



## **COMPTROLLER ELLIOTT AUERBACH**

**COUNTY OF ULSTER  
PO BOX 1800  
KINGSTON, NEW YORK 12402**



### **IF YOU CAN'T MEASURE IT YOU CAN'T MANAGE IT**

#### **Comptroller Auerbach Issues First Quarter Report**

KINGSTON, NY (May 13, 2009)...Ulster County Comptroller Elliott Auerbach released his office's first quarterly report on the financial condition of the County and the economy, effectiveness and efficiency with which the County is run.

"Here in Ulster County, I've quickly learned, we have a fundamental flaw in our financial management. Access to and analysis of current financial data is seriously limited not only for the public but for county staff and leadership," said Auerbach. The Comptroller explained that Ulster County's budget and financial data is managed using a significantly out-dated DOS system and five separate methods of payroll management.

"On no uncertain terms, our financial systems are inadequate and inappropriate," stated Auerbach, "as Comptroller it is my duty to not only assure expeditious implementation of a 21<sup>st</sup> century financial management system, but also assure that it enables public access to accurate, timely data and that the system enables staff to understand and use financial data."

Quarterly reporting is a requirement of the Ulster County Charter. Comptroller Auerbach has designed the reporting document to be user friendly, helping staff and the public better understand the story financial data intends to convey and how to use the data to guide decision making. "We spent a lot of staff time analyzing various reporting methods," explained Auerbach, "and I believe it is most valuable to provide data in context and with an explanation of why it is important and how to use the information."

This first report focuses on four(4) fiscal indicators. For each indicator the report directs the reader "where to look," explains "what the report tells," describes "how we evaluate" the data, identifies "issues noted" and "opportunities for improvement," and it provides the necessary data.

"The single most significant improvement that needs to be made, however, is implementation of a modern financial management system," said Auerbach, "without it the sunlight is muted, staff time wasted and reporting antiquated." According to Auerbach, on a number of occasions recently, the press has unintentionally been given erroneous financial data because there is no single source for current and accurate information. "I want to make clear that I see this as a systems problem not a people problem," explained Auerbach, "we have very capable people spending lots of time compensating for a poor system."

Comptroller Auerbach committed to work closely with the County Legislature and the County Executive to fast track a funding and implementation plan. "While the affects of the global economic crisis reveal themselves to us daily," said the Comptroller, "now more than ever we have a responsibility to readily record, monitor and evaluate each and every penny Ulster County receives and spends."

Noting that the report will continue to expand and grow over time, the Comptroller insisted that the report conclude with a "Rate this Report" form. "We want to know what people think, what information do they need to evaluate the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of County government," explained Auerbach, "this report is produced to serve the interests of the people of Ulster County so, please, let us know what we should do differently or better."

The Ulster County Charter designates the County Comptroller as the chief accounting and auditing officer and requires the Comptroller to at least quarterly "report on the financial condition of the County and the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which County government or any of it is departments, agencies or programs is managed."

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A copy of the audit will appear on the Ulster County Comptroller's web page at [www.ulstercountyny.gov/comptroller](http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/comptroller)

**Office of the Comptroller (845) 340-3525 Email- [eaue@co.ulster.ny.us](mailto:eaue@co.ulster.ny.us)**