

## **As District Grows Protection Becomes Key**

FEDERAL GLOVER

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THE BIGGEST LESSON I learned from 2007 is not to take things for granted. One day you are as healthy as a horse, and the next day you are in the hospital ICU.

That is why one of my first actions as the new chairman of the Board of Supervisors will be the creation of a Public Protection Committee made up of two supervisors. That committee will be able to draw on the expertise of the Sheriff's Office, fire department, emergency services and health services.

In the past year, we made good progress in improving the health and quality of life for our county. Our county hospital, one of just eight in California, this year became a leader in patient-safety improvement. Our Sheriff's Office launched a Web site that shows whether registered sex offenders live near your home, or near your child's school. Last year we installed ARIES, the system that allows 48 law enforcement agencies to exchange information -- a system created in and by Contra Costa.

Contra Costa County has led the way in public protection. But it is amazing to me that this county has come this far without this committee. We have committees for all sorts of things, but we don't have a body that oversees studies, evaluates and makes suggestions to the Board of Supervisors on those matters that concern the safety and well-being of our residents.

We live in one of the most beautiful regions in the country, but what good is living in a million-dollar house if you are a prisoner of fear and you can't leave your house without looking over your shoulder?

For those of us fortunate enough to live in East County, we are coming together to build a community, working together to solve our challenges and build on our strengths.

Our quality of life continues to improve because of some of the measures we are taking in transportation by securing funding for eBART, nearing completion of the Highway 4 bypass and continuing to widen Highway 4 and improving safety measures on Vasco Road.

But there are challenges that face us. District 5 has become a poster child for the problems that face growing communities. Foremost among them is the home foreclosure crisis. Unfortunately, East County is Ground Zero for Bay Area foreclosures.

But foreclosures are simply a symptom of what's really wrong. Just as Section 8 is a symptom.

The root reason for the high concentration of foreclosures and rental units in East County is because of poor planning. To some area leaders, new housing growth was a sign of prosperity. In the eagerness to build new houses, they didn't take into account its impact on our infrastructure and our way of life.

It is no secret that I advocated slow, controlled growth. The Urban Limit Line was part of an attempt to rein in growth for growth's sake.

The problems we face now are the consequences of that poor planning.

As difficult and complex as the foreclosure problem is, we can still offer help. I have some things planned that might bring some relief to some homeowners and lenders.

Foreclosures will undoubtedly be a topic of discussion at the Building Community Implementation meeting that will be held Saturday in Antioch. That is where the ideas and issues brought forth by East County residents last year will be presented to our local decision makers.

In February, Assemblyman Mark DeSaulnier and I will jointly sponsor a workshop for homeowners facing the loss of their homes because of foreclosures.

We will make progress in 2008 but it won't be without challenges. We need to roll up our sleeves. I challenge all of you to be part of the solution.

We are going to take back our communities by working with our law enforcement agencies and community leaders.

We will provide job training opportunities to our young people and give them pathways to careers and colleges.

We will seek ways we can safeguard our Delta communities and agricultural lands from weak levees.

County employees will be there as part of the solution. They will be in the middle of it all in trying to help the public and improve their quality of life. The Board of Supervisors will be there helping our communities and constituents. I will be there as chairman of the board, in my role on the various transportation and public safety committees and providing the means in which we can work on our problems together.

Will you be there?

This preceding is a condensed version of the supervisor's Jan. 8 address for the Board of Supervisor's reorganization when he became chairman. Glover is the County Supervisor for District 5. Reach him at [dist5@bos.cccounty.us](mailto:dist5@bos.cccounty.us).