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A state that works

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Gov. Rick Scott and Lt. Gov. Carlos Lopez-Cantera share a laugh at the Tallahassee inauguration ceremony.

Gov. Rick Scott laid out a clear-eyed vision for Florida in his second inaugural speech, delivered after he took the oath of office on Tuesday. He sees a state that “does the right thing” for families, all of them. He sees a Florida that is the global leader for job growth by 2020. And he understands that reaching both goals relies on the strong foundation of an educated workforce, well-built infrastructure and a valued environment.

He reiterated his commitment to cutting taxes, especially to continue to attract business, and struck a hopeful tone that both sides of the legislative aisle can come together for the good of the state.

With the 2015 legislative session just around the corner, Mr. Scott has the best chance yet to be a forceful leader, leaving his stamp on the state and ensuring Floridians a good quality of life. We share so many of his goals for the state and hope that he forges ahead not just with steely resolve to make Florida a state of numerical superlatives, but also one that acts with compassion and common sense.

Mr. Scott said that the state has surpassed the 700,000 jobs he promised to create during his first inaugural speech in 2011. Indeed, the economy is rebounding, and the Legislature will have a surplus — of which it should make the most. Of course, a good quality of life, in which one can feed a family, pay the rent and keep the lights on doesn’t just spring from having a job — it comes from having a job that pays enough to afford these basics, and then some.

We hope that as Mr. Scott works to lure business, that a diversity of jobs requiring a range of skills, are among those created. For instance, it's a shame that Legislature last year refused to extend film-industry incentives that allowed Florida to compete with Georgia and other states that understand the ripple effect TV and movie production have in terms of job creation. With jobs as his priority, Mr. Scott, no doubt, can make a strong case this year.

Housing — affordable, in safe neighborhoods and with effective public schools — also helps build strong families. Not everyone is a CEO, not everyone can have mini-mansions on the shore. But the state already has successful housing programs that bring a solid return on the dollars invested, something that should be music to the governor's ears, business-savvy leader that he is. The Sadowski Affordable Housing Act, enacted in 1992, created a dedicated trust fund — supported by a portion of documentary-stamp taxes paid on real-estate transfers — to provide affordable homes and apartment units.

Unfortunately, lawmakers have been raiding this trust fund for years. And running counter to his vow to make Florida a state that works for all families, Mr. Scott's 2014 budget, which the House signed on to, again denied full funding for Sadowski programs. The upcoming session is an excellent opportunity for him to hew to his commitment, protect the Sadowski trust fund and put roofs over more Floridians' heads.

Similarly, Mr. Scott pledged Tuesday to be a good steward of the environment, restoring springs and water supplies. Amendment 1 was overwhelmingly approved by state voters in November to create another fund, also using part of doc-stamp taxes, dedicated to land conservation. Already, lawmakers have their knives out. Mr. Scott should step up and say to them: "No way!"

Mr. Scott urged lawmakers to invest to "keep Florida working." He's right, and the state clearly has the resources to make it work for everyone.