

2006 State of the County

Good afternoon, Chairman Schofield, Lawmakers, Broome County employees, members of the media and special guests. Thank you for this opportunity to update you and the community on the State of Our County.

It is hard to believe it has been a year already since I delivered to this group my first State of the County address. It has been an active year, and I am eager to move forward on the projects we began in 2005.

Broome County is at a real crossroads. We are at a crucial time where decisions that are made now could mean the difference between our area becoming a dynamic community once again, or remaining a community that continues to struggle.

We are a stable county but we do have financial concerns. The good news is we are not facing a crisis like many communities in the Northeast. However, we are not experiencing a strong resurgence in our economy either.

I want to change that and become a community that can boast of turning things around and become a model for others to follow. We can do that, if we work together.

Broome County is in decent shape financially. We have a solid budget in place for this year. We do have concerns, however, like health care, Medicaid of course and energy costs.

We implemented a number of programs and initiatives last year to do a better job of controlling spending.

They include; stricter oversight on purchases, payroll, and travel, stricter oversight on Medicaid expenditures and a more focused approach to creating a structurally sound budget; one that is not dependent on gimmicks, one shot revenue streams or bloated appropriated fund balances.

On the issue of oversight, I want to update this body on the State Comptroller's report on Broome County's payroll operation.

I am told by the Comptroller's office that this report will be issued within the next few weeks. I look forward to the findings in this report and working with you on implementing the recommendations.

I would like to encourage lawmakers to push forward with your review of the administrative rules. As County Executive, I implemented measures to protect the county from another sick pay controversy; however, we still need legislative action to firm up these rules. I look forward to your recommendations.

In regards to the 2006 budget, I once again commend lawmakers on their foresight to continue to maintain the tax stabilization fund. This is the responsible thing to do. It is in the best interest of our taxpayers.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a concern but our Medicaid situation is in much better shape than it was a few years ago, thanks to the state Medicaid cap. But I feel it is important to note that even with the cap in place our costs increased by \$1.7 million from 2004 to 2005 and they will continue to increase this year by approximately \$1.2 million dollars.

The cap has been a tremendous help in planning for the future but everyone needs to remember this does not make our Medicaid problem disappear. It is still quite a drain on our local resources, comprising about 11 percent of our overall budget or about \$34 million dollars a year.

That is why we need to work on continuing to reduce the Medicaid burden that exists for property taxpayers across New York State. This is not to say that those in need will be sacrificed or ignored. I absolutely do not believe that should happen.

However, the system and how it is administered by New York State is broken. It seems there is complete incompetence, fraud or both.

The New York Times reported last year that our Medicaid system which is quote-*the most expensive and most generous in the nation*-has been mis-spending billions as a result of fraud, waste and profiteering. This has got to be stopped.

I strongly advocate an aggressive approach to cracking down on fraud. That is why I sought to have Broome County become one of the first counties in New York State to join the Verify New York Program.

This program will enable counties like Broome to flag inefficiencies and billing irregularities. The demonstration project makes counties partners in the effort to detect, investigate and prosecute Medicaid provider fraud.

By participating in this project, we are not assuming there is fraud on the local level, however, if we do nothing, we will never know and I would rather take steps to protect the taxpayers' dollars than simply hope there is not a problem.

This is not costing Broome County a dime and if any money is recovered as a result of fraud, we will share in those recovered funds.

I want to assure you that Broome County Security Department efforts, to investigate user fraud, will continue as well.

Shared Services

The Press & Sun Bulletin recently reported that our area has one of the highest percentages of government related employees than any other community in New York State. They were talking about the number of school district, as well as federal, state & local government employees.

What they reported probably did not come as a surprise to anyone. I hear it everyday, "*Why can't we reduce the size of government?*"

I am here today to say we must do something about the size of government, sooner rather than later.

I started the Shared Services initiative because I strongly believe there has got to be a better way of providing services to our constituents and providing those services in a more cost efficient manner.

Less than one year later we are making progress but we need more people in leadership positions that recognize the need to reduce the size of government. One way of doing it is by sharing services and yes even consolidating governments.

Many dismiss the idea as not leading to real cost savings or have been critical of the lack of progress that has been made.

First of all this project has been going for less than a year. In just the past 10 months communication lines have been opened and people have been educated about the need for a more coordinated effort.

Secondly, Sharing Services initiatives have and will cut costs.

Broome County's inter-municipal agreement with the Village of Endicott which, allowed the county to handle the village's labor relations and negotiations, is a shining example.

In 2005, Broome County's personnel and law departments helped the Village settle all 7 contracts with its employees at a savings of approximately \$60-thousand dollars to village taxpayers. I want to recognize Mayor Pulse for having the foresight to work with the county on this effort.

Also as a result of my Shared Services initiative, the City of Binghamton, hopefully this year, will be transferring its entire tax collection operation over to Broome County's Real Property Tax Department.

I want to thank Mayor Ryan for supporting this initiative and seeing it through. This will save the city thousands of dollars and most assuredly bring in additional revenue to Broome County coffers.

We are also in the final stages of an agreement with the Town of Chenango, which will allow the town to use our fuel refilling station on Route 12. This will save the Town more than a half a million dollars! I want to recognize legislator Jerry Marinich for the role he played in these talks.

In addition, we are exploring ways for all of us to save on skyrocketing insurance costs. The search has led us to explore the possibility of joining a health care consortium.

There are still a lot of questions to be answered. The group has to decide if we can join in the first place. We have to decide if this really makes sense for us. And the municipalities have to decide if they would benefit from joining as well.

But these are the kinds of conversations that need to be taking place. We need to look at everything to determine where we can share a service, consolidate, contain costs and even reduce costs.

The Sharing Services initiative has also gotten us talking with the City, Towns and Villages about our highway operations and our parks systems.

However, this does not have to be all that is discussed. There are so many more opportunities for sharing services and consolidation and I hope to keep pressing forward and making progress on a number of fronts. There is planning, payroll, personnel, police, fire, libraries and much more left to explore.

This cannot be a one-way street. We need all of the communities committed to reducing the size of local government in Broome County. Without their commitment this cannot work.

Economic Development Efforts

Economic development must remain a major priority this year. We have laid a strong foundation in 2005, and I plan to keep those ideas and initiatives progressing.

Residents of Broome County and our media have often debated publicly whether county government should be involved in the business of economic development. I think the focus of that debate is misplaced.

As elected leaders we **are** involved in economic development. The focus of the debate should be on the extent of our involvement.

I would like to outline my philosophy. Broome County needs economic growth. County Government can help achieve that goal by doing the following:

County Government can **facilitate** economic growth. We can actually assist existing businesses, developers and entrepreneurs.

We can act as a **coordinator** of economic development. In other words we can try to get all of the various groups working together. We need to make things easier for our employers.

We can actually **promote** economic growth by protecting and enhancing our infrastructure. When available, we can also use incentives and grants to help employers.

When appropriate, we can also act as a **developer** in the delivery of certain type of services. This is especially true for recreational and entertainment services like those delivered at the Arena, Forum, En Joie and Grippen Park.

I truly believe that County Government has an obligation to act as a **facilitator, coordinator, promoter and developer** of economic growth. As long as we act responsibly with our goal of spurring economic growth in mind, we will have success. We will improve our quality of life, attract employers and do our part to stimulate economic growth.

As a **facilitator** of local economic development efforts we need to do more to develop programs and incentives designed to create, grow and retain jobs.

One method is to give small and emerging businesses a helping hand when starting out. The technology and products these small companies are creating could lead them to be the next IBM or Link Simulation companies of the future. We need to help them get started.

Today I am pleased to report that through the assistance of Senator Clinton's office, we have received a \$250-thousand dollar federal grant to create an incubator facility for these new and emerging businesses.

This money will help refurbish a building in the Broome Corporate Park. We anticipate housing at least 4 businesses that need development and manufacturing space.

This initiative is a perfect example of Broome County **facilitating** economic development. We are excited about the prospects and we are thankful to Senator Clinton for her help with this project. Work will begin immediately.

During the last year we met with various groups and individuals involved in spurring economic growth and a few things emerged as main priorities.

Local companies need venture capital. We **facilitated**, along with one of our partners, the Southern Tier Opportunities Coalition, by creating a process for local companies to seek venture capital. This had never been done before.

Local companies need a trained workforce. We **facilitated** by reorganizing the Workforce Investment Board and bringing it into New York State compliance, which it had not been under the previous administration. The board is streamlined and re-energized.

This community needs a one point of contact for all economic development efforts. To help **coordinate** this effort we are working with Senator Schumer's office to secure \$270-thousand dollars to study this one point of contact project.

We are **coordinating** a one point of contact economic development web site that is about to become reality.

We are **coordinating** an update of our own go-Broome-County web site to make it a more effective marketing tool.

With help from our economic development partners, we have **coordinated** the creation of a Rapid Response Team to go after opportunities. This has received enthusiastic response from business and community leaders.

We would like to work closely with Binghamton University, helping them transition any research and technology advances to the market.

We have also developed a relationship with Cornell University and its Cornell Center for Technology, Enterprise and Commercialization for the same purpose.

Another one of our goals is to include the entire Greater Binghamton region and beyond in economic development efforts. We need everyone working together for the same goals.

If one thing taught me a lesson this past year it is that regional successes can be successes for all of us.

Lockheed Martin's ability to secure the Marine One helicopter contract has meant tremendous things for Broome County. We cannot be so narrowly focused with our own efforts. What is good for one sector of the region is good for the entire region.

To that end we are meeting with and talking with other counties in our region to see how we can partner on economic development efforts.

Also in the last year, we have provided advice and counsel to the Greater Binghamton Coalition and its Executive Director Jim DiMascio. We have worked with the G-B-C on its "One Point of Contact" initiative.

It includes an excellent marketing plan for Greater Binghamton and a Capital Improvements plan that focuses on brownfield redevelopment.

Its basic theme is that this community must find a sustainable revenue stream for infrastructure improvements and other large-scale projects.

In 2005, with legislative support, we also secured an economic development planner, whose job it is, to aggressively go after any and all grants. In 2005 we secured nearly a million dollars in grants and appropriations. In 2006 we are going after \$1.7 million dollars.

Broome County can also **promote** economic growth. We can accept the responsibility of creating and nurturing a positive quality of life for the people who live here.

Employers need to realize that Broome County is a great place for their employees to live, to work and to raise families.

That means we must help revitalize the County's urban core in downtown Binghamton; we must protect our infrastructure, parks and recreational opportunities and we must protect our older citizens.

We are working on several capital projects, which will promote economic growth and move this community forward.

Capital Projects and Economic Development

George Harvey Justice Building

I still strongly believe in the need to rebuild the George Harvey Justice Building. We must move forward with plans to use the tobacco money for this project. It needs to be done before the building falls apart and then we have a different and more expensive problem on our hands.

We have an opportunity to save the taxpayers a half a million dollars a year in rent. We have the opportunity to centralize all of our court functions once again. We have the opportunity to provide a safe and secure environment for our employees. We have the opportunity to promote additional private investment in the city. And we have the opportunity to save an historic structure.

We must make a decision soon. Delaying a final decision will open the county to financial penalties that could be severe.

We must act now.

The Intermodal

Another project that is moving forward this year is the Intermodal in Downtown Binghamton. If we stay on track, we should break ground for this transportation center this fall.

This is a wonderful project that Congressman Maurice Hinchey laid at our doorstep. It lay dormant until this administration took over. This was one of the first projects my administration aggressively pursued.

I want to thank Congressman Hinchey for helping with the funding for this project and for being patient.

This transportation hub is not only going to improve the operations for several transportation agencies, including our own BC Transit, it is going to improve a section of Downtown Binghamton that is in need of a little boost.

New Nursing Home

Plans for a new nursing home will move forward as well in Broome County in 2006. I want to thank Senator Libous for helping to facilitate our using land at the Greater Binghamton Health Center. This project would not have been able to move forward in a timely manner without the use of this property.

Many have asked me why I support a new nursing home. I have been challenged by other nursing home providers to rethink why Broome County should be in the nursing home business at all.

I strongly support a county run nursing home. I feel it is the only way to guarantee that those in need will be taken care of when they finally realize they need a little help.

I do not want any members of our older generation that lived here their whole lives, to have to move to another community for nursing home care because they are a Medicaid patient.

I dealt with this issue with my mother in law. She spent 5 years at Willow Point. If Willow Point had not been available, we would have had to send my mother in law to another community where we could not have visited on a regular basis. We could not have done that and I do not want any family to ever face that decision.

My mother in law is no longer with us but I can have peace of mind knowing that she lived her last years, living near family and receiving the best care possible.

My personal feelings certainly drive my beliefs on this topic but a new nursing home also makes fiscal sense. This is yet another project that will save taxpayer dollars.

A new nursing home will lead to a rebasing of our Medicaid reimbursement rates. Right now we are losing money on the nursing home operation.

We can stop those losses and actually get reimbursed what we are owed by building new. I look forward to working with our state lawmakers our local legislators and our community leaders on moving this project forward.

The state's "right sizing committee" will have quite a bit of input on our future plans. We plan to work closely with them to make sure our community is able to provide the best possible care for all of its residents no matter what their income level.

We intend to pursue our obligations as a **promoter** diligently. We will continue to protect our infrastructure and we will push these capital projects aggressively. In turn our promotional activities will enhance Broome County's quality of life.

Local governments, including Broome County, can also enhance quality of life and economic growth by developing and delivering certain services, primarily entertainment and recreation.

Broome County already owns and manages the Forum and the Veterans Memorial Arena. We are working on ways to increase activities and revenues at both venues. We are also involved in the delivery of various recreational services to our residents.

Broome County must help deliver these services.

En-Joie

En-Joie Golf Course, in my opinion, is an example of both prudent economic development and consolidation.

We have two highly qualified gentlemen in place to operate the golf course. We feel very good about their ability to manage this course and to make money for both Broome County and the Village of Endicott. Both of these gentlemen are with us today.

Michael Deuel comes to En Joie from the Binghamton Country Club. He has great ideas about the En Joie operation and how to market it and make it a positive for all in Broome County.

Andrew Cain is a highly qualified agronomist who comes to us from the Mark Twain Golf Course in Elmira Heights. Andrew is looking forward to getting the course in shape for all golfers, all season long.

Both men are up to the challenge and we look forward to the improvements and enthusiasm they will bring to the course and the entire operation.

Thank you gentlemen for coming today and thank you for leading our efforts at En Joie.

I wanted to take a moment to thank Public Works Commissioner Henry Weissmann for his work on putting this team together and a special thank you to members of the En Joie Advisory Board who have provided us their time, talent and expertise. We truly appreciate their efforts.

I also wanted to thank the legislators who saw through the controversy to the opportunity that was before us. I strongly believe we made a difference in the eyes of the PGA. I believe our actions went a long way in influencing the PGA in terms of giving us a second look at playing host to a Champion's Tour.

We are anxiously waiting to hear if En Joie will be a stop on the Champions Tour but in the meantime our focus must be on this year's golf season and this year's B.C. Open.

Grippen Park

There has also been quite a bit of discussion about the future of Grippen Park. As you all know, the facility was heavily damaged in last year's flooding and we did have an environmental problem as a result.

I am pleased to report that the environmental issues at Grippen are being addressed and every lab test has indicated the water is safe.

I am also pleased to report that we are moving forward aggressively to get that ice rink operational again.

From all reports to my office and from what I hear in the community, there is a tremendous demand for ice time for all of our ice skating enthusiasts.

This is a quality of life issue for me.

During 2005 we made good progress in the area of economic development. Broome County initiated steps to **facilitate, coordinate, promote** and **develop** economic growth.

We need to build on this foundation. There is a lot to do and this is only the beginning. We have a good plan and the right people. I am confident we can move forward with a lot of success.

Greater Binghamton Airport

Our Greater Binghamton Airport is undergoing some major improvements.

Some bright spots at the airport include the soon to be finished runway rehabilitation project, a new visitor center at the airport and a return of the Greater Binghamton Air Show this summer.

The visitor center is operating and providing handouts and information about the area and what we have to offer. This is a long overdue marketing tool and we are excited to be able to make this happen.

And the air show will be part of our Bicentennial Celebration and it promises to bring aviation sights never before seen in Greater Binghamton.

Carl Beardsley has been overseeing operations at the airport since mid-year last year. Carl is doing a terrific job and he is working aggressively to market our airport to the people of this community and to market our strengths to the airlines.

On a nationwide basis, 2005 was a difficult year for the aviation industry as a whole with multiple Chapter 11 bankruptcy filings and significant downsizing of some major airlines. I am proud to say that the airport endured this difficult year and is working toward a more prosperous 2006.

We hope to have more announcements about improvements at the airport in the months to come.

Challenges; Health Insurance & Energy Costs

As I mentioned at the beginning of this address we do have challenges before us. First and foremost, skyrocketing health care costs. Last year I commissioned our Risk Manager Bob Murphy to investigate and create a list of options for the county to review. We will be taking his recommendations and looking for ways to reduce our costs.

I also look forward to the recommendations coming from the Chairman's task force on health care. We all understand we cannot continue on this track. Our employees cannot afford it. Our property taxpayers cannot afford it.

We need to be creative and we need to be aggressive with our health care options.

Our energy costs are also creating challenges for us. I did make the decision at the beginning of our winter season to reduce the temperature in all county buildings to 68 degrees. It had to be done.

We may not have reduced our energy costs by dropping the temperature but we definitely kept our costs from skyrocketing even further. The mild winter helped us but I am afraid this is something we are all going to have to get used to every winter season.

Because of the fuel price increases our transportation costs have risen dramatically. This is going to continue to put pressure on the county budget. We are looking at ways to contain these costs. We are reviewing the work schedules of our public works employees and reviewing the BC Transit operation, including the routes and fares.

There are not going to be any easy answers. This is about cutting back where possible, becoming more efficient and still trying to maintain quality services.

We must turn to alternative energy sources when possible.

That is why we are part of a larger group, looking into purchasing hybrid buses for our BC Transit operation. Maybe even some of our public works vehicles can become hybrids as well.

We must explore all options.

Broome County's Bicentennial

I would like to finish this State of our County with news on our Bicentennial Celebration. I am excited about the schedule we have put together to mark our community's 200th birthday. We have several events coming up soon and I would like to see people from across Broome County participate.

The entire schedule and any updates will be on our own go-Broome-County web site.

As I mentioned at the start of my address, Broome County is at a crossroads. I believe this Bicentennial can be viewed not only as a major milestone but a rebirth for our community as well.

We have had 200 years of a rich history. Our community began with a small group of people trying to eke out an existence at the confluence of the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers.

We grew into a mighty industrial power with the help of companies like IBM and Endicott Johnson. They laid a strong foundation. They set the course for this area to be known for its opportunities and its innovative people.

Let's take these first two hundred years and let's begin to build on the foundation that has been laid by the generations before us. Let's leave this crossroads behind and start making good decisions that will take our community on the right path to economic vitality once again.

We can do it if we work together. I am excited about working with all of you this year to move Broome County forward.

My hope is that when those who celebrate our Tri-Centennial look back on this time, they will say this moment in history was a real positive turning point for Broome County's future.

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2005 Department Highlights:

Information Technology Accomplishments:

- **Network Migration and PC upgrades:** Completed the migration of the County's network from Novell e-Directory to Microsoft Active Directory. This was a year and half long project migrating 70 plus servers and upgrading all PC's to XP. The completion allows us to provide greater support to the end users along with better protection from viruses, spyware and other threats. It also gives us better network management and backup capabilities. Also as part of this a conversion of all County Access databases was done. This was a lot of work requiring many hours of recoding because some functions did not work the way they did in Access 97 and database corruption due to the dual environments
- **Public Defender:** Completed installation of new IP video conferencing equipment at PD offices and Public Safety, used by attorneys to conference with their clients. The new system replaced the ISDN based equipment installed in 1999, and is estimated to save approximately \$8K in monthly service and annual maintenance agreements alone over the next three years. In addition, the new service has "significantly improved our efficiency, already saving dozens of trips to and from these facilities", says Jay Wilber, Broome County Public Defender. Additionally installed new overhead public address system in the office, providing a more effective and efficient way of locating attorneys and routing calls accordingly.

- **Highway Garage:** Replaced antiquated phone system and answering machines with new VoIP phone system, consolidating services & equipment, improving functionality, and centralizing management. Migrated facility to a new network connection, improving cost effectiveness and stability.
- **Law Enforcement Mobile Computing Project:** Assisted with the coordination, design, and deployment of a new secure wireless infrastructure and related services to facilitate mobile communications for this multi-agency project. Deployed new hardware, software, and services, and coordinated with agencies on additional development & deployment of this shared services offering.
- **Centralized Finger Printing:** Broome County Government has been designated a “hub” for DCJS communications; Live Scan and Secure Services. Area local law enforcement agencies connect to our network and use our feeds to NYS to access online information. This project includes connecting agencies outside of Broome County such as Cortland County, City of Ithaca and Otsego County with others planning to come on as well.
- **Johnson City Police Department:** Complete the migration of JC police department data onto the County’s system. Help coordinate all the connections so that they can be dispatched by County’s 911 center.
- **Police Mobile Project:** We have continued to work with all the County’s police agencies (except JC) to update their mobile computer systems as well as rolling out the electronic ticketing capability. That will be fully deployed in 2006 along with an additional 30 mobile units. Currently there are 40 units across the various agencies. We are working with Vestal to keep them a part of this project. Johnson City has also expressed an interest in going with mobile units in their vehicles. We have begun deploying Automatic Vehicle Locators in all the cars. This helps dispatch in knowing where the police vehicles are located and can address some officer safety issues as well.
- **Counter Terrorism Zone 6 Integrated Communications Project:** Assisted with the coordination, design, and development of an integrated communications platform for all CTZ6 law enforcement agencies, providing centralized and uniform information services throughout the multi-county region.
- **Airport:** Assisted with the extension of our free broadband wireless Wi-Fi Internet access for patrons and visitors to the terminal facility, improving customer service satisfaction and reducing expense through the removal of payphone services previously used for Internet connectivity.
- **Payroll:** Complete reinstall of Payroll without Vendor assistance. This could have cost the County upwards of \$100,000 or more.
- **Probation:** A major upgrade to Probation Tracking system. For tracking restitution payments by multiple defendants to be paid to the same victim or victims.
- **OFA:** Installation and data conversion for SAMS. This is a system for the Office for Aging replacing the software written for the AS400 the was used for years. Valerie should be commended for her role in this project from conception to completion.

- **Print Shop:** New Offset Press installed and running, resulting in better quality images, less set up time and faster production. Also signed leases to start in January for a new mail machine and a more new high end copier that will allow more flexibility and ease in producing documents.

2006 GOALS

- **IT Assessment Study:** Conduct a study to look at IT skills, are we meeting our end users needs, developing a strategic plan and putting the plan into place.
- **Financial & Payroll Study:** Determine if there is reason and cost justification to replace the County's 20+ year old applications. If justified, a plan will be developed to do a requirements analysis and RFP.
- **First Floor Renovations:** We are hoping to have Phase 1 of our renovations done in 2006. This will allow a centralized reception area for better coverage as well as more efficient use of space.
- **Broadband Infrastructure:** Successfully deploy and further develop broadband wireless WAN infrastructure, to improve efficiency, further consolidate services, and possibly provide a means for further shared services offerings to municipalities.
- **Messaging Services:** Successfully acquire and deploy a unified messaging platform, in a test environment, for purposes of future full-scale deployment. Identify and seek necessary funding for full-scale deployment, as services are anticipated to improve employee efficiency, reduce Total cost of ownership expense over its projected life expectancy, and centralize management; while at the same time replacing antiquated and disparate messaging services & platforms.
- **VoIP:** Continue our efforts to migrate and deploy VoIP services, where feasible, in an effort to consolidate services, infrastructure, and further centralize management of voice related services.
- **New Mainframe, Enterprise Storage and Printer Project:** Install and migrate existing systems to the new Mainframe and enterprise storage. This will result in faster processing and better allocation of data. We will also be deploying a new form printing application to help us eliminate the old line printers as well as move some reports for viewing on-line can save money spent on special forms and large reports that don't need to be printed.
- **Binghamton Tax Collection Project:** Perform analysis and development to bring Binghamton parcels into our software packages for tax collection.

District Attorney's Office:

1. The Broome County District Attorney's Office handled 53 felony trials in Broome County Court during 2005 – the most felony trials ever conducted in Broome County Court during any single calendar year;
2. The last of the 4 possible capital cases that arose in the summer of 2002, People v Robert Williams, Jr., was concluded in February 2005. Williams was convicted after a three week jury trial of three counts of Murder in the First Degree and one count of Burglary in the First Degree, for his role in the murders of Valerie and Devin Spears. These murders were committed for the purpose of eliminating them as witnesses in a sexual assault trial scheduled to commence in Baltimore Circuit Court on July 30, 2002.
3. Under the leadership of the Office of the District Attorney, in 2005 Broome County became the first county in New York State to have all of its major police agencies videotaping police interrogations from start-to-finish in major cases. Using drug forfeiture funds, the District Attorney's Office has over several years purchased the recording equipment for each of these police agencies.

Public Defender's Office

1. For the first time in the history of the Broome County Public Defender's Office, the office topped 7,000 new case files. Total number 7,128.
2. The office represented 4,954 cases, which is an all-time high.
3. Office was mandated to represent Sex Offender Risk Assessment Modification cases which brought in a new revenue source. We used the money to purchase a new state of the art filing system.

Risk and Insurance:

1. Added En Joie Golf Course to Property Insurance while actually negotiating a reduction on the premium from about \$215,000 to about \$198,000.
2. Negotiated a Crime Policy (Employee Bond) with more coverage but reduced the premium from about \$14,000 to about \$6,000.
3. Employee 457 savings plan—negotiated 0% administration fees with Hartford (as opposed to nearly 1% Nationwide's fees).
4. Negotiated no increase in Workers' Comp claims administration fees for up to the next 5 years (3 years + 2 renewals at county's option)
5. Negotiated new Workers' Comp nurse case management contract reducing annual fees from \$68,000 to \$30,000).
6. Negotiated new Workers' Comp excess and employer's liability policy for no increase in premium.

Office of Emergency Services:

1. Construction of new transmitter tower in 2006 will allow the County to have ownership and oversight of all 911 dispatch infrastructure
2. Upgrade response to hazardous materials incidents and terrorist type incidents with equipment purchased for fire, law enforcement and emergency medical service disciplines in the County through the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction Grants, totaling \$400,000 in 2005
3. Through 911 grants replacing all 911 dispatch furniture in 911 center and re-aligning dispatch center functional areas
4. Assisting Town of Vestal with the repair and re-furbishing of a live fire burn building at the Fred W. Singer Fire Training Facility. This facility is utilized in providing live fire training in this county
5. Replacing existing radio microwave system with state of the art digital system, this will also allow Information Technology to expand their data network to remote County Facilities without the expense of leasing data lines.

Health Department

1. In 1996 we became one of 10 contractors around NY State to become a Regional HIV/AIDS Contractor to provide free education for health and human service providers for an 8 county region, to include Broome, Chenango, Chemung, Tompkins, Otsego, Delaware, Tioga and Cortland counties.
2. In 2006 the coordinator for this program, Sondra Pruden, was awarded the first Outstanding Service Award, by the medical director of the NYSDOH AIDS Institute, for providing education to the Southern Tier for 10 years.
3. We were one of the first contractors to be able to register participants on line for trainings, at www.gobroomecounty.com , click on Health Department, then click on HIV AIDS training program.
4. In 1993 the Broome County Health Department received the J. Howard Beard Award Runner-UP, from the National Association of County Health Officials, “for its Outstanding and Innovative Program **HIV, STD, TB Education and Testing Program**. This outreach program was also written up in the December 1992 issue of AIDS ALERT, a monthly newsletter for health professions published by the American Health Consultants.
5. Another article was published in the American Journal of Public Health, June 1995, Vol. 85, No. 6, entitled, **HIV, Sexually Transmitted Disease, and Tuberculosis Testing in Community Sites in Upstate New York**.

Probation Department

1. Legislation passed to allow Probation to collect a fee, up to \$ 30.00 per month for supervision of DWI offenders. Approx 189 offenders would be in this category. We are hoping to generate about \$ 30,000 in 2006. This is assuming about an 80% collection rate. Money will go into a dedicated account with STOP DWI, which has been partially funding a Sr. P.O., to work with these offenders as part of a DWI team with 3 other officers.
2. Probation collected \$ 341,335.23 in court ordered restitution for crime victims and \$94,927 in fines for felony DWI offenses. (down slightly from '04)
3. Probation in collaboration with DSS, Youth Bureau and County Attorney worked on implementation of changes in the PINS Law that was enacted in April 2005. Basically, the law calls for every service that can be provided to the youth and family to be exhausted, before the court can place the child. Probation serves as the "gatekeeper" to the system. These County Departments serve as the Juvenile Justice Task Force. We will be working on their relevant issues in 2006.

Broome County Clerk

Clerk's Office

1. Implementation of pilot program with Courts to make Civil Actions and Criminal Files available on the intranet and internet. – for 2006
2. Implement credit card program for retrieval of documents via the internet. – for 2006
3. Continue to process passports – 2005/2006
4. Continue to operate at no cost to taxpayers - ongoing
5. Refurbish archival books and make them more available to the public - continual

Records Management

1. Created 168 rolls of microfilm for County Clerk transactions of Mortgages, Deeds, Judgments & miscellaneous.
2. Continue the reduction of paper records with permanent storage on CD or microfilm (currently over 300 CD's created) - 2006
3. Actively continue to seek grants to improve the Records Management program – 2006 (over 9 years, have received almost ½ million dollars in funds)
4. Destruction of almost 20,000 lbs. of records that have reached their recommended retention
5. Transferred approximately 1295 cf of inactive records to the Records Center from County offices

Department of Motor Vehicles

1. Implementation of mobile unit in Conklin & Whitney Point – 2005
2. Capital improvements at both DMV locations: Endicott – public restroom, Clinton St – public restroom, more counter area for customers – 2006
3. Continue to offer more hours than any other NYS DMV
4. Increased security at both locations
5. Specialist now handles auto dealer requests

Parks and Recreation

1. The Dorchester Park Triathlon, last held in 1993, will be revived in 2006 as part of the County's bicentennial celebration. The event, which will be held at Dorchester Park on Saturday, July 8, will consist of a half-mile swim, a bike ride of approximately twenty miles, and a five kilometer (3.1 mile) run.
2. The Parks construction crew has been busy at Otsiningo Park during the fall and winter. In November, work was completed on a new picnic shelter in the main park, and at Otsiningo North, progress continues on a combination restroom/concession stand, which will be completed in the spring.
3. All programs at Finch Hollow Nature Center are now free of charge. Offerings during February and March will include a "Tracks and Traces" Nature Walk, as well as programs devoted to nature crafts, skunks, worms and many more.
4. Last September, Dorchester Park hosted the first Broome County Employees Picnic since 1996. The event was a huge success, with over 700 employees and guests in attendance. Planning for this year's picnic will begin soon.

Office for Aging

1. The Office for Aging received a prestigious national award from the International Council on Active Aging for the innovative programs, Men Making Meals and Tips for the Late Blooming Handywoman.
2. Referrals for services from our elder population grew rapidly in 2005. The state recognizes that the elder population is growing and there is an increasing desire for elders to remain in their own home. As such, the state has increased funding for the first time in nearly 20 years that is helping us to serve more of our frail elders.
3. The biggest national policy change in 40 years is also affecting our elder population with the start of a new component of Medicare, Part D, a prescription drug benefit. With this new plan all persons aged 65 and over need to decide on which plan to join. OFA along with their contractor Action for Older Persons is fielding many inquiries and helping our elder population to make a transition into appropriate plans.

4. The Office for Aging served more than 16,000 different individuals in 2005.
5. The number of meals served by the Broome County's Meals on Wheels Program continues to increase and in 2005, served 206,122 meals.
6. In 2005, there were 120,245 meals served at over 6,000 seniors attending our congregate sites and senior centers.
7. Volunteers play an important role in delivering services in our community. In the Office for Aging volunteers gave more than 84,000 hours to help deliver meals, supported senior centers and adult day care sites, and assisted home bound individuals. This is the equivalent of 43 full time people.
8. The Aging Futures Partnership continues to gain momentum in collectively addressing the needs of our elder population. In the past year the Partnership which consists of local service providers, hospitals, faith based groups and consumers worked together to decrease the incidence of stroke, support informal caregivers and promote the importance of social connections.

Youth Bureau

1. The Broome County Youth Bureau is currently collaborating with the City of Binghamton to establish a municipal youth bureau to be located at the City. The City has the potential to draw down additional state funding for youth development programming. This will in no way hinder the current operations of our County Youth Bureau. In fact, it will enhance our efforts to provide quality services for youth in our community.
2. Establishing a municipal youth bureau will also help to strength planning for youth services throughout our County.

Purchasing

1. County Surplus Auction brought in \$101,703.69.

Department of Social Services

1. The Department of Social Services ended 2005, \$8.5 million dollars under budget!
 - \$6.3 million in Medicaid
 - \$1.6 million in Administrative Costs
 - \$359 thousand in Assistance Programs
 - \$241 thousand other
2. The Temporary Assistance Programs developed and/or enhanced specialty units to impact rising caseloads. In 2005, these initiatives achieved a total savings of nearly \$2 million. These efforts involve intensive case management coupled with a coordinated approach for disability review and the pursuit of SSI benefits for disabled recipients. The following is a summary of these activities:

- The Welfare to Work division assisted 1,025 recipients in securing employment.
 - The Transitional Opportunities Program (TOP) assisted 332 Family Assistance recipients in securing and retaining employment. It is our priority to work with these families so that they achieve self-sufficiency and transition off of assistance before their federally supported benefits expire (60 Months).
 - The newly developed Safety Net Swat Team provides short term intensive case management, disability determination efforts, and fraud detection to aggressively move recipients to self sufficiency. 166 cases were closed in the second half of 2005 due to the efforts of this innovative project.
 - Our disability review efforts resulted in 40 TANF recipients and 53 Safety Net recipients securing SSI.
3. The Support Collection Unit collected and disbursed a record \$17.5 million dollars in child support for thousands of children and families in Broome County.
 4. The Legal Unit representing DSS, set record high monetary collections totaling almost \$4 million. These collections were made in conjunction with Broome Security's Case Integrity Unit and the DSS Child Support Unit.
 5. Due to the Legal Unit's efforts DSS Medicaid related recoveries of \$3.1 million substantially exceeded budget expectations of \$1.9 million. These recoveries will permanently reduce Broome County's Medicaid costs because of the Medicaid Cap!
 6. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) filed tax returns on behalf of 370 clients for a total of \$740,000. Broome County was number one in the State for the total number of tax returns filed through this project.
7. In 2005, the Department implemented a Document Imaging Project in many program areas including: Temporary Assistance, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Managed Care and Medical Services, and Day Care. It is expected that these areas will scan roughly 2 million documents into electronic case files in 2006. This initiative is enabling the Department to convert paper files to electronic files which will make storage and retrieval processes more efficient. This project is one of the largest scale technology related initiatives to be implemented in any Department of Social Services in NYS.
 8. On February 14, 2005 the Department of Social Services received written commendation from John Johnson, the NYS Commissioner of the Office of Family & Children's Services for the significant progress that the Department made in reducing the number of overdue child abuse investigation related reports.
 9. In 2005 the Child Protective Services Unit investigated a record 2,506 cases of suspected child abuse.
 10. Collaborative efforts between the Department of Social Services and the Probation Department resulted in a 10% reduction in detention utilization by Broome County youth which also resulted in reduced costs.
 11. 25 adoptions were finalized in 2005. Many of these children were hard to place kids that had been involved with the Department and awaiting adoption for many years.

12. The Department certified 15 new foster homes in 2005. The Department currently has 74 foster homes.
13. The Department secured \$550,000 for Building Brighter Futures for Broome for 2006. This is an innovative, evidence based project that is a collaboration involving many organizations in Broome County. The Broome County Health Department, Broome Community College, Binghamton City School District, The Family Enrichment Network, and Lourdes Hospital are all partners in this project. By providing evidence based interventions with pre-school children and day care providers this initiative will support at risk children so that they will be better prepared to succeed in school and the community for the rest of their lives.

Department of Mental Health

1. The Department's Adult Outpatient Mental Health Clinic is the largest clinic of its kind in Broome County. In 2005, the Adult Clinic treated an average of eleven hundred mentally ill individuals per month. Of these, 453 patients were seriously and persistently mentally ill individuals with a history of psychiatric hospitalizations or who were at risk of such hospitalizations.
2. The Department's Children and Adolescent Outpatient Mental Health Clinic treated an average of 257 children and their families monthly. Of these, 175 were seriously emotionally disturbed children with a history of psychiatric hospitalizations or were at risk of such hospitalizations.
3. Both Clinics ended 2005 under budget in county support.
4. The Department's Families First Program continues to provide successful services to families in Broome County. Families First serves children who are referred by the Department of Social Services who are at risk of out-of-home placements such as foster care, detention, group homes and residential care. In 2005, Families First prevented these types of placements for 119 children, saving the County \$2.7 million. In addition, 100% of the children served by the program remained at home 12 months post discharge!
5. The Department's KYDS Coalition, (a substance abuse and other high risk behavior prevention project) secured Federal funding for each of the next three years. Nine Broome County School Districts are involved in providing state of the art, science based prevention strategies to Broome County youth. Thirty five hundred students have successfully participated in these prevention programs in 2005! Sixty families also participated in an evidence based family intervention program.
6. The Department's Road to Recovery Program in conjunction with Binghamton City Drug Court had 9 clients successfully complete intensive residential treatment in 2005.
7. The Department in collaboration with the Probation Department was awarded a grant from the NYS Office of Mental Health to provide training to the Criminal Justice System and to improve coordination between mental health providers and the Criminal Justice System.

8. In 2005, the Department in conjunction with all local mental health and developmental disability providers completed a significant planning project targeted at improving services to children with developmental disabilities and mental health disorders. The Center for Governmental Research was engaged to facilitate the project. In 2006, system-wide improvements are expected to occur for these children.
9. The Department successfully transitioned its Forensic psychiatric treatment services to inmates at the Public Safety Building to Corrections Medical Care, Inc. the new comprehensive medical provider at the facility.