enormously positive impact on our Village for years to come.

Libraries, in general, have traditionally been known to offer local government an excellent return on investment. We expect to see the same here in Palmetto Bay, through our long-term agreement with the County Library System. We worked long and hard to bring this important County service closer to you...

If they've made it over here yet from the Library, I'd like to thank to our Branch Manager Gabriella Imbimbo and her dedicated staff. In the words of Mayor Alvarez, "This is a time to highlight the value of libraries in providing educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities to people of all ages."

I'm a card carrying member of the County library system – all of you should be, too.

More programming – the newly-formed Garden Club is planning to meet in the new Community Room, which is exactly what this modern new meeting facility was designed for – public use and enjoyment. I also hear that a Book Club is in the works... Don't forget to use your new book mark (check your parting gift bag.)

At Coral Reef, park goers will soon be afforded additional personal work-out components with the installation of exercise equipment that Richard so aptly described in the video. The combination of fresh air, sunshine, and exercise will inspire people of all ages – including perhaps your mayor and Council – to "get moving" toward better fitness. I should also quickly mention that Palmetto Bay Park is next in line to get these exercise stations. You've got no excuse now!

Back at Coral Reef Park, you've likely noticed work going on just north of our admin building. From the dust of this construction site will emerge a beautiful concession facility, restrooms, storage, and offices. It will complement the magnificent concession facility already located at the central hub of Palmetto Bay Park's softball complex. While at either park, you will be able to enjoy a light lunch or a hotdog while watching a game or participating in the myriad activities these amazing parks provide, Coral Reef's vibrant, green-certified concession stand will now be the "location of choice" for morning coffee. Watch out Starbucks!

Also during this new fiscal year, Thalatta Park will come back on line, re-developed, and ready for public enjoyment. Wasn't that sunrise shot just incredible? The video doesn't do it justice. The redevelopment of Thalatta will provide a venue for weddings, special events, and other private functions. The carriage house will be transformed into a fully ADA-compliant facility with new restrooms, an office area, a prep kitchen, and a multi-use area.

And, yes, I can be available to toast the bride and groom at every wedding.

The mission of our Parks & Recreation is simple: to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing safe, functional, and attractive parks with programs and activities that are accessible to all members of the community. This deep commitment to capital improvement positioned us well to be more supportive of our football, baseball, and softball teams, summer campers, and residents in general.

Now we're set to engage in activities that truly build the spirit of a community. We get to create senior and youth programs and, just for the sake of example, again, I will mention the new Garden Club; now we have an outstanding facility where they can meet and really get to work! What a great community we live in!

Programming – Don't forget to wear your costumes for Movie Night at Coral Reef Park October 30. There's a specially-prepared "reminder" of this event tucked inside the gift bag everyone will receive before leaving tonight: Compliments of Gus Machado Ford, the date and time of the movie is printed right here on this bag of popcorn so

you'll know when to pop it up and head out to the Park to see "IGOR." In fact, Gus Machado Ford has subsidized the entire cost of Halloween Movie Night. They're a great organization, good neighbors to have. Thanks to the entire Machado team for stepping up in this big way. They've set a great example of the power of community partnership. Who's going to be the next big sponsor?

POLICE

From public enjoyment, I wish to move on to public safety. The Palmetto Bay Police Unit, headed by Commander Truitt, continues to provide outstanding service in the form of an overall reduction in crime, while maintaining excellent response for service calls. The past year was once again marked by an outstanding level of dedication, in areas such as:

- Service - The Village Policing Unit continues to lead the Miami-Dade Police Department and all contract cities in response times to calls for service – both emergency (average 5:53 min) and non-emergency (average 11:54 min) responses. We will maintain leadership in this area.
- Community Outreach – Programming ... Our Officers will continue to assist homeowners in establishing Citizen Crime Watch programs to provide a conduit between neighbors and the Police Department in an effort to further reduce crime. During the past year, 4 Crime Watch groups were created. Now this is a trend I want to see increase. Don't wait until an incident occurs to get mobilized. The time to form a group is NOW. Get to know your neighbors, open up communications, share phone numbers... Do it NOW.
- Officer Friendly - Programming ... The Policing Unit conducts Officer Friendly meetings with all elementary-aged students enrolled in public schools within our Village. The curriculum consists of Stranger Danger, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety, Anti-Bullying, Gun Safety, and a component called, "*Police Officers are Your Friend*." Our officers will meet and educate over 2,400 children this year.
- Two programs of honorable mention - The D.A.R.E. Program and a new program RADKids. DARE is a nationally recognized Drug Abuse Resistance Education program provided to all fifth-graders attending our public schools. Kids learn how to recognize and resist the pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs... RADKids stands for Resisting Aggression Defensively, a program that empowers kids to make educated decisions to recognize, avoid, and escape hazardous or abusive situations. The program culminates in a "dynamic simulation" where kids put into practice the very techniques they learn in class.
- Security Surveys - I continue to stress that our Policing Unit offers a great Public Safety program that you need to take advantage of. Residents and businesses owners may now request a free security survey covering everything from external lighting and door locks to credit card fraud protection and robbery-prevention

techniques. Call the Policing Unit to make an appointment for a confidential security survey. You NEED to be a part of the solution.

- Traffic-Safety Initiatives - A continued priority with special emphasis on reduction of speeding. The Policing Unit seeks input from citizens and our schools to continue to ensure that all pedestrian and vehicle traffic flows through the Village in a safe and expeditious manner. These activities will be conducted with regular zone officers augmented with Selective Traffic Enforcement Programs.

On a related traffic-safety note, I wish to thank Councilwoman Stanczyk, a long-time proponent of safe pathways to school, for all the work she and her committee has done leading up to the recent adoption of our Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan. This long-term planning document provides for improvements to Village sidewalks and streets that will ultimately create safer commutes for residents who prefer to walk or bike through our Village – with special emphasis on our children.

Thanks to our incredibly professional team of police investigators for the countless hours and incredible police work they put forth this year during a very stressful time for our Village. During that time, our community came together in ways that were truly rare and remarkable.

This terrible incident also allowed us to forge closer relationships with the many animal-advocacy groups in our community, such as Paws-4-You, Friends Forever, the Humane Society of Greater Miami, and the Cat Network, which is hosting an adoption event at one of our parks in mid-November. Stay tuned for details.

With so many pet rescue groups in our Village, I ask everyone to please consider giving someone you love a rescue pet this holiday season.

PUBLIC WORKS

Once programming of these new facilities has begun, maintenance is key to success. Therefore, allow me to briefly discuss the Public Works department, this hard working, lean, professional team, headed up by Director Patterson. Here's a quick brush of what this department of only five employees were able to accomplish this past year:

In the area of Street Signage - The Department of Public Works completed the street-name signage program this past year with installation of a total of 31 new and 50 damage-replacement signs. The department also replaced eight street signs on 80 Avenue between 160 Street and 168 Street in honor of Southwood Middle School designated as

"Superstar Way." Also, at our request, the County co-designated 152 Street from Old Cutler east to 67 Avenue as "Warrior Way" in honor of Westminster Christian School. Thank you, Commissioner Sorenson, for your sponsorship.

Let me state for the record – our excellent public and private schools constitute a major reason for Palmetto Bay's success... Please allow me to ask any principals, teachers, staff, and PTA members who are present this evening to stand and be recognized (name any you see.) I am so happy of the partnership we have with our schools and I look forward to working with them in the future. And, speaking of partnership, I strongly urge our legislators to pass an anti-texting while driving law that this Council sponsored. It's important – we demand safe streets for our children.

I have to take a minute to thank our members of Congress:

- Lincoln Diaz-Balart;
- Mario Diaz-Balart;
- Ileana Ros-Lehtinen;
- Debbie Wasserman Schultz; and
- Kendrick B. Meek.

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to these individuals for their support of our Village, which was so clearly evident by their co-sponsorship and affirmative vote approving the sale of property by the US Department of Agriculture to Miami-Dade County for construction of a fire station that will serve more than Palmetto Bay, but Pinecrest, Coral Gables (through Joint use) and Cutler Bay.

Right-of-Way Beautification - The Village received Tree City USA designation for its continuous commitment to the greening of Palmetto Bay – and America in general. I am very proud of this achievement as it reflects our long-held belief that trees truly make a community beautiful and appealing – and it's good common sense from an environmental standpoint. Public Works is continuing to enhance our public right-of-ways by planting live oaks and Japanese blueberry trees.

Thanks to Councilman Tendrich – I often refer to him as a "tree hugger," but seriously, his constant urging about caring for the environment helps keep us committed to this outstanding program. I also hear his rain barrel is working well – Howard practices what he preaches.

Another greening project, this one driven by Councilman Feller, with help from FDOT. is transforming a sizeable stretch of our commercial corridor. If you've taken a look at the eastern right of way, while driving north on US-1 from 184 Street to 168 Street, you'll agree that trees definitely play a significant role in the beautification of our Village. We will gladly continue to annually meet our Tree City USA mandate.

Looking ahead, there are some "welcoming signs" on the horizon – quite literally! New Entrance Monuments - By the end of next month, we will be installing several beautiful entrance monuments at key intersections, at our borders. These welcome-signs will support our distinctive branding and contribute to the greening of our Village as high-efficiency, solar-power LED lighting will illuminate each monument location. The monuments will be works of art – and signal to everyone that you've arrived "home" in Palmetto Bay.

The Village aims to leverage Federal Stimulus funds to create jobs in the community and build infrastructure with lasting value, without taking on new or recurring costs. Palmetto Bay will be receiving and administering transportation and transit Federal stimulus funding from FDOT in an amount totaling \$570,000; and funding from the Miami-Dade Transit Authority of nearly \$250,000 for a total of more than \$810,000.

PLANNING & ZONING

On to our Planning & Zoning Department, run by Director Perez and his hardworking group. This department, of course, includes our Code Compliance team, as well.

Palmetto Bay continues to improve our Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code through regular updates to meet the changing needs of our environment and new planning requirements mandated by the State. Through our initiatives, we will now develop sustainable growth that serves as the strong foundation for a green future. Business as usual is out – sustainable living practices is our focus.

Comprehensive planning in our community is used:

- as our growth-management tool to establish future guidelines;
- properly manage our sensitive environment;
- encourage sustainable economic development; and,
- to protect our quality of life.

I'm proud the Village made several significant changes to our plan this year, including the adoption of a new element entitled the "Water Supply Facilities Element." We are one of a very few municipalities in South Florida that adopted an element that specifically addresses the water issues impacting our region.

Let's turn to enhancing the aesthetic quality of life, I am very proud to remind you that Palmetto Bay was the first municipality in south Miami-Dade to develop its own Art-in-Public Places Program. And now, in "The Year of

Transition,” as we move from the “meeting” phase of this effort, to the “action” phase. The aesthetics of construction of local buildings will be improved through the work of this program.

Our Historic Preservation Program is truly coming into its own. In the past year, our advisory board petitioned the County to consider historic designation of the coral rock walls along 152 Street & 168 Street. Next year, the Historic Preservation Advisory Board intends to complete interviewing pioneer residents in an effort to compile old memories, historical facts, and artifacts. Components of this project will be displayed at Village Hall and other facilities.

Planning & Zoning remains focused upon Economic Development Initiatives that guide future -development in the FT&I – the Franjo Triangle/Commercial Island district. Specific land uses within this key area, envisioned as our future downtown district, will develop a diverse and sustainable economic base capable of supporting existing and future commercial activities here... The first development to incorporate the Design Guideline Standards was Fern Street Shopping Center, followed by Maroone Nissan, Palmetto Bay Point, and South Florida Teachers Credit Union.

VILLAGE HALL

Our new Village Hall... nothing underscores the theme of green “Transition” better than this municipal complex. I am truly excited about this development – and you should be, too... It serves as a tangible investment in the FT&I, sparking future positive growth and development in this district. It will likely be the last of the major capital programs to take place here in Palmetto Bay – the cap stone, if you will, of the foundation we have built since our inception in 2002.

We look forward to working with Commissioner Sorenson on this exciting project.

Take a moment to view the architectural rendering of this exciting project that is on display tonight. Not only will it be an incredibly attractive facility, but the new building will be quite practical from an energy standpoint – perhaps even completely self-sustaining.

We are presently in line to be Gold-LEED certified, but seriously working toward Platinum “net zero.” We cannot guarantee it, but if we achieved this rating, we could save up to \$50,000 in annual operating expenses and be the first Net-Zero Energy public building and Emergency Operation Center in South Florida.

Clearly, we're setting a shining example for future development in this district... future green development.

This leads me back to an important area of Planning & Zoning, the adoption of the Green Community Ordinance – or the Green Guide to the Sustainable Future of Palmetto Bay.

Since incorporation, the Village Council has made a commitment to protecting the environment, improving quality of life, and promoting sustainability. In order to fulfill this commitment, the Village will adopt a set of requirements and recommendations through the Green Ordinance to encourage the development of "green" buildings without forcing excessive costs or other burdens upon developers, building owners, or occupants.

Our commitment is to reduce the amount of energy, water, and construction material used in new- and redevelopment-projects in the Village and encourage this practice with developers. Everyone needs to work together and support this – for so long US consumers have been wasting, now it is time to give and think globally.

CODE COMPLIANCE

The Village's Code Compliance Division is working on multiple initiatives to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents. One of the green initiatives is the implementation of the Water Restrictions Ordinance, which is intended to protect our water supply and to assure there will be ample water available in our region.

An estimated 50 percent of the water consumed in Florida is used for outdoor irrigation, much of which is lost to evaporation and transpiration. We urge all of our residents to abide by the irrigation guidelines established by the South Florida Water Management District and adopted by the Village. If you don't know what the restricted hours are, please visit the "popular links" section of our website and click on "water restrictions."

I'm happy to inform you that people are joining in on this effort - in the last two months, no citations have been issued by our Police Department or Code Compliance Officers for violating this ordinance.

DEPT OF BLDG & CAPITAL PROJECTS

Formerly the Building Department, the Department of Building & Capital Services team oversees all construction activity for the Village. Last year, in its first year as an independent department, we saw numerous positive changes:

- It recently transitioned from an outsourced staff to a hybrid system of part-time and full-time employees, allowing for vast improvements in customer service. I think Evelyn did well in describing her department. Thanks again, Evelyn. Great job.

- Nothing makes people happier than low fees, and Palmetto Bay has among the lowest permitting fees of any municipality in South Florida. We're going to keep them low, too.
- The inspectors also will be able to upload inspection results from the job site, thus allowing for a quicker response time. Productivity continues to improve in this department.

Finally, I should mention the obvious: This department has played a chief role in the very successful early phases of construction of our new Village Hall, and will continue to lead this exciting project. So Hats off to you, Director Silva. Or should I say hard hats off to you!

PERSONNEL

Since our early beginnings, we've enjoyed a small, efficient, and highly competent workforce. Currently, we are able to offer exemplary services and programs for our 25,000 residents with a staff of just 90 employees... This outstanding figure includes 40-sworn and four-civilian staff in our police department. All tolled, this translates to about one single municipal worker for every 300 residents of Palmetto Bay.

Quite frankly, I'm shocked that this much quality of work gets done with so few employees – this small number of employees provide such great quality. It's testament to our management team and the culture of excellence that they have developed.

VILLAGE CLERK

Speaking of a key member of the management team and productivity, I also want to mention the efforts Clerk Rader is making to reduce Village Hall's impact on our environment. In recent months, we have gone green in the production and distribution of agenda packets – specifically, from producing 20 copies to just 12. If you've ever seen the size of the full-agenda we receive before every public meeting, you know this is an impressive reduction in the use of office paper.

We also encourage residents to view an abridged version of agenda online – rather than print out the entire file with all supporting documents. Try to read everything online and help save a forest! Before it was fashionable, Palmetto Bay took the green approach and has always placed the agendas, budgets, and notices on our website. Our business is available on-line, 24 / 7, without killing trees.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

All the information in the world is useless if you do not have easy access to it. Early on, the Village Council recognized that a strong public-communication program is necessary in the operation of a truly transparent government. We have been able to capitalize on green, environmentally-friendly technologies to ensure that we meet – and even anticipate – the demand for credible and timely information... This has been achieved through the able assistance of our Public Information Officer, Bill Kress.

Last year, we eliminated our traditional paper-based newsletter by transitioning to a highly cost-effective combination of all-electronic, all-green communication vehicles. We now offer a much more robust and interactive website that features streaming video and frequent Village News updates. And more recently, in response to a growing need for green resources and information on sustainability, a new page called “Village Green” was developed to meet that demand.

Perhaps the biggest news on the communications front this year was the successful launch of *e-Currents*, our electronic newsletter that is distributed via e-mail at least once a month. Readership continues to grow, people are loving it.

But here's where the true benefit of electronic communications comes in: it costs only about \$35 a month to produce! Compare this to an annual cost of \$32,000 to produce and distribute the quarterly paper-based newsletters we used to print and mail out. Everyone should subscribe – if you haven't already... Do so tonight before you leave. There's a subscription slip just like this in your take-home bag.

You have probably also seen a significant up tick in the volume of news coverage – mostly positive, I might add. This doesn't happen by accident; it occurs as a result of relationship building with TV stations and newspaper reporters, assignment editors, and feature magazines. We're doing all of that – and quite well.

Thanks, Bill.

Be sure to take the “Mayor's Challenge” when you visit our homepage. Your hit will be registered and tallied up to measure how well Palmetto Bay stacks up against other green municipalities in South Florida. All this leads to a free family pass to the South Florida Living Green Fair in November and the possibility that our Village will win the opportunity to use an original 45-foot mural by famed marine artist and conservationist, Wyland. Come on folks, if everyone hits this link when they go home tonight, we could really win this contest.

CONCLUSION

As I draw to a close I want you to know that I personally enjoy the responsibility – the opportunity – to stand before you, my fellow residents and taxpayers, to provide this yearly report. In this, its Seventh Year, Palmetto Bay continues to grow, improve, and move forward in a positive direction.

Much of the success of this outstanding Village is attributable to the involvement of our residents. Thanks to all of you. I always welcome your positive and constructive feedback. Good night and thank you for being such an active part of these first seven years.

- end -