



December 7, 2010

Remarks as prepared for delivery:

Thanks, Susan. It's an honor to be here with you at one of Wisconsin's largest woman-owned businesses.

If you look behind me, you'll see Full Compass' 160 employees hard at work. Susan and Jonathan have built Full Compass from just an idea in the late 1970's to what it is today.

They still call this building the "store," but today, Full Compass boasts global sales of nearly \$100 million. Dane County needs more stories like this one.

I'm an entrepreneur myself, and I know just how challenging this growth must have been. I know that even with all this success, the hard work doesn't end.

Building a business means time away from family.

It means tough months when you worry about meeting the payroll much less putting food on your own table.

I'm announcing my campaign to become Dane County's next Executive *here* because Full Compass is more than a successful business. It is a prototype for Dane County's future: Local. Innovative. Employee-driven. Growth-focused.

There is no doubt that Full Compass is a Dane County success story. They bucked an international trend and expanded during one of the worst economic downturns in history.

They are a bright spot.

But, we don't have to look far to see the rest of the picture. The undeveloped lots and a dead end street right next door are reminders of the work waiting to be done.

Dane County needs a bold approach, an innovative approach. I'd even call it a *radical* approach. One that puts job creation first.

Over the past few years we've seen that Dane County isn't recession proof. Family incomes are down. Unemployment is up. And one in 10 Dane County children live in poverty.

I've heard from workers and families from Mazomanie to McFarland, from Cottage Grove to Cross Plains, who are worried about this place we all love.

A recent report by Thrive highlights a chilling fact about the Madison region. Despite the University of Wisconsin-Madison undertaking \$1 billion in research – making us one of the largest research universities in the nation – we trail our peers in job growth and business establishment growth.

This is the canary in the coal mine.

We need to act now.

Small businesses and young startups are the primary creators of new jobs. This lack of job creation – rather than job losses -- is at the heart of the current economic challenge.

Our potential is great. But, our challenges are clear.

We can't afford for our leaders to work around the edges of job creation, to just talk a good game on economic development.

Now is the time for action.

To create jobs, Dane County needs to be serious about creating the right economic climate. We need to help businesses invest and innovate. We must retain existing businesses, encourage university research and innovation to launch new businesses, and whenever possible, we need to attract new employers here.

As a Commerce Department leader, a former small business owner, an entrepreneur and a city council member, I am the right person for this job, right now.

That is what running for office is about: being the right person, at the right time, for the right reasons. It is not about being next-in-line or looking for a change of political scenery.

To ensure Dane County's prosperity, job creation has to be our focus. And, I don't mean just using those words, just talking vaguely about jobs or creating some office or committee while keeping everything else the county does the same.

Dane County has to get into economic development in a real, meaningful way, and I know how to do that.

I have signed the front of paychecks, not just the back of one.

I'm the only declared candidate with a proven track record of creating jobs and helping businesses grow and thrive.

And, I am the only candidate who, when I held elected office, developed a reputation as a watchdog for taxpayers' dollars.

Lots of candidates for office talk the talk about the importance of job creation. But I'm the only one who's walked the walk.

This is personal to me. I am not Johnny-come-lately on Jobs.

I grew up in a single parent home, where money was tight. I saw my mother struggle to make ends meet.

From my childhood, I know all too well the importance of creating jobs that can provide the financial means for a safe and stable home, access to health care and the ability to provide a quality education for one's children.

And today, with three kids of my own, I know all too well the importance of creating jobs for our future and our children's future.

Dane County has done a lot of things right in the past. We've protected the environment here and we've preserved a human services safety net for those in need.

But, now, we need a County Executive who is willing to push the envelope. We can't just maintain what we've done in the past, we need to take dramatic steps to ensure that everyone in Dane County will prosper in the future.

If we are to succeed, if we are to be a community where the next generation of entrepreneurs like Susan & Jonathan Lipp set up their business and stay to *grow* their business, then we must not be afraid to take a radically different approach.

Dane County's future is directly linked to our ability to create jobs for everyone:

- Jobs for the single mother struggling to get by
- Jobs for the worker whose world has been rocked by mid-career layoffs
- Jobs for the college graduate who wants to stay here
- And jobs for families looking to move here -- attracted to Dane County's quality of life

We must ensure that *all* of our workforce, including people of color, women, gays and lesbians, and those who currently are struggling in these tough times, are part of our economic development strategy.

We cannot leave workers behind as we move forward.

Now is not the time for more of the same. Now is not the time to put merely stable – or competent – leaders at the County's helm.

Now is not the time for short cuts or timid, cautious tweaks to the way we do business at the County level.

This is the time for a bold, innovative, and energetic approach, a radical change in the county's focus that will ensure our stability and prosperity well into the future.

Dane County needs to focus on jobs. Period.

Thank you.