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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE JONATHAN DELAGRAVE'S
2018 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 humbled and honored to deliver this, my fourth State of the County address, within the Sam and Gene Johnson Pavilion at the River Bend Nature Center. This gorgeous space, like Racine County, is where the past is honored, the future is ripe with possibilities, and the present is ever-changing.

Many of you already know that Imogene Johnson was a passionate environmentalist, the founder of Prairie School, and an instrumental supporter in the development of River Bend. She also was an avid and expert bird watcher.

Every year, Imogene had a front row seat to the annual banding of the Racine County baby peregrine falcons that are born on the roof of the courthouse. Traditionally, as the baby falcons are banded, they are given the name of someone who has died the previous year. Last May, we broke with this tradition and named one of the baby falcons Gene, after their front-row fan. Imogene was able to watch as the baby falcon was banded with her name forever.

Sadly, Imogene passed away in March and she won't see this year's banding on the 10th floor of the Courthouse this Friday at 3pm. I encourage you all to attend this fascinating event and, like me, gain comfort that a sister peregrine falcon named Gene is flying high somewhere: a fitting tribute to this extraordinary woman we were so blessed to have in our community.

Frank H.T. Rhodes, the president emeritus of Cornell University, has written that Gene and the Johnson family provide a foundation of "visionary purpose."

Visionary Purpose. How well do those two words sum up not only the legacy of a singular community benefactor, but the past few years in Racine County?

My State of the County address last May did not mention Foxconn, supplier companies, TIDs, or floods. What I did unveil in last year's speech was our new Racine County mission statement:

Racine County cultivates innovative, sustainable, and valued opportunities for community and economic growth.

Today, I add this: Racine County embodies visionary purpose.

Stephen Hawking, another brilliant visionary who passed away this year, once said, "The past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities."

This past year, Racine County has been filled with undisputed accomplishments and unparalleled intergovernmental cooperation.

Let me remind you of what we, together with our fellow municipalities and the Racine County Economic Development Corporation (RCEDC), have accomplished just in the last 12 months:

Foxconn. Not only will this transformational, once-in-a-generation project redefine Racine County for decades to come, Foxconn has spawned several major projects and intergovernmental agreements that never would have happened otherwise:

- The agreement between Kenosha County, Racine County, and the state to develop KR as an east-west corridor to better connect lakefront urban centers.
- The historic agreement between Racine County, Caledonia, and Mount Pleasant that saved Caledonia taxpayers \$25 million, improved infrastructure, and positioned the community for future development.
- The collaboration between Racine County and Sturtevant to rebuild and redirect Willow Road to relieve traffic congestion and improve safety.
- Yorkville's vote to incorporate into a village that will open a "spectrum of possibilities" for that community.

There is no doubt that 2017 was an unprecedented year for economic growth in our county. Foxconn may be a catalyst, but we know our existing businesses are the backbone of our community and the primary source of employment for our residents.

We are pleased and thankful that our local businesses continue to invest and grow. In Yorkville, Merz North America consolidated three separate locations into a \$3 million, 100,000 square foot facility to improve efficiency and grow its workforce. In Burlington, LDV expanded its facility by 33,000 square feet to meet increased demand for highly customized vehicles. In Mount Pleasant, Badger Meter relocated 30 positions from Arizona by adding new testing and calibration capabilities in Racine County.

We are also excited to see construction of InSinkErator's new headquarters and R&D office facility in Mount Pleasant, as well as the company's commitment to invest an additional \$29

million to expand its City of Racine manufacturing space. The Racine County Board played an integral part in keeping this legacy company headquartered in Racine County – thank you.

Several new businesses now call Racine County home as a result of the County's partnership with RCEDC. This spring, Grand Appliance moved from Zion, IL into its new headquarters and warehouse facility in the Renaissance Business Park in Sturtevant. Johnson Health Tech, a manufacturer of award-winning fitness equipment, relocated its manufacturing operations from South Milwaukee to a 200,000 square foot, modern facility in Yorkville.

In addition to Foxconn's \$10 billion investment in Wisconsin, RCEDC worked with 21 other companies in 2017, facilitating over \$52 million in private investment in Racine County.

The new Greater Racine County Revolving Loan Fund was established as part of the 2018 budget to assist local companies to invest in their businesses and compete to become Foxconn suppliers.

It's not just our businesses that exhibit visionary purpose. The Village of Caledonia is updating its vision for development along I-94 and the Village of Sturtevant is developing plans to spur commercial development along Durand Avenue. The Villages of Union Grove, Rochester, Waterford, and Burlington are weighing opportunities for investing in future business park development.

Racine County is truly on the brink of enormous growth.

In April, the National Association of Realtors listed Racine, Wisconsin as the No. 7 performing market in the nation in home sales. Not the state – the nation. The Public Works and Development Services Department, under the able guidance of Julie Anderson, saw its first residential subdivision plats approved in nearly 10 years.

More lots and plats have been submitted for approval. Zoning and sanitary permits are up. It's clear commercial and industrial development is charging forward, and demand for all types of housing is increasing around the County.

In preparation for this tremendous development, Racine County has supported RCEDC's engagement of a multi-disciplinary team of consultants to assist our communities in their land planning and infrastructure development efforts. This study will contribute projected market information to each municipality's land use plan and adds a layer of coordination and information sharing among community leaders not witnessed before in the County.

The first leg of the analysis will be rolled out in June and will include a residential development overview.

In another historic example of proactive intergovernmental cooperation, Racine County, Mount Pleasant, Caledonia, and Sturtevant, in partnership with the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread and Wisconsin Policy Forum, are taking part in a regional service study analysis to help identify

when, if and where gaps in future service needs and quality could arise and determine where collaboration makes sense.

This study grew out of the Johnson Foundation's Resilient Communities initiative, which brought together leadership from throughout Eastern Racine County to envision and plan the future of the region, before Foxconn became a household name in southeastern Wisconsin.

"If you want to know the future, look at the past," said world-changing visionary, Albert Einstein. Today, with Foxconn taking root and thousands of new jobs on the horizon, I believe the seeds of this historic growth were planted with the bold decisions, proactive thinking, and significant projects that every Racine County department has enacted in the last few years.

For example, when I took office, we overhauled the branding, website, and mission statement of Racine County. Our clean, attractive logo, user-friendly website; modernized mission statement; and a stunning new highlight video are a great first impression for those new to Racine County. Our new flag, designed by our Youth in Governance, flies proudly next to the state flag at Foxconn's vast industrial complex in Sakai, Japan.

To develop a Racine County-ready workforce, we overhauled the Workforce Development Division to create what we now call Workforce Solutions. We designed innovative programs like Start IT that allow people to get trained, paid, and placed into high-demand fields. We launched a GED initiative that resulted in more people obtaining their high school credential than many of our surrounding counties combined.

Now, we venture even further; not for the mere sake of achieving milestones, but to better the lives of all Racine County residents. Our Uplift 900 initiative is a truly ground-breaking effort to knock down barriers that have kept some in our community from entering or staying in the workforce. It's exactly the kind of wraparound, intensive support necessary to lift up and transform the futures of disadvantaged City of Racine residents. We recently hired a project manager, Pastor Melvin Hargrove, who is engaging residents at town halls, local churches, community centers, and neighborhood events to join in this initiative.

With the County Board's partnership, we purchased a tool called SkillSmart that will help us build a bigger, more diverse talent pipeline. This software program – which you can find at GreaterRacineAtWork.com – was used successfully to recruit, enroll and train workers for the Milwaukee Bucks arena project. We are confident it will help employers to tap into our residents and underrepresented groups.

We are undertaking an in-depth workforce analysis with ManpowerGroup and RCEDC to assess the workforce supply across multiple industries in Racine County. This analysis will help create a pipeline of talented people to make sure in-demand jobs are filled in the short- and long-term.

In the upcoming weeks, I will partner with our county supervisors and city aldermen to hold town halls geared toward minority communities in the City of Racine. We will address every

question and provide the communities with the information needed to take advantage of employment opportunities in Racine County.

The steps we took leading up to Foxconn, and the steps we have taken since, put us in great position to maximize the benefits of Foxconn for our residents and our businesses. From the west end to the east end, we don't want anyone left behind. We're confident we can do this – in large part because we are finally getting to the root of why many in our community have been left behind for so long.

Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACES, was at the center of my State of the County address last year. Identifying childhood trauma as a major factor in the cycle of poverty has been a breakthrough for communities across the nation – including Racine County.

Our Youth & Family Division, under the direction of Kerry Milkie, has led the agency and our community partners in adopting principles of Trauma Informed Care. Staff has trained all Human Services Divisions, and our programs are now geared toward addressing the root causes that make it difficult for many people to get ahead. While these trainings and programs are the right start and worthy of our effort, they won't be enough. I'm committed to ensuring they aren't where we stop.

Childhood trauma is just one of many challenges the Human Services Department, under the inspirational leadership of Hope Otto, is tackling head-on:

- The Behavioral Health Division dedicated staff to work with opioid-addicted residents and has worked closely with the jail to treat inmates' addictions before release.
- Juvenile detention has created a comprehensive mental health program, doubling the amount of therapy sessions from years past.
- Our Fraud Unit was recognized by Governor Walker for its success detecting fraud in public assistance programs and protecting taxpayer dollars.
- Our Foster Care staff and marketing team developed a campaign called "Bring Them Home" to increase the number of foster homes in Racine County and reduce the number of children placed out of county.

The work done by our employees impacts lives every day. This is true at HSD and many other departments -- perhaps none more so than the Racine County Communications Center, led by dedicated Director Jackie Bratz.

Two years ago, Racine County agreed to facilitate a bulk purchase of upgraded and standardized radios for several municipalities so that fire and rescue departments could coordinate communications. Last summer's 200-year flood response further enhanced cooperation among communities, as the City of Burlington made the pragmatic, yet locally tough, decision to join the Racine County Communication Center. Now, all sixteen of our municipalities are united for the first time under the same 911 emergency dispatch center.

I want to thank Jackie and her team for a seamless transition that has ensured our residents see no change in the level of service and responsiveness. I also want to thank Director John Barrett and the illustrious IT Department, which completed a major upgrade of the Dispatch hardware and software to the latest products (ProPhoenix) and the fastest new hardware. Lastly, I want to thank all the municipalities for their partnership and cooperation to ensure our Communications Center is the best it can be.

As the County prepares for big growth, these and other steps taken in the last few years have us well-positioned to address oncoming public safety challenges – thanks not only to a robust dispatch center, but a proactive Sheriff's Office.

Since 2016, we have made major investments in equipment (body cameras) and manpower (more correctional officers). In addition, Sheriff Chris Schmaling found ways to generate more revenue, securing a \$2.7 million contract to house state inmates at the county jail -- that's additional money that will help the Sheriff's Office protect our residents.

Sometimes with growth comes growing pains. The Sheriff's Office recognizes that public health issues like human trafficking, drugs, assaults, and traffic incidents escalate in other communities that experienced job booms.

Our message is simple: Not in our county. We are thinking ahead and being proactive rather than reactive. I am working closely with Sheriff Schmaling and his team to make sure those on the front lines have the resources they need and that our County grows in a safe and responsible way.

We also want to grow in a way that enhances our quality of life. That means having cultural amenities that make Racine County a great place to live, work, and play.

We are excited about the SC Johnson Community Aquatic Center and Burlington Community Aquatic Center opening in a matter of days. New pools on the west end and the east end represents a giant boon for children and families throughout Racine County. We are thrilled and honored that SC Johnson's \$6.5 million donation resulted in a beautiful facility at Pritchard Park, and we were happy to provide support for a wonderful aquatic center in Burlington. I can't wait to see the first splashes into each pool.

At Pritchard Park, the SC Johnson Community Aquatic Center is only the first phase of a multi-phased plan to transform the park into a destination for youth, families, residents, workers and visitors. In the very near future, you will be hearing more about our plans to give our youth modern, state-of-the-art sports facilities, as we fulfill the vision we laid out when the County Board approved a borrowing measure two years ago.

We're also enhancing the environment at Pritchard Park with a restoration of the wetlands and other natural areas courtesy of a partnership with Root-Pike WIN. This is in addition to work creating a wetland area and installing native plantings at Cliffside Park using a \$550,000 DNR

grant. I'm grateful to partners like Root-Pike WIN to ensure our parks are enjoyed by residents for generations to come.

It's not just parks -- we need to make sure all of our facilities are sustainable for the future. In the past year, we have taken a fresh look at our county buildings and facilities through a detailed, countywide facility strategic master plan. We know we have aging infrastructure and inefficient use of space. With rapid growth upon us, it makes sense to provide county services in the most efficient and effective way possible.

We are already taking steps forward in Burlington. We will soon move out of the aging Western Racine County Service Center and into a temporary new space in the Fox River Plaza shopping center. We are committed to keeping a strong presence on the County's west end as we explore options for our permanent home.

For our other facilities, we put every option on the table and are awaiting the final results of the study. We will consider all the study's recommendations and, together with the County Board, craft an efficient, scalable, and flexible plan to meet future needs.

A key and steady component to all of Racine County's success, stability, and visionary purpose is the expertise and dedication of our Finance Department and financial advisors. Under the leadership of Director Alex Tillman, I am extremely proud that Racine County's financial position is as strong, solid, and consistent as it's ever been, and will remain strong due to conservative budgeting and healthy reserves. Moody's Investor Services has assigned the County an Aa2 bond rating, citing the rating outlook as stable due to our very healthy financial position and a large tax base.

As stated again and again, the local investment for Foxconn will not raise taxes, the county bonding will be paid by Foxconn special assessments, and the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance called the local agreement "more protected from loss than any deal" they've seen.

Visionary Purpose. Proactive decisions. Unprecedented Intergovernmental Cooperation.

Let me be clear: we have accomplished much because the level of communication and collaboration between our area communities is high. We need to continue to work together for the good of not only Racine County, but our region as a whole. Our neighbors, our state, and the country are watching us set the standard of how, in this rare opportunity, the public sector has been outpacing the private sector in our level of agreement. We cannot allow this collaboration to stall or lapse. I commend the leadership of all our municipalities for their willingness to compromise, find common ground, and move forward. Thank you.

None of the achievements of these past few years – none – would have been accomplished without my outstanding team. Over and over, my team has been asked to work late, on weekends, on short notice, on new subjects, in new places, with new players, on heavy lifts.

“Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change,” Stephen Hawking observed. I am beyond grateful for my team’s extraordinary work ethic, willingness to listen, and their laughter when I needed it most. It has been an unbelievable year.

Thank you to my Cabinet -- to those already mentioned as well as Karen Galbraith, my steady Human Services Director, M.T. Boyle, my indispensable Chief of Staff, and our new Corporation Counsel, Michael Lanzdorf. Michael in his first year has been a cool-headed source of wise legal advice – exactly what is needed as we cross what are more frequently uncharted waters.

Thank you to our constitutional officers, Tyson Fettes (Register of Deeds), Sam Christensen (Clerk of Courts), Wendy Christensen (County Clerk), Jane Nikolai (County Treasurer), and Tricia Hanson (District Attorney) – whose tremendous contributions weren’t singled out in this speech but undoubtedly are making a true difference in Racine County.

I want to thank the other members of my staff in the County Executive’s Office, Dawn Hendrickson and Mark Schaaf, both of whom have been invaluable in keeping both the County and our team on course.

And lastly, I’d like to thank you, the County Board. I’m very thankful for your partnership in our shared visionary purpose over the last three years. None of us could have imagined Racine County would birth a new era of industry and manufacturing for not only Southeastern Wisconsin, but the American Midwest. With the tremendous steps forward we have taken together, I’m convinced that a new horizon awaits.

To borrow from Stephen Hawking once more, “Only time – whatever that may be – will tell.” I think we can all tell we are in a defining moment for Racine County. I’m grateful to be here, in this moment, with you, our team, the leadership of our communities, and the residents of Racine County. Together, we rise from winter darkness, sink our fingers – and bulldozers – into spring’s fresh earth, and plow forward into a new future!

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