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Official Publication of the State League of Municipalities

January 2016

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Joseph Tempesta, Jr.
NJLM President
Mayor, West Caldwell

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Building Public Health
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100th Annual Conference
Coverage

nj Focus **Leadership**

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New Jersey Grows Great Leaders

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” Those words of the great and eloquent American statesman John Quincy Adams help us to focus on the theme of this issue of our magazine—leadership in New Jersey.

Our Garden State has been home to many great leaders. Folks all around the nation and the world will recognize names like Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Zebulon Pike, Buzz Aldrin, Woodrow Wilson, Admiral William Halsey, and General Norman Schwartzkopf. I’m sure any one of us could name many more.

When we think about these great leaders, we consider their careers and their common characteristics. Then, we can list some of the things that define leadership. How did they inspire others? How did they help others to work together to reach new heights and worthy goals?

It’s obvious that courage is a key characteristic of great leaders—the courage to try and the courage to risk failure. They each were able to objectively evaluate the facts that they faced and the resources that were available. All had the imagination to envision a better future and the tenacity to solve the problems that blocked progress along the way. And all had the ability to communicate their visions, by word and by deed, in ways that could inspire others to greater effort.

They could do this because they proved themselves to be trustworthy and loyal. They effectively delegated authority. They accepted responsibility for any failure and they generously shared credit for any success.

Though folks around the nation and the world may not know it—and though many even here in our State may not easily admit it—New Jersey municipalities are blessed with a star-studded class of great leaders. And it is an honor to direct the staff of an organization created to serve the thousands of women and men who, in serving their fellow citizens, daily demonstrate the courage, the objectivity, the imagination and tenacity, the communication skills, the wisdom, the patience, the integrity, the generosity, and so many other traits and virtues that have always defined good leadership.

As the League of Municipalities begins a new year, we welcome a new President. Mayor Joe Tempesta is the kind of leader we need for the challenges we’ll face in 2016. We hope his words, which you will find in this issue, will inspire our readers to get more involved in their League, which only exists to help them to be better leaders in their Home Towns.

Should you need guidance in growing your local government leadership potential, I encourage you to attend one of the League’s January seminars “Orientation for Municipal Officials” or the “Mayors Legislative Day” on February 3. *✦*

Michael Darcy

“It’s obvious that courage is a key characteristic of great leaders—the courage to try and the courage to risk failure.”

NOW & THEN



Leading for the Future

In this issue of *New Jersey Municipalities* our focus is on Leadership, with issues such as disaster recovery and community service taking center stage. The League's new President, Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Mayor of West Caldwell, shares his experience, insights, and plans for the future both as a municipal leader and on a statewide basis for his tenure in office. Mayor Louis Manzo of Harrison Township also shows how being a good leader in crisis means reaching out to other towns as well as County, State, and Federal resources to recover from disasters such as last years' ferocious storm cell.

This issue also covers the happenings from the League's 2015 Conference. The event was a strong ending to the centennial celebration year and sets the tone for years to come. In these pages, we'll provide a glimpse of the highlights and share some educational session information that was worth taking home.



Amy Spiezio
Managing Editor

Homecomings have always been important to NJ Municipalities. In January 1919, the state and its municipalities were dealing with a set of issues relating to the end of World War 1 (at that point simply the world war).

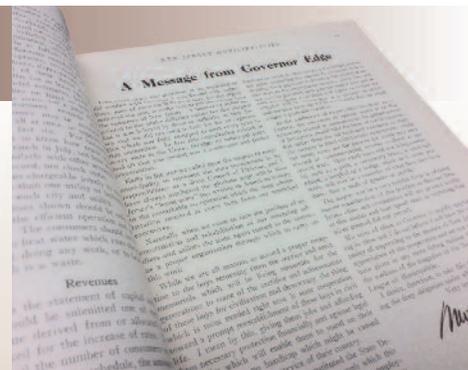
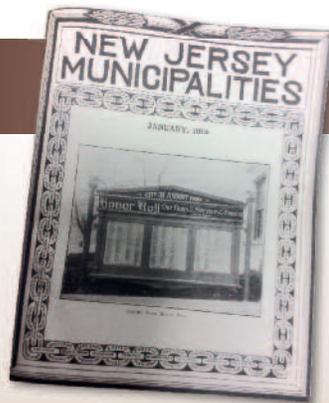
As we move into the second century of helping municipalities succeed this year and beyond, we'll look back each month at what the towns and cities of New Jersey were focusing on in the past. While times have changed, good leadership lessons are timeless. ♣

Time Capsule: 1919



Trenton Returns Soldiers to Employment

The city of Trenton is endeavoring to compile a complete record of its men who have been in the service during the world war, in order that the problems likely to confront many of these men upon their return may be mitigated or eliminated. — *Bernard J. Walsh, Secretary to Mayor Donnelly*



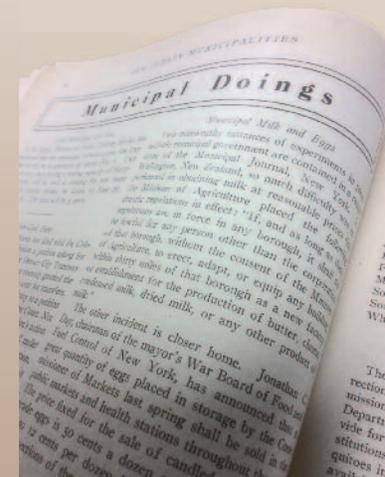
A Message from Governor Edge

Early in the war we called upon the mayors of every municipality to represent the state government in its responsibilities as a State Council of Defense, and I

have always attributed the glorious page which New Jersey's "home army" has written in American history to the remarkable co-operation which the state administration received at every turn from our municipal executives. — *Governor Edge*

Municipal Doings

Mayor Mravlag, of Elizabeth, wants the State to build a general traffic bridge across Newark Bay, to connect Elizabeth and Bayonne, which, he thinks, should be done before it spends from \$12,000,000 to \$20,000,000 toward paying for a tunnel under the Hudson and a bridge over the Delaware at Camden. It does seem that before we help connect New Jersey with New York and Pennsylvania we might spend the public money to better advantage in local improvements.



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New Executive Board Members of the New Jersey League of Municipalities with the League's new president. Shown left to right: Sylvia Petillo, Mayor of Hopatcong; League President, Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Mayor of West Caldwell; Edward J. Mahaney, Jr., Mayor of Cape May City; Raymond S. Heck, Mayor of Millstone Borough, and Sean Elwell, Mayor of Elsinboro Township.

New Executive Board Members Sworn In

During the December 2, 2015 New Jersey League of Municipalities Executive Board meeting, four new Executive Board members were sworn into office by League President Joe Tempesta, Mayor of West Caldwell. For details about the new Board members, see page 59. ↗

NJ Municipalities Wins 2015 Marcom Gold Award

NJ *Municipalities* magazine is the recipient of a Gold Award from the MarCom Awards for its work during the League's 100th Anniversary year. An international awards competition that recognizes outstanding creative achievement by marketing and communication professionals, MarCom is the largest program of its kind and drew more than 6,500 entries from the U.S., Canada and 15 other countries for the 2015 competition.

The MarCom Awards program is administered by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals and judged by industry professionals who select companies and individuals whose talent exceeds a high standard of excellence and whose work is a benchmark for the industry.

NJ Municipalities is led by the League's Executive Director and *NJ Municipalities*' Editor, Michael J. Darcy, CAE. Advertising Manager Taran B. Samhammer and Managing Editor Amy Spiezio round out the staff (previous Managing Editor Kyra Duran was instrumental in many of the 2015 issues of *NJ Municipalities*). ↗



Camden's Pop-Up Park Return

Camden's Roosevelt Plaza pop-up park made a return this summer. The park gives residents a safe public space to enjoy and encourages residents to use the city's civic spaces. Pop-up parks are a cost effective way to add public park space, and test out new public spaces. The Roosevelt Plaza Park, which popped up for the second year in a row this August, featured a community piano, guitar and bongos in the "music box," and a giant chalkboard for drawing.

This year, the park included a rain curtain. The rain curtain recorded how many gallons of water have been collected by the system, to educate park patrons on the city's reliance on local waterways and its efforts to address stormwater management issues caused by aging infrastructure.

Security around the park included Camden County Metro officers and private security guards during its open hours. The park also hosted the Camden Jam, a free arts and music festival, in September. ↗

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Municipalities Honored for Public Information Programs

The winners of the 54th Annual Municipal Public Information Contest were announced at the 100th NJLM Conference in Atlantic City this November. Honoring initiatives to increase the public's awareness of government operations, strengthen community ties, and provide useful information and services to citizens, the contest is to promote the use of successful and innovative techniques that increase government's ability to meet citizen needs and improve access to government services.

Administered by Anthony Petracca, Senior Program Coordinator, Rutgers Center for Government Services, the contest is sponsored by Rutgers Center for Government Services, New Jersey Municipal Management Association, and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. Judges for the competition were Gregory J. Bonin, Township Administrator, Branchburg Township, Past President, New Jersey Municipal Management Association; Lori Buckelew, MPA, RMC, Senior Legislative Analyst, New Jersey State League of Municipalities;



Alan Zalkind, Director, Rutgers Center for Government Services and Michael J. Darcy, CAE present Longport Mayor Nicholas Russo with the Best Print Media Award.



League President Brian Wahler (l) and Zalkind (r) present Jersey City Press Secretary Jennifer Morrill with the Best Special /Innovative Media Award.

Distinguished Public Service Award Presented to NJTV News' Aron



Michael Aron, Chief Political Correspondent for NJTV News, was presented with the Distinguished Public Service Award 2015 by League President, Mayor Brian Wahler of Piscataway (l) and League Executive Director Michael J. Darcy, CAE (r). The League presented the 13th annual award in recognition of Aron's outstanding and dedicated service over more than three decades with NJN and NJTV, contributing to the betterment of local, state, and federal government. 🇺🇸

Michael Capabianco, MPA, MSCJ, City Manager, Asbury Park City; Frederick C. Carr, MPA, Borough Administrator, South River Borough; and Jewel Thompson-Chin, MBA, Borough Administrator, Tenafly Borough

Following are the Awards for First Place:

- Best Overall
 - Public Information Program Somerville Borough
 - Best Print Media Longport Borough
 - Best Special/Innovative Media . . . Jersey City
 - Best Website/Social Media Sea Isle City 🇺🇸



A celebratory moment with Alan Zalkind, Director, Rutgers Center for Government Services, Somerville Borough's Technology Coordinator Paul Allena and League Executive Director Michael J. Darcy, CAE.

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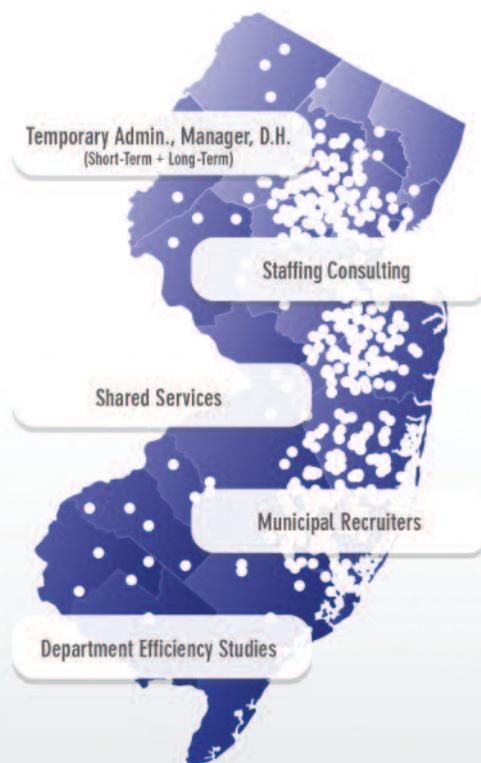
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NJ Farmers Meeting Looks Forward

New Jersey farmers gathered for the 97th NJ Farm Bureau Convention to review the past year and formulate policies to be addressed in the coming year heard some good news about this season's crops and looked into the future of the state's agriculture. Most farmers informally polled reported they had a very good season, with robust and healthy crops.

"Early rain followed by a dry summer discouraged pests and leaf mold, making for good-looking, flavorful crops," said Ryck Suydam, president of Farm Bureau. "One farmer reported that his tomato crop was the best in his long memory. Even the market prices were good this year. But, our community must continue to focus on farm viability and profitability in this urban state, recognizing that the industry continues to change and agriculture needs to adapt."

Many issues, such as conservation, water quality, environmental regulations, energy use, and renewable energy were formulated into policies, of which 10 emerged that are of primary

focus for the coming year, Farm Bureau representatives noted.

1. Right to Farm is one of the most important state policies to encourage and maintain agriculture in the state.

2. Taxation, especially property tax, continues to take its toll on farmers. Despite reduced rates on land in cultivation, taxes on buildings and other land continue to rise, impacting farmers, along with every other state resident.

3. Wildlife— deer, bears, wild turkeys, and especially Canada and Snow geese are increasing and continue damaging crops. Fish and Game Council presented an update on the state of goose control, and the news isn't good. Farmers can get depredation permits to shoot them at any time of year, but little else currently exists to repel them.

4. Soil Disturbance restrictions on preserved farmland, proposed last year by the State Agricultural Development Council (SADC), were tabled this year for further discussion. Delegates stressed that farmers need to use some soil for roads, buildings, terraces, reservoirs and the like.

5. Relief from Excessive Environmental Regulations is crucial for farmers. Since 1972 and passage of the Clean Water Act, the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been assuming more and more authority over the use of land, water, plant, animal, and other natural resources, many negatively impacting agriculture. While no one questions the need for environmental protection, excessive and unnecessary regulations do not make for good relations between the agriculture community and the DEP. The policy adopted is intended to build dialogue and better relations between the two communities.

6. Labor Supply and Management are imperative for successful agriculture. Growers need reliable workers accustomed to farm work. Farm Bureau will continue to advocate for favorable guest-worker programs and legislation.

7. Farmland Assessment is the primary reason that New Jersey farmers can stay in business. Farm Bureau monitors the program and works with legislature on any proposed changes

8. Ag Retention and Farmland Preservation have been key to farming viability. To date, more than 2,260 farms totaling more than 209,000 acres have been preserved to remain in agriculture in perpetuity.

9. Farm Viability is the overall goal of Farm Bureau, protecting farmers against excessive government regulation, burdensome taxes, wildlife damage, and heavy-handed land use regulations, while keeping farm-gate prices at levels that assure profitability.

10. Highlands have been on Farm Bureau's radar screen since passage of the Highlands Act of 2004, with the bureau continuing to advocate for "fair compensation" to landowners harmed by the act that preserves more than 800,000 acres. ♣



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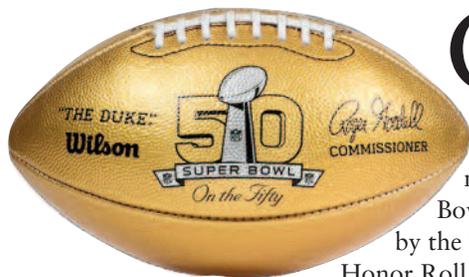
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Golden Footballs Head to Garden State



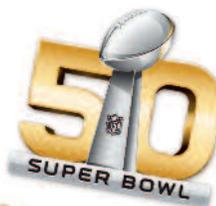
Garden State schools and towns that have fostered young football players and coaches who have made it to the Super

Bowl are being recognized by the Super Bowl High School Honor Roll initiative recognizing

schools and communities that contributed to Super Bowl history and positively impacted the game of football.

High schools across the nation, and around the world, will receive a commemorative Wilson Golden Football for every player or head coach who graduated from their school and was on an active Super Bowl roster. Nearly 3,000 players and head coaches, and more than 2,000 high schools, will be recognized. Players and coaches will also have the opportunity to personally deliver golden footballs. In New Jersey, several players have stopped by their home schools, including a visit last month by former New York Giants and Green Bay Packer left guard Billy Ard of Watchung, a 1977 graduate of Watchung Hills Regional High School, who presented Principal George Alexis an NFL Foundation Golden Football, welcoming his alma mater into the Super Bowl High School Honor Roll.

The NFL Foundation will provide the schools with a new character education curriculum and the opportunity to apply for grants of up to \$5,000 to help support and grow their football programs.



Local Legends

While New Jersey isn't among the top-five champion producing states, it has plenty of greats in which to take pride.

Hillsborough Township and Pennsauken Township each can boast of three players/coaches who made it to the big game, with Hillsborough sons in five Super Bowls and Pennsauken's players/coaches in six.

Two players/coaches hail from each of the following towns: Camden, Clifton, Middletown, Wayne, Mt. Holly, Montvale, Scotch Plains South River (with five Super Bowl appearances), Union, Warren, Willingboro.

Many schools throughout the state take pride in a single Super Bowl player or coach, with a complete list available at SuperBowl.com.

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Walking Poetically

Bedminster held a Nature Poetry Walk in June to celebrate National Trails Day. Participants were invited to visit this free event during park hours and enjoy a self-guided tour featuring poetry in the landscape. Poems were placed among locations along the trail. All those inspired enough to write a poem along the walk, create a sketch, or take a photo were encouraged to share their creations on the Raritan Headwaters Association's Facebook page, an association dedicated to protecting and preserving natural resources and water quality. 🌿

Middletown Neighborhood Spotlight

This past summer Middletown took great strides in educating its residents about the programs and services it offers. In July the township launched its “Neighborhood Spotlight,” a program focusing on the township’s different neighborhoods and their uniqueness, as well as the interests and concerns of residents. As the township is comprised of over a dozen unique neighborhoods, this “spotlight” focuses on the beauty of each.

Over the coming year, the township plans to station the Police Department’s Mobile Command Center throughout different neighborhoods, and residents are encouraged to stop and discuss any concerns they may have for their individual neighborhood with the available police officers. Township staff will also be present during these events to answer questions about township services and programs. This program is

part of the township’s Community Identity Campaign, a series of projects the township is rolling out to help create a common community identity for Middletown and celebrate its diversity.

Middletown continued this theme this past August, when it held its Local Government Day. Between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the library, representatives of local, county, and state government were available and spoke about the programs and services available to residents. This event provided residents with an opportunity to learn more about their local government. The event included passport applications and renewal photos, free notary services, election/voter information, information on adoptions, probates and wills, youth identification cards, and child seat safety tips. Senior and veteran services also were available. 📍

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If your community has a unique program or story, write to Amy Spiezio c/o The League of Municipalities, 222 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 or via email at aspiezio@njslom.org.



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Q & A with the New League President

NJLM Question and Answer Session

By Joseph Tempesta, Jr., NJLM President; Mayor, West Caldwell

Q *Why did you first become involved in your town's government?*

A I became involved in the Township of West Caldwell at a young age because I was so impressed with the volunteers who served on the local Environmental Commission and Planning Board. I saw firsthand how these respective boards played an important role in the shaping of our community as well as protecting the character of our community.

Those reasons served as the impetus for me to get involved in the Township. From there I served as a volunteer member and eventually Chairman of the West Caldwell Environmental Commission and then served as a member of the Planning Board before running as a Councilman for the first time in 1985 at 24 years old.

Maintaining the character of the community as well helping residents and businesses whenever possible is a very rewarding experience. Having been reelected to a fifth term in office, one would think I might be tired of serving the Township where I've spent most of my life. Not true. I am probably more committed than ever to serving and I enjoy more than ever having a hand in establishing policy to lead the township into the next decade with vision and leadership. Perhaps most rewarding to me is seeing how the Township of West Caldwell is still a very desirable place to live, work, and raise a family.

I am also blessed to have a great team with the Township Council members and Township staff. Together we are observing the positive effects of good policy decisions and the competent staff carrying out those policies throughout the Township's business and residential neighborhoods. This is all being done despite the country's sluggish economy and literally losing several hundred years of experience through retirements of professional staff as well as Township Council members.

I attribute our success to the great staff and colleagues on the Town Council as well as the hundreds of volunteers who are the backbone of our community. I have always strived and demonstrated that I am someone who genuinely cares about the Town of West Caldwell and has the best interests of the people we represent.

Q *What are the most significant challenges facing local government?*

A The most significant challenges today are trying to maintain the services that residents and businesses have come to expect while keeping property taxes at a reasonable level. We are very concerned about certain infrastructure projects, particularly road projects whereby we have come to expect significant dollars from the state through the Transportation Trust Fund.

This may become a significant challenge in the future for all municipalities if the State of New Jersey does not find a way to fund the nearly insolvent Transportation Trust Fund. Similarly, municipalities would like to get the Health and Pension reforms figured out in the near future in order to plan properly for the consequences of a potential mass exodus of public employees and the loss of all of the experience that goes with them.

Major Property Tax Reform is long overdue and something has to give with regard to the present structure in the State. Particularly the funding of schools traditionally being over 50% of most municipalities' property taxes is becoming an overwhelming burden for NJ families, particularly our senior citizens on fixed incomes.

Q *How would you describe your style of leadership?*

A I would describe my leadership as very quiet but strong, behind the scenes, and very straightforward. I pride myself on being a consensus builder. I generally size up decisions fairly quickly, seek consensus, and make the decision. I believe strongly in empowering Council members, department heads, and professional staff to bring forward their recommendations in order to help them grow professionally as well as to take ownership in their decision making. I also believe in paying attention to what people say—usually one can find out a lot of information from someone by simply listening to them.

Q *What do citizens want from their local government and has it changed?*

A Most citizens want their local government to be responsive to their needs in a timely fashion. The difficulty today is society has changed through technology—meaning that everyone through either email or social media can demand certain things and expect very quick responses. This has caused citizens to be much more demanding and the stakes are much higher, meaning that citizens expect answers in a positive way even if the request is unreasonable.

The standard of living in this country is extremely high. However, due to the level of property taxes and the value of property in this day and age, citizens expect their local elected officials who traditionally are closest to the people to respond to their inquiries and their issues even when the requests has nothing to do with local government.

It is definitely a balancing act to satisfy their request and accomplish things with limited funds to do so.

Q *What advice would you give to newly elected officials?*

A The advice I would give to newly elected officials would be to listen, observe, ask questions, and try and learn from someone who has been involved in municipal government for a while. It is amazing what you can pick up by simply observing a veteran elected official or longtime government staffer in how to deal with issues and, more importantly, dealing with the public.

Additionally regardless of your background, you should be yourself and not try and be someone else. Too often people forget their own personal style, which is unique to them. After time, most of us have found out that you probably do your best job when you go with your first instinct and speak your mind directly to people. I believe constituents appreciate the honest and direct approach even if when you can't give them what they want or satisfy their requests.

It is amazing what you can pick up by simply observing a veteran elected official or longtime government staffer in how to deal with issues and, more importantly, dealing with the public.

Campaigning and governing are very different. Newly elected officials have a variety of educational classes through the New Jersey League of Municipalities and Rutgers University that are very timely and informative. Understanding how government runs is complex, especially at the local level. Most town elected officials throughout NJ are there to develop and set policy—the professional staff is there to carry out those policies.

Too often elected officials forget that most of what they have to do is legislate and set policy, and instead try to manage the government staff. Becoming a seasoned elected official can be learned through observation, by working with more senior elected officials, networking with officials through the New Jersey League of Municipalities, or by taking advantage of the different publications, classes, and opportunities the League provides its membership.

Q *What are the biggest legislative challenges facing municipalities?*

A Property taxes are always the biggest challenge facing municipalities today. We place a heavy burden on our residents, expecting them to fund our schools through local taxes. As the President of the New Jersey League of Municipalities, I believe

we need to reform the current regressive tax system and it should remain one of our highest priorities. Our constituents, especially those on fixed incomes, simply cannot afford living in New Jersey anymore and that is unacceptable.

New Jersey residents should pay property taxes based upon their ability to pay based on income and not on the assessment of their home. The League's Property Tax Reform Task Force has demonstrated that other methods of funding education have merit and should be explored by the legislature. Although this message is being heard it has been a slow process to gain traction on this important issue.

Q *What are your goals as League President?*

A My goals as League President are to continue to lobby the NJ Legislature and the Administration to once and for all establish a stable funding source for the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). Without the TTF being funded, New Jersey's infrastructure falls further into disrepair and will eventually have catastrophic consequences.

I also hope to bring to the table in conjunction with the Road Map Commission, the NJ Legislature and New Jersey's Public Employee Unions, a compromise solution establishing a stable Health Benefits and Pension Reform package. I hope to gain consensus in order to finally resolve this important issue so that government employees can be assured that whatever solution is ultimately proposed will be financially feasible, permanent, and supported by law.

Finally, I would like to see the legislature focus on property tax reform so that property taxes and specifically school funding dependency on local property taxes can be changed to be based more on people's ability to pay rather than their current home's assessed value. We owe it to the people who elected us and to the people we represent to work on finding better ways to alleviate this financial tax burden while still maintaining a thorough and efficient education program that meets our highest expectations. 🍷

Remarks of the Honorable Joseph Tempesta, Jr.

President, New Jersey State League of Municipalities; Mayor, West Caldwell

I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to serve as President of the New Jersey League of Municipalities. It is truly an honor and privilege and I promise, with your help, and with the help of the League's new management team, to maintain the high standard of service that has been set by those who have served before me.

I am also proud to be the Mayor of West Caldwell for the past 17 years. A small suburban community of nearly 11,000 residents tucked in the corner of the western part of Essex County, West Caldwell is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. I want to personally thank my friends and Council colleagues who are here today from West Caldwell, our staff members, Administrator, Clerk, CFO, Health Officer, and Chairman Smith. I thank them for all of their support over the years and for taking the time to be here. Thank you for making me look good and for all of your hard work on behalf of our residents and businesses.

As concerned public servants, we all are called to stand up for our neighbors. Local government allows us to work together to protect our neighbors' interests, and also, our neighbors' rights.

For 100 years the League of Municipalities, with its many and various services, has helped generations of local officials do that. The League is able to help us, thanks to the often invisible efforts of the officers and the members of the Executive Board. I hope that this year I am able to continue the standard of service set by my predecessor and friend, Mayor Brian Wahler of Piscataway. Mayor Wahler recognized that unity in action, and the active participation of more and more League members, were the main tools that the League can use to build a better New Jersey.

I also wish to thank the League's capable staff under the leadership of our new Executive Director Mike Darcy for all of their hard work. Together we will continue the good work and carry out the policies of our officers and Executive Board on behalf of our members and the citizens and businesses, affiliate groups, and any and all parties interested in helping us move the State of New Jersey forward.

The League has been blessed by a series of great leaders and I salute all of our Past Presidents for their leadership, integrity, intelligence, and skill. Whether they realized it or not, those that I have been associated with while a member of the League have been real mentors. I especially want to mention my late friend, mentor, and former League President and Mayor of West Caldwell, Bob Reiher. Bob passed away about 15 months ago; and Bob was the one who convinced me to get involved with the League. I know Bob is proud and looking down today, no doubt, he has a smile on his face.

I also want to thank all the members of our Executive Board with whom I have served and I will continue to rely on for support and wise counsel. Whenever we get together, I am reminded of how much we have in common. And I greatly appreciate the passion and the intelligence you bring to our deliberations.

Municipal officials are generous people. They give up their evenings and weekends. They give up their time and their talents. They give up the expectation that others will respect their limitations and their privacy. They rarely get the thanks they merit. In fact, they often get blamed for things they can't control. But they keep at it, doing what good they can in what time they have. And I am grateful that the members of our Executive Board do that, not only for the people of their municipalities, but for the betterment of local governments all around our Garden State.

I am honored to be the first President of the League of Municipalities' second century of service. I thank you, again, for calling me to this office. And I urge all of you to continue to support the League and to get more involved, so that you can help us shape a better future for all the people of the great State of New Jersey. 🍷



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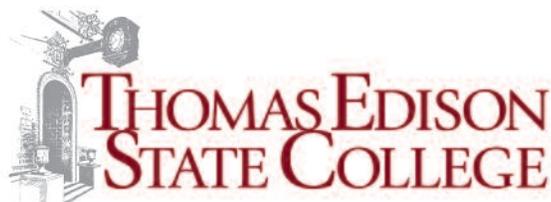
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Leadership in the Eye of the Storm: Strength in Numbers

Good leadership is proven in action during an unexpected and destructive storm

By Louis Manzo, Mayor, Harrison Township

Over the years, I've spoken to fellow Mayors from all over our state and one theme that has emerged repeatedly is a lack of satisfaction with the support they receive from their County government. As Mayors, we often hear talk about the need to consolidate or merge some of our 565 municipalities, but recently some have suggested the elimination of government at the County level.

As always, there are two sides to every story and I think it makes sense to look at ways to improve the existing infrastructure before suggesting we abolish it. Clearly that's the position that many Mayors take when the merger/consolidation topic is directed at their town. I believe there is a template for successful and supportive County government because I see it in a few other counties and I experience it directly in my home county of Gloucester. The key element is very simple: good leadership.

The best evidence of good leadership emerges when it's tested, and there is no more crucial test than an unexpected crisis. Such an event occurred in South Jersey on June 23, 2015, when a severe storm cut a surgical path of destruction through Gloucester, Camden, Burlington, and Atlantic counties.

WITHOUT WARNING This storm was unique on several levels. First, there was no significant advanced warning since the front was forecasted like any other summer storm front and it was not expected to be severe in nature. That forecast changed approximately two hours before the storm hit, but hindsight tells us the weather experts never really had a clue about the true severity and unusual aspects of the storm. We became familiar with the terms "bow echo" and "straight line winds" and the devastating power associated with these words. The storm also struck very quickly, with the event only lasting about an hour.

The aftermath revealed that straight line winds could lay down an entire row of 100 foot trees on one side of the street and not affect the trees on the other side of the street. This happened randomly throughout the County, with my town, Harrison Township, sustaining minor structural damage and neighboring towns on either side suffering catastrophic destruction.

Amazingly, there was no loss of life during this event, which is hard to believe when you see the pockets of devastation after the storm. The other unique aspect of this storm was the unprecedented damage to our power and energy infrastructure. In fact, industry professionals say they have never seen this type of damage in our area; not even during Super Storm Sandy. The falling trees and poles had caused massive damage to Atlantic City Electric's transmission (transmission lines and substations) and distribution (poles and wires) systems. The immediate post-storm assessment confirmed that 17 transmission lines and five substations were not operational. This level of damage to the transmission system is especially rare.

Needless to say, the mobilization to address the energy restoration and cleanup issues was massive and included bringing in work crews from neighboring states. Many residents were without power for a week or more.

PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE LEADERSHIP AT WORK But this is not a story about the utility company's preparation or response. This is a story about leadership—both proactive and reactive.

The June 23 storm evidenced that our County leadership has an effective Emergency Management plan in place to provide and coordinate services during such an event. At the direction of our Freeholder Board, led by Director Robert Damminger, the Gloucester County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated within minutes of the storm's impact. OEM Director Dave Butts mobilized his staff and issued "request to report" orders to seven County Departments. They immediately began the outreach program to each municipality to assess the impact need and to develop a priority list.

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Strength in Numbers

As planned, Atlantic City Electric, PSE&G, and SJ Gas liaisons were summoned to the County OEC, along with representatives from the American Red Cross. The initial assessment that night was that numerous State, County, and Municipal roadways were closed due to



A home in Wenonah takes a devastating hit from a falling tree. In this area, damages were even more extensive than those from Super Storm Sandy.

The best evidence of good leadership emerges when it's tested, and there is no more crucial test than an unexpected crisis.

fallen trees or electrical wires and approximately 82,000 residents (out of 288,000) in Gloucester County were without power. Reports of structural damage to homes and buildings were

steaming in through the Municipal OEMs. By the next day, the County had set up Reception Centers in two locations for displaced residents and a Medical Needs Center for residents requiring non-hospital assistance. The County

also supported water and ice distribution sites set up by the Red Cross and Atlantic City electric.

The delay in the disaster declaration and the lack of attention we were receiving from Trenton became a point of frustration for several Mayors. A week after the storm, nerves were frayed and tensions were high on that front, which prompted the Gloucester County Mayors Association to get involved. In my capacity as President of that organization, I wrote a letter to the Governor.

While the County's leadership was more deliberate and intentional, my support was more reactionary. I could hear the exasperation from the Mayors who still had residents without power and who were spending themselves into insolvency just to clear their roads. I asked the Governor to declare a state of disaster related to this event, which would pave the way for Federal assistance.

This prompted the Governor's Office to host a conference call with State OEM leadership for the Gloucester County Mayors the following day. It also compelled the Lt. Governor to actually host a local meeting in-person at a municipal building in one of the effected towns in Gloucester County a day later. She brought several Commissioners/Advisors with her to provide guidance on the protocols and processes involved in attaining the disaster declaration. This served as a roadmap on

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Trees fallen by a sudden and unexpected storm pulled down power lines in Washington Township, leaving many in the storm's path without power for a week.

how each town could seek reimbursement for the storm clean-up outlay.

The meeting went a long way to appease local leadership and deliver the assistance we needed from a fiscal standpoint.

In both instances it was an entity larger than the local municipality itself that provided a valuable service for residents of that municipality. The Gloucester County Emergency Management command structure exemplifies the County government's proactive leadership style.

They also provide county services for 911, EMS, tax assessment, public health, abandoned property services, animal shelters, and more.

Our Mayors Association leadership reacted on behalf of those towns that needed assistance and works throughout the year to provide a forum for Mayors to pool their knowledge and experiences to benefit neighboring towns in our county. Leveraging each other's resources, town-to-town and County

CHECK LIST: The First Week

During the first week after the storm, most of the effort focused on power restoration and vegetative debris clearance.

The County hosted daily conference calls with the OEM leadership of the 24 municipalities to prioritize and provide the needed support services.

In addition, they helped with the completion of the Damage/Expenditure Assessments that the affected municipalities needed to file to determine eligibility for a federal disaster declaration. This was crucial considering the unprecedented fiscal outlay for the most impacted towns.

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Finding Your Way as a Leader

A Primer for Newly Elected Officials

By Robert Casey, Member, Local Unit Alignment Reorganization and Consolidation Commission, Former Municipal Administrator/Manager; Past Executive Director, New Jersey Municipal Management Association



Providing leadership to the municipal organization and the community as a whole is the primary expectation of an elected official. And while a textbook definition of leadership includes setting direction and tone, prioritizing goals, getting your goals enacted by other elected officials, and implementing the goals, getting through the maze of leadership means answering some questions.

How you go about doing these things?

How you can accomplish what you feel is necessary for the municipality?

And, most difficult of all: how you can get your fellow elected officials to join in the process?

SEVEN STEPS TO SUCCESS Consider the following seven steps to find your way to success in municipal leadership.

1. PLAN YOUR PATH You must have a clear understanding in your own mind of your long-term goals: where you want your municipality to go over the next year and your term of office. You were elected to accomplish certain goals and you should always remember them. You will quickly become bogged down in the mundane issues of the ongoing activities of your municipality. Do not allow these daily issues to cause you to ignore what you believe needs to be done to improve the municipal operations or to not address one or more community issues or other concerns that you may have.

2. WORK COOPERATIVELY There are two key processes that govern change in municipal government: Co-Optation and Incrementalism. The implementation of your goals requires the involvement of others. To affect change you must, at a minimum, have the acceptance of your goals and processes by others, even if you do not have their full support or concurrence.

Co-optation is the process of involving those to be effected by a decision early in the process so that they buy into the process and the end result. This is especially true of those who may be in a position to throw a roadblock against accomplishing the goal.

Incrementalism is the realistic way local government works. Change seldom comes in one large process; rather, you slowly inch toward change, one piece at a time, one sub-goal at a time. Municipal change occurs normally through evolution and not revolution.

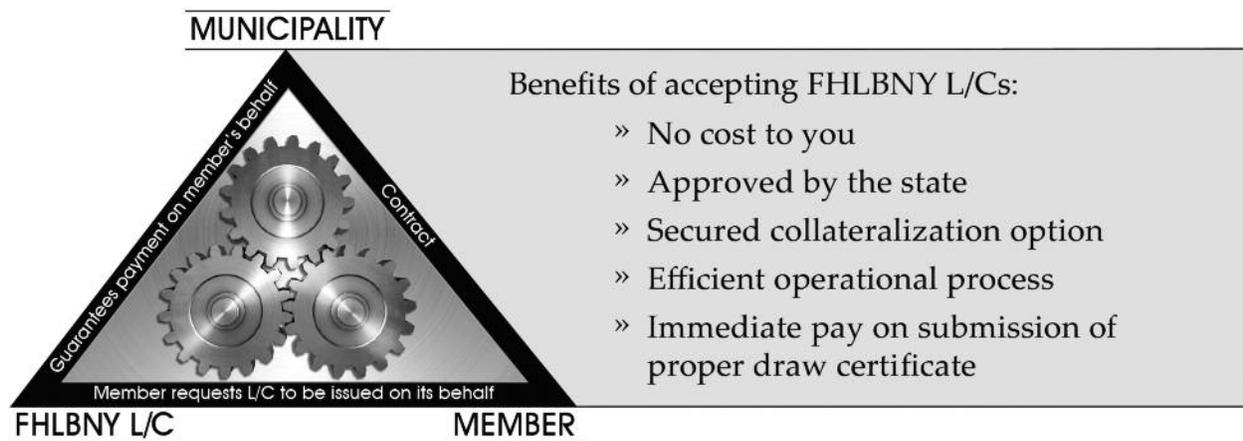
3. LEARN BEFORE YOU LEAD You must have a good understanding of the actual functioning of your municipal government and what you can and cannot do as an elected official. You may



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Finding Your Way as a Leader

find that the reality of the position for which you were selected is far different than you were lead to believe.

The greatest obstacle to implementing a great policy is the delay to seek a perfect policy—they don't exist!

You should discuss with your attorney, your administrator or key staff person, and even your predecessor (assuming you are on speaking terms) what is the actual, real-world function of the municipality from a legal as well as a pragmatic standpoint, along with the actual current condition of the municipality from a fiscal, policy, and priority basis.

4. SEEK YOUR STAFF'S THOUGHTS AND SUPPORT Your municipal staff is normally a neutral in the political process, in spite of what you may have heard from others who have not been in your position. Recognize that a good staff—regardless of who the elected leaders are—supports their elected leadership. This is their job and responsibility. Do not blame them if you take exception to the discretionary policies of the prior administration. Their role is to provide the guidance for the policies and then to support the policies when they are finally established

Enunciate clearly to the staff the goals and objectives of this new administration. You must tell them and periodically remind them of these and the organization's purposeful direction.

Your staff serves as advocates for their particular function in the government and this is good. There are often

disagreements amongst the staff, especially in the competition for resources. Do not discourage this conflict, but use it to further your knowledge of the total needs of the organization.

Your administrator or manager should be the person providing the overview to you on how to implement what you want to do. You should meet with this person on numerous occasions and keep that person in your loop as to what your thoughts are.

Don't be afraid to seek your staff's comments on your thoughts and plans. You need to know what they know, plus how they believe a particular issue can be handled. You serve as the catalyst to bring up the issue and to keep discussions focused on the issue

You must appreciate the existing time and operational constraints on your employees. Find out what these are so you will have an understanding of the pressures on them as they may be pulled in two or more directions.

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In sum, your goal is to co-opt the staff into buying into your goals and ideas. Make them a part of your team, your solution, and not your opposition.

5. DISCOVER YOUR “CAMEL” BEFORE YOU RIDE

Your new ideas and goals may require changes in existing policy and procedures. Change is good and a strength of local government, but not all movement is necessarily positive change.

Municipalities are constantly evolving local policies and programs and the way to operate. However, if you want to change an existing policy or procedure—remember this existing policy or procedure normally evolved over time and in response to various competing demands. Remember a camel is a horse designed by a committee to reflect all of their desires. The camel may be an ugly beast, but it is very good for the environment in which it is placed.

All municipal policies are camels in their design, and maybe in their actual operation. To make change, you must first know in depth how the existing

Foundation’s “Friends of Local Government” series. The paper is the narrative of a presentation given by Robert Casey at the Newly Elected Officials seminars offered by the League of Municipalities. The entire narrative is available on the Foundation’s website at www.njlmef.org

systems operate and why they operate in that manner. Ask yourself and your staff: Who is impacted? Why? When? How?

You must have a good idea of how you want to change the system and what you want to do.

Meet with those most directly involved to discuss the present and the future. You need to know the obstacles to what you want to do before you start so you can anticipate these difficulties in your planning process.

Challenge them to overcome the identified problems with the existing process or to implement what you want. Recognize that change often requires compromise to reflect the competing demands that can affect even the simplest of issues. The greatest obstacle to implementing a great policy is the delay to seek a perfect policy—they don’t exist!

6. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE

Break down your ideas into sub-goals or process and set deadlines for components to be reviewed, examined, implemented, etc. Have the staff agree to these target timelines and then meet periodically with the staff to see how things are going. If you become too directly involved, you may lose the perspective you need to make the changes, compromises, etc., needed to accomplish your long-term goals.

7. KEEP MOVING THROUGH THE MAZE

Most importantly, don’t give up on what you want to change. You may have to nibble at its edges for some time to get to where you want to be, but be willing to recognize that even nibbles are progress. Don’t initially oversell a change—let everyone know that change will come incrementally and methods could vary as the implementation processes impact existing realities. ⚡

Robert Casey is a former Municipal Administrator/Manager, who served in four municipalities on a full-time basis and provided consulting services or served as a temporary or interim Administrator on numerous occasions. He is past Executive Director of the New Jersey Municipal Management Association.

@ This article is a condensed version of a paper in the New Jersey League of Municipalities Educational

Goal-Setting Suggestions

- Break down your goals into sub-goals or implementation steps that will lead to addressing the larger goal you have and then to set time lines for these incremental steps.
- Be open to modifying your goals as you become more knowledgeable about the organization and its capabilities—once in office you may find things different from what you expected
- Write down your goals—post them in your office as a daily reminder.
- Share your goals with others—become an advocate, use them as your guiding principles.
- Hold an annual special meeting with the elected officials and key staff personnel to discuss everyone’s goals and to develop common shared goals for implementation. This could be the most important meeting of the year.

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By Cory Booker, U.S. Senator

In New Jersey, our transportation network is our lifeline—we use it to get to work, to school, and to travel.

Yet over the past several decades, our highways, byways, railroads, and bridges here in New Jersey and across the country have deteriorated from being a point of national pride and a source of American economic dominance to being emblematic of our embarrassing reluctance to make common sense investments in our future.

While competitor nations like China invest boldly in infrastructure, with 9 percent of their gross domestic product going to infrastructure projects, we're investing just 2.4 percent of our GDP in infrastructure here at home, a 20-year low.

And instead of addressing this deficiency for the long-term, Congress continues to pass short-term, stopgap measures that do barely enough to keep our infrastructure moving, let alone lead the globe as it once did and must again.

As the federal government has failed to invest sustainably in vital infrastructure projects, more of the burdens of our aging system have shifted to the shoulders of states, counties, cities, towns, and municipalities.

It's estimated that the shutdown for just a single day of one of the Hudson tunnels could cost our regional economy and the nation \$100 million in wasted time and lost productivity. It's a cost New Jersey families can't afford to bear, and one they shouldn't have to.

Here in New Jersey, our infrastructure not only serves to connect commuters with their jobs and local businesses with consumers, but also acts as a vital transportation hub for the entire Atlantic seaboard. Our state is the centerpiece of the Northeast Corridor, a passenger rail artery that carries 750,000 people each day, moves a workforce that contributes \$50 billion annually to the United States' gross domestic

product, and transports more people from city to city than all the airlines combined.

Yet remarkably, this critical lifeline that moves our state and our region relies on dated, decaying, and often century-old infrastructure. The Hudson River tunnels connecting New York and New Jersey were an engineering feat when they opened in 1910, but now, 106 years later, they desperately need to be replaced.

It's estimated that the shutdown for just a single day of one of the Hudson tunnels could cost our regional economy and the nation \$100 million in wasted time and lost productivity. It's a cost New Jersey families can't afford to bear, and one they shouldn't have to.

The stakes are high, and the need is urgent.

In order to get this project done, it has become clear we can no longer afford to wait exclusively on federal action.

That's why I joined colleagues in Congress, members of the Administration, and the governors of New York and New Jersey—working across state and party lines—to take action to address one of New Jersey and our region's most pressing infrastructure challenges. Starting with a meeting in my Newark office on August 18, we began making progress on a plan to manage, oversee, and fund the construction of new Hudson River tunnels and other upgrades to the Northeast Corridor.

The construction of new tunnels will ensure the long-term sustainability and efficiency of the Northeast Corridor and will ultimately jumpstart growth in our local and regional economies. The success of businesses in New Jersey and our region relies on the fundamental ability to move goods and services effectively.

A 2012 Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco report estimated that every dollar invested into our national infrastructure increases economic output by at least 2 dollars. The Gateway Project will create jobs up front and provide economic benefits for decades.

Our economic viability as a state, a region and a country depends on the completion of this project. The wheels are now rolling forward, but there is still much work to be done. It's time that the hardworking New Jerseyans and their families who rely on essential public services like the Hudson Tunnels are given the predictability, efficiency, and safety they deserve. 🗣️

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Municipal Government is Transparent with Laws We Already Have

By Chuck Chiarello, Mayor, Buena Vista Township;
League Past President

First, let me say that Loretta Weinberg, Senate Majority Leader, is one of the most active members of our legislature. She has been involved with countless issues that have made New Jersey a better place to live.

I do humbly disagree with Senator Weinberg about Senate Bills S781 and S782 to further revise our current OPRA and OPMA laws in the name of transparency. Having heard the concerns of countless municipalities, elected officials, and staff, I conclude we have done all that we have been requested to do by law or common sense to make our communities transparent with the existing OPRA and OPMA laws. There comes a time when staffing and budget requirements have been exhausted just to accommodate a select few people who bombard our municipalities with public records requests.

Our websites are always updated and contain all the information required by law. Our meeting minutes are online and available by the next meeting or as soon as reasonably possible. Our agendas and budgets are all online for the public.

Under the existing laws, OPRA fees are unreasonable for the amount of time and effort that must go into searching for “older” documents. It takes valuable time away from our staff—not only in the Clerk’s office, but also in many other departments that may be involved in the same request.

As an example, to locate 100 pages of older requested documents brings a town in revenue a crisp \$5 bill while racking up payroll expenses that might equal \$100. Each request is different from a cost standpoint, but the law rarely leans in the direction of the municipality.

The OPRA law also allows outside businesses seeking construction permits and plans or animal rights groups to utilize municipal services for their private commercial gain.

Under the OPMA laws for open public meetings, proposed changes will add secretarial expenses and additional reports to the cost of running subcommittee meetings.

Our subcommittee meetings have been open to the public for

as long as I can remember and rarely do people even come to those advertised meetings. Subcommittees are mostly handled by volunteers along with a representative(s) from the local governing body. To produce minutes in a formal fashion, whether it’s quarterly or semiannually would be another unfunded mandate. All of our subcommittees keep notes and any formal actions or expenditures come back to the main governing body for approval anyway.

I truly believe municipal governments are both efficient and cost effective for the job that we do for our communities.

I know the intentions of the Senator are good, but please err on the side of municipal governments that proudly serve our state. Do not allow us to be hit with additional unfunded mandates or burdens at the same time further budget cuts and shared services are being requested. I truly believe municipal governments are both efficient and cost effective for the job that we do for our communities.

Please recognize that we are transparent, we do meet the laws, and we don’t need further burdens placed upon us. If an OPRA requestor takes us to the GRC (Government Records Council) and we are proven right, we still have to bear the entire expense of paying lawyers or mediators. The money for this comes from our taxpayers just to argue with a select few people who overburden our Clerk’s offices. Our municipal OPRA and OPMA burden is greater than any such requirement of our own legislature.

Knowing that my comments apply to a majority of our towns in the State of New Jersey, I ask that you reconsider your ongoing efforts with OPRA and OPMA and allow us to deal with the dozens of other issues that we face in local government. ♣

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New Jersey: A New Year and a New Legislative Session

By Assembly Majority Leader Lou Greenwald,
Assemblyman, District 6

As a new legislative session is upon us and we reflect over this past year, efforts made by the General Assembly to improve our quality of life, foster job creation, and help communities afford critical infrastructure needs were successful. However, many of these issues will remain a priority in the new legislative session.



Since the Great Recession, the Legislature has worked steadily to provide relief for communities throughout the State. We have enacted incentives to encourage job creation and business growth, such as the Economic Opportunity Act, which approved more than \$2.1 billion in tax incentives through the Grow New Jersey and Economic Redevelopment and Growth Programs. It is expected this investment will generate more than 15,500 new jobs and 11,750 construction jobs, and the retention of nearly 13,000 at-risk jobs. Local community leaders have been instrumental in our efforts to stimulate the economy and have helped to attract businesses to New Jersey.

This past year, we worked to advance legislation to help local municipalities upgrade their crumbling water infrastructure, including the law I authored called the Water Infrastructure Protection Act. Additionally, we have passed legislation to facilitate operations with the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust Financing Program, which has helped save taxpayers billions of dollars on the financing of various water infrastructure projects.

While great efforts have been made, there is still work that needs to be done. New Jersey's economic stability is arguably one of the most pressing issues determining the future well-being of our state and is an issue which remains at the forefront of our agenda.

The fact is, six years after the Great Recession, New Jersey has not yet fully recovered, despite the great progress made in the rest of the country. Over the last six years, we've seen surrounding states and the rest of the country bouncing back stronger than before. Nationally, the United States has recovered 133% of its jobs lost since the financial collapse, while New Jersey has recovered only 63%. We have the nation's highest property taxes, yet New Jersey revenue collections remain 10% lower than our peak year prior to the recession.

By establishing more sensible methods of garnering additional revenue instead of repeatedly turning to hardworking homeowners with outstretched hands, we can decrease property taxes, attract new residents, and turn New Jersey's economy in the right direction.

At the heart of our economic struggle is our state's over-reliance on property taxes as a revenue source. Our dependence on this tax has put New Jersey in a downward spiral. Each year, hundreds

of residents and businesses leave New Jersey for more affordable places to live and work. As a result, our state's revenue decreases and this handcuffs our ability to balance a budget that continues to fund important public services.

Currently, the state provides property tax relief through rebates as well as school and municipal aid; however, the Governor's deep cuts to property tax rebates, plus cuts in municipal and school aid, have only worsened the problem. By establishing more sensible methods of garnering additional revenue instead of repeatedly turning to hardworking homeowners with outstretched hands, we can decrease property taxes, attract new residents, and turn New Jersey's economy in the right direction.

While this has been a mostly ominous look at the precariousness of our state's economic welfare, know that there is most certainly a light at the end of the tunnel; as long as we choose to look in

the right direction.

As I already mentioned, reforming our tax system is necessary if we are going to see any real growth, but this can only be accomplished with the inclusion of revenue-neutral reforms to ensure that the tax burden is carried by those who can afford it, not those who are already suffering.

This is the challenge ahead of us, but by working together we can effect serious economic change to get New Jersey back to being the great state we call home. Fixing New Jersey should not be a partisan issue because, in the end, we all want the same thing: New Jersey's success.

As we embark on a new legislative session, I am hopeful that Republicans and Democrats, local and state leaders can work together to steer our state through these challenging issues. ♣

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The Best of the Bright Ideas

2015 Innovation in Governance Awards Program winners named

By Jennifer Bradshaw, Public Information Officer, New Brunswick,
Ernie Troiano, Jr., Mayor, Wildwood, James A. Brownlee, MPH,
Director, Trenton Department of Health and Human Services



Presented with plaques at The League's annual Conference in Atlantic City, three projects received top honors:

City of New Brunswick: Dina's Dwellings, Supportive Housing for Domestic Violence Survivors

City of Trenton: The Coordinated Entry & Assessment Service (CEAS) Center, Providing Housing and Services for Homeless Individuals

Wildwood City: The Wildwood Landfill Closure Initiative

Honorable Mention:

Brick Township: Permit Amnesty Month, June 2014

Frelinghuysen and Green Townships: Inter-local

Agreement for Emergency Management Services Coordination

Highland Park Borough: New Projects and Programs to Improve Police-Community Relations

City of Newark: Lower Broadway/Bloomfield Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project



Blending creativity, ingenuity, and community service, the winners of the 2015 Innovation in Governance Awards are municipalities and partnerships among municipalities and counties that have shown successful innovative effort.

The program, sponsored by The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and The New Jersey State League of Municipalities, recognized a trio of projects for their hard work on community-improving efforts.

The following is a rundown of the winning projects' highlights and how they may apply to other municipalities.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS Dina's Dwellings is a project that addresses the needs of a portion of our homeless population, and serves as a modern example of alternative uses for historic buildings in the City of New Brunswick.

The First Reformed Church is a more than 300-year-old structure with a rich history that predates the Revolutionary

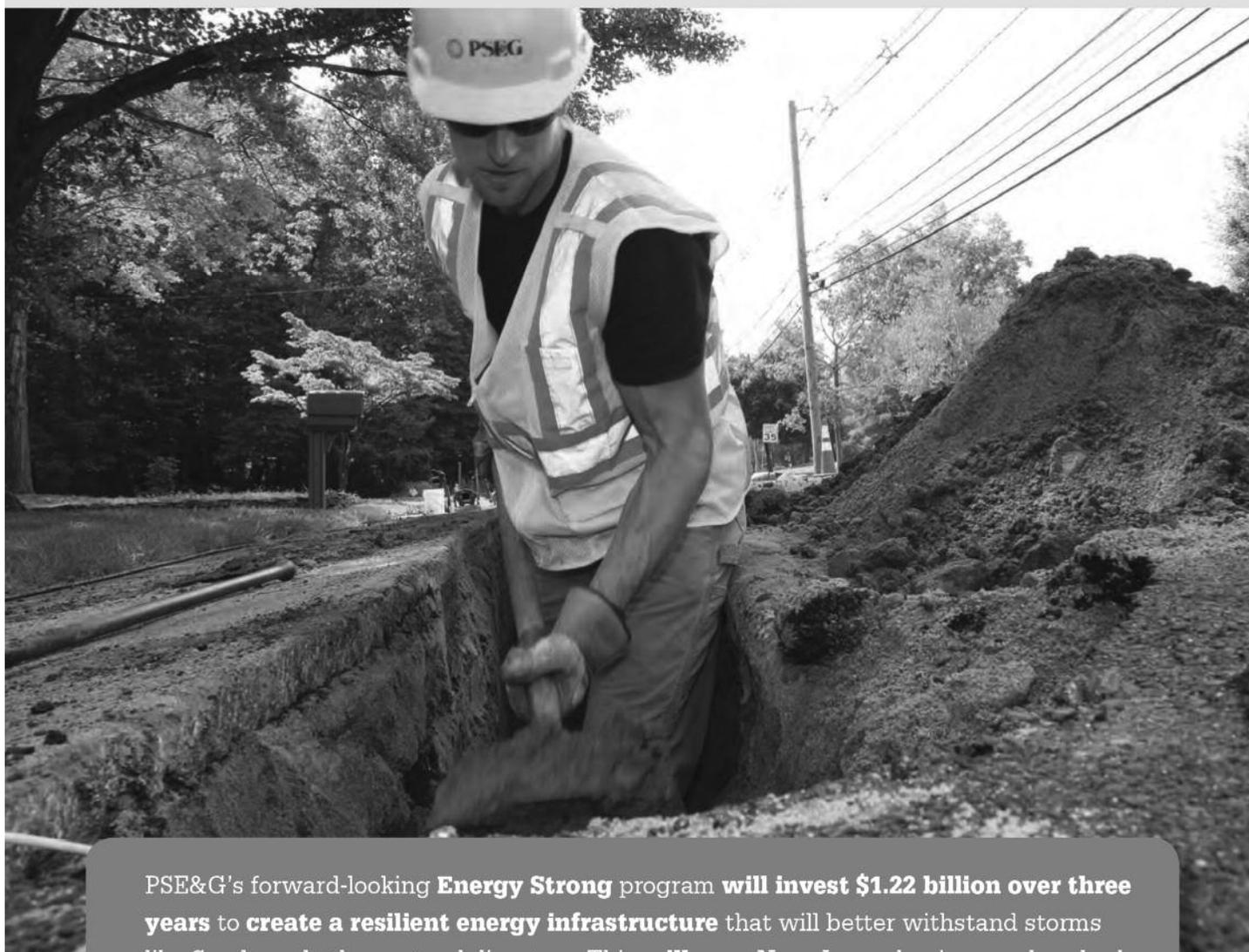
War. It is in the process of being permanently transformed into 10 long-term apartment units to permanently house families affected by domestic violence while providing them with support services addressing mental and physical health, as well as job placement and education.

Complimentary to the Housing First model, this \$3.4 million project will be supported by \$604,385 in HOME funds pledged by the City of New Brunswick. Additional funds have been pledged by NJ-HMFA Community Block Development Grant Disaster Relief Funds, Bergen County United Way, a Planning Grant from the NJ Historic Trust, a Johnson & Johnson Planning Grant and private donations. Tenants will pay about a fourth of their rent, with the rest to be provided by federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing vouchers. All tenants will be referred to social service organizations throughout the area as they work toward a new life. They will be permitted to stay as long as needed.

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Named after one of the church's strongest female leaders, Dina VanBergh, who came to New Brunswick from Amsterdam in 1786 and is buried on the church grounds, the project is overseen by Town Clock Community Development Corporation, Inc. Town Clock CDC is a nonprofit organization lead by Susan Kramer-Mills, Associate Pastor of First Reformed Church.

Dina's Dwellings is the latest venture in the City of New Brunswick's standing commitment to supportive housing, which has entailed more than \$1.6 million

in HOME funds spent on housing for New Brunswick's homeless residents. This includes the first permanent supportive housing for domestic violence survivors which opened in the City in 2013. Women Aware utilized \$114,601 in City-provided HOME funds to make that project a reality.

IN YOUR TOWN

Historic landmarks can have modern use that provides preservation and innovation. This permanent conversion of the First Reformed Church space is anticipated to save the church hundreds of thousands of dollars that previously went toward heating, cooling, and maintaining the church's large sanctuary space. It will provide safe shelter for a population that greatly needs it, and will further the City of New Brunswick's commitment to permanent, supportive housing.

TRENTON'S COORDINATED ENTRY & ASSESSMENT SERVICES CENTER (CEAS) CENTER

The Trenton/Mercer community realized that although it has much success developing a system for homeless families the same was not true for homeless individuals and the CEAS Center was born. In 2014, Mercer County officials and the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness proposed to the City of Trenton to develop a city-funded and operated service to address the diverse and challenging needs of homeless individuals. Mayor Eric E. Jackson endorsed this plan and the City of Trenton's Department of Health and Human Services' efforts to address issues of homelessness for individuals.

In April 2015, the Coordinated Entry & Assessment Services (CEAS) Center was opened to provide permanent housing and supportive services to chronically homeless individuals in one location. A mobile outreach van is also used to transport the homeless to various appointments.

The City of Trenton has enjoyed a strong partnership with its community stakeholders. A unique partnership was started with the County of Mercer, the Mercer County Board of Social Services,

and the City of Trenton to identify the homeless needs through data research and analysis that led to the development of strategies to combat these issues, which included aligning government funding to implement a system change. The community has benefited from a more comprehensive system that collaborates with various housing providers, non-profit social services agencies, faith-based organizations, and federal, state, and local governments.

County officials have shared this success at several national conferences and the Executive Director of the Mercer County Board of Social Services was selected by the White House as a Champion of Change.

IN YOUR TOWN

The Trenton/Mercer CAES homeless system can be replicated in other communities across the state by:

- Convening the Cities, Counties and Board of Social Services to identify commonalities, gaps, and funding streams
- Building community consensus on moving from what had been primarily a sheltering model to a Housing First and Rapid Re-housing model
- Engaging communities HUD Continuum of Cares in the planning process
- Investing in Data Collection, Research and Analyst
- Developing uniformed screening and assessment tools
- Identifying homeless priorities and make a firm commitment at all levels to reach stated goals and objectives
- Building partnerships with all sectors that touch the homeless in some capacity
- Having patience

WILDWOOD LANDFILL CLOSURE INITIATIVE

Ocean City operates Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) No. 83 (Site 83), located within their municipality, that currently contains approximately 200,000 cubic yards of previously dredged bayside sediments.

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Innovation in Governance Awards

Ocean City needs to dispose of this material in order to reopen additional storage space for subsequent bayside maintenance dredging.

The Wildwood City landfill closure plan was designed to utilize approximately 140,000 cubic yards of dewatered dredged material from Ocean City as the soil cap portion of the landfill closure design. Wildwood City petitioned

the NJDEP for specific approval to import the material from Ocean City.

Implementing this type of project, which involves a landfill within a coastal zone and a separate dredging project, typically requires significant time and effort to secure the required permits and approvals from multiple State and Federal agencies. The NJDEP Land Use Division worked with the City of Wild-

wood and provided an expedited specific approval for the import of 83,000 yards of the stored dredge material from Site 83 in Ocean City.

Environmental benefits associated with the integration of sediment disposal needs of Ocean City and the fill requirement for the Wildwood City Landfill site include a reduction in resources, associated equipment emissions, and heavy truck traffic on coastal roads and causeways that would be required to move the Site 83 material to a more distant disposal site.

Ocean City was able to utilize a local destination where the material is put to beneficial use at a significant cost savings and reduced transport costs. The City of Wildwood collects a fee for the import of the dredge material based on the cubic yards delivered, and 100% of the fees collected are set aside to offset the costs of the final landfill closure. This funding for the landfill closure is in addition to the cost savings to the City by the elimination of the need to import fill material from another source.

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IN YOUR TOWN

The NJDEP Sediment Technology Group has recognized these benefits for some time and has promoted sediment beneficial re-use projects whenever possible, although finding opportunities where the dredge material meets the needs or is suitable for an available receptor site have been limited. Overall this type of beneficial use project can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of a large earthworks project.

The suitability of fine grained bayside dredge materials for fill projects may be limited based on geotechnical demands of the available receiving sites. However, these sediments can be mixed with other available materials such as recycled concrete or other aggregates to create fill suitable for more potential uses.

The initial approval for the import of 83,000 yards of dredge material into the Wildwood Landfill will be increased in the future after the final landfill closure plan is approved and the additional volume of material that can be imported to complete the closure is determined. ♻️

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Healthy Momentum

New Jersey is Gaining Ground with Accreditation in Public Health

By Peter N. Tabbot, Health Officer, Rockaway Township Division of Health, Former MLC-3 Project Director in New Jersey, Member, Gaining Ground Steering Committee; & Colleen McKay Wharton, Program Manager, Rutgers School of Public Health's Office of Public Health Practice, Coordinator of New Jersey's Gaining Ground Initiative



As part of New Jersey's Gaining Ground initiative, local public health officials develop a strategic plan in preparation for public health accreditation.

There is an old axiom in public health that states, “If you have seen one health department, you have seen one health department.” While this somewhat derisive saying was coined years ago to illustrate the variation one might find in services from one public health agency to the next, it is now used to describe the growing national momentum for standardization and accreditation readiness in public health—and New Jersey’s local health departments are helping lead the way through the national Gaining Ground effort.

Gaining Ground is a two-year initiative, managed by the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). It is intended to help develop sustainable systems for public health accreditation and performance improvement in local, tribal, and state health departments. The New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials (NJACCHO), in collaboration with the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH), and the Rutgers School of Public Health, is one of seven national recipients of the Gaining Ground grant

As a result of participating in Gaining Ground, a large cohort of the State’s local public health departments, 18 in total, are making significant strides toward accreditation readiness and the infusion of continuous quality improvement (QI) in the profession. Through the grant, New Jersey’s

health departments have also become a vital contributor to the dialogue on public health accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), comprised of public health leaders from around the country, and are helping inform the national learning community that has formed around these efforts.

“Having the opportunity to work with leaders from other states and national public health organizations has provided profound insight as to how New Jersey’s local health departments can advance accreditation readiness and best serve the public,” said Margaret Jahn, Health Officer with the Freehold Health Department and Project Director for New Jersey’s Gaining Ground effort. “Accreditation is not about a piece of paper. It is changing the way we do business, and it revolves around performance management and accountability.”



Kaye Bender, President and CEO of the Public Health Accreditation Board, addresses elected officials and health officers at the 2015 League Conference.

LOCAL APPLICATION OF A NATIONAL PARADIGM

Through Gaining Ground, New Jersey’s local health departments are building capacities to successfully apply for national public health accreditation, and are simultaneously generating enthusiasm and improving employee morale. With this ongoing collaborative process,

equally important benefits include improved alignment and compatibility between state and local health departments, the sharing of best practices and the interagency fusion of resources, all without compromising local autonomy and oversight.

“In New Jersey, a group of dedicated local health department leaders, together

with the NJDOH and leaders in academia, have worked together to promote a different vision of public health in the State,” said Pamela Russo, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Senior Program Officer. “The total number of local health departments has dropped significantly, cross-jurisdictional sharing has flourished, and the application of quality

ACHIEVEMENT: LEAVES AN IMPRESSION

“Accreditation is not about a piece of paper. It is changing the way we do business, and it revolves around performance management and accountability.”

enhanced intraagency congruence and camaraderie is on the increase. Benefits include a benchmark of consistent standards for public health services, ongoing quality improvement, increased efficiencies, heightened accountability to the public and policy makers, and superior metrics demonstrating the value of public health. Some less visible but



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Healthy Momentum

improvement has increased.”

Gaining Ground is providing New Jersey’s local health officials the opportunity to enjoy these benefits through rewarding cooperative learning opportunities. Local health departments are meeting, rolling up their sleeves and developing valuable programs, policies and processes that are beginning to make a substantial difference in their communities. The NJACCHO is facilitating this process by training New Jersey’s local health officials, providing technical support and furnishing stipends to accelerate accreditation readiness.

“The New Jersey Department of Health supports the efforts of local health departments as they prepare for voluntary national accreditation.”

“New Jersey’s Gaining Ground steering committee designed a very innovative approach by grouping health departments into cohorts based on where they were in their journey toward becoming accredited,” said Russo. “New Jersey’s local health departments have made great progress, and we are confident that in the next two years, New Jersey will have accredited agencies and will become champions for their colleagues.”

These efforts come with support from elected officials and boards of health in participating communities. In a November 2014 resolution endorsing public health accreditation readiness, the League of Municipalities urged local government officials to support this initiative in an effort to achieve healthier communities. New Jersey’s municipalities are not alone in their enthusiasm for accreditation readiness; the NJDOH is working to achieve these very standards at the state level and recently received a site visit from PHAB experts in its

Getting There: Becoming Accredited

Public health accreditation is a long, intensive process—especially for a local health department with limited resources—but one with rewards including more cost effective programs, standardization of practices, and better strategic planning.

- To become accredited, a health department must demonstrate that their performance measures favorably against a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused, and evidence-based standards.
- To achieve PHAB accreditation, a health department must embark on a seven-step process, including compliance with the PHAB Standards and Measures Version 1.5. PHAB’s national accreditation standards include 12 domains, each with a unique group of standards that pertain to a broad group of public health services. Each standard has multiple measures, providing a means for evaluating whether a health department is meeting each standard.

The accreditation process also requires moderate applicant fees, with a sliding scale based on the size of population served by the health department seeking accreditation. Because public health accreditation is an ongoing commitment requiring continuous quality improvement and reaccreditation, fees enable PHAB to support both applicants and previously accredited health departments.

This range of services includes dedicated guidance from specialists, in-person training, a site visit by peer review experts, access to an exclusive best practices community of learning, annual guidance, and written and electronic resources.

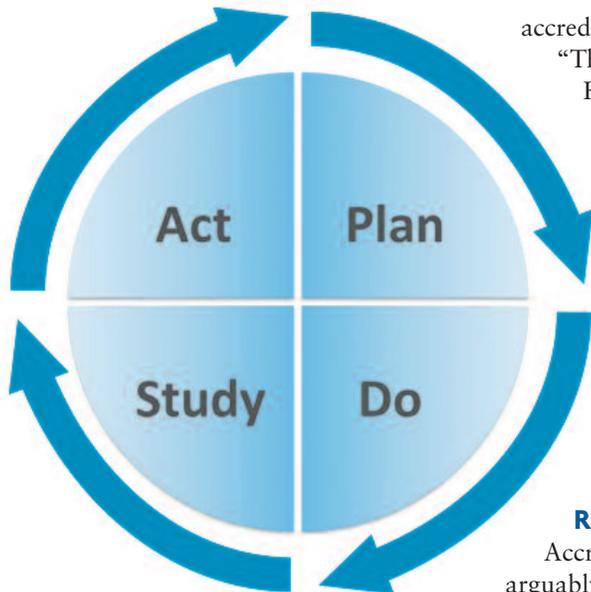
The Bloomfield Health Department was advised in mid-November that it met PHAB’s standards and became the State’s first accredited health department. With other applications for accreditation in progress, New Jersey is walking the walk and further proving to be a national leader in this effort.

“Achieving accreditation was a monumental effort requiring the hard work and cooperation of the entire department,” said Michael Hodges, Accreditation Coordinator with the Bloomfield Health Department. “We are very happy to have reached this milestone, and we know that the public health services we’re providing are of the highest quality.”



Bloomfield receives recognition at the 2015 League of Municipalities Conference for its public health accreditation. Pictured from left to right: Michelle Lonardis, Public Health Investigator; Mayor Michael Venezia; Kaye Bender, PHAB President and CEO; Michael Fitzpatrick, Health Officer; NJDOH Acting Commissioner Cathleen Bennett; Karen Lore, Director; Michael Hodges, Accreditation Coordinator; and Jill Scarpa, REHS.

Improvement Cycles



Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA), the iterative process that serves as foundation for public health continuous quality improvement. Image courtesy of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

accreditation process.

“The New Jersey Department of Health supports the efforts of local health departments as they prepare for voluntary national accreditation,” said former New Jersey Health Commissioner Mary E. O’Dowd. “The Department of Health is pursuing national public health accreditation to advance our quality and performance to further strengthen our agency.”

READY FOR CHANGE

Accreditation readiness is arguably the most significant change agent in New Jersey’s public health system over the last few decades, shifting the culture of public health around the state and across the nation. The State’s local public health system is truly moving

the dial in its effort to establish consistent, heightened standards and to protect the public’s health. To the average person, accreditation readiness may not be as sexy or headline-grabbing as an emergent event or communicable disease outbreak. But to New Jersey’s public health professionals and the growing number of municipal and state partners who support it, accreditation readiness is contagious. 🦋

Peter N. Tabbot is Health Officer with the Rockaway Township Division of Health, was MLC-3 Project Director in New Jersey and is a member of the Gaining Ground Steering Committee.

Colleen McKay Wharton is Program Manager with the Rutgers School of Public Health’s Office of Public Health Practice and is Coordinator of New Jersey’s Gaining Ground initiative.

@ For more information on public health accreditation readiness in New Jersey, email mjahn@twp.freehold.nj.us.

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Help for Hoarders

Why a response team is more effective and less expensive for towns than more traditional responses

By Elizabeth Wade, Community Liaison,
Mental Health Association in New Jersey,
& David Buzby, Atlantic County Fire Marshal



Officials in towns and cities across the country face the same challenge: how to manage the neighbor or renter who has accumulated too much stuff. Hoarders live among precarious towers of unused possessions that create increasingly dangerous situations for them and their neighbors.

Hoarding is certainly not new, but recently there is more public awareness of the disorder thanks to popular TV depictions. The term “hoarding” is being replaced with the less-stigmatizing term “finder/keeper.” There’s also been a shift in the way communities respond to hoarding situations.

The concept, based on a task force or alliance model, has been successfully duplicated in parts of many states, including the first, which started in Virginia in 1998. Among other states with utilizing this model are Massachusetts, California, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Minnesota, and Connecticut, among others. Tragic stories of injury or death sometimes prompt the change; in other cases a human service worker is touched by someone’s sad circumstances.

New Jersey is joining the growing list of states that have adopted community-based collaborations. The model unites officials from multiple disciplines, such as firefighting, public health, code enforcement, housing providers, and social workers to affect positive change. Often animal welfare is included as well.

“There are not many mental health issues that require a collaboration or coordination of efforts like this,” said Robert Kley of the Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ), which is introducing evidence based techniques designed to assist Finders/Keepers. “But certainly this qualifies as one of them.”

In an alliance such as this, members typically meet quarterly to problem solve cases as a group.

Under the program, a code enforcement official uses a non-punitive, judgment-free approach to break down of the overwhelming task of cleaning up.

“Recently, I was working with a tenant who had about 16 clean take out boxes stacked on her stove,” recalled Charlie Miller, Brigantine Rental Inspector. “And she was very stressed about cleaning a three foot path for egresses to at least one window in every room.”

Since his participation in a hoarding conference, his understanding of the disorder has improved. He uses a non-punitive, judgement-free approach to break down the overwhelming task into prioritized, smaller jobs.

“People look frustrated and stressed,” says Miller. “But, the approach you take makes a difference.”

When Miller returned to re-inspect, he said she’d complied and even worked ahead on other rooms, which she was proud to show him. He also provided

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Help for Hoarders

her with information about a local support group.

Support Groups In these groups, a mental health professional works with the Finder/Keepers on ways to reduce clutter, learn to sort and discard, develop organizational skills, and understand their own complex behavior.

In contrast, the outdated approach of systematically throwing away the possessions typically fails, with hoards returning in 18 months. Not only was the clean out costly and ineffective, it was also a damaging experience for the individual, who would develop mistrust and resentment.

Research shows that taking a more compassionate approach provides cost savings to cities and municipalities. One state reported that the cost of case management for working with one client over a two year period was \$1,800 in contrast to the cost of eviction which can reach \$10,000 or more.

Peer-Led Hoarding Response Teams comprised of individuals who have firsthand, lived experience with accumulating and collecting are currently in the development phase. A member of the alliance would be able to refer a Finder/Keeper to the team and help provide



support for another Finder/Keeper. Agencies like MHANJ often secure grants to cover the cost for this type of support, which can be required for months or years.

A peer response team can be helpful to homeowners as well as renters. Many states have collected data on tenants that reveal very high success rates. When tenants accept help, the overwhelming majority come into compliance and maintains their housing, which creates stability and reduces homelessness.

A Common Problem Research reveals that approximately one in 50 individuals have hoarding behaviors.

“We know this is something that demands and requires attention,” said Kley. “Looking ahead to population projections, this issue is expected to become more complicated. The number of Americans age 65 and over will double in number by 2050. This behavior peaks at age 50.”

Individuals with a tendency to live in clutter do not generally seek help. Though some recognize their behavior as problematic; others do not. Stigma, fear of punishment and the stress of letting go of possessions prevents most from taking steps to change their behavior.

In general, a tenant or renter in need of help is more likely to be identified and

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referred for help. The problem is more likely to begin to affect others, and a call for assistance is made due to concerns about mold, mildew, dust, rodents, insects, odor or air quality.

In the case of homeowners, the behavior is more easily concealed and can become extreme. Local municipalities often have codes that address issues outside the house, but do little to affect conditions inside.

Emergency Response When a municipal worker enters a home in response to a 9-1-1 call, there is an opportunity to help. If a first responder observes blocked egresses, unsanitary conditions, or a child living in an unsafe environment, those concerns can be shared with a variety of social supports, such as Child or Adult Protective Services, among others.

living with Hoarding Disorder, according to the International OCD Foundation. From the social work perspective, working with individuals on behavior modification is imperative for the individual as well as the community. Changing behaviors can lead to improved socialization, reduced isolation, enhanced quality of life, and improved health and safety.

In Atlantic County, issues with clutter came to light following Hurricane Sandy. Case managers identified residents who were not cleaning out of the wet contents of their storm-damaged homes.

“If they could help themselves, they would,” observed Vicki Phillips, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association in Atlantic County. “Very quickly, we realized that there were significant barriers in our county.”

Bringing New Resources When she looked for community partners who

could assist these residents, there were none. And so began the effort to bring resources to South Jersey. Mental Health Association staff has attended national conferences and worked with representatives from evidence-based programs in other states in an effort to bring peer response teams to New Jersey. The office currently runs a successful bi-monthly support group called “Got Too Much Stuff?” that they are duplicating in other parts of the state.

“Though considered a private matter, this is something that becomes an issue for the community. These are some solutions that make a difference,” said Phillips. ♣

@ If you’re interested in becoming a member of the New Jersey Hoarding Alliance or want additional information on how to support someone in your community, call 609 652-3800.

New Jersey is joining the growing list of states with community-based collaborations that seek to assist those who accumulate too many possessions.

Firefighters face additional challenges at Funder/Keeper properties. The fire load, or the higher weight of the dwelling’s contents, puts the building at a higher risk for collapse. Consider the weight of clothing when saturated with water. Firefighters are also more likely to be injured by falling objects. Finding victims inside a burning dwelling is also more difficult because these fires produce more smoke, and serious fires, injuries, and deaths can result. In addition, properties adjacent or connected to the dwelling are at increased risk.

At any given time, approximately 15 million Americans are believed to be



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- Tax Appeals
- UCC Regulation/Litigation
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Stray Cat Problems? Hillside has the answer

Thanks to a trap, neuter, release program that relies on volunteer sponsors, the feral population is down by 28 percent at no cost to the township

By Angela R. Garretson, Mayor, Hillside

In today's society, it is not socially acceptable to euthanize stray or surplus animals. As municipal leaders, we are increasingly pressured to adopt compassionate solutions to animal control problems. We are faced with the complex task of balancing public health protection against the humane mandate from our communities, while managing limited resources responsibly.

In Hillside, we have responded by developing a comprehensive and collaborative Ordinance based on a method called TNVM (Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Manage, also known as TNR or TNVR).

The Animal Protection League of New Jersey described TNR as "a movement that is growing by leaps and bounds as residents and local governments see its potential. It is on a trajectory to become the predominant method of feral cat population control."

In October 2014, the controversial program was presented to the Administration and during several Board of Health and Council meetings. The outcome culminated in the Ordinance that addressed both sides of the issue, demonstrating compassion and population control, spearheaded by Councilwoman Tonia Hobbs.

Nine months later, over 100 feral cats had been sterilized and vaccinated and 22 cats were removed from colonies and placed for adoption. This resulted in an immediate overall reduction in the number of outdoor cats in these neighborhoods of about 28 percent. Both the animal lovers and those concerned about the numbers of stray cats were happy with the program.

WHAT IS TNVM? In short, it involves humanely trapping feral cats, spaying or neutering them, vaccinating them against



In nine months, over 100 feral cats had been sterilized and vaccinated and 22 cats were removed from colonies and placed for adoption. The tipped ear on this colony cat indicates he has been neutered.

rabies and other common illnesses, and returning them to their outdoor home to live out their lives. A colony caretaker provides food, fresh water, and adequate shelter to the colony cats and monitors their health. Adoptable animals are removed for placement in homes. With sustained efforts, ongoing monitoring, and innovative funding, TNVM has proven effective at reducing complaints and public health risks, and ultimately at decreasing or eliminating free-roaming cat populations.

WHAT ABOUT COST AND ADMINISTRATION? The average cost in New Jersey to hold a stray animal for seven days (as required by State Statute) and then euthanize it is well over



People for Animals also holds TNVM training workshops for caretakers, offers traps on loan at no cost to residents, and assists caretakers in trapping cats for medical care.

\$100 per cat. In contrast, the cost to spay/neuter and vaccinate is \$55. The International Fund for Animal Welfare notes that in addition to reduced cat pop-

Animals (PFA), to help administer the program in order to eliminate expenses and administration for the township.

RESPONSE IN ACTION Stray cat complaints are referred directly to the sponsor who responds and works with both the complainant and caretaker to resolve concerns, liberating Health Department and Animal Control resources to attend to other tasks.

PFA also holds TNVM training workshops for caretakers, offers traps on loan at no cost to residents, and assists caretakers in trapping cats for medical care. Costs to spay/neuter and vaccinate the feral cats in Hillside are covered by a grant to PFA through PetSmart Charities—another benefit of the sponsor-based approach.

Hillside's Ordinance also logically dedicates cat licensing fees to the program since stray cats are the result of abandonment and roaming of reproductively intact pet cats. This motivates the sponsor and community to assist the township to improve cat licensing compliance.

As a result, PFA is working with the Hillside Board of Health to develop an incentive program whereby local businesses

are invited to offer gifts or discounts to licensed pet owners in the Township.

A well-managed TNVM program provides the community with cost control, and a humane, long-term solution to controlling the Township's cat population. This model can be replicated and customized to fit the needs and resources of any municipality: large or small, urban, suburban, or rural.

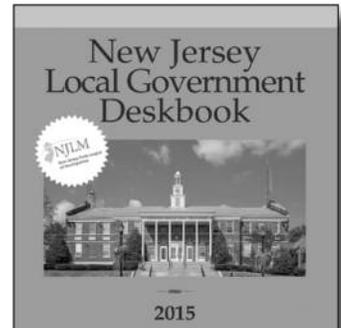
People for Animals, Inc., and the Animal Protection League of New Jersey offer no-cost consultation to municipalities interested in a TNVM program. 🐾

A well-managed TNVM program provides the community with cost control, as well as a humane, long-term solution to controlling the Township's cat population.

ulations, TNVR has resulted in large savings for many New Jersey municipalities.

A Sponsored TNVM Program mobilizes community members who care for the cats to voluntarily do the work required to administer the program. The Hillside model enlists a local non-profit animal welfare organization, People for

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100 Years of Success: NJLM Conference 2015

Wrapping up the centennial celebration, the League's Annual Conference in Atlantic City Grows and Shines



The event began with a ribbon cutting and anniversary cake cutting enjoyed by the League's members and leadership alike.

A fit closing to the 100th anniversary celebration of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, the Annual Conference held in November at the Atlantic City Convention Center was a success, providing educational and informational opportunities to many municipal representatives and employees throughout the state. Attendance was up as the League's members met to elect a new president and executive board, make new legislative plans for 2016, and expand their knowledge base for the year to come.

By the numbers, the Conference offered:

- 100+ Panels, clinics, workshops, and other sessions
 - 21 Associations of technical and professional employees
 - 17,000 Delegates
 - 1,100 exhibits
- Following are highlights of the century-celebrating event.

@ Visit njslom.org for a full photo album of each day at the conference.



NJLM President and Mayor of Piscataway Brian Wahler accepts a plaque recognizing the League for 100 years of exceptional service from Michael J. Margulies, AIA, Board Member Preservation of New Jersey. (L-R) 2nd Vice President Albert Kelly, Mayor Wahler, Mayor Tempesta, Immediate Past President Suzanne Walters, Margulies, and NJLM Board Member Mayor Jim Perry.



The celebration continues as (l to r) NJLM's 2nd Vice President, Bridgeton Mayor Albert Kelly, NJLM President, Piscataway, Mayor Wahler, 1st Vice President, West Caldwell Mayor Joe Tempesta and Michael J. Darcy, CAE, Executive Director show a commemorative plaque and welcome attendees to the 100th Annual Conference.



Anthony Santiago from the National League of Cities (far right) presented the NJLM with an NLC certificate of congratulations upon the 100th Anniversary of the NJLM. The presentation took place during the NJLM annual business meeting November 19, 2015 in Atlantic City. **From left to right in the photo are:** Michael J. Darcy, CAE, Executive Director NJLM; Mayor Suzanne Walters, Immediate Past President and Anniversary Committee Chair; Mayor Joe Tempesta, 1st Vice President; Mayor Brian Wahler, President; Mayor Albert Kelly, 2nd Vice President; Mayor James Cassella, 3rd Vice President, and Santiago.

With Appreciation

Outgoing members of the NJLM board were thanked for their service at the annual Board reception. President Mayor Brian Wahler of Piscataway (l) and NJLM Executive Director Michael J. Darcy, CAE, presented plaques to (top) Deputy Mayor Ellen Pompper of Lower Alloways Creek and Past President, Mayor Suzanne M. Walters (bottom) of Stone Harbor.



NJLM Past President and Former Mayor of East Orange City, Robert Bowser and President Brian Wahler, Mayor of Piscataway speak with an attendee.



Attendees queue up to pick up their badges.

Day one of the event, Tuesday, Nov. 17, was filled with sessions and exhibits, including an Orientation: Getting the Most from Your Conference Experience, a NJLM Board reception, and the 7th Annual Sustainable Jersey Awards Luncheon. Shown here:



An active audience participated in the session The Role and Responsibilities of Municipal Governing Body Members.

Networking and exchanging ideas was a highlight for many including:



NJLM 1st Vice President, Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Mayor of West Caldwell, Harrington Park Borough Mayor Paul Hoelscher, Oradell Borough Mayor-Elect Dianne Camelo Didio, and NJLM Executive Board member and Alpine Borough Mayor Paul H. Tomasko.



At the Sustainable Jersey sessions, NJLM Executive Board member Dr. Edward J. Mahaney, Jr. Mayor of Cape May City speaks.



NJLM Past President Paul J. Maticera of North Brunswick and NJLM Executive Board member and Clinton Town Mayor Janice Kovach.

A Fresh Start!

Getting the blood pumping and their minds moving, early-rising attendees had the opportunity to work out with Joetta Clark Diggs, four-time Olympian and member of the NJ Hall of Fame who was on site working out as the spokeswoman for the Mayors Wellness Campaign.

The second day of the Conference offered a whole new set of sessions and opportunities to get fit, exchange ideas, and learn from the past about the potential of tomorrow.



Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley speaks about his experience at the session “Lessons from 40 Years Leading an Ethical Municipal Government, part of the Arthur J. Holland Program on Ethics in Government at the Eagleton Institute of Politics. Next month in *NJ Municipalities*, Mayor Riley will share his insights in an article based on his visit to the Conference.



“The Community Reinvestment Act and Municipalities” session included representatives from the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association as well as bankers, regulators, and community advocates. Shown l to r Mayor Wilda Diaz of Perth Amboy, Adena Bayoh, co-founder of Kapwood LLC and founder/CEO, Foya Hospitality Group, and April De Simone, co-founder and managing partner, Designing the WE.



A panel of former Governors reflected on 2015 at “Informed Perspective: Former Governors Consider Christie’s Year.” Shown l to r: Former Governors James E. McGreevey, John O. Bennett, Donald T. Di Francesco, and James J. Florio with moderator Kevin McArdle, state house correspondent for New Jersey 101.5.



DCA’s Commissioner Charles Richman, Economic Development Authority Chief Executive Officer Melissa Orsen, and NJLM President Brian Wahler at the panel during the Mayor’s Luncheon.



During the session, “Looking Forward: Legislative Leaders Discuss 2016 Plans,” state leaders reflect and project on last year and the years to come. Shown l to r: Thomas H. Kean, Jr., Senate Republican Leader, Senator, District 21; Vincent Prieto, Assembly Speaker, Assemblyman, District 32; Michael Aron, NJTV Chief Political Correspondent; Stephen M. Sweeney, Senate President, Senator, District 3; Jon M. Bramnick, Assembly Republican Leader; Assemblyman, District 21; and NJLM 1st Vice President, Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Mayor West Caldwell.



DEP’s Commissioner Bob Martin with Joseph Fiordaliso, Commissioner of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

New NJLM President and Officers



At the League Business Meeting, President Brian Wahler swears in League Officers 1st Vice President Albert Kelly, Mayor, Bridgeton; 2nd Vice President, James Cassella, Mayor, East Rutherford, and Colleen Mahr, 3rd Vice President, Mayor, Fanwood.



New NJLM President, Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Mayor of West Caldwell, is sworn in to his new role by President Brian Wahler and backed by friends and supporters.



Outgoing NJLM President Brian Wahler (center) accepts a service plaque from Past President Suzanne Walters, Mayor, Stone Harbor, Mayors Tempesta, Kelly, and Cassella.

The last day of the Conference was far from slow and communication and education took place until the very end of the event. At the Women in Municipal Government Breakfast “The Key to Success—Your Power Base” Outstanding Women in Government Awards were presented.



Dr. Stephanie R. Bush-Baskette, Director, Health Department/Aide to Mayor, Irvington; Former Commissioner, State Department of Community Affairs; Former Majority Whip, New Jersey General Assembly (shown here left with center Mildred C. Crump, Newark City Council President, and right, NJLM Past President, Suzanne Walters, Co-Chair, Women in Government Committee; Mayor, Stone Harbor.)



The award for Candace L. Straight, Co-Founder of WISH List, Former Vice Chair, New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority was accepted from Walters, I, and Crump, r, by former Commissioner for the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Lori Grifa (center).



At the League Luncheon, Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, shown here with Town Crier Richard Lalena.



President Brian Wahler, Mayor of Piscataway, with Past President Mayor Timothy C. McDonough, Mayor, Hope, at the League Luncheon.

NJLM Publications

Resources for You and Your Professional Staff

A History of Municipal Government in New Jersey: New Jersey's municipal story with new statutory provisions enacted.

Member \$12 • Non-Member \$14

An Electrical Energy Policy Primer: Strong understanding of how the electricity market operates. (2014)

Member \$40 • Non-Member \$45

Brownfield Properties 2nd Edition: Examines the factors that have contributed to the "Brownfield Phenomena" with federal and state legislation.

Member \$28 • Non-Member \$30

Building Economic Development at the Local Level Primer 8th Edition: Municipalities can sustain and build their own economic base as they contemplate a formal economic development plan.

Member \$35 • Non-Member \$60

Faulkner Act: New Jersey Optional Charter Law.

\$12 for All

Guide to Unfunded Mandates (1st. Ed.) (2012)

Member \$15 • Non-Member \$18

Laws of Interest 2013: Desktop reference for bills enacted into law and information on NJLM's legislative programs.

Member \$35 • Non-Member \$40 • Electronic \$20

Legislative Bulletin (yearly subscription): Bills signed into law affecting municipalities.

Member \$7 • Non-Member \$12

Local Public Contracts Law Series 1 (2014)

Member \$60 • Non-Member \$120

Local Government Ethics Law (2014)

Member \$12 • Non-Member \$14

License Volume 1: Mercantile, Peddler, Solicitor, Canvasser & Itinerant Vendor Fee; Vending Machine/Taxi and Limousine Fees.

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License Volume 2: Alarm Fees, Penalties/Landlord Registration.

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License Volume 3: Dog & Cat Licensing Fees; Liquor Fees; Garage Sale, Flea Market and Auction Fees.

Member \$40 • Non-Member \$56

License Volume 4: Municipal Parking Fees & Rec. Fees.

Electronic only: Member \$40 • Non-Member \$55

License Volume 5: License Fees for Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Zoning, Historic Preservation & Construction/Building. This is an Excel file only (2015).

Member \$50 • Non-Member \$100

Municipal Directory: Published annually. Desktop reference

guide listing mailing and contact information for all 565 municipalities in New Jersey. Also includes the names of their current Mayors, Clerks, Engineers, Managers and Attorneys.

Printed Copy: Member \$25 • Non-Member \$40
Electronic PDF: Member \$49 • Non-Member \$59

New Jersey 5 Traditional Forms of Government: New Jersey townships, villages, boroughs, cities and towns.

\$12 for All

NJ Mayors Healthy Cookbook: Healthy Recipes from Elected Officials.

\$10 for All

New Jersey Municipalities Magazine: Monthly magazine and the official publication of NJLM. Serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on municipal affairs for public officials. Available in both print and digital subscriptions.

Nine-month subscription: Member \$20 • Non-Member \$25
(Single copies also available)

Newly Elected Officials Handbook: Updated annually. Instructional materials for elected and re-elected municipal officials. 40/40A of New Jersey Statutes Annotated.

Member \$20 • Non-Member \$30

Open Public Meetings: OPMA; Guide to the Sunshine Law.

\$12 for All

Open Public Records: OPRA; Short, quick guide provides introduction to the Right to Know Law.

Member \$12 • Non-Member \$14

Overview of NJ Personnel Policies with MEL-JIF (2015)

Member \$12 • Non-Member \$14

Police/Fire Data Service: Annual Subscription. Tracks trends in police and fire contract settlements and arbitration.

Electronic only:

Full: Members 305 • Non-Members \$500

Police: Members \$265 • Non-Members \$400

Fire: Members \$240 • Non-members \$340

Arbitration: (Quarterly Newsletters Emailed)
Members \$50 • Non-Member \$100

Protecting Your Towns Environment: Provides overview of key environmental issues confronting New Jersey municipalities.

Member \$12 • Non-Member \$14

Salary Survey: Salary information for 40 municipal positions. Updated bi-annually (2015).

Electronic only: Member \$90 • Non-Member \$180



2016 Legislative Priorities



L league President and West Caldwell Mayor Joseph Tempesta has identified a number of key legislative priorities for 2016, and asks for your assistance in advancing these priorities. The issues may sound familiar as some very significant public policy issues that impact our municipalities and our taxpayers remain unad-

ressed. But your assistance and advocacy can help the League advance the ball on these key issues.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING The League continues to advocate for the reauthorization of the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF.) There must be adequate and reliable funding to meet the vital State and local needs for the next 10 years. The League will also champion increased Local Aid funding to ensure adequate and reliable funding to meet all local transportation infrastructure needs and we support the increase the municipal share of Local Aid funding to ensure fair funding for all municipalities.

LOCAL HEALTH AND PENSION BENEFIT FUNDING Like TTF, this is again a priority for the League. Working with partners such as the School Boards Association, the Association of Counties and a number of our affiliates groups, the League has successfully made the case for the preservation of the local health and pension benefit funding.

Going forward, the League will continue its strong advocacy that the New Jersey Pension and Health Benefit Study Commission recognize that the local pension systems are healthy, and that municipalities and counties have met their obligations as employers. Further, the League remains committed to advocating for legislation, regulations, and policy directives that empower local governments to operate more effectively and efficiently and dedicated to advancing innovative programs

and initiatives that enhance the level of service provided and save valuable taxpayer dollars.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING Despite the State Supreme Court's invitation for a legislative solution to the current affordable housing policy debate, over 300 municipalities remain mired in a costly, time consuming judicial process because of the failure of the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to adopt third round regulations. Such events demonstrate and underscore the need for significant reforms to the Fair Housing Act (FHA). The League, therefore, will urge the Governor and the State Legislature to partner with municipalities and enact legislation to implement a reasonable and rational state affordable housing policy which promotes rational planning, seeks to achieve results with available housing funding and incentives, encourages partnerships, and protects the interests of taxpayers.

RESTORATION OF PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FUNDING Energy providers benefit from the use of the municipal rights of way and rely on local services. To compensate municipalities and taxpayers for those benefits, energy taxes (ETR) are collected, to be returned to local budgets for property tax relief. However, it has become common practice for the State to fail to meet these statutory requirements and the revenue is used for State purposes. The League will continue to call for an end to this practice and support legislation to fully restore \$331 million in municipal property tax relief funding.

ENHANCE PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS In these austere times and operating under a hard 2% cap, local governments must utilize every tool and every possible asset for the benefit of our taxpayers. It can be significant under-utilized assets, such as abandoned suburban offices spaces (i.e., stranded assets) or it can be simple partnership amongst local governments, be it between municipalities, counties, school boards or Authorities, or even working with local businesses to improve recreational facilities such as pools, recreational fields and equipment.

These types of partnerships have been ongoing for decades, but over the course of the next year the League will re-examine what legislative or regulatory changes should be made to enhance such partnerships for the benefit of our taxpayers. ♣



Highland Park Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler speaks at the League Resolutions committee meeting on November 19 in Atlantic City.

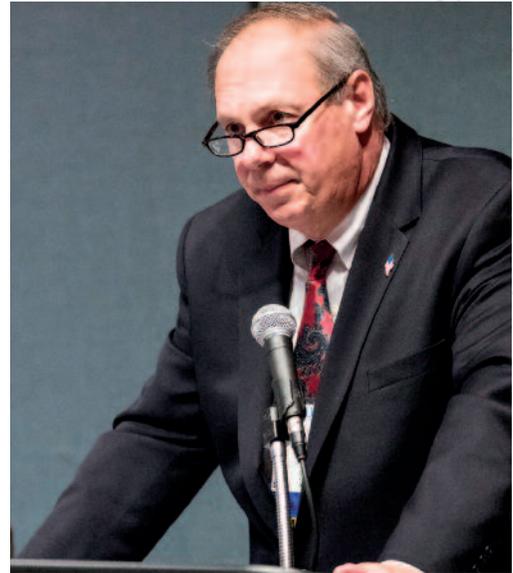
League Committee Approves 16 Resolutions

On Thursday, November 19, 16 resolutions articulating new legislative and policy priorities for the League of Municipalities were adopted at the Annual Business Meeting held to conclude the League's 100th Annual Conference.

On Tuesday, November 17, the League Resolutions Committee screened the resolutions and made its recommendations. The Committee chaired by newly elected League President Joe Tempesta, Mayor of West Caldwell, screened and recommended all 16 resolutions.

Below is a summary of the resolutions. The full text of each is available on the League's website, njslom.org.

League staff will be working with the sponsors of the resolutions to line up legislative sponsors and take other steps to advocate for their implementation.



Then 1st Vice President Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Mayor of West Caldwell, serves as committee chairman at the League Resolutions Committee meeting.

Approved 2015 Resolutions:

- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-01**
Resolution of Support for the Gateway Project
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-02**
Regarding Efforts to Develop Municipal Microgrids
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-03**
Urging Local Official to Provide Leadership in Ending Human Trafficking
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-04**
Resolution Supporting Extension of Employee Health Benefits Contribution Required by P.L. 2011, c. 78
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-05**
Calling for Affordable Housing Reform
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-06**
Resolution Urging Transportation Trust Fund Reauthorization and Increased Funding for Local Transportation
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-07**
Calling for the Restoration of Energy Receipts Funding to Municipalities
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-08**
Regarding the Provision of Reliable Telephone, Wireless and Wired Broadband Service to All Residents in All New Jersey Municipalities

- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-09**
Resolution Urging Governor and Legislature to Provide Timely State Property Tax Relief Funding Calculations to Municipalities
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-10**
Advocating for a 21st Century Water Infrastructure
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-11**
Resolution Urging Governor and Legislature to Recognize and Preserve Strength of Local Pension Funding When Considering the Recommendations of the Pension and Health Benefit Study Commission
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-12**
Calling for Legislation to Mandate the Relocation of Utility Facilities When a Street or Highway is Altered
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-13**
Regarding the Siting and Construction of Interstate Oil Pipelines in the State of New Jersey
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-14**
Resolution Supporting Equity for Charter Schools and Public Schools Funding
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-15**
In Appreciation of Former League Executive Director Bill Dressel
- NJLM Resolution No. 2015-16**
In Appreciation of League President Brian Wahler of Piscataway Township

Annual Mayors' Hall of Fame



League President Mayor Joe Tempesta and Gold Level Mayors Hall of Fame recipient Executive Board Member Mayor Gary Passanante of Somerdale.

At the 100th Annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City, then League president Mayor Brian Wahler and officials from throughout New Jersey honored the most recent inductees to the Mayors' Hall of Fame.

The League established the Mayors' Hall of Fame to recognize mayors who have served for over 10, 20 or 30 years. "Serving as mayor for decades is a commitment of time and energy over the long haul. These mayors have obviously made a long-term commitment as leaders to better their communities. They have had a chance to see their communities grow and change over the years and to work to make a difference" said League Executive Director Michael J. Darcy. "They deserve to be recognized."

The members of the 21st induction class of the Mayors' Hall of Fame were honored during a special ceremony during the Mayors Box Luncheon on November 18 in Atlantic City.

List of Inductees:

Silver Level (tenures 10 to 19 years)

Honorable Cyril Wekilsky	Boonton Town
Honorable Frank W. Minor	Logan Township
Honorable Victor DeLuca	Maplewood Township
Honorable Susan S. Howard	Monmouth Beach Borough
Honorable John A. Washington	Penns Grove Borough
Honorable William Budesheim	Riverdale Borough
Honorable Andrew K. Skibitsky	Westfield Town

Gold Level (tenures up to 20 years):

Honorable Jack Cimprich	Upper Pittsgrove Township
Honorable Gary Passanante	Somerdale

In addition, during the December 2, 2015, League Executive Board meeting, League President Mayor Joe Tempesta presented Executive Board Member Mayor Gary Passanante of Somerdale with the Gold Level Mayors Hall of Fame lapel pin. In 2015, Mayor Passanante completed his 20th year as Mayor.

@ For more about the Mayors Hall of Fame visit njslom.org/letters/2014-0520-Hall-of-Fame.html



The Silver-level inductees of the Mayors' Hall of Fame (10-19 years). Top row, l to r: Logan Township Mayor Frank W. Minor, then League President Mayor Brian Wahler, Piscataway; Maplewood Township Mayor Victor DeLuca. Sitting, l to r: Penns Grove Borough Mayor John A. Washington, Monmouth Beach Borough Mayor Susan S. Howard, and Town of Westfield Mayor Andrew K. Skibitsky.

Meet Your New Board Members

Four Mayors Join NJLM Board

Congratulations to the League's new Board members: Sean Elwell, Mayor of Elsinboro; Raymond Heck, Mayor of Millstone; Edward Mahaney, Mayor of Cape May City, Sylvia Petillo, Mayor of Hopatcong.

Sean Elwell is the Mayor of Elsinboro Township in Salem County. He is in his ninth year serving as an elected official. Four of these years he served as Deputy Mayor, and the last five years as Mayor. In addition, Sean has served as President of the Salem County Association of Local Government and on the New Jersey Conference of Mayors Board of Directors. He is also active in the community and sits on various boards and committees.



Professionally, Mayor Elwell is the emergency department manager at the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware.

Elwell has volunteered with the Elsinboro Fire Company for the past 16 years. He has served in various leadership roles including EMS/Rescue Captain and Vice President and is currently an active EMT and firefighter, serving as Deputy Chief of the company.

Raymond Heck is currently in his ninth year as Mayor of Millstone Borough. Mayor Heck holds several certifications and licenses including Registered Municipal Clerk, Certified Municipal Registrar, Fire Official, Fire Instructor, Emergency Medical Technician and Certified Public Manager. Mayor Heck is currently the President of the New Jersey Conference of Mayors and the immediate Past President of the Somerset County Governing Officials Association.



He's currently employed in the field of law enforcement, where he has served for over 20 years in assignments such as SWAT, COBRA unit and Academy Instructor.

Mayor Heck brings a unique blend of both public safety and organizational management to local government. When

requested, he continues to aid and assist his fellow elected officials throughout the state.

Dr. Edward J. Mahaney, Jr. Mayor for the past seven years, Dr. Mahaney has been a member of Cape May's governing body for 15 years and City Planning Board for 20 years. He is committed to intertwining the City's long-range planning agenda with its long-term financial and capital programs to create a comprehensive sustainability and resiliency approach for the town.



A doctor of education, Dr. Mahaney has served as a professional educator in the public and private school systems, at the collegiate level, and also at the State Department of Education level during his 45-year career.

With a total budget of \$27 million, Cape May has obtained \$10.2 million in competitive grants and rebates during the last four years to fund initiatives involving public improvement, environmental, and energy conservation projects.

Sylvia Petillo was the first female Mayor of the Borough of Hopatcong, elected in 2007, and is in her third consecutive term. Petillo started her municipal service in 2004 on the Borough Council. Sylvia was elected to the Hopatcong Board of Education in 1995 and re-elected, serving four years as President and two years as Vice-President. Mayor Petillo is a member of the Leadership Council for Project Self Sufficiency in Sussex County and the



Sussex County League of Municipalities. She is also Vice-President of Petillo Enterprise, a Site-Development Company that she owns with her husband, Ron, in Kenvil.

During Operation Desert Storm, in 1991, Petillo was inspired to compose a song entitled "Where Is That Love." Through the help of General Norman Schwarzkopf's office her song was distributed by the military to all the families of the fallen soldiers and our POW's. On the 20th Anniversary of Desert Storm, Sylvia was invited to take part in a Military Anniversary Ceremony in memory of those who fell and those who survived. ♪



GOLD DOME

Shifting Political Landscape May Shape Economic Policy

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

Following the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, the United States entered a long period of general political conservatism, highlighted by favoritism towards corporate success and antipathy towards central government. Even Democrats like Bill Clinton declared that “the era of big government was over.”

Thirty-five years later, things are changing and we may well be on the verge of a new progressive era. The continued political strength of the presidential campaign of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders is Exhibit A. But consider what else is happening. Issues that hardly existed a few years ago in the public consciousness are now front and center: fast food workers organizing for a \$15/hour wage; rural moms protesting fracking; college administrators facing new challenges in their handling of a diverse campus population. These seem to all be part of a resurgence in a progressivism (nee liberalism) nationally.

Two years from now, in November 2017, New Jersey will elect its next governor. The maneuvering among ambitious candidates has already started, with the creation of super-pacs and generous donations to county organizations. Local party leaders are often on the receiving end of anyone seeking to curry favor in the hope of winning endorsements and especially the coveted “party line”—the preferred ballot placement in a primary. (Winning the line in key counties is one of the surest ways to capture your party’s nomination. Except for Morris, every county awards a party line and each has its own rules. This gives huge power to those who influence the final decision.)

There are two reasons for the early aggressive positioning among candidates. First, Governor Chris Christie’s absence as he pursues the Republican presidential nomination has left a power vacuum being filled up by candidates. Second, according to many Trenton observers, the next governor will very likely be a Democrat. New Jersey’s changing demographics, coupled with “Christie fatigue,” make it very hard for any Republican to duplicate Christie’s winning formula.

The New Jersey governorship is—constitutionally—the most powerful governorship in the country. With so much at stake, the looming end of the Christie reign has sparked a “battle royale” among five Democrats so far: Senate President Steve Sweeney, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop, former ambassador Phil Murphy, state Senator Ray Lesniak, and Assemblyman John Wisniewski.

The shifting national landscape is likely to have an impact on a new administration in Trenton. Specifically, a new progressive era may well spark reconsideration of economic redevelopment strategies.

Perhaps most likely to come under increased scrutiny is the Economic Development Authority (EDA), the state’s primary distributor of incentives and tax breaks to entice companies to move to New Jersey or to keep them from leaving. In effect, the EDA operates as New Jersey’s development bank. Recipients of the breaks are required to stay in the state for a certain number of years and are held accountable for a certain number of jobs.

“A new progressive era may well spark reconsideration of economic redevelopment strategies.”

Over the years, support for the EDA has largely been a bipartisan affair. But groups such as New Jersey Policy Perspective, led by former state Senator Gordon MacInnes, have been questioning the benefit of paying hundreds of thousands of dollars in future tax revenue for each new or retained job—a particular EDA program that has ramped up dramatically in recent years.

No one imagines that the EDA will be eliminated. Tax incentives will remain a critical part of the package state officials can offer companies.

But when New Jersey faces its own budget shortfalls and a variety of competing spending needs, the changing political environment is almost certainly going to provide the EDA’s critics a more hospitable landscape.

A shift away from the tax abatement program may well bring more EDA attention to technology transfer programs that help bring new ideas from labs and universities to market. Senators Robert Singer (R) and Paul Sarlo (D) already have legislation to do exactly that. Further, as small businesses generate a majority of new jobs, they might see an increase in EDA focus and largess.

In the aftermath of the Great Recession, the average American recognizes that there is a “new normal” for the economy. With the likelihood of a “new normal” for politics, government economic policy will probably have to shift as well. ♣

The Recording of Public Meetings by Members of the Public

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

Smartphones are everywhere. Aside from being used as phones, they make nifty mp3 players, handheld computers, cameras, and video recorders. As recent experience teaches us, that last bit is important. Indeed, the recording of police officers has been the touchstone of much debate over the last few years. But, what about recording other public officials? Most often, this issue comes up in the context of individuals video recording public meetings. This issue comes up more often than you would think.

Our State Supreme Court, in 2007, ruled in *Tarus v. Pine Hill*, that citizens had a right to videotape meetings under the New Jersey common law. In that case the town prohibited a local citizen from videotaping the meeting of the local governing body because the mayor feared that recording the meeting might, “intimidate residents in the audience.”

The Court stated that, “...we are not persuaded by fears that the use of video cameras in non-judicial settings will generate intimidation and harassment. We agree with *Belcher*...where the court reasoned that “[i]f an individual is willing to stand up and talk in the sometimes volatile setting of a thronged public meeting, at which members of the press are customarily present, that person has little to fear (and much to gain) from the presence of a tape recorder...Trepidation over the effect of video cameras in public meetings is overstated. The prevalence of video cameras in society and the open nature of public meetings militate against such hyperbolic concerns. Although some citizens may be fearful of video cameras, we find that consideration insufficient to deny the right to videotape.”

The right is, however, subject to restrictions.

In the same decision, the Court held that municipalities could impose reasonable restrictions on the common law right to record meetings. The Court went on to state that:

[C]itizens are not permitted to disrupt meetings with their recording equipment. Accordingly, public bodies may impose reasonable guidelines to ensure that the recording of meetings does not disrupt the business of the body or other citizens’ right

of access...In *Maurice River II*, supra, the Appellate Division held that a public body could implement “guidelines designed to regulate and control reasonably the videotaping of its public proceedings.” 193 N.J.Super. at 494. In all circumstances, such guidelines must be neutrally adopted and administered, and limited in scope to the stated purpose of preventing disruption... [These] guidelines can “include the number and type of cameras permitted, the positioning of the cameras, the activity and location of the operator, lighting and other items necessary to maintain order and to prevent unnecessary intrusion into the proceedings.” *Maurice River II*, supra, 193 N.J.Super. at 493.

Reasonable restrictions may also include those designed to preserve the orderly conduct of a meeting by controlling noise levels [and] spatial requirements...[,] to safeguard public facilities against damage to the meeting hall’s electrical system, or to require fair payment by the wielder of the device for electricity used. *Tarus* cit. 515-517.

Thus, this case allows a town to establish general guidelines for taping. Since 2007, there have been no judicial decisions which better define “reasonable restrictions” on taping. A quick review of municipal codes reveals that the focus of many towns is to prohibit any interference with the public’s participation at public meetings. Some require that the equipment be set up before the meeting and only in designated areas. Others impose noise limitation. Based on the current case law, what the width and breadth of “reasonable restrictions” are is unclear to me. The safest bet would be to continue to focus on prohibiting any action that could reasonably disturb the ability of the public to hear, see, or speak at a public meeting. But, outright prohibition appears to be unlawful.

It should be noted that many town guidelines and the *Tarus* case itself anticipate the use of larger video recording devices, not smartphones. As we know, these devices are small, handheld, and compact. Therefore, smartphones may very rarely cause the type of disturbances that *Tarus* allows towns to prohibit. Only time will tell if the “selfie stick” will become an issue for local government. ❧

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