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**NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 15, 2010

**Contact: James J. Hanson**  
845.802.3138  
jhns@co.ulster.ny.us

**COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN RECEIVES NEW REPORTS  
ON SHARED MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

**Initiatives are designed to reduce costs and improve services in Ulster County**

Kingston, NY – County Executive Mike Hein today announced the release of three new reports, which include a study of opportunities for shared services among municipalities throughout Ulster County. Funded through a grant from the New York State Department of State Local Government Efficiency Program, the goals of the ambitious program were to identify beneficial ways in which intergovernmental collaboration would improve local government efficiency and save taxpayer dollars. The work was undertaken by the County acting in partnership, initially, with thirteen and later with all general purpose governments within Ulster County. A report released earlier this year recommending an innovative decentralized approach to the delivery of shared highway services was also part of the study.

The study team, led by Jonathan Drapkin, CEO of Pattern for Progress, a mid-Hudson regional planning and policy organization, included experts from the Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach (CRREO) of SUNY New Paltz, the Intergovernmental Studies Program at Rockefeller College - University at Albany, Fairweather Consulting and the Center for Local Government at Binghamton University.

The centerpiece of the study is the comprehensive Summary Report on Intergovernmental Collaboration compiled by Dr. Gerald Benjamin and Joshua Simons of CRREO. The Summary Report includes more than two dozen areas for potential collaboration and cooperation in the future. Baseline data, analysis of current trends and guiding principles for achieving collaboration are included in the approximately one hundred-page document.

This Report briefly references key findings from the three focus areas detailed in separate reports: (1) the Highway Shared Services Report, mentioned above; (2) a report on Justice Courts by Dr. Sydney Cresswell of Rockefeller College; and (3) “Options for Reconfiguring the Delivery of Planning and Economic Development Services” by Peter Fairweather of Fairweather Consulting. These reports, as well as Pattern for Progress’s Action Plan for Implementation are posted on the Ulster County website at: [www.co.ulster.ny.us](http://www.co.ulster.ny.us)

“I want to thank Jonathan Drapkin, Gerry Benjamin, Peter Fairweather, Sydney Cresswell and Michael Hattery for their work on this important initiative,” said County

Executive Hein. “I look forward to moving to the next phase of reviewing the possibility of implementing some of the recommendations outlined in the reports. The global recession has created a new fiscal paradigm for local governments. It demands that we reject the status quo and adopt new and innovative ideas to deliver services at a lower cost to the taxpayer.”

"This has been the largest study of its kind in New York and an extraordinary opportunity to look in detail at how government services are delivered across 24 municipal borders," said Jonathan Drapkin, President and CEO of Pattern for Progress. "We are grateful for the leadership of the County Executive and the many local officials with whom we worked. Although the study is done, Pattern will continue to help communities in Ulster as they consider potential restructuring and beneficial change."

Gerald Benjamin, CRREO Director & Associate Vice President for Regional Engagement said, "We are delighted to have had a role in developing this comprehensive overview of opportunities for reducing costs and improving service quality through collaboration for all the local governments in SUNY New Paltz's home county. We think that this unique study provides a model approach to identifying collaborative opportunities for counties throughout New York."

According to Sydney Cresswell, Director of the Intergovernmental Studies Program at Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, "Ulster officials tapped into a growing interest in examining the issues and operational concerns of justice courts. Our study provided them with the range of information they needed, including data on activities, costs, and metrics for individual justice courts, data from similar communities to permit comparisons, and information on options for modifying court operations. We hope that this report will enable local officials to jump-start a series of productive conversations."

Peter Fairweather, Principal of Fairweather Consulting said, "We've been involved in government and not-for-profit restructuring efforts throughout the Northeast, and we were very impressed with the professionalism, commitment, and creativity of the officials in both the county and town governments. It was a pleasure working with them and with the entire Pattern team. It is our hope that we've been able to contribute something that will assist the planning and economic development efforts in our home county of Ulster."

County Executive Hein will be forming a shared services implementation team to further examine the possibility of actual implementation. The team is expected to consist of members of the County Executive's staff, the Ulster County Legislature, representatives of the Ulster County Supervisors and Mayors Association, the League of Women Voters, Pattern for Progress, CRREO and other appointees of the County Executive. Pattern and CRREO are available to help town leaders pursue areas in which they have expressed interest.

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