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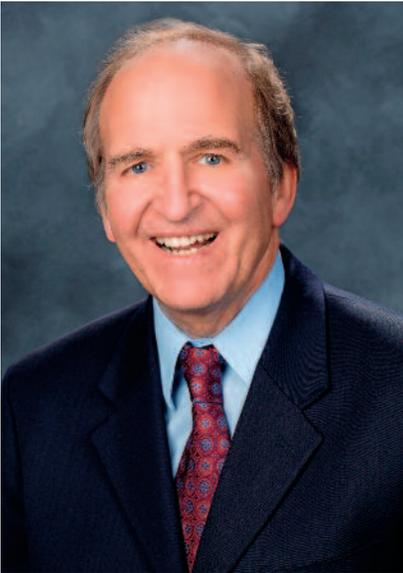
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Today is the Gift of Our Yesterdays

One hundred years. Wow. That's a long time.

Though it sometimes seems that I started only yesterday, I have been working here at the League for forty one of those years. I have seen lots of changes. And, believe me, most have been for the better.

Some people are awed by the technological changes we have seen. Some highlight the crises and challenges our nation, our state and our municipalities have faced. Some note the endless evolution of our economic institutions. But to me, the march of progress is best appreciated when we consider the hard-won advances of so many groups that were once—and not so long ago—denied equality of opportunity and the right to fully contribute to the success of their state, their nation or even their own home towns.

More women are involved in government at all levels in New Jersey. More African-Americans have been given more opportunities to lead and serve their communities, their state and their nation. Latinos and Latinas have earned the votes of their fellow

citizens to public office, and the votes of their colleagues in office to key leadership posts. Likewise, Americans of Asian ancestry have been asked to bear—and have gladly accepted—the burdens and the opportunities of political leadership.

Here in our magazine, this year, the League's Immediate Past President, Mayor Suzanne Walters of Stone Harbor, has agreed to serve as the Chairwoman of our Centennial Committee. In that role, she has been writing, and will continue to write, monthly articles that highlight the evolution of the League and of local government in New Jersey, over these past 100 years.

On our website, our Bureau Services and Research Coordinator Taran Samhammer keeps on posting more and more informative pieces of our shared history. Our celebration of this anniversary will hit its apex at the banquet on May 7.

I really hope to see you there. 🍷

Bill Dressel

“The march of progress is best appreciated when we consider the hard-won advances of so many groups that were once—and not so long ago—denied equality of opportunity”

23rd Annual Mayors' Legislative Day a Success

On February 4, over 150 mayors from all around New Jersey gathered for the League's 23rd Annual Mayors' Legislative Day. Attendees were given a handout featuring detailed information on the League's Legislative priorities for this year. For a summary go to njslom.org/letters/2015-0109-Weekly-Update.

The meeting opened with League President Brian Wahler, Mayor of Piscataway Township, asking key Christie Administration leaders to outline their priorities for the coming year.

Commissioners reported on initiatives Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Jamie Fox spoke about the need to reauthorize the state's Transportation Trust Fund and urged all mayors to talk to their constituents to help them to understand the need for adequate funding. He emphasized the costs we all pay for inadequate maintenance of our roads, bridges and railways—noting that the last great investments in these facilities were made over 50 years ago.



NJLM President and Mayor of Piscataway Brian Wahler welcomes elected officials to the Mayors' Legislative Day, held on February 4 at the State House.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin focused on DEP's efforts to expedite reviews and to streamline its processes for municipalities. He also discussed the department's continuing response to Superstorm Sandy, including efforts to assist the municipalities that were devastated.

Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Deputy Commissioner Chuck Richman listed resources that the DCA has made available to help meet the needs of municipalities and of individuals impacted by Hurricane Sandy. He also discussed the department's continuing efforts to develop reasonable affordable housing policies and procedures. He asked local leaders to urge their Legislators to address Fair Housing Act reforms. Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Commissioner Diane Solomon talked about the need to hold utilities accountable for unacceptable maintenance and timely repair of equipment, conduits and rights of way, and of the need to modernize utility operations.

Top Legislators attended This was followed by a lively legislative policy roundtable discussion, moderated by award winning NJ 101.5 State House reporter Kevin McArdle. The panel included Senate President Steve Sweeney; Assembly Speaker Vince Prieto; Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick; Assembly Transportation Committee Chair, Assemblyman John Wisniewski;



Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick and Senate President Steve Sweeney (pictured) served on the Legislators Panel with Assembly Speaker Vince Prieto; Assembly Transportation Committee Chair, Assemblyman John Wisniewski; Assemblywoman Betty Lou DeCroce; and State Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee Member, Senator Jennifer Beck. These state-level leaders were joined by League Second Vice President, Mayor Albert Kelly of Bridgeton; League Third Vice President, Mayor Jim Cassella of East Rutherford; League Past President, Mayor Tim McDonough of Hope Township; and League Board member, Mayor Susan Howard of Monmouth Beach.

League Inducts 17 into Elected Officials Hall of Fame



NJLM President Brian C. Wahler (third from the left) poses with members of the 2015 Elected Officials Hall of Fame.

The New Jersey State League of Municipalities inducted 17 new members into the Elected Officials Hall of Fame during the 23rd Annual Mayors Legislative Day February 4, 2015 at the State House Annex in Trenton.

This honor is reserved for local municipal governing body members who, as of December 2014, served for more than 20 years in elected municipal office.

The president of the League of Municipalities, Mayor Brian C. Wahler of Piscataway Township, said, "The Elected Officials Hall of Fame recognizes these officials who have selflessly guided their communities through the good times and difficult times, often with little recognition of their public service. This small token of

appreciation focuses a light on their sacrifices over lengthy tenures, demonstrating how much they care and serving as excellent examples of civic pride for all citizens to emulate."

There are currently 549 members of the Elected Officials Hall of Fame, which can be viewed at www.njslom.org.

2015 Elected Officials Hall of Fame Inductees

- Councilman Daniel Wimer, Allentown Borough
- Mayor Kirk O. Larson, Barnegat Light Borough
- Councilwoman Dorothy Reynolds, Barnegat Light Borough
- Councilman E.L. Pete Green, Burlington Township
- Councilwoman Sandra V. Stewart, Burlington Township
- Councilwoman 3rd Ward Quilla E. Talmadge, City of East Orange
- Committeeman John Carman, Jr., Egg Harbor Township
- Committeeman William Boettcher, III, Hainesport Township
- Councilman Justin A. DiPisa, Hasbrouck Heights Borough
- Councilwoman Dr. Mary Jane Celli, Long Branch City
- Councilman at Large Luis A. Quintana, Newark City
- Deputy Mayor Neil J. Lewis, Plainsboro Township
- Mayor George Fosdick, Ridgefield Park Village
- Mayor Emeritus Karen Chamberlain, Saddle Brook Township
- Councilmember John H. Klose, Surf City Borough
- Councilman Stephen Black, Watchung Borough
- Councilman Glenn Corbett, Wharton Borough

Assembly Transportation Committee Member, Assemblywoman Betty Lou DeCroce; and State Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee Member, Senator Jennifer Beck. These state-level leaders were joined by League Second Vice President, Mayor Albert Kelly of Bridgeton; League Third Vice President, Mayor Jim Cassella of East Rutherford; League Past President, Mayor Tim McDonough of Hope Township; and League Board member, Mayor Susan Howard of Monmouth Beach.

Support for TTF, pension system and municipal aid

One topic that generated enthusiastic support from state Legislators and Mayors, alike, was the need to reinvigorate the Transportation Trust Fund and to supply a greater level of aid to local governments. Also, agreement was expressed to end the state's diversion of Energy Tax funding. Legislators stated their agreement that the Energy Taxes do belong in local coffers and their hope to address the problem soon.

The need to protect the integrity of local pension systems, to provide municipalities with predictability regarding affordable housing requirements and the need to promote economic recovery also received favorable comment.

Mayors' Legislative Day is an annual highlight of the League's on-going effort to keep local elected officials informed on what's happening in the state capital. 📌



Trenton Mayor Attends the Christening of the 'USNS Trenton'

The USNS Trenton was christened on January 10 in Mobile, Alabama. Trenton Mayor Eric Jackson addressed the gathering at Austal USA's Vessel Completion Yard, which included Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and over 300 naval and shipyard guests.

The Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) is the fourth naval vessel to bear the name Trenton. The first ship was built following the Civil War and was named to honor George Washington's Revolutionary War victory on the banks of the Delaware River. Since then, a ship bearing the name Trenton has served during every vital Navy mission until 2007 when the last ship was decommissioned.

The 338-foot catamaran vessel was named Trenton by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. According to Secretary Mabus, "Trenton displays American values of community, perseverance and resourcefulness at their very best. I chose to name [the ship] after Trenton to honor those values and the men and women of the city as well as the state of New Jersey."



Trenton Mayor Eric Jackson (far right) stands beside the USNS Trenton.

Trenton will soon join the four other JHSVs which have been delivered over the last two years. These new ships have the speed, volume and flexibility that the U.S. Navy will need in the decades to come.

Ms. Virginia A. Kamsky, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kamsky Associates, Inc., a strategic advisory firm with offices in Beijing and New York City received the honor of serving as the ship's sponsor. A cum laude graduate from Princeton University with a B.A. in East Asian Studies, Ms. Kamsky then attended the MPA program at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

Ms. Kamsky is serving under a White House appointment as a member of the U.S. Secretary of the Navy Advisory Panel. Ms. Kamsky is a recipient of the Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Award, which is the highest honorary award the Secretary of the Navy can confer on a Department of the Navy civilian employee.

The ship will be launched for Builder's Sea Trials in the Gulf of Mexico before the end of January. ↴

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Business Partnership Invites Local Businesses to ‘Meet the Mayors’

The Somerset County Business Partnership held the fourth session in its series of Meet the Mayors sessions on February 11 in Basking Ridge.

Mayor William C. Mueller of Peapack & Gladstone, Mayor John Malay of Bernards Township, Mayor Steven Parker of Bedminster, Mayor Kevin R. Sooy of Bernardsville and Far Hills Council President David Karner who represent communities in northern Somerset County attended.

The initial sessions of Meet the Mayors featured presentations from the Mayors in the southern, western, and central portions of the county.

As in the previous four sessions, the Mayors talked about their ongoing initiatives and planned innovations at the municipal level that are intended to provide a competitive advantage for local businesses. The content offered by the Mayors will be particularly valuable for business owners, executive-level managers, and representatives of companies looking to expand in Somerset County.

“Somerset County is renowned as the statewide leader in planning for a strong and sustainable economic future,” commented Freeholder Director Mark Caliguire. “Having served as Mayor of Montgomery Township I am intimately aware of the need for a strong local business climate that is supported by the local government. Under the leadership of former Freeholder Director Patrick Scaglione, these sessions have provided reassurance to the local business people throughout the county that their governments are working to enhance their success.”

The event was sponsored by NAIDiLeo-Bram & Co., Abingdon Care & Rehabilitation Center, Advance Realty, and Star 99.1 FM.

The Somerset County Business Partnership serves as central New Jersey’s regional Chamber of Commerce. Members and investors represent public, private and community organizations, working in partnership and dedicated to maintaining and promoting economic prosperity and quality of life in Somerset County. 📍



Pictured at the February Meet the Mayors program are (l to r): Bernards Mayor John Malay, Peapack & Gladstone Mayor William Muller, Bernardsville Mayor Kevin Sooy, Far Hills Council President David Karner, and Bedminster Mayor Steven Parker.



Protecting Seniors from Scams

The Summit Police Department recently launched a program to help senior citizens avoid becoming victims of fraud. This population is particularly vulnerable to telecommunication fraud and identity theft. “Summit Safe Seniors” is a special presentation by the Departments’ Community Policing Unit that helps participants identify common criminal attempts.

The presentation also covers strategies for home safety and preventing burglary. In addition, information folders that identify resources for victims of identity theft, fraud or scams are available at police headquarters. Presentations are scheduled throughout the city through 2015. 📍



Fido’s Turn to Frolic

Wildwood has dedicated a section of its beach as a dog-friendly area. The town’s actions gave dogs and their owners an opportunity to enjoy the beach and frolic in the surf together. The beach also allows both owners and their dogs to socialize with other dog lovers and dogs.

The dog beach is thought to encourage pet owners to plan longer stays in the city, as it eliminates the need to rush home to care for the animals. At the time of its creation, this dog beach was the only year-round dog beach in Cape May County. The new dog beach made national news when it was featured on the Weather Channel last summer. The city hopes that the creation of this area will increase its appeal as a tourist destination. 📍



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NJLM Associate Counsel John L. Kraft, Esq.



John L. Kraft, Esq. serves as an Associate Legal Counsel to the New Jersey State League of Municipalities and belongs to the New Jersey County Finance Officers Association and the Government Finance Officers Association of New Jersey. Mr. Kraft was selected twice as the Outstanding Person in New Jersey Public Finance by the County Finance Officers Association. Mr. Kraft is a long time member and Trustee of the New Jersey Institute of Local Government Attorneys. In 2004, the Institute

presented him with its prestigious Fred G. Stickel Award.

He graduated from Georgetown University (cum laude) in 1958 and then spent three years in the U.S. Air Force as a Lieutenant. At Yale Law School, where he was an Editor of the Yale Law Journal.

Mr. Kraft was admitted to the Bars of New Jersey, New York, Florida, the United States Supreme Court and the District of Columbia.

In 1970 he was appointed Associate Counsel to Governor William T. Cahill.

In 1971, Mr. Kraft left the Governor's staff to establish Kraft & Hughes, New Jersey's first Bond Counsel firm. Mr. Kraft's prior training and experience at two New York Bond Counsel firms serving New Jersey issuers enabled him to achieve what many said was impossible. The tradition of the "New York Legal Opinion" was thought to be an insurmountable obstacle to any New Jersey lawyer succeeding as Bond Counsel. However, he was successful and achieved the distinction of becoming New Jersey's first Bond Counsel.

From 1971 to 2012, Mr. Kraft practiced at the law firms of Kraft & Hughes, Kraft & McManimon, Lowenstein Sandler PC, John L. Kraft, Esq., L.L.C. and Lomurro, Davison, Eastman & Munoz, P.A. In 2012, he re-established John L. Kraft, Esq., L.L.C. and in 2014, the firm was renamed KRAFT & CAPIZZI, LLC.

Mr. Kraft has served as Bond Counsel for eighteen of the twenty-one counties and hundreds of municipalities, school districts and authorities in New Jersey.

Throughout his career, Mr. Kraft has been a leader and an active force in the New Jersey Bar, the National Bond Counsel Bar and the New Jersey community. These activities have enhanced his ability to serve his state, county, municipal, school district and authority clients.

Mr. Kraft is a regular contributor to *New Jersey Municipalities Magazine*. 📌



Water Tower is Valuable Real Estate

The Borough of Ocean Gate recently signed a contract with Landmark Infrastructure Holding Company. The \$1,907,993.38 contract is for a 50 year lease. They will be leasing "space" on top of the Borough-owned water tower.

Ocean Gate has had five cell companies on the tower for the past eight years that pay rent. Four of the companys' leases (Sprint, AT&T, Verizon and T Mobile) were up. A marketing company negotiated with the borough for a long term lease. This went out to bid twice and a sole bidder was awarded the contact. Basically, they lease the same space that they have under their prior leases.

The borough received a check in the amount of \$1,884,533.70 in late December. This money went directly into the current fund. The governing body is planning to discuss what to do with the money soon. The borough is also in the process of hiring a financial consultant to help with the decision. The amounts of each lease follow:

Verizon	\$436,664.88
T Mobile.	\$466,729.90
Sprint	\$497,417.40
AT &T	\$507,181.20 📌

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Responding to the Threat of Ebola

The Department of Health is working with hospitals and local health departments to monitor travelers and strengthen preparedness

By Mary E. O'Dowd, Commissioner,
New Jersey Department of Health



The New Jersey Department of Health continues to work with partners throughout New Jersey's healthcare and public health communities—as well as federal, state and local agencies—to enhance our response.

Local leaders are critical in protecting the health of our communities.

Only five U.S. airports, including Newark Liberty International Airport, are receiving passengers returning from the Ebola-impacted countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Upon arrival, passengers are screened by federal officials and evaluated for fever, symptoms of Ebola and risk factors for potential exposure to the disease. Individuals with no symptoms and who report no specific exposure to Ebola, other than travel to an Ebola-impacted country, are considered low risk for having contracted the disease. Contact information for these individuals is shared with public health officials, and local health departments. Public health nurses and other local health department staff perform active monitoring of this population for 21 days, which is the maximum time when a person who may have been infected with Ebola could develop the disease. It is important to remember that the Ebola virus can only be transmitted by contact with the body fluids of a person who is showing symptoms.

As local leaders, you play an important role in providing education to your community.

During active monitoring, contact between the local health departments and individual occurs daily to record temperatures taken twice a day by the person being monitored. People considered low risk have no restrictions on travel and are permitted to attend work and school.

More than 400 individuals who either live in or are visiting New Jersey who have returned from West Africa between October and January 15 have been screened at one of the five U.S. airports accepting these returning passengers and local health departments around the state monitor these individuals. A total of 700 individuals have been screened at Newark airport since September.

Healthcare system preparedness has been a priority for New Jersey and the Department of Health for more than a decade. In the past year, we have working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and our hospitals to enhance our readiness. CDC has created a tiered approach for Ebola response comprised of Ebola Treatment Centers, Assessment Hospitals, and Frontline Hospitals. In New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson University Medical Center in New Brunswick is serving as a Treatment Center (a hospital capable of caring for confirmed Ebola patients for the duration of the



The Ebola epidemic has taken a catastrophic toll in West Africa with more than 21,100 cases and 8,370 deaths. While the risk of a case of Ebola in New Jersey remains very low, hospitals and local health departments are working to protect our residents by monitoring travelers and strengthening preparedness.



University Hospital in Newark staff practice donning and doffing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

illness). University Hospital in Newark and Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack are serving as an Assessment Hospitals (which are capable of isolating, testing, and managing a patient who might have Ebola until a lab test for Ebola is confirmed positive). Both CDC's Technical Assistance Team

and the Department of Health have visited these three hospitals to provide guidance on preparedness. All other General Acute Care Hospitals and Satellite Emergency Departments are Frontline Hospitals (those expected to promptly identify and isolate patients who might have Ebola).

To support our local health and health-care partners, the department has purchased more than \$1 million in personal protective equipment (PPE). Working with the Rutgers School of Public Health, we've provided PPE training to more than 270 hospital health workers and EMS officials—those who are trained are providing training to their health care community. More than 700 New Jersey health care workers have been trained in donning and doffing PPE, and more hospital workers are undergoing training and practicing now every day.

The department has also been working to help educate our communities about Ebola. In the fall, the department and the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System opened a toll-free call center, 1-800-962-1253, to answer questions on Ebola for both the general public and healthcare workers. Additionally, the department has attended a number

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of community meetings for families and friends of those in Ebola-affected countries. We have also developed educational brochures, flyers and webinars available on the department's Ebola page nj.gov/health/cd/vhf/.

The department and the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System opened a toll-free call center, 1-800-962-1253, to answer questions on Ebola for both the general public and healthcare workers.

New Jersey and our partners are well prepared to identify, isolate and treat an Ebola patient and we continue to learn from the experience of other states and our federal partners.

As local leaders, you play an important role in providing education to your community. We encourage you to share our education materials and call center information with your constituents. 📌

@ To learn more about the state's Ebola Preparedness efforts, please visit our website nj.gov/health/cd/vhf/.

7th Annual Women in Municipal Government Day

The Key to Success — Your Power Base

Friday, March 20, 2015

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

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For more information on the Women in Municipal Government Committee or the event please contact Lori Buckelew at 609-695-3481 ext.112 or email lbuckelew@njslom.com.



Our Experience with Active Monitoring

The silver lining of following up with travelers from West Africa

By Jeannette Oliveras RN, BSN
& Madeline Oliveras, RN, BSN;
Trenton Public Health Nurses



On October 22, 2014, the Trenton Health Department learned from the New Jersey Department of Health that several individuals who had visited Ebola impacted countries in West Africa were traveling to Trenton. State Epidemiologist Dr. Tina Tan and James A. Brownlee, MPH, the director of the city's Department of Health and Human Services provided a briefing on how to actively monitor these individuals. There were many unanswered questions and information on Ebola was changing daily—the level of fear and confusion was high.

The active monitoring process began at the airport, where individuals traveling from the affected countries were evaluated. The airport personnel provide the information from the individual to the New Jersey Department of Health, which then sent the Trenton Health Department an alert with the individual's information via an electronic communicable disease reporting surveillance system, known as CDRSS. It provided

demographic information on the individual to be monitored for 21 days.

Monitoring We checked the CDRSS system daily for travelers coming to Trenton. Initially, the cases were challenging, because sometimes the information was incorrect and some individuals did not have cell phones, land lines or thermometers. Additionally, the individuals were given a packet

at the airport containing the telephone numbers of the New Jersey Department of Health, but not the local health department. Many people did not know if they were to call us or if we would call them.

Some of the travelers were unsure of why the local health department was monitoring them. There was a sense of mistrust. Many clients were hesitant to provide us with any information. We informed them that we only wanted to monitor them closely for their safety. We encouraged them to call twice a day with their temperature. We asked them to call us if they felt ill at any time, day or night, so we could get them medical care quickly. We gave them our cell phone numbers so they could reach us at any time.

We worked collaboratively to obtain the answers and ensure the safety of our community.

Home visits Once they realized we were concerned for their well-being, they became much more cooperative. If the individual did not make contact with us once or twice, we would make a home visit. Staff was very anxious about the disease, so nurses were asked to consider wearing personal protective equipment. However, we decided not to unless the individual was symptomatic. When home visits were made, we found that the people were very kind and caring. Many decided to quarantine themselves to ensure the safety of our community, although it was not necessary. They were very cooperative and understanding of the situation.

Community relations In an effort to help them better assimilate, we provided information concerning immigration,

education, medical care and community groups. We also worked to keep information about those being monitored strictly confidential. We didn't want them to suffer any discrimination. We believe that the sense of fear and mistrust within the West African community has lessened as a result of these efforts.

Although this assignment began with many unanswered questions, we worked collaboratively to obtain the answers and ensure the safety of our community. This experience demonstrates what public health is. Being part of this experience has been a challenge and a pleasure. ♣



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A Cure for Violence

A new program seeks to heal a culture of violence by employing people who know the community to serve as credible messengers

By Dana Redd, Mayor, City of Camden

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CURE4CAMDEN
PEACE ON OUR STREETS

Cure4Camden - The Camden City Project for Violence Prevention

Camden used a series of compelling brochures to promote the initiative. The graphic above comes from one of them.

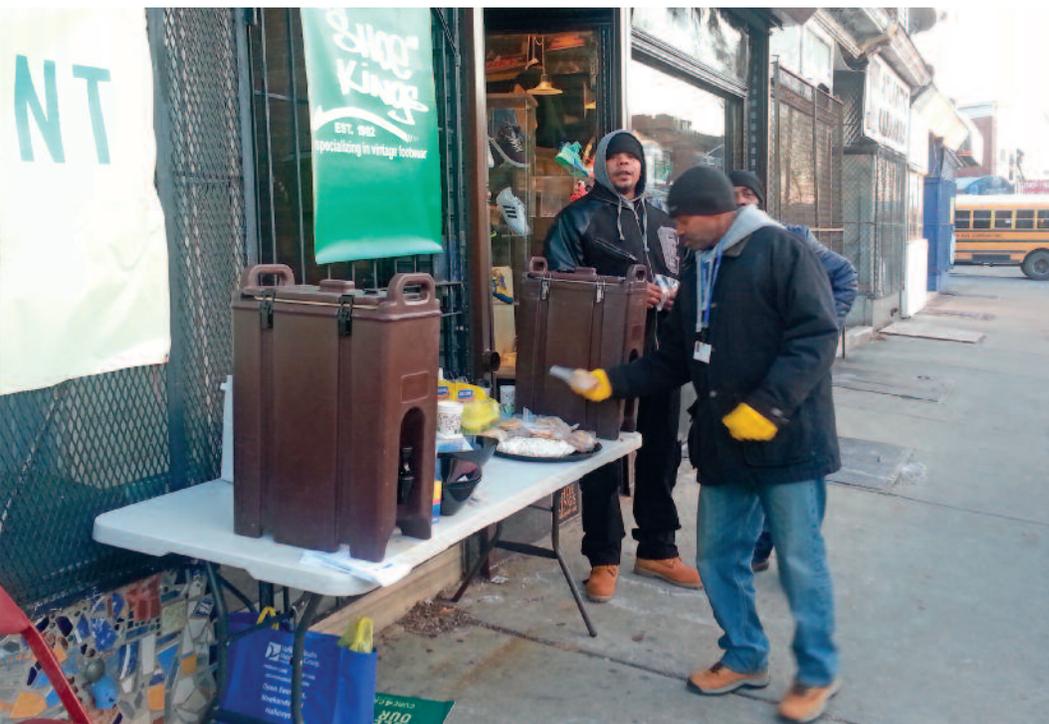
The City of Camden launched an intensive effort to address the violence that has plagued the city for decades. Since the late 1990s Camden City has consistently ranked as one of the most dangerous cities in the United States. With a murder rate 12 times higher than the national average, Camden experienced consistently higher rates of murder, manslaughter and other violent crimes compared to the neighboring cities of Philadelphia, New York and Newark.

Through a \$1.4 million US Department of Justice grant, Camden was able to establish the Cure4Camden program which takes a “public health approach” to shooting, violence, and drug dealing in the city. The goal is to bring peace back to the streets.

In the winter and spring of 2014, my Administration launched the program in collaboration with the community based non-profit Center for Family Services and Faith Based Organizations, including Muhammad’s Temple #20. The effort

is centered in the Camden City neighborhoods of Liberty Park, Whitman Park, Centerville, and Cooper Plaza/Lanning Square.

We are committed to bringing best practice and evidence based models to Camden. The program combats violence through detection and interruption. We are mediating violence before it happens. We saw the impact this program has had in Chicago and other communities and knew that it would work with our multi-pronged approach to public safety.



Cure4Camden held January Cookies and Cocoa Fridays where the team handed out cookies and cocoa while spreading the message of peace on the streets.

Violence is a disease that can be stopped using science-based methods.

Cure4Camden is modeled after the evidence-based Cure Violence model developed in Chicago in 2000, which approaches violence as a disease that can be stopped using the same science-based methods associated with disease control. Since the program's inception, the Cure Violence model has been implemented in cities across the United States and around the world with proven results. The United States has seen a reduction in shootings and killings in more than 23 cities.

The premise is that violence operates just like an epidemic disease. Scientific studies have shown that violent behavior transmits and spreads based on exposure. Mental trauma from exposure to violence, for example, has been scientifically shown to increase a person's risk of adopting violent behavior. The Cure Violence public health approach offers an effective method for preventing violence and for treating those at risk for violent behavior.

Cure4Camden aims to reduce violence with a three-pronged approach: (1) detection and interruption, (2) behavior change, and (3) changing community norms. The overarching goal is to reduce street violence by stopping shootings and killings in the short-term and changing the underlying conditions that give rise to shootings and killings in the long-term.

We have credible messengers on the streets to promote non-violent solutions and a new way of life.

Credible messengers The Cure4Camden team consists of outreach workers, violence interrupters, and a hospital responder who work in the communities in which they live or grew up. They were selected to join the Cure4Camden team because they know the community and have been identified as credible messengers. These team members, some of whom may have contributed to the problem at one time, are credible. As professional interveners and messengers, they are promoting non-violent solutions and a new way of life.

Violence interrupters and outreach workers identify and work with those most likely to shoot or be shot, in an effort to make them less likely to commit violence. They promote alternatives to violence and remain engaged to ensure the conflict does not reignite.

“They walk by their side and help them understand the cost of violence. They connect them with social services in an effort to better their lives and redirect them to positive pursuits, including jobs, job training, and returning to school,” says Associate Vice President at Center for Family Service Barbara Maronski.

Cure4Camden also includes a strong public education campaign to increase awareness among youth and change community norms regarding violence.

Since its inception, Cure4Camden has reached more than 2,500 community members with a message that violence is not normal and the behavior can change. Thousands of posters displayed by area residents, community businesses, and faith-based organizations now blanket the four Camden City neighborhoods.

In addition, our outreach workers and interrupters have supported 29 individuals who were at severe risk. These individuals have been redirected through Cure4Camden. They are now actively involved in positive pursuits.

Cure4Camden is also making great strides engaging the community and spreading awareness. Together we are bringing a message of hope and bringing peace back to our streets.

Through monthly events, like peace rallies and community activities, all neighborhood residents can get involved. Residents are invited to Cookies and Cocoa Fridays during the month of January from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

“These community events are crucial in bringing strength and unity back to the community,” added Maronski.

Cure4Camden is part of the city's comprehensive approach to improving public safety and changing outcomes for the city's youth as part of the city's National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention Plan. Camden was selected as one of four cities in 2013 to develop a plan that focuses on four key pillars: prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry. 🦋

@ For more information call the Cure4Camden information line at 844-676-5945.

New Strategies Can Prevent Youth Drug Abuse

Secaucus and Rutherford are using federal grant money to support new programs that discourage substance abuse among young people

By Tania Guaman, Coalition Coordinator,
Secaucus Prevention Coalition



Funding from the Office of National Drug Control Policy through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will allow Secaucus and Rutherford to expand drug-abuse prevention measures over the next five years.

Secaucus and Rutherford have each received \$125,000 per year for up to ten years of federal funding through the Drug Free Communities Program to be used to reduce substance abuse among young people. The money, provided by the Office of National Drug Control Policy through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will allow for the expansion of drug-abuse prevention measures for the next five years.

The Drug-Free Communities Support Program provides funding to community-based coalitions that organize to prevent youth substance use. The DFC Program has funded more than 2,000 coalitions and currently mobilizes nearly 9,000 community volunteers nationwide. The goal of this program is to increase collaboration among community partners and prevent substance abuse.

As active communities, Secaucus and Rutherford requested support from the Hudson County Coalition for a Drug-Free Community and Partners in Prevention to battle underage drinking, prescription drug misuse, and drug abuse. After learning about the DFC grant, both communities worked with community leaders and support from Partners in Prevention to obtain the grants. Among hundreds of towns and organiza-

tions that had applied across the nation, Secaucus and Rutherford were two of the successful awardees of the Drug-Free Communities grant.

Support of town leadership The Secaucus Prevention Coalition and the Rutherford Community Prevention Coalition are newly formed local coalitions that will coordinate efforts in implementing effective prevention strategies. Secaucus Mayor Michael Gonnelli and Rutherford Mayor Joseph DeSalvo support our initiatives to address local substance abuse issues and to create a positive impact in society.

“We feel proud to have been awarded this new grant and we will work hard to create a positive impact in building a drug-free community for the children and families in the Town of Secaucus” said Mayor Gonnelli.

To strengthen community efforts, in the upcoming months, a few staff and some community members will attend trainings at the National Coalition Academy, where they will meet with other coalitions nationwide to discuss and review effective environmental strategies that can be applied at the local level.

Changing the environment Environmental strategies focus on changing the environment around substance abuse rather than an individual’s attitude towards drug use. For example, if it is easy to access illegal drugs in a community, more people will use those drugs, because they are readily available. By reducing access, through better support for law enforcement efforts, the environment of the community is changed. Thus, fewer people will have access to illegal drugs, ultimately reducing the problems they can cause.

Volunteer initiative Many members of both the Secaucus and Rutherford communities and the Municipal Alliances give their time and energy to support the coalition. These volunteers represent many sectors including law enforcement, media, youth, school system, business, religious and fraternal organizations, civic and volunteer groups, healthcare, government and other organizations working together toward a common goal of bringing tangible solutions to the community. Everyone is welcome to join the coalition’s efforts to build a build a safe, healthy and drug-free community. 🇺🇸

@ If your municipality is interested in learning more about the Drug-Free Communities Support grants, please go to whitehouse.gov/ondcp/drug-free-communities-support-program.

Environmental strategies focus on changing the environment around substance abuse rather than an individual’s attitude towards drug use.

Rutherford and Secaucus also enjoy the support of the Hudson County Coalition and local community leaders to implement prevention strategies to tackle challenges such as underage drinking and prescription drug misuse. Jaimie Serfield, director of the Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute acknowledges that her team is “thrilled to be working with the Rutherford community to reduce youth drug and alcohol use in town. Serfield also points out that the privilege of receiving the Drug-Free Communities Grant “shows that our citizens are committed community members who are dedicated to addressing challenges that do exist with proactive and proven prevention practices.”



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The Affordable Care Act Turns Two

By Jackie Cornell-Bechelli,
Regional Director, US Department of
Health and Human Services—Region II



Last month, the second open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) came to a close, and while the official final numbers are not yet available, it is clear that more New Jerseyans than ever before now have access to affordable, quality healthcare. As witnessed during the first enrollment season, so much of the reason for this success is because elected officials and community leaders like you made education and access to health insurance coverage a priority.

Across the state this winter an impressive collaboration of leaders at all levels of government—from a local Councilmember in one of our smallest villages to US Senators and Members of Congress and everyone in between—rallied their constituents to take advantage of the ACA and the important opportunity to protect their health. In addition, as a Medicaid expansion state, the impressive number of enrollees has helped to cut the uninsured rate in half in just under two years.

The numbers The initial numbers point to a resounding success. With enrollment numbers at over 210,000 as of late January, we are on track to greatly surpass the 160,000 New Jerseyans that were enrolled during the first season.

I have met and talked with dozens of folks these past few months who have told me how proud they are when they hold that healthcare insurance card in their hand. They said they have the peace of mind of knowing that no matter what life

may throw their way, they and their families will get the care they need without fear of losing their home, dipping into their retirement or struggling to pay seemingly endless medical bills. The numbers point to the progress, but there is nothing like hearing firsthand how the ACA is making a real difference in our communities across the state.

like you once again in the fall when our third open enrollment period begins on October 1, 2015.

New Jersey has a tremendous asset in the strong coalition that has helped to reduce the number of uninsured, helping middle-class families have more security, and for many of those who already had insurance—better coverage. At the same

time, we're spending our health care dollars more wisely, and we're starting to see higher quality care across the state.

Please contact my office at 212-264-4600 or email us at HHSORD2@hhs.gov and let us know how we can assist you in your community—our office is here to work with you. We look forward to hearing from you. 📧

Much of the reason for this success is because elected officials and community leaders like you made education and access to health insurance coverage a priority.

Ways to encourage enrollment However, the job is not done. While enrollment is now closed until October 1, 2015, there are still many ways that leaders like you can help your constituents get the information they need to make the best choices for them and their families.

- Firstly, coverage options are always available to residents experiencing a life changing event such as a change to marital status, career, birth/adoption of a child, or other major event. Remind everyone that options in the ACA Marketplace are available to these qualifying individuals and families 365 days a year.
- There are still opportunities to direct people to health services year round, such as Medicaid through NJ Family Care.
- With tax season upon us, additional resources are available to help consumers prepare for tax filing, including online tools to help individuals connect with local tax preparation services and determine if they are eligible for an exemption.
- With a number of New Jersey residents still uninsured, work remains ahead of us. We hope to call upon leaders

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Every New Jerseyan Deserves Opportunities

By Jamel Holley, former Mayor, Roselle;
Assemblyman, District 20

The circumstances of my childhood placed me within the statistics that said children who grow up in single-parent households are less likely to succeed or even obtain a high school diploma. I am grateful my story is one of both the perseverance necessary to succeed and the incredible return that comes from investments and programs designed to help those who are less fortunate obtain access to greater opportunities.

As children who were raised by our grandmother in Roselle, my two brothers and I were able to live and grow with the support of state benefits like welfare and food stamps. Our medical needs were met as the result of Medicaid benefits. I received a solid public education and was able to obtain my undergraduate degree from New Jersey City University and Masters in Public Administration from Kean University as the result of being eligible for New Jersey's Educational Opportunity Fund. All of these programs were created based upon the democratic values that say all children—regardless of the communities from which they come—deserve to be cared for and are worthy of opportunities to achieve the American dream.

Over the last ten years, I have pursued a career in public service aimed at giving back to the community that has given so much to me. I fought tirelessly to ensure the needs of Roselle residents and members of our surrounding communities were met. First as a member of the Borough Council and as Mayor, I worked with my colleagues to propel Roselle into a period of renewal and renaissance.

With a goal of making government efficient and effective, we spurred economic redevelopment projects that have stabilized residential property taxes. We created the Roselle First Workforce Development and Job Readiness Program to provide a resource where residents are prepared to be competitive in their employment endeavors. We also have ensured that our public safety departments have the required tools to keep our neighborhoods safe and invested in parks, infrastructure, recre-

ation, youth and senior services. This has all been done with a spirit of optimism and togetherness that has permeated Roselle, from the government to the local businesses to the community itself.

As I reflect on the successes we have achieved in our community, I can see a blueprint for success that can be shared with other municipalities, fostering the creation of partnerships. Our accomplishments in Roselle have been the direct result of collaborative efforts on multiple levels of government. Many believe in the vision of Roselle's potential to achieve positive progress.

All children—regardless of the communities from which they come—deserve to be cared for and are worthy of opportunities to achieve the American dream.

Although the results of our efforts are tangible, there is much more that can be done—especially on the state level where the scale of change is much greater. New Jersey's property taxes are among the highest in the nation and direly require restructuring. Our public schools need reliable funding so that children can graduate with greater opportunities to succeed. Pervasive unemployment and underemployment hurts families and drives up foreclosure rates, causing people to exit New Jersey at a faster rate than any other state in the United States.

Not only is the unemployment rate in New Jersey above the national average, it is double the national average in urban communities. Changes must be made with a keen focus on rebuilding communities in a way where all residents and stakeholders can live, learn, work and play peacefully. We need continued strong leadership on the state level to make these changes happen. ♣

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Tackling a Tricky Redevelopment

Fifty years in the making, 'The Modern' is bringing new life and town-wide benefits to Fort Lee

By Mark Sokolich, Mayor, Fort Lee

The 16-acre parcel at the entrance to the busiest bridge in the world seemed to be cursed. Since the early 70s, developer after developer and administration after administration had struggled to redevelop this property, thought by some to be among the most valuable pieces of real estate in the country.

The first developer, with ties to organized crime, offered a bribe to Fort Lee's then Mayor, Burt Ross. As a result, our heroic Mayor went into the witness protection program and the developer went to federal prison. That was 40 years ago; since then it has lay dormant. Notable land barons, including Harry Helmsley and his successor Leona, were likewise unable to develop the tract.

The gateway to northern New Jersey, Fort Lee hosts the George Washington Bridge. Approximately 37,000 diverse citizens call Fort Lee home. Our community is attractive to many for its varied housing stock, which ranges from hi-rise buildings atop the historic Palisades Cliffs facing Manhattan to upscale one and two family neighborhoods.

Fort Lee has always been considered one of the most desirable places to live in Bergen County. With its strong public school system, safe streets and small town feel it attracted professional athletes, film stars and Fortune 500 business leaders.



The project's eastern half is predominantly residential with one 49-story luxury residential tower known as The Modern completed and a second tower slated to break ground in or about late 2015. Once completed, these iconic structures will be the tallest buildings in Bergen County. The first phase of the western portion, which is well underway, will boast approximately 175,000 square feet of retail, a hotel and 425 residential units.

Despite these advantages, the combination of a poor economy, a string of incapable or unwilling developers and political complacency doomed this development for many, many years.

A committee and a vision As a new Mayor, I realized very quickly that our first challenge in conquering Redevelopment 5 was to terminate Fort Lee's relationship with the latest redeveloper, Town & Country. In retrospect, the only benefit our town derived from this rela-

Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of any redevelopment process is what benefits the town can derive through negotiation.

tionship was the subdivision of the 16 acre parcel into two separate and distinct parcels, each approximately eight acres. This division made the project more manageable by providing more options to government.

To get the ball rolling, I formed a committee of select members of government, attorneys and planners to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) which set forth our government's collective vision of what we would like Redevelopment 5 to become. It was critical that the RFP be crafted broadly enough to allow for negotiation with prospective developers without losing focus.

Our priority was to build a development that would serve as the cornerstone of Fort Lee's renaissance. The RFP unequivocally required that the eastern portion of the property be developed predominantly as residential and the western portion as mixed-use with an emphasis on downtown retail. However,

a precise number of units or minimum retail square footage was purposely not incorporated to leave room for negotiation. To ensure that we did not allow a city within a city to be constructed, we required a development which challenged the rest of the business district to keep up and to otherwise restore pride in our small town community.

Public input Ensuring that the public was engaged and participated in the selection process in a meaningful way, the governing body convened five town hall meetings over the course of four weeks. These meetings were not statutorily required and to our knowledge this protocol is not common practice; they simply made all the sense in the world.

Each meeting was devoted to one of the prospective developers and began with a power point presentation followed by a Q&A session. I walked through the aisles with a cordless microphone standing side-by-side with resi-

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Tricky Redevelopment

dents as they asked questions. The management and development team for each developer was required to attend along with traffic consultants and marketing representatives who could respond to specific questions. The questions posed by the public were intelligent, on point and most certainly impacted the final designs of the developers who were ultimately selected.

The fifth and final town hall meeting was reserved for the public. At the end of the meeting I asked the audience the following question: “If you were us (the governing body), who would you pick and why?”

And, wow, did they ever tell us!

Checking the financials Concurrent with the town hall process, we engaged the services of a financial firm specializing in forensic analyses to determine the financial strength and creditworthiness of each prospective developer. We wanted to avoid adding to our collection of gold plated shovels—which I prominently display in the Mayor’s Office—a reminder of the plight of this development.

After multiple meetings of the governing body, consideration of what we learned at the town hall meetings and analysis of the

findings from our forensic financial specialists, Fort Lee ultimately selected SJP Residential Properties to develop the eastern parcel and Tucker Development to develop the western parcel. Within days, the negotiation of the Redevelopment Agreement commenced and the real work started.

Setting the terms

Negotiation of the agreements with SJP and Tucker was challenging to say the least. In a room crowded with attorneys, consultants, developer representatives under the pressure of an impending deadline, the negotiations were long and arduous. The agreements were negotiated concurrently, the redevelopers had no prior relationship whatsoever and it was critically important to government that, despite the subdivision of the parcel, a cohesive and compatible development be created.



Mayor Mark Sokolich and Councilman Harvey Sohmer pose with the town’s collection of gold plated shovels—which had been prominently display in the Mayor’s Office—a reminder of the plight of this development.

Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of any redevelopment process is what benefits the town can derive through negotiation. With respect to the eastern parcel, there are approximately two acres of land which separate the residential towers and upon completion of the second hi-rise (as well as a freestanding restaurant situated between the buildings) the entire area will be dedicated to Fort Lee as a public park.

A new theater In recognition of Fort Lee’s past as the first Hollywood, a state of the art theatre/playhouse will be constructed on the ground floor level of the second hi-rise with SJP contributing the cost to construct the building and facade and Fort Lee remaining responsible for its interior. Once constructed, this theatre is anticipated to be the crown jewel of our entire community and serve as the main venue of an annual Film Festival second to none.

In addition to site-specific benefits to the community, a host of other off-site benefits were paid for by the redevelopers. A new force main and upgraded utility service through our downtown district and a new pump station are being constructed. As a condition of approval, the redevelopers were each required to contribute to the cost and



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expense of an Adaptive Traffic Signalization System which encompasses 12 intersections which service the entire perimeter of Redevelopment 5.

Traffic improvements When implemented, this system will allow for a freer flow of traffic by reducing unnecessary wait times, re-routing traffic away from overwhelmed intersections and constantly adapting to traffic demand in real time through a web of sensors and vehicle detectors. The challenge with this initiative was to obtain approval from not only local officials, but also state and county agencies as the intersections encompass local, county and state roadways, though only one agency is responsible for the master controls. After almost 18 months of negotiating, document drafting and overcoming multiple technical roadblocks, approval and implementation is imminent. The County of Bergen will serve as the lead agency.

After more than four decades, Fort

Lee's Redevelopment 5 has become a reality. It will cost in excess of 800 million dollars and will have employed almost 1,000 people. Its eastern half is predominantly residential with one 49-story luxury residential tower known as The Modern completed and a second tower slated to break ground in or about late 2015. Once completed, these iconic structures will be the tallest buildings in Bergen County. The first phase of the western portion, which is well underway, will boast approximately 175,000 square feet of retail, a hotel and 425 residential units. The first tenant, IPIC Movie Theatres, plans to open in early 2016.

The Business District Alliance This redevelopment has inspired us to establish Fort Lee's first Business District Alliance (BDA). The group's sole mission is to market and promote our downtown businesses and to ensure a harmonious relationship between our redevelopment businesses and our exist-

ing downtown businesses.

Through the collective efforts of government and our BDA, Fort Lee's Main Street will be receiving a complete facelift, including new sidewalks, benches and receptacles, streetlights which match those surrounding the redevelopment, wider sidewalks to allow for outdoor dining, a new roadway and a passive park. Plans include relocating our post office to a state-of-the-art parking deck to be constructed in our municipal parking lot which will better accommodate our business patrons, commuters and absorb overflow from the shopping district at Redevelopment 5.

As I write, twenty-story high cranes are piercing the earth and an army of carefully choreographed construction workers are laying rebar and distributing construction materials. A small price to pay considering from where it is that we came and what we will ultimately have...a redevelopment second to none. 🚧



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A Better World Café

A new, non-profit restaurant promotes sustainably with healthy, delicious food; while also feeding those in need

By Gayle Brill Mittler,
Mayor, Highland Park

Nestled in between the cities of New Brunswick and Edison, the Borough of Highland Park is a friendly community of approximately 14,000 residents. That small-town feel is evident in its creative and diverse shops, ethnic restaurants representing nearly 20 cultures, and welcoming houses of worship—all within a two mile radius. Highland Park is the kind of community that is committed to “giving back” to the rest of the world. And for the past five years the borough has been home to a very special neighborhood ‘joint’ that benefits its patrons and the community.

A Better World Café, on the first floor of the Reformed Church on 2nd Avenue, is a joint venture of Elijah’s Promise soup kitchen and culinary school based in New Brunswick and Who Is My Neighbor? Inc., a nonprofit in Highland Park that seeks to improve the quality of life and sustainability. The café provides healthy, tasty and affordable food to the public while promoting sustainability and environmental responsibility. The restaurant was inspired by and is associated with the national organization One World Everybody Eats, based in Salt Lake City, Utah. At A Better World Café, the menu (changed daily) is filled with seasonal foods that are produced by local farms and markets. Each day a complimentary vegan dish is on the menu for those who cannot afford a meal, or to supplement a meal without increasing the cost to the customer.

The café serves anywhere from 50 to 100 people for lunch each day, including Highland Park residents, local employees, Rutgers students and residents from neighboring towns. Pricing is “suggested,” giving customers the option of paying the set price, a higher price, or eating for free. Approximately 85 percent of diners choose to pay at least the suggested price for their meals. Some pay extra to help pay for the cost of providing complimentary meals.



A BETTER WORLD

SEASONAL AND
SUSTAINABLE FARE

CAFÉ

A Better World Café has proven to be a vital source of sustenance for numerous residents. It’s also making a name for itself as a quality restaurant in Highland Park, providing appetizing cuisine for its health-conscious clientele.



A Better World Café

both graduates of the Elijah's Promise Culinary School, while desserts and the daily quiche is made by the staff at the Better World Bakery. Aside from the chefs, a part-time house manager and part-time dishwasher, the remainder of the staff are volunteers. Each week the café welcomes 10 to 20 volunteers who help serve and clean up, and are treated to a free meal. These volunteers are a vital part of the café operations.

A Better World Café has proven to be a vital source of sustenance for numerous residents, many of whom visit on a daily or routine basis. However, it is also making a name for itself as a quality restaurant in Highland Park, providing appetizing cuisine for its health-conscious clientele. The friendly, relaxed atmosphere contributes to the community spirit at the café. It is well-worth a visit to the Better World Café—check out daily specials on their Facebook page. 🍴

A Better World Café, on the first floor of the Reformed Church on 2nd Avenue, is a joint venture of Elijah's Promise soup kitchen and culinary school based in New Brunswick and Who Is My Neighbor? Inc., a nonprofit in Highland Park that seeks to improve the quality of life and sustainability.

A sample lunch menu might include Vegetarian Chili, Pumpkin Soup, Turkey Sandwich, Macaroni Salad, Vegetable Quiche, Complimentary Vegetarian Rice

and Beans, Apple Crisp and Peanut Butter Cookies. Their signature "A Better World Café Salad" is offered daily. Lunches are prepared by Chef Vito and his assistant,



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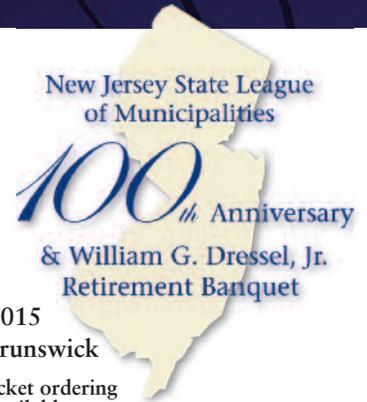
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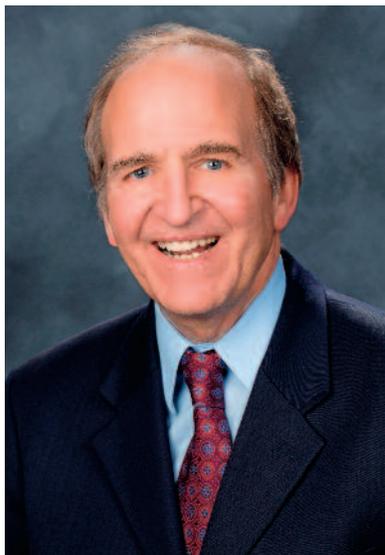
May Banquet to Commemorate League Centennial and Executive Director's Retirement

By Suzanne Walters, Chair,
NJLM 100th Anniversary Committee



May 7, 2015
Hilton, East Brunswick
Sponsorship and ticket ordering
information is available at
njslom.org/100banquet/

On May 7 the League will be celebrating two major milestones in one evening: the 100th Anniversary of the establishment of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities and the distinguished tenure of Executive Director William G. Dressel, Jr., who is retiring after 41 years of service.



Bill Dressel joined the League in 1974 and quickly established a local government presence in New Jersey. He has fought many battles on behalf of the League's local government membership at the State House. In 1995, Dressel was named the League's Executive Director. It was under his leadership that the League acquired and rehabilitated the dilapidated Ferdinand W. Roebing Sr. Mansion in the heart of historic Trenton, which now serves as the League's Headquarters. Dressel's accolades

include the Sarah P. Fiske Award by Preservation New Jersey, Inc. for the rehabilitation of the League's new headquarters (September 2008), the John G. Stutz Award recognizing over 25 years of League service (December 1999) and the Rutgers Award for public service to New Jersey for Excellence in promoting and supporting municipal government (November 2007).



Executive Director Bill Dressel, Senior Legislative Analyst Jon Moran and then Senior Legislative Analyst Casey Barrs review the proposed "State Pay for State Mandate" Constitutional Amendment with Senate President John Russo in 1987.

The League will be celebrating two major milestones in one evening: the 100th Anniversary of the establishment of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities and the distinguished tenure of William G. Dressel, Jr.

Dressel will retire on June 30, 2015. In his resignation letter he wrote: "I have the deepest respect and admiration for the local officials who contribute and sacrifice so much to improve



Bill Dressel is interviewed at the State House by Fox News.

Then League President Dave DelVecchio, Mayor Lambertville, Ginny Hook, President, 222 W. State Street Urban Renewal Corp. and Executive Director Bill Dressel (top, center) cut the ribbon for opening of new League Headquarters.

the quality of life in their communities. You have honored me by allowing me to serve you and I will be eternally grateful.”

The May 7 banquet will also highlight the founding of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, its first 100 years of service to its members and 100 years of dedication to local government cooperation.

The banquet will be held at the Hilton East Brunswick and will include a cocktail hour and sit down dinner. Among the banquet highlights, speakers will regale with a look at both the League’s and retiring Director’s histories.

Tickets are required for entrance into the banquet, and are on sale now at njslom.org/100banquet.

Speakers will be announced on the banquet webpage as they are confirmed.

We hope that you will join us in celebrating two significant milestones in one evening. 🍷

@ Visit njslom.org/100banquet for information on the 100th Anniversary & William G. Dressel, Jr. Retirement Dinner. Follow the celebration using #njlm100 on Facebook and Twitter.



Governor Chris Christie and NJLM Executive Director Bill Dressel greet each other at the 2% Arbitration Cap bill signing, June 24, 2014.

Marketing Your Community

A combination of targeted ads and social media are encouraging millennials, young parents and empty nesters to consider Jersey City

By Steven Fulop, Mayor, Jersey City; Member, NJLM Executive Board



C **JERSEY** **CTY** **MAKE IT**
YOURS

#JCMAKEITYOURS

Jersey City is on a rapid ascent. The city's skyline is undergoing a dramatic change as 6,000 housing units are currently under construction and a further 18,000 are approved—the largest number of housing starts in New Jersey. Soon, 17 of our state's 20 largest buildings will be in Jersey City.

Over the next few years Jersey City will become the state's largest city. While this is an enviable position to be in, it creates challenges. Finding residents for all these homes while at the same time maintaining the character of local neighborhoods is something we can't overlook.

That's why we decided to launch a marketing campaign to more accurately define Jersey City to prospective residents and businesses as well as to attract tourists to our hotels, cultural destinations and restaurants. We think that our approach could serve as a tool for elected officials in New Jersey who are looking to attract investment to their communities.

From the very start we brought the development community into the mix. After all, they are the ones building the residential units and, we believed, should be involved in the campaign and financially support the effort.

The Make It Yours campaign was launched with this full page ad featured in the Metropolitan section of the New York Times.

Marketing Your Community

Research Before designing the creative, we researched what people considered the strengths and challenges of Jersey City. We interviewed millennials, young parents and empty nesters in Jersey City, throughout northern New Jersey and in New York City. What we learned was precisely what our developers told us: that we needed to define Jersey City as a vibrant, diverse urban community with terrific shopping and a restaurant scene comparable to other energetic cities.

We went to work to create a campaign with an authentic, descriptive, urban feel for Jersey City.

Then we went to work with our advertising agency and social media firm (Hudson County-based Harrison Rand and Jersey City-based Creative Civilians) to design a campaign with an authentic, descriptive, urban feel for Jersey City.

The message was that residents and businesses could define their own way to live, work and enjoy the city.

Jersey City: Make It Yours, which became our brand, tested best against several other options with all our key audiences.

Planning From the beginning, we planned for this to be more than just a traditional advertising campaign. Social media is an integral part of the effort, especially in reaching millennials. We identified our target audiences based on Census data and then behaviorally and geographically targeted mobile and digital ads. Specific office buildings and transit hubs were targeted. This means that our audience is seeing our ads on their smartphones or tablets commuting to work, and then on desktops in their workplaces. Millennials live online and use public transportation to get around. We know how to reach them.

Digital ads have appeared on dozens of sites including news, weather (weather.com) and sports (NBA.com, NFL.com, Bleacher Report) outlets. At the same time, we have taken full advantage of out-of-home advertising using digital billboards and urban posters, taxis and buses as well as PATH and subway

advertising. Of course traditional print and radio outlets are used as well.

No broadcast TV or cable was used because with online streaming, DVR, and YouTube, Millennials don't watch live TV very often. The videos we produced are seen online and through social media, garnering thousands of views.

What's more, we haven't solely relied on paid media and have embraced an active earned social media campaign. Our strategy for Jersey City's social presence, in a sentence, is very simple—to put a human face to the city and to celebrate the diverse range of people who call Jersey City theirs. So often, cities become faceless, impersonal monoliths, and we want to counter that by showcasing local people—residents, business owners, students, community leaders, and artists—who are doing interesting things in every part of the city. We are painting a picture of what Jersey City is all about, beyond its convenient transportation options and landmarks—it's a city that's defined and energized by its residents.

On Facebook, we are using targeted acquisition to build our fan base and are promoting select posts to boost our content's reach. On Instagram, we have partnered with local influencers to extend the reach of our content and to gain followers organically. On Twitter, we are pushing out bite-sized content such as links to news articles, reviews, editorials and any other topics relevant to Jersey City. We're promoting our page to boost our reach and follower base.

We've also pursued a public relations strategy, especially to highlight our restaurants and cultural institutions that on their own might not have the resources to pursue the coverage.

Measuring results The first wave of advertising occurred in October and November, before the holiday advertising crush. Immediately following this initial wave, we tested how much we moved the needle regarding our primary objectives.

The results have been heartening as ad recall was high and the perceptions of

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Mana Contemporary was featured as part of the Make It Yours campaign in this digital billboard located in strategic, high visibility locations close to key approaches to Hudson River crossings.

Social media is an integral part of the effort, especially in reaching millennials.

Jersey City changed in several important categories. The favorability of Jersey City increased by double digits. A greater number of people said they had a positive regard for our art and restaurant scenes, shopping venues, housing options, parks and cultural institutions. Most important, our post-campaign focus groups proved that we were suc-

cessful in our efforts to showcase the diversity and energy of the city.

There is no cookie cutter way to create a sophisticated, targeted marketing campaign. Still, there are lessons that should be taken from our approach. We want the region to make Jersey City theirs. So can other communities in pursuing economic development goals. ♣

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Helping Patients with Lyme Disease

By Chris Smith, Congressman, Fourth District

Lyme disease is the most prevalent vector-borne (i.e. tick or other organism-transmitted) disease in the U.S. today. It's estimated that over 59,000 cases of Lyme have been reported in New Jersey in the past 15 years. According to recent data, 95 percent of Lyme disease cases were reported from 14 states, and New Jersey was fourth highest.

After years of uncertainty, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced in 2013 what we in the Lyme disease community already knew: only 10 percent of cases were being reported. Nationwide, the actual number of Lyme cases is over 300,000—not 30,000 as CDC had previously insisted. Given our state's high incidence rates, this announcement has heightened the urgency for a coordinated, targeted effort to assist Lyme patients.

We need to redouble our work on a concerted strategy to raise awareness of Lyme and provide real solutions for those who are suffering. The House Lyme Disease Caucus, which I founded and now co-lead along with Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN), is designed to do so. Our caucus works to educate Members of Congress and staff members about Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, and advances initiatives designed to help the estimated 363,000 Americans who suffer from Lyme disease each year.

We recently introduced legislation to establish a federal Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee to better deliver results for those living with this debilitating illness. The bill, H.R. 665, would ensure that experts and patients have a seat at the table when decisions are made impacting Lyme disease research, diagnostics and treatments.

Specifically, HR 665 requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to form the panel and include a diverse group of experts to enhance coordination and improve communication among federal agencies, medical professionals, and patients. The requirement of ensuring diversity of valid scientific opinion and a broad spectrum of viewpoints will lead to a better approach to the challenges in diagnosing, treating and managing Lyme disease—particularly for those who have suffered for decades with chronic Lyme, only to be told that their illness doesn't exist.

For example, one of my constituents, Colleen, was 10 years old when she began suffering from many mysterious health problems. Her mother suspected that it could be Lyme disease and fortunately sought out and found a literate doctor. This doctor treated Colleen for several months and she initially showed improvement, but once the course of treatment was over Colleen's health deteriorated. Instead of spending her high school years with friends, playing sports and preparing for college, Colleen was at home or in numerous doctors' offices.

HR 665 will lead to a better approach to the challenges of Lyme disease—particularly for those who have suffered for decades, only to be told that their illness doesn't exist.

After many years of treatment from Lyme-literate doctors, Colleen was able to go back to her high school for partial instruction and eventually enroll full-time. She not only graduated on time, but fifth in her class. She was accepted to Johns Hopkins University and today Colleen is a successful professional with a full and happy life. She still has the disease, but is able to use alternative therapies to help her manage it.

Unfortunately, there are too many patients who will not receive the diagnosis and treatments that allowed Colleen to live a productive life, and not nearly enough has been accomplished for people suffering from the disease.

Designing the process to better focus on improving outcomes after a Lyme diagnosis—as HR 665 would do—will not only ensure more effective policies, but will help to raise the quality of life for patients and assist the loved ones who care for them. ♣

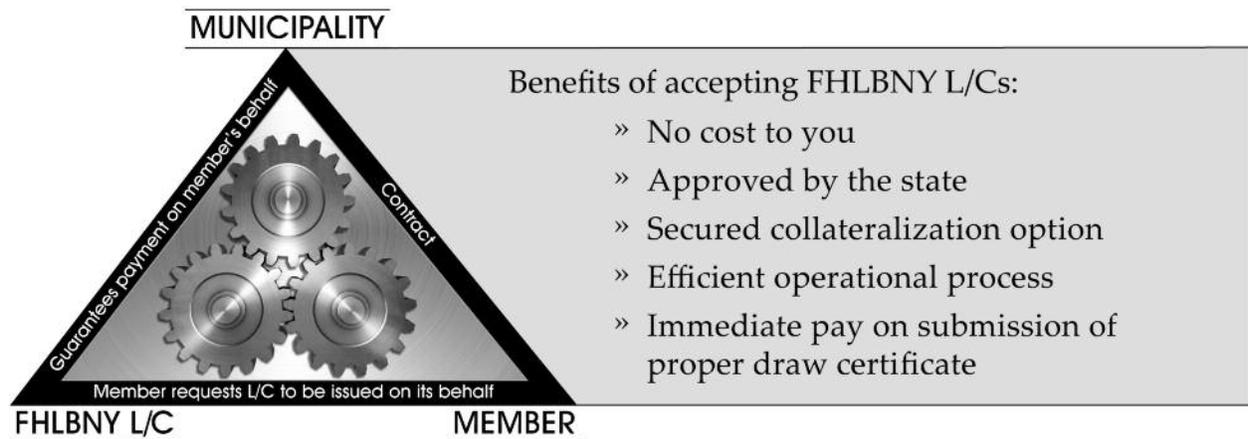
Smith, of Robbinsville, is co-chair and co-founder of the bipartisan Lyme Disease Caucus in Congress. He serves as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Global Health.



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‘Tiny Homes’ for the Homeless

Cities are the right laboratory to try this cost effective approach to combating homelessness and the dysfunction that leads to it

By Albert B. Kelly, Mayor, City of Bridgeton



“Tiny homes” are small and very basic; picture an enhanced backyard accessory shed structure, but with a bathroom, kitchen, and basic systems in place. It’s an alternative to literally sleeping on the street.

Some might see it as a small attempt to solve a big problem, but for Bridgeton and other fiscally challenged urban communities, it could be a big weapon in the fight against homelessness.

The “tiny homes” approach provides very small affordable housing units for the homeless. I first got the idea in May of 2014, when I came across a program, “Occupy Madison” in Madison Wisconsin. They built 98-square-foot homes for around \$3,000 specifically for the homeless.

What are they? “Tiny homes” are small and very basic; picture an enhanced backyard accessory shed structure, but with a bathroom, kitchen, and basic systems in place. It’s an alterna-

tive to literally sleeping on the street. It provides shelter to be sure, but also a framework for people to get back on their feet.

I support trying this approach on a pilot basis because as we know, making a difference in homelessness requires more than just providing physical shelter. To help the homeless, and by extension the wider community, we need to provide day-to-day stability, instill productive routines, and access to on-going support services.

A “tiny homes” approach would not replace traditional shelters. Instead, the structures would fill in the gaps where there are too few beds, lack of services, or limited access. This approach, if successful, would also give each community the ability to craft a program tailored to their specific homeless population and resource base.

But I’m banking on the fact that having a place of their own, albeit a small one, and enough “skin in the game” of their own recovery will make it worth doing.

Legislation I am greatly encouraged by State Senator Ray Lesniak’s sponsorship of legislation (S-2571) establishing a “Tiny Home Pilot Program” to be carried out by up to six municipalities in New Jersey’s three regions.

The proposal, if approved, would provide \$5 million total to the participating communities over the life of the program. It would allow a pilot effort to go forward under the direction of the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. My hope is that the legislature would pass, and the governor sign, this important foundational step.

Considerations My other hope, as a mayor, is that a “tiny homes” pilot program would not get bogged down with a heavy top-down bureaucracy. However, any program along these lines has to balance a number of considerations.

For example, the homes themselves need to be safe and habitable. Any community participating would need to examine their codes (zoning, planning, and housing) to attain some consistency. Public safety and law enforcement should also be considerations. From a planning or land-use standpoint, thought has to be given to impacts on given neighborhoods.

At that point, there may be plenty of reasons to say “no,” but not when I consider the status quo from a community perspective. Currently the homeless occupy whatever nook and cranny they can find, loitering in public spaces, panhandling from pedestrians, violating petty ordinances and committing crimes of desperation or opportunity. The situation brings down the quality of life in our communities. That’s why I’m looking for reasons to say “yes” to tiny homes.

And when I consider the status quo from the perspective of the homeless, it’s all of the above but it’s also their lives; filled with desperation, despair, fear, hopelessness, sickness, addiction, mental health issues, and in some cases death from exposure. Sadly, this happened in my community in 2013. It prompted us to start our own Code Blue program to provide warming centers during the winter. It also started us thinking about longer term solutions to homelessness.

Accountability To be sure, a “tiny homes” program should be heavy on accountability. Participation should require adherence to rules and regulations regarding personal conduct. Every-

thing from regular inspections to required participation in programs that provide substance abuse counseling, job training, and financial literacy should be part of the package. But I don’t think these challenges should keep communities from trying.

Providing those in need with a permanent place to live will make it easier to follow-up with and require accountability from the homeless population. In reality, a few may not make a transition at all but given a chance, I think most will. Sometimes it’s easy to see “the homeless” as a category—a problem to be solved. But I’m banking on the fact that having a place of their own, albeit a small one and enough “skin in the game” of their own recovery will make it worth doing.

For urban communities “tiny homes” may also be a way to let vacant, unproductive, or substandard parcels in a city’s inventory generate value for the community.

It’s part of why I tend to think that cities are the right laboratory to try what I believe can be a cost effective approach to combating homelessness and the dysfunction that leads to it. ♣

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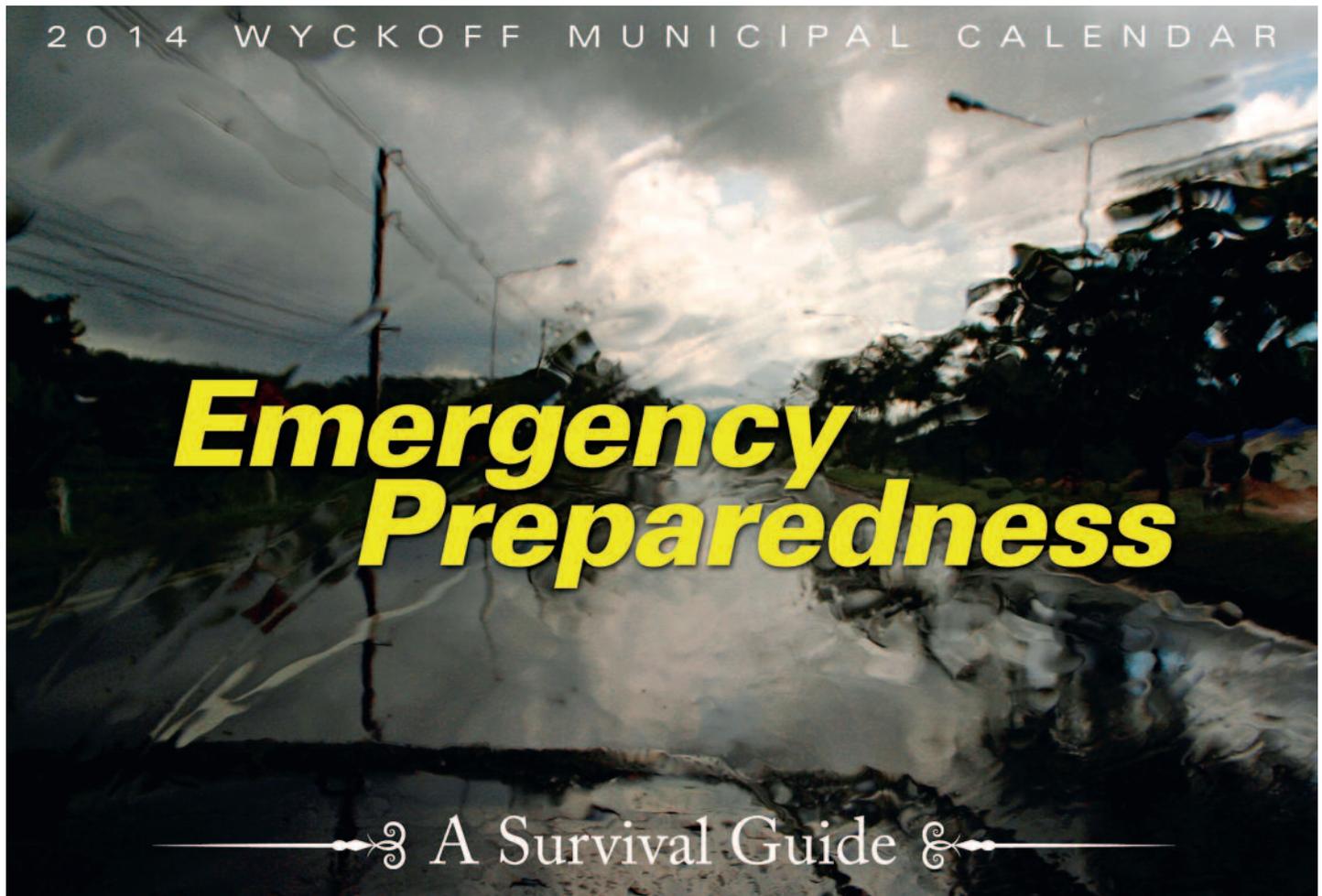
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The Calendar to the Rescue

Wyckoff used its 2014 municipal calendar to share potentially lifesaving information

Kevin J. Rooney, Mayor & Robert J. Shannon, Jr.,
Township Administrator, Wyckoff Township



The calendar's cover photo is a far cry from the bucolic images that are typically employed for this publication.

Hurricane Sandy, tropical storms, ice storms and the pre-Halloween snowstorm all caused extensive damage, downed electrical lines, and sustained power outages in Wyckoff. Many of our residents were prepared, but some were not. After nine days without power following Superstorm Sandy—and the difficulty of keeping police vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks rolling with limited gas and fuel resources—our emergency management team met to conduct a post response plan.

They identified a critical need to provide more information to our residents on how to prepare home emergency plans. Mayor Rooney suggested that we use the town calendar as a tool to provide the information. After all, the calendar hangs in many of our homes throughout the year. It would be easy for citizens to access and would have a significant shelf life.

The Township Committee selected “Emergency Preparedness Survival Guide” as the theme for the 2014 calendar. This reflected the fact that maintaining the safety and security of the township is our number one priority.

The calendar's cover photo is a far cry from the bucolic images that are typically employed for this publication.

Be Storm Informed

- Sign Up for e-News on the home page of www.wyckoff-nj.com to receive notices of road closings/detours, emergency communications during storms.
- Register cell phone numbers at the Swift 911 notification symbol on the home page of wyckoff-nj.com to receive telephone calls with emergency information.
- Sign up to receive text messages from the Wyckoff Police Department at the Nixle Text Message symbol on the home page of wyckoff-nj.com.
- Facebook users may click on Wyckoff, New Jersey Office of Emergency Management and “Like the Page” to receive emergency storm information from the Wyckoff Police Department.

These items were included in the 2014 Wyckoff Township Calendar. The publication addressed numerous other topics related to Emergency Preparedness.

Instead, it shows an ominous and stormy sky photographed through the rain-beaded windshield of a car. The image is designed to underscore the serious nature of the threats the calendar addresses. Additional photos and graphics illustrate specific preparedness activities.

also sought to provide common sense information that was timely, meaningful and useful for residents.

The information points included:

- The wide range of measures that residents need to consider when assembling a home preparedness plan.
- How to drive safely during a snowstorm.
- How to stay safe during a thunderstorm.
- The location of township warming/cooling centers.
- Promotion of the township’s “Be Storm Informed” program.
- Volunteer opportunities available,

including how to join the Volunteer Fire Department, Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and the volunteer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Featured throughout the calendar were a series of “pre-disaster planning tips” including:

- Keep a photocopy of important phone numbers in a waterproof container.
- Information on how to install and operate electrical generators safely.
- A Hurricane Preparedness check list.
- Emergency contact information for utility companies, tree and landscape companies, plumbers, electricians, veterinarians, etc.

Anticipating resident queries We also sought to anticipate the questions that come up in every emergency. For example, the calendar includes an explanation of how utilities provide electric power and the steps they must take in restoring power, as well as warnings about staying clear of downed power lines. Another entry details the composition of the Municipal Emergency Management Team, its preparedness planning activities, and our state-approved preparedness plan.

Special needs We also included a form for residents with special needs, so the

We’ve found that whenever we arm the public with information about a program it increases the effectiveness of that program.

For example, the calendar includes a photo of a crank radio being used to charge a cell phone.

The Municipal Calendar is mailed to all homes and businesses in the township. The response from the public has been overwhelmingly positive. Each year we try to anticipate what our residents need to know about municipal services. We’ve found that whenever we arm the public with information about a program it increases the effectiveness of that program.

Calendar content development Our challenge was to address the questions and concerns that we heard from residents during the township’s nine day power outage. Primary among these was when will the power be restored? We



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Calendar to the Rescue

Police and Board of Health could be aware of their location and requirements. Residents were also encouraged to help their neighbors, particularly the elderly, in times of emergencies.

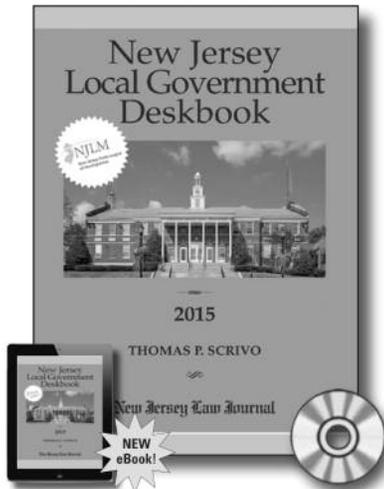
Now, instead of struggling to share this vital information in the midst of an emergency, we have provided a resource that people can refer to beforehand and when a storm or power disruption hits.

The back cover of the calendar includes a meaningful photo. It shows a police officer, ambulance corps member, DPW employee and a firefighter stand-



The calendar's photos and graphics illustrate specific preparedness activities. For example, the calendar includes this photo that shows a crank radio being used to charge a cell phone.

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ing in front of their respective vehicles. The image is emblazoned with the motto "Standing Ready to Serve." Dedicating our calendar to our first responders is just one additional way that Wyckoff demonstrates this commitment.

2015 Calendar theme The township's 2015 resource calendar addresses another very serious subject, the increase in drug and alcohol abuse throughout the metropolitan area, titled, "It's Time to Get the Conversation Started, A Resource Guide for Drug & Alcohol Prevention & Treatment." It details how to identify problematic drugs, how to recog-

nize and understand addiction and how to contact local, county and regional organizations that provide further education and support.

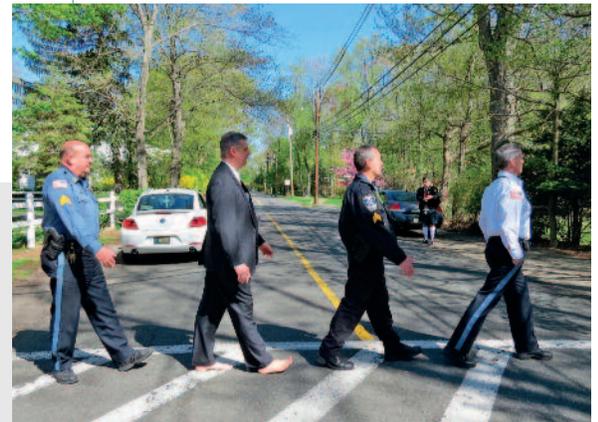
To reduce the expense, the township's calendar project team works with a group of municipal employees to craft the public information into a useful and timely product that provides information about municipal services, changes in laws and procedures, or programs. ♣

Calendar Wins "Best Print" Award

The Township of Wyckoff was awarded "Best Print Media" for its print public information campaign in the

53rd Annual Municipal Public Information Contest sponsored by the New Jersey League of Municipalities, New Jersey Municipal Management Association and Rutgers University Bureau of Government Research. The standards for judging were based on content, clarity, utility and appearance. The contest is open to all 565 municipalities in New Jersey. The township has received numerous awards for its public information materials during the last 20 years.

The Township's "Best Print" award this year was for the aforementioned "Emergency Preparedness" calendar, our regular Spring and Fall newsletters (the iconic Beatles Abbey Road photo with our police officers turned rock stars, reminds motorists to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks), and a special newsletter detailing the township's current Revaluation process.



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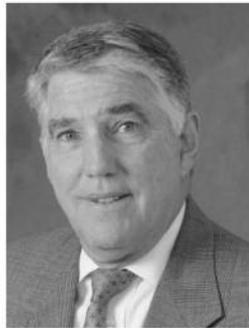
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Take Two Tracks, and Call Me When It Passes

By Ben Dworkin, Assistant Professor of Political Science (Adjunct); Director of the Rebovich Institute for NJ Politics at Rider University

With the United States Supreme Court agreeing to consider the constitutionality of same sex marriage in 2015, several political observers have predicted a victory for marriage equality advocates, in part, because it seems so widely accepted already.

Currently, about 70 percent of the nation's population lives in states that allow same sex marriage, the result of a deliberate state-by-state legal and political strategy.

On Facebook, Steve Goldstein, founder of Garden State Equality, New Jersey's largest civil rights group working on behalf of the LGBT community, explained: "A decision against our side would present an unprecedented legal nightmare." The thinking is that with a majority of Americans living with same-sex marriage laws, it becomes much easier for the Court to find for their constitutionality. According to Goldstein, the Court simply won't choose to "unmarry" couples.

Many political observers are trying to draw lessons from the political strategies that have brought same-sex marriage to the precipice of universality. The New Jersey Time to Care Coalition and the New Jersey Working Families Alliance are paying particular attention. They are using the marriage equality playbook to push for a statewide paid sick leave law. Already, they have helped secure passage of paid sick leave in the state's three biggest cities—Newark, Jersey City and Paterson—as well as Passaic, East Orange, Trenton, Irvington, and Montclair.

Together, these communities represent about 11 percent of New Jersey's population. The strategy appears to be to have more municipalities jump on board and thereby build momentum for a statewide bill.

Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt and Senator Loretta Weinberg have introduced statewide paid sick leave legislation that would allow workers to earn one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked. The annual total would be capped at 40 hours for those working in businesses with less than 10 employees and at 72 hours annually for larger companies. The paid sick days can be used for dealing with the health care of the employee or that of a family member.

More than one million New Jerseyans work in jobs that don't provide paid sick leave, according to the Assembly Democrats—who have adopted the two-track strategy of marriage equity proponents. Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto said that

he supports "every local effort to adopt this pro-worker policy," while at the same time he believes that "this must be a statewide policy that helps all workers."

The issue has gubernatorial implications. Jersey City, under Mayor Steven Fulop, was the first in the state to adopt the ordinance in 2013. Fulop, who is widely assumed to be running for Governor in 2017—or sooner if Governor Christie leaves early—has been able to use the issue to burnish his bona fides before the progressive base of the state's Democratic Party. His support for paid sick leave, his supporters say, is an indication of the kind of policies he would pursue in Trenton.

Each town that passes the ordinance, either by council vote or referendum, builds the pressure to get everyone on the same page.

As a political strategy, pursuing paid sick leave on two tracks, simultaneously in the Legislature and in targeted municipalities, is likely to be a slow, but effective, one. Each town that passes the ordinance, either by council vote or referendum, builds the pressure to get everyone on the same page.

Imagine an employer required to provide paid sick leave for workers at their Newark store but not those working in their West Orange store. Multiply this by numerous employers operating in a variety of jurisdictions, and—proponents argue—the pressure for uniformity will inevitably lead to passage of the Lampitt/Weinberg legislation.

The state's leading business groups, including the New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJBIA) and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, are strongly opposed to statewide legislation. They see it as a one-size-fits-all solution that will cost jobs, even at companies that already provide paid sick days. "Good intentions don't necessarily translate into good policies for the workforce as a whole," argues NJBIA's Stefanie Riehl.

In Trenton, such arguments may carry the day. But as more municipalities adopt the law themselves, it creates a very different field of battle in the Legislature. If the marriage equality fight is any indicator, the two-track strategy will prompt copycats involving other issues in years to come.

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A Merit Awards Program Jumpstarts Leadership

By replacing a “spend it or lose it” approach with incentives for managers, Vernon reduced the tax rate while maintaining service levels

By Victor J. Marotta,
Mayor, Vernon Township



Vernon Township, a rural, maturing community in Sussex County, is home to about 24,000 residents. Our tax base depends on residents and eco-tourism. Following a long period of political unrest, the community successfully fought to change its form of government. In July of 2011 I took office as Vernon Township’s first popularly elected mayor in our 223 year history.

As a newly elected mayor, I was not sure what unscheduled appropriations might be uncovered and felt it prudent to maintain a very conservative fiscal stance until all accounts had been reviewed. As it turned out, the previous administration had left the township with over \$600,000 of un-appropriated expenses. I also “inherited” a highly demoralized group of department heads, who had not received a raise in over four years, despite watching their unionized subordinates achieved raises through collective bargaining.

Efforts to introduce ordinances to support pay raises for these individuals were stymied by the previous mayor and a small group of supporters who used the initiative and referendum feature of the Faulkner Act. In order to meet this challenge by the former mayor and her supporters, it became necessary for me to develop a means of compensation to offset the inability to provide much needed income enhancement. But to do this I needed the complete cooperation and commitment of my department heads. Any plan to provide bonuses

A Merit Awards Program



Administration representatives to the Performance Awards Committee (left to right) Chief Financial Officer Elke Yetter, Business Administrator Bill Zuckerman and Vernon Mayor Vic Marotta review performance evaluation forms that have been submitted by supervisors to The Performance Award Committee.

I met with each of my department heads individually and in a group to enlist their support for a merit bonus program that would be fair and equitable.

for them had to be achieved through cost saving efficiencies, as my council and I had pledged not to increase municipal taxes. If this challenge was to be met and this promise to the voters kept, it would require a complete buy-in by every department head. Otherwise it could become the basis of unhealthy competition rather than the spirited cooperation required to change the work environment.

In 2011 and early 2012, I met with each of my department heads individually and in a group to enlist their support for a merit bonus program that would be fair and equitable. I assured them that we would follow their recommendations and that savings would accrue

to their departments avoiding the “spend it or loose it” practice. I was confident that we could find ways to hold the budget to the 2011 level.

I’m happy to report that the program was a success. Our citizens enjoyed a municipal tax decrease in 2012, 2013 and 2014. And, while we are still working on the 2015 budget, it looks good at this time to maintain that trend. The decreases were not large, a penny or

two, but the trend of the 10 to 12 cent per year increases of previous years had been broken. It was gratifying not only to me as mayor, but also to the employees themselves to see the results of their cost savings transformed into Bonus Awards without any loss of services. The total cost of the program for the first year 2012 was about \$66,000, and it was somewhat less in 2013. Yet the feeling of pride and the morale boost among my senior management team was palpable. Our employees came to know that they were an important part of the decision making process. They are both held accountable for results and rewarded for their management skills. Their leadership helped my Administration achieve its goals.

Following these meetings, I met with my finance committee (the Business Administrator and my Certified Financial officer) to revise existing evaluation forms to provide the foundation to develop a meaningful Merit Bonus program. It was important that these forms be clearly understood as they were the basis of a formalized process, which included the employee’s self-evaluation, which would then become the starting point of the annual evaluation with my Business Administrator. Within the



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A Merit Awards Program

evaluation review, goals for the coming year were discussed and agreed upon. The employee and administrator also determined how success would be measured. These completed forms are not OPRable as they are personnel forms and become part of the employee's personal file. A copy of the evaluative form is placed in the file with all other copies

being destroyed after meeting with the Performance Awards Committee.

In 2012 and 2013 Performance Based Awards were paid to department heads following meetings with the Performance Awards Committee. These awards did not become part of the employee's salary but were a one-time award issued at the discretion of the Per-

formance Awards Committee. Following the issuance of these awards, the former mayor and a friend brought suit against the Mayor and Council challenging their legality and demanding that the Council reimburse the Township for the cost of the awards.

Ultimately the Township was exonerated, but the mayor was required to add two council members to the Performance Awards Committee thus making the evaluation a two-tiered process. The first meeting is held with the internal finance committee in November, and meetings with the Performance Awards Committee follow in December. Also the members of the Town Council were not required to reimburse the township the cost of the awards. Awards for 2014 have not yet been paid, although the Awards Committee is deliberating as I write this article.

For a program like this one to succeed, it is important that the employees involved are committed, not only to the Bonus Program which is a motivating factor, but also to the Township in trying to reduce spending while maintaining effective control of their areas of responsibility. With this feeling of being part of the management team there was a buy-in and our managers are no longer reluctant to make critical decisions, or work in concert with other members of the management team to create innovative ways to meet our goals.

With this type of mindset and commitment from our employees, Vernon Township has been able to increase its fund balance from over \$940,000 dollars when we took office in 2011 to over 3.3 million in 2013. Bonded indebtedness has been reduced from 24.3 million in 2011 to 21.3 million in 2013. Not only are we in a better financial position but we were able to hire two additional police officers, make critical road repairs and add to the DPW's and EMT's rolling stock. A bonus awards program is a management tool, one that if used prudently as a part of a well-designed management plan, can be a strong motivating factor in helping to develop leadership, communication and pride in our departments' accomplishments. 🍀

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Get Ready to Meet a Sovereign Citizen

Some people who mistrust the government have taken steps to “remove” themselves from its authority

By Jon-Henry Barr, Esq., Municipal Prosecutor,
Clark and Kenilworth; President, New Jersey State
Municipal Prosecutors Association

These individuals have declared themselves fully “independent” and are typically referred to as “sovereign citizens.”

Who Are They? The term “sovereign citizen” is used because these people claim that as human beings, they constitute their own sovereign entities, like independent countries, and therefore neither the federal, state or local government in the United States can exercise any rightful authority over them. A sovereign citizen will often reject attempts to compel him to comply with laws governing zoning, planning, professional licensing and registration, motor vehicle licensing and registration, traffic control, taxation, and just about any other regulatory scheme. For the local governmental authorities who must enforce the law, sovereign citizens are not merely unhappy customers—they can become nightmares.

The most frequent encounter between sovereign citizens and governmental agents occurs with local and state police enforcing traffic laws. When these individuals receive traffic summonses, they submit extensive paperwork to the court. The paperwork challenges the authority of the police to charge them, rejects the ability of the courts to hear the charges, and demands the dismissal of all charges against them.

Sometimes, a sovereign citizen charged in municipal court will bring other sovereign citizens with him to amplify his objections and “create a scene” intended, ultimately, to get law enforcement officials to retreat. Since most traffic violations are minor in nature and carry relatively small fines, sovereign citizens believe that if they can present a big enough headache for the cops and the court staff, the charges they face are more easily dismissed than prosecuted.

Our nation is engaged in a great deal of debate over the power of the executive branch and the proper exercise of that power. While most Americans remain law abiding citizens despite their misgivings about the government, there is a growing group of citizens whose mistrust of the government is so strong that they have taken steps to try to “remove” themselves from being subject to any federal, state or local authority.

Although police, municipal prosecutors, judges and court staff are on the front lines, sovereign citizens will also challenge and defy local health and safety code officials, tax collectors, clerks, and elected officials.

Paper Terrorism Some sovereign citizens have resorted to extreme and violent measures when confronting law enforcement. Sadly, some truly disturbed sovereign citizens have shot and killed police officers elsewhere in the United States. Fortunately, most sovereign citizens do not resort to violence to achieve their aims, but some engage in what has been called “paper terrorism.” Paper terrorism consists of the filing of false liens, deeds transferring property, frivolous lawsuits, and other official filings against government officials that wreak havoc with those officials’ credit, property ownership, and ability to engage in routine business transactions. Sometimes sovereign citizens employ these tactics against other private citizens in an effort to avoid foreclosures or paying other legitimate debts.

The New Jersey judiciary has already consulted the New Jersey State Police, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security, the FBI and other judiciaries around the country about how to handle sovereign citizens. Although the FBI has classified sovereign citizens as domestic terrorists, it is important to note that not every action taken in the name of sovereign citizen ideology constitutes a criminal act. Some of their activities take place in a “gray” area between legal conduct and outright fraud.

For example, sovereign citizens frequently use documents purporting to be official identification but are obviously not issued by any state government. Other times, they will impersonate diplomats from countries that either do not exist or are not recognized by the United States. Ultimately, sovereign citizens make it extremely difficult for local government officials to conduct routine business, and the natural inclination of municipal officials may be to give up and simply call the police on a difficult person.

Get to Know Them Municipal government officers should learn as much as possible about who the sovereign citizen is and what actions they may take. As with any local resident with a gripe, municipal government employees should demonstrate civility and respect.

Although sovereign citizens may appear crazy, they are usually not psychological-

ly disturbed. They can be smart and well-educated about government operations. They often have no interest in hurting any government officials, but simply want to be “left alone.” Some sovereign citizens are willing to politely interact and exchange information when they realize that it may serve their purposes and save them time and energy. ❧

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Michael F. Cerra, NJLM Director of Government Affairs;
Lori Buckelew & Jon R. Moran, NJLM Senior Legislative Analysts
& Edward Purcell, Esq., Staff Attorney-NJLM Associate Counsel

A-366 / S-1713



Restoring Revenues from Corporate-claimed Exemption

Status: Assembly Telecommunications and
Utilities Committee/Senate Community
and Urban Affairs Committee

These bills are absolutely needed to address the current and future loss of a key, non-property tax revenue stream.

In 2009, Verizon claimed itself exempt from the payment of Business Personal Property Taxes (BPPT) in five municipalities. This claim was based on the corporation's own interpretation of a 1997 law. Using that interpretation, Verizon claimed the exemption after it unilaterally determined that it no longer provided dial tone access to at least 51 percent of the local telephone exchanges in those communities.

Hopewell Borough (one of the five) challenged Verizon's claim to the Mercer County Board of Taxation and prevailed. Verizon appealed that decision to the Tax Court. In 2010, 28 municipalities were added to the list. In 2011, 31 more municipalities were told by Verizon that they would no longer receive their BPPT payments. By 2012, 55 more municipalities were missing out and in 2013, they were joined by 44 more. Verizon's claimed exemption was felt in 18 municipalities for the first time, this year. And 42 more have been informed by Verizon that they will receive no BPPT payments in 2015.

As a result, unless the Legislature acts, 223 municipalities now enter this fiscal year knowing that they will need to balance their budgets without Verizon BPPT payments. These funds have allowed municipalities to provide vital relief to residential taxpayers.

In 2012, the Tax Court issued a preliminary decision in favor of Verizon. Hopewell Borough, joined by the League as *amicus curiae*, asked the Appellate Division to review the Tax Court's ruling. The Appellate Division denied that request. Hopewell, with the League as *amicus*, then asked the Supreme Court to consider the matter. That Court's refusal to get involved in this matter, until all Tax Court proceedings conclude, effectively denies the taxpayers in over 100 municipalities the opportunity for judicial relief.

In response to that decision, legislation was introduced by Assemblyman Ralph Caputo and Senator Bob Smith to provide

clear direction to the courts regarding the Legislature's intent to protect residential taxpayers, when the laws regarding state taxation of telecommunications providers were reformed in 1997.

The Legislature must act to prevent more and more municipalities from losing their fair share of BPPT revenues. Please ask your legislators to support A-366 and S-1713.—JRM

S-2701/A-4172
S-2702/A-4173



Requiring Creditors to Maintain Vacant Properties

Status: Senate Community and Urban Affairs
Committee

Proposed for Introduction in Assembly

The League of Municipalities supports S-2701/A-4172 and S-2702/A-4173, similar legislation which would provide permissive tools for municipalities to deal with abandoned properties. Current law requires creditors to maintain the exterior of vacant and abandoned residential properties under foreclosure. These bills are intended to extend that to non-residential properties as well as the interior.

Specifically, S-2701/A-4172 would:

- require creditors to maintain vacant and abandoned non-residential properties under foreclosure;
- extend creditors' responsibility to these properties under foreclosure to include non-residential properties;
- require creditors to notify each municipality of new and pending foreclosure actions on vacant and abandoned non-residential properties within the municipality;
- authorize municipalities to levy fines of \$1,500 for each day a maintenance violation of such properties goes uncorrected following a 30-day window to correct, or a 10-day window in the case of an imminent threat to public health and safety; and,
- authorize municipalities to levy fines of \$2,500 for each day an out-of-state creditor fails to appoint an in-state representative or agent after the 10-day deadline to notify a municipality that a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose on a non-residential property has been served.

S-2702/A-4173 extends these provisions to the interior of these properties.—MFC

A-3829



Permits Agriculture-related Events on Preserved Farmland

Status: Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

A-3829 would allow agriculture-related events on preserved farmland. This is the latest bill to deal with the issue of special events on land that, using taxpayer dollars, have been preserved.

Under this legislation, a person or persons interested in holding such an event would need to obtain a permit from the county board of agriculture. The county board may issue the permit if: 1) no more than four permits are issued for the farm a year; and 2) the event only temporarily disturbs the use of land for agricultural/horticultural purposes, and does not interfere with the use of land for these purposes after the event.

The League has opposed similar initiatives in the past, and continues to do so here. Under this bill, the approval is required of the county board, but there is no approval required from the host municipality, that would be dealing with any additional traffic, noise or other results from the event.

The League supports the state's hugely successful preservation program, in which taxpayers dollars are used to permanently preserve these lands. Allowing preserved farmland to be used for commercial purposes runs contrary to and undermines the intent of the program.

We do appreciate that the bill seeks to limit the number of events, an issue which generally has not been dealt with in previous legislation. However, on balance, the concerns far outweigh the benefits of the bill.

Lastly, there is a on-going pilot program in which a small number of wineries on preserved farmland will be

allowed to host events, under certain circumstances and provided they achieve all necessary approvals from the municipality. It is preferable to allow that pilot program to run its course before taking action on the very same issues.—MFC

A-3869



Establishes State Tax Commission to Preempt Local Regulation

Status: Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee

This bill establishes the "State Tax Commission" to create a statewide system of taxi regulation. The Commission would consist of nine members, to be appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Under the bill, this new bureaucratic agency would be authorized to establish a single, one-size-fits-all system of regulations to govern the taxi industry throughout the state.

The bill also repeals the sections of current law that authorize municipalities to regulate the ride-for-hire industry, within their jurisdictions. It does not, however, relieve municipalities from the practical responsibility to receive and respond to any citizen complaints. Nor does it specify a mechanism for state enforcement of the new regulations; leaving that task, we presume, to local authorities.

Since 1917, in order to protect prospective passengers, other motorists and the general public, and to preserve order, municipalities have been empowered by statute to license ride-for-hire businesses. While no level of regulation is perfect, municipalities have clearly demonstrated their effectiveness in this area for close to 100 years.

Throughout that period, in order to protect the public, local governing bodies have established reasonable standards for companies and contractors. Local government has been responsive to concerns raised by passengers, pedestrians, local merchants and other drivers. Local first

responders have attended to accidents. They will continue to do so.

We oppose this bill, which would provide the state with a new stream of revenue, but which will terminate a system of regulation that has served New Jersey well for many years.—JRM

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A-3987



The ‘Fire Police Appointment Act’

Status: Referred to Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee

A-3987 would permit certain fire police units to appoint fire police officers.

Currently, a volunteer fire company can only appoint members to be fire police from its membership. This bill would allow a volunteer fire company to appoint fire police from individuals who are themselves members of the fire company.

The League approves of this bill because it sets good policy. Ultimately, this bill increases the pool of individuals who volunteer fire companies can use as fire police.—EP

S-2523



Municipal Senior Citizen Parking

Status: Referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee

S-2523 would permit municipalities and municipal parking authorities to create senior citizen priority parking programs. Under this proposal each municipality or authority would be free to craft a program for reduced rate parking for those above age 60. Information about this program must be maintained on a municipality’s website or in printed form in city hall.

The League approves of S-2523 because it clarifies the law in relation to these senior citizen parking programs. To be clear, many New Jersey municipalities already have senior citizen parking programs. The League views S-2523 as a means to clarify that authority.—EP

A-4067/S-2524



Volunteer Services in Return for Property Tax Vouchers

Status: Assembly State and Local Government Committee and Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee

A-4067/S-2524 would permit a municipality, by resolution, to create a

“Municipal Volunteer Property Tax Reduction Program” to provide certain municipal residents with property tax credits. The “Municipal Volunteer Property Tax Reduction Program” will only be available to municipal residents over the age of 60 who have owned and lived in a home within the municipality for 15 years (aggregated) and their home must be their principle residence. Such a resident would be eligible to volunteer their services in exchange for property tax credits, not to exceed \$1,000 per year.

When creating the “Municipal Volunteer Property Tax Reduction Program” the municipality must determine the types of volunteer services and the amount of property tax credits. However, the volunteers cannot be used for any position for which a salary is budgeted in the municipal budget. Volunteers can only be used for non-professional, non-salaried positions.

A volunteer who participates in the program and earns credits shall receive a voucher. The voucher can only be used to offset property taxes on their primary residency for the municipal levy. The voucher cannot be transferred and credits earned under the program cannot be carried over one year to the next. Credits earned in a tax year shall apply only to the municipal levy owing only for that year.

While the intent of the bill is noble, we have several concerns. One concern is the impact on municipal revenue, especially in communities with large senior citizen populations. If the program is successful the municipality could face a significant loss of revenue that would necessitate a reduction in services or an increase in taxes.

Another downside is the uncertainty of the meaning of “volunteer” and “non-professional.” We question whether one is a volunteer if they are receiving a voucher. We also question, what a “non-professional” position is.

Although A-4067/S-2524 is well intended, there are significant practical concerns about the impact the program will have on all the property taxpayers of a municipality.—LB

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Federal Communication Tower Rule Limits Local Input

The new rule will have a far-reaching impact on local land use applications

By Joel Shain, League Public Utilities Counsel; Xiaosong "Larry" Li, Esq. & Kevin G. Boris, Esq., Attorneys with Shain, Schaffer & Rafanello, P.C.

On October 21, 2014, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a Report and Order, which sweepingly overrides and preempts state and local land use law with respect to wireless collocation applications, such as applications to mount or install additional transmission equipment to existing wireless towers or base stations. Subject to limited exceptions, local governments must, within 60 days, approve any application which does not substantially change the size of existing structures. The Order would force each municipality to change its review procedures and amend its ordinances relating to such applications.

Nonetheless, the new FCC rule is not a complete loss for local governments. In spite of intense lobbying from telecommunications carriers, local governments persuaded the FCC to preserve some local discretion. Our office, on behalf of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, contributed to that effort by formally filing a Comment with the FCC regarding the proposed rule. Going forward, New Jersey municipalities could and should take advantage of the hard-earned, albeit limited, local discretion to better protect their citizens' interests.

Background to the FCC rule Congress passed the Federal Telecommunications Act (FTA) in 1996 to facilitate the rapid deployment of wireless services. Section 332(c)(7) of the FTA imposes some specific limitations upon the land use regulation of personal wireless service facilities by state and local governments.



Aside from those limitations, the FTA essentially left intact the ability of local governments to approve or deny the initial placement and modification of wireless facilities.

In 2012, Congress further intruded into local zoning control with the so-called Spectrum Act. Under Section 6409(a) of the Spectrum Act, “a state or local government may not deny, and shall approve, any eligible facilities request for a modification of an existing wireless tower or base station that does not substantially change the physical dimensions of such tower or base station.” Significantly, Congress left some material terms of Section 6409(a) undefined, such as “substantially change,” “base station” and “tower.”

To interpret the undefined statutory terms, the FCC moved to enact rules through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). These proposed rules were even more sweeping than the eventual

Order. Most industrial groups urged a complete abolishment of local oversight, while local governments expressed concern that the proposed rules would be inconsistent with local community needs, interests and values.

In its Comment, the League emphatically stated that the rules, as proposed in the NPRM, would not only disturb the balance between federal communications policy and local oversight, but would unconstitutionally commandeer state and local officials to enforce a federal zoning program. The League also made specific comments to the definitions and tests proposed in the NPRM. Among other points, we successfully argued that there must be a cumulative limitation on multiple applications regarding the same structure.

Wins and losses for local governments The FCC eventually adopted a rule that preserved some local oversight.

For example, state and local governments “may continue to enforce and condition approval on compliance with generally applicable building, structural, electrical, and safety codes and with other laws codifying objective standards reasonably related to health and safety.” Further, the FCC will allow a 90-day “transition period” for local governments to comply with the new rule. In addition, municipalities will have discretion over a modification application if:

- it entails any excavation or deployment outside the current site of the tower or base station;
- it would defeat the existing concealment elements of the structure; or
- it does not comply with conditions associated with the prior approval of the structure, subject to certain exceptions such as a non-substantial increase in height.



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Federal Communication Tower Rule

Section 6409(a) applies only to state and local governments acting in their role as land use regulators. A local government retains discretion over modification requests related to structures located on property owned or leased by the local government.

Nevertheless, industry lobbyists won most of the battles this time. As a result, the FCC Order broadly sets forth rigid, mechanical tests to determine whether a modification “substantially changes” the physical dimensions of an existing structure.

In addition, the FCC states that Section 6409(a) applies to support structures with any FCC-licensed or authorized wireless transmission, not just cell towers. It defines the term “base station” to include any non-tower structures that support or house an antenna, transceiver, or other associated equipment when the relevant application is filed. Under this broad definition any building that hosts antennas or transceivers may constitute a “base station.” Consequently, if a municipality allows the installation of some small antennas inside a sports stadium or on a high-rise building, the municipality may find itself

unable to deny future applications to install much larger antennas.

Importantly, the Order adopts a 60-day shot clock. A collocation application is “deemed granted” if a state or local government fails to act on it within the 60-day time period. However, the running of the period may be tolled by mutual agreement or upon written notice that an application is incomplete. Further, a local government may only require applicants to provide documentation required by the new rule.

At this time New Jersey municipalities should expeditiously amend their land use ordinances and procedures to comply with the new FCC rules and better protect their citizens’ interests. However, the rule is subject to change as related litigation, including constitutional challenges, may lie ahead. ❧

@ If you require additional information or would like our office to assist you in complying with the new rules, please contact the authors at Shain, Schaffer & Rafanello, P.C., (908) 953 9300 or jshain@shainlaw.com.



Actions Your Town Should Take

Although the final rule regarding Section 6409(a) was published in the Federal Register on January 8, 2015, it will not be effective until April 8, 2015. Additionally, certain other components of the rule, such as tolling of the 60-day shot clock, will not be effective until approved by the Office of Management & Budget (OMB). Municipalities should take the following actions during the transition period:

Establish appropriate procedures for handling the two different types of collocation/modification requests

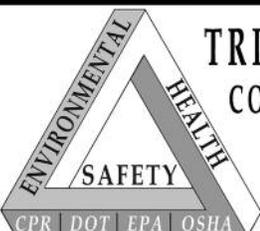
Consider those that fall under the new rule, versus ones that involve “substantial” change of physical dimensions. Requirements, processes and applicable shot clocks all differ. Related local land use ordinances or forms should be revised accordingly.

Establish appropriate procedures to ensure that any future Section 6409(a) application complies

with generally applicable building, structural, electrical and safety codes, and with other laws related to health and safety.

Adopt new tests and exercise additional caution when reviewing any initial application

for a new tower, or any initial application for the installation of any antenna or other transmission equipment on any structure which presently does not host any FCC-authorized equipment. When reviewing such initial applications, a municipality can and should legitimately consider the cumulative effects of subsequent collocation applications.



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When an Interstate Gas Pipeline Comes to Town

By Edward Purcell, Esq.
Staff Attorney-NJLM Associate Counsel

The advent of hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” has caused lower natural gas prices as well as a noticeable jump in the number of proposed interstate pipelines to transport natural gas into New Jersey.

These pipelines are contentious issues for local elected officials. The major touchstone for contention is the preemption of local oversight by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). It is therefore important for elected officials to understand how this process works, so that they can advocate for their residents during the FERC’s review.

There are two components to the FERC’s review: (1) a pre-filing and environmental review; and (2) an application to the FERC for a pipeline certificate which allows a broad preemption of state and local regulation.

First, developers may file a request with the FERC to use the commission’s pre-filing procedures. See 18 C.F.R. 157.21. This procedure is meant to encourage developers to engage in project development activities with interested stakeholders, including municipal and state governments. Taking into account stakeholder input, the developer can amend its plan with proposed environmental mitigation measures before applying to FERC. After this process concludes, the developer may provide FERC with a resource report which the commission will use to conduct its own environmental review.

The FERC’s environmental review is conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). See 42 U.S.C. §4321. This federal law requires the FERC to consider the potential environmental impacts of granting a pipeline certificate and to communicate that information to the public. The process of review and seeking feedback from the public by the FERC staff is called “scoping.” After the initial scoping period, the FERC issues a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), first to cooperating federal agencies for review, and then to the public. After holding another set of public hearings and seeking input, the FERC issues a final EIS.

Second, the developer must file a formal application with the FERC for a pipeline certificate. Upon receiving an application, the FERC publishes a notice in the federal register and begins

the application process. The FERC must determine if the proposed pipeline would be in the public interest by considering a number of factors.

If the FERC grants a pipeline certificate, the commission’s order will state the terms and conditions of approval, including the route that has been authorized, along with any environmental mitigation measures required by the project. Importantly, a FERC certificate confers upon the developer eminent domain authority. 15 U.S.C. §717f(h). Because federal law preempts any state or local law that would obstruct federal law, such as siting and zoning, municipalities will not be able to withhold approval for these projects. However, the state does have some oversight consistent with its authority under the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). See 33 U.S.C. §1344.

It is important for elected officials to understand how this process works, so that they can advocate for their residents.

As noted above, while local authority is preempted, the state does maintain some oversight over interstate natural gas pipeline projects through provisions of the Clean Water Act. See 33 U.S.C. §1344. The first provision, section 401 of the CWA, gives states the ability to deny certification of a project which “may discharge into the navigable waters” of the state. See 33 U.S.C. §1341(a)(1); see also *Alabama Rivers Alliance v. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission*, 325 F.3d 290 (D.C. Cir. Ct. 2003). The second provision, section 404, gives states the authority to regulate the impact of a pipeline project on wetlands. See 33 U.S.C. §1344. New Jersey has incorporated its section 404 authority into the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act (FWPA). See N.J.S.A. 13:9B-5(a).

The state may begin to review a developer’s application after it submits its initial resource report to the FERC prior to their environmental review. Generally, this process is completed before the FERC issues a pipeline certificate. In any event, con-

struction cannot begin until the project has received these state approvals.

What you can do It is important that local elected officials communicate their concerns to the pipeline developers, the FERC and the Department of Environmental Protection. This can be done during the developer’s initial outreach, the FERC’s “scoping process,” during the DEP’s CWA review, and after the FERC issues its initial EIS. Your municipality should also consider becoming an intervenor in the develop-

er’s formal application process before the FERC.

There are two main reasons why a municipality should consider becoming an intervenor. First, as an intervenor the town’s officials would receive copies of all documents filed during the application process. This includes, but is not limited to, reports filed by the applicant, letters and comments submitted by the public, reports and requests issued by the FERC, and any other document filed for consideration in the application

process. Second, as an intervenor a municipality would have legal standing as an official party to the action and would be authorized to appear before the FERC administrative law judges, and in any challenge to the FERC’s decision before the U.S. Court of Appeals.

In sum, while local oversight is preempted by the FERC there are, nevertheless, actions which local elected officials can take to advocate for their residents. ♣

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The Major Environmental Legislation of 2014

A look at the initiatives introduced last year that may affect your municipality in the future

By John M. Scagnelli, NJLM Environmental Counsel;
Partner and Chair of the Environmental and Land Use
Law Group, Scarinci Hollenbeck

In 2014, a number of environmental bills were introduced in the New Jersey State Legislature. These bills covered diverse subject areas and are discussed below.

Air Pollution New Jersey's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) has been the subject of a multi-year battle between the Legislature and Governor Christie. Governor Christie pulled New Jersey out of RGGI and the Legislature has been trying to put the state back in. Two bills, A-1763 and S-151 take the position that New Jersey's participation in RGGI is required by the 2007 RGGI implementing law, P.L. 2007, 340 (N.J.S.A. 26:2C-45 et. seq.). Governor Christie will likely veto these bills. The battle over the state's participation in RGGI will likely continue.

Environmental Infrastructure Financing A-3548 and S-2354 would require local governments and authorities seeking to finance environmental infrastructure projects costing \$500,000 or more to request from the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust (NJEIT) an estimate of financing costs if the project is to be funded by NJEIT, in whole or in part. Even if the local government does not finance the infrastructure project with NJEIT funding, it must still submit the financing cost estimate to the Division of Local Government Services.

The League has opposed A-3548 and S-2354. Municipalities now have the option of pursuing a loan from NJEIT, the bills mandate a lengthy process which could delay a project, and provide no exemptions from the obligation to submit the financing cost estimate, even in cases when the project is funded by grants.

Regional Sewerage Authorities Oversight The issue of oversight of the budgets of regional sewerage authorities has been the subject of attention the last few years. S-72 would limit the percentage growth in regional sewerage authorities' budgets to a cap of 2 percent per year and require that the budgets be approved by the Director of the Division of Local Governmental Services and the Governor.

While the League agrees with the 2 percent cap on the authorities' budgets, it opposes S-72 because local units, not the state, are generally the appointing authorities and should have budget control.

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and sewage runoff into the state's waterways is a long recognized problem. A-3184 establishes notification, signage, and monitoring requirements for CSOs.

NJDEP recently announced that it will issue final permits for 25 municipalities and regional sewerage authorities to require them to develop long term strategies to deal with CSOs and sewage run off. NJDEP is recommending the building of storage tanks or lagoons to store stormwater and green infrastructure projects, such as rain gardens, green roofs and more urban parks to capture stormwater. These strategies will have significant financial impacts for municipalities.

Water Infrastructure Privatization S-2412 and its companion A-3628 was signed into law on February 5, 2015. P.L. 2015, C.18 authorizes municipalities and municipal,

county and regional utility authorities to lease or sell their water and/or wastewater assets to a private entity, without public referendum if an “emergent condition” exists as described in the bills.

The Water Infrastructure Protection Act was opposed by the League. The League is concerned about bypassing a local referendum and not obtaining public approval, the broad definition of the “emergent conditions” authorizing such sale or lease in the Act and financial and public safety impacts. In addition, the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) will not review the negotiated sale price of the water or wastewater assets which could lead to ratepayer increases.

Barneгат Bay Eco-System A-2506 and S-1493 would require NJDEP to adopt total maximum daily loads for the Barneгат Bay ecosystem and require NJDEP to adopt nutrient standards for New Jersey marine waters. The League has opposed these bills based upon their unknown financial implications for municipalities.

Site Remediation Reform This year saw the Governor sign into law a two year extension of the May 7, 2014 statutory deadline for the completion of remedial investigations for pre-1999 discharges on contaminated sites to avoid direct oversight by NJDEP of the remediation of those sites. The Governor signed AS for A-4543/SCS which provides the additional two year extension.

Spill Act Contribution Protection A-2419 and its companion A-3880 prohibit contribution actions against local public entities under the New Jersey Spill Act for cleanup and removal costs or other damages associated with discharges of hazardous substances. These bills follow from NJDEP’s Spill Act legal action filed in 2005 against private companies with liability for discharges of hazardous chemicals into the Passaic River from the former Diamond Alkali plant in Newark. The action resulted in the private companies filing third party complaints against 83 public entities alleging that those entities had con-

tributed to the Passaic River contamination. The Passaic River case has now been settled, but it resulted in the public entities named as third parties having to pay \$95,000 to the state as part of the settlement. The Spill Act contribution protection bills would prohibit such contribution actions from being filed so that public entities will not be dragged

into future environmental litigation cases such as the Passaic River case. These bills would not prohibit direct actions against public entities, only contribution actions. The League has supported these bills.

Many of the bills discussed above will advance in the 2015 session of the Legislature and bear watching. ♣

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Size May Not Be the Issue

A recent study finds little correlation between the cost of local government and municipal size

By Raphael J. Caprio, PhD, University Professor and Director, Bloustein Local Government Research Center, Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers, the State University



New Jersey municipalities generate, on average, 62 percent of their revenue from the property tax. In many other states property taxes are a mere 30 percent of municipal revenue. The challenge of controlling local government costs in New Jersey is thus inextricably linked to issues of the property tax, and vice versa; they cannot be discussed in a vacuum.

Please note that this research focused exclusively on municipal government spending and the property tax burden imposed by municipal government (which averages 24 percent of the total property tax levy). It does not address matters of public school or county spending or property tax burden. Thus, all references to property taxes and spending refer to municipal government, and no other level of government.

The prevailing discussion among state policy makers, media commentators and citizens frustrated with high property tax bills, reflects a “folk hypothesis” that New Jersey has “too many municipalities and too much government.” Consolidating local governments is presented as a way (perhaps in part) for the state to solve its property tax challenges. But is it true that New Jersey has too many small governments and that consolidating them will save tax dollars?

Consolidation of small, allegedly costly municipalities has been advanced as an important policy strategy to remedy the New Jersey property tax problem. Yet, while such arguments are advanced, the basic premise has remained empirically unsupported.

This article is based on the 24th paper in NJLM Foundation’s “Friends of Local Government” Policy paper series, “The Relationship of the Cost of Local Government with Municipal Size,” and the paper “Size May Not be the Issue: An Analysis of the Cost of Local Government and Municipal Size in New Jersey,” published by the Bloustein Local Government Research Center, Issue Paper #1, November 2014. Both were coauthored by Marc H. Pfeiffer, MPA; Assistant Director, Bloustein Local Government Research Center; former Deputy Director of the NJ Division of Local Government Service. The fully-referenced report is online at www.blousteinlocal.rutgers.edu and the whitepaper is at www.njlmef.org/policy-papers/FoLGv634.pdf.

Too many towns? If this premise is correct, there should be some measurable link between the size of government and the cost of government. What we have found, however, is that municipal population size may not necessarily matter in determining per capita cost. Municipalities, large and small, are what they are and do what they do (and can afford to do). They have evolved over time to provide a range of goods and services that reflect local demands within a cocoon of state-imposed fiscal, policy and operational standards.

The cost per capita of municipal government does not significantly vary between large and small municipalities in New Jersey.

Our study of municipal government costs per capita in New Jersey for both 2011 and 2012 would seem to contradict the prevailing folk hypothesis in two fundamental areas: first, that the state has too many municipalities, and second, that smaller municipalities are more expensive than larger municipalities. Three conclusions are drawn from the study.

Size by population First, the perception that the state has too many municipalities may be flawed. Yes, we have more municipalities per square mile than any other state, but New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation. When we look at the average population of “general governments” in the states, New Jersey actually ranks 15th of the 50 states. Put another way, measured by the number of general governments per 10,000 population, the state ranks 34th of 50. Further, 35 other states have more total governmental units and special districts per 10,000 people than does New Jersey. Compared with the population of other states, we

may actually not have too many general governments.

Little variation in cost per capita Second, the cost per capita of municipal government does not significantly vary between large and small municipalities in New Jersey. This conclusion is not explicitly evident since most cursory explorations of municipal costs typically include approximately four-dozen coastal resort communities. These municipalities are characterized by large seasonal but small year-round populations. With infrastructure, service costs, and taxable property value far in excess of what would otherwise be expected given their permanent, year-round populations, these municipalities are also among those with the lowest effective tax rates. Accordingly, unless they are understood to be what they are with their unique characteristics, they distort uninformed analyses.

Once resort communities are separated out from the approximately 500 remaining municipalities, we find that the average cost of municipal government per capita, as demonstrated in each of ten population size groups of municipalities, does not differ significantly between large or small government population groups. The cost of municipal government in 2011 for municipalities under 1,900 population averages \$1,271, while those over 39,000 population average \$1,340.

The significance of socio-economic factors Third, and most intriguing, the study found that while there are no strong individual correlations between municipal cost per capita and population size, there are significant differences in the cost for municipal government when considered against the socio-economic makeup of a municipality, and its character (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural).

These findings—in particular that socio-economic factors may be a greater determinate in driving municipal services and costs—should give pause, suggesting that we may need to rethink the idea that forcing municipalities into larger organizations will improve efficiency and save money. Other, not yet well-understood, factors appear more intimately linked to variations in the cost of local government on a per capita

basis. Finally, the impact of a municipal consolidation if the candidates have separate public school systems can add to the challenge.

The hazards of forced consolidation Accordingly, efforts aimed at forcing municipalities to consolidate might just as readily result in undesirable and/or unintended consequences as savings.

First, the average cost data suggest that for the most part, ultimate savings would be marginal, if any.

Second, consolidation would also require special circumstances to exist. Policymakers must consider whether the candidates see themselves as one community with two governments, or two communities with two governments? Like it or not, our political biology often reinforces a community’s identity with its municipality, place names aside.

The third consideration is that the communities should similarly benefit without undue cost shifts between them. The feared potential for increased costs (and taxes) in one community has contributed to the failure of consolidation efforts.

A service tipping point Fourth, while consolidation may result in some efficiencies, the conventional wisdom ignores the fact that the new, larger municipality may exceed a service threshold, requiring new or additional levels of services not previously anticipated.

Fifth, pressure to consolidate ignores additional potential cost controls through cooperation and shared services. This form of “service specific consolidation” does not result in loss of “community.” The hundreds of shared services already in place may contribute to the remarkably similar cost per capita across all population size municipalities. This would make a good topic for additional research.

This all said, there are places where the stars may align and consolidation may make sense, such as in the case of the 2013 consolidation of the Princetons. Those cases should be rigorously studied. Further, a review of state policies and activities that affect revenue sources, mandated costs, and inefficient practices could reveal ways to reduce the property tax burden stemming from the municipal portion of the total property tax levy. 📌

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MARCH

March 11

Budget, Ethics, and Procurement Updates

Conference Center at Mercer,
West Windsor

March 17

A Review of the Open Public Records Act

Bergen County College, Paramus

March 20

Annual Women in Government Day

Princeton Marriott
(visit njslom.org/WIMG-2015.html to register)

March 26

Disciplinary Actions in the Public Sector and What Constitutes a Hostile Workplace

Doubletree Hotel, Tinton Falls

MAY

May 7

100th Anniversary and William G. Dressel Jr. Retirement Banquet

East Brunswick Hilton, East Brunswick

May 8

A Review of the Open Public Records Act

Burlington Township Municipal Center,
Burlington Township

May 13

Leaves of Absence in New Jersey: A Look at FMLA, NJFLA, and ADA

Doubletree Hotel, Tinton Falls

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