



Westchester County Board of Legislators

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News from
LYNDON WILLIAMS,
your County Legislator...

Other Programs

Here are highlights of some other programs and services which I have supported:

- Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center
- Mental Health Services for the poor
- Free Legal Services for Senior Citizens and the Indigent
- Mount Vernon Public Library Program and Arts Initiative Program
- Mount Vernon Boys and Girls Club
- All Island Association Tutorial Program
- Mount Vernon Day Care and other Child Care Providers

Mount Vernon Youth Bureau

I must take a moment to commend the Mount Vernon Youth Bureau on its outstanding service and dedication to our city's youth. *Safe Haven*, *Step-Up!* and *Youth Empowerment* are phenomenal Youth Bureau programs which I am proud to support. Since taking office in 2009, I have secured over \$500,000 in contracts for these worthwhile programs.

Safe Haven is an after-school Summer program that serves 140 children, ages 7-12 providing daily academic enrichment, positive youth development and recreational activities.

Step-Up! program serves 86 young men, providing training and mentoring which helps create a better relationship between the police and Mount Vernon's at-risk male population. The Step Up program offers case management activities and training on leadership, public speaking, and interactive skills to youth ages 13-19.

Youth Empowerment serves 50 at-risk and court supervised young people with comprehensive basic job readiness and occupational skills training. The participants are provided with employment opportunities and community service projects.

During these tough economic times we must continue to invest in our youth. I am committed to our young people and will do my part to ensure they have access to safe recreational, educational, and employment programs.

Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Summer 2011 Newsletter



Lyndon Williams

District 13 ~ Mount Vernon



Dear Neighbor,

I hope this newsletter finds you well.

This newsletter will share information with you about the activities of Westchester County government and their impact on Mount Vernon. I have accomplished many important legislative initiatives since my last newsletter, some of which I have highlighted here.

At the beginning of this legislative term, I was elected Vice Chairman of the Board by my colleagues. I appreciate their confidence and continue to work diligently to make Westchester County a great place to live.

As your legislator, I worked closely with Mayor Clinton Young's administration to ensure that Mount Vernon benefits from the many programs, services and

resources of the County. I'm sure you appreciate the importance of a cooperative working relationship among your elected officials to effectively move Mount Vernon forward on a steady path to success.

Our country experienced the most difficult economic recession over the past four years. The recession resulted in high unemployment and limited economic growth. We are now seeing some signs of economic recovery from the recession. We must focus on opportunities that will create jobs, stimulate local economies, and provide much-needed tax relief to residents. I am proud to say we are doing just that. With renewed investment by the business community, new job creating opportunities, initiatives to reduce crime and improve services, Westchester County and the City of Mount Vernon are on a great path to economic recovery.

The 2011 County Budget was very challenging. We had to find ways to lower the tax levy while maintaining the vital services needed to run the County and to serve its residents. After many public hearings, town hall meetings, spirited debates, vetos and overrides, the Board of Legislators enacted the Budget delivering a historic -2.2% tax cut to Westchester residents while restoring the programs and services for children, senior citizens, and families. We protected the safety-net for the most vulnerable and needy.

I call that a fair and responsible government at work—your government.

I am privileged to serve as your County Legislator and will continue to work hard for real solutions in challenging times. A vibrant cooperative partnership with you, community leaders and city officials will continue to make Mount Vernon one of the finest cities in Westchester.

Please feel free to contact me at (914)995-2837) or e-mail Williams@westchesterlegislators.com.

Sincerely,

Lyndon Williams

COUNTY BOARD CUTS TAXES -2.2%

This resulted in a 10% tax cut for Mount Vernon residents after equalization.

In December 2010, the Westchester County Board of Legislators passed the 2011 Budget that cut county taxes 2.2%. We substantially reduced spending by \$30 million, and reduced the workforce over 10% through creative early retirement programs. The Budget passed 16-1 with all five Republicans voting with Democrats on the spending plan. The 2.2% tax cut was more than twice the tax cut proposed by the County Executive Astorino. The Board's fiscally responsible 2011 Budget gained the confidence of the financial community with Fitch's rating agency reaffirming

County Board Passes Historic Employee Benefits Reforms

Employee Health Care Contributions and Cap on Accrued Sick Days Saved Millions

The Board of Legislators passed groundbreaking legislation requiring employees to make contributions toward their health care coverage and capped the number of accrued paid sick days upon leaving county employment. As chair of this special committee, I can say this measure generated substantial savings for taxpayers by requiring elected officials, appointed officials and all non-represented management employees share in the costs of health insurance coverage based on their salary level.

Protecting Child Care Subsidies: Safety for Children; Work Opportunity for Parents.

Child-care subsidies assist parents to go to work knowing that their children are with a safe-regulated day



the County's AAA bond rating based on that budget. The Budget restored funding for services eliminated in the County Executive's proposed budget. The Board also eliminated a proposal from the proposed budget to have the County borrow money for tax assessment challenges. We believed these types of risky proposals caused financial troubles for Nassau County and did not want the same for Westchester. The Board had a transparent budget process with live streaming of committee meetings and several public hearings and meetings with over 2,000 attendees. Mount Vernon residents should see a 10% reduction in the county portion of your 2011 tax bill after equalization.

Section 8 Housing Voucher Program

Here is an update of the Section 8 Program. The voucher program provides rent subsidies for the poor to obtain housing. The program is funded by the federal government and, for sixty years, was administered by Westchester County at no cost to the taxpayers. Mount Vernon has the largest number of vouchers in the county administered program. In 2010, the Astorino administration decided that the county should no longer administer the program. My colleagues and I believe the county should continue administering the program to ensure that housing for the poor is not jeopardized and that landlords could count on receiving rent payments. We restored the program in the 2011 Budget against the County Executive's veto. A lawsuit was filed against County Executive Astorino's administration by terminated employees who administered the program. The lawsuit is pending. I am closely monitoring the developments and the administration of the program by an outside agency.

care provider. Eligibility for subsidy is income based. After taking office, County Executive Astorino unilaterally eliminated substantial portions of child care subsidies for working parents in mid-2010. I, along with several of my colleagues, strongly opposed these cuts to child care subsidies because we felt they could be harmful to the safety of young children and defeat the county's policy of encouraging parents to work instead of relying on more costly welfare and social assistance.

The 2011 Budget restored the child care subsidy program over County Executive Astorino's veto. We believe investing in early childhood education contribute to the development of children into intelligent productive adults. I will continue to strongly advocate for child-care subsidies for working families.

LaPorte - A significant investment in Mount Vernon.

LaPorte is a \$120 million investment in the City of Mount Vernon secured by Mayor Clinton Young's administration. The project consists of three phases of which the Board of Legislators has approved \$4.5 million of county funding for a portion of phase I. This phase consists of a fourteen-story mixed-use building to be located at 203 Gramatan Avenue. The building will include 158 affordable workforce housing units along with 20,000 square feet of retail space providing new housing options for working residents as well as commercial opportunities for business in downtown Mount Vernon. The Gramatan Avenue project anchors 140 units of market-rate housing and 59 units of senior housing on Crary and Oakley Avenues.

In May 2011, the Board approved \$3.71 million in New Homes Land Acquisition funds to finance the portion of the residential housing and an additional \$784,000 in County Housing Implementation Fund bonds to cover



construction costs for street scape and infrastructure improvements. When the project is completed in three years, both Westchester County and the City of Mount Vernon will begin to recoup their investments through retail sales and property taxes. LaPorte will create 305 construction jobs and 76 permanent jobs while stimulating the local economy.

Mount Vernon's Summer Jobs Basketball Program



As you know, the Mount Vernon High School Boys Basketball Team has once again won the New York State Class A and New York State Federation Championships. Under the thoughtful guidance of Coach Bob Cimmino, our boys basketball team is now the most accomplished high school athletics program in the State of New York. Since I took office, I have secured over \$150,000 in contracts for a summer jobs program and travel camp in which these young men participate. This extraordinary county-wide program includes weekly visits by mentors from various professions and disciplines who offer life skill techniques and provide personal insights on a wide range of topics. This invaluable program run by Coach Cimmino ensures that the participants are prepared to succeed both on and off the court.

Memorial Field – Key to Mount Vernon's Revitalization

It has been a long process, but the rebirth of Memorial Field is finally becoming a reality! My colleagues and I on the Board approved \$9.7 million to finance the project in January 2009. In April 2011, the City Council approved the City's financial commitment, thereby allowing the project to finally move onto the next phase. This regional landmark deteriorated for two decades as Mount Vernon city officials debated over how best to restore it. The restoration plan, made possible through the Westchester Legacy Program and approved by both the City

and County, presented a viable opportunity to do more than talk. It is not only comprehensive in its scope but financially considerate of the budgetary constraints we all currently face.

With an expected timeframe for completion from start to finish of 18 months, the renovated Memorial Field will restore community pride and create much needed jobs and revenue for the city. I will continue to update you on the progress of this project until its completion.