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# Sullivan County Manager's Monthly News

## SULLIVAN COUNTY PROCEEDS WITH CONSTRUCTION OF COUNTY JAIL

After more than ten years of research, planning and review, Sullivan County is moving forward with the construction of a new County Jail. Construction bids were opened on Wednesday, August 24, 2016. Preliminary analysis indicates the cost of the facility will total approximately \$81.4 million: \$65.4 million for the jail, \$8 million for administrative offices for the Sheriff's Patrol and Civil Units, and \$8 million in "soft costs" including construction management and offsite utilities.

The 155,725 square foot facility is designed to meet the current needs of the County while providing for future growth. Core elements, such as the kitchen, intake and other common areas, are designed to accommodate a higher population than the 256 beds which is currently scheduled to be constructed. This was done deliberately to avoid expenses as future expansions are required, and the facility will accommodate the addition of pods with minimal disruption to operations.

Awarding of the bid is anticipated in early September of 2016, and the issuance of the first bonds will follow closely after that. County management has met with Moody's in an attempt to ensure the best interest rate possible and minimize costs.

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- County Jail Moves Forward

## SULLIVAN COUNTY MANAGER EXECUTES AGREEMENT FOR PURCHASE OF HYDRO ELECTRICITY

The County Manager recently executed an agreement with Gravity Renewables that will provide Sullivan County with the ability to purchase a substantial portion of its electricity supply directly from a hydroelectric plant in upstate New York.

The hydroelectric plant will generate approximately 4,000,000 kWh of clean, renewable electricity per year, which is equivalent to nearly 45% of the County's total annual electric needs. The County will reap the benefits of stabilized and reduced energy costs, with significant savings during the 20 year term of the agreement. The County will have the option of extending the agreement for an additional five years at the end of the initial 20 year term.

The project represents a true win-win situation for County residents, reaffirming the County's commitment to a sustainable future while also reducing day to day operating costs. The County has already exceeded several goals of the Climate Action Plan, adopted in 2014, through the purchase of clean hydro and solar electricity. According to the County Manager, the County will continue to explore options to reduce its energy usage, reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, and ultimately reduce costs to its residents.

### TOBACCO ASSET SECURITIZATION CORPORATION REFINANCING BONDS

Sullivan County has the opportunity to refinance its outstanding tobacco bonds through the Sullivan County Tobacco Asset Securitization Corp (TASC).

As a result, funds will be available for use by the County for reducing debt.

### WELLNESS COMMITTEE FORMED, CREATING AN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE AND ENHANCE THE HEALTH OF THE COUNTY EMPLOYEES

County Manager Joshua Potosek has established the Employee Wellness Committee comprised of County management as well as union representatives in an effort to generate effective strategies to create a healthier work environment for County employees. In addition to the County Manager, committee members include Lynda Levine (Director of Human Resources), Joseph Todora (Commissioner of Health and Family Services), Nancy McGraw (Director of Public Health Services), Michelle Huck (Executive Assistant to the County Manager) and a representative from each of the six unions that represent County employees.

The committee is in the beginning stages of developing effective strategies and potential programs to help support the overall health of our county workforce. A few of the goals that County Manager Potosek would like to see come to fruition through the Wellness Committee is to create a tool to assist employees with personal health improvements and goals, improve employee morale, and reduce absenteeism.



## COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

The Sullivan County Division of Public Safety, headed by Commissioner Richard Martinkovic, is nearing completion of perhaps the largest public safety project in the County's history. In 2009, with an aging communications system and tower infrastructure, Martinkovic along with 911 Coordinator Alex Rau took advantage of NYS Department of Homeland Security grant funding to conduct a needs assessment study to determine what measures could be taken to improve public safety communications throughout the County. The results pointed to a need for communications interoperability between Fire, EMS and Law Enforcement personnel through the use of a common frequency platform; a need for more tower locations to provide better coverage in our mountainous terrain, and a desperate need to upgrade the 30 year old radio equipment for which parts are no longer available.

In 2013 the Sullivan County Legislature gave the green light to embark on the estimated \$10M project to upgrade existing communications towers, construction of new tower sites, and replacement of the radio network equipment. With infrastructure upgrades now completed, the County has renovated 3 of the existing towers and constructed 7 new tower sites in key locations throughout the County to improve coverage and replace towers which no longer meet industry standards. A new microwave backhaul system has been installed which will link all 10 towers to create a network and provide the transport mechanism for data and communications back to the 9-1-1 Center from first responders. Motorola is expected to complete installation and testing of the radio equipment later this fall. Commissioner Martinkovic, who is looking forward to the completion said, "A lot of planning, design and collaboration has gone into this project with our various vendors, our first responder community, and 9-1-1 staff. It will be a great day for Sullivan County residents, visitors and emergency responders once we get this system online and bring our communications up to current public safety standards. It will also pave the way for the future needs of our emergency responders as the need for sending data and other technologies rapidly evolve."

Once completed, this communications upgrade will provide added safety to residents and visitors in Sullivan County by insuring lifesaving dispatches are heard by our first responders, improve regional communications with our neighboring counties and state agencies, it will greatly improve the safety and ability of first responders to communicate amongst each other and 9-1-1 Dispatch, and it will also enhance the communications of other County agencies including the Sheriff's Office and our Department of Public Works which work closely with public safety in times of winter weather, floods, and other seasonal storm activities.

## YEAR END FINANCIAL STATEMENTS COMPLETED FOR **FY2015**

Sullivan County engaged PKF O'Connor Davies to compile the year-end financial statements for Fiscal Year 2015, and the result of their audit was presented to the Sullivan County Legislature during the Management and Budget Committee Meeting in July.

Overall, the County stayed within budgeted appropriations for FY2015, and there were no material deficiencies reported by the auditors. Sales tax increased by 1.4%, double the average of New York counties (excluding New York City) of 0.7%.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF 2017 TENTATIVE BUDGET UNDER- WAY**

The County Manager, with the assistance of the Commissioner of Management and Budget, has initiated the process of developing the 2017 Tentative Budget. Department requests have already been received and are in the process of being reviewed.

The Tentative Budget will be submitted to the Sullivan County Legislature no later than October 21, 2016 for consideration. The final 2017 Operating Budget must be adopted no later than December 20, 2017.

The County Manager is the full time Chief Executive and Administrative Head of the County of Sullivan. He and his dedicated staff are prepared to answer your questions and to hear your comments.

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## **POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY CEREMONY**

POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony scheduled for Friday, September 16, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.

The Sullivan County Veterans Service Agency will recognize POW/MIA Recognition Day with a ceremony in the lobby of the Sullivan County Government Center, 100 North Street, Monticello.

Please join us in taking the time to remember those who were prisoners of war (POWs), and those who are missing in action (MIA), and their families.

The public is invited to attend.

For additional information on this event, please contact the Sullivan County Veterans Service Agency @ (845) 807-0233.

## **RESIDENTIAL HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE AND RX DROP OFF COLLECTION EVENT, AUGUST 27TH**

The second Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event of 2016 will be held on Saturday, August 27, 2016 from 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM at the Monticello Transfer Station/Scale House area, 91 Landfill Drive, Monticello, NY 12701. Proof of Residence (2 Forms of ID) Required for HHW Event Participation!

**ACCEPTABLE ITEMS:** Solvents, oil-based paints, antifreeze, pool chemicals, acids, bases, fluorescent bulbs, cleaning products, mercury-containing devices, pesticides/herbicides, automotive batteries, roofing tar, wood preservatives, adhesives, creosote, stains and inks.

**NEW:** Unwanted Medications Accepted on August 27, 2016!

**UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS:** NO Radioactive materials, explosives, ammunition, electronics, consumer batteries, fire extinguishers, LP/gas tanks, medical waste, refrigeration devices, latex paint. NO commercial or agricultural waste. NO liquid medications, sharps, injectables or inhalers please!

**HHW Event Pre-Registration Procedure for 2016:** Acceptance of unwanted medications is confidential, however HHW participants MUST pre-register by calling 845-807-0291 between 9 AM–3 PM Mon.–Fri. prior to August 26, 2016. If you get the voicemail message, please leave your name, address, phone number, list of HHW materials to be disposed of and what time during the Event 12:30 PM-4:30 PM) you plan to arrive. There is no charge to participate!