

INSIDE INSIGHTS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Sullivan County Manager's Office

January 2018



County leaders and legislators were privileged this month to recognize 10 Employees of the Year, as chosen by their department supervisors. Holding awards, from the left, are Transportation Specialist Dolores Bassney, Client Support Technician Andrew McCabe, Senior Caseworker Tiffany Corces, Court Liaison Laura Pasquale, Real Property Appraiser & Examiner Richard Conroy, Assistant Commissioner of Planning Jill Weyer, Senior Tax Map/GIS Technician Chris Knapp and Construction Equipment Operator Joe Wilson. Not pictured are Community Health Nurse Janna Walter and Master Mechanic Gregory Neugebauer.

These are the folks who make this County run

In a truly appropriate kickoff to an exciting new year, the Sullivan County Legislature and County Manager's Office solicited and then honored nominees from across County government to be recognized as Employees of the Year.

"The County workers who received this prestigious designation very much earned it, and I couldn't be prouder of the work they do every day for citizens and taxpayers," said County Manager Josh Potosek. "They represent the very best of what we have to offer, and as such, they serve as role models to their coworkers and the people of Sullivan County.

"Congratulations, and thank you!"

In This Issue

- We're helping make progress on plans
- Our Nutrition Dept.: more than just food
- Sharing our shared services success with New York State



The Office for the Aging's Nutrition Department staff includes, from the left, Aging Services Assistant Barbara Panos, Aging Services Aide Albert Patalona, Aging Services Specialist Darlene Farragher and Nutrition Services Coordinator Jane Bozan. Not pictured are Nutrition Site Operators Marjorie Janowski, Louise Davis, Kimberly Adamoyurka, Madeline Fuller, Ruth Ann Ward, Ursula Valkanas, Julia Pisall and Eileen Stryko, along with Chauffeurs Richard Hewitt, Deborah Haas, Asunda Esposito, JoAnne Rivera and Michelle Guidera.

Departmental Spotlight: The Sullivan County Office for the Aging's Nutrition Department

Feeding body, mind and soul

While they may be called the Nutrition Department within the Office for the Aging (OFA), they're not just about feeding local seniors. This talented, compassionate crew nourishes the hearts and minds of County residents, as well.

"The contact, the socialization we provide is very important," says Jane Bozan, Nutrition Services Coordinator. "We're reaching out to those who are isolated and have no transportation, to make sure they're safe in their homes."

As heartwarming as that sounds, however, it's a lot of work, considering the program currently serves 234 seniors scattered across Sullivan County's 1,000 square miles.

"We have 17 paid staff and 12-15 volunteers (RSVP, New Hope and Sullivan Arc help us deliver), and we're always looking for more volunteer drivers," Jane nods, speaking of the crew who deliver Meals on Wheels five days a week. (The Nutrition Department contracts with the Adult Care Center kitchen to prepare the meals.)

"We'll even take volunteers just one hour or one day a week," adds OFA Director Deborah Allen. "That helps us get the meals out to everyone."

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Sites we serve

- Bethel Senior Center, Kauneonga Lake (Mondays)
- Cocheton Town Hall, Lake Huntington (Tues/Thurs)
- Highland Senior Center, Eldred (Tuesdays/Fridays)
- American Legion Hall, Jeffersonville (Weds/Fridays)
- Liberty Senior Center, Liberty (Mons/Weds/Fridays)
- Lumberland Senior Center, Glen Spey (Wednesdays)

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Revenue rise

While 2018 holds promise as a prosperous year for businesses in Sullivan County, 2017 showed we're already on the rise.

According to the Treasurer's Office, sales tax revenues hit more than \$37 million in 2017, close to half a million dollars more than the year prior.

Mortgage tax revenues approached the \$700,000 mark in 2017, over \$100,000 more than in 2016.

Taxes on rooms rented in the County reached \$860,000 in 2017, \$51,000 above 2016.

And there are still numbers coming in, with an official final tally expected in March, so these figures could rise even further.

Up to Albany

County Manager Josh Potosek and Legislature Chairman Luis Alvarez were recently invited to inform the NYS Assembly about the successes and challenges of Sullivan County's implementation of the Governor's County-Wide Shared Services Plan mandate.

Pleased to hear the Governor will dedicate \$225 million in matching funds to shared-services efforts, Potosek testified via letter that New York State "must join with us in reducing the tax burden on our tapped-out residents. We alone cannot do it."



Sullivan County's Plans & Progress Small Grant Program helped the historic Cochection Center Community Center complete its much-needed roof replacement.

Ready to help develop dreams

Sullivan County's Division of Planning and Community Development is so named because we're here to help communities grow in a locally smart, environmentally sensitive and fiscally efficient manner.

Take a look at some of our upcoming opportunities:

- We anticipate the release of the **2018 Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Requests for Applications** in April or May, with a submission deadline in mid-summer. These applications can be lengthy and complex, so it is never too early to identify and refine a project, as well as begin to assemble all that is required. Contact us for information on the funding opportunities and the process. Whether or not you need assistance with your application, it is important to let the County know about your project so our representatives on the Regional Council can advocate for it effectively.
- Applications are now being accepted for funding of community improvement projects through the Sullivan County **Plans & Progress Small Grant Program**. The purpose of the program is to assist local municipalities, community groups, and not-for-profit organizations throughout Sullivan County with projects related to tourism, community and economic development, image enhancement, trails development, health improvement, agricultural and farmland protection, and other County goals. Applications will be reviewed periodically throughout the calendar year. The first round will assess all applications received by 4 p.m. on April 6.
- Tap into our **Revolving Loan Fund Program: Agri-Business Loans, Agri-Business Micro-Enterprise Loans, Main Street Business Loans and Main Street Micro-Enterprise Loans**, up to \$100,000. Rates for all loans are set at 1% below the prime interest rate, with a base minimum of 2% and a maximum of 6%. Terms are generally set at up to 10 years.
- **Municipal planning and zoning board training** (details on page 4).

E-mail planning@co.sullivan.ny.us or call us at 845-807-0527 for more information.

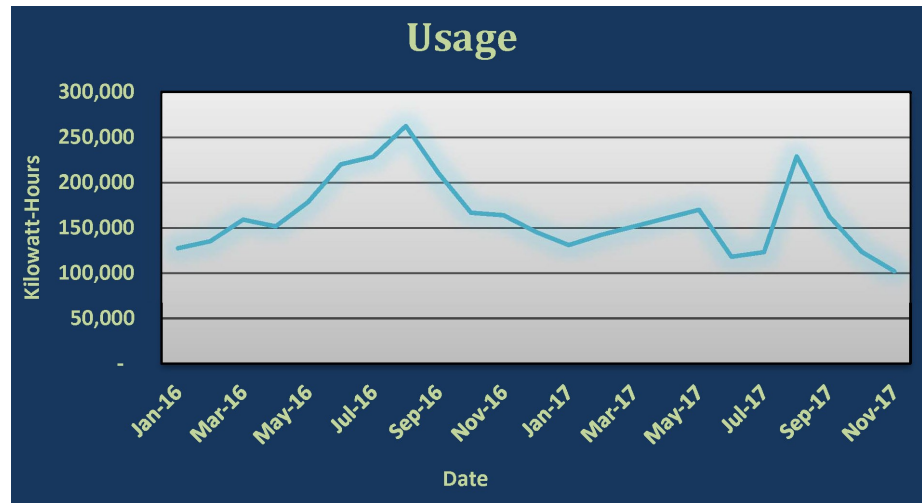
Save the dates and learn more!

- O&W Rail Trail Community Meeting, January 30 (snow date January 31) at 6 p.m., Government Center, Monticello
- Planning/Zoning Training—Community Design Tools, Sign Regulation, offered by the Department of State's Local Government Services & Sullivan County Division of Planning, Monday, February 26 at 5 p.m. In the Government Center, Monticello

Energy-efficient? Why yes, we are

We've been keeping tabs on our electricity usage at the Government Center, and now that we've installed energy-efficient lighting and other upgrades, we've seen a marked drop in the energy we consume. Take a look at the graph below...

We financed the \$2.7M project, but it was structured by the New York Power Authority in a manner whereby the energy savings will pay for the overall cost. Many thanks to our Division of Public Works & Office of Sustainable Energy for their work on this!



Ready... Aim... Find us a cannon!

Do you know of a person or place that might be willing to part with a colonial-era cannon, be it authentic or a reproduction? If so, put them in touch with Parks Director Brian Scardefield (brian.scardefield@co.sullivan.ny.us, 845-807-0287), who's seeking a replacement to one that's long delighted Fort Delaware visitors.



Long in service but cracked beyond repair, our faithful cannon no longer fires over the parapets of Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History in Narrowsburg. Instead, it sits in storage (for now) at our Public Works' facility in Maplewood, near Monticello.

Got a question?

Try your legislator first, by calling the Sullivan County Legislature's office at 845-807-0435. They can direct you to the representative who is elected to serve you.

Or look up who you're seeking directly, via the County's website:

co.sullivan.ny.us

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Nutrition: Far beyond food ...

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The paid staff also includes nutrition site operators at 12 different senior centers, drivers, plus four office staff who take orders, track supplies and prepare reports. Four Aging Services Specialists cover the County, completing assessments for those needing meals and other services, while the rest of the team at OFA work in tandem with Nutrition staff to ensure more than 4,000 seniors a year get the services they need.

“I really consider myself more of a staff member than a coordinator,” affirms Jane, who can as easily be found delivering Meals on Wheels as completing state-required paperwork in her office at the Government Center in Monticello. “It’s so very important to reach out in such a rural County.”

That includes connecting young people to seniors, from having students create cards and placemats for their elders to actually taking them on field trips to area senior centers.

Nevertheless, Jane dreams of having more staff and volunteers to pick up homebound seniors and bring them to a variety of social activities, not just at senior centers but movie theaters, parks, educational facilities, picnics, and more.

“They have a lot to offer, these seniors,” she notes, “but they’re too often ‘the forgotten generation.’”

She loves every chance to interact with them and listen to tales of lives well-lived.

“They have great stories, and they give to me as much as I give to them,” Jane says. “It’s almost like having close to 300 grandparents!”

For many, Jane and company are the only people they see on a regular basis, and if they fall or suffer a life-threatening medical condition, County workers (who are trained in CPR and other emergency procedures) are often the first to discover them and render aid.

Mostly, though, they’re simply greeting seniors with a warm smile and a friendly “hello!” They take that moment to empty garbage, put batteries in a clock, take in their mail or deliver a bottle of milk along with the County-provided meal, which makes all the difference.

“My drivers are wonderful,” Jane states proudly. “Many have been with us 10, 15, 20 years.”

“We’re a family, and the goal we share is to keep our residents in their homes safe. We want them to age in place, with dignity and compassion,” explains Debi. “And it gives the staff a good feeling to allow our seniors to live at home, to see them, to get to know what they need when they need it.”

That can be as simple as taking a moment to stop and listen, she remarks.

“I’ve heard seniors say, ‘That’s all I needed – someone to listen to me.’”

Even when weather interferes with personal visits, staff are calling seniors, both during the week and on weekends.

“It’s the highlight of their day,” Jane says. And she’s not just speaking of the seniors...

Sites we serve

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- Mamakating Town Hall, Wurtsboro (M/T/W/Thurs)
- Ted Stroebale Recreation Center, Monticello (M/Th/F)
- Tusten Town Hall, Narrowsburg (Mons/Thurs)
- Neversink Firehouse, Neversink (Wednesdays)
- Roscoe Community Center, Roscoe (Tues/Thurs)
- Woodridge Municipal Hall, Woodridge (Mondays)

Who’s eligible

Congregate meals (served at the above locations) are available to anyone 60 years of age or older, plus their spouse. A dietician is also available by appointment.

Meals on Wheels are delivered Mondays through Fridays to homebound seniors 60 years of age or older who are County residents.

There’s a suggested contribution of \$3/meal, but inability or unwillingness to pay will not deny you a meal.

How to get in touch

Need meals? Want to volunteer? Call us at 845-807-0241 Mondays-Fridays from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.