

INSIDE INSIGHTS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Sullivan County Manager's Office

October 2017

“The 2018 Tentative Budget invests in what’s important to our residents: highways & bridges, public safety, economic development, community beautification, and health & wellness. It does so without significantly increasing taxes, the burden of which, as a County resident, I understand.”

- County Manager Josh Potosek

Proposed 2018 County budget delivers for citizens, taxpayers

Sullivan County Manager Josh Potosek delivered the 2018 Tentative County Budget to legislators on October 20, and he’s pleased to say it expands services without hiking taxes above the state-mandated cap.

“As proposed by my office, the 2018 Tentative Sullivan County Budget invests heavily in what’s important to our residents: highways and bridges, public safety, economic development, community beautification, and health & wellness,” Potosek says. “It does so, however, without significantly increasing property taxes, the burden of which, as a County resident myself, I understand.”

Highlights of the \$226,143,143 proposal

- \$28.2 million in capital infrastructure investment, including cash and bond payments supporting an unprecedented \$10 million to replace deteriorating bridges, \$6.2 million to pave more County roads and \$350,000 to replace the County Courthouse’s sidewalks and heating/ventilation system
- \$50,000 to begin an Attraction & Retention Incentive Program for EMS personnel
- \$75,000 for a Municipal Growth Incentive Program to streamline commercial zoning and approvals, thus accelerating growth of our crucial commercial tax base
- Forming an Opioid Epidemic Task Force to create effective solutions
- \$750,000 for two additional Assistant District Attorneys and five additional Road Patrol Sheriff’s Deputies in order to promptly catch and prosecute criminals
- Add a clerk in the Department of Motor Vehicles Office to reduce wait times
- Funding to gradually increase the minimum wage for County employees to \$15 an hour, beyond the state mandate, in order to attract and retain qualified personnel in a newly competitive market

In This Issue

- Department Spotlight: E-911 and the Emergency Control Center
- Inside the new casino and wellness resorts
- Catskill Edible Garden grows more than food
- A new, brighter look at the Gov’t. Center



Sullivan County Manager Josh Potosek



The Sullivan County E-911 dispatching team includes, from the left, Tim Morey, Alex Rau, Nate Routledge, Chris Kelly, Serra O'Donnell, Josh Price, Jordan Merklin, Kris Gwiozdowski, Mike Congelosi, Marissa Benton, Danielle Cassidy, Chella Cavanagh, Dylan Baker, John Picard, Mike Kelly, Gil Mahler and Charlie Rampe.

Departmental Spotlight: E-911 and the Emergency Control Center

Often heard, but rarely seen

The “first” first responders have also been called the “forgotten responders,” notes Alex Rau, Sullivan County’s E-911 Coordinator. For as is often the case, those 911 dispatchers who have sent life-saving aid to your emergency aren’t pictured or heralded in the media, movies and magazines like their brethren firefighters, paramedics and police officers.

Most of them actually ARE volunteer firefighters, EMTs or have worked in law enforcement agencies. But outside of the softly lit confines of the Emergency Control Center at the Sullivan County Airport, they’re a disembodied voice to nearly 80,000 callers a year, sharing as much reassuring calm and professionalism as possible before responders physically arrive. As such, they’re a crucial but rarely-seen part of the emergency response system, swiftly moving on to the next call when a patient is safe.

And in an age where cellphone use is proliferating, their role has become more important than ever.

“Now, kids are calling from their iPads, sending us texts,” Rau explains. “Your dryer can call you and tell you your laundry’s done — and soon, it will also be able to call us and tell us it’s on fire.”

No joke — that’s why E-911 (which stands for “Enhanced”) is poised to take another leap into “NextGen” 911. Rau can’t wait.

“I very much enjoy the technology end of it,” the 21-year Emergency Control Center veteran acknowledges, eagerly pointing out E-911’s Reverse 911 capabilities and the text- and email-based Emergency Notification System.

It’s a long way from where the Center started in 1987, when you didn’t dial 911 but 583-7100 (which still works, by the way).

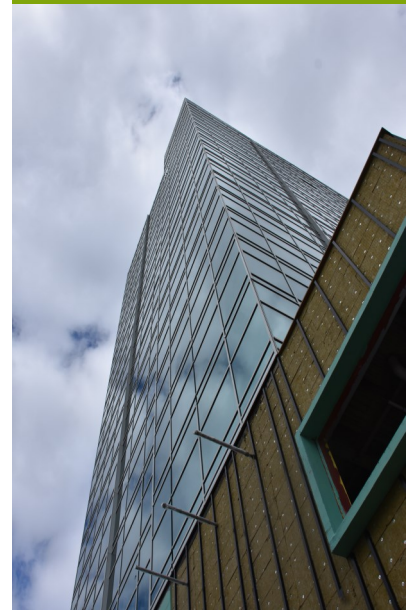
Continued on page 4

A sneak peek inside two amazing projects

Legislators, County Manager Josh Potosek and other officials got a chance to tour the under-construction Resorts World Catskills Casino and Veria/YO1 Wellness Resort, both near Monticello.

“Seeing these enormous projects well on their way to completion reinforced the certainty that Sullivan County is about to become a world-class destination,” affirmed Potosek. “And it won’t just be for those looking to gamble but to enjoy the natural beauty and ancillary tourism opportunities this region affords.”

Resorts World Catskills already rises 18 stories above the landscape, with more than 200,000



square feet of gaming and event space.

Nearby is the Veria/YO1 resort, a seven-story hotel, spa and conference facility overlooking Baily's Lake.



In between both is an indoor waterpark that will become part of the larger Adelaar resort in which the casino sits, offering families a year-round place to swim, raft, wade, eat and stay.

The casino and Veria resorts are anticipated to open this spring and have begun hiring. The indoor waterpark is scheduled to open a year later.



Planting a seed in one of our local schools' Catskill Edible Gardens also plants a seed in the impressionable minds of students. And like the fruits and vegetables that will sprout in these gardens, that seed of knowledge will bear fruit when one day these children are growing gardens of their own.

Growing the next generation of local food entrepreneurs

October is National Farm to School Month, a time to celebrate the connections happening all over the country between children and local food! Sullivan County has a strong agricultural heritage and a growing agriculture community and industry, reflected in its Farmland Protection Plan, which outlined several priorities and initiatives upon adoption in 2014.

Among those was to strengthen the connection between our farming community and our schools with the intent of helping more students to enjoy locally sourced meals and to understand where their food comes from. One key initiative in this endeavor is the Catskill Edible Garden Project, a collaborative effort between Catskill Mountainkeeper, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Sullivan Renaissance to bring healthy food to schools and communities. The Project has been "growing the next generation of food entrepreneurs" since 2012. Working

Continued on page 5



Light bright

What looks like a landing strip is actually the Government Center's parking lot in Monticello.

New LED lighting is not only brighter but more cost- and energy-efficient, and it provides safety and security for employees and visitors, without contributing to light pollution (the lights are precisely focused downward).

LED lighting is also being installed inside the Center, along with a new heating and ventilation system, plus updated signage.



Got a question?

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

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

co.sullivan.ny.us

**Sullivan County
Manager's Office
Joshua A. Potosek,
MBA**

100 North Street
Monticello, NY 12701
(845) 807-0450

Always there, always ready to help ...

Continued from page 2

Chief Dispatcher Chella Cavanagh was part of that first group of dispatchers, but while the technology has changed from paper to digital and rotary phones to iPhones, she can tell you that the floods, fires, accidents and heart attacks keep coming like they always have.

"There are times when we've had incredible amounts of snow," she recalls. "One time, a dispatcher arrived on a snowmobile — from White Sulphur Springs!"

Thunderstorms and car accidents still generate the most calls, and dispatchers continue to use guide cards — easily accessible pieces of paper listing what to say, and when to say it, in emergencies requiring action (like CPR) before responders arrive. The team of 21 also takes dozens of hours a year of continuing education courses.

"I couldn't ask for a better team," says Rau, pointing out how often they work together on the tougher calls.

"We're a family here," agrees Cavanagh. "We spend so much time together, eating together, going through stress together, all in the same room."

"And we're definitely the first line of support for one another," adds Rau, with Cavanagh seconding, "It's important and helpful to know you're not alone in dealing with these types of events."



The Sullivan County 911 Center is housed in this building at the County Airport near Kauneonga Lake.

Because what stresses you out in an emergency can do the same to a 911 dispatcher, who is away from home and family even during countywide catastrophes.

But this is what they do — a calling so intense that they're willing to endure long night shifts to ensure 24/7 coverage.

And there are plenty of happy stories to share: of babies delivered, lost hikers located, overdose victims revived.

Three decades on, the goal remains "to provide prompt and professional dispatch services to 70 agencies and to get help to residents as fast as possible in their time of need," nods Rau.

"I believe in that mission."



to prepare vegetables that have been grown in the school garden. The experience gets them excited about eating fresh vegetables.

Cornell Cooperative Extension has connected the Catskill Edible Garden Project with Seed to Salad, a statewide garden-based learning program that combines classroom experiences with hands-on activities in the garden. Food that was grown through this program was then featured in the cafeteria menu.

The CEGP is an excellent resource for students and our school community. It offers real-world experience and instills knowledge and healthy habits that can be nurtured. The program welcomes community and family involvement in the gardens.

For more information please contact one of the CEGP Partners: Catskill Mountainkeeper (439-1230), Cornell Cooperative Extension (292-6180) or Sullivan Renaissance (295-2445).

Teachable, eatable, repeatable ...

Continued from page 3

with schools and community organizations, they design edible gardens as living, educational and gathering spaces that allow children to experience sharing; engage in independent observation; learn about food and where it comes from; adopt healthy habits; reconnect with and explore their place in nature; build on a variety of school lessons; strengthen a sense of place AND create a sense of pride.

Several Sullivan County school districts have dedicated individual garden coordinators who connect the garden to classes, school activities or clubs. The greatest and most impressive impact is that the children are involved with planning, planting, caring for, harvesting, preparing and then actually EATING what they have grown.

In addition to the gardens, the CEGP has introduced a "Chef in the Classroom" program which allows students to participate in a hands-on cooking demonstration. They work side by side with a professional chef



Catskill Edible Garden Project locations

- Cooke Elementary School, Monticello
- Cornell Cooperative Extension, Liberty
- Emma Chase Elementary School, Wurtsboro
- Hebrew Day School, Kiamesha Lake
- Kenneth L. Rutherford Elementary School, Monticello
- Liberty Elementary School
- RJK Middle School, Monticello
- Roscoe Central School
- Sullivan West Elementary School, Jeffersonville
- White Sulphur Springs | SC BOCES

Community Garden locations

- Federation for the Homeless Vegetable Garden, Monticello
- Main Street Community Garden, Liberty
- Pearl Street Community Garden, Livingston Manor