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2018 State of the County Address

April 10, 2018

Andrew T. Kostielney, President

Board of Commissioners

President Morton, esteemed members of Council, Auditor Hamann, and fellow residents of St. Joseph County, thank you for the opportunity to stand before you tonight and talk about the great work being accomplished daily by the dedicated public servants throughout all departments of county government. In 2017, we made great strides towards accomplishing our vision, “to develop a region that builds quality of life through economic growth and safe living,” by embracing our values of, “efficiency, transparency, and responsibility” and by living our mission of, “efficiently providing public services that build strong and sustainable communities.”

This year, 33 departments submitted reports, and I would like to thank them for these submissions, and for all they do each day for the residents of St. Joseph County. I will take a few moments to recognize these departments and highlight their accomplishments.

The Department of Adult Probation has been working on reducing recidivism rates through the continued development of a Pretrial Services Division. As St. Joseph County is part of a 10-county pilot program in Indiana working toward Pretrial Reform. To help with these efforts, the department received a grant of \$308,500.

Archives received 1,215 boxes in 2017 - the third highest amount since its founding. They continue to work with volunteers from the South Bend Area Genealogical Society on indexing several databases.

The Area Plan Commission prepared for assuming the administrative duties of the Area Board of Zoning Appeals and zoning administration from the Building Department. As of January 1, 2018, the Area Plan Commission has been responsible for all zoning administration.

The Office of the Assessor completed the fourth cycle of cyclical reassessment of approximately 30,000 residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural parcels. They processed over 3,700 appeals, and completed a review and assessment on over 11,000 business personal property accounts. The office has held extended hours to meet with taxpayers in the evenings to review assessments. They have also expanded online services to include sales information, neighborhood maps, ownership and tax information.

The Office of the Auditor worked to increase transparency by including a variety of financial and budget reports on the County website. They also worked to create new financial reports for the Council, Commissioners, and website. This year, they will be working on the selection of an Enterprise Resource Planning system and plan to improve and revamp budgeting procedures to provide additional information for Council and Commissioners.

The Office of the Clerk of the Courts completed a successful implementation of e-filing in both the Circuit and Superior Courts beginning in May of 2017. E-filing in Probate Court began in October of 2017. From May 19th through the end of the year, 22,433 new court cases were filed electronically, totaling 38,163 in Circuit and Superior Courts for 2017.

The Community Corrections Advisory Board helped oversee the implementation a pilot felony pretrial diversion program, in coordination with Adult Probation and the Prosecutor.

The Office of the Coroner responded to 510 calls, and have worked to significantly reduced costs. Autopsies are \$1400 less, transport of bodies is \$450 less, toxicology blood draws are now included in transport costs, saving \$500 per draw, and morgue storage is now available at no cost to the county. Previously the cost was \$1,500 per day.

The Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau provided services to 144 families, involving 256 children. They registered and tracked the completion of court-ordered basic divorce education and co-parenting classes for 8,194 parties.

The Ducomb Center provided GPS monitoring for individuals in the Felony Pretrial Pilot Program. Due to sentencing changes at the state level, more clients are ordered into the community corrections program.

The Department of Economic Development spent 2017 “setting the table” for future development with a primary focus on advancements in the New Carlisle area. 486 commercial construction-building permits were issued in the county, equaling \$323.9 Million of new capital investment. This is an increase of 1.7% from 2016.

The Emergency Management Agency took over the county grants department. Throughout 2017, the agency applied for 44 different state and federal grants. They also hosted a statewide exercise collaborating with five different districts and the Director of Homeland Security.

The Department of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) completed the mapping for the 911-dispatch center. They set up over 40 different map layers for dispatchers to use when a resident calls 911. The department also maintains 36 departmental layouts and 137 layers for maps for use by almost all departments of the county.

The Department of Health Environmental Services Division implemented 12 health programs including sampling and monitoring drinking water wells in Granger. The Foods Division conducted 2,111 inspections, and brought in almost \$200,000 in food permit renewals, issuing 217 new permits. The Health

Education Division completed 973 presentations or programs educating nearly 13,000 residents. This Division also accepted an agreement with the South Bend Community School Corporation to provide health education according to State standards for all primary centers. The Vital Records Division issued 15,076 Birth Certificates and 17,922 Death Certificates in 2017.

The Department of Human Resources was restructured at the beginning of 2018, and a new interim director was named. She immediately wrote the department's mission statement to, "to provide knowledge, counsel and services to help St. Joseph County attract, develop, and retain a talented, diverse workforce."

The Department of Information Technologies completed the implementation of both the VoIP Cisco phones and full client installations of Office 365 to all county employees, as well as continuing the technology refresh program.

The Juvenile Justice Center has reduced juvenile commitments to the Indiana Department of Corrections by 51% since 2013. They have reduced admissions to the JJC by 25% during this time, and have lowered their daily population in detention by 37%.

The Department of Maintenance assumed responsibilities for the upkeep of additional facilities, including the Juvenile Justice Center. The installed an updated panic button security system in the County-City Building and its surrounding court buildings. The maintenance staff worked with Performance Services to help identify and coordinate the energy savings upgrades to the county facilities.

The Department of Museums reported that nearly 50,000 individuals visited the museums' exhibits, toured its historic houses, and participated in its school and public programs. The History Museum has over 700 member households and welcomed 5,446 students.

The Department of Parks and Recreation benefits the community public health and economic development by managing over 1,300 acres of public access greenspace, river and stream corridors, wetlands, and woods. Last year, they welcomed 317,000 visitors to their events.

Portage Manor worked to decrease its operating budget by \$300,000 last year, and averaged an occupancy of 133 patients. They also organized a 501c3 charity called "Friends of Portage Manor, Inc", to help with fundraising efforts to offset anticipated budget shortfalls.

The Department of Procurement (formerly Purchasing) spent much of 2017 working with over 50 county employees from 20 departments to document

and outline current financial, accounts payable and human capital tracking processes as preparation for the selection of an Enterprise Resource Planning System. The department also started a surplus auction to gain revenue from assets declared obsolete, but had not reached the end of their useful life. Both were accomplished while still performing the business of processing purchase orders at an average rate of 70 per day.

The Office of the Prosecuting Attorney filed over 1,600 misdemeanor and over 5,300 felony charges, held offenders accountable, and secured convictions, such as a 130 year sentence in a cold case murder. Their child support division exceeded state and national averages and collected over \$27.5 Million for families. 2018 will see the office continue to aggressively embrace solutions for combating the opioid epidemic through their work with law enforcement and community partners.

The Public Safety Communications Consortium (PSAP) fully consolidated its computer aided dispatch system. The center received 450,847 calls in 2017, a decrease of 50,518 from the year before. The PSAP center is pleased to report that as of December 31, 2017, 72% of employees are fully cross-trained; which is quite the accomplishment since only 31% were cross-trained four months prior.

The Department of the Public Defender has 21 felony deputies, who handled 1,682 cases in 2017, an increase of 98 cases from the previous year. At the JJC, public defenders handled in excess of 650 cases. The department also handled 2,180 misdemeanor cases last year. This reimbursement will be approximately \$867,514 for 2017.

The Department of Public Works completed over \$42 Million in community investment on the Road and Bridge program in 2017 and improved approximately 108 centerline miles of roads throughout the county. Major projects included receiving \$1 Million of Community Crossings Matching Grant Program funding to rehabilitate Pierce Road and \$670,000 from the same grant program for local paving. They completed the McKinley Highway at Ash Road intersection improvement in partnership with Elkhart County, the Olive Road and Sample project in partnership with South Bend, the Fir and Brick roundabout improvement, and the LaSalle Trail Extension - Phase II. In 2018, the department will work on several other major road projects, such as the Cleveland Road Corridor Reconstruction.

The Office of the Recorder recorded 41,686 documents in 2017. The office added another layer of cyber security to its recording software so that in the event of a local natural disaster, or malware, the county would not suffer a loss of recorded data or financial information.

The Sheriff's Department services 40% of the population of St. Joseph County, and is responsible for patrolling 85% of the County's land area. The department has 116 sworn Merit Officers, 73 of whom are assigned to Patrol. The Jail Division booked 9,091 inmates in 2017, thankfully none of them named Hamann or Kostielney, for an average daily population of 627. They received over \$1.2 Million in reimbursements from the federal government for housing federal inmates and over \$1 Million from the IDOC for housing their inmates. The Civil Division conducted 502 mortgage foreclosure sales and 1,876 evictions and repossessions. The Warrants Division received 9818 warrants from the courts. The Sheriff's Department was dispatched on 44,721 calls, and the Police Investigative Services completed 5,103 case reports. The county and the University of Notre Dame have reached an agreement to move the Cyber Crimes Unit to the campus of Notre Dame. This will make it one of eight units nationally that uses a hybrid approach to law enforcement working with academic institutions.

The Soil and Water Conservation District completed its second year of a multi-county Clean Water Indiana Grant project. They planted 434.9 acres of cover crops to help improve soil health, and participated in 240 school programs.

The Superior Court reported that 30,913 new cases were filed. Further, 5,200 residents appeared for jury service in 128 jury trials. They also established a Title IV-D Court to deal with the establishment of paternity and collection of child support when the prosecutor has appeared on behalf of the children. Under the coordination of Judge Hostetler, state and federal judges gathered at the statue of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fr. Theodore Hesburgh in downtown South Bend in September to reaffirm the commitment of our courts to equal justice for all.

The Office of the Treasurer collected \$268.6 Million in taxes last year an increase of \$7.6 Million from the prior year. The total amount of money held in investments was \$87.2 Million, an increase of \$2.2 Million from 2016. These investments earned nearly \$2 Million in interest. 2017 was the second year the office offered e-billing in lieu of mailing out tax bills. 3,385 residents have signed up for this service - an increase of 2,023.

The Department of Voter Registration updated 16,054 voter records through voter registration applications. Through the federally and state-mandated Voter List Maintenance Program the office also made 9,858 records inactive.

Lastly, the Department of Weights and Measures, through the help of MACOG, purchased a $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton pick-up truck with an insert for testing fuel meters at fueling centers.

Under the leadership of Commissioner Fleming, the county began holding monthly meetings with those departments under the Commissioner's umbrella. This group drafted Vision, Mission, and core Values statements to help shape the proper direction for our county. They worked to develop a three-year strategic growth model and identified key projects that could be started in the first year. I am pleased to say that we are well on our way to accomplishing our goals.

Starting in the bottom left quadrant of our chart is the goal of having a safe, efficient community. This begins by bringing efficiency within county government. The Department of Procurement, under the direction of Bree Roberts, has been leading the efforts to navigate the Enterprise Resource Planning project from charting the various department processes, to drafting the RFP, to leading the selection committee through the elevation to demonstration phase, and eventually later this year, to bring before this council a final proposal for funding. Over 50 county employees have put countless hours into this project from 20 different departments. This system will help streamline all facets of day-to-day activities.

Ultimately, 14 different vendors submitted proposals, and the selection committee spent weeks pouring over the proposals, narrowing them to 3 finalists. Crowe Horwath will demonstrate their system from May 1st through May 3rd. Tyler Technologies, Inc. will be demonstrating their system from May 21st through May 23rd. Infor Public Sector, Inc will be demonstrating their system May 30th through June 1st. All demonstrations will be available from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. I recommend all members of Council come to the demonstrations and witness how significant these systems would be for all County departments. We will look back on this three years from now and wonder how we ever conducted business without it.

The Department of Information Technologies has also been working tirelessly under the direction of Scott Senff to implement several new IT initiatives. They have been working with the courts to help automate the Jury Questionnaire system, and have been working at the Jail to implement a new Jail Management system. They are also bringing Office 365 training, tools, and libraries to all employees. This, alone, has increased productivity, as employees can access work product from their mobile and home devices, along with state-of-the-art software. Most importantly, under the guidance of Auditor Hamann and Councilman Corey Noland, the county will be moving to a formalized system of IT Governance. With a re-configured Data Board, the county will be better able to assess long-term IT needs, and move away from a system based on the tyranny of the moment.

By embracing these technological advances, we can bring increased efficiency and productivity to our employees, and through them, provide a better level of service to our community.

The upper-left quadrant is the goal of Lead County Vision. This refers to the county government leading by example and representing the type of community where our residents are proud to call home. Projecting a strong brand for St. Joseph County is important for economic development and for fostering a sense community among citizens. We do great work; but have struggled with communicating this to our citizens. This needs to end.

The new county logo represents our natural resources by combining green, which symbolizes growth and our great parks system, and the letters “SJC” being formed from script reminiscent of our river and forward momentum. The “C” for county falls in the center of the logo because our county should strive to be the epicenter for the region – a safe place to live and work, with a rich heritage of traditions and a strong cultural scene – perfect for raising a family, conducting business, or receiving a world-class education.

Throughout the first half of 2018, this logo will be integrated into several new branding components. New courthouse way-finding signage was recently installed, and new signs will soon be going up in the County-City Building. These signs will help make it easier for citizens to navigate the various county departments and quickly find the offices they need. We are currently rolling out the final products of this branding initiative. Soon, all departments will be utilizing new envelopes, business cards, letterhead, and email signatures.

We have also been working on increasing our web presence. More and more departments are taking advantage of our website, “sjcindiana.com”. This January, over 40 employees went through a weeklong training on posting documents, creating forms, and using our website to its fullest potential. It is a great tool for our residents to apply for permits, view budget information, and interact with county departments.

In January, we added a “Report a Concern” feature on the homepage. Citizens can use this feature to report anything from a road concern, to a customer service concern. These requests are immediately forwarded to the appropriate department who can address the issue. In the first three months, we have received 60 requests through this portal. I am confident this is just the beginning as more and more people become familiar with how easy it is to communicate with their local government.

Last week, we also launched Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and Twitter, Instagram accounts. We continue our partnership with WNIT Public Access to

record and broadcast Commissioner and Council meetings. The videos are posted to our YouTube page, and to the county website. No longer is traveling to the County-City Building a barrier for citizens to be informed of the workings of their government. They can watch our meetings from the comfort of their homes, and interact with their government from the convenience of their smartphones. They will be able to keep up to date with upcoming deadlines, engage with other citizens, stay informed of the latest news from our government, and communicate with us more effectively.

Through the new branding, the website, and social media presence, we are beginning to reshape how the county conducts the business of the people. These tools will allow us to market our community to attract new businesses, and by providing excellent customer service to our citizens, we will better retain those who already call St. Joseph County, “home”.

Another quality of life issue that we are continually looking to improve upon is our leaf pick-up program. With the leadership of Councilman Robert Kruszynski and Auditor Hamann, we listened to the feedback from our constituents and modified the leaf program, allocating resources where they were most needed. We’ve also released a new RFP for leaf pick-up that will hopefully provide greater flexibility and continued improvements in the process.

The top-right quadrant represents “sustainable economic growth”. The Department of Economic Development, under the direction of Bill Schalliol, has been working on several major initiatives to accomplish this goal of fostering strong economic growth.

Phase I of the St. Joseph Energy Center became operational in March of this year. The department is currently working with four prospects for new projects in the New Carlisle industrial area and anticipates working with the St. Joseph Energy Center team to move forward with Phase II of their project.

We initiated Project ONE RING, a master planning effort for the area. This 7-consultant planning study will not only assist in creating a master plan for the northwestern part of the County but will also serve as the framework for site certifying several hundred acres of property through the INOCRA site certification process, making us even more attractive to development.

We’ve already begun to see the positive impact of these efforts by the petition for a new concrete batch plant in that area, which indicates the private sector has noticed that future construction opportunities are on the horizon.

Another focus involves the Capital Avenue Economic Development Area, originally created to support the AM General Commercial division. Recently, SF Motors, based out of China with a US office in Santa Clara, CA, bought the

Commercial division from AM General. The department has been working with the new ownership team on the transition and planning for reuse of the site. Mr. Schalliol was on hand in California when SF Motors unveiled the electric vehicle that will be built at the Mishawaka plant.

We're continuing to explore the economic viability of SR 933, which is one of the most underdeveloped corridors in the entire county. To better serve this area Parks and Public Works sought funding to complete the LaSalle Trail to the Indiana-Michigan State Line. The funding approved by Council was from the Hotel-Motel Tourism fund.

Last year, the county committed over \$18 million to the South Shore Double Track project, continuing our commitment to bring 90-minute service to Chicago. We are working with South Bend and NICTD to locate a station with maximum economic impact and minimal residential impact.

Most significantly, the Department of Economic Development is tasked with reorganizing all aspects of the building process, leading to a restructuring of all areas that touch commercial and residential construction. This will help companies and individuals more efficiently navigate the development process by making permitting and plan reviews more streamlined and expedited. This has been a tremendous area of opportunity for the county in the past and we are finally able to commit the necessary resources to make it happen.

The final quadrant in our chart represents exceptional customer service. This not only means great service to our residents, but also great service to our employees. When our employees feel valued, and work in a positive environment that embraces technology to make their tasks easier and more efficient, they will be better able to provide a high level of service to the public. After better technology, input from county departments identified HR as the area most in need of improvement.

Beginning in January of this year, Kimberly Karkiewicz was named the Interim Director of Human Resources. She and her team are working on establishing a customer-focused environment to become more clearly connected to support departments and employees alike. They seek to build the reputation of St. Joseph County as a great place to work by transforming the Human Resources system.

Human Resources focuses on four initiatives for 2018, the first of which is employee attraction. Job postings have been revamped to highlight the benefits of working for St. Joseph County. They are also reworking job descriptions, the hiring process, and centralizing orientation. Departments are finding it difficult to recruit and keep talented professionals.

The second initiative focuses on employee retention. HR is working with individual departments to update organizational charts, revise position descriptions, define training requirements and identify countywide training programs to improve service.

The third initiative focuses on internal communications. Kim is meeting with department heads to discuss the individual needs of their department. Last month, she sent out our first monthly HR newsletter and is working to put various HR toolkits on our county HR website.

Lastly, the department is focused on improving safety and updating existing policies. She has formed a safety compliance committee and will be looking to update the employee policy manual and extend HR best practices across all departments.

I am also happy to report that effective next Tuesday, Kim will be the permanent HR Director.

With all the wonderful things accomplished in 2017, we know the full impacts of the circuit breaker looms. We need to continue the hard work of tightening our belts to continue to deliver the essential services our citizens expect. The good news is that our past efforts have been successful. St. Joseph County continues to be in a strong financial position. We have a AA Bond Rating from S&P. At the start of 2018, we had cash reserves of over \$18.5 million in the General fund and \$6 million in CEDIT. St. Joe County had a Total Net Cash balance of over \$74 million, which is more than double that of South Bend, and 10 times that of Mishawaka. There is indeed light at the end of the tunnel.

This past year has brought about quite a few changes at the county level. Departments are adapting, and are excited about the new direction we taking to embrace technology. As elected officials, it is our responsibility to support our employees who provide essential services to our community on a daily basis. The state of our county is strong, and will grow even stronger as long as we continue to work together.

Thank you.