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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE JONATHAN DELAGRAVE'S
2019 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS**
(As prepared for delivery)

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, Members of the Board of Supervisors, Youth in Governance representatives, distinguished guests, residents of Racine County:

I am honored and humbled to stand before you to give my first State of the County Address after you entrusted me to serve a second term as County Executive.

Racine County truly is in unprecedented times. A few months ago, I saw the movie, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and became fascinated by the story of the rock band Queen and how they blazed their own trail. Thirty-four years ago, did Queen and lead singer Freddie Mercury know when they released that song – that epic, groundbreaking song *Bohemian Rhapsody*, that they would forever be known as the band that changed the history of rock music?

We know one thing for sure: Change is inevitable. We are setting the groundwork today for a tremendous future for our community. I'm proud of the steps we have already taken, and I challenge all of us – myself included - to question our old way of thinking and embrace new ideas, new models, and new heights of imagination.

A few weeks ago, this board met Oliver Buechse, founder of My Strategy Source and co-founder of AI Wisconsin, and the consultant who will lead our Digital County initiative starting next month, pending County Board approval. In his

presentation, Oliver noted that Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is likely to be the “most disruptive force in technology in the coming decade and companies that embrace AI may get a competitive edge while those that don’t risk extinction.” (Bloomberg Intelligence, Oct 2017).

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, in an article posted just last week, claims that “nearly half of the occupational tasks performed by humans in Wisconsin (47.5%) can be replaced by computer-driven technologies that exist now.” In other words, more than 800,000 current jobs are at “high risk of elimination because of current technologies.”

Wisconsin and the Midwest are trailing in awareness on AI preparedness and the technological implications. Our old way of manufacturing will be altered by AI. Our region has a choice to ignore the AI wave, or influence the shape and benefits from the trend.

So, what IS a Digital County? It’s as grand as setting the stage for being the first 5G County in the Country. And it’s as ordinary as shifting the model of how we deliver our County services or distribute information every day. It’s setting guiding principles for a Digital future strategic plan, including ethical guidelines and privacy policies on the use of data. To be clear, an emphasis on protecting the privacy of citizens is a must. Simply, what a Digital County is, or becomes, ...is up to all of us.

Our Digital future depends on our collective and collaborative vision. Racine County’s digital future is not just the product of one man or one I.T. project or one break-through technology or – congratulations to the City of Racine - one Smart City Designation.

And our Digital future is not dependent on one entity, even if that entity is a global leader in AI and technological innovation. What Foxconn offers us, and what Chairman Gou reiterated in his meeting with me and other local leaders last week, is a rock-solid commitment to create an advanced high-tech ecosystem throughout the State.

The transformational effect in Racine County has already been significant:

- Dozens of local businesses awarded construction contracts;

- More than \$2.2 million invested in Racine-based worker trainings;
- I-94 largely completed by the end of the year;
- Water and sewer expanded in Mount Pleasant and Caledonia;
- New housing and commercial developments throughout the County;
- Two announced new hospitals;
- And of course, the Innovation Center.

This summer, Foxconn is ramping up construction on the next phase of Wisconsin Valley Science and Technology Park's Gen6 factory, with production slated to begin by the fourth quarter of 2020. This construction is undoubtedly a catalyst for further welcome investment in our region.

While we've seen public sentiment run the gamut between excitement and skepticism, we remain squarely focused on protecting taxpayers and positioning all County businesses for success. Let me reiterate: "Critics are loud, but success is louder." (Matshona Dhliwayo).

Our Digital County effort embraces building a "consensus corridor" that includes all of us - the County Board, the business community and private sector, our municipalities, our elected officials, and most importantly, our residents and future generations. It means empowering our greatest resources: our people, our partnerships, our projects, our information, and our County departments to inform and direct our time, energy, and funds.

Now, let me remind you: I am a practical, pragmatic County Executive who takes my responsibility as the steward of your hard-earned tax dollars very seriously. Therefore, a key component to our Digital County Future includes strong, consistent data collection and analysis. What gets measured gets improved.

Frankly, we do collect a lot of data already. As part of our Digital future, however, we will employ mission analytics, which is the use of advanced analytics on government operational data. This ability to measure our own performance against our stated goals, and to adjust our resources swiftly to better meet goals, means we can continue to do more with less, yes: "the Racine County Way."

Now let's celebrate our successes in Racine County this past year. As stated over and over, we can't and don't do our work alone. Incredible teamwork is key to where we are today.

Our partnership with Racine County Economic Development Corporation (RCEDC) continues to lead our community into a future of growth and opportunity. In 2018, RCEDC helped facilitate 21 development projects, over 300 new jobs, and \$116 million in private investment.

The impact spans from the west end to the east end. Lavelle announced its expansion in Burlington, Union Grove broke ground on the Granary, a multi-family development, and Raymond welcomed Larkman Construction Excavating Company from Milwaukee County.

An Italian manufacturer, Sacco, announced plans to build in Caledonia, thanks in large part to Supervisor Hincz; Seda and Badger Meter expanded in Mount Pleasant; and Atmosphere opened a co-working space in downtown Racine. Additionally, RCEDC continues to administer the county's matching grant program which supported 29 small businesses in Racine County during 2018. In total, 50 companies were positively impacted by the partnership between RCEDC and Racine County.

These are just some of the projects that Jenny Trick and her team at RCEDC helped bring to life. I'm especially proud that 45% of those projects were in support of minority- and women-owned businesses. We also need to highlight a very positive development for those at our new west-end Racine County Service Center at Fox River Plaza: Burlington's first Starbucks coming this fall!

We also are in position to deliver on years of recommendations and visioning from SEWRPC and our own Eastern Racine County Transportation Task Force. Our team has worked tirelessly to listen – not only to transportation, engineering, and development experts, but to the community at large. We are ready to move these projects forward for the benefit of future generations.

Our vision at the County is bigger than any one program, or one company, or one issue. Doing right by our residents and local businesses drives our work, and our focus is and always will be on positioning them for success.

Our Human Services Department, with the talented Director Hope Otto at the helm, is key to that vision. I'm excited to share some of the progress we've made on our vision of a fully capable and employed workforce.

On the journey to Uplift 900 City of Racine residents, Racine County has assisted over 140 residents receive their high school equivalency diploma or GED and 250 residents complete fully-funded training. In addition to that, over 950 residents – many of them unemployed, under-employed, or ex-offenders – received work-readiness support such as paid work experience, childcare, and transportation. For Racine residents who received short-term training in a skilled trade, they reported earning an average wage of over \$17 per hour.

This impact was made possible by the hard work of Racine County staff coordinating over 50 outreach events connecting more than 300 businesses to trained skilled talent.

Racine County's Workforce Solutions team continues to work on two talent recruitment initiatives:

- With the ManpowerGroup on a roadmap for local businesses to develop, retain, attract and grow talent; and
- Greater Racine County, a joint venture of the County, RCEDC and Real Racine, which is in the beginning stages of its effort to attract more workers and their families to our beautiful County.

We recognize we still need to reach more members of our community, and that workforce demand in Racine County will continue to grow. We, together with communities across the nation, have identified Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACES, as a major contributor to the cycle of poverty. Two years ago, we committed to adopting the principles of Trauma Informed Care to address the root causes that make it difficult for many people to get ahead. Our Youth & Family Division, under the direction of Manager Kerry Milkie, has truly made a difference in this area:

- In 2018, we were able to train 189 staff throughout the many divisions of Racine County Human Services Department (HSD)

- In 2018, we provided trainings to almost 500 individuals, representing 77 agencies. Participants included schools, childcare, attorneys, judges, social service agencies, therapists, social work staff and others.
- By the end of 2019, over 28 HSD and RUSD staff will have completed the Train the Trainer course to further embed the practice in the community.

In recognition of Racine County's success, the State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services' Trauma and Recovery Project has appointed two Racine County staff to their Executive Committee. Additionally, they have chosen Racine County to participate in a Train the Trainer program for a Trauma Parenting Curriculum.

Racine County also leads the state with our Youth Justice services, under the stalwart guidance of Juvenile Detention Superintendent Ed Kamin. Our Alternatives to Corrections through Education or ACE program contributes to one of the lowest recidivism rates in the state – 25% compared to the State's 99%! Our increased educational achievements, trauma-informed approach, and integrated mental health services and substance abuse treatment programs have led us to be a model for the whole State.

As the County Board knows, Racine County is pursuing a State-funded regional facility that would replicate our success on a higher level while keeping children in the youth justice system close to home. A diverse group of Youth Justice Advisory Committee members have been meeting monthly to inform us of the views and aspirations of the community. We will complete and submit a proposal to the State for the design and construction of a facility within the next few months.

Juvenile Detention is just one division of our Human Services Department that sets the standard for success:

-At our Economic Support Division's Call Center, we have one of the lowest error rates in the state.

-We began opioid screening and treatment for inmates at the Racine County Jail thanks in part to a collaboration between the Human Services Department and Sheriff's Office.

-We are implementing the nationally-recognized Credible Messenger program to connect youth involved in the justice system with adults who went through the system and transformed their lives.

- Comprehensive Community Services, a recovery-based program which helps those adults and children with mental health or addiction challenges, has grown to serve over 200 people in the last year – doubling in size. Participants report reduced hospital admissions and – perhaps best of all – increased life satisfaction.

At the core, isn't this what our work is all about? Helping support and improve people's lives?

We didn't accomplish these things using the old way of thinking. For example, we broke with tradition and allowed benefit specialists to work remotely for 2 to 3 days per week. The results showed a 15% rise in productivity, with employees reporting more job satisfaction, a better work-life balance, and less stress.

To replicate this success, our Human Resources Department, under the able leadership of Director Karen Galbraith, partnered with UW-Madison Extension staff. Together, they recently completed a Racine County employee survey to discover how we can be an employer of choice for our nearly 700 hard-working County employees. With a response rate of more than 82%, the survey will be a great tool to not only report the results, but create an action plan to increase productivity, save money, and retain our valued employees.

Because becoming a Digital County is not just about gathering data – it's about acting on it.

Last year, after almost a year and a half of work and countless interviews with key County staff, the County completed a countywide facilities study to serve as a roadmap for future planning decisions. To be clear, this is a living document. As we look at needed upgrades to our facilities, we will be following this roadmap to ensure decisions are made in a strategic and cost-effective manner.

A few years ago, we received both public feedback and data that demonstrated the pressing need for youth sports facilities in Racine County. Thus, our SC Johnson Community Sports Complex at Pritchard Park was born. First was the Aquatic Center. Next, in partnership with Racine United School District, is a

multipurpose turf stadium for football, soccer, and lacrosse. Early this summer, we expect to bring forward several measures that will allow construction on the stadium, plaza, concession stand, and various park improvements to begin in late summer or fall. We anticipate completion by next August so that local sports and community teams can utilize the field for the Fall 2020 sports season.

We want all our parks to be true assets for Racine County. Under Julie Anderson, our Public Works and Development Services Director and Dave Prott, our Highway and Parks Superintendent, we've recently made several investments and environmental enhancements in County parks. These includes plans for a new concession stand at Einer Fischer, improved water quality at Quarry Lake, wetland restoration at Pritchard, and -- thanks to the County Board's approval just a few weeks ago -- beer gardens this summer!

And speaking of upgrades, I can't wait for Range Time's year-round driving range to be constructed across the road at the Ives Grove Golf Course. This fantastic public-private partnership will bring more recreational opportunities for Racine County residents – and best of all, at no cost to County taxpayers.

Another Racine County jewel, Reefpoint Marina, continues to increase both slip occupancy and its national reputation: voted 1st Choice Marina by boater reviews on Active Captain in 2018, and Boater's Choice Marina for the third year in a row by Marinas.com.

As I said earlier, the Digital County vision is about analyzing data to make the most efficient use of our tax dollars. Whether it's a smart playground that can tell us the most popular pieces of equipment, a new app that guides the public to the closest bike path, or energy-efficient lighting at our Pritchard Park fields, our parks and cultural amenities are a key part of making Racine County a great place to live.

When you have bold ideas, you need bold leaders. Tonight, I'm pleased to recognize two new members of my cabinet, and one old face in a new role.

Brian Nelson officially started last week as Racine County's new Finance Director. For the last two and a half years, he impressed all of us as the Fiscal Manager for the Human Services Department. Brian also has nearly 30 years of progressively responsible financial experience in the private sector, and he's a Veteran of the

United States Air Force. He inherits a talented Finance Department and a strong, solid, and consistent County financial position due to conservative budgeting and healthy reserves. We continue to earn a strong Aa2 bond rating. I look forward to Brian's leadership and sense of humor as he continues to make fiscally-prudent decisions for our taxpayers.

Our Information Technology Department, although just one player in our Digital County initiative, spans across all County departments, municipalities, and technologies. We require a leader that can take several IT projects and make them more than the sum of their parts. I believe we have found her.

Before the County Board this evening is my appointment for the County's next IT Director. Shuchi Wadhwa has extensive experience in project management, strategic technology and data management, and cybersecurity. She has worked at the University of Wisconsin, Northwestern Mutual, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

We know the growth and expansion of the work that we do will not diminish. Liam Doherty, in his new role as the County Project Manager, and Shuchi will work closely together to ensure our priorities are met on time, on budget, and on target.

I cannot do this job without my Cabinet: those already mentioned and Michael Lanzdorf, our Corporation Counsel, who proves his invaluable worth every single day, Jackie Bratz, our Communications 911 Director, whose coolheaded leadership inspires me, and M.T. Boyle, my indispensable and effective Chief of Staff, who was just named one of Racine Mirror's 2019 Women of Worth. Congratulations, M.T.!

I also want to thank our former Corporation Counsel Jon Lehman, who stepped in to assist our finance department this spring, and Dave Huber, our interim IT Director. As always, Mark Schaaf, our Communication Manager, and the dependable Dawn Hendrickson keep our office running smoothly. You all have my deepest gratitude for the excellent work that you do every day.

I'm grateful for the support of County elected leaders: Sheriff Chris Schmaling, County Clerk Wendy Christensen, Treasurer Jane Nikolai, Clerk of Courts Sam Christensen, and District Attorney Tricia Hanson. We all will miss the former

Register of Deeds Tyson Fettes, who served the County well for many years and to whom I wish all the best in his new endeavor. I am also grateful for the conscientious and engaged 17 heads of municipal government from throughout the county. In this transformational time, it's more important than ever to continue our strong relationships and intergovernmental cooperation.

As always, I want to thank you, the County Board. I know the decisions that we ask of you are not always easy. I am committed to supply you with the information you need – quickly and openly – to act on behalf of your constituents. County Board Chairman Rusty Clark's collaborative leadership has been instrumental to the achievements of this past year and those to come. I truly appreciate Chairman Clark, Vice-Chairman Cooke, and all of you, whose steadfast commitment to do what is right for Racine County makes a better community for all of us to call home.

Our future depends on us now. It depends on our boldness, our vision, our determination, and our belief in ourselves. Like Queen and Freddie Mercury, let's step into our own spotlight. Our future is up to us. Let's build it together.

Thank you. God bless you and all of Racine County.

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