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The Brielle Borough elevated storage tank is one of many water-related infrastructure projects around the state. Communities can get technical assistance on projects through the Water Bank, article page 6.

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“While you face worries about public safety, health, taxes, affordable housing, infrastructure, and so many other topics, your plans for 2024 are inspirational and hopeful.”

Building Back, Building Smarter, Building Better

It's no secret that infrastructure in New Jersey and the rest of the nation has been a challenge to maintain and upgrade. And that means dollars out of residents' pockets and local government budgets. Optimistically quantifying that, the World Bank reported in 2022 that for every public dollar invested in infrastructure, there was a result of \$1.50 economic activity.

As we mark the fourth anniversary of the COVID shut down in 2020, we also can reflect on what that's meant to municipalities, particularly in terms of infrastructure recovery. One of the silver linings of the pandemic was the once-in-a-generation influx of funds to improve local governments' infrastructure that was intended to rebuild a stronger, more equitable economy through recovery. Municipalities large and small have used their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to improve water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, and improve public health with great results. This work will continue through 2026, giving recipients time to complete jobs financed by costs obligated no later than December 2024.

According to a report from the I-Bank (page 6) the NJ Department of Environmental Protection has dedicated a significant amount of BIL and ARPA funds to low-income communities and communities of color in the form of principal forgiveness and enhanced financing packages. With support Technical Assistance Programs from the

I-Bank are contributing to the success of investments in critical water infrastructure updates.

Some of this infrastructure work continues fights that started with Superstorm Sandy, or earlier. Little Egg Harbor has struggled with erosion and sought to restore its beaches to their 1977 shorelines, a pivotal undertaking to improve marine habitats, safeguard uplands, and mitigate wave attenuation (page 18). These projects paint a picture of resiliency and dedication to what makes New Jersey so very special.

Mayors around the state are very aware of what makes their communities unique. We've gathered samples from state of the city, state of the town, and new year's addresses from mayors throughout the state. While you face worries about public safety, health, taxes, affordable housing, infrastructure, and so many other topics, your plans for 2024 are inspirational and hopeful. We hope your peers and neighbors serve as inspiration for plans within your own community.

I would be remiss without sadly noting the passing of League Bond Counsel Ed McManimon. His obituary on page 12 provides more details, but Ed was a valued and trusted resource to the League, and to countless public entities statewide.

In paying my respects to the family, I was struck not just by how many friends and family were there, but that elected officials, DLGS Directors, and so many others came as well. He will be missed.

May he rest in peace. 🍀

Michael Cerra

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Technical Assistance Programs

Supporting communities with their capital infrastructure projects

Reporting by New Jersey Infrastructure Bank (I-Bank) Staff

plant facility

Significant planning and investment are required to sustain and improve New Jersey's aging infrastructure systems. That cost often exceeds the capabilities of local sewer utilities and municipalities. The New Jersey Water Bank Program (Water Bank), a financing program jointly administered by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank (I-Bank) to provide funds to help communities address water infrastructure needs, has an abundance of resources available to finance projects.

In addition to deploying and leveraging federal Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) annual grant monies, the Water Bank will receive almost \$1 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) over the next five years, the largest federal investment in clean water infrastructure in the history of the United States. The State Fiscal Year 2023 state budget also allocated \$300 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the DEP to make transformative investments in critical water infrastructure upgrades.

Disproportionate challenges

Historically, New Jersey’s low-income communities and communities of color have been subject to a disproportionately high number of environmental and public health stressors, including pollution from industrial, commercial, and governmental facilities located in or near those communities. As a result, those populations suffer from increased adverse health effects including asthma, cancer, elevated blood levels of lead, cardiovascular disease, and developmental disorders.

The DEP has dedicated a significant amount of BIL and ARPA funds to these communities in the form of principal forgiveness and enhanced financing packages. However, there can be a gap between the need and the ability to access these funds. The Water Bank aims to bridge that gap by offering robust technical assistance to these communities.

The Water Bank has expanded its technical assistance services for New Jersey communities most in need of support. Pursuant to New Jersey’s Environmental Justice Law, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-159 (2021) (EJ Law), DEP maintains a list identifying overburdened communities in the state in accordance with the criteria set forth in the EJ Law. The expanded technical assistance programs are designed to deploy early engineering and engagement assistance at no cost to the EJ Law communities as well as those that meet the Department’s Affordability Criteria as defined in Water

Bank program documents for the SRF program, and small and rural communities as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

The Water Bank’s Technical Assistance Program is part of DEP’s global NJ Technical Assistance Program (NJ TAP), which was launched in

2023 to help disadvantaged communities provide safe and reliable drinking water to residents. These programs complement and add to the USEPA’s Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerator Program, and the long-standing Engineering Corps program offered by the DEP to very small water systems.



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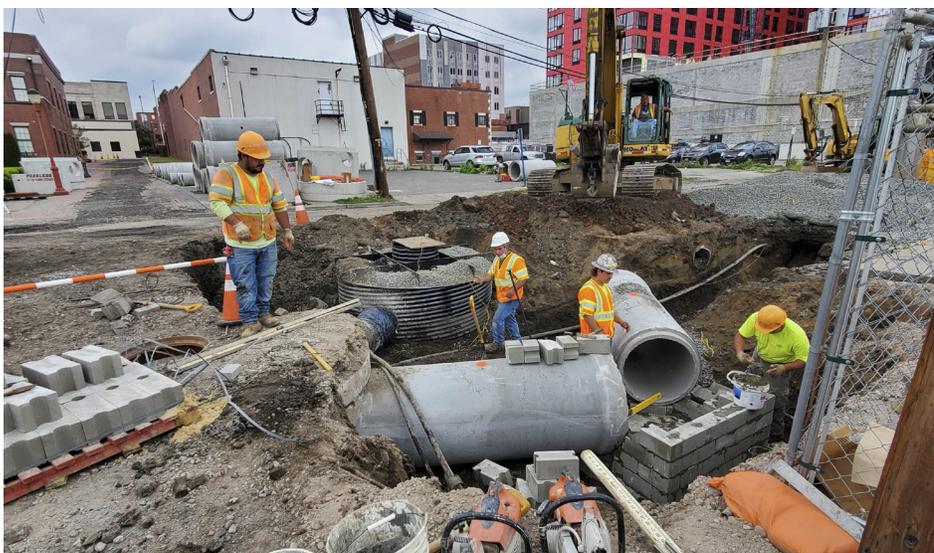
The Water Bank's Technical Assistance Program will help disadvantaged communities by suggesting best management practice (BMP) adjustments; identifying and refining their water infrastructure needs; facilitating communications with the public; educating the community and its local leaders on available funding packages, particularly principal forgiveness funds; and navigating the Water Bank application and permitting process.

In October 2021, the Water Bank established a qualified pool of engineers (Technical Engineering Assistance Consultants) to provide assessments of public water systems' fiscal condition, including the rate structure designs, and components, as well as an inventory of assets. Available assistance includes:

- Asset Management Plan development
- Technical, Managerial, and Financial Capacity Evaluation
- Capital Improvement Plan Development
- Lead Service Line Inventory Development
- Lead Service Line Replacement Law Compliance Assistance
- Lead Service Line Replacement Program Creation and Implementation
- Drinking Water Infrastructure Project Development
- Clean Water Infrastructure Project Development
- State Revolving Fund Loan Application Submittal Assistance
- Preliminary Technical Assistance (needs and fiscal assessments and public outreach)
- Early education and public engagement services

In 2023, the Water Bank also established a qualified pool of consultants (the Early Engagement Consultants) to provide comprehensive outreach services. The consultant may coordinate with the community and all relevant stakeholders to educate ratepayers and

the public, supporting participation to ensure community benefits are included in the final plan, including any capital projects selected for implementation through the Water Bank. Public meetings and online seminar sessions will be organized,



Hackensack sewer separation project.



and feedback will be solicited.

The Early Engagement Consultant may also help the community prioritize its water infrastructure improvement projects and assist with the selection of the most promising water infrastructure improvement projects. The consultant may consider criteria including but not limited to a cost/benefit analysis, the impact of the project, environmental benefits, community benefits, and status of development (i.e., a project may already be designed and have all required permits and approvals such that only assistance with the application phase in H2LOans is needed).

First-time applicants to the Water Bank Program may need assistance with the application process, including initial application, pre-application and/or pre-construction meetings, and initial requisition submissions. Assistance with applying for Water Bank funding through the H2LOans application portal avoids unnecessary slowdowns to financing.

The selected Early Engagement Consultant may coordinate with the Technical Assistance Consultant to assist the community in procuring a professional design engineer who will develop biddable plans and specifications adhering to the requirements of the Water Bank Program. This assistance could include:

1. Developing a request for proposals for the required design services.
2. Reviewing design proposals received and offering recommendations to the community.



North Hudson Sewage Authority's CSO Abatement Solids and floatables screening.

3. Coordinating with the design consultant as needed to provide supplemental assistance and/or advise the public.

Assisting the community

In coordination with the Technical Assistance Consultant, the Early Engagement Consultant may also

assist the community in procuring any permits and approvals needed for the project. The two consultants may collaborate with the design engineer on environmental planning and technical reports required by the DEP for Water Bank financing. To fund this initiative, the DEP is contributing federal funds through BIL monies, and the I-Bank is providing ongoing financial support from funds derived from the I-Bank's Program Administrative fees. The I-Bank anticipates utilizing such monies to fund this specific Technical Assistance Program alongside the DEP into perpetuity so that no system should ever lack the opportunity to provide safe water services to its community. The Technical Assistance Request Form is currently available on the Water Infrastructure Investment Plan (WIIP) webpage by clicking on the Technical Assistance tab.

The I-Bank has established the foundation to create a similar program in the New Jersey Transportation Bank (Transportation Bank),

a financing program jointly administered by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT) and the I-Bank to provide funds to help communities address transportation infrastructure needs. It has increased the annual administrative fee by 2 basis points, which, in turn, is set aside to build the funds to support a technical assistance program for communities meeting the DOT's affordability criteria. Coordinating with the DOT, the I-Bank will solicit a pool of candidates from which to choose an engineer to collaborate with the community and assist in identifying the most promising transportation infrastructure improvement projects.

Similar to the Water Bank program described above, the selected consultant will identify disadvantaged communities and discern which could most benefit from infrastructure improvements and technical assistance, and then assist the community in completing its transportation infrastructure goals. 📍

Budgeting for the Elected Official:

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

Saturday, March 9, 2024

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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 aid in this endeavor, the League has created a special half-day program geared toward Elected Officials to help them in understanding the Municipal Budgeting Process.

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League sets 2024 Conference Theme and Logo

On the streets where we live and in the communities we build, local officials unite and plan to meet common goals. Creativity, civility, and innovation blend in the local laboratories where government officials strive to improve their resident's quality of life. The 2024 Annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference is a Main Street for gathered local government officials, providing opportunities to share newfound and useful knowledge while building face-to-face connections in classrooms and the aisles of the exhibit hall.

The 109th Annual Conference will be held November 19-21 at the Atlantic City Convention Center in Atlantic City, offering an environment where local government officials and professionals can build stronger bonds with state and federal officials, and gain valuable resources during the three-day gathering of sessions, networking, and service/product highlights. It will be a place to explore the latest developments in technology, the environment, and infrastructure while exploring budgeting, public safety, health, and the multitude of other issues that arise.

League President Mayor Bill Chegwidden of Wharton,

notes, "The League is made up of 564 laboratories, each town experimenting and trying new innovations and concepts to improve the quality of life for their residents." He adds, "The Annual League Conference is the focal point to showcase achievements and share solutions to difficulties that may arise throughout the year."

"In 2024, the League is focusing on local governments and what they need to collectively develop to advance their goals," said League Executive Director Michael Cerra. Cerra also noted, "Whether there's a traditional downtown, city, or rural community, municipal buildings serve as a Main Street and our community centers. The work that goes on there ensures positive outcomes. We look forward to meeting in Atlantic City this November to collaborate and educate local government officials around the state." The largest municipal gathering in the nation, the Annual League Conference provides extensive learning opportunities, meaningful face-to-face networking, and a comprehensive showcase of the latest product innovations to New Jersey's local government officials and professionals. 🇯🇵



NJ Knowledge Answers 1. Fourteen (14). One for each of the 12 Congressional Districts and 2 for each of the US Senate Seats. 2. Republican won 16 times and Democrat won 15 times. 3. Since 1911 there have been 96 officials removed. 61 Municipal Lawmakers, 33 Mayors, and 2 School Board Members. 4. Five (5) states have a lower population than Bergen County: South Dakota, North Dakota, Alaska, Vermont, and Wyoming. 5. Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, and Monmouth counties in East Jersey were established in 1683. Burlington and Salem counties were established in 1681 in West Jersey. 6. According to the National Weather Service, on Dec. 26-27, 1947, Long Branch recorded 29.7 inches of snow during a 24-hour period. 7. The greatest 24-hour rainfall was 14.81 inches in Tuckerton on August 19-20, 1939. 8. NJ Transit Rail Operations provides passenger service on 12 lines at a total of 166 stations. 9. The agency operates an active fleet of 2,221 buses. 10. Starting in 1921, Atlantic City hosted the event each year until 2004. It returned September 15, 2013 for the last time.

NJLM Activity



League President Chegwidzen joins colleagues from around the nation at the Old Executive Office in Washington for a briefing. Washington photos courtesy National League of Cities staff.



President Chegwidzen overlooks the capital.

Washington Fly-In

NJLM President Mayor William Chegwidzen and Deputy Executive Director and Director of Government Affairs Lori Buckelew joined the League's partner on the federal level, the National League of Cities (NLC), for a fly-in to the nation's capital.



Power List

Congratulations to League Executive Director Mike Cerra for his naming to the ROI Influencers Power List: 2024: Associations & Organizations.

He joins "54 key individuals" representing associations and organizations that are doing great work in the state of New Jersey.

Hellos and Goodbyes

The League's staff gathered in December to celebrate the end of another successful year and to say goodbye to retiring Legislative Assistant Shirley Cade, a longtime League employee. Joining the current team to say their farewells were former executive directors Bill Dressel and Michael J. Darcy.



Bill Dressel, Shirley Cade, current Executive Director Mike Cerra, and Mike Darcy.



President Chegwidzen with other local leaders at a briefing.



The fly-in participants in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Room.

CORRECTION

In the February 2024 issue's Meet Your New Legislators section, Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia is a Republican and was misidentified as a Democrat.

We regret the error.





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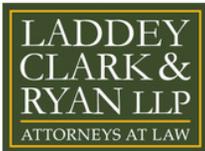
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