

Overcoming COVID-19 and Strengthening our Communities this Holiday Season *County Insights from Chairman Simon and the Lake County Board of Supervisors*

LAKE COUNTY, CA (December 15, 2020) – The COVID-19 pandemic has tested every fiber of our social fabric.

In 2020, we endured much of society shutting down. Some believed governments should have taken swifter and even more significant action to save lives. Others fought to preserve freedoms and keep the doors of their businesses open. All around, people faced profound hardship.

County leaders and the Board of Supervisors were charged with representing people on all sides of a growing number of divides, as the winds of change swirled with unprecedented force. Answers weren't always clear as we wrestled with fundamental questions: How do we balance health and economic risks? How do we ensure every voice is heard at this critical moment?

“Since March, we have answered those questions and more, and we are still here,” said Moke Simon, Chair of the Lake County Board of Supervisors. “All the frustrations, the life-changing moments that have happened so differently this year - they have shown us a lot about ourselves. There is a strength inside every one of us that will not be torn down.”

Crisis brought clarity of perspective for some: “For me, from the outset of the pandemic, attending to the real human needs multiplying by the day was the priority,” shared Tina Scott, District 4 Supervisor. “People were hungry, and they needed to be fed. People didn't have a place to stay. Many leaders rose to meet those needs.”

Helping local businesses weather the challenges was a matter of high priority: “Our small business owners have been amazing,” noted Rob Brown, District 5 Supervisor. “When services couldn't be delivered in person, businesses found new ways to connect with customers. Our Board wants to help people building businesses overcome obstacles and succeed. We were very proud to provide support by funding the Lake County CARES Small Business Grant Program.”

District 2 Supervisor and Vice Chair, Bruno Sabatier, ensured Lake County's needs were heard in the regional and statewide conversation: “Sitting back and waiting for the State to let us know how to respond to COVID-19 as a County was not going to work,” observed Sabatier. “We drafted letters, joined committees, and spoke up. It wasn't a cure-all, but there were months where Lake County businesses were more open and active than 90% or more of the state.”

District 3 Supervisor, Eddie Crandell, became a trusted moderating presence: “There were issues that divided people this year, and I tried to be a good listener,” stated Crandell. “We all have different perspectives and histories, and we come out on different sides of issues. Acknowledging that is important, but we can't stop there. I was happy to help people work together this year, and I look forward to doing more of that.”

With the holidays now upon us, the challenges we have collectively faced can unite us: “We may have all had different experiences this year, but we have ALL been through something,” remarked Simon. “We can talk about what we have seen this year, what it has been like to face real struggles and try to be there for each other over the phone and Zoom.”

“2020 taught us three big lessons,” continued Simon. “Number one, we can overcome really big challenges. Number two, we can change our approach to situations more quickly than we ever

thought. Number three, we are all connected and must be heard, no matter our point of view – we have to work together.”

Happy Holidays, from the Lake County Board of Supervisors. Let’s be kind to each other. Let’s unite, seek a balanced perspective, and work through this challenging phase of the pandemic in ways that strengthen communities. Let’s build a future that recognizes the lessons of 2020, and the potential we all have to do great and unexpected things in 2021.