

As we begin the year with renewed optimism and resolve, we can all make a commitment to slow down a little bit and spend time with our family and friends while enjoying all of the amenities our Great City has to offer.

January 8<sup>th</sup> marks the season opener for Orlando's new professional lacrosse team, the Orlando Titans at Amway Arena. The Titans have re-located from New York where the franchise played in the league championship last year. They play a 16-game season that runs through mid-April. For ticket and other information, check out [www.orlandotitans.com](http://www.orlandotitans.com). For other events taking place at our City venues, please visit [www.orlandovenues.net](http://www.orlandovenues.net).

On Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, please join us for the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade at 10 a.m. in downtown Orlando. For information about this and other great happenings in your downtown, please visit the City Downtown Development Board's newly revamped website at [www.downtownorlando.com](http://www.downtownorlando.com). If you ever find yourself downtown during the week in need of a restaurant or entertainment recommendation, directions or any other service, please take a moment to visit our Downtown Information Center located at 201 South Orange Avenue near Church Street.

Also that weekend, please visit Leu Gardens for their annual camellia show taking place on both Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. Admission to the gardens on both days is free. For more information, visit [www.leugardens.org](http://www.leugardens.org). Then on Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, join us in Baldwin Park for the Orlando Chili Cook-Off beginning at noon. For more information on this event that is sure to be a crowd pleaser, please visit [www.orlandochilicookoff.com](http://www.orlandochilicookoff.com).

And speaking of New Year's resolutions, I am excited to announce that the City of Orlando just completed its 10,000 Trees Initiative in December. This project was put in place to help restore the forestry damage incurred by the hurricanes of 2004 to Orlando's desirable tree canopy. I had the privilege of planting the 9,997<sup>th</sup> tree in the initiative on December 16<sup>th</sup> at Signal Hill Park in District 3. And on Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Dyer planted the 10,000<sup>th</sup> tree in Wadeview Park. The City will continue to work through our Families, Parks and Recreation Division, Green Up Orlando and Keep Orlando Beautiful to maintain and expand our City's tree canopy as it provides so many environmental and aesthetic benefits to our community.

As we enter into 2010, I look forward to working together to make this new year a great one here in the City of Orlando. It is my hope that amid the doubts that continue to linger in our nation, we can all remember what we can accomplish in our community when we stay focused and positive. As always, thank you for your continued support.