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Guest commentary: Supervisor prepares for western shift of district

By Federal D. Glover
For the Contra Costa Times
Posted: 08/03/2011 02:30:38 PM PDT
Updated: 08/03/2011 02:30:39 PM PDT

District 5, the area I represent on the Board of Supervisors, is shifting westward.

My fellow supervisors and I approved the new boundaries for our districts at our June 26 meeting in Martinez. The ordinance comes before the board on Tuesday and, in all likelihood, will be adopted.

My new district will span the northern waterfront of Contra Costa County, including the cities of Hercules, Martinez, Pittsburg and portions of Pinole and Antioch, as well as the unincorporated communities of Rodeo, Pacheco, Crockett, Port Costa, Briones, Mt. View, Vine Hill, Alhambra Valley, Reliez Valley and Clyde, in addition to Bay Point, which remains in District V.

Besides the waterfront, all the communities are linked by Highway 4 and heavily used railroads. The preponderance of the county's heavy industries, which make Contra Costa the second most industrialized county in the state, lie in this new district.

Having spent most of my life working for USS-POSCO and Dow Chemical, I have an affinity for these new constituents. I know how important these industries are and how they impact their host communities.

I also know how vital Highway 4 is to my new district, since I spent most of my elected career seeking funds to make that roadway, parts of which used to be called Blood Alley, safer and wider.

As a strong proponent of the Urban Limit Line, I am an advocate for smart planning and the preservation of open space. That doesn't

mean I am anti-development. I believe in smart planning and making sure cities use their undeveloped land efficiently so they can continue to grow.

I'm excited at the diversity of my new district, which has 203,744 residents. There will be no dominant racial or ethnic group living in the northern waterfront district. Latinos will be the largest group, making up 35 percent of the population, followed by Caucasians, 33 percent; African-Americans, 15 percent; Filipino and Asian-Americans, 11 percent; and Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islander and others making up the balance.

I look forward to meeting you in the near future in a series of introductory town halls that are being planned.

Although I am excited at the prospect of meeting my new constituents, that is tempered somewhat by having to say goodbye to my loyal constituents in Antioch, Oakley and Bethel Island.

We've been through a lot together these past 10 years -- from turning Oakley into a city, clamping down on unkempt rental properties, cleaning up the Delta waterways of debris and abandoned watercraft, bringing eBART to Antioch and the ongoing widening of Highway 4.

We can't forget how we are mustering all our creativity and determination to weather the ongoing economic crisis that has negatively hit our cities, county, state and country.

Like brothers and sisters, we've disagreed on some issues such as the Urban Limit Line, and we've banded together to get funding for many transportation improvements and approval for the new energy plants in Power Alley and the completion of the Bethel Island Bridge.

Through troubled times and joyous celebrations, I've made many close friends whom I'll value for the rest of my life.

The new district boundaries don't mean I'm abandoning the East County residents who I've worked together with for

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The new district boundaries don't mean I'm abandoning the East County projects we've launched together. There's still plenty to be done.

The yearly Youth Summit will continue to help, inform and entertain young people, and I hope to improve attendance from the communities in my new district. The work by the East County Gang Task Force will continue to support regionwide efforts and strategies against gangs.

My staff and I will be deeply involved in trying to implement the Re-entry Strategic Plan that seeks to reduce recidivism among inmates as they return to the county and the impacts they will have on our communities.

As a member of the Metropolitan Transit Commission and with the Association of Bay Area Governments, my work on public protection as a member of the executive board of the California State Association of California (CSAC), the National Association of Counties and my positions on various local and state regulatory boards, I promise I'll still be supporting all of East County while working in collaboration with my colleague, District 3 Supervisor Mary Piepho, who will be representing far East County.

Glover is the Contra Costa supervisor for District 5. He can be reached at dist5@bos.cccounty.us.

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