

FROM THE CHAIR...

A Monthly Roundup of News from the Chair of the Sullivan County Legislature



BROADBAND
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BY ROBERT A. DOHERTY, CHAIRMAN, SULLIVAN COUNTY LEGISLATURE

I hear it everywhere I go: we need broadband Internet access, and we need it now.

So how do we, as your

County Legislature, meet that need? After all, we're not some huge corporation like Spectrum Cable or DirecTV.

Turns out we don't have to be. Sullivan County has the solution right here, right-sized for us. And we're just a few months from making it happen. Here's the plan: led by our Commissioner of Information Technology Services Lorne Green, we're installing antennas on two towers in Monticello (one we built at the new jail, one we're going to build at the old landfill), which will transmit and receive high-speed broadband signals from wifi modems you'll have in your home. That should happen by year's end.

If this pilot project is as successful as we believe it's going to be, we'll create a nonprofit corporation to roll out this service - at a competitive price - across Sullivan County, utilizing the 10 towers we already have for emergency communications.

Our research indicates it will ultimately pay for itself, but more importantly, it will satisfy the critical demand for broadband service Countywide AND bring more convenience and development our way.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CORONAVIRUS AND US - 2

THE SHERIFF IS IN - 3

MAKE SENSE OF THE CENSUS - 3

CORONAVIRUS AND SULLIVAN COUNTY

I'm a fighter. Always have been. So this new virus they call COVID-19 hasn't frightened me or slowed me down. I won't let it, and neither will the hundreds of County employees you depend on to continue providing services during this crazy time.

I particularly want to thank our nurses, who have repeatedly put themselves in close contact with coronavirus to ensure the rest of us stay safe and healthy. You're the absolute best!

So what's the latest? Well, we're

in Phase 1 of the State's reopening plan at the time this newsletter went to press, with Phase 2 a week off. That means our businesses are reopening and our economy is restarting, just at the time we need it most - our summer season.



Chairman Doherty and DA Meagan Galligan stand inside the Shepherd's Pantry at the White Lake Reformed Presbyterian Church, where they donated food they bought personally from local grocery stores.

How can I help?

If you are fortunate to still be collecting a paycheck, I ask you to join me in making a difference in the lives of your neighbors. Here's how:

- Donate food and/or money to your closest food pantry. The full list is at www.sullivanny.us/Departments/HealthandFamilyServices
- Volunteer with these pantries or other groups helping people out. Call our Emergency Community Assistance Center at 845-807-0925 to find out where you're needed.
- Spread the good word to others who you think can help, too!

It's critical our employers and employees start seeing those dollars roll in again, because how they fare is how we fare. Half our revenue comes from taxes - property, sales, room - and we won't get paid if they don't get paid.

That said, the health crisis has been just as devastating to some families, and like you, I don't want to see us descend into widespread transmission of coronavirus. Keep doing what you've been doing to limit the spread.

District Attorney Meagan Galligan and I have been trying to help personally as well, donating food to healthcare workers and local pantries, most recently in White Lake. We'll only get through this together, and there's no better time to be a part of your community than right now.

FILL OUT THE CENSUS? HELL, YES!

Did I get your attention with that headline? I'm not known for putting things mildly, and in this case, it's warranted.

You see, the 2020 U.S. Census is going on right now, even while we've all been distracted by coronavirus and life in general.

And if just one of us misses out on the chance to participate in the Census, we'll all pay the price. In fact, it's estimated that each person who fails to fill out the Census costs State, County and local governments over \$2,000 in lost funding - because that person wasn't counted as being a part of our population.

And for what? 'Cause we don't have the time? I did it online

and it took me less than 10 minutes. The questions were easy, they didn't invade my privacy, and the process was simple.

If you're afraid the government already knows too much about us, trust me, refusing to participate won't make a dent - except in your wallet, as you'll pay more taxes. How about we aim to get what we deserve instead?

Fill out the Census at www.2020Census.gov.

Don't do it for me. Do it for you!



NEW, IMPROVED AND OPENED



Unless you've had reason to visit our Sheriff's Office lately, you probably haven't realized that their new complex is now open. Most of us know it as the "new jail," but actually it's a whole lot more than that. (And the jail itself isn't quite yet open, as we have a few more State hoops to jump through first.)

The old Mapes Farm just off Route 17's Exit 104 in Monticello is now home to our Patrol and Civil divisions, housing 52 deputies, 6 civilian employees, and their leadership since March 9.

Very soon, I expect over 100 more Sheriff's employees will arrive, along with inmates, once the jail itself opens.

I'm proud of this 158,000-square-foot facility and even prouder to know it's giving our workers the long-overdue space they need and deserve.

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

- **Looking for the Chairman?**
845-807-0435 or
Robert.Doherty@co.sullivan.ny.us
- **General question? 845-794-3000**
- **Need a specific name or number?**
www.sullivanny.us/countydirectory



Tune in to our Town Halls every Monday and Thursday at 1 p.m.

If you haven't had a chance yet to watch one of our Facebook Town Hall Q&As, you're missing a lot. We've already had more than a dozen Town Halls, an idea I developed with our leadership team to give you the latest, most informative and most interesting data about COVID-19 in Sullivan County.

They've drawn an average of 4,000 viewers every time, and that's because we don't just tell you what we know - we answer your questions, too. For the ones you missed, visit our Coronavirus Info page at www.sullivanny.us where we have a complete archive. Then make sure to tune in every Monday and Thursday at 1 p.m. to www.facebook.com/SullivanCountyGov for the newest Town Halls.

I guarantee you'll learn something!

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

With coronavirus closing our buildings, the only way to witness Legislature meetings is online, but not everyone has the time or ability. So let us fill you in on our latest activities...

- **We reset** two public hearings for July 16, starting at 9:40 a.m. - one for amendments to our Ethics Law, one for a new Human Rights Law. We hope to hold the hearings in person.
- **We restored** \$8,000 in funding to Creative Think Tank, a nonprofit that runs Monticello's D.R.E.A.M. Tank, where teens can have fun and learn instead of being on the streets. Their funding had previously been cut due to COVID's financial impacts.
- **We implemented** two early retirement incentives to reduce our workforce without further layoffs, again due to COVID's fiscal hit.
- **We agreed** to fight a demand by Eagle Creek Hydropower to essentially cut their tax bill in half on eight parcels they own as part of their operations in Bethel and Forestburgh. We're joined in this court battle by the towns and the Monticello Central School District, all of whose taxpayers will take a hit if those taxes are lowered.