

INSIDE INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SULLIVAN COUNTY MANAGER



RUNNING TO KEEP PACE WITH THE STATE

BY JOSHUA POTOSEK, COUNTY MANAGER

On the one hand, I'm glad to report that Sullivan County is collecting more sales and room taxes than ever before, with us on track to hit our projection of \$66 million in sales tax revenues alone this year.

The net effect: the County's budget no longer has to rely so heavily on property taxes, and I'm eyeing a potential zero-percent increase in land taxes for 2024 (subject to County Legislature approval later this year).

On the other hand, New York State's leaders have embarked upon a series of measures which threaten to vacuum up that revenue. Here's what's going to hit us hardest:

- Municipalities won't be able to keep profits from tax foreclosure sales anymore.

Instead, whatever we collect at a tax auction in excess of what we're owed in taxes and fees will have to be given to the delinquent property owner. **Estimated impact:**

\$4-\$5 million a year.

- Certain Medicaid dollars from the Federal government, which are supposed to be passed through the State to counties like Sullivan, will now be kept by the State, forcing us to pay \$100,000 more a week in Medicaid costs next year. **Estimated impact: \$3.5-\$4 million a year.**

- The pay rate for assigned counsel (lawyers who represent those who cannot afford one themselves) is rising to \$158 an

hour, doubling our costs. **Estimated impact: \$192,000 a year.**

I'll also note that our sales tax revenues appeared to be leveling off earlier this year, so coupled with inflation and the usual operational expense increases, we may be looking at some belt-tightening this time next year.

I'll know and share more as we begin developing the 2024 County Budget.



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OUR JOB GROWTH CONTINUES TO BE STRONG

For most of the past two years, Sullivan County has led all of New York State - including New York City - in job growth, according to NYS Dept. of Labor statistics.

In the last couple of months, we've been surpassed by a few other counties and the city, but our growth rate continues to be quite strong. In fact, we remain in the top five of non-metro counties Statewide. Not surprisingly, leisure/hospitality jobs continue to outpace all others in Sullivan County. Our historic role as NYC's playground makes us more popular than ever, as traffic and parking in our downtowns can attest (plus healthy room tax revenues). But efforts to diversify our economy have borne

fruit, and growth in the State-defined sector of trade/transportation/utilities has been almost as strong as that in leisure/hospitality.

Where do we need to grow? Manufacturing and educational/health services could use a boost, and professional services and financial activities job growth remains flat.

Of course, there is a cycle to all things, and what has been declining may increase again (and vice-versa). For example, jobs in the agricultural industry are not as plentiful as they used to be. Yet we have some healthy, active farms in the region, especially those that have diversified beyond one product (like dairy). So, too, must we continue to diversify.

HAVE YOU 'CHATTED' WITH US ONLINE?

You've likely seen this little box on our website. It pops up in the lower righthand corner at sullivanny.us.

Greetings! Welcome to Sullivan County Government. What can we help you with?



Go ahead - type in a question! Or pick from the choices offered. It's powered by that new technology everyone's raving about: AI, short for artificial intelligence.

Don't worry - it's not stealing your data or keeping tabs on you. It's intelligently determining what you need and how to quickly find it for you, that's all.

Right now, the "chatbot," as we call it, is only set up to handle queries about our County Clerk and County Treasurer offices, but it's been such a success that we're getting ready to expand it to all County offices and departments.

That means you'll be able to get virtually any answer you need in just a few seconds - without having to make a phone call or a visit. Isn't that the kind of service we want from the Internet?



JOIN THE PICKUP PARTY!

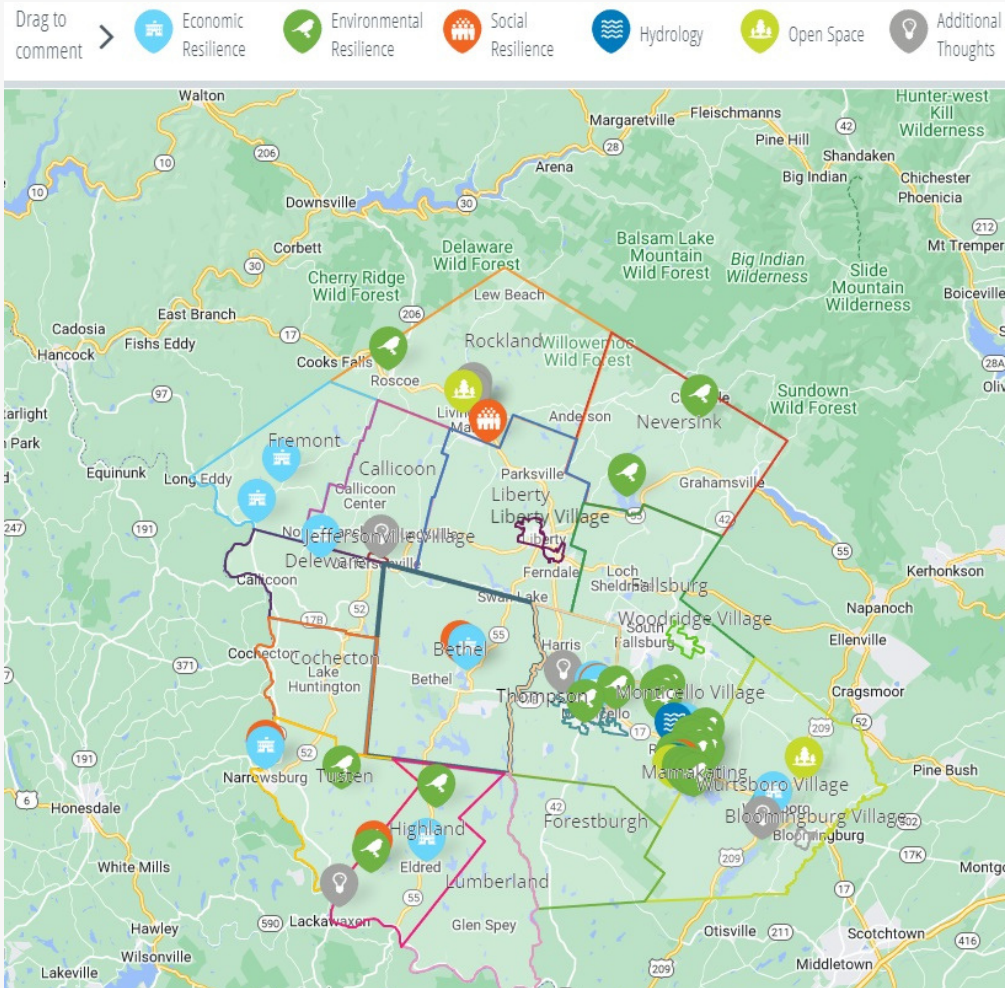
Spring isn't the only season for cleaning. In fact, our Countywide Litter Pluck runs all the way through October 31!

That means we'll take your roadside and trailside litter for free, so long as you use one of the coupons we have at our transfer stations (also available at town and village halls, among other locations).

It's about more than looking our best - it's also about taking pride in our communities and ensuring our wildlife and environment are kept safe.

PLANNING FOR DISASTER

Think about it: what would you do in an emergency? We're all taught to plan ahead, to not wait until a crisis strikes to figure out what to do. As a County, we should be doing the same, and you have an opportunity to help us plan for the inevitable disaster. The map at left is just one part of a chance for you to weigh in. Take a moment to visit resilientsullivan.com for all the details.



A NEW GENERATION OF COUNTY LEADERS STEP UP

I'm pleased to welcome a host of new leaders to Sullivan County - some of whom have been here for a while, others of whom are recent arrivals, all of whom are part of our ongoing quest to best serve taxpayers, visitors, businesses and our most vulnerable.



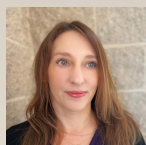
Julian Motola - Airport Superintendent. Our Airport is a gem that's just beginning to shine, and Julian is prepared to let the world know it's open for business.



Scott Schulte - Public Safety Commissioner. Scott joins us after a long and acclaimed career leading SUNY New Paltz's emergency management team.



John Hauschild - Deputy Public Safety Commissioner. Also our Fire Coordinator, John possesses an unparalleled understanding of our emergency response needs.



Karen Holden - Public Health Director. Karen brings her passion for healthcare and humanity to a role that has become more important than ever.



Jill Hubert-Simon - Deputy Public Health Director. Jill has deep understanding and expertise to help improve our health and well-being.

Seven local residents took advantage of a County-funded course held at BOCES' workshop in Liberty this past spring.

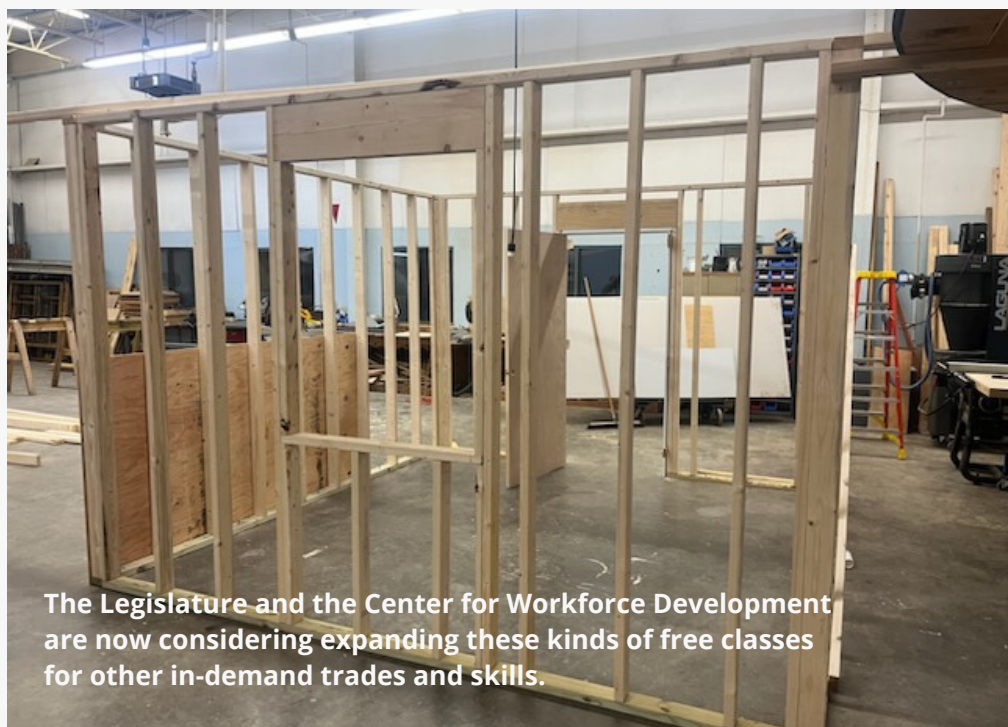


The free 9-week class taught them basic construction skills.

BUILDING CAREERS



All of the grads are going on to local employment, which was the goal of the program.



The Legislature and the Center for Workforce Development are now considering expanding these kinds of free classes for other in-demand trades and skills.