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“Being both visible and accessible to the public shows that leaders in local government are active partners in growing and protecting the communities they serve.”

Raymond S. Heck
President, NJLM
Mayor, Millstone Borough

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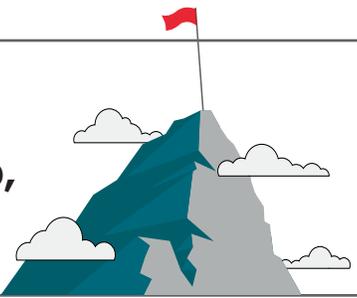
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Focus:

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Take One, Share One, Send One

Coming back from an event like the League Conference can result in amazing things, from the way your municipality operates every day to the plans that are created and recreated for the future. We are proud to be a part of that learning experience and look forward to seeing you again next November 14-16 in Atlantic City.

issues here and on the horizon that are very important to your community in the form of an article or an op-ed to share with your peers. The magazine creates an opportunity to network with local officials around the state.

This month we spotlight the League's new President, Mayor Ray Heck from Millstone Borough (Somerset). He shares his thoughts on holding office, the importance of local governments, and how "You're in this to serve and help advance your communities. Leaving office in a better position than when you took office is your true legacy." (See full article, p. 6.)

The hope expressed in President Heck's insights align with that of Gov. Phil Murphy, who noted at the Conference's League Luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 18, "We're in politics, regardless of party, because we are optimistic about the future of our communities and our state. Given all that's swirling around us I know it sometimes might be hard to always express that optimism, but it's there. It's palpable." (See article, p. 20.)

We look forward to a great 2023 in which we work together for a better New Jersey. Happy New Year! 🍀

Michael Cerra



We have a whole year together to learn and grow. Starting with the magazine. We hope you take something away from every issue that helps you to help your community.



But your learning partnership with the League doesn't end there. We have a whole year together to learn and grow. Starting with the magazine. We hope you take something away from every issue that helps you to help your community.

Starting the year with a goal to take an article and share it with others and to write an article and send it to us will help your own and others' development. Please share the magazine with others in your offices and support your fellow local government officials and the League by passing the magazine link, www.njlm.org/magazine, on to those who can potentially benefit from advertising and reading.

Consider sitting down at the keyboard and sharing your thoughts on the big

PS: Please remember to start your year on the right foot by attending our Newly Elected/Reelected events on January 21 in Mt. Laurel or February 11 in Rutherford, and the Municipal Budgeting seminar on March 11. Visit www.njlm.org/seminars for more information.

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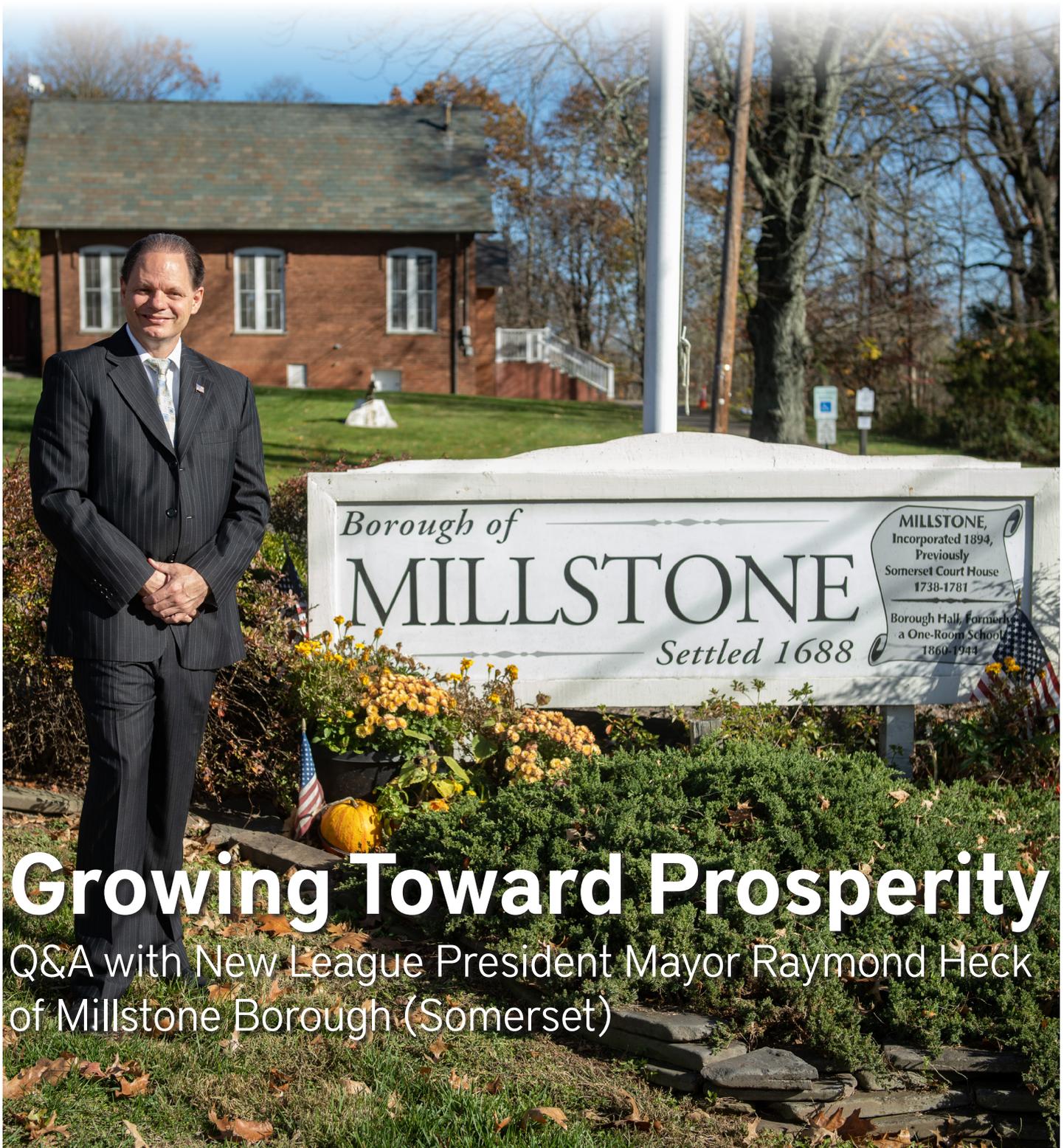
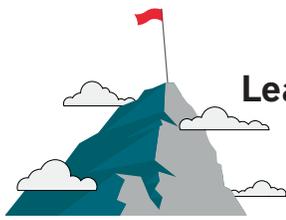
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Growing Toward Prosperity

Q&A with New League President Mayor Raymond Heck of Millstone Borough (Somerset)

“Being both visible and accessible to the public shows that leaders in local government are active partners in growing and protecting the communities they serve.”

Q What led you to get involved in local government?

A From an early age, I was exposed to the arena of local government. Both my parents worked for the township I grew up in and were active in the community. Seeing firsthand the peaks and pitfalls of managing daily operations, I noticed the integrity of the workers achieving positive results. I was looking for purpose and to be a part of something that could help the community grow and prosper.

Q What are the greatest strengths of local government in New Jersey?

A The greatest strengths in our local governments are the abilities to understand and connect with our neighborhoods. Being both visible and accessible to the public shows that leaders in local government are active partners in growing and protecting the communities they serve. Local governments are the backbone of this state and represent unique qualities that make New Jersey so great.

Q What do citizens expect from their municipal officials, and how has that changed over the years?

A Citizens expect their elected officials to be active listeners and transparent. Over the years though, governing has become more complex, and actions taken have become more time sensitive while as elected officials we continuously take on greater and increased responsibilities. However, we sometimes need to take a step back and talk with (and not at) our residences.

Q What are your goals as League President?

A Protecting our communities through training, education, and grant guidance are the right tools in shielding municipalities from harm. Let's face it; the world that most of us grew up in has changed dramatically. Terrorism, lone wolf actors, criminal street gangs, active shooters and cyber attacks are just some of the real dangers we live with in today's society. Fortunately, New Jersey's first responders are some of the best trained in the nation to address these situations.

However, as elected officials, we hold enormous responsibilities assisting in areas like preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Just like with natural weather events such as hurricanes, floods, and winter storms, our communities look to us to ensure the safety of the residents. My goal would be to give ample opportunity to members of our governing bodies to participate in the ICS 402 course (ICS for elected officials and senior staff) this year. This

course will provide our officials with the knowledge they need to be engaged with these types of events.

Another goal I have this year is to continue the fight to reduce the opioid crisis in New Jersey. Synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, have taken a strong hold in our society. This type of drug addiction has no boundaries and every story I heard about the road to addiction has been different. While we have tools such as emergency intervention with Naloxone, it is a short-term fix but not a long-term solution.

More important, listen to what the public is saying. They are your best source of intelligence on what's happening daily in your community. Respect the views and opinions of your fellow governing body members.

We need to get to the root cause of this type of addiction and address it head on. Not only does the victim suffer, but so does the entire family. I have the privilege to chair the League's Opioid Reduction Committee with some of the brightest people from very several disciplines. We have made some meaningful progress and together, with our legislators, new heights can be achieved.

Q What advice would you give to someone just elected to local office for the first time?

A Enjoy every moment that you hold such an honor. When first elected, it's a feeling of great accomplishment. However, the real journey is just about to begin. Some things you need to learn off the bat are being humble and having a sense of empathy and thick skin, too.

If you have 10 residents with 10 issues, then you have to address one distinct issue at 10 different times.

Take a moment to understand their needs, reach out often to the community and tell them what your administration is doing. More important, listen to what the public is saying. They are your best source of intelligence on what's happening daily in your community.

Respect the views and opinions of your fellow governing body members. Campaigns are before elections and the day after, you're one team. I for one, have a council that is mostly represented by another party. I always think about how blessed I am to serve with such a great and dedicated

Growing Toward Prosperity

team. Each one has taken an oath of office and are totally devoted to the people they serve.

Debate with dignity, listen with an open mind, and acknowledge your peers for time and hard work they do. Trust me; you're not going to be a millionaire by serving in public office. You're in this to serve and help advance your communities. Leaving office in a better position than when you took office is your true legacy.

Q How would you describe your leadership style?

A I tend to be seen as a McGregor theory "Y" leader. Way too often the micromanagement style only puts more work on you. This leads to potential stressors and fatigue, which ultimately leads to slower production and failures. Allowing your staff the management of responsibilities, empowering them to make decisions, and partnering with them in a collaborative relationship yields higher productivity.

Remember that your staff is the most important resource you have. Respect them, assist them, and support them. They are the heartbeat of the town and a reflection of you.

Q What motivates you as a leader?

A One word motivates me as a leader: results. When I walk by the park and see the children laughing and playing on new, safer equipment we installed. When I drive down Main Street in the evening and I see an older couple walking hand in hand without fear of the criminal element lurking in the darkness. These are the results of hard work that our government puts in to make the town safe and enjoyable for all. Safe sidewalks and roadways, low crime rates, beautiful parks, and great schools are what the taxpayer's desire and is what we as public officials strive to accomplish. However, results



in my eyes are always temporary and we use them as motivator to take on and accomplish new tasks.

Q What challenges do you see for municipalities in their ongoing recovery from the pandemic?

A The COVID-19 pandemic hit all towns in New Jersey differently. It had many components such as public safety, public health, economics, socialization, and education. Being in the public safety field for over 30 years, I can say without reservation, that New Jersey communities are now stronger.

In the early stages of the pandemic,

many could not get a grasp on how to address this. We tried many avenues, both preventative and intervention, which yielded some results. However, as we learned more about this virus and finding the balance between infection response and preventative measure, we started to become more resilient. Even today, COVID-19 is still here but we have managed in society

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November 9, 2022

Dear NJ Municipal Official,

JPM proudly announces **our new CEO: Tom Czerniecki, PP, AICP, MPA**, of Evesham, NJ. Tom will also become the new owner and operator of JPM effective January 1, 2023.

Dan Mason, Founder and former JPM President said "Tom is the very best person to be the new CEO, based on his **25+ years of NJ Municipal Management experience**, with his reputation of the **highest integrity**, plus many credentials," including:

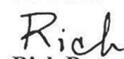
1. **Township Manager or Borough Administrator in 4 NJ Towns** (Bernardsville, Evesham, Howell, and Eastampton) and the assistant in 2 Towns (Montville and Randolph).
2. **Licensed NJ Professional Planner (PP)**, and holds a Master's in Public Administration (MPA) Kean University. Tom specializes in Downtown Redevelopment and Park Planning.
3. **Former Senior Vice President for Administration and Operations at Rowan College** at Burlington County, responsible for Human Resources, Budget - Finance, Facilities, and IT.
4. **Worked with and for JPM for the last 7 years** as part-time Senior Manager and Management Consultant, specializing in DPW services.
5. **Certified by the American Society for Quality as a Manager of Quality (CMQ - OE).**

Tom said, "**Professional Management in Local Government** is my life-long passion; I am excited for this opportunity to build on JPM's excellent reputation and tradition for being a trusted partner assisting NJ Municipalities **develop better services**, management, leadership, and efficient organizations."

"**Tom has been a real pleasure to work** with these last few years", Rich Deaney said, "and I am looking forward to working even more closely with him."

Joe Verruni added, "Tom's personality and **vast knowledge of NJ laws, rules, and regulations**, along with his superior computer skills and verbal communication, will serve him well as CEO."


Tom Czerniecki, PP, AICP
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to move on. We have learned so much about how to respond to pandemics that I feel that we are better prepared for the future of COVID-19 and whatever pandemic will follow. This is why I can't stress enough to communicate with your emergency management teams and understand the all hazard approach to emergencies. As public



President Heck's Acceptance Remarks

The following are highlights from Millstone Borough Mayor Ray Heck's presidential acceptance speech at the League Business Meeting held during the Annual Conference in Atlantic City on November 18.

Many mayors are accountants, lawyers, planners, we come from different backgrounds. I'm one of the unique birds out there, my background is in law enforcement, I'm still a cop and I've been doing it for 28 years. I have a very tactical type of job that I do, I work in special operations. And I also have the privilege of being a union official dealing with not only 5,500 of my officers but about 29,000 members of the PBA, as well as sitting on the pension board. The important thing it has taught me is what leadership is really about.

As I came here to the League, I started from the ground up, I watched everybody. I've learned from everybody; I've seen what works and what doesn't. So I'm not a person who really looks to 364 days from now, what do I accomplish? I focus on the moment, I look at the past, what we could do better. I look at the future, and a take a hard focus on it.

I want to make sure that we give all the support to the opioid settlement. To support and make sure they start on all 564 municipalities, 21 counties, the political subdivisions, the bureaucracies who can deal with this, that we give them the support that they need.

Homeland security is all of our issue. As elected leaders, the community looks to us for guidance, to our staff, and to our stakeholders. There are over 9 million people in this state, and we have a considerable amount of visitors who come here every single day. When something's wrong, they don't call the director of public safety, they don't call the director of public works, they call you. We have to be schooled better and be more knowledgeable in this field.

We also need to focus on the healthcare debacle [2023 State Health Benefits Program increases] we're dealing with and property tax relief. We've been talking about that during all these conferences, and I'm one of those individuals who wants to make sure that I don't forget what the previous presidents have done.

I look forward to working with all of you this year.

officials, we are tasked to be the face of the community and knowing and being active in this area will greatly assist you and your residents.

Q How can local governments better build resilience in their operations and community?

A Resilience, in general terms, just means to bounce back stronger and better. With names like Floyd, Sandy, Irene, and Ida in our history, we understand that to build greater resilience, we need to partner geographically. Storms have no boundaries, so we need to explore more multi-jurisdictional agreements in land use and planning or retrofitting or building diversion structures.

Education is another key area to addressing the future. Understanding why something happened and what brought us to this is a good starting



point. Resilience in infrastructure, such as public utilities, can be in form of needs assessments, risk benefits, and cost benefit analyses. Sound principals of resiliency would be repair, analyze, and develop concept, search funding options, and

plan for the future.

Resilience builds strength, aids in quicker recovery, and incorporates flexibility to adapt to best practices. These concepts can be employed through many areas of government with promising results. 📌

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Everything you Need to Know to Create, Balance, and Approve Your Municipalities' Budget

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Creating and approving a feasible budget is one of the most important tasks of an Elected Official. It is also one of the most complex and time consuming tasks. To aide in this endeavor, the League has created a special half day program geared towards Elected Officials to help them in understanding the Municipal Budgeting Process.

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This program is a requirement of the Local Government Leadership Program. For more information visit www.njlm.org/IgIp



League General Counsel Kearns Receives Stutz Award

New Jersey State League of Municipalities General Counsel William Kearns was recognized for his career of service to municipal governments with the presentation of the John G. Stutz award at the League's Conference held in Atlantic City in November.

He is General Counsel for the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, a Senior Trustee of the New Jersey Institute of Municipal Attorneys, and a Past President of the International Municipal Lawyers Association. He is a former Chair of the Local Government Law and the Women's Rights Sections of the New Jersey State Bar Association.

Currently Of Counsel at Helmer, Conley & Kasselmann, P.A., Kearns previously was a founding partner of the Kearns, Reale & Kearns law firm in Willingboro. He focuses his practice on local government, municipal land use, and business clients.

Kearns is a Past President of the Burlington County Bar Association. He is a Past President and Director Emeritus for Life of the Burlington County Chamber of Commerce. During his career, he has served as the Municipal Attorney for Beverly City, Bordentown Township, Delanco Township, Edgewater Park Township, Florence Township, and Willingboro Township. He has served as counsel to various other public bodies.

He has held public office as a member of the Willingboro Township Council and as Mayor of Willingboro. In August, 2009 he was appointed as a member of the NJ Governor's Task Force on Local Government Ethics. He served as Attorney for the Transition Task Force preparing for the consolidation of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township into a single municipality.

Kearns has earned the Diplomate in Local Government Law designation from the New Jersey Institute of Local Government Attorneys and was one of the original attorneys to earn the designation as a Fellow in Local Government Law from the International Municipal Lawyers Association. He has received the Michael A. Pane Award for high ethical standards enhancing the integrity of local government. He has received both the Fred Stickel Award and the Gordon Griffin Award for excellence in local government law from the New Jersey Institute of

Local Government Attorneys. He regularly lectures in New Jersey and nationally on local government ethics, public meetings, public records, email and social media, and land use issues.

Kearns earned his undergraduate degree from Saint Peter's University and earned his law degree from the Rutgers University School of Law – Newark. ↗



(L to R): Then-NJLM President Mayor William Pikolycky presents the Stutz Award to NJLM General Counsel William Kearns, with NJLM Executive Director Mike Cerra.



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