



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN



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ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN DELIVERS 2018 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

As Bold An Agenda That We Have Ever Had Access To A Brighter Future For EVERYONE

New Paltz, N.Y. – Ulster County Executive Mike Hein delivered his tenth annual State of the County Address at the conference center of Ulster BOCES in New Paltz to a standing room only audience of business owners, community leaders, State and local officials, and most importantly everyday citizens. The County Executive’s message of “*Access to a Brighter Future for Everyone*” resonated throughout his speech as he detailed some of the many exciting initiatives scheduled to take place in 2018 while highlighting the accomplishments of the previous year.

“The state of our County is not only strong, it’s stronger than it’s ever been and I firmly believe that our finest days are yet to come,” said **County Executive Mike Hein**. “The difficult and sometimes controversial decisions we have tackled head on in the past are now just beginning to pay the serious dividends we had planned for all along, helping us rebuild the county’s financial foundation, improve our overall bond rating, and accomplish what many people just assume is impossible - greater access to better services with lower taxes for everyone. Ulster County property taxes in 2018 are the lowest they’ve been since all the way back in 2009, almost a decade ago. All while helping our partners in local government by providing over \$32 million dollars in relief to our Towns and the City of Kingston to help them balance budgets, protect taxpayers and protect essential services.”

County Executive Hein continued, “The County’s \$61 million dollar county-wide infrastructure overhaul is working better than we could have ever imagined, creating quality jobs and safer roads and bridges for everyone. We are witnessing first hand the reinvention and diversification of our County’s economy with dramatically lower unemployment rates, the birth of a film based entertainment industry and the explosion of tourism spending all across our county.”

County Executive Hein highlighted his three part plan to help end generational poverty: “I’m particularly excited about my \$11.3 million dollar, three project plan to increase opportunities for disadvantaged youth and improve access to a brighter future for everyone by positively impacting some of the root causes of generational poverty. I am pleased to report that because of the quality of our projects, we have secured over \$9.3 million dollars in grant funding to help offset our local costs. This plan delivers access to higher education for inner city youth with our SUNY Ulster Kingston campus that’s already built and thriving; it will include access to low cost, high quality food, plus a safe and secure location for children to play, for some of our poorest residents, by connecting mid-town Kingston to the City’s only major supermarket with our upcoming Linear Park; and this year specifically, we are excited to provide access to a life altering second chance for at risk youth with our new Restorative Justice and Community Empowerment Center. This facility will provide specialized programming to reducing

recidivism, improve family reintegration and deliver targeted employment training for at risk youth, all to proactively alter the trajectory of their lives.”

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEW INITIATIVES HIGHLIGHTED BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
IN THE STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS INCLUDE:**

Fiscal

- The property tax levy for this year in Ulster County is the lowest since 2009, while providing greater access to better services for citizens. In addition, the County has provided the City of Kingston and Towns with \$32 million in relief.

Environment

- The County completed its Utility-Scale Solar Project at the former Town of Ulster landfill with 6,320 solar panels, which will generate 20% of the County government’s entire electric needs.
- Ulster County received the 2017 New York State Department of Environmental Excellence Award due to the County’s leadership in environmental stewardship: being the first and only “Net Carbon Neutral” County in New York State with 100% of County government’s energy being generated from renewable resources; creating the largest concentration of municipal electric car charging stations in New York State; and converting the County’s fleet to alternate fuel vehicles.
- Ulster County has also been awarded a special \$85,000 State grant to evaluate the direct impacts of climate change and to work on local solutions to help fight climate change. In addition, this year the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center will have a massive energy efficient lighting upgrade which will be accomplished in conjunction with NYSERDA and Central Hudson.

Sexual Harassment Prevention

- The County Executive unveiled a bold initiative to protect victims of sexual harassment in the workplace all across Ulster County. The County Executive has directed that a hotline and website be available as a tool to provide information and resources to any victim of workplace sexual harassment: **the Workplace Sexual Harassment hotline #1-833-ENDS NOW or 1-833-363-7669, and the website is www.UlsterHelps.org.**
- The County Executive highlighted the new Ulster County Bystanders Against Sexual Assault Program (UCBASA). This ground-breaking program provides bystander training for bar staff as it aims to prevent sexual assaults before they occur and reduce the overall number of sexual assaults that take place. It is the first such program in New York State and can serve as a model for the development of a state-wide initiative. This innovative program developed by the Ulster County Crime Victims Assistance Program was launched in the college town of New Paltz with the assistance of Town of New Paltz Police Chief Joseph Snyder and the President of the New Paltz Tavern Owners Association Mike Beck. The program is scheduled to expand to Kingston and Saugerties.

Capital Construction

In total, this year has a near unprecedented volume of capital work with an aggressive time line that positively impacts virtually every one of the 180,000 residents of Ulster County.

- The \$10 million new Family Court facility is under construction located next to the County’s Department of Social Services in the Town of Ulster. This new facility will improve efficiency and services for children and families. It will greatly improve the critical outcomes for vulnerable children and their families by placing a state of the art court facility right next to health and human services.
- Construction of a new Ulster County Restorative Justice and Empowerment Center which will be part of a major overhaul of the juvenile justice system and it will include important programming to provide youth a second chance.
- In 2018, Ulster County will make an additional \$16 million investment in public infrastructure, totaling \$61 million over a four year period under the County Executive’s “Building a Better Ulster County” initiative. This massive undertaking has resulted in improving 72% of the County’s 423 miles of roads. This year, the County is expected to improve 11 more bridges in addition to improving roadways.
- Ulster County will continue to focus on safety for children by expanding its successful school safety program across the County with the installation of additional solar speed signs in critical areas and roadwork projects; including widening the shoulders for bicyclists and pedestrians, including on South Putt Corners Road in New Paltz near the high school.
- Deliver a multi-location Fire Training Center with an exterior training complex at SUNY Ulster; a state of the art lecture facility at SUNY Ulster; and burning and extrication training split between the Town of Ulster and Walker Valley. County Executive Hein proposed the lecture hall at SUNY Ulster be dedicated in memory of the late Captain Jack Rose of the Mt .Marion Fire Department – the Captain Jack Rose Memorial Lecture Hall.

Veterans

- The County Executive and his Veterans Advisory Panel arranged for the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall to visit Ulster County and it will be on display July 18-23, at the Cantine Veterans Memorial Complex in Saugerties. The Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall is a 300ft. long replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

Legislative Agenda

The County Executive called for the Ulster County Legislature to address important issues and take action in 2018:

- 1) Pass Comprehensive Campaign Finance Reform designed with the best good government groups in the state, to ensure clean and fair elections forever with the four following pillars:
 - Public Financing: because you shouldn’t have to be rich to run for office;
 - Contribution Limits: because it’s reasonable to demand that political contributions NOT be exorbitant;
 - Disclosure Requirements: because voters should know precisely where the money comes from; and
 - An Independent Oversight Commission.

*“If we truly want a government of, by, and for the people, then we must be willing to take the necessary steps to protect it,” said **County Executive Hein**. “It’s about doing the right thing and it’s about delivering the kind of integrity based system that our citizens deserve.”*

- 2) Pass Tobacco 21 legislation, raising the legal age to purchase cigarettes to 21, reducing the number of people who begin smoking at a younger age and the number of people suffering from cancer, lung and heart disease.

*“But the good news is we can do something about it, and as a direct result, drastically reduce the likelihood of terrible diseases like cancer, lung disease and heart disease too. The statistics are clear, the best way to reduce the number of people who smoke is to delay the time that they start,” said **County Executive Hein**.*

- 3) Create a county-wide single bus system serving City of Kingston residents as well as all residents with a fully coordinated system. This would be accomplished with no job loss, better service, less risk and no additional cost to the taxpayers.
- 4) Announced a three year agreement in principal with CSEA, the County’s largest labor union, which awaits legislative approval; and
- 5) Unite to require the New York State Legislature to reauthorize and extend the Film Tax Credit for Ulster County.

*“So if we are to continue to grow this industry and reach our full potential as a community, we must unite in our support to extend the film tax credit, just as we did to secure it in the first place, said **County Executive Hein**. “Simply put, let’s get this bold agenda done together.”*

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For 2018 State of the County Speech and Presentation please visit
<http://ulstercountyny.gov/executive/state-county>