



The Abrams Agenda

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Palm Beach County
Commissioner
Steven Abrams

Farewell and Thank You

It is hard to believe that nine and a half years have come and gone and that due to term limits this will be my final newsletter as county commissioner. I started out in elected [office](#) in Boca Raton in 1989 and have been re-upped by the voters on average every three years since. Whew. The Fire-Rescue extrication team is going to have to remove me from my seat.

You could say I am leaving on a low note. Last month, a banner headline in *The Palm Beach Post* read, county “unemployment hits all-time low,” from 11.6% when I took [office](#) in 2009 to 3.1% today. [Working together](#), we helped create thousands of [jobs](#) in my district as we climbed out of the Great [Recession](#). I was proud to have a key role in breaking a bureaucratic logjam to retain one of my district’s biggest employers, Modernizing Medicine, whose expansion was called “Palm Beach County’s biggest economic development announcement in years.”

At the same time, I sought to hold the line on taxes. The tax rate has not increased since I took office. I opposed a number of sales tax proposals (famously calling one “half-baked”) and was a part of the effort to remove special-interest projects from the penny sales tax before it went to the voters. Along the way, I fought to restore the county’s decimated road and bridge budget. All six of the nine county-owned Intracoastal Waterway bridges in my district were replaced, renovated or repaired during my watch.

In addition, we finally cut the ribbon this year on the I-95/Spanish River interchange. I held a press conference to announce a proposed design for this massive project when I was in my first year as mayor of Boca Raton!

A few years into office, I suggested changing the BCC Chairman title to County Mayor to raise accountability and enable the county to be recognized on an equal basis with our neighbors to the south. I was honored to be named the first mayor of Palm Beach County (which, for trivia buffs, makes me the only person in the county to have served as both a city mayor and county mayor). I co-founded the “Three Mayors” meetings with Broward and Miami-Dade, as well as the Coastal Ocean Task Force, to foster regional cooperation on issues ranging from [economic](#) development to climate change.

As County Mayor, I shepherded through the sale of the Mecca Farms property so those 2,000 acres could be used for water restoration, not 90 million square feet of development. Working with regional agencies, the county is taking steps to store excess stormwater, instead of standing by while millions of gallons go out to tide.

As a member and past chairman of the Solid Waste Authority, I supported initiatives to make the county one of the biggest producers of renewable energy in the United States. The SWA opened a second plant to turn trash into electricity, generating millions in revenue and lighting up thousands of homes.

I have been a public transportation advocate, even referred to as the “commuting commissioner” for riding Tri-Rail to work daily. Serving on the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), we expanded service, had fewer late trains, safer stations, more airport connections, new engines and increased ridership. I am so pleased that I will be able to continue my involvement as SFRTA’s executive director starting January 1.

And so I am leaving elected office for now the same way I entered it three decades ago—with enthusiasm! I have been proud to play a part in local, county, and regional decisions in what is considered one of the premier locations of the entire country.

I have many people to thank: my constituents for giving me this unique opportunity to serve them; my supporters through ten campaigns; the dedicated staff members I have worked with; my fellow elected officials; and of course, my family. I have been outspoken over the years based on what you have taught me. The bad jokes, however, are mine.

As my successor, Robert Weinroth, and the new Board take their oaths on November 20, I refer to another oath taken by young Athenians many centuries ago—a credo I have tried to live by: “We will never bring disgrace upon our city by an act of dishonesty. We will strive to quicken the public’s sense of civic duty. We will transmit this city greater than it was transmitted to us.”

For now I hold the office of citizen, and there are no term limits.



**If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact my office
at 561-355-2204 or email at sabrams@pbcgov.org.**
