

Freeholders In 2017: Enhancing The Quality of Life In Hunterdon County

John E. Lanza completes his term as Director of the Freeholder Board on December 31 and continues here to reflect on the Board's efforts to enhance the quality of life for residents of Hunterdon County.

9-11-01: "Too Much Was Sacrificed That Day To Ever Forget" – Sheriff Brown

"Sheriff Fred Brown re-established a Historic Courthouse steps ceremony commemorating September 11, 2001 on September 11th this year.

I was honored to join my Freeholder colleagues, Constitutional Officers, Congressman Leonard Lance, local officials, and leaders of numerous Hunterdon County first responder units in a moving ceremony remembering those who were lost and the sacrifices made that day. The Historic Courthouse bell sounded sixteen times in memory of the sixteen Hunterdon County residents who were lost on 9-11-01.

Economic Development Plan Takes Major Steps

Looking to the technology future and strengthening economic development in the County were major themes for the Freeholder Board in 2017.

ExxonMobil's decision to consolidate operations and add jobs at their Clinton Township R & D facility demonstrates the viability of Hunterdon County as a prime location for the growth of quality companies with high wage positions.

The County partnered with Flemington Community Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce to hold an inaugural 'Hackathon,' a 24 hour innovation competition that connected the County's technology and innovation community with each other and is a pivotal part of the County's emerging innovation initiative.

Additionally, the Freeholders approved moving forward on two major foundational economic programs. A Procedural Review pilot project that will identify local obstacles to economic growth and a Tourism Study that will provide the strategic guide for maximizing what Freeholder Suzanne Lagay has called the County's sleeping economic giant – the tourism economy.

County Stronger And More Prepared

During 2017, a resiliency program putting five permanent generators in place at key county structures and an updated Emergency Management Plan has made the County more prepared

than ever to respond to major incidents, such as those experienced during the 2012 mega storm Sandy.

Permanent natural gas generators have been established at the public shelter in Building #1 at the County's Route 12, the County Library, which can now serve as a public charging station, at County fuel stations, and at a county communication tower to ensure vital links for emergency responders. The total \$694,847.96 cost of the generators project came from a federal Homeland Security grant.

Heron Glen Clubhouse Nearing Completion

The groundbreaking for the construction of the Clubhouse at the Heron Glen Golf course took place in May and today the facility is nearing completion, with the goal of having it ready for use at the beginning of the 2018 golf season.

As projected in the 2007 Golf Resource Associates study, the addition of the clubhouse will serve to enhance the financial benefit of the golf course for home owning and business taxpayers.

As I stated at the groundbreaking ceremonies, ultimately the Heron Glen profits result in monies that do not need to be raised in taxes to support the county budget.

Keeping The Public Informed

The Freeholder Board approved a major step in openness and communication with the public through the establishment of the Hunterdon Report, which is emailed to thousands of residents who have signed up to receive it and is also available on the County's Facebook page and web page.

The Hunterdon Report provides information on many aspects of County government, including news from the Freeholder Board and Constitutional Officers, timely notice of services such as the electronic/household waste drop off days, Parks activities, and many other notices of events.

In discussions with residents and officials around the County, the newsletter has been well received.

Honor To Serve

It has been my great honor to serve as Freeholder Director in 2017. Hunterdon County has a great quality of life and it is my sincere hope that the actions taken by the Freeholders in 2017 have enhanced that quality. I look forward to continuing to serve as a Freeholder and happily pass the baton of leadership to the next Director in 2018."