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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

2017 State of the Department

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Good morning/afternoon:

Welcome to the 2017 State of the Department. It is great to see you all.

I hope you enjoyed the video; phenomenal when you think about it. A lot has happened in the world and in our Department since the last time we met. In the past two years, we've witnessed fast-paced change that has transformed the way we communicate, changed the way we perform our jobs, significantly expanded how we deliver services and, in many ways, reinvented how we go about things in our daily lives.

This marks the ninth year of our State of the Department events. We've come a long way and have been through a lot together. Some of you have been with us for the whole ride while, for others, this is a first. What's most important about these gatherings is acknowledging the important role that each one of you play in the state of our Department.

Every year we establish a theme or focal point for the Department. In the past, our themes have included: seeing ourselves as "Game Changers"; challenging ourselves to "Raise the Bar" and to "Bring It"; taking personal responsibility by recognizing "It's Up to Me"; striving to take it "Over the Top"; and last year affirming our commitment to go "Above and Beyond." Each of those themes remains relevant today. They're intended to build upon each other and to remind us of the importance of our work.

For me this year marks 11 years with Los Angeles County and the Department. This week also marks a significant milestone in my aging process, so I have been more than a little contemplative and nostalgic about all that we have faced and accomplished as a Department – and, all that has been packed into my 50 years of living. I am here to tell you, there's a lot there!

Here in the Department, we've seen the complete transformation of how we record and index property documents, we launched electronic ordering of vital and business records and e-recording, we implemented vote by mail tracking systems, designed a new state-of-the-art voting experience, fostered a strengths-based management approach and successfully navigated multiple transitions of leadership in the County and in our own senior management team.

Personally, I celebrated more than 25 years of marriage, watched my kids graduate from college and embark on their own career paths and completed my own formal education. Along the way,

I've had the opportunity to address issues I really care about on a statewide and national platform in ways I never quite imagined.

Together, we have witnessed history being made in terms of marriage equality, the first African American elected and the first woman nominated on a major party ticket for President and the highest number of registered voters in the County's history. And, that just scratches the surface.

I must admit there is a temptation to sit back and rest; to take inventory of the accomplishments, accept the defeats and failures; and to retreat into a predictable pattern of events while coasting through the next few years – more in the background and less in the spotlight.

But, there's this other part of me that knows that's not acceptable and knows that's not who we are. That part of me that looks around and sees the demand for our services growing every day and the needs our community expanding and becoming more and more complex.

I think about my own expectations of the world around us – how I seek convenience, access and responsiveness in my interactions; how some of the changes I see invigorate me and others infuriate me. And, I recognize that retreating is not an option. This isn't a spectator sport and the stakes are way too high to disengage.

So, that brings me to this year's theme – *Embrace the Future!*

Embracing the future takes courage and initiative to face the unknown and to do so with optimism, determination and hope. It's a call to action to challenge the status quo, to resist complacency and to strive for more. Like it or not, embracing the future means we don't get to take a break. In fact, it requires us to step up our game.

The next few years will require focus, dedication and, most importantly, teamwork to face the many changes ahead and to make them work for the success of the Department and for those we serve. If you think about how much change was represented in the video representing the past two years, what we know is that the pace of change is getting faster and broader and it is up to us to keep up. Otherwise, we will become stagnant and ineffective; or, worse yet, insignificant.

To be truly successful in dealing with change – as individuals and as an organization – we must find solutions together. We must face each day with our eyes open and our radar fine-tuned. By doing this, we will grow stronger and face the uncertainties with commitment and resolve. This can only happen if we are willing to take small action steps forward and adapt to what the future holds. If we don't – if we sit back and wait for others to take those steps – we become figments of the past instead of creators of the future.

But, it isn't just about adapting to or accepting change. Embracing the future calls on us to initiate the change; to clear the path and allow progress and change to occur in the services and programs that intersect with or rely on what we do here at the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk.

That is why we are on the cusp of implementing major changes like the new voting system and why, just last week we took a proposal to the Productivity and Quality Commission requesting

funding for a new customer queuing system aligned to changes in our public service areas that will streamline and improve our customer service delivery.

Embracing the future also comes with an obligation to prepare our workforce. That's why we continue to expand training in our Lean Six Sigma program and to promote a culture of continuous improvement and ongoing education. And, that's why we need to prioritize contingency planning and protocols, so we aren't caught unprepared when systems go down or when we need to respond to an emergency.

It's also why it's so important that we continue to identify and grow leaders. Earlier this year we launched our third cohort in the Emerging Leaders Program to do just that. If any of our emerging leaders – those in this year's cohort or graduates of the program – are here in the room, please stand so we can acknowledge you.

So, what do we know about the future of our programs and services? In the next couple of years, there are already many changes and opportunities on the horizon. As we sit here today, the California legislature is considering a host of new laws that will fall to us to administer. These include possible recording fee increases, expanded language services for voters, a proposed bond measure to fund new voting equipment and consideration of data changes that could affect birth and marriage records.

Countywide, we're in midst of major projects to address homelessness; a plan to regulate recreational use of marijuana; coordination of health agencies; and an initiative advancing pay equity and expansion of job opportunities for women. Here in our Department, next year we begin the long-anticipated transition to a new voting experience and we're fast approaching seeing most our documents recorded electronically.

The technology infrastructure rely on is in a constant state of change moving toward cloud based storage, reduction of paper records, new productivity tools and expanded communication applications like Office 365, SharePoint and Skype for Business. All of which will impact our Department in one way or another.

Across the Department, we are pushing to bring about the best in everyone. We are looking to improve service through strategic and deliberate change; exceeding the expectations of the Board of Supervisors and the public who look to us for answers.

As has become our tradition, we've compiled a Top 10 list of departmental achievements to highlight from the past year and to set the course for where we're headed next. This list is never all inclusive, but is a representative sample of the many accomplishments across the whole Department.

Again, that was just a sampling, but it's also very impressive. Give yourselves a hand for such great achievements.

In the spirit of creating the future, there are two ways we want you to engage today and to remind you of your voice and your impact.

First, we want you to help us select the next generation of “I Voted” stickers for Los Angeles County. Please mark your ballot and drop it in a ballot box when you leave today. We will tally all the votes and begin the process of introducing the new design in 2018.

Second, we want to capture your top of mind ideas about what the future holds for our Department.

Here's what some predict we will see around us in the not-too-distant future: self-driving cars, drone delivery services, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, robotic assistance, expanded space exploration and soon maybe even habitation on other planets. It's hard to imagine just how much change we will witness, but it's clear that it's coming.

So, what about here at the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk? What does the future hold for the work you do? When you think of the next two-five- or ten years, what comes to mind?

We provided each of you some post-it notes and a Sharpie, so you can share your thoughts about the future. One way to approach this is to think about your work and ask yourself the question – “Wouldn't it be cool if _____?” and then jot down your quick thoughts and post them on the board out in the hall on your way out. We will compile all the responses received and integrate your visions into our strategic planning.

Finally, Embracing the Future is about making sure we thrive.

It is important to note that change is hard. It involves risk and that can be scary. The thing about the future is that we may not always have the answers we need. We might not always know the outcome. We might not always get it right. In fact, we can pretty much count on getting it wrong along the way. And, that will test our patience, frustrate us and, if we're not careful, it will make us lose track of why we're here and what we are charged with doing. Change can feel overwhelming, but only if we let it.

There is a great quote that says “change is inevitable, growth is optional” – This should be a place of growth for each of you and for our organization. That's what will come from embracing the future.

I want each of you to leave today with a clear message about what change really is – and, that is opportunity. Change offers the opportunity to contribute to the overall good of society; to impact in a meaningful way the communities in which we live. An opportunity to demonstrate the many years of wisdom and experience you acquire through public service and to bring that with you as you embrace the future; to use that experience to help us achieve the goals we set and, to persevere through any challenges we face.

Now is not the time to retreat. It is the time to create. I am excited to embrace the future side-by-side with you and to see where that future takes us. So, buckle up, hunker down and dig deep – the future starts now. Embrace it.

Thank you!