

INSIDE INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SULLIVAN COUNTY MANAGER



BROADBAND EXPANSION IS COMING SOON

BY JOSHUA POTOSEK, COUNTY MANAGER

The promise of broadband for all of Sullivan County remains very much in the forefront of my and legislators' minds, and I'm happy to say we are close to making a major announcement about our high-speed Internet plans.

In the meantime, let me share a couple photos from our August 17 meeting with a new company called Archtop Fiber, with whom we formed a public-private partnership to reach unserved and underserved homes and businesses throughout the County.



LEFT: Nearly 22 million square feet of fiber-optic wire is ready to be deployed.



ABOVE: From the left, Archtop Fiber's VP of Business Services John Boolukos, Sullivan County Legislature Vice Chair Mike Brooks, Archtop's Chief Development Officer Shawn Beqaj, NYS Senator Peter Oberacker and County Manager Josh Potosek.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS ISSUE:

A NEW TOWER IS
COMING - 2

TACKLING THE OPIOID
PROBLEM - 3

A LOOK AT OUR NEW
RIVER ACCESS - 4



PUTTING A TOWER IN JEFF'VILLE

E-911 Coordinator Alex Rau has spearheaded an effort to identify and fill gaps in our emergency radio network. I'm pleased to say that as a result, we plan to add an emergency communications tower to a hill above Jeffersonville. It's on a site next to the Sullivan West Elementary School, with whom we've been collaborating. If all goes well, our 11th such tower will go live in mid- to late-2024.

TAX AUCTION SET FOR SEPT. 6&7

The 2023 Sullivan County Real Estate Tax Foreclosure Auction will be held **online only** on Wednesday, September 6 and Thursday, September 7.

County Treasurer Nancy Buck urges potential bidders to register now at <https://aarauctions.com/servlet/SeArch.do?auctionId=6092> to receive a packet via email explaining the terms and conditions of the auction, along with the foreclosure process and associated liens. A bidders' seminar is available to watch online, as well.

There will be no showings of foreclosed parcels, though most properties up for auction can be viewed from public roadways. Bidding opens September 1 at 10 a.m. The auction itself begins at 9:30 a.m. on September 6, covering parcels in the towns of Bethel, Callicoon, Cohecton, Delaware,

Fallsburg, Forestburgh, Fremont, Highland and Liberty. The auction will recommence at the same time on September 7 and cover parcels in the towns of Lumberland, Mamakating, Neversink, Rockland, Thompson and Tusten.

"Interested bidders should ensure they've done their homework: personally viewed the property or properties, checked for outstanding liens and assessments like water and sewer, and are familiar with the auction terms and conditions, particularly the taxes and fees for which they will be immediately responsible upon placement of a successful bid or bids," said Buck. All sales are subject to final approval by the Sullivan County Legislature. More information can be obtained at nysauctions.com. The County Treasurer's Office also welcomes inquiries at 845-807-0200.

ELECTION DAY ISN'T JUST ONE DAY THIS YEAR

Early voting is increasing in usage across New York State as it rapidly becomes the norm.

Sure, you can still cast your votes at your local polling spot this Election Day, November 7, but if you're already registered to vote in Sullivan County, there's no need to wait.

This year, our Board of Elections will open two early voting locations:

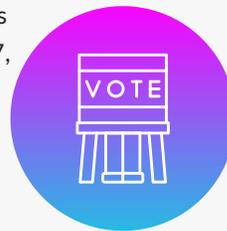
- Sullivan County Government Center, 100 North Street, Monticello
- Sullivan County Public Health (the Gladys Olmsted Building), 50 Community Lane, Liberty

Either location is fine to use, no matter where you live in Sullivan County. Just make sure you arrive between the following hours on one

of the following dates:

- 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on October 28, 29, 30 or November 1, 3, 4 or 5
- Noon-8 p.m. on October 31 or November 2

If that's not convenient, like I said, you can always head to your usual polling location on Election Day, anytime between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. To find out who's running, where to vote or any other question you may have, stop by or call our Board of Elections at **845-807-0400**.



TALKING ABOUT DRUGS HONESTLY AND OPENLY

It's not an enjoyable message to share, but Sullivan County has a big problem with opioid use - the biggest in the State, on a per-capita basis. We've taken a number of big steps to tackle this issue: strengthening our Drug Task Force, successfully fighting to be designated a High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (freeing up Federal resources), and tapping into millions of dollars in settlement funds from pharmaceutical companies which helped create this epidemic in the first place. Our Department of Community Services has joined forces with the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and Columbia University to spread compelling messages about recognizing and treating opioid use disorder. Utilizing over \$300,000 in grant monies, the HEALing Communities Study is aiming to reduce opioid-related deaths by 40% in Sullivan County and other municipalities across the hardest-hit states like New York.



Social media posts like the one pictured above have been running much of this year, along with billboards, flyers and radio ads. They've focused on three areas: educating people about the overdose-reversing "miracle drug" naloxone, promoting medicated treatment to wean addicts off opioids, and urging those already in treatment to stay steadfast, despite intense struggles. Find out more at HEALTogetherNY.org/Sullivan.

HEATHER BROWN: FROM ANALYST TO COMMISH

It's been my pleasure to watch Bethel native Heather Brown rise through the ranks of County government over the past 20 years, and I'm particularly pleased to share that she's now our Commissioner of the Division of Planning & Community Development.

Heather started with us in 2004 as a research analyst, consistently impressing and improving along the way, and I promoted her to the commissioner position this summer in recognition of her talents and drive.

A graduate of Monticello High School, she possesses a bachelor's in biology from SUNY Binghamton, and



her County government experience has led her to identify three priorities on which she'd like to

focus: the buildout of the O&W Rail Trail and other recreational opportunities, the housing crisis, and the judicious use of local water resources.

We are recognized Statewide for Heather's work as director of our Office of Sustainable Energy (a role she still fills, even amidst her new duties overseeing Planning, Parks and Grants).

Whenever possible and prudent, I try to promote from within our existing ranks, and I expect Heather will continue to make her mark.

The Delaware River forms much of the western and southern borders of Sullivan County, and our Division of Planning has been working diligently to open up new spots to access its natural splendor. Located just west of Barryville along Route 97, the Highland River Access is now paved (including an accessible trail to the canoe launch) and open to the public.

OPENING A NEW ACCESS TO ONE OF THE BEST NATURAL GIFTS IN OUR AREA



The Upper Delaware is an ideal spot to take the family on a rafting, fishing, camping or swimming trip (or all the above!).

