



Westchester County Board of Legislators

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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Fall 2008 Newsletter



William E. Burton

District 9 ~ Cortlandt, Croton-on-Hudson,
Ossining, Briarcliff Manor



News from
BILL BURTON,
your County Legislator...

ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITIES DEPARTMENT: *Consolidation on the County Level Makes Sense and Saves \$\$\$*

The County's Role in Managing Critical Infrastructure like Sewers, Reservoirs, Water Pipes, Incinerators and Recycling Facilities

They may not be glamorous to talk about but the county owns and maintains the complex web of infrastructure that supports the daily lives of our communities. Our Environmental Facilities Department is *a model for putting the county in charge of these services that cross town and village boundaries and would be impossibly expensive for individual municipalities to provide on their own.*

The County at Work on Ossining's Critical Infrastructure

Take sewers and waste-water management, for example. Westchester County recently issued bonds for \$1,700,000 for pump station rehabilitation for the Ossining Sanitary Sewer District. This was followed by an \$8,000,000 capital improvement effort to the Ossining Waste Water Treatment Plant to build an enclosure of the transfer area to contain odors. These unsavory sounding

steps will result in cleaner water flowing into the Hudson River and a noticeable improvement in the atmosphere along the waterfront, especially at the newly opened Water Spray Park adjacent to Engel Park, likewise made possible with aid from the County.

Environmental Facilities At-A-Glance

- 7 wastewater treatment plants
- 194 miles of sewers
- 4,000 manholes
- 42 pump stations
- Water Filtration Systems
- 4 water districts
- Kensico Dam
- Charles Point Trash Disposal
- Materials Recycling Facility

An aspect of the riverfront infrastructure that I told you about in my Newsletter last summer is the RiverWalk program to construct a walking and biking path along the entire length of Westchester's Hudson River waterfront. This year, the County has issued bonds for \$200,000

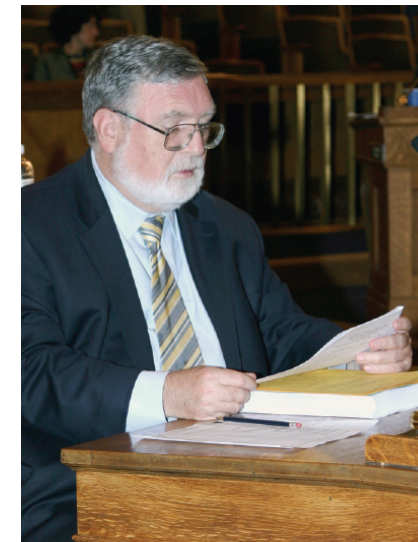
to finance the design and site feasibility studies for an extension of the RiverWalk through a stretch of the Ossining waterfront that includes the municipally-owned Crawbuckie Preserve and the private Mariandale property. In Croton, Westchester County has undertaken the construction of the half-mile long Beaverkill trailway at the northern end of Croton Landing Park, as another link in the chain of RiverWalk.

Our part of the County is the source of fresh drinking water for many people beyond our local area. Under the leadership of the Westchester County Department of Planning, the villages of Croton and Ossining, and the towns of Cortlandt, New Castle and Ossining have completed the comprehensive program for the Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Watershed. The area covers over 5.3 square miles; its waters sustain and feed important habitats along the Croton River and fragile estuarine ecosystems in the Hudson River. The plan calls for improved storm water management, protection of existing wildlife habitats, restoration of existing wetlands and groundwater drinking sources, promotion of sustainable development, and increased public education.

Dear Neighbor,

In these times of economic insecurity and tight family budgets, people have been asking me (and rightly so) what the County does with their tax money. Some have asked what the role of the Board of Legislators is and whether we might be better off without it – or even without County government altogether.

This year has been a period of cut-backs and belt-tightening in the County's budget, but we've still succeeded in enhancing public safety with the addition of more officers and emergency service employees; in increases to Westchester Community College; in continued investment in such quality-of-life initiatives as the Westchester Arts Council and the Westchester Library System; and in continued capital budget investment in open space/legacy programs and affordable housing initiatives. In the rest of this Newsletter, we'll examine the County's budget in some detail and then look at a few of the things that Westchester County has done since I joined the Board of Legislators in January of 2006 to improve the lives of people in the Ossining-Croton-Cortlandt area.



Please let me know of your concerns and suggestions by contacting me by email at Burton@WestchesterLegislators.com or by mail to Hon. William Burton, Westchester County Board of Legislators, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, New York 10601.

Best wishes to you and your family,

Bill Burton
Legislator, 9th District
Westchester County Board of Legislators



Did you know?

Westchester's legislature has the lowest per capita cost of the three comparable metro counties?

In 2008, our legislature's budget, including perks and office space, was \$4.7 million compared to \$9 million for Nassau County legislature and \$11 million for Suffolk.

What Does The County Do?

About two-thirds of the county's operating budget goes toward paying for services mandated by the state. The cost to deliver social services—**\$570 million**—accounts for almost all of those mandates. County government provides a regional, cost-effective solution for delivering services that local municipalities would have to otherwise provide and fund through property taxes. The bottom-line—county government offers efficiencies that save taxpayer dollars.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

- Communicable Disease
- Control
- Environmental Health
- Community Health
- Inspections: *restaurants, hotels, day camps; water, solid waste systems*

CONSUMER PROTECTION

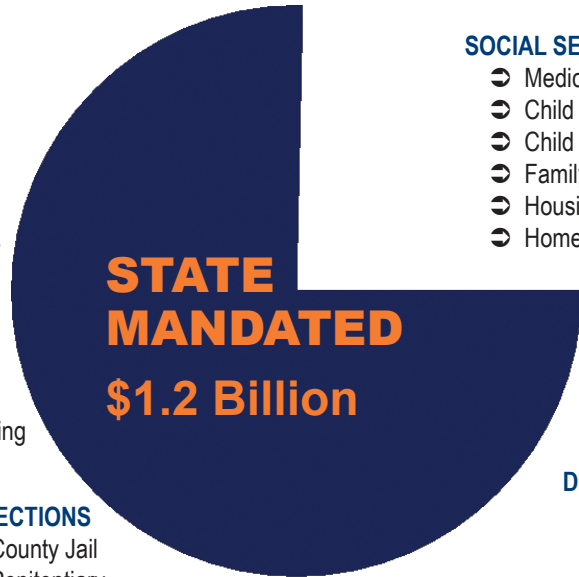
- Consumer Complaints
- Weights & Measures
- Home Contractor Licensing

PROBATION

- Family Court
- Criminal Court

CORRECTIONS

- County Jail
- Penitentiary



SOCIAL SERVICES

- Medicaid
- Child Protective Services
- Child Support Enforcement
- Family Emergency Assistance
- Housing Placement
- Homeless Services

COUNTY CLERK

- Land Records
- Legal Documents
- Passports
- UCC filings
- Pistol Permits
- Licensing-Plumbers, Electricians

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

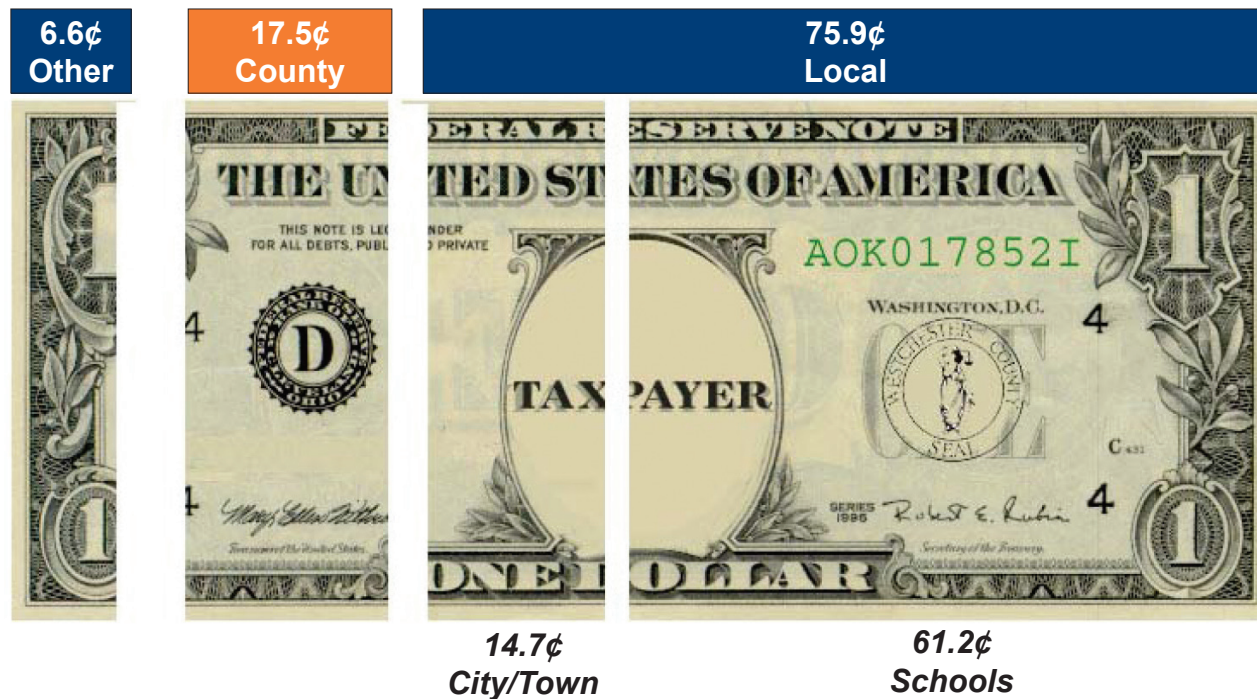
- Voter Registration
- ALL county, village, water, fire, library & school district elections

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

- Prosecutions
- Special Bureaus: Environmental Crimes; Narcotics; Gang & Gun; Stop DWI; High Tech Crime; Child Abuse; Domestic Violence Bias Crimes; Economic Crimes

ONLY ABOUT 17% OF YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL GOES TO FUND COUNTY SERVICES.

Here's an approximate breakdown of where your property tax dollar goes:



The County Key to Affordable Housing for Ossining and Croton



The most visible such project in our district will undoubtedly be the restoration of the triangular building on Main Street in the heart of Ossining's downtown that formerly housed the Ossining National Bank, but has been unused for four decades. With over a million dollars in funding by the County, the building is being renovated to hold a restaurant in its elegant ground-floor space and twelve apartments above, to be made available for purchase to families with incomes at or below 80% of the County's median income level. This building is an iconic part of Ossining's history, often featured on old postcards of our downtown, and the restoration of its ornate Italianate façade and red tile roof will be a crucial step in the renaissance of the whole downtown business area. The new apartments will provide affordable places for working people to live, thus adding to the life of the downtown area, while the restaurant will draw new visitors to our village. The County has also funded improvements at the Brandreth Street parking lot, to provide additional parking spots for the residents of the building.

Another important County initiative in affordable housing is the Symphony Knolls senior housing development, which recently broke ground on Mount Airy Road in Croton-on-Hudson. The eleven rental units will be made available to individuals aged 55 and over whose income is no more than 60% of the County median; preference will be given to people with a Croton connection, but this won't be a requirement of application.



On a recent rainy day, I joined with County Executive Andy Spano and Croton Housing Network president Nance Shatzkin to break ground for Symphony Knolls.



The former Ossining National Bank building, soon to be affordable apartments over a restaurant.

