



# Rockland County Legislator Jay Hood, Jr.

District 3—Haverstraw and West Haverstraw

Winter 2010/2011

## Message From Legislator Hood

The County Legislature just completed its annual budget review, and it was the most difficult one in recent memory.

Rockland County relies on revenue from several sources, most of all from the sales tax, but in this economic downturn, revenues have fallen sharply, creating a \$17.8 million deficit.

In October, the County Executive presented us with a proposal for a \$711 million budget that in-

cluded a county property tax increase of \$24 per year for the typical homeowner. My colleagues and I on the Budget Review Committee worked productively over several weeks to propose a budget that was \$1.2 million less by eliminating vacant and newly proposed positions, and we reduced the proposed tax increase of \$24 per year to \$12 per year. Legislator Michael Grant and I are both members of the review committee and

we made sure that funding for the many programs and organizations which serve our districts remained in the final budget.

The county executive also proposed that the county sell Summit Park Hospital to a Public Benefit Corporation (PBC) for a projected \$60 to \$80 million. Legislators will now have time to review the complexities of the proposal to determine if the sale of this asset



will benefit the needs of the county, its residents and the 700 county employees that faithfully tend to the needs of the patients and the overall operation of the hospital.

## Tackling Crime In Rockland County

2010 was a milestone year for law enforcement in Rockland. As Chair of the Public Safety Committee in the County Legislature, I have the opportunity to work with law enforcement officials on numerous issues, but I have made cracking down on local crime a top priority.

I was proud to collaborate with Rockland County District Attorney Tom Zugibe on several issues, including a new program known as Drug Market Intervention. This

program apprehends street-level drug dealers to rehabilitate them. Already, eight drug dealers in Haverstraw have been taken off the streets and are part of this program.

When local firefighters were facing the possibility of having to pay for the testing of their own fire masks, I worked with Gordon Wren, Director of Fire Services, to find federal funds so that the firefighters would not have to pay for the testing.

I voted to appropriate millions of dollars of forfeiture funds, which is money seized by law enforcement from criminals.

Below are some of the ways that money was spent:

**Equipment and Training:** New technology for law enforcement and an upgrade of existing equipment. Specialized training for District Attorneys, Sheriff's officers, and other personnel.

**Tele-Visitation System:** Instead of transporting prisoners for medical or other evaluations, a new system was installed in the jail to allow for meetings over video transmission, saving taxpayer money and making it safer for everyone involved.

**Distribution To Police Departments:** A great deal of funding has been distributed to local police departments, including the Haverstraw Police Department, for working on investigations.

## Funding Youth Services

This year, an attempt was made to cut over \$200,000 in funding for youth programs, primarily the Youth Employment Program. This program provides opportunities for the disadvantaged, including many young constituents of mine. Particularly in a bad economy, we need to do all we can for our children, and foster their growth and development to help them prepare for the world that awaits them.

With the support of my legislative colleagues, I was able to prevent those cuts, so that the residents and young people of my district and all of Rockland can continue to enjoy the benefits of these important programs.



Legislator Hood with District Attorney Tom Zugibe.

### New Public Safety System Created

In addition to combating crime in Rockland as Chair of the Public Safety Committee, I also pushed forward a plan to create a countywide interoperable communications system. This system will allow all first responders from different departments and localities to communicate with one another.

This new structure will greatly enhance public safety in Rockland,

and will allow for communication between all departments, including the Town of Haverstraw Police Department, the Haverstraw Ambulance Corps, and fire districts.

I'm proud to have pushed this plan forward, which will also include the purchase of new radios for all local departments, including all those in Haverstraw, saving local taxpayers real money.

### Defending Human And Civil Rights

During the budget meetings in the legislature, a proposal was made to eliminate funding for the Human Rights Commission. I was appalled by this suggestion, and proudly stood to defend the work of this vital group.

The Human Rights Commission, which I have interacted with on numerous occasions as a legislator, assists hundreds of residents involved in civil or human rights complaints a year.

This group gives a voice to the underserved and underprivileged, including many who live in my district. They investigate issues of housing and employment discrimination, and promote tolerance and understanding.

In our diverse community, we need this group now more than ever, and I was proud to fight for them. Thankfully, working with my colleagues, that proposal was dismissed, and the work of this group can continue.

### Your Neighborhood & Quality Of Life

#### Quality of Life Board

Residents have a right to a peaceful, clean and safe environment, yet the peace and civility of some of our village's neighborhoods are often interrupted by excessive noise and other inconveniences that disrupt the quality of life we treasure. At my suggestion, the Village of Haverstraw Board of Trustees has introduced a program to address issues that may affect the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Residents are now able to report such issues to the newly created Quality of Life Board, a seven-member volunteer board that will evaluate each complaint and work to arrive at a fair and impartial solution. Please call the Village Office at (845) 429-0300 for more information or to obtain a copy of the "Quality of Life Complaint Form".



#### Police Firing Range

The County Police Firing Range which has existed on Tilcon property for decades, was relocated to another section of the quarry. Unfortunately, the noise created during practice sessions disturbed the normal quiet of the nearby residential areas of Haverstraw and New City.

Legislator Ed Day and I, with the support of our colleagues, appropriated funding to retain an engineering firm to assess the situation and determine a plan to reduce the noise.

A remediation plan has been designed that will be funded by forfeiture funds from a major narcotics investigation through the cooperation of Sheriff James Kralik and District Attorney Thomas Zugibe.

Once all formalities are decided, the project should begin in early 2011 and be completed by late spring. In the interim, law enforcement personnel cooperated to alleviate the noise impact by limiting activity at times residents would be impacted the most.

### North Rockland's Shining Stars

One of my greatest pleasures as your legislator is to invite district residents to our chambers to participate in our pre-meeting ceremonies or to recognize them for special achievements. I particularly enjoy recognizing our youth, the heart of our community.

From Ms. Rodman's Haverstraw Middle School KnitLit Club, which inspires interest in literature, knitting and acts of charity; to our boys and girls sports teams, our youth are involved, enthusiastic and a wonderful reflection of the community we are all a part of.



**I value and welcome your input. Feel free to call me with any questions, comments, or concerns at (845) 638-5100, or e-mail me at HoodJ@co.rockland.ny.us. You can also write to:  
The Rockland County Legislature 11 New Hempstead Road New City, NY 10956**