

2024

Message to the Legislature



Edwin J. Day

County Executive

March 26, 2024

Good morning, Rockland, members of the Legislature, elected officials, county employees... I thank you and everyone tuning in virtually for the 2024 State of the County.

As we just saw we've come a long way.

In fact, Rockland's thriving economy is attracting more investments by businesses, which will offset costs to taxpayers even further.

The Rockland County Industrial Development Agency reports last year \$1 Billion was invested into new projects, creating nearly 1,000 jobs. The current focus of my administration is maximizing momentum we have generated to ensure this County's continued success and fiscally stability for generations to come. Which is why we continue to invest more in the people of this administration. Accomplishments are only possible with a team that can take us there. Our Department of Personnel launched a learning library with over 600 trainings for employees. The courses cover everything from specific job training to personal development.

We are investing more into our future labor force of this County with our Youth Employment Program. This year our Youth Bureau will employ hundreds of young individuals who will work over 40,000 hours with employers. This provides youth with the valuable skills they'll need when they enter the workforce.

We are investing more into tourism, to strengthen our economy and create jobs.

In 2022, tourism generated \$513 million in sales in Rockland, saving the average household \$581 in yearly property taxes. This year, we hired a marketing company to promote this county and increase tourism revenue even further.

We also awarded approximately \$300,000 in tourism grants to 31 organizations – the highest ever since launching this initiative. These grants are used to promote our events outside Rockland, to attract more visitors to the county.

We're investing more into our transit system, a lifeline for those without a car. We're planning to purchase 2 dozen new TRIPS paratransit buses. The best part is they'll be purchased with Federal and State funding. That means zero county tax dollars for the upgrade. This is in addition to still providing free TOR bus service for the fourth year in a row.

We are investing more in our fire and emergency services to protect our volunteer first responders. This includes expanding property tax deductions under New York State for volunteers.

We've awarded over \$115,000 from our two College Tuition programs, HERROES & Edges. These programs reimburse volunteer first responders for part of all their tuition in exchange for their service to the County.

We are hiring several new fire training instructors for our fire training center and new Fire Operations Building.

We are purchasing a new breathing apparatus training maze. This \$300,000 training tool - won't cost local taxpayers a single penny thanks to our team securing a grant.

Let's not forget I recently stood alongside our New York State lawmakers announcing a bipartisan effort to bolster fire safety with a package of 9 New York State bills.

The bills cover everything from minimum staffing levels in municipalities to enforce the uniform code to aggravated offenses against a property owner if someone is hurt due to a building or fire code violation. We know more needs to be done and believe these bills can and will save more lives.

We applaud our state lawmakers for putting lives before politics, for the betterment of our residents.

And of course, a huge thank you to our Fire & Emergency Services team for all that you do, and to our volunteers who put their lives on the line every single day for this County!

We are helping more local veterans than ever before. Last year, our Veterans Service Agency received a 55% increase in claims and secured heroes over \$4 million in benefits.

Some of our success stories include a WWII veteran secured over \$4,000 a month in assistance for his declining health. We also helped a Gulf War veteran who unsuccessfully tried to obtain financial assistance on his own for a decade. When he finally came to us our team secured him over \$2000 a month in benefits.

To continue to better serve our veterans we are hiring an additional veteran service officer to assist with claims.

We will never stop fighting for the heroes who risked everything for the liberties we enjoy.

We are also working diligently to support the older men and women who continue to help make this county what it is today.

Our Office for the Aging helped hundreds of seniors improve their strength, flexibility and balance during Zumba and Chair Yoga classes last year.

They also worked to provide nearly 4,000 rides to clients for medical appointments.

Our team is doing everything possible to help these folks remain healthy, happy, and safe for years to come.

We're preserving more of Rockland's natural environment.

Our Division of Environmental Resources facilitated the purchase and protection of about 40 acres from development under our Open Space Acquisition Program... with more acquisitions in the pipeline.

We additionally allocated \$10 million in ARPA grants to municipalities and nonprofits for over two dozen projects for parks, playgrounds, and gardens across Rockland.

Once these projects are complete the people of Rockland will feel even prouder to call this County home. Not only will our natural beauty be elevated to an all-new level, but these improvements will benefit Rocklanders for generations to come.

We are doing more to protect families from dangerous diseases.

Unfortunately, vaccine hesitancy has become more common leading to long eliminated diseases resurfacing, including a case of paralytic polio here in 2022.

To combat this, our Rockland County Department of Health continues to be proactive to increase immunizations through various education efforts.

Since that case of polio, nearly 60,000 polio vaccines have been administered countywide. It's also been over a year since any polio was detected in wastewater.

Additionally, last year our health department spearheaded a media campaign empowering parents with information on immunizing their children against harmful diseases.

That campaign resulted in a 63% increase in visits to our immunization clinics last year compared to 2022. And – 140% increase compared 2021.

The number of child immunization visits at our Pomona site also nearly doubled from 2021 to last year.

Let's give this department a round of applause.

As this responsibility falls on families as well, I implore all parents -- please do the right thing for your child and the greater good of this community and have your child vaccinated now.

We are also a leader in the state for Child Welfare resources thanks to our incredible Department of Social Services (DSS). Last year DSS trained and certified 26 new foster homes for children, awarded 194 housing vouchers to families, and increased Childcare assistance funding by \$2 million. And so much more.

We're also proud to share our Office for People With Disabilities is hosting a new Accessible Family Fun Day on June 23rd.

Our FREE event for ages 12 – 26 with special needs will feature adaptive sports for all abilities. The best part, we hope to make it an annual event for our residents with special needs to enjoy.

We are investing more resources into the fight against hate and discrimination in this county, including more public outreach.

With this goal in mind, our Human Rights Commission launched three satellite offices across the county.

We also secured Martin Luther King III to visit Rockland County, speaking about unity and respect.

While my Human Rights Commission works diligently to build bridges among communities, I remind everyone that this is an issue that can only be solved if everyone does their part.

And, when necessary, use your voice to stop hate and intolerance in its tracks.

We are also doing more to crackdown on irresponsible slumlords putting innocent lives at risk.

Last year our Department of Consumer Protection investigated 617 complaints, pursued 166 prosecutions for unlicensed contracting, and returned \$66,000 to homeowners.

Our Health Department's Center for Rockland Codes Investigations conducted 7,200 inspections, a 20% increase over the prior year.

And since being mandated by New York State to enforce the Uniform Code in the Village of Spring Valley, our Office of Buildings and Codes has conducted over 2,000 inspections in 2 years. In fact, we completed 3 years of inspections in two years. Without a doubt an incredible feat.

Those inspections resulted in over 12,000 violations and half a million dollars in fines collected.

But enforcement is only a band aid, as it does not solve what is causing this issue which is lack of housing.

We don't have the housing stock needed to drive down home and apartment prices, which is resulting in residents living in dangerously overcrowded conditions.

Last year, our Office of Community Development partnered with Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress to conduct the County's first-ever comprehensive community and affordable housing needs assessment.

This assessment underscored our housing needs and challenges and several methods to overcome those challenges and develop affordable workforce housing.

We are planning to present these findings at our second Housing Forum on April 19th. The hope is to create a roadmap for local governments to select from as they see fit.

But I'd like to dive into some of what we discovered. Nearly 60% of homes in this county are single-family detached homes. The average price of those single-family homes is nearly \$700,000. The median household

income in Rockland is \$100,000 which only qualifies for a \$260,000 mortgage. That is a huge gap for the average resident to overcome.

We also have a housing deficit of 4200 units for those making under \$60,000. We are talking about our essential workers including teachers, first responders, retail workers, government employees, and more... all unable to afford safe housing here.

The first recommendation we are pursuing immediately is hiring a housing coordinator to lead any and all affordable housing initiatives we plan to pursue.

The second is utilizing ARPA funding to create a revolving loan program. This program will provide direct loans to borrowers for affordable housing projects in Rockland. And because it is a revolving loan, proceeds from loan repayments flow back into the fund for future housing opportunities.

This is not all we are planning to do. I can let our residents know we are discussing and looking into even more initiatives we can get underway – with the help of our county legislature – create safe and affordable housing for all. This is a national problem that did not develop overnight, nor will it be solved overnight, and I implore our families at home to be patient. I will continue to take every opportunity to make things better for everyone.

I also call on my partners in government and our County legislators to work with me and my administration to knock down financial barriers for our families. Costs in this county and country are far too high... and families are stretched thin. The best thing we can do to help them is find ways to put money back into the pockets of the people as we did with this year's budget and our tax cut.

As we wrap up, I want everyone to know while it is impossible to mention every department, or department head, there is no I in team – especially when it comes to ours.

From our Sheriff's Department and facilities to audit and insurance; every department and every person in our administration plays a vital role in our operational success.

To my dedicated employees we have accomplished more than we ever thought possible. We rescued and revived this County.

Thanks to our hard work, we can and will continue to spark real positive change for our residents.

So, I ask our employees, department heads, commissioners, and the legislature; help me give our families more reasons to be proud of this administration.

Let us pray for our military for both securing our freedom and defending our liberty. Let us pray for our everyday heroes ... our cops, volunteer firefighters, Emergency Medical personnel, and Auxiliary police for keeping us safe. May God bless you all; God bless Rockland, and may God bless America. Thank you!

OFFICE FOR THE AGING

2023 Achievements

- Provided funding and monitoring for our contracted agencies of more than \$3.7 million for older adult services and programs including meals, transportation, legal services, home healthcare, etc.
- Senior Day at Clover Stadium – Collaborated with Polaris Healthcare to provide an opportunity for socialization and fun for 625 Rockland County older adults. The event included a free baseball game, parking and free food, and community vendors.
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, June 15, 2023 – Collaboration with County Executive Ed Day, the Rockland County Department of Social Services, the Rockland County Sheriff's Office, and several community organizations where June 15 was proclaimed World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Rockland County. The event served to bring an increased awareness to the existence of elder abuse in our community and offer much needed support and solutions.
- Technology Classes – The RCOFA teamed up with the Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services, the Rockland County Division of Information Technology Services and Rockland BOCES to host technology education classes for over 120 seniors. Class instruction was followed by one-on-one assistance from BOCES interns for seniors with hand-held devices.
- Health and Wellness – The RCOFA helped nearly 800 older adults improve their strength, flexibility, and balance during dozens of Zumba, Bingocize, Matter of Balance and Chair Yoga classes. Falls Prevention Awareness Week events also reached dozens of older adults and their families.
- HIICAP – Assisted and educated nearly 600 older adults and their families through the Health Insurance Information Counseling & Assistance program to better understand Medicare and other health insurances.
- Transportation Assistance – The RCOFA provided nearly 4,000 rides to clients for medical appointments within Rockland County. Rides were provided by either a contract agency or volunteers who are a part of the Rockland Senior Volunteer Program.
- Outreach and Events – Partnered with 25 agencies to host an application and health screening clinic which connected 100 older adults with available services. RCOFA was also assisted by the Salvation Army to provide 200 Thanksgiving and Holiday meals to older adults in need.

2024 Goals

- We are scheduled to move our offices from Building B to Building F at the Pomona Health Complex. Building F has space to create collaborations with community partners which are interested in holding scheduled office hours at our new location. These partnerships will make it easier for clients and their families to obtain information about services and will improve outcomes for the older adults served by RCOFA.
- New on-site education classes, games and activity programs designed to promote socialization, physical fitness and group exercise will be provided at Building F. This will include chair yoga, Zumba, A Matter of Balance, Bingocize, etc.
- Tech Lab Partnership – RCOFA will be partnering with Rockland BOCES to hold a regularly scheduled technical assistance lab staffed by BOCES students.
- Continue the Fall Prevention Program – The purpose of the Falls Prevention program is to bring to scale and sustain evidence-based fall prevention programs that have been proven to reduce falls, fear of falling, and fall-related injuries in older adults. We will continue to host pertinent programs to combat and prevent falls.
- ElliQ – Promote and distribute proactive care companion technology to older adults, reducing social isolation, supporting independence, connection, and engagement. ElliQ proactively suggests activities

and initiates conversations, building context through artificial intelligence (AI) to inform follow-up conversations that create a sense of relationship with the AI. To support health and wellness, ElliQ offers sleep relaxation exercises, physical activity exercises, in-depth nutrition-related conversations, and medication reminders for each user's unique condition(s).

- Elder Abuse Services and Programming – Collaborate with the Center for Safety and Change, DSS, and other community partners to increase awareness of the existence of elder abuse in our community and offer support and solutions.
- Introduction of on-site Alzheimer's Programs. Through these programs we will be able to offer a wide range of information and services for people with dementia as well as their families and caregivers on-site.
- Community Outreach – The RCOFA will hold office hours in libraries, senior housing complexes and community centers across Rockland.
- Improve Transportation Options – The RCOFA will pilot the GoGo Grandparent program which will offer an additional transportation option for older adults. This effort is being overseen by the New York State Office for the Aging with the goal of simplifying and improving transportation options.
- Continue to focus on our caregivers of older adults in Rockland County by providing a network of services and support.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN DEPARTMENT (ARPA)

Jenna Nazario, Director

2023 Achievements

- Closed out four ARPA Grants:
 - Awarded over \$1,300,000 to small businesses.
 - Awarded \$400,000.00 in non-profit rescue grants.
 - Awarded over \$450,000.00 to restaurants.
 - Awarded \$7,000,000.00 in Urban Green Space grants.
- Funded the expansion of the Youth Bureau TEEN Works program to all youth in Rockland ages 14-24 years.
- Funded the Spring Valley YPI program to continue their work with at risk youth.
- Awarded funds to Purchasing Department to expand their e-sourcing program to allow for more equitable opportunities for MWBE/WBE enterprises and better collaboration with surrounding Counties.
- Completed the Rockland Riverway Feasibility Study- 26-mile path from Palisades to Stony Point.
- Released the 2023 Community Checkpoint Survey to ensure ARPA funds were still aligned with community need- received over 500 responses.
- Built new relationships with stakeholders both within departments and outside agencies to develop new relationships and grant opportunities.
- Completed the Lake Suzanne walkway engineering study.
- Collaborated with local affordable housing nonprofit to preserve existing affordable housing units in Rockland.
- Granted \$1,450,000.00 to acquire land for workforce housing.
- Awarded \$616,959.00 to install new 911 software more equipped to respond to mental health emergencies.

2024 Goals

- Partner with Community Development to create a new initiative for additional workforce, affordable housing throughout the entire County.
- Phase 2 of the Rockland Riverway trail with RFP to hire engineer to develop plan and environmental studies.
- Release new nonprofit equipment grant to allow food pantries reimbursement for much needed equipment to maintain their food storage ability.
- Partner with Stony Point to develop climate mitigation plans in high-risk flood areas.
- Partner with Planning and Transportation to develop the new County Comprehensive Plan to build sustainability for years to come.
- Community outreach and education program on affordable housing.
- Unveil all the newly developed open spaces approved under the Urban Green Space grant.
- Obligate all the remaining ARPA funds.

AUDIT DEPARTMENT

Linda Hill, Auditor

2023 Achievements

- Successfully assisted the Department of Probation to upgrade and implement new software to manage their fees and restitution accounts.
- Developed and issued new training materials on Electronic Vouchering.
- Successfully audited contract agencies as needed.
- Continued to monitor all Procurement Card purchases.
- Successfully completed an audit of the Rockland County Municipal Federation.
- Successfully completed the 2022 Financial Statements for the Deferred Compensation Plan for Employees of the County of Rockland.

2024 Goals

- Develop and implement a County-wide policy on accounts receivable which will include the recording of receivables and a standard for writing off bad debt. (Will be done in conjunction with the Law Department)
- Develop and implement a County-wide policy on running events which includes accepting donations, accepting funds from paid attendees, advertising, securing vendors, etc. (Will be done in conjunction with the Law Department)
- Review all department's monitoring of migrated contract agencies.
- Review and address any issues in the annual employee engagement survey.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Kathleen Pietanza, Commissioner
Patricia Giblin, Commissioner

2023 Achievements

Primary Election

- State/Local Primary June 27, 2023
- Early Voting 1,511
- Voter Turnout Total 12,027

General Election

- Early Voting 9,274
- Absentee and affidavits 3,099
- Total votes cast 63,037

Voter Outreach

- The board strengthened and expanded our voter outreach approach.

Schools:

- We visited nine local schools to register the students to vote. We assisted them in filling out the registration form and informed them of their options for absentee voting.

Post Offices and Libraries:

- Supplied all 15 local post offices throughout Rockland registration forms and absentee applications. We send to all 14 libraries.

Villages and Towns:

- All Towns and Villages were sent registration forms and absentee forms, English and Spanish and flyers seeking poll workers.

Citizenship Ceremony and Community groups:

- Participates in the Citizenship Ceremony and will send and attend voter outreach groups including the NAACP and special interest.

2024 Goals

- Continue to update the election process by purchasing new voting machines. With the use of grant money and help from the County we were able to replace our fleet of voting machines. The old machines are more than fifteen years old and were becoming completely outdated. Additional equipment will be purchased to facilitate the absentee process.
- New scanners and voting machines are the goals to increase speed, accuracy and modernize the election process. Voters expect more and we strive to make the voting process as seamless as possible.

DEPARTMENTS OF BUDGET & FINANCE

Stephen DeGroat, Commissioner

2023 Achievements

- Worked successfully with NY State Office of the Comptroller for the 2023 & 2024 Budget Review.
- No Revenue Anticipation Notes (RANs) issued.
- No Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs) issued.
- Successfully submitted quarterly reports to the NY State Office of the Comptroller.
- Successfully submitted multi-year report to the NY State Office of the Comptroller.
- County made full payment of pension bill without having to borrow from New York State.
- Successfully remained under the NYS Tax Cap for the 2022 and 2023 Budgets.
- Purchased debt software, Debt Book to organize all county serial bonds.

2024 Goals

- Achieve AAA credit rating from Moody's – highest ranking.
- Continue to receive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award (CAFR) by the Government Finance Officers Association.
- Continue working with other credit rating agencies for upgrades.
- Continue not issuing a Revenue Anticipation Note (RAN) or Tax Anticipation Notes (TAN).
- Collaborate with the five towns on a county-wide property tax software system.

OFFICE OF BUILDINGS & CODES

Edward Markunas, Director

2023 Achievements

- 100% of 1 year commercial/assembly inspections have been completed.
- 100% of 3-year residential inspections have been completed in a 2 year period.
- Successfully awarded 3rd party record keeping management software for Advancing Code Compliance Technology (GovPilot).
- Issued over 400 Building Permits.
- Conducted 233 administrative prosecutions.
- 106 hearings completed to date.
- Conducted 2,090 inspections - 1,107 in 2023 and 983 in 2022.

2024 Goals

- Build and configure Code Compliance modules with 3rd party record keeping software (GovPilot).
- Contract with additional 3rd party plan review service and Code Enforcement Officers.

- Develop and create inspection zones and sectors.
- Implement a training program for Code Enforcement Officers and institute the newly configured record keeping software for tracking of inspections.
- Continue to seek compliance through enforcement and educational outreach.

COUNTY CLERK
Donna Silberman, County Clerk

2023 Achievements

- Completion of a reconfiguration of the office to provide a safer environment for the public and staff. This includes bulletproof glass and additional stations to serve customers more efficiently.
- Upgraded our website to include appointment scheduling for passports and pistol applications.
- In our Pistol License Unit, maintained increased application flow, answered numerous customer inquiries, and provided detailed information on new laws, policies, and application procedural changes.
- Effectively managed the influx of passport applications and assisted customers navigating the lengthy process that resulted from increased travel.
- Created and secured funding for a mobile outreach passport program.
- Senior Center Visits – Educating seniors about property related scams and how to better protect themselves.

2024 Goals

- Officially launch our mobile outreach program and deliver services directly to towns and villages making it easier for residents.
- Continue to digitize additional court records to make them accessible on-line.
- Create on-line ordering program on our website to provide copies of basic documents.
- Increase vendor participation and participant enrollment in FAVOR and SAVES Discount Programs.
- Pass legislation to allow for filing of federal immigration documents in our office.
- Create interactive user-friendly app for public to conduct services and communicate with our office.
- Through updated technology, we are committed to eliminating language barriers for residents.
- GIS linking of deeds with section/block/lot so that it can be connected to the county planning department parcel look up.

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Alexandra Obremski, Director

2023 Achievements

- Held our first housing forum with over 200 attendees and multiple panelists on various housing topics. The event was a success.
- Completed the housing needs assessment.
- Distributed over \$4 million in CDBG funds to towns, villages and not for profits.

2024 Goals

- To conduct our second Housing Forum in April.
- To launch an education and marketing campaign targeted to the results of the housing needs assessment.
- To seek proposals for the County's \$3.3 million in HOME-ARP funds.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Kimberly Vonn Ronn, Director

2023 Achievements

- New Director appointed in late 2023. Reviewed the local licensing laws, rules, regulations and internal policies and procedures, and hosted public meetings regarding the livery and for-hire vehicle, driver and base station licensing division.
- Obtained an additional position of Deputy Director of Consumer Protection to oversee the enforcement division of the Department and supervise consumer complaints to ensure expediency and efficiency.
- Successfully developed and passed a local law to license livery and for-hire vehicles, drivers and base stations in the County of Rockland for the purpose of protecting consumers and the motoring public.
- Investigated 617 complaints which led to 166 criminal court prosecutions and the issuance of 530 violations for infractions of the Rockland County licensing laws as well as the New York State Agriculture and Markets laws. The financial penalties and departmental licensing fees offset the operational expenses of the Department.
- Through our consumer complaint process, we have successfully mitigated cases in favor of homeowners who have been taken advantage of by both licensed and unlicensed contractors. In 2023, we returned \$66,000 in restitution to Rockland homeowners.
- Processed a total of 440 new license applications which brings the number of active licenses that the Department oversees to a total of 2,629. This number includes a combination of Home Improvement, Plumbing, Electrical, Precious Metals, Tax Grievance, and Towing license types.

2024 Goals

- Continue the partnership with the Planning Department in the development of a multi- agency software application and anticipate launching the application early 2024. This programming will increase our efficiencies across our licensing and enforcement spectrums. It will create on-line formatting for license applications and complaints and track statuses for both the department and the licensee. This will drastically improve our internal processes and workflow, reduce time frames and enable a mobile application for all parties.
- Continue to increase public awareness of the Department and educate Rockland County consumers. This will be accomplished through social media, Department website, and public forums as well as contributions to the Office of the Aging newsletter. Continue to promote public awareness to inform and alert the public about scam, frauds and best consumer practices.
- Launch the new livery and for-hire vehicle, driver and base station licensing division to protect consumers. Partner with Rockland County Sheriff's Office to conduct proper background checks on drivers and safety inspections on vehicles.
- Implement a written examination to ensure home improvement contractors have the objective skills and competence necessary to perform quality workmanship.
- Continue robust enforcement against unlicensed contractors and continue partnership with Rockland County District Attorney's Office to combat illegal and itinerant contractors.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Tom Walsh, District Attorney

2023 Achievements

- The Rockland County District Attorney's Office ICAC (Internet Crimes Against Children) Task Force continues to work with state and federal agencies to identify individuals online who are attempting to lure children to meet for sex or looking to disseminate child sexual abuse material (CSAM).
- Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program named Project Connect was piloted at the Clarkstown Police and now has been rolled out to the Orangetown, Ramapo, and Haverstraw Police Departments. This is a pre-arraignment program for low-level nonviolent offenders with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. Participants work with peers, are assessed and referred for treatment. If they engage for 30 days, the charges are withdrawn.
- The Rockland County District Attorney's Office (RCDAO), led by the Drug Task Force, continued to be a regional leader in efforts to bring community and state resources together to fight the scourge of opioid and heroin use and abuse, as well to promote better treatment and recovery services for addicted persons.
- The Rockland Crime Analysis Center provides real-time analysis, criminal intelligence and other important information to enhance the capacity of law enforcement within Rockland County.
- Continued to establish a more diverse office by recruiting and hiring new employees, bringing our office more in line with the diverse population of Rockland County.
- Created a Community Affairs Division led by a Senior Assistant District Attorney to develop and strengthen partnerships with community organizations.
- In collaboration with the Town of Clarkstown and the Clarkstown Police Department, we held mock DWI accident demonstrations for high school students showing the real consequences of drinking while driving.
- The Office used various social media platforms to keep the public updated on important cases, Office programs, and community events.

2024 Goals

- To seek justice for victims of crimes in Rockland County, while protecting the rights of the accused.
- Continue to work and build relationships with our law enforcement partners on the federal, state, and local level.
- Work in collaboration with the Rockland County Department of Health to hold Narcan trainings for the public.
- Host “Drug Take Back” events throughout the year and in different parts of Rockland County to make it easier for residents to discard unwanted prescription drugs.
- The RCDAO Drug Task Force will be holding informational meetings in each town in Rockland County to discuss the fentanyl and opioid epidemic.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Lucy Redzeposki, Director

2023 Achievements

New Business Highlights

Regeneron

- Purchase and renovation of 235,000 sq ft former Avon facility in Suffern
- Uses to include Research & Development laboratories and cold storage space
- Estimated capital expenditure: \$138 million
- Project will generate 230 new jobs

The Ranch

- Purchase and renovation of 40,000 sq ft Table Rock Estate, to include 26 guest rooms as well as dining, spa, yoga, and other wellness activities
- Estimated capital expenditure: \$20.1 million
- Project will generate 100 new jobs

Strides Pharma

- Strides Pharma, Inc. specializes in soft-gel capsules (SGC), oral solids, modified releases, topicals and liquids
- New lease of 2 entire buildings at Hudson Valley iCampus, totaling 57,197 sq ft for chemical storage

Natixis

- Natixis is a French financial institution providing investment and asset management services
- Relocation of data center from CT to Orangeburg
- Small footprint (3,500 sq ft) but major investment in equipment, hardware, etc.
- Estimated capital expenditure: \$1.25 million

Point 72

- Point 72 is a global asset management firm
- Relocation of data center from CT to Orangeburg
- Small footprint (4,750 sq ft) but major investment in renovation (\$10 million) and equipment, hardware, etc. (\$95 million)
- Estimated capital expenditure: \$105 million

Expansion – Key Projects

Pfizer

- Announced expansion of Vaccine Research & Development facilities at its Pearl River campus
- Plans include building 260,000 sq ft of new space, including 55,000 sq ft of lab space
- Estimated capital expenditure: \$470 million
- Project will generate 370 new jobs

Aptar

- Global manufacturer of dispensing devices; pharma division HQ is in Congers, existing 170K facility
- Adding 30K sq ft expansion, which will allow the company to expand its manufacturing capabilities
- Estimated capital expenditure: \$10.7 million
- Project will generate 15 new jobs

Chartwell Hemlock

- Their business is finished dose pharmaceuticals, expanding into injectables
- Renovation of 3 properties in Congers
- Uses to include manufacturing, distribution, and office space
- Estimated capital expenditure: \$13.9 million
- Project will generate 50 new jobs

Schreiner Group

- Business is manufacturing of specialty labels
- Received \$1.5 million grant from Empire State Development to construct and equip a new 100,000 sq ft facility
- The expansion will incorporate updates to existing manufacturing technologies, and implement new technologies such as RFID chip technology

Industrial Development Agency – Induced Projects

- \$1 billion in estimated capital expenditures for newly-induced projects
- Over 950 new jobs anticipated as a result of these projects
- Highlights:
 - Housing – 9 projects (3 market rate, 5 affordable, 1 mixed use)
 - Pharmaceutical – 2 expansions and 1 new
 - Data Centers – 2 new
 - Luxury Retreat and Spa – The Ranch
 - Retail / Shopping Center – Spring Valley Marketplace

Grant Awards

(Total 2023 NYS Economic Development + Workforce Grant Awards = \$3,560,838)

- Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council awards for Rockland totaled \$2,292,426
 - Empire State Development – total \$1,825,000
 - Capital grant for manufacturing
 - Tourism marketing dollars
 - Support for growth of two craft breweries
 - Capital grant for nonprofit serving people with disabilities
 - Preservation grant
 - Department of State – total \$467,426
 - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (Village of Haverstraw and Village of Nyack)
- New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) grants totaled \$215,000
- Workforce Grants
 - NYS Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD)
 - Rockland Community College - \$933,412 to develop and implement a new industrial machinery maintenance mechanics pathway that will provide credentialed training for students while meeting the hiring needs of local manufacturing partners.
 - Empire State Teacher Residency Program
 - Clarkstown Central School District - \$120,000 to support 4 Teacher Residents

Marketing

- *Trade & Industry Development* magazine
 - Print ad in magazine (September/October 2023) – circulation: 25,000
 - Digital banner ad on <https://www.tradeandindustrydev.com/> (October 2023 – September 2024) – unique monthly visitors: 18,000
 - Retargeting campaign (January 2024 – April 2024) – 90,000 guaranteed impressions
 - Digital Directory Featured Listing (January 2024 – September 2024)
- Presentations to various audiences, including Leadership Rockland, Rockland Business Association, Workforce Development Summit, Rockland Business Women’s Network

2024 Goals

- Implement the 2024 Tourism Grant Awards to provide funding to promote Rockland’s events/destinations outside of the county to increase visitor spending.
- Generate a minimum of \$500,000 in filming revenue using county property while promoting the county as a filming destination.
- Develop the 2024 Rockland County Tourism Travel Guide for distribution at rest stops, attractions, and other tourism locations to promote the county.
- Maintain an updated departmental website which includes Tourism, Economic Development and Filming information for the stakeholders, tourists, residents, businesses that are served by the department.
- Work with the travel consultant to prepare our attractions and destinations to receive group tours and provide consulting services as appropriate.

- Work with the marketing company of record to promote Rockland County as a premier tourism destination.
- Develop and implement a tourism promotional program to attract the Canadian traveler in partnership with the NYS Tourism Industry Association and NYS IloveNY.
- Implement the recommendations in the 2023 comprehensive economic development strategic plan for the county with input from the Economic Development Advisory board and Pattern for Progress.
- Obtain CFA monies in the amount of \$25,000 that was awarded to the county to develop the economic development strategic plan once the plan is received.
- Assist in the feasibility study to promote a walking/biking trail that connects Rockland County to the Empire State Trail and continues along the eastern border of the county.
- Expand the filming concierge program with the filming industry and the filming contacts throughout Rockland County to include outreach to attract filming to the area.
- Serve as President of the Hudson Valley Tourism Group promoting Rockland County as a destination in the Hudson Valley in partnership with the neighboring counties.
- Participate in the Travel and Adventure show at Jacob Javits Center and IPW to promote Rockland County and the region as a tourism destination.
- Work with the IDA, Rockland Works, the Rockland County Workforce Development Board, and other stakeholders to attract, retain and expand new and existing businesses by promoting programs and incentives that create a climate in which companies of all sizes can grow and prosper.
- Participate in all Empire State Development activities including the CFA process and site selection program to ensure Rockland is well represented.
- Use the ILOVENY grant funds, promote attractions and events throughout Rockland County.
- Ensure Rockland County's tourism, economic development and filming assets are included in all NYS initiatives pertaining to these three areas so that Rockland's participation benefits the county.

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Kevin McGuiness, Coordinator

2023 Achievements

- Environmental Education – Staff at the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Division of Environmental Resources (DER), in partnership with other agencies, educated 941 youth and adults throughout Rockland County. Approximately 24 education programs and topics were presented which included Rockland Planning Land Use with Students (RPLUS), Conservation Field Days, American eel lifecycle, a day in the life of the Hudson and Harbor estuary, macroinvertebrate education, tabling events, and others.
- Community Science – A total of 197 individuals participated in 6 community science projects coordinated by the DER and other partners. These projects were the American eel project at Minisceongo Creek, Water Assessment by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE), three bird walks, and one cleanup event. For the American eel project at Minisceongo Creek, 75 volunteers counted, weighed, and relocated 2,167 glass eels over the 11-week monitoring season. For the WAVE project, 13 volunteers collected samples from 13 streams across Rockland County. For the three bird walks, 19 volunteers participated to identify and count birds in Orangeburg and Tappan. The data they collected was uploaded to the ebird platform. For the annual cleanup event, staff worked with Keep Rockland Beautiful (KRB) and the Minisceongo Creek

Watershed Alliance members and partners to coordinate education events and lead clean ups at five sites in the Minisceongo Creek watershed. 90 volunteers participated in this cleanup and removed 57 bags of trash, 21 bags of recyclables and bulky items totaling over 1,890 pounds.

- Road stream crossing assessments – Seasonal staff from the Rockland Conservation and Service Corps worked with staff from the SWCD to assess road stream crossings in the Town of Clarkstown. Seasonal staff used the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative protocol and database to survey 133 road stream crossings, totaling over 9 square miles.
- Environmental Volunteer Award - Jacob Tanenbaum was selected as the County Executive's Outstanding Environmental Volunteer for his volunteer work with the American eel project at Minisceongo Creek and his volunteer work with Turtles of Western Highway. A tree was planted in his honor at Kennedy Dells County Park, followed by a recognition ceremony.
- Haverstraw Bay Park – Above average attendance continues at the park. Both park permit applications and boat launches were above previous averages. The Pilot Personal Watercraft program went very well and has been made permanent. The surfaces of both playgrounds were replaced using American Rescue Plan funds (\$191,000) and \$130,000 from the operating budget. Once again hosted the September 11th Memorial Service.
- Continued to preserve additional lands as County Parks through acquisition as part of the County Open Space Program. Assessed 6 properties for potential acquisition and finalized deals and acquired 4 properties totaling approximately 52 acres.
- Utilized the Rockland Conservation & Service Corps members to evaluate all County Park trails and make recommendations for improving safety, sustainability and ease of use.
- Utilized Rockland Conservation & Service Corps members to build a new, approximately 1 mile trail and bridge crossing on the newly acquired Gordon Property.
- Installed new informational Park maps at the trailheads in the County parks.
- Updated park bathroom facilities with new energy efficient hand dryers and freshly painted facility walls and floors.
- Maintained the DER social media pages.

2024 Goals

- Install a public walking path connecting Dutch Garden north to the Demarest Kill Park.
- Install a public walking path around the 25-acre Cropsey Farm. The path for recreational use, will also allow users to observe the various fields used to grow organic crops and flowers.
- Upgrade the dog park at Kakiat Park.
- Install 25 new benches at Haverstraw Bay Park.
- Improve the park reservation permitting system by offering an online reservation and payment option.
- Hire a full-time conservation district technician.
- Staff will deliver in person and virtual education programs to educate 775 youth and adults.
- Staff will continue to lead community science programs throughout Rockland County.
- Continue to circulate bi-annual Soil and Water Conservation District newsletters.
- Continue to acquire and preserve as County Parks, additional parcels through the Open Space Program. Currently assessing 12 properties which total approximately 342 acres.
- Continue to update the DER social media pages.

OFFICE OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Chris Kear, Director

2023 Achievements

- Successfully revised the Industrial Training Program. Trained over 600 employees from various corporations/businesses.
- Began construction of the new Fire Operations Training Building.
- Secured a \$220,000 grant from the Dormitory Association of the State of New York. Grant will go towards a new technical and challenging Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus training maze.
- Added three new Deputy Fire Coordinators to our ranks.
- Purchased new \$22,000 training prop called Max Fire Box. This training prop will teach firefighters fire, heat and smoke flows paths, the effects of ventilation and how to control the growth and extinguishment of fire.
- Created an extensive Lithium Battery training program for the counties volunteer firefighters. This includes working with Rockland Green on disposal and developing safety information for the public.
- Hire for the new Principal Clerk position which oversees the HERROS & EDGES programs.
- Successfully began the HERROS tuition reimbursement program for volunteer fire and EMS personnel. At the end of 2023, the program has reimbursed over \$50,000 to our county volunteers.
- Successfully collaborated with RCC on the EDGES program which provides free enrollment to active volunteers here in Rockland County.
- OFES responded to and was an integral part of the massive brush fires along the CSX rail line. This response involved mutual aid from three different counties, and a response from the NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control. Coordinated with numerous county agencies to make this a successful operation.
- OFES also played an integral role with the massive flooding on July 9th in the northern part of our county. Coordinating local and state resources was integral. In addition, worked hand in hand with NYS DHSES and FEMA to assist local communities in damage assessment and funding.
- Successfully transition our Indian Point/Entergy plan from active participation to a monitoring status. This includes decommissioning our equipment at many different locations and plan changes to reflect the current potential hazard.

2024 Goals

- Continue to grow the HERROS & EDGES programs for the volunteers here in Rockland.
- Continue updating the county's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Hurricane Response and Preparedness Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Work in collaboration with the Sheriff's Department on the Domestic Terrorism Plan.
- Facilitate two functional exercises which will bring all of the key agencies (both public & private) together to test the preparedness for major incident.
- E-911 Office has secured three new cell phone carriers for our tower locations. These three new carriers will bring in over three million dollars over the life of their contracts.
- Create several new task force response plans for county fire departments. These task force plans will be for brush fire response and water resource response. These plans will provide an organized and well-planned procedure for request for the specific task force by incident commanders.

- Facilitate the purchase of new technical and challenging Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus training maze with grant funds and capitol project funding. Total cost around \$300,000 for the training unit.
- Replace our out of service Flashover Simulator Unit with a new one. Current one is 17 years old.
- Place our new Fire Operations Building in service by early spring.
- Hire several additional new relief fire training fire instructors. These new instructors will greatly assist in the overall training use of the new Fire Operations Building. In addition, we are looking to develop new classes here at the FTC which will require the need for additional instructors.

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

Catherine Johnson Southren, Commissioner

2023 Achievements

- Established regularly scheduled weekly meetings with DGS team to coordinate efficient services to all county departments. (Meet with 3 Department Directors - Facilities Management, ITS, Purchasing)
- Facilitated more streamlined communication between DGS Departments; serving as liaison to coordinate and expedite communication.
- Met with Law Department (Eugene Bondar) regarding outstanding legal concerns regarding contracts, etc. and determined regular meetings are required.
- Arranged meetings with each Director and staff members of the team (Met with Purchasing staff and ITS staff. Scheduled meeting with Facilities staff).
- Hired Temporary Project Assistant, Christopher Barker (October 2023), who transferred to Confidential Secretary position January 1, 2023.
- Implemented plan to meet with all Commissioners/Department Heads regarding DGS matters.
 - Coordinated DSS Wi-Fi request with Facilities, Purchasing, and ITS.
 - Strategized with Facilities and Purchasing to address Building C inoperable elevator.
 - Facilities addressed Buildings C and L concerns.
- Completed Emerging Leaders Training.
- Established a Directory of all Rockland County Departments including the locations and phone numbers.

2024 Goals

- Continue to streamline communication between DGS (Commissioner & 3 Department Directors) and Law Department, by having regularly scheduled weekly meetings.
- DGS to meet with all Rockland County Department Heads/Commissioners re: outstanding DGS issues and/or other concerns.
- Establish timeline of Capital Projects commencement to completion.
- Establish logs for all DGS matters (re: 3 DGS Departments) including timeline (initial notice to resolution).
- Establish a Purchasing Department tracker that will include number and status of RFPs, contracts, and requisitions.
- Establish a Facilities Management Department tracker that will follow status of maintenance requests and capital projects.

- Establish a process to maintain and organize documents in the event a local, state, or federal agency may require submission (i.e. PESH).
- Ensure timely repair of all elevators located on the Pomona and New City campuses via a systematic plan commencing with DSS Building C.

Facilities Management

Robert Gruffi, Director

2023 Achievements

- Capital Project 4466 - Utility Plant Renovation. Started construction on renovation of the Health Center Utility Plant. Completed total demolition. Started and Completed installation, startup, and commissioning of boilers. (Piping, pumps, electrical) Started installation of rooftop cooling towers, all internal piping and electrical service. Project anticipated to be completed by July 2024. Air conditioning ready by May 2024.
- Capital Project 2105 – Completed 95% construction of the Police Academy Track. Please note that the completion would be 100% if Facilities did not have a five-week delay in having a contract prepared and approved by Purchasing and Law.
- Capital Project 2110 - Building F Renovation - Completed 95% of the renovation.
- Capital Project 1870 - FTC Fire Operations Building - Started construction and installation of the Fire operations Building. Completed construction of the building. Completing final site work and electrical installation.
- Infrastructure Improvements:
Completed 95% of the Health Center Sidewalk replacement.
Completed 15% of Health Center Curb replacement.
Completed 25% of Health Center Stairs.
Completed 5% of FTC sidewalk replacement.
Project to continue in Spring 2024 and continue to October 2024 for remaining concrete work.
- Performed Building Code Compliance inspection of the New Highway Building.

2024 Goals

- Hire all open position vacancies by September 2024.
- Fleet Policy – update to reflect present day operations and administrative responsibilities.

Information Technology Services

Frank Calise, Director

2023 Achievements

County-wide Telephone System

- Installed various call processing systems and call centers throughout County agencies and departments.

Networking & Network Security Units

- The Networking Unit upgraded various systems throughout 2023 including those that provide vital backup and recovery of our network resources and data.
- Completed multi-factor authentication on all Active Directory Accounts.
- Our ITS Helpdesk successfully responded to nearly 5,000 end user tickets in 2023.
- Upgraded the core network infrastructure by virtualization of physical servers.
- ITS continued to perform multiple county-wide phishing and educational campaigns in 2023. ITS dramatically impacted the number of end users not correctly identifying possible malicious emails.
- Finalized and passed Penetration Tests both internally and externally.

Peoplesoft, OnBase & eClinical Works

- Successfully implemented payments to various union members based on settlements and negotiations.
- Upgraded our Helpdesk ticketing system to include new applications and provide more detailed tracking and reporting capabilities allowing us to address root cause and chronic issues.
- Back in 2022 the Information Technology Service Division expanded the use of document management system. We continued to scan and index records for the Law Department and the Probation Department allowing these departments to destroy old paper records and provide faster and more efficient retrieval.
- With our Document Management System, we implemented various online forms and workflows for the Department of Personnel, Office of Fire and Emergency Services and Buildings and Codes Departments.

Web Services

- “Go Live” with a new County Website in December 2023 that will provide more access and applications.

2024 Goals

- Fully implement a public access WIFI solution to all County buildings.
- Install and monitor USB Thumb Drive Encryption.
- Implement and activated multi-factor authentication for the Peoplesoft application.
- Expand the use of document management and implement complex workflows for various departments.
- Continue projects to scan historical paper records and index them throughout County agencies.
- Continue to upgrade and enhance various vital applications throughout the network.
- Reinforce, expand, and enhance our end user Cyber Security training.

PURCHASING DIVISION

Paul Brennan, Director

2023 Achievements

- Awarded contract for 100% green electricity to maintain sustainability efforts in electric supply and our EPA designation.
- EPA Green Power Partnership Rankings – The Count maintained being ranked in the Top 30 Local Governments nationwide for green power use. The county was ranked #18 of all local governments nationwide.
- Testified at New York State Assembly Hearing on Local Government Procurement Reform.
- Trained over 200 county employees on County Procurement Policy, Uniformed Guidance, and Contract Request Process.
- Trained local towns, villages, and non-profits on Uniform Guidance Requirements for federal awards via ARPA Funding.
- Three Purchasing Division employees obtained professional certification as Certified Professional Public Buyers from the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council. (Sabrina Samuels, Michele Phillips, Richard Ryan)
- Transitioned to new P-card provider (Chase) under a New York State Contract that provides higher levels of rebates than the previous P-Card provider.
- Implemented new County-wide Printer Management Program.
- Provided Procurement Shared Services to the Village of Spring Valley, East Ramapo Central School District, Village of New Hempstead, and the Workforce Development Board.
- Negotiated additional Revenue Percentage for the first two years on contract with Bus Patrol, LLC for the School Bus Stop Arm Camera Enforcement Program. Additional revenue is estimated as \$500,000 over the first two years of the contract.
- Implemented new bidding process for capital construction projects for Highway, Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 and Facilities Management, based on Executive Order.
- Started implementation of new eSourcing and Contract Life Cycle Management Software from Periscope. Go-live is scheduled for May 2024. Secured ARPA funding for the first year's cost of the software.
- Shared Services: Issued multiple solicitations for the Village of Spring Valley and one solicitation for the Village of New Hempstead.
- Applied for and received NYSERDA grant (\$75,000) for technology (software) related to building inspections for the Office of Building and Codes. Software implementation is currently in process.
- Trained local municipalities who received ARPA Funding from the County on the Federal Government's Uniform Guidance requirements.
- Contracted for \$147 million dollars of goods and services for county departments in FY 2023.
- Major equipment acquisitions included:
 - Drive-thru Vaccination Shelter
 - Vaccination Van
 - Fire Apparatus for Village of Spring Valley
 - Snowplows for Highway
 - Bucket Trucks for Sewer and Highway
 - Furniture and Equipment for New Highway Facility.

2024 Goals

- Implement Periscope's E-sourcing, Contract Life Cycle Management and Marketplace solution by end of 2nd quarter.
- Expand user department training on procurement and accounts payable procedures and issues. (1st and 2nd quarter)
- Expand training to county employees and municipalities through the Purchasing Center for Excellence. (3rd and 4th quarter)
- Continue Succession Planning Efforts and further develop internal training for Purchasing Division Staff.
- Identify and implement additional Sustainability initiatives and continuing advocating for vehicle charging stations.
- Utilize spend management and analysis data to identify additional cost savings area. (On going effort)

- Review and Update Standard Operations Procedure Manual for the Purchasing Division by the end of the 3rd quarter.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Kevin McKay, Deputy Commissioner

2023 Achievements

- Rockland Codes Investigations (RCI) increased the number of annual inspections performed by 20%, conducting 7,200 inspections in 2023 (6,000 in 2022) while assessing total fines that were 60% more than 2022.
- The Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA) engaged with 80% of local police departments in order to develop a more coordinated approach to limiting underage sales of tobacco products and preventing the sale of prohibited tobacco products such as illegal flavored nicotine vapes and out of state cigarettes.
- Coordinated environmental and clinical home lead inspections that were conducted at 136 sites triggered by medical referrals for elevated blood level tests, ultimately resulting in 163 cited violations for 2023.
- The Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP) increased the amount of in-home smoke alarm installations arising from scheduled visits by 35% in 2023, up to 863 installations. They similarly increased the number of carbon monoxide alarm installations in residential settings by 70% over the 2022 total.
- In an effort to increase the demand for immunizations locally, RCDOH partnered with outside agencies to bring a health education fair to Ramapo residents in December. The event included doctors and health professionals who provided education to parents directly on-site. Topic areas of speaker discussions focused on routine childhood and maternal immunizations, and additionally offered lactation/pumping consultation, preventive screenings, family nutrition, choking prevention information, fire safety, and provided printed educational materials developed in-house.
- To increase access to immunizations, RCDOH expanded the hours of operations of the Immunization Clinic in 2023 at both the main site in Pomona, and by the addition of vaccine only clinic hours at the RCDOH Spring Valley clinic. Demand for vaccines has risen annually since 2021 with a 30% and 50% increase of visits during 2022 and 2023 respectively.
- The Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Program was awarded another 5-year state grant, running from 10/1/23 to 9/30/28, with an annual target caseload of 16,100. The Rockland program is currently providing services to a caseload which is already 10% above that suggested target.
- Disease Control and Prevention staff successfully controlled one of the largest TB clusters that the state has seen in many years, as per NYSDOH. After investigating 75 individuals with exposures associated to the cluster, 11 were found to be new TB cases and 20 were found to have latent infections (LTBI), all of whom are now being treated. The Tuberculosis program clinically managed a total of 26 active cases during 2023, which is the highest annual amount for Rockland since 2005.
- An unprecedented exposure to a rabid kitten in a private high school was managed quickly and successfully through partnerships with Good Samaritan Hospital, Montefiore Nyack Hospital, and NYS DOH. A total of 98 individuals were identified as being exposed. All individuals were given the multi-dose series of rabies vaccine by RCDOH staff over a 4-week period, preventing any human cases.
- Assisted 11 worksites and day care centers in achieving 'breastfeeding friendly status' by developing and creating the required breastfeeding friendly environments, policies, staff trainings, and lactation spaces to attain that certification.

- Coordinated 2 in-person professional learning sessions reaching 60 Rockland teachers on integrating agricultural concepts into academic subjects and highlighting the importance of healthy nutrition and physical activity, Building Community Through Agriculture May 2023 and October 2023.
- Organized and participated in 19 nutrition presentations and events reaching almost 1,000 people directly; and worked to assist Rockland Community Against Hunger with food distribution to 16 food programs countywide that feed approximately 30,000 people per month.
- Emergency Medical Services increased involvement in the Youth Squad to develop future EMS providers in Rockland County by redesigning and bringing back the Annual Youth Squad Competition. Eight teams competed in the Rockland EMS Competition which was held in May.
- Successfully purchased and obtained a mobile vaccination van and a two-lane inflatable drive-through shelter via COVID-19 grant funding. These long-awaited important tools are now available to the department and can be deployed for a variety of emergency response and outreach purposes.

2024 Goals

- Continue to canvas neighborhoods for signs of overcrowding and rooming house living arrangements in an effort to crack down on the rampant unsafe conditions caused by the expanding housing crisis in Rockland, while assisting and coordinating directly with all local code enforcement agencies.
- The Tobacco program plans to increase collaboration with local Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) and the school districts to ensure the health and safety of Rockland youth. Plans are in place to organize collaborative undercover operations with LEA's at local Tobacco & Vape Retailers; as well as to develop a task force at the county level enabling conformity of efforts across the agencies involved/affected.
- The Emergency Preparedness program aims to complete the development of a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) for Rockland County, which would establish a pool of vetted medical volunteers who could be called upon in emergency situations to assist the RCDOH stand up clinical operations.
- Rockland EMS Office will be hosting a county wide EMS Sustainability Task Force in 2024 which will be comprised of community partners, municipalities, elected officials, EMS agency representatives, and providers. The goal of the task force is to gather data around the primary issues EMS agencies and providers are currently facing with respect to a diminishing number of volunteers. The overall purpose is to determine immediate, short-, and long-term goals that can address the issues identified.
- Through a new 5-year NYS grant (2022-2027) focused on public health infrastructure, workforce & data systems, the RCDOH will begin to roll out programs that expand staff educational opportunities, support personal professional advancement, improve workplace conditions, and broaden data analytic capacity. This funding will improve retention and recruitment of qualified staff and increase overall departmental effectiveness.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Charles Skip Vezzetti, Superintendent

2023 Achievements

- Completed the second year of a Three-Year Road Resurfacing Program (Capital Project 3420 - \$2,431,678 total) and have resurfaced 8.6 miles of Chipseal Surface, 4.4 miles of Microseal Surface, 4.2 miles of Asphalt Surface for a total of 17.2 miles of County roads. Of the total amount spent on the

resurfacing \$1,962,954 was reimbursed through the NYS Capital Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS).

- Road Resurfacing program over the past 20 years has steadily increased the useful life of pavements as follows:
 - Chipseal Surface from a 7-year average to a 9-1/2-year average
 - Microseal Surface from a 10-year average to a 12-year average
 - Asphalt Overlay from a 10-year average to a 14-year average
- Completed construction of the Minisceongo Bridge (located on Beach Road next to the Haverstraw Marina. This project is funded by Bridge New York in the amount of \$1,921,000.
- Completed construction of the Townline Road and Hungry Hollow Road Culverts (located in the Towns of Clarkstown, Orangetown and Ramapo). This project is funded by Bridge New York in the amount of \$1,230,000.
- Construction is in the final stage of the New Highway Facility. All Highway Department staff have moved into the buildings. Building 4 will be completed in the beginning of 2024.
- Solicited bids and award construction of the Suffern Lane at Hammond Road Intersection Improvement Project. This Federally and State aided (95% Fed and State – 5% local) project will convert the two-signal intersection into a single four-leg roundabout.
- Solicited bids and award construction of the West Washington Road Bridge. This Federally and State aided (95% Fed and State – 5% local) project will upgrade the existing structure and make improvements to the stream.

2024 Goals

- Continue updating our fleet of vehicles thanks to the Equipment replacement Bond (Capital Project 3421 - \$6,000,000) over three years.
- Continue Road Resurfacing program to maintain the useful life of pavement surfaces at a 10-year life expectancy or greater. This goal also dovetails with reducing or stabilizing maintenance costs for future years.
- Begin construction of the Suffern Lane at Hammond Road Intersection Improvement Project. This Federally and State aided (95% Fed and State – 5% local) project will convert the two-signal intersection into a single four-leg roundabout.
- Begin construction of the West Washington Road Bridge. This Federally and State aided (95% Fed and State – 5% local) project will upgrade the existing structure and make improvements to the stream.
- Begin construction of the Call Hollow Road Culvert located in the Town of Haverstraw. This project is funded by Bridge New York in the amount of \$1,230,000.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Spencer Chiimbwe, Commissioner

2023 Achievements

- Hosted the Human Rights Woman of the Year Award.
- Co-hosted the Future of Housing Forum with Community Development.
- Opened two Human Rights Satellite Offices in Haverstraw & Nyack.
- Assisted with Forum on Mental Health Resources in Correctional Facilities at the Nyack Center.

- Held a reception for HOF former inductees.
- Held staff training with Westchester Residential Opportunities on basics of Fair Housing Law.
- Participated in all day policy training with the New York State Division of Human Rights.

2024 Goals

- Continue to collaborate with the New York State Division of Human Rights.
- To increase and improve public outreach through events and community engagement.
- Host Hall of Fame induction ceremony featuring Martin Luther King III.
- Partner with the Office of Community Development to host the second annual Future of Housing Forum.
- Orchestrate a Mental Health Symposium with local stakeholders.
- Participate in the renaming of the RCC Ellipse Building after Dr. Gordon.
- Follow up meeting to discuss the launch of Human Rights Law Clinic at RCC.

Strengthen the following programs:

- Case intake in satellite offices.
- Launch online case intake.
- Facilitate meetings with HUD to discuss further possibilities of a new basic fair housing discrimination cases.

INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

Thomas Torpey, Director

2023 Achievements

- Received two rulings of fraud on workers compensation claims. One of the claims saved the County over \$130,000.
- On one workers compensation claim an award for indemnity had already been granted, and the County had an obligation to pay over \$300,000 in weekly benefits; we were able to negotiate that down to \$150,000 in a one-time payment to help settle a medical malpractice case for the same claimant. This saved the County over \$150,000.
- Negotiated a new 5-year contract with our claims administration firm saving over \$60,000 a year for each of the next 5 years.
- Negotiated a full refund of a \$17,000 fee for adjusting automobile claims from our 2022 liability insurance carrier.
- Assisted the Personnel Department in the negotiation of a new Extended Workers Compensation Benefit with the goal of getting injured workers back to work faster.
- Successfully closed a questionable sewer back up claim with no payment saving the County \$250,000.
- Secured an additional \$21,000 from our property insurance carrier for a fire in a pump station in 2021.

2024 Goals

- Continue to provide loss control services to help prevent and reduce liability and workers compensation losses.

- Continue to vigorously pursue fraud in workers compensation claims.
- Provide the tools and time for department staff to obtain certification in risk management.

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

Thomas Humbach, County Attorney

2023 Achievements

- Drafted Declaration of a State of Emergency and Emergency Orders concerning asylum seekers being transported to Rockland County and assisted with temporary closure of Armoni Hotel in Orangetown.
- Continued to provide prompt, daily legal advice and counsel and crisis management to our clients, draft and process 844 contracts, 597 resolutions, and 16 local laws and reviewed 15 other local laws and/or resolutions drafted by the Legislature.
- Successful intern program with 10 students who reviewed over 4,000 files which have now been scanned and shredded. Interns also attended court appearances and meetings with attorneys, and attorneys provided training sessions on topics like FOIL, student discipline at public institutions, etc.
- Revamped Collections unit. Commenced 109 new cases—a 91% increase from the year prior. Collected a total of \$164,239.77 in fines, which was \$64,821.76 more than last year. This included \$74,180.00 on behalf of the Office of Consumer Protection—a 131% increase from the year prior.
- Office was approved as a CLE Accredited Provider for the New York State Continuing Legal Education Board.
- Organized first Bring Your Child to Work Day, which was extended to all County agencies.
- Attorneys were moderators at the first Rockland County Housing Forum.
- Successfully initiated and completed our first condemnation proceeding pursuant to the eminent domain law, a type of proceeding previously handled by outside counsel, in order to acquire certain property necessary for the completion of the Highway Department's West Washington Avenue Bridge Replacement Project.
- The office was featured in a video produced by RCC entitled "Alumni Spotlight: Paralegal Studies Alumni at the Rockland County Attorney's Office," which is posted on LinkedIn and YouTube.
- Several litigation and administrative wins:
 - *County of Rockland v. 84 Orange Ave.*: The Office successfully recouped \$365,040.74 in property taxes due and owing for a decade following a contested *in rem* tax lien foreclosure proceeding.
 - *Waldman v. County of Rockland*: Petitioner filed an Article 78 proceeding based on the County's alleged denial of his FOIL request. Following protracted proceedings and testimonial hearings at which the requestor made demands for substantial legal fees and sanctions, the Court dismissed the Petition in its entirety. The Order specifically denied Petitioner's application for attorney's fees and litigation costs, and the issue of sanctions was not discussed.
 - *Matter of OBC v. JHW Construction, et al.*: This matter involved a 13-building residential property owned by JHW Construction. We negotiated and settled this case, with a total penalty of \$95,000 for 338 violations and a timeline for construction (still on track today) to remedy the violations.
 - *Matter of OBC v. Fekete*: This matter involved a single family residential property with overcrowding and change of use violations. We commenced an abatement action and later negotiated a consent order for this case, and the property was vacated and brought into compliance within 60 days, with a penalty of \$5,500 for 12 violations.
 - *County of Rockland v. Koppel, County of Rockland v. Brull, and County of Rockland v. Fekete*: These matters concerned single-family homes being over-occupied and used as rooming houses. In each case, the Office filed temporary restraining order and abatement applications with the courts seeking to vacate the respective properties as a result of the violations. Based upon our motions, each property was vacated and repaired bringing it into compliance.

2024 Goals

- Continuation of development of state-of-the-art cloud-based contract and resolution workflow in LegalStratus.
- Continuation of development of new DCEs for purchase orders and capital projects.
- Roll out of FOIL Specialist position and electronic RAO Designation Form. Begin one-on-one department trainings regarding FOIL generally and GovQA system and development of subject matter lists.
- Work with departments to draft policies, procedures, workflows, etc. regarding a variety of topics including subpoena response procedure, list of all Rockland County owned real estate, LGBTI guidelines for safe confinement in Jail, OBC and OBC-Law workflows in OnBase, centralization of County's competitive procurement processes, collections referral process and workflows for OBC, etc.
- Provide trainings for County agencies and host internal trainings and CLEs. External trainings included Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) training for County, town and village law enforcement officers, administrative enforcement & FOIL training for Health, collections training for OBC, etc. Internal cross-trainings and CLEs concerned processing local laws and resolutions, tax foreclosures, filing of litigation documents, collections, RLUIPAs, etc.

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Susan Hoerter, Acting Commissioner

2023 Achievements

- As the department was charged with managing and distributing Rockland's Opioid Settlement funds, DMH began the process by holding a community forum to gather input on spending priorities from individuals and families impacted by the opioid epidemic, and from agencies involved in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of opioid use disorders.
- Hosted a regional listening session with Dr. Cunningham, the Commissioner of the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). Dr. Cunningham reviewed OASAS' plans and took questions and feedback from providers and community members, including those impacted by substance use disorders and their family members.
- In partnership with the Sheriff and the Police Departments, DMH coordinated Drug Take Back Days in April and October, collecting a total of over 500 pounds of unused medication from Rockland households.
- To address drug contaminants that increase the risks of overdose, DMH obtained and distributed Xylazine and Fentanyl test strips.
- Worked with RCJ and OASAS to fully implement Medication Assisted Treatment in the jail.
- In recognition of the efforts of community agencies throughout the pandemic and beyond, DMH held its first Provider Appreciation Day. A nationally recognized speaker led the group in a discussion of leading with empathy. The event connected providers across the various levels of care, improving communication to facilitate better outcomes for individuals with behavioral health concerns.
- Utilized NYS funding to train providers within the Children's System of Care on the history and impact of systemic and institutionalized racism with the goal of helping providers better understand the effect of racial injustice on the BIPOC community.
- Utilized county funding to contract for DBT skills training in the South Orangetown Middle School. DBT skills training helps adolescents with regulating their emotions and keeping themselves safe. This training will be provided to all (approximately 300) students in the middle school.

- Worked closely with the state and the mobile crisis team to address the mental health needs of residents living in the Garnerville Home when it was closed unexpectedly.
- Added new staff to build-out the contracting team; thereby improving adherence to contracting deadlines and oversight expectations.
- Worked with the NYS Office of Mental Health to revise implementation of the Mobile Access Program (MAP), which moved to a geographic area with greater needs, thereby enhancing the utilization of the program. This program connects police officers in the field with the mobile mental health crisis team to prevent avoidable trips to the emergency department.
- DMH staff co-led sections of the Crisis Intervention Training which was open to police officers across the county. DMH staff and other community providers participated in a panel discussion of mental hygiene laws and behavioral health issues encountered by on-duty police officers.
- As part of its efforts to increase coordination with police departments to address community safety and improve outcomes for cross-system involved individuals, DMH staff met with the police chiefs to clarify involuntary pick-up orders under Mental Hygiene Law. DMH staff also met monthly with the Crime Analysis Center and other members of law enforcement to connect individuals identified by police officers as having behavioral health needs with appropriate services.
- DMH staff provided trainings on Kendra's Law and Assisted Outpatient Treatment to staff in the jail, public defender's office, and police departments.
- DMH staff co-led Fundamental Crisis Intervention Skills training for police recruits at the Rockland County Police Academy.
- DMH staff completed a manual on Assisted Outpatient Treatment.
- DMH staff co-chaired the statewide Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors' Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Continued to facilitate the implementation of the Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center, which will serve the entire Mid-Hudson region and help divert individuals in behavioral health crises away from the emergency department.
- Continued to add agency and program information to Arounja, an online resource for child and adolescent behavioral health services.
- DMH, in its effort to increase collaboration with pediatricians, worked with Orangetown Pediatrics to help them secure a Healthy Steps grant, which will provide funding for a mental health specialist in their office. This improves access and reduces stigma for children and their families who need mental health services.
- Facilitated the expansion of school-based mental health clinics into the Kakiat STEAM academy, several private schools, and Chestnut Ridge Middle School.

2024 Goals

- Manage Opioid Settlement Funds and distribute to align with identified community needs.
- Facilitate integration of new regional Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center into adult and child systems of care via messaging on social media, at stakeholder and community meetings and on County website.
- Improve messaging and marketing of behavioral health services and simplify access to and navigation of the behavioral health system.
- Investigate the sustainability of different options for a single point of contact for behavioral health services.
- Optimize behavioral health listings on Arounja so they are comprehensive and accurate. Contact providers semi-annually to obtain updated information on programs and services and update Arounja accordingly.
- Improve utilization of data to inform decision making regarding service provision and community needs.
- Develop a training program that offers CEUs to support a well-trained workforce at OMH, OPWDD and OASAS licensed programs. By doing so, these programs may experience improved staff retention due to an increase in professional satisfaction by staff. A better trained workforce will benefit all who receive services.
- Improve the 7 and 30 day rates of follow-up with outpatient treatment after an ED visit or hospital discharge by increasing availability of clinic appointments and by implementing transitional care management to help connect individuals who are moving between levels of care to their next provider.

OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Jacki Scott, Director

2023 Achievements

- Updated our department website with the help of our IT Department.
- Designed posters for the Board of Elections to help those with disabilities at the polls. Posters were put out at some of the most popular voting sites during our last election. The purpose was to alert folks with physical disabilities that they do not have to wait in line to cast their ballots if voting in person.
- Expanded resilience and trauma-based training in Rockland County. The steering committee began training in the first level of Breadth Body Mind (BBM) an integral part of building resilience to trauma. We brought in 2 BBM trainers for that. It was a 2-day training and all who participated received certification in the Fundamentals of BBM.
- Held another Resilience training in Haverstraw at the Haverstraw Center with members of the Haverstraw and Challenge Collaboratives. Because of that training, other groups are requesting trauma-based training.
- The Office for People with Disabilities was an integral part of the Rockland County Transition Fair planning committee. We held the event in person on April 28 at the Palisades Center. There were tables set up from many community-based agencies, schools, and other organizations that service those with disabilities. It ran smoothly and participants could easily access information, ask questions, and get feedback to their questions and concerns. Over 500 community members came to participate.
- From the time the vaccination process started at the Health Department, I worked closely with them to vaccinate Rockland County residents with disabilities. During 2023, a lot of calls still came in for Covid boosters as well as for flu vaccines as I continued my outreach into the community.
- Participated in Metro-North Railroad Accessibility task force. We held quarterly meetings at which there were presentations of crew training, station ambassadors and customer service coordination updates. We discussed the fact that accessibility issues continue to be an ongoing problem at Rockland's railway stations. A feasibility study is presently being conducted by Metro-North at the Pearl River train station on whether a high-level platform can be installed. When the study is complete, Metro-North will report back to us. After much discussion, NJ Transit is now talking about a feasibility study at the Suffern Train Station for accessibility. This is desperately needed.
- Worked with the Holocaust Museum at RCC to make it more accessible to all visitors. Work began to accommodate those that may be visually impaired or hearing impaired, or who have emotional or learning challenges, as well as those with physical challenges. The Executive Director and Education Director were very open to all accessibility needs. In 2022 we had developed a brochure to let residents know of the accessibility at the Museum. In 2023 it was revised, and more copies were made available. The museum's accessibility is a work in progress.
- Held monthly meetings and worked closely with the Challenge Collaborative to bring representatives from community-based agencies and school districts to share information and insights and to learn from a multitude of presenters on a variety of topics of interest to the group.
- Throughout the year, I made myself available to educate, answer questions, intervened when necessary, and worked to bring parties together when issues arose for our constituency to bring all parties to consensus whenever possible.

2024 Goals

- Expand the Resilience Coalition to include additional Rockland County representatives who wish to be part of this evidence-based solution to trauma. We are currently meeting with interested individuals who want to stage Resilience events with film showings, debriefing sessions, and the development of action plans.
- Further implement accessibly for all at the RCC Holocaust Center. We spoke about the fact that the descriptions and information under each photograph is extremely small and difficult to read for those who are visually impaired. To help with that, I introduced them to a group of students who work with the hearing impaired and raise money for projects. They are getting them listening devices which will help those who are hearing impaired but will also help those who are visually impaired as they can listen to the explanations and information. We are also working on getting TranslateLive machines to help translate the information in real time into any language needed so that all people can access the museum. We are trying to limit as many barriers as possible.
- Work with DAC and the Challenge Collaborative along with all providers and schools to address the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families in the effort to maximize access to equitable health, well-being, education and employment resources in Rockland County. Along those lines, we have embarked upon an initiative entitled "Think Differently". DAC members and I have been introducing this to the various communities and school boards in the County. It is a movement to help change the way individual, businesses, and communities relate to our fellow neighbors with special needs. With this initiative we hope to help folks look past the differences and embrace the inherent potential of all individuals of all walks of life. We look to celebrate everyone's intrinsic value to the community. We will continue expanding this initiative in 2024.
- Work with the Transition Consortium committee to coordinate, implement, and participate in the 2024 Rockland Transition Fair to be held April 17, 2024 at Palisades Center.
- Work with the Reaching for the Future Guide committee to update the present Guide. There are many agencies and schools that have changed names or addresses or no longer exist. There are also new agencies to add.
- Participate in inter-county office meetings and attend necessary community meetings and collaboratives to learn, share information and exchange ideas.
- Continue work with the Metro North Taskforce to expand accessibility at Rockland's rail stations and continue work with the United Way Transportation Committee to improve our public transportation needs in the County.
- Put together a diverse abilities day to be held on June 23 at RCC. Working with Peter Gagliardo, the Adaptive Sports Coordinator at Helen Hayes Hospital and William Marlowe, the Chief Administrative Officer at The ARC Rockland. The event will consist of a variety of races, sporting events, and activities throughout the day. Participants will also be able to gather information to continue activities after the day has finished. Towards that end, we are looking to have businesses that offer sports and activities to young people of diverse abilities to set up booths with information.
- Develop, with the help of Beth Cefalu, a brochure for the Office for People with Disabilities.
- Add additional links to the Office for People with Disabilities website with the help of the IT Department.

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Lori Gruebel, Commissioner

2023 Achievements

County Training:

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and belonging on-line courses with over 1700 employees and Board and Commission members completing main coursework as well as supplemental trainings.
- Emerging Leaders with outside consultant offering a hybrid training program for 40 of the County's future and succession leadership. Completed the program which received over 90% positive feedback.
- Created and executed training for all County HR contacts outlining all processes, laws and rules governing their day to day. Training covered over 400 participants and was recorded for all 10,000 clients.
- For all three trainings above, Rockland County is one of the only County Personnel departments to create and execute these training out of 62 Counties.

Labor Agreements: (Organizational alignment)

- Preparation, costing, drafting, redlining and executing three (3) non-union management resolutions and salary schedules as well as nine (9) union Memorandums of Agreement and resolutions. All of the necessary language changes and paperwork including unions/Finance/Law follow-ups to ensure documents were accurate. Coding of salary schedules, bonus amounts, eligibility and COLA increases for the system. Again, as noted by Moody's, having the fiscally sound contracts out in years was a major contributor to the fiscal rating.
- Completed CE initiative in two weeks with 6 months of preparation and was under the budgeted amount from CE.
- Insurance Automation WorldPay- credit card payments for health insurance premiums (existing and retirees)

2024 Goals

- Expand and create new automation in Peoplesoft to support bargaining, costing models, leave accruals, contractual terms and conditions, leave plans and complicated salary rules.
- Police/Patrol exam- support project plan to execute the largest holding for civil service. Upwards of 3-5k candidates for the police/patrol exam which provides the candidate pool for all the Towns, Villages and County.
- Training which will include 2nd class of Emerging Leaders, LEAD, process improvement through LEAN, On-line professional training courses, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as well as Civil Service training.
- Recruitment- strategic multi prong approach to further aide in recruitment for the County, Towns, Villages and special districts. Design and deliver recruitment efforts via social media, marketing, postings, career fairs, community partnerships and digital/graphic design. Goal is to increase qualified candidate counts and educate the community on the value of working as a civil servant.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

Douglas Schuetz, Acting Commissioner

2023 Achievements

Land Use

- Completed 616 General Municipal Law (GML) Section 239 referral reviews for all municipalities within Rockland County. These 616 total applications included the review of 3,613 acres, 3,760 proposed dwelling units, 304 new lots, and 6,460,277 sq. ft. of additional space. Of the 616 reviews, 29 included development proposals that entailed the construction of 25,000 square feet or greater; four with 10 or more new lots; 14 included development plans for 50 or more new dwelling units; one review of a municipality's comprehensive plan; and one review of a completely new zoning ordinance. Among the reviews were 52 subdivisions, 158 site plans, 283 variance applications, 49 special permit applications, and 8 zone change proposals. An additional 66 reviews covered items such as local laws and wetland permits.
- Planned, coordinated, and oversaw all functions of the Rockland County Planning Board including the meeting planning, the preparation of meeting agendas and minutes and all other administrative functions related to the County Planning Board. All members of the County Planning Board completed all County Mandated trainings in 2023. The Rockland County Planning Board reviewed and provided input and advice the County Planning Department on 52 GML 239 referrals in 2023.
- Reviewed several large-scale projects, including Millers Pond (Preliminary PUD/ mapping of the Millers Pond PUD overlay zone), Islamic Center of Rockland County, Watchtower A/V Production Center, 111 South Liberty Drive, Oak Tree Apartments, Databank Orangeburg, Gatto Lane Planned Adult Community, Pearl River Pfizer expansion, Shadow Estates, WPT Acquisitions, and Midco Industrial Park. In addition, the Planning Department reviewed local laws and zoning amendments for the New Square Zoning Code, a Residential Inclusionary Zone (RIZ) in the Village of Haverstraw, revisions to the New City Hamlet Center zone in Clarkstown, an expansion of the Airmont Specialized Housing Residential (RSH) overlay zone, and a revised draft of the Orangetown Comprehensive Plan update.
- Through the SEQRA process, reviewed one Scoping documents and two Draft Environmental Impact Statements for major proposed projects.
- Planned, coordinated, and oversaw all functions of the Rockland Municipal Planning Federation (RMPPF). This included planning educational sessions and helping to advertise educational sessions sponsored by other agencies so that planning board and zoning board of appeals members could continue to attain their State-mandated training hours and complete or be re-certified in the Rockland County Certification Program. Training sessions were held both virtually and in-person. Recordings of all virtual sessions in 2023 have been posted to the Federation's YouTube Channel. The Planning Federation directly offered eight educational sessions (18.5 training hours) and promoted an additional sixteen sessions (34.5 training hours) by other organizations in 2023. In total, the Federation sponsored or promoted 24 educational sessions in 2022 for a total of 53 hours of training. Educational sessions sponsored by the Planning Federation covered overviews of the role of land use boards, electric vehicle charging in the Hudson Valley, the Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code, wetlands protection, and updates on relevant case law. In addition, the Federation resumed holding its Annual Dinner Meeting and the Clerk and Support Staff Session for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic. Training sessions were attended by 509 individuals who earned a total of 1,030 hours of training credits in 2023.
- Planning Department staff regularly participated in the educational training webinars conducted by the Conservation and Land Use Program for the Hudson River Estuary and attended several conferences on affordable housing and sustainable development.

- Planning Department staff participated as mentors in Rockland Planning Land Use with Students (RPLUS), a program that teaches local high school students about sustainable development.
- Drafted and finalized the Six-Year 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan for all departments in the County.
- Reviewed and prepared SEQRA determinations for County capital projects, which included preparation of 2 Notes to File for Type II Actions and three Short Environmental Assessment Forms for highway projects.
- Staff provided assistance and guidance, as needed, to other County departments related to the SEQRA process.
- Continued the process of implementing a new multi-department centralized Rockland County land use records management system.
- Staff planned, coordinated and were liaison to the Rockland County Planning Board, Historic Preservation Board, and the Rockland Riverfront Communities Council. Each board meets monthly, and staff are responsible for setting the agenda, compiling minutes, and ensuring that the boards remain active so that they can provide relevant feedback regarding issues associated with their expertise.
- Continued cross-training efforts of staff so that responsibilities and duties can be successfully completed by others. This was important due to the large number of recent retirements and new hires. Staff also attended many training sessions that focused on not only land use issues and daily tasks, but also on office protocols and management information.
- Planning Department staff worked closely with the administration and the Personnel Department to add a new position of Sustainability Coordinator, fully dedicated towards the addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Rockland County through participation in the state Climate Smart Communities and Clean Energy Communities programs.
- Planning Department staff worked with the County Executive's office and consultant Barton & Loguidice to review, edit, refine, and finalize Rockland County's Climate Smart Communities (CSC) and Clean Energy communities (CEC) Action Strategy.
- Planning Department staff worked with the County Executive's office to prepare and submit a Consolidated Funding Application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for state grant funding to conduct a Rockland County Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventory and create a Government Operations Climate Action Plan.
- Planning Department staff was instrumental in assisting the County in being designated a Clean Energy Community by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).
- Planning Department staff worked with the County Executive's office to prepare and submit a Clean Energy Communities Designation Grant to the NYSERDA.
- The County was awarded a \$5000 Clean Energy Community Designation grant from NYSERDA to purchase and use electric battery powered lawn and ground maintenance equipment.
- Planning staff participated in other County department studies, including but not limited to the following: Shared Used Path Feasibility Study, Community and Housing Needs Assessment and the Strategic Economic Development Plan. Planning staff also participated in the following: Route 59 Area Transportation & Land Use Study implementation efforts, the consultant selection for the Safety and Sustainability Study on State Routes 303 & 304, and the Rockland County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024.
- Developed and issued an RFP for County Comprehensive Plan Update. An update of the 2011 Plan will create a vision for the County and guide future development and investments. The update will result in useful tools and information to move the County forward by addressing economic development, housing, sustainability and include populations projections and a build-out analysis for the County.

GIS

- Continued to update and maintain mission critical street, address point and various other emergency response layers for the County 911 dispatch and records management system (Motorola Flex). Data

layers are also shared with other dispatch systems including the Town of Clarkstown (NewWorld) and the Town of Ramapo (Central Square).

- Completed mandated tax map maintenance of more the 90,000 parcels countywide. Updated and delivered the 2023 tax maps to Towns and Villages.
- Continued to satisfy map/data requests from other County departments and personnel.
- Successfully cross-trained staff with various specific projects and datasets and participated in numerous training opportunities.
- Continued to update GIS Portal – Interactive Mapping Applications, Data and Maps for the public to access. Added updated imagery, land use data and more to the site.
- Provided GIS data to other County studies/projects, including but not limited to the following: (i.e., OFES Hazard Mitigation Plan, Geographic Response Plan, etc.)
- Continued to partner with the Rockland County Sewer District No.1 to implement a GIS-based project for sewer infrastructure, leveraging the existing Planning Department's County GIS Portal infrastructure, resulting in savings to the District.
- Continued to manage the Eagleview imagery project; This shared services initiative is a multi-year program to capture orthographic and oblique aerial imagery as well as the subsequent derivative products such as elevation (Lidar) and planimetric (buildings, roads, driveways, etc.) data.
- Trained County and other municipal staff on the use of the Eagleview software.

2024 Goals

Land Use

- Continue to review the GML development applications referred by towns and villages.
- With the RMPF, coordinate and plan educational sessions for municipal planning and zoning board of appeals members, including sessions already in the planning phase.
- Review and prepare State Environmental Quality Review Act determinations for County capital projects for all departments.
- Review DEIS, FEIS, Scoping documents and other SEQRA-related documents for large-scale development proposals and planned municipal comprehensive plan updates.
- Launch the new interdepartmental Rockland County land use records management system. Coordinate with local municipalities to provide digital GML submissions.
- Work with the Budget Department to create the six-year Capital Improvement Budget for 2025-2030.
- Continue to staff, plan and coordinate the three boards/councils that focus on land-use related issues (Hudson River, development applications, historic preservation).
- Continue training and cross-training efforts for all staff so that seamless transition can continue to occur, and new employees can obtain necessary insight into office protocols, management guidance and policies.
- Select a vendor for the Comprehensive Plan Update and kick off the project.
- Research and implement ways to improve the overall GML process.
- Hire a Sustainability Coordinator within the Department of Planning to implement the County's CSC-CEC Action Strategy furthering the County's participation in both the Climate Smart Communities and Clean Energy Communities Programs.
- Create Climate Smart Communities Task Force.
- Work with County Executive office and other departments to implement Clean Energy Communities designation grant to purchase and use electric landscaping equipment.

GIS

- Maintain and improve the quality of the GIS data products, which contribute to/serve as the digital foundation for various mission critical systems such as the Rockland County GIS Portal, the 911 computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, the Board of Election voter database system among others. Create new GIS data layers where necessary.

- Continue to improve the performance, functionality and appearance of the Rockland County GIS Portal. This effort will provide greater flexibility in updating data more frequently, launching new topic-specific applications faster and making other technological improvements.
- Continue to educate and train municipal employees and Planning Federation members, zoning boards, planning boards, clerks, engineers and others about the existing online GIS applications (Municipal Map) and GIS data (parcels, flood zones, wetlands, etc.) available through the GIS portal. These applications and GIS data are very useful for subdivision and site plan review, environmental analysis and code enforcement.
- Continue to utilize the Tax Map Issue Tracker to work with the Town Assessors and the Real Property Director to resolve new and outstanding tax mapping issues as they arise. Continue to train Town Assessor staff on the use of the Issue Tracker system.
- Continue the development of GIS layers required for the upcoming centralized Rockland County land use records management system (Tyler).
- Develop/release new products/annual updates from the aerial photography program (Eagleview).
- Continue to update and develop GIS data layers for the County's dispatch and records management software (Motorola Flex).
- Update GIS data and maps for the forthcoming Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Continue to work with the Rockland County Sewer District No.1 to implement a GIS based project for sewer infrastructure, leveraging the existing Planning Department's County GIS Portal infrastructure.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Joseph DiCarlo, Director

2023 Achievements

- Responsible for supervising approximately 600 individuals in our criminal and juvenile supervision units.
- Serviced over 570 Family Offense petitions for victims of domestic violence and over 615 custody and visitation petitions for the citizens of Rockland County in addition to guardianships, support, and miscellaneous petitions.
- Collected and disbursed over \$463,492 in fines, fees and restitution for the County and distributed \$78,315 in restitution to approximately 300 victims of crime.
- Provide Pre-Trial Supervision services throughout the County and received NYS grant funding in the amount of \$317,165 to offset the costs associated with the provision of certified pretrial services to the county's courts.
- Established Electronic Monitoring Program for Rockland County Reducing the need for remand/placement of juveniles and incarceration for adults.
- DWI supervision- completed intakes and currently monitoring 96 IID Conditional Discharge clients.
- Collaborated with the Village of Spring Valley Police, Sheriff's Department, the DA's Office and other local police departments under NYS Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE). GIVE is a key component of New York State's shooting and homicide reduction strategy and provides state funding to local law enforcement agencies for equipment, overtime, personnel, as well as focused training and technical assistance.
- Conducted 14 GIVE (Gun Involved Violence Elimination) details with various local police departments during 2023, which resulted in taking 4 guns taken off the streets on 9/24/23.

- We continue to collaborate with our partner agencies, the Police, The Courts, Sheriff, the DA, PD and County Attorney to streamline our processes with raise the age implementation for 17-year-olds.
- Probation Department Instructors have taught various instructional classes locally and throughout the region.
- Instituted an in-house quality assurance panel to evaluate Probation functions, data and identifying areas of need in terms of best practice.
- Adapted a paperless process for case record management and archives.
- Conducted department wide training on the Use of Force, aerosol spray and baton.
- Collaborated with Rockland County Audit department to reconcile data to be integrated into new financial management system for the department to streamline the collection and disbursement of restitution, fines and fees and move towards more accurate record keeping.
- Partnered in planning the first County Integrated Domestic Violence Court which started on March 20th, 2023.
- As of September 2023, the Rockland County Probation Department in partnership with the Center for Safety and Change, utilizing Probation Officers as instructors, has taken on the responsibility of administering the county's Domestic Violence Program for men.
- Two Supervising Probation Officers Jennifer Williams and Cherron Petruzzi have become co-chairs of the STOP Fear coalition.
- Through July 2023, successful in diverting 87% of youth ages 17 and under from entering the Family Court system. A powerful step in helping these youth reach their full potential.
- Graduated four Probation Officers, Michael Ancin, Kayla Bosworth, Erica Soto, and Iris Puelles from the Rockland County Emerging Leaders Program.
- Probation officer Kristina DiMaulo graduated 11 weeks of NYS Peace Officer and Fundamentals of Probation Practice training.
- Conducted training on Sex Offender Services unit and Domestic Violence unit for the Rockland County District Attorney's Office on 2/7/23.
- Conducted and annual presentation to BOCES CRJ students 5/1/23.
- Participated in Village of Spring Valley National Night Out.
- Participated in Rockland County Youthfest.
- Trained Juvenile Probation Officer Darianny Duran as a certified Caseload Explorer expert/trainer to conduct statewide training.
- Supervising Probation Officer Cherron Petruzzi and Probation Officer Austin Salcedo completed the 80-hour Defensive Tactics Instructor course through the Rockland County Police Academy.
- Conduct 100% of Investigations in accordance with the Timeline established by the Department. COMPAS Screenings were completed on all applicable defendants.
- In collaboration with Jacki Scott, Director of the Officer for people with Disabilities and the Resilience Steering Committee, presented the film Resilience to the Haverstraw Collaborative. Resilience reveals how toxic stress can trigger hormones that wreak havoc on the brains and bodies of children, putting them at a greater risk for disease, homelessness, prison time, and early death. While the broader impacts of poverty worsen the risk, no segment of society is immune. The half day training also presented champions through science and theory to protect children.

2024 Goals

- Continues our effectiveness in community supervision and focus on increasing our quality of service throughout the County.
- Continue to collaborate with the Village of Spring Valley Police, Sheriff, and local police agencies under NYS Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE).
- Continue to collaborate with all local enforcement in the supervision of gun related cases, sex offenders and all high-risk cases in the community.

- Probation shall continue to provide domestic violence, custody, visitation and other miscellaneous intake services for Rockland County.
- Probation will continue to work with our partner agencies, the Police, the Courts, Sheriff, the DA, PD and County Attorney to protect our communities and streamline our processes with raise the age implementation for 17-year-olds.
- Continue to provide electronic home monitoring and Pre-Trial Supervision services to the county's courts.
- Probation looks to increase our diversion rates above 86% of youth ages 17 and under from entering the Family Court system by. To continue to partner with DSS, BOCES and Mental Health to enhance supervision and increase positive outcomes for our youth.
- To continue to train and utilize staff to provide evidenced based programming to the individuals and families we work with.
- With accredited trainers, develop a departmental training "core" curriculum for the department and collaborate with regional Probation Departments for training opportunities.
- Establish an in-house Peer Support Team and Officer Wellness program.
- To conduct department wide SOGIE training and develop internal policy.
- Continue to review and update our existing policies; and add new policies to accommodate rule changes and changes in practice.
- Establish new protocol for referring youth to Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) by working side by side with DSS to enable Probation to work with the entire family system.
- Enhance our victim contacts.
- Probation shall continue to commit resources to making sure the County-wide Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Hub Court reaches full operational potential.
- Probation shall continue to collaborate with the Center for Safety and Change and administer the county's Domestic Violence Program for men.
- Continue our Offender Workforce Development series and schedule our third READY SET WORK class in 2024.
- System of Care (SOC) training for Rockland. This training brings together 40+ stakeholders across systems to identify needs and resources within Rockland's children's SOC with the goal of improving the SOC.
- Probation looks to increase our diversion rates above 86% of youth ages 17 and under from entering the Family Court system.
- Continue to collaborate with our partner agencies, Mental Health, Law Enforcement and DSS and various nonprofits to create a System of Care (SOC) framework for the County and implement a MRSS (Mobile Response Stabilization Services) call center and mobile response.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

James Licata, Public Defender

2023 Achievements

- Transitioned to paperless files (60% complete).
- One major retirement of trial attorney. Implemented succession procedures.
- Re-designing of office is approximately 75% completed.
- 2018-2020 files have been scanned and shredded. Presently scanning all 2021-2023 open files making them searchable and accessible to attorneys and staff.

- Offered CLE's with Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) throughout the year and will continue same in 2024.
- Offered CLE training with Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) on significant changes to discovery and bail statutes and will continue same in 2024.
- Continued to seek creation of a CAP Part.

2024 Goals

- Continue transition to paperless files.
- Continue implementation of succession planning for anticipated retirements.
- Continue implementation of construction plan re-designing our office space.
- Continue procedure to scan and shred all old and archived files to make them searchable and accessible to our attorneys and staff.
- Continue coordination with Rockland County Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) to work with CLE's and trainings regarding new laws.
- Continue coordination with Rockland County Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) with CLE's and training on significant changes to discovery and bail statutes.
- Review the 2023 County of Rockland Employee Engagement Survey results. Analyze each topic area and determine areas in which improvement is needed. Review with management team and implement a plan to improve. Track progress and report results mid and end of year.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Douglas Schuetz, Acting Commissioner

2023 Achievements

- The Department continues to be funded via State, Federal and local transportation dollars (No County tax dollars).
- Secured a grant in the amount of \$11,400,000 awarded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) from Section 5307 of the Urbanized Area Formula Program to purchase 8 replacement buses for TOR, as well as 6 expansion buses to expand the TOR fleet to meet current service demands and improve operational reliability and efficiency. No County tax dollars.
- Continues to spend down its Federal CARES Act funding that has covered the increased operating costs associated with the post-COVID transportation operating climate.
- Secured grant funding in the amount of \$24.5 million awarded by the FTA from the American Rescue Plan Act and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act to cover increased operating costs for existing bus service.
- Continued to provide a full level of TRIPS and TOR bus service. TOR is the only transit system in our region that has not cut any service in the COVID era.
- Continued to sustain expanded cleaning and sanitizing procedures and methods for both the TRIPS and TOR bus systems in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Continued with waiving fare collection.
- Demand for the ADA TRIPS service grew 44% compared to pre-COVID ridership in 2019 and 30% from 2022. The Department hired a new full-time driver position and 7 Relief Drivers in 2023 to help meet this

increased demand and ensure that the Regular TRIPS service can continue to offer rides for Rockland seniors and people with disabilities who may not qualify for the ADA TRIPS service.

- Reviewed and processed 501 Regular TRIPS, ADA Trips and Reduced Fare applications from public transit riders.
- TOR's bus fleet has an average age of 4.8 years, with 20 replacement buses entered into the fleet last summer & the replacement of 14 more buses programmed for the next 2-3 years.
- Provided 1.4 million rides through our TOR and TRIPS bus services.
- The Department exercised the 6th-year Contract Option for Transdev to operate TOR.
- Continued to provide all Departmental services, including customer services, and met all Federal and State mandates and requirements during the year.
- Completed the Federally mandated National Transit Database (NTD) Annual Report, NTD Sampling Project, Title VI Report, Public Transportation Safety Agency Plan, Drug and Alcohol Testing Program, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (DBE), and Transit Asset Management Plan.
- Continued to provide oversight and administered funds for the STOA program for Rockland County bus operators on behalf of the NYS DOT.
- Provided guidance and assistance to the Village of Kaser in establishing its new municipal bus service and applying for STOA.
- Purchased four new buses to replace vehicles in the Town of Clarkstown's Mini Trans bus service fleet using 100% New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) funding through the Public Transportation Modernization and Enhancement Program (MEP).
- Continued to be the lead on interfacing with regional transit agencies, including MTA Metro-North and NJ Transit, coordinating the County's efforts to improve transit service, transit options and transit access for Rockland County commuters, and in seeking equity from the MTA for the value gap that exists between what the County pays to MTA versus what it receives in return.
- Continued Rockland's role in regional transportation planning with County Executive Ed Day serving as a Principal of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), and voting at February's Annual Council Meeting to approve the 2022-2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- The Department's Travel Demand Management (TDM) Program continued its work to help reduce congestion and improve air quality through the promotion of transit and park & ride programs and utilizing NYS DOT dollars to fund Park & Ride maintenance programs throughout the County.
- Continued Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition for the West Shore Railroad Safety Improvement & Quiet Zone project. Continued adhering to Federal Railroad Administration procedures and the specific Federal Highway Administration procedures required of this Locally-Administered Federal Aid Project.
- Completed RFP solicitation process, obtained legislative approval and retained consultant for the Route 303 and 304 Safety and Sustainability corridor studies, which are funded by NYMTC UPWP funds.
- Coordinated and managed capital improvement/state of good repair projects at various park & ride locations, including Suffern Railroad Station Park & Ride facility, which is owned by NJ Transit. The Suffern Station project included drainage improvements and curb replacements by the Village of Suffern, as well as the County's work on new signage, milling, paving, striping and all required ADA improvements for the parking lot. The \$106,000 project was funded with 100% New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) funding through the Public Transportation Modernization and Enhancement Program (MEP). No County tax dollars were used for this project.
- Continued working with NYMTC, NYS DOT and other stakeholders on implementing goals from the Route 59 Area Transportation & Land Use Study.
- Completed the mandated NY State Transportation Operating Assisting (STOA) Audit, Single Day Federal Audit and 17-a Annual Financial and Performance Review reporting.
- In coordination with NYMTC, continued ongoing review of programmatic and analytical elements of regional emission analyses and transportation conformity determinations.
- Completed mandates and needs of CMAQ/TDM for the program year and continued to work with regional partners to complete the required federal mandates for on-going transportation funding.
- Continued to work with regional partners to update the NYMTC Regional Transportation Plan.
- Continued to monitor NJ TRANSIT and MTA Metro-North Commuter Rail service performance and advocated for improvements for Rockland County residents.

- Supported the County Executive's successful efforts to obtain a waiver from Metro-North's fare increases for West of Hudson rail fares.
- Supported the County Executive's efforts in opposition to MTA's proposed congestion pricing program, which, as proposed, would severely impact Rockland County's Manhattan-bound commuters.
- Through the Department's Bus Shelter Program, made repairs, replaced panels and installed solar lighting kits on 50 additional shelters throughout the County, bringing the total number of shelters retrofitted with lighting to 115. The Department also initiated a bus shelter power washing program for all shelter infrastructure County-wide.
- Continued to conduct data analysis activities, prepared public data products and provided technical support regarding the results of the 2020 Census for Rockland County and its towns and villages.
- Assisted Facilities Management in making needed improvements to the Building T facility HVAC system.

2024 Goals

- Continue to provide full levels of TRIPS and TOR bus service.
- Initiate TOR Bus procurement process for replacement and expansion bus purchases.
- Purchase as many as 23 new TRIPS paratransit service buses using Federal and State funding and no County tax dollars.
- Complete work on the TOR Routing Analysis to identify strategies to improve service performance and efficiency; and begin to implement planned technology improvements for TOR.
- Adjust schedules for TOR routes to address traffic congestion impacts, improve on-time performance and potentially serve new destinations with demonstrated high demand for transit service.
- Implement service improvements to TOR that meet the County's established Routing Guidelines, including significant ridership demand, operational considerations that are deemed safe and efficient, and sustainable funding.
- Continue to secure Federal and State funding for operations and capital infrastructure improvements.
- Continue to utilize Rockland County's allocation of approximately \$24.5M in Federal transit funding from both the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to cover increased operating costs of public transit for both TOR and TRIPS caused by COVID, including the purchase of personal protective equipment and continued emergency relief operating assistance.
- Secure ongoing annual funding from Metro-North for TOR to serve as a connecting service with Hudson Link and Metro-North.
- Prepare for the Department's 2025 FTA Triennial Review.
- Prepare for the mandated 2024 NY State Transportation Operating Assisting (STOA) Audit, Single Day Federal Audit and 17-a Annual Financial and Performance Review reporting.
- Complete all quarterly Federal & State transportation mandates.
- Continue to monitor NJ TRANSIT and MTA Metro-North Commuter Rail service performance and advocate for/negotiate improvements for Rockland County residents.
- As part of an overall and ongoing campaign to gain equity from MTA, continue to support the County Executive's advocacy efforts for Rockland residents to be exempt from MTA's proposed congestion pricing tolls and proposed MTA fare increases, and continue to push MTA for improved rail service and accessible stations for Rockland County.
- Complete ROW acquisition for the Railroad Safety & Quiet Zone project and move into final design phase. Continue developing the CSX construction schedule and contract. Continue working with NYS DOT and CSX to gain consensus on requirements associated with this Locally-Administered Federal Aid Project.
- Continue work with NYMTC on the Federally-required programs and projects.
- Continue to secure Federal and State funding for operations and capital infrastructure improvements.
- Continue implementing the ADA Transition Plan for County bus shelters and park and ride facilities.
- Continue to fund Park & Ride maintenance programs throughout the County utilizing County's TDM program.
- Continue to coordinate and manage capital improvement/state of good repair projects at various park & ride locations throughout the County including and Stony Point Park & Ride facility. These projects will

include milling, paving and striping and will adhere to all required ADA mandates. No County tax dollars will be used for these projects.

- Continue to provide training and cross training opportunities to staff in order to continue to provide essential services and to aid in our efforts toward succession planning.
- Begin the Clarkstown Safety and Sustainability Study for the Route 303 & 304 corridors.
- Continue to participate with NYMTC, NYS DOT and stakeholders for the Route 59 Area Transportation & Land Use Study.
- Participate in the Comprehensive Plan update project with the Planning Department.
- Continue work with the US Census Bureau and State Data Center as 2020 Census data continues to be released and analyzed.
- Through the Department's Bus Shelter Program, continue to bring all County bus shelters to ADA standard; continue to identify appropriate locations for new bus shelters; replace existing bus shelters that have reached the end of their useful lives; continue to repair and replace components and panels as needed and administer the bus shelter power washing program.
- Continue to administer the Bus Shelter Solar Lighting campaign to complete the installation of solar lighting kits on existing bus shelters for the Rockland County public transportation system to enhance safety and increase ease of use at night for transit ridership.
- Continue to work with Orangetown to fund and develop the new Sparkill Park & Ride facility, assisting with the development of an RFB for construction with 100% State funding.
- Continue to improve customer service for both TOR and TRIPS services by capitalizing on recent phone system upgrades and in developing call centers to more directly route customers.
- Continue to assist Facilities Management to make improvements to the Building T facility and systems, including a roof replacement, HVAC system, generator, security enhancements and fuel tank replacement, by providing Federal and State funding, input to procurement solicitation documents and oversight regarding the adherence to Federal and State guidelines and requirements.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Louis Falco III, Sheriff

2023 Achievements

Police Division

- Successfully completed Re-Accreditation with the New York State DCJS.
- RCSO School Bus Enforcement Unit was brought online working with the County vendor, Bus Patrol. Progress made regarding County Livery Law with work ongoing.
- Established the position of a Strategic Safety and Security Coordinator at the Police and Public Safety Academy.
- Re-established the position of Patrol Lieutenant in 2024 Budget for Special Operations/Emergency Management.
- Outfitted each patrol marked unit with breaching equipment for response to active shooters and other emergencies.

Corrections

- Continued compliance with the 166 standards for the New York State Sheriff's Association Jail Accreditation Program.
- Upgraded all training laptops.
- Upgraded all scanners and printers to All-in-One desktop versions for ease of use for staff.
- Upgraded COSS from a Legacy version to a web version with an App.
- Integrated Fortinet tokens for all users on the RCPIN network for Multi-Factor Authentication to add an extra layer of network security.
- Upgraded existing CCTV system.
- Added additional cameras to cover blind spots in facility.
- Replaced defective cameras with newer IP cameras to allow for clearer video and enhanced playback.
- Added CCTV monitors and updated all CCTV workstations in all control rooms for coverage to increase safety and security.
- Saved the life of an incarcerated individual who was overdosing on Fentanyl by using CPR and Narcan.
- Completed SCAAP reporting requirements, netting department \$314,139.
- Installed security fencing in upper alcove of A/B Rec Yard to prevent escape attempt by "wall-walking" up the brickwork.
- Went live with body worn cameras for whole Division effective January 3, 2023.
- Designed and had a body worn camera room built where the camera charging stations are located and where staff don and doff their cameras.
- Transitioned whole Division from existing Glock gen 4 handguns to new gen 5 handguns.
- Installed Axon body camera signals onto all Division holsters.
- Outfitted and trained all Officers with new secure.

Civil Division

- The Civil Enforcement Division seized approximately \$3 million dollars for reimbursement to the residents of Rockland County and other plaintiffs in court related actions and generated over \$300,000 in revenue for the County of Rockland.
- Review/audit of all active cases.
- To enhance and update the Civil Enforcement Division's web page.
- Upgraded scheduling software (POSS).
- Enhanced the training program in conjunction with the police academy to train all police officers in the handling of landlord/tenant issues prior to enforcement as well as an overview of the Civil Enforcement Division.

Communications Division

- Activated and deployed a new Field Comm unit.
- Proposed and achieved approval & funding for IAED Software.
- Fully Deployed PowerFTO Field Training Management software.
- Achieved new call taking positions.
- Achieved recertification of APCO33.
- Held several classes and trained NYSP and NYSPPD on Flex mobile.
- Successfully hosted our second national CMCP class.
- Added another IDC instructor to our staff.
- Promoted an additional Communications Specialist.
- Complete renovation of cameras and door controls.

2024 Goals

Police Division

- Identify a new, permanent headquarters location for the Mounted Unit.
- Commence and complete the renovation of the old Highway Department offices and garage, which will house the Transport Unit, the Livery Unit and REACT.
- Repower department Marine Unit vessels Marine One and Marine Two.
- Train an officer to become a licensed fixed wing and rotary aircraft pilot.
- Establish a new Patrol K9 to replace K9 Lennon who is reaching retirement.
- Integrate members of the Spring Valley Police Department into REACT.

Corrections

- Upgrade the current internal security system, which operates the doors throughout the facility. The existing system is antiquated and needs constant attention and maintenance. Newer versions would allow for more efficient operation which would allow for existing staff to be utilized more efficiently and effectively.
- Upgrade our current Stentofon system.
- Continue compliance with the New York State Sheriff's Association Jail Accreditation Program to meet standards for re-accredited.
- Upgrade all housing unit laptops.
- Procure Tek84 Intercept body scanner.
- Obtain used/obsolete electronic locks from Dutchess County to help maintain our existing locks.
- Obtain necessary components from Dutchess County to create a mock jail cell to be used for training.
- Hire eleven (11) new Correction Officers, and maintain staffing levels as required by NYSCOC.
- Conduct New Staff Orientation and On Job Training.
- Conduct Correction Officer Basic Academy, currently scheduled for August for new staff hired in 2024.
- Conduct Supervisor Academy for four (4) previously promoted Sergeants.
- Continue training standards so that we are in compliance with DCJS and NYS Sheriff's Association Accreditation.
- Improve appearance of front façade.
- Install ramps on recreation yard steps.
- Restore "McFadden Cell" in F Wing.
- Repair ceramic tile in kitchen floor near steam kettle.
- Tile floor of Intake Booking area.
- Create ADA compliant cell.
- Roll out handheld scanners for patrol tours/cell checks.
- Balance HVAC system for consistent temperature control throughout the facility.

Civil Division

- To attain re-accreditation with the New York State Sheriff's Association by maintaining standards and operating procedures consistent with the State Sheriff's Association accreditation program as well as the standards of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.
- Research and implement risk management software to prevent undue liability toward this agency.
- To acquire additional licenses for Civil Serve software program to avoid intermittent service interruption.
- To enhance the collection of fines levied by County agencies as well as local municipalities.
- To develop a training strategy for police dispatchers in civil law enforcement.

Communications Division

- Configure and deploy IAED 911 Software.

- Formulate a 988 Diversion plan.
- Perform a live test of the Alternate Emergency Communications Center.
- Obtain security cameras at all remote tower sites.
- Work with Facilities Management on replacement of Pomona radio room lighting.
- Work with Facilities Management on replacement of the generator transfer switches.
- Bring EMS agencies (that we dispatch) onto Flex Mobile.
- Work with Sheriff's administration on the procurement of call taking position hardware.
- Work with Facilities Management on having electrical and data drops outside of each radio room to accommodate a connection to the new Field Comm Unit.
- Train multiple new positions to obtain appropriate staffing levels.

SEWER DISTRICT #1

Michael Saber, Executive Director

2023 Achievements

- Continued to work through supply chain issues to maintain and improve facilities.
- Performed flow study of District interceptors and pumping stations. Final report due early 2024.
- Completed design for the Screenings Upgrade project.
- Completed engineering report for the Pump Station Screenings Upgrade project.
- Completed engineering report for the electrical grid at the wastewater treatment plant in Orangeburg.
- Completed engineering report for Twin Avenue Sewers Upgrade project.
- Bid construction phase for the Union Hill and Tallman Pump Station Upgrades project.
- Continued infiltration and inflow removal program.

2024 Goals

- Complete emergency repairs on the Lower Main Interceptor.
- Complete Odor Control Upgrade project.
- Complete Main Pump Station Upgrade project.
- Bid construction phase for the Sludge Dewatering Upgrade project.
- Bid construction phase for the Sludge Thickeners Upgrade project.
- Bid construction phase for the Screening Improvements project.
- Begin engineering report for pump station telemetry upgrade.
- Begin engineering report for blowers at wastewater treatment plant in Orangeburg.
- Begin design for the Pump Station Screenings Upgrade project.
- Begin design for the electrical grid at the wastewater treatment plant in Orangeburg.
- Begin design for the Twin Avenue Sewer Upgrade project.
- Resolve SPDES issues with the NYSDEC.

- Complete SEQRA process for potential diffuser on outfall for wastewater treatment plant in Orangeburg.
- Meet SPDES permit limits at both wastewater treatment plants.
- Continue infiltration and inflow removal program.
- Perform more public outreach.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Joan Silvestri, Commissioner

2023 Achievements

- Rockland County remains a leader in the state for Child Welfare measurements and results, including placements, safety checks etc. Currently in the top 10% of performers statewide in Employment and Child Support enforcement efforts and has few children in foster care than any other county as a percentage of population. Of those placed only one is in a congregate care setting. All others are with individual families. Through outreach and education recruited, trained, and certified 26 new foster homes avoid sending children to congregate settings.
- Despite the large increase in homelessness on a state and federal level, Rockland's homeless population has remained relatively stable with little or no increase in numbers. This was achieved through strategically maximizing grants and leveraging relationships with community partners and nonprofit agencies, redeployment of staff resources and the development of overall homeless strategy plans. Rockland's rate of homelessness is 1/6 the national average and has not shown any significant increase. All this was achieved at a time when Rockland's migrant and refugee numbers surged.
- Continued as the lead agency for the HUD Emergency Homeless Vouchers for Rockland County. Through strategic and targeted outreach and assistance Rockland, to date, has been awarded 194 vouchers to aid families experiencing or under the threat of homelessness. This is the highest number of vouchers awarded throughout the region.
- Successfully, absorbed an additional 200 Section 8 vouchers that have expanded our ability to aid Rockland residents. Rockland DSS continues to increase the awarded vouchers through its excellent performance ratings. This was achieved during a time when we also transitioned to a new system and expended the use of mobile technology for greater efficiencies.
- Developed a department wide Complex Case Review team that works collaboratively with internal and external community-based partners.
- Implemented a DSS call center (leveraging the new phone systems capabilities) to enhance client experiences at DSS.
- Increased by \$2 million the amount previously spent of Child Care assistance, while implementing widespread statutory and regulatory changes.
- Despite staffing shortages, successfully met the need for an increased demand for eligibility services.
- Working with the County Attorney's Office, developed appropriate and legally supported basis for obtaining emperor restraining order to stop the attempt by NYC to utilize a Rockland County hotel as a NYC shelter. The success of this lawsuit has prevented the quadrupling of Rockland's homeless population and overburdening of our already stretched social services system.

2024 Goals

- Continue to support the community, adjusting resources to meet those requirements ensuring that we identify gaps in services and respond in a timely way to emerging needs.
- Develop implementation strategies for significant statutory and regulatory changes resulting in additional work requirements including ABAWD employment, Medicaid expansion for senior migrants and refugee eligibility for benefits.
- Continue to work with landlords to identify affordable housing for DSS clients despite the dramatic increase in housing costs.
- Continue to advocate and lobby the State for an increase in the housing allowance for Temporary Assistance that does not provide sufficient funds for individuals to secure safe housing.
- Implement mobile based language translation services.

STOP-DWI

Albert Del Principio, Coordinator

2023 Achievements

- Updated the in-person English and Spanish Rockland County Victim Impact Panel Calendar.
- Increased our fee for the in-person Victim Impact Panel. Fee increases to \$80 per attendee (from \$50) as of 01/01/2024.
- Continued to hold in-person monthly (12) English and quarterly (4) Spanish Victim Impact Panels. As of December 2023, 659 individuals were court ordered to attend the in-person Rockland County Victim Impact Panel.
- Created a better more efficient Victim Impact Panel Referral Form. The form was sent to all the courts, probation, and Rockland TASC (Treatment Alternatives To Street Crime).
- Secured a \$35,000 grant through the New York State STOP-DWI Foundation / New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to continue to conduct High Visibility Enforcement Campaigns in 2024.
- Successfully arranged a sponsorship between the New York State STOP DWI foundation and the Rockland County Boulders Clover Stadium for STOP DWI promotion.
- The 2023 Rockland County STOP-DWI Plan was approved by the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Completed and submit the 2024 Rockland County STOP-DWI Plan to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee for approval.
- Submitted Rockland County STOP DWI report of expenditures for 2023. Quarters 1, 2, 3, 4 and the Annual report to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Participated in online New York State STOP DWI Foundation and New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee training sessions and meetings.
- In October 2023, attended in-person the annual New York State STOP-DWI Foundation conference in Utica, New York.
- STOP-DWI Coordinator and STOP-DWI education consultants provided in-person school presentations/assemblies at high schools, middle schools, community events, health fairs, rotaries, treatment centers, National Night Out and Rockland County 2023 Youthfest.

- Purchased and maintained in-stock, up to date DWI enforcement equipment and shared with the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and (8) municipal police departments. An accurate record of all items and funding provided to each police agencies and the Rockland County Sheriff's Office was kept.
- Training through the New York State STOP-DWI Foundation and New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee was offered to the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and (8) municipal police departments in Rockland County.
- 2023 Annual DWI arrest statistics were collected from the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and (8) municipal police departments in Rockland County. Data was provided to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.

2024 Goals

- Secure additional grant money through the NYS STOP-DWI Foundation and New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to continue to conduct High Visibility Enforcement Campaigns in 2025.
- Explore the possibility of introducing and funding the purchase of fluid testing equipment for roadside drug-impaired driver investigation. This would be in collaboration with the V/T/C Courts, RC DA Office, RC Chief's Association, and Director of the RC Police Academy.
- Create the 2025 in-person English and Spanish Rockland County Victim Impact Panel Calendar.
- Provide the Victim Impact Panel calendar to all County Court clerks, Rockland County Probation, and Rockland County TASC (Treatment Alternatives To Street Crime).
- Continue to hold in-person monthly English and quarterly Spanish Victim Impact Panels.
- Potentially add two more Spanish Victim Impact Panels. Making the Spanish Victim Impact Panel available every other month.
- Complete and submit the 2025 Rockland County STOP-DWI Plan to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Submit accurate STOP-DWI report of expenditures for Quarters 1, 2, 3, 4 and the annual report to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Encourage all clerks to continue to utilize the Uniform Victim Impact Panel referral form created in 2023. This will create uniformity of the court paperwork regarding the Victim Impact Panel in 2024.
- Increase coordinator and consultants in-person school presentations/assemblies at high schools, middle schools, and community events.
- Locate and utilize additional Victims of Drunk Drivers willing to share their stories at our Victim Impact Programs.
- Continue to share funds and STOP-DWI equipment with the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and our (8) municipal police departments with monies allocated for DWI enforcement.
- Purchase and maintain in-stock, up to date, DWI enforcement equipment and share with the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and our (8) municipal police departments.
- Provide additional opportunities for training sessions, quest speakers for law enforcement agencies.
- Focus on additional advertisement opportunities.
- Continue to attend regional Mid-Hudson regional New York State STOP-DWI Victim Impact Panels, information sessions, meetings, and conferences.
- Continue to attend New York State STOP-DWI Foundation meetings and conferences.
- Continue to attend New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee meeting and conferences.

VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY

Susan Branam, Director

2023 Achievements

- The efforts of our agency led to a substantial 55% increase in the total number of claims submitted in 2023, reaching a total of 626. This surge in claims reflects the team's commitment to outreach within Rockland County's veteran population. Of the veterans and family members we assisted in filing for benefits, 201 were newcomers to the VSA. This underscores our dedicated efforts to engage with and support individuals who may not have previously tapped into resources available to them.
- The claims submitted in 2023 resulted in a noteworthy \$4,028,079 distributed in benefits from the Department of Veteran Affairs so far, with approximately 200 cases still pending decision. These funds directly contribute to enhancing the lives of our local veterans, providing essential support for their well-being.
- This year's increase in claims can also be attributed in part to the passing of the country's largest piece of legislation regarding Veterans impacted by toxic exposure during their military service, known as the PACT Act. Because of the sweeping changes made with the PACT Act, the VSA hosted several information sessions about increased eligibility for benefits for veterans and surviving spouses, as well as healthcare for toxic exposed veterans.
- We also assisted 50 veterans in applying for VA health care. For some veterans, they are either rejected by or denied VA healthcare. In those cases, we specialize in finding the correct pathway for them to overcome eligibility obstacles.
- Due to the huge success of the previous year's Fresh Connect program, New York State entrusted our agency with more money to distribute to our veterans and their families to purchase food at local farmer's markets. This year, our team handed out \$7,000 in Fresh Connect Vouchers.
- Actively fostered collaboration with external organizations, emphasizing the importance of community partnerships. By working together with outside agencies, we strengthened our ability to provide comprehensive support to veterans, addressing their unique challenges and needs.

More importantly, are the lives of veterans in our community that have been transformed:

- The family of a WWII veteran came to our office for help for the veteran, who had never accessed benefits before. His health was declining rapidly, and his family was facing many challenges in providing the level of care he needed. We helped get the veteran enrolled in VA healthcare, as well as help him with benefits, totaling over \$4,000/month. We were also able to get a family member assigned as his family caregiver, allowing the veteran to spend the holidays comfortably at home with his family.
- A Gulf War veteran had filed claims related to his toxic exposure unsuccessfully for the last decade and came to the VSA for help. We were able to assist him in finally being approved at 90% disability, receiving a total of over \$2000/month.
- A veteran and his family came to us with a diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease and wanted to see what we could do to assist the veteran. After facing a denial from the VA, we were able to win an unprecedented case on his behalf, resulting in a pathway to assist other veterans with similar diagnosis and a history of toxic exposure to diesel fuel.

2024 Goals

- Continue to prioritize extensive training for Veteran Service Officers in order to offer the best possible services to veterans and their families.
- Continue to increase our outreach to underserved veterans in Rockland County. We want to do more outreach, more information sessions, and be even more accessible for veterans in our community.
- We are in the initial stages of planning to build a Gold Star Family Monument at Haverstraw Bay Park. This monument would be a place where all generations of families that have had loved ones that paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom could gather or pay respect.
- We are planning to expand our current office space and add another Veterans Service Officer. Our goal is to meet the changing needs of our Rockland Veterans and to provide the most benefits in the shortest amount of time.

YOUTH BUREAU

Gabriella Marano-Holahan, Assistant Director

2023 Achievements

Youth Employment Program (YEP)

- Young people between the ages of 14-24 developed attitudes, skills, and behaviors to help them become contributing members of Rockland's workforce and prepare them for success in their current and future endeavors.
- Trained and employed over 308 young people in 2023.
- The program provided 44,428 hours of paid employment experience to Rockland County youth while equally benefitting our local employers.
- 88 youth graduated from the T.E.E.N. (Teen Employment Education Network) Works Program. T.E.E.N. Works is a 4-week pre-employment summer training that engages participants in experiential activities focused on helping them develop job-related soft skills including effective communication, acceptance of feedback, and problem-solving to strengthen their ability to become self-sufficient and responsible. Participants' ability to work as a team under supervision was seen in their community service activities led by Youth Bureau staff.
- 98% of youth placed in employment completed their job placement.
- On a scale of 1-4, with 4 being the highest, 98% of our youth workers received a rating of 3 (very good) or 4 (excellent) from their supervisor in assessing their work skills and attitude.
- With the continuation of ARPA funds from 2022, we were able to provide the youth with uninterrupted employment through the new year.
- When given the opportunity, young people are rising to the occasion and contributing to our county in a meaningful and productive way.

Rockland Conservation & Service Corps

- Rockland Conservation & Services Corps (RCSC) builds the capacity of municipalities and organizations to address community needs. RCSC continued to recruit and train members to meet community needs in environmental issues and gain an understanding of the factors affecting Rockland and New York's environmental resources.
- Coordinated volunteers for 34 Get Fresh deliveries drawing over 75 volunteers in 2023 totaling over 99, 253 pounds of recused food to our local food pantries.
- 26 Summer Corps Members dedicated 9,226 hours of environmental and conservation service in partnership with 11 host sites. Two new sites included in the 11 – Bear Mountain State Park and Riverhook Preserve.
- Conservation Corps members built a walking trail at the newly dedicated Gordon property in Ramapo.
- Completed 8 "Friday Projects:" county-wide environmental projects which channeled the strength and skills of the Conservation Members towards projects that improved county sites and resources.
- Co-facilitated Rockland Planning Land Use with Students (RPLUS), virtually engaging over 300 students from 11 local high schools in land use planning and sustainability education.
- Hosted four Repair Cafes attended by 216 people and taking on 269 repairs of items such as radios, computers, phones, furniture, mixers, musical instruments, toys, jewelry and clothing. Two "Pop-Up" Repair Cafes were part of the four.

Youth Development Program (YDP)

- Through an RFP process, the Youth Bureau and its Volunteer Advisory Board funded 18 programs run by Rockland County agencies and municipalities that provide direct service to our local youth.
- The Board process for allocation includes a needs assessment to determine which of the goals and objectives in the NYS Touchstones Life Areas – Economic Security, Physical & Emotional Health, Community, Education, Families, and Citizenship – would have the most beneficial impact on our community.
- A total of \$243,224.00 NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Youth Development Program funds were allocated, monitored, and audited.
- Funded agencies include CANDLE, Center for Safety & Change, Chiku Awali African Dance, Arts, & Culture, the Martin Luther King Center, Mental Health Association of Rockland County, RCADD, Rockland 21C, Rockland County YMCA, Rockland Pride Center, the Stony Point Police Department, VCS Inc., and the Village of Haverstraw.
- For second year, the Rockland County Youth Bureau was allocated the Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding in the total amount of \$79,051.00, more than double the allocation from 2022. These funds helped support the sports programs provided by COPS Barn, Martin Luther King Center, Rockland BOCES- Jesse Kaplan School, the Rockland County YMCA and the Village of Haverstraw.

2024 Goals

- Employ and train at least 400 young people through the expanded Youth Employment Program.
- Establish Project TEAM (Teen Employment & Academic Mentoring) in partnership with Rockland Community College.
- Conduct a county wide youth focused needs assessment to support expanded outreach and funding opportunities.
- Mobilize volunteers for at least 25 Get Fresh food deliveries.
- Engage 26 Conservation Corps members in environmental service throughout 10 host sites in Rockland County, delivering over 9,100 hours of service to the community.
- Train and mobilize Corps Members to prepare for, mitigate and recover from significant weather events during their service period.
- Train Youth Employment Program and Conservation & Service Corps employers and site supervisors on best practices on positive youth development and youth engagement.
- Host 4 Repair Café events.
- Establish a network of school and community staff responsible for supporting Runaway and Homeless young people to facilitate improved attendance, engagement, and academic success of homeless children and youth.
- Establish a Youth Service Network comprised of young people developing leadership skills through community service outreach and youth advocacy.