



*News From*

# **Maggie Brooks**

## *Monroe County Executive*

**For Immediate Release**

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### **THE 2015 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS AS DELIVERED BY MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MAGGIE BROOKS**

*Wednesday, June 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.  
Irondequoit High School*

Good evening, and welcome to Irondequoit High School. As we do every year, could you please join me for a moment of silence for all of our hometown heroes in military service to our country, for those patriots we have lost this past year, for all of our dedicated first responders who risk their lives daily for the safety and security of this community and for the late Officer Daryl Pierson.

Thank you Superintendent Crane for that kind introduction, for your gracious hospitality and for your unwavering support of our children. And thank you to the members of the Irondequoit Chorale for your wonderful performance, led by Director Kristin Graham.

Also, welcome to those of you watching from home on Time Warner Cable News or listening on WXXI Radio.

For those on Twitter, I encourage you to follow my account @Maggie\_\_Brooks or #SOTC2015. We will be sharing highlights of the address and fun enhancements to the speech that you won't see anywhere else.

We have many elected officials and community leaders here tonight. I would like to take a moment to thank Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn, County Clerk Cheryl Dinolfo, and District Attorney Sandra Doorley for their commitment to excellence in County government. To the members of the Monroe County Legislature – thank you for your service and for the important role you play in the enhancement of County policy.

To my critical partners at the town, village, and school district level, thank you for your continued efforts to put taxpayers first. And finally – I will talk more about her later – but welcome and thank you to Mayor Lovely Warren for being here tonight.

I am a big believer that good politics leads to good government. I want to welcome and thank Chairman Bill Reilich, Chairman Tom Cook, and Chairman Steve Corryn for being here and supporting our efforts. I would also like to recognize Monroe County's first executive, Lucien Morin who is here tonight. His vision put this community on a path to prosperity and it has been an honor to follow in his footsteps.

There's a reason I chose this venue for my 11th and final State of the County address. Irondequoit is a town that will always have a special place in my heart and my life. Being here brings my 20 year political and governmental career full circle. It's a location that stirs many personal memories and represents many family connections.

I was raised in this town. In the 1950s my parents bought their first house on Walzford Road. My dad worked for the Times Union, and my mother was a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Whipple Lane in East Irondequoit where my brother and I attended school. A man named Ivan Green was principal at the time, and now the school bears his name.

As County Executive, I've had the opportunity to return to the school as a guest reader and when I tell students I knew Ivan Green - well, I might as well have said I knew Abraham Lincoln.

My daughters, too, have benefitted from an upbringing in Irondequoit. Julia and Jensen graduated from this school, and a flood of fond memories greets me every time I walk through these auditorium doors. School plays, chorale and band performances on this very stage. And I was a very proud Odyssey of the Mind coach for both girls for many years. It makes me proud to see their State and World trophies on display.

But here's some Irondequoit trivia for town residents on Wisner Road. Supervisor Adam Bello, did you know the road name is actually misspelled? It's true. Durand Eastman Park, including the beach, was originally a 150 acre dairy farm owned by Adam Wiesner, my husband's great-grandfather. In 1900, Dr. Henry Durand and a gentleman named George Eastman made an offer the Wiesner's couldn't refuse. They sold the land, which eventually was donated to the City, and we all know what happened after that. But the Wiesners were allowed to keep their log farmhouse located on what was supposed to be Wiesner Road—they just left out the "e". A true story - documented by town historian Patricia Wayne.

As you can see the personal connection runs deep, but never did I imagine growing up that I would one day be a voice for this community in government.

Public service for me started in 1977 when WHAM - a powerhouse radio station at the time gave a young graduate of Ithaca College a job in the newsroom. My broadcasting journey took me to Channel 10 in 1980 and then to the private sector in 1994 at a satellite radio network owned by Tom Golisano.

In 1995, residents of the 17th Legislative District in Irondequoit literally changed the course of my professional life when they had the faith and confidence to elect me to the Monroe County Legislature. It has been my great honor to serve this community for 20 years – first as County Legislator, then County Clerk, and then as the first female and 3-term County Executive.

When I first sought this office in 2003, I promised to protect taxpayers, create a government that would live within its means, support companies that create and retain local jobs, and establish a new spirit of cooperation with community and government partners to enhance our quality of life.

I have spent the last 12 years fulfilling those promises and protecting the future. We have celebrated amazing success, we have overcome incredible challenges, but we have never lost sight of the end game... leaving the county better than when I took office.

Politics and governing are about working as a team, but governing well is about relationships. I truly believe that. There's a spirit of cooperation in Monroe County that has defined much of the success we have seen over the past decade, leaders who've been willing to leave their politics at the door, to put aside self-interest for the greater good. I've had the privilege of working with five mayors, and I have enjoyed a strong partnership with each one of them. But I must admit, the ability to work well with Mayor Lovely Warren has been unique and productive.

It started with a meeting of the minds on Costco - part of the important and transformational City Gate project. Go figure, two women bonding over a shopping experience, but the Mayor helped secure needed votes to jumpstart the stalled project in the County Legislature, and that collaboration set the tone for our relationship.

We have a shared vision of a community where our world class quality of life extends to all residents. That is why the Anti-Poverty initiative is a shared commitment.

Rochester has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of poverty in the nation for communities of comparable size, and while the concentration is greatest in the City, the rate of poverty is growing in suburban areas. Monroe County is one of the largest social service providers in the region. Thousands of people come through our doors each year for help, but despite best practices and best efforts, families continue to struggle.

That is why I am proud to have joined the Mayor, Assembly Majority Leader Joe Morelle, and the United Way to convene an unprecedented alliance of stakeholders from all over the community to create a plan to strategically fight back.

We can do better. We must do better, and with the Governor as a partner we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a difference. It's not about additional handouts. It's about giving a hand up to those struggling to find a road to self-sufficiency. It's about aligning resources for greatest impact. Our group will submit recommendations for change to the State this summer, and Rochester will become an incubator for impactful change that can be replicated in other New York cities.

But we already have one of the answers to the problem. Finding and keeping a job creates a pathway out of poverty.

When I first became County Executive, most economic development was led by government. We were trying to market the community, attract new business, retain existing jobs, offer assistance to companies large and small, but we just didn't have the staff or resources to do all of it well.

Sometimes we collaborated with other levels of government, but often times we were in competition. Today we speak with one voice. By working with Greater Rochester Enterprise, the Rochester Business Alliance, Empire State Development and the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council, we've focused our collective efforts on projects and priorities that will create jobs and leverage private investment.

Each year, through the Council, our 9-county region competes for State funding to aid our efforts and this year we have a unique opportunity to compete for Upstate Revitalization dollars. Three NY regions will receive \$500 million - \$100 million a year for 5 years to support projects and industry clusters that will help define our future economy. Our Council Chairs Danny Wegman and U of R's Joel Seligman are leading this effort - let's thank them for their hard work.

There is no question that Monroe County's economy is changing. In 1980, Kodak, Xerox and Bausch and Lomb together employed nearly 75,000 local workers. Today employment at those three companies has dwindled to less than 10,000.

In 1980 there were 330,000 jobs in Monroe County. Now, despite corporate losses at the Big Three, we have 376,000 jobs. How can that be?

Today the big three look different - it's the University of Rochester, the Rochester Regional Health System, and Wegmans. We are still number 3 in manufacturing in New York State, but our focus has shifted to include optics, healthcare, education, food and beverage, alternative energy and agriculture.

We have 5,000 small businesses that have fewer than 100 employees. Many were started and are led by entrepreneurs who left Rochester's Big Three and used the talent and expertise gained at larger firms to launch their own successful businesses.

Each and every day as County Executive I focus on 2 realities. Government doesn't create jobs - that is the role of the private sector - and companies have choices. They do not need to be in Monroe County, and will locate where they have the best chance for success.

I constantly visit local companies who tell me that incentives matter. Incentives matter because they level the playing field in our highly taxed and over-regulated State. Since 2004 our most important business assistance agency - COMIDA - has helped almost 1,500 companies grow and expand. Our tool-belt of job programs and services has supported the creation and retention of 110,000 jobs - nearly 1/3 of all the jobs in Monroe County today.

There's a reason our unemployment rate is 5.1% - one of the most stable rates in the State - and well below the national average.

But we can't just measure success on job numbers alone. Success must be related to private investment as well. The companies we have worked with have invested \$5.3 billion in our local economy since 2004.

COMIDA - it's been an acronym praised and vilified by area naysayers and in our local media, where failure is showcased and success ignored.

Every year the State looks at our numbers as a benchmark for other IDA's. Over the last 12 years, \$245 million incentive dollars were provided to area companies with a benefit to our community of \$963 million. That's a 4:1 return on investment - one of the best returns in the State.

According to the State, COMIDA is run efficiently. The average cost to run an IDA per project in New York State is over \$18,000. The cost to run COMIDA is just under \$4,000 - a quarter of the cost. COMIDA is ranked second in total number of projects and third in jobs created.

Companies benefit, but it's the taxpayers who are reaping the real rewards.

And Monroe County's IDA has a unique requirement that's ensuring local jobs for local people. In 2004 I fulfilled a promise to add a 100% local labor requirement to all projects using COMIDA assistance. I am proud to say that since 2004, we have seen an 8% increase in the use of local labor and we've had over 19,000 construction jobs filled by local workers since that time. In 2014 alone, more than 1,100 construction jobs were created through the local labor requirement.

The success of these programs is the result of the hard work and dedication of the men and women who volunteer their time to work with local companies and act on assistance applications. Tonight, I would like to recognize our COMIDA Board members: Chair Theresa Mazzullo, Ann Burr, Jay Popli, Gene Caccamise, Clint Campbell, Mary Worboys-Turner, and Mark Siwec.

Your collective work is one of the reasons Rochester has been named one of the friendliest cities in the State for small business, the 5<sup>th</sup> easiest City in the Country to start and maintain a business, one of the most unexpected cities for high-tech innovation, and a top region for job growth.

But I've failed to mention our true secret weapon in the fight for economic success. I could not have fulfilled the promise of supporting job creators in Monroe County without Planning and Economic Development Director Judy Seil. Judy is an unsung hero in the fight for jobs. Recently she was named the 2015 Economic Developer of the Year by the New York State Economic Development Council, an honor she truly deserves.

After 24 years with the County she will be retiring June 18th, but ask any company she has worked with her tireless efforts will have a lasting impact on our community because of every job created and every dollar invested in our economic future. Judy, what can I say - our community is better and more vibrant because of your service.

Every year I stand here and talk about the people and the ongoing efforts creating momentum in our County. But let's be honest. It's not just collaborative efforts around economic development, the competitions for State dollars or the government incentives alone that will ensure our vibrant economic future.

It's the men and women who own and operate the companies that are taking the risks. They have the ideas, they put up the private dollars, they leverage assets to get bank loans for buildings and equipment, they hire and pay workers and provide benefits that ensure a better quality of life for families. And depending on the state of the economy, they juggle priorities and make decisions to keep the doors open and the lights on.

And the products and services they create give Monroe County a broad reach and a high profile.

McAlpin Industries, one of Rochester's oldest companies, makes the metal parts for the game "Operation".

Harris RF manufactures military radios used by troops around the world.

LiDestri Foods makes all kinds of national products here - like Francesco Rinaldi, Paul Newman and Barilla pasta sauces.

Hammer Packaging makes labels for Snapple, Poland Spring and Tostitos.

Truesense Imaging captures all the images you see on Google maps.

Fee Brothers is a fourth generation family-owned business in Rochester that manufactures over 100 products such as cocktail mixes, cordial syrups and bitters to restaurants, bars and distributors.

The list could go on and on but you get the idea. The quality of life in Monroe County depends on the success of local business. And often that means the success of local families. There are many family-owned companies here that understand the importance of passing the torch to the next generation.

Precision Grinding and Manufacturing is run by the Hockenbergers - Todd has joined us tonight, he works with his brother Mike, their dad, Bill, and their step-brother, Doug Cauwels. They work side-by-side each day to maintain and sustain what is a thriving local business. The company has been in the City since 1967 and has carved out a unique niche that serves a variety of industries including medical, military, aviation, automotive, and telecom. PGM has 117 employees, and working with COMIDA, they will be expanding their operation to add space to service their growing customer base and to create 12 new jobs.

I thank them for their investment in the local economy as they continue to create jobs and promote Rochester as the manufacturing hub that it once was and continues to be.

This will be a big year for one of Rochester's oldest companies. Rochester Midland marks its 127<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The company is led by Harlan Calkins, and his children Bradley Calkins and Kathy Lindahl are co-CEOs. Thank you to the family for joining us tonight.

Rochester Midland is a leader in green practice and manufactures an extensive line of environmentally sound products and chemicals.

Ambition, ingenuity and hard work drove the early growth of the company in the late 1800s and continue to be the foundation for the company's success. In 2011, COMIDA stepped in to help Rochester Midland move to a new production facility, a significant move because the company's other option was out of State. Not only would we have lost good paying manufacturing jobs but we would have missed out on a 13-million dollar private investment. Thank you to the Calkins family for believing that when it comes to doing business, there's no place like home.

Since 2004 I have toured thousands of vibrant companies that reflect the great historical spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship we see in Rochester. The optimism and can-do attitude of the many men and women running local companies is contagious. They are our advocates, our ambassadors, and will ensure Monroe County remains a premier destination for business in the future.

Fulfilling the promise of supporting companies will protect the future but we also need to understand unanswered challenges.

Rebuilding our Center City is a challenge and an opportunity that the Mayor and I share. 38% of our 2014 IDA benefits were applied to projects in the City, and the benefits leveraged \$62 million in private investment. If you've spent any time at all in downtown Rochester lately, you know there's positive momentum.

This past year we lost two incredible ambassadors for our Center City. You simply cannot talk about Rochester without talking about Larry Glazer and Joe Floreano.

No one believed in the potential of a revitalized downtown more than Larry. His impact is far reaching, and his vision for the future is now living on through the hard work of his sons Ken and Rick, and everyone at Buckingham Properties.

Larry Glazer said, "My vision starts with the idea that downtown can come back and it will be vibrant. It will be different than it was."

Midtown Plaza, which for a long time was the poster child for revitalization failure in Rochester, is being transformed into Midtown Rising and will stand as a testament to the forward-thinking, failure-is-impossible attitude of Larry Glazer, one of our community's greatest cheerleaders. \$54 million in private investment was the seed money for the project that will support more than 200 construction jobs, retain and create 345 permanent jobs, and generate over \$10 million in benefits to the community.

Down the street, our convention center bears a new name, a tribute to Joe Floreano, who was known as one of our City's most gracious hosts for residents and visitors alike. The convention center is known as 'the house that Joe built,' and its success as one of Rochester's most popular event spaces is a reflection of his passion and commitment to a City that he loved. He was a man with a big smile and big heart, and we will miss him.

Every time the County supports a downtown project, we are supporting the risk-takers and leaders who are not willing to accept the status quo. Each project is another piece in the puzzle that will reveal the reinvention of Rochester as a destination.

Bob Bartosiewicz is one of those risk-takers and leaders. While many people were talking about Downtown redevelopment, he was quietly building an amazing high-impact marketing company on Main Street in the Granite Building.

CGI started in 1987 with a handful of employees and customers. Today CGI has a client base of 80-thousand. CGI received a Rochester Top 100 award for 6 straight years and is now one of Upstate NY's top growing companies.

As the owner of the building next door, the County's been watching the progress of CGI. And I am excited to announce that we are finalizing a deal with CGI to purchase the long vacant Gateway and Atrium Buildings on Main Street. Max Farash originally sold the buildings to Monroe County for one dollar. Now CGI will fill those vacant spaces with the young professionals it's known for hiring.

12 years ago my very first project proposed as County Executive embraced a vision of combining arts, education and transit as a way to breathe new life into that old, nearly abandoned City block.

In October of last year, after more than a decade of planning, the ribbon was cut on the new RTS transit center, completing the vision of a sheltered, centralized space for public transportation users and removing the logjam of buses on Main Street.

Talk of a new state of the art downtown home for Monroe Community College students didn't start with my vision, but it quickly became my promise and priority. If you're traveling on State Street you'll notice some new activity at the old Kodak site. Kodak corporate offices are still there but by September of 2017 MCC will open the door on a space that will enhance the student and faculty experience as well as student learning.

For over 50 years, MCC has played a critical role in providing affordable, high quality education and creating countless opportunities for residents of all ages to pursue their goals and dreams. MCC has a national reputation for excellence and is an integral part of our ability to develop the workforce of the future.

Last year, thanks to the approval of the County Legislature, we were able to secure the second and final phase of funding needed to complete this project. In addition, all State and matching funding has been secured. The renderings are exciting. And I can't help but believe that George Eastman would enthusiastically support an educational re-purpose to an iconic building that once defined Rochester.

I'd like to thank MCC President, Dr. Anne Kress, Bob Healy of LaBella Associates, as well as John DiMarco and John DiMarco II of DiMarco Constructors for their commitment to an on-time, on-budget home for students.

I would also like to welcome Dr. Joel Frater, the new Executive Dean of MCC's Damon City Campus, who has joined us tonight. Extremely qualified and experienced, he will lead the establishment and then the operation of the new downtown campus and help make the transition to the new building as seamless as possible.

This is a big project and represents a significant investment on the part of the County which is the local financial sponsor of the college. But thanks to the support and partnership of the Rochester Building and Construction Trades, we will be reducing costs and creating jobs at the same time. In February, the County Legislature approved the execution of a Project Labor Agreement, which will maximize local jobs during development. And utilizing the PLA will save taxpayers over \$640,000.

I want to thank Dave Young, President of the Rochester-Building and Construction Trades Council, for being a great partner and strong advocate for local jobs.

Right next door to the MCC Campus site is a County facility that fuels our reputation as Baseball City USA and is a major reason we were named the number two sports market in the nation. No question we love our sports and our hometown teams. And every year more than half a million people visit our baseball stadium extending the impact of Frontier Field from the City to all corners of the County and beyond.

It's hard to believe the stadium is almost 19 years old, but since day-one the County has been committed to providing our hometown baseball team and loyal fans a world class experience.

We have an incredible partnership with the Rochester Red Wings. And while the County owns and maintains the stadium, the scoreboard and many other improvements you see represent an investment by the team.

But baseball fans know that the way people watch baseball games is changing. It's all about the game certainly, but it's also all about the overall experience - the food, the recreational opportunities for families, unique viewing areas that promote a more social atmosphere. Frontier Field needs to change with the times.

That's why we are supporting a major renovation that will cost \$7.5 million on top of the \$2.4 million Monroe County has already included in our Capital budget to replace aging utilities and infrastructure. And thanks to the Finger Lakes Council we have secured \$1.5 million in State funding. The money will be used to add a new concourse behind the outfield wall that will be home to new seating, amenities, and a kids' play area. We will also renovate the old firehouse and re-design the left field plaza, among other improvements.

Naomi Silver is here tonight. Let's thank the Silver family for their commitment to Rochester. Thanks also to Dan Mason, and board Chair Gary Larter for their partnership. Frontier Field is an important asset, and we have a responsibility to take care of it.

The Seneca Park Zoo is a unique Monroe County asset and a top family friendly attraction. Much has changed since the County started operating the zoo in 1961.

There is less bricks and mortar and more natural habitats which allow visitors a more authentic viewing opportunity.

Over the next ten years you will see some changes now being finalized in a new Zoo master plan, changes you will notice as soon as you walk through the gate. The last remaining original zoo buildings will be coming down. The County made a funding commitment to the project in our Capital Improvement Program as a requirement of our accreditation, and the changes will transform the visitor experience.

This year we have two big additions to our zoo family. Moki and Chana are two African elephants that came to us from the Jacksonville Zoo in Florida, and their arrival completes a vision we had in 2004 for an exhibit that would house 4 elephants. It's no secret that Lilac and Genny C have been fan favorites for years, and with our growing herd we are looking forward to a strong visitor season.

Animals don't come to us by accident. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums partners with us to make the decision. The AZA cited three key reasons why we were chosen, including our first rate elephant exhibit, our excellent elephant conservation programs, and extraordinary care on the part of our staff.

I want to thank our Parks Director Larry Staub, Zoo Director Larry Sorel, our amazing and talented zookeepers and Pamela Sanchez and our partners at the Seneca Zoo Society for this big win!

I have spent my career working to make County government smaller and more efficient, cutting spending and the County's tax rate - but I am very proud to say that the one thing that's doubled during my time as County Executive is the size of our elephant herd.

Funding, fixing and expanding public infrastructure is important, but it's not always the exciting, high profile activity that grabs headlines like new elephants do. But our quality of life depends on maintaining roads and bridges, and public entertainment and sports facilities.

Far too often, the only time public infrastructure is noticed is when it fails. We saw two examples last year when two State bridges in the area were found to have "significant deterioration" and were closed.

19 bridges in our nine-county region were built before the Model T in 1908. One out of every 5 bridges is at least 65 years old. And New York State has designated 32% of the bridges in the region as 'deficient'.

Roads and bridges represent our most critical transportation assets, but without additional State and Federal funding for maintenance and repair, those assets will quickly become liabilities.

It's a safety issue, and the need for action has never been greater. While the Regional Economic Development Council process has made progress advancing transformational projects, governments no longer have direct access to funds historically made available for public infrastructure. The money has been swept into competition with everything from housing, to tourism, to higher education.

Left without access to historic funding streams, local governments will be forced to raise taxes to pay for maintenance and repairs, and that runs counter to the Council mission of strengthening the regional economy.

I have asked our Council to do what others around the State have already done, create a Public Infrastructure work group to identify and review potential public projects that, while not categorized as transformational, are equally important to quality of life.

Quality of life is one of three things mentioned when I ask business owners why they are in Monroe County. But the number one reason is access to a highly-skilled workforce.

By the end of this year one in every five American workers will be over 65 years of age and by 2020, one in four will be over 55, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Those are eye-opening statistics that mirror the trends in our local community and underscore the need to double-down on workforce development and job training efforts. It is vital that we connect young, skilled job hunters with opportunities.

Who are those young-skilled workers? More often than not they are millennials. Born between 1980 and 1994, millennials represent the fastest growing demographic in the country.

The Reason Foundation said, “understanding what millennials care about, what they believe in, and how they think is a first-priority of anyone interested in the future of American culture and ideas, and any employer who understands the value of investing in a future workforce.”

My husband and I are millennial parents, and like a lot of you only one of our four children has chosen to stay in Monroe County. What can we do to get them to come home? What can we do to get young people to stay?

Last fall we started an initiative to create a millennial culture here in Monroe County. The goal was to identify ways to unleash the potential of this increasingly influential age group.

They are called the Monroe 200 and were nominated by area colleges and young professional organizations. I gave them a very simple charge: Imagine someone giving you a blank sheet of paper and asking you to make a list of everything you would want or need in the community where you choose to live, work and eventually raise a family. I was blown away by their engagement and enthusiasm. Well, you can see for yourselves.

Using local subject matter experts and a facilitated focus group format, the Monroe 200 gave us feedback on issues like Education; Environment & Sustainability; Health & Wellness; Housing; Jobs & Economic Development; Recreation & Culture; Safety & Security; and Transportation & Mobility.

Tonight I am honored to present some of the highlights of the Monroe 200 report. The Monroe 200 has been working for months on a report which will be a community guide to better attract and retain young talent in our region.

Rochester’s millennials, or as we like to call them, ROCMillennials are connected to our community. 88.4% consider the greater Rochester area home and report a sense of ‘pride in the area.’ One participant, for example, reported that he “wanted to teach in a place that felt like home, with family, and a sense of history.”

ROCMillennials are invested in their community. Most reported wanting to stay in the area and become even more a part of it. More than one of the participants said, “We *want* to remain here.”

ROCMillennials value convenience. One common theme from all workgroups was the convenience of living in Monroe County. ROCMillennials like the easy commute and access to everything from the airport to Lake Ontario.

ROCMillennials think we are not too big, yet not too small. They can get around easily, but our community is large enough so they have access to the opportunities that keep them staying local.

ROCMillennials appreciate a healthy community, an active nightlife, and opportunities for activity. When it comes to arts, recreation, and outdoor activities, they can't get enough. And while it's not surprising that the millennial generation values recreation opportunities, the value placed on these activities is significant. Rochester and Monroe County would not be able to attract and retain millennials if it wasn't for our local museums, theaters, parks, lakes, 'walkable' communities, summer activities, festivals, and many more.

ROCMillennials want access to education. The Monroe 200 believe the higher education institutions and the top-notch K-12 education available in suburban districts is a strength. Many millennials want options to further their higher education. However, they did say they would choose suburban living over City living when they have children because of the reputation of City schools.

ROCMillennials appreciate our cost of living and housing. Millennials say affordable housing is important to them but high taxes in the area creates an incentive to leave.

ROCMillennials say they want to stay in Monroe County and be a part of its future development. They like the opportunity to be part of solutions through the Monroe 200 process. But for them, it's all about jobs. They want access to good paying job opportunities, but not just a job that pays the bills. They are looking for a workplace that uses, grows, and rewards their talent with advancement and that allows them to work with other millennials.

Those are a few of the report highlights, and the upside is that Monroe County has a solid base to build on. We have accessibility, affordability, and an abundance of activities.

A lot of work went into the report and tonight I want you to meet the authors. Many of the Monroe 200 are here tonight. I would like them to stand so we can thank them for their thoughtful insight.

Many of our subject matter experts are also here tonight, and I'd like to recognize them for being great mentors and for their passion for the future of Monroe County.

Thank you to MCC President Dr. Anne Kress, Mark Peterson, of Greater Rochester Enterprise, Rich Perrin of GTC, Director of Public Safety David Moore, Don Jeffries of Visit Rochester, Susan Maney from the Parks Advisory Council, Mark Siwec, of Mark Siwec Realty, and Laura Fasano, from the YMCA.

I would also like to thank our partners in this effort, Michelle Ashby, CEO of Tipping Point Communications and our data specialist, Tim Franz and his team. I am grateful for their willingness to give local young people a chance to step-up, speak-up, and take control of this community's future in a way that will make a real difference.

At the beginning of the process I made a promise to the Monroe 200. I told them this report would not sit on a shelf. Over the next few months I will be taking your thoughts and ideas to the many groups and organizations that need to hear your message. And this report will be put into the hands of my government and business partners, and key community stakeholders.

Each of you has a unique story to tell from this experience, so I will be inviting members of the Monroe 200 to join me in meetings and presentations. Your words and ideas will help shape the future of Monroe County. You should all be very proud.

12 years fulfilling the promise: working collaboratively with other government partners to enhance of quality of life and supporting companies that create and retain jobs. None of it matters, and we cannot protect the future if we don't honor our commitment to taxpayers by creating a government that lives within its means.

In 2004 I made a bold but simple commitment: to hold the line on property taxes. And every year at budget time I hear the chorus of opposition voices saying it can't be done.

But every year at budget time we prove them wrong. We've heard repeated dire predictions from desperate politicians - the fiscal sky is falling, the County is bankrupt, the County is planning massive post-election day tax increases. Well, here we are twelve years later and I'm proud to say I will have served my entire tenure without raising the tax rate... in fact, it's lower than when I took office.

In 2004 when I took office we had no money in the savings account and we were searching for annual one shots to balance the budget. 2015 - no one shots, and we ended 2014 with a 9 million dollar surplus - that's right, a surplus.

After more than a decade our fiscal restraint is paying off.

All totaled we have more than \$20 million in reserves. I am grateful to the efforts of Chief Financial Officer Bob Franklin and his team and each of our department heads.

In light of this news, Wall Street Credit Rating Agency, Moody's has improved our financial outlook to "stable," which is also great news for local taxpayers.

The greatest challenge facing County finances is the crushing weight of unfunded mandates which account for 85% of our billion dollar budget. Some say that mandates are like the weather, everyone complains about them, but no one does anything about it.

Well, that's not the case in Monroe County. I've spent much of my tenure educating the public about the destructive impact of Mandates, but we've also been doing something about their impact on the budget. You see, when 85% of the budget isn't under your control, you have to work even harder on the portion that is. The biggest factor we can control in our budget is the cost of the County workforce, specifically payroll and benefits.

In partnership with our unions, we have kept the growth in payroll to 1% per year since 2004. In fact, gross payroll, which is salaries and overtime, is actually lower today than it was in 2009. We've reduced payroll by 5%, a savings of over \$11 million.

By comparison, if we had given our employees the same wage settlements as other public sector agencies, our payroll would be \$60 million more than it is today.

Let's put that in context: if we had to balance our budget with a \$60 million hole, property taxes would have to increase 16%, or we would have to lay off more than 1,000 employees, or drastically slash vital public safety and quality of life services. A better example: to make up a \$60 million hole, you would have to shut down the veteran's services agency, 911, the crime lab, all County parks, and the DA's office, as well as suspend all county road and bridge work.

We would never allow that to happen, but it emphasizes the importance of controlling costs any way we can.

We continue to make tough fiscally conservative management decisions each and every day. We scrutinize every vacancy and only fill the most critical. We analyze our operations and reduce staffing accordingly. Since 2004, we have 500 fewer positions, a 10% reduction.

We have been just as diligent in our management of benefit costs and have focused on controlling health care costs. We are self-insured, and our health insurance cost is \$80 million less than it would have been otherwise.

We launched an award winning wellness program to promote employee health and retained a clinical integration firm to identify gaps in care.

None of this work has been easy, but it is part and parcel of our commitment to the taxpayers of this community.

I have many valuable partners in this fight for fiscal stability. During my tenure, Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn has been a leader in best practices that save money. Through the efficient management of the County Clerk's Office, Cheryl Dinolfo has returned over \$30 million in revenue to the County budget since 2004. District Attorney Sandra Doorley has been a great steward of tax dollars by running a lean operation and finding ways to do more with less. I am grateful for their efforts.

And I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the members of the County Legislature, especially the Republican Caucus for supporting my annual budget and standing with me each and every year to protect the local taxpayer. Because of term-limits some of the faces will change at the end of the year. I want to ask four Legislators to stand...Mary Valerio, President Jeff Adair, Dan Quatro, and Robert Colby. These four are the only members of the Legislature who served with me during my entire 12 years as County Executive. You have been invaluable partners. Thank you for your service to this community.

Throughout my tenure, I have fulfilled the promise of fiscal responsibility, protected the future with stable taxes, and delivered budgets compliant with the State 2% property tax cap, which controls the growth of the levy and the local taxpayer protection act which controls the growth in spending.

This year local governments faced a new challenge from Albany, and for most of this past year members of the Council of Governments have been working with the County to respond to the requirements of the Governor's Property Tax Rebate Program.

In order for homeowners to qualify for a rebate, each jurisdiction - counties, towns and villages have to comply with the 2% property tax cap, and then submit a local government efficiency plan to the State budget office.

Using the 2014 tax levy as the measure, our plan has to demonstrate a one per cent savings for the years 2017, 18, and 19. Based on that calculation, our community's annual savings goal is just over \$5.5 million.

Well, in Monroe County our commitment to reduce the burden on taxpayers didn't start with the creation of this plan. Working together to cut costs and share services to increase efficiencies is not a new idea. It's something this community has been doing for decades.

Those efforts are paying off for taxpayers. Because, instead of submitting a plan that meets the State goal of \$5.5 million, our plan submitted on June 1<sup>st</sup> represents \$60 million in annual savings for taxpayers.

County efficiencies in the plan include: new and innovative Pictometry software that will be used by town assessors, police and fire departments, a County move to self-insurance which save \$6 million a year, long standing shared service agreements like the centralized library system, our consolidated 9-1-1 center, our State of the art crime lab, and our under-one-roof public safety training facility and emergency operations center.

And just this past year the County became part of a unique interagency partnership that is a great example of a shared-service done well, a cost-cutting project that is a model for dispensing alternative fuels in the region.

It's called the Multi-Agency Green Fleet Fueling Facilities Project and provides convenient alternative fueling stations at three locations around Rochester. The City of Rochester and Monroe County now have better access to lower cost fuels for the large fleets of vehicles we run on a daily basis. It's a shared service that saves money but also promotes sustainability in our community.

One of the short sighted aspects of the Governor's plan is the fact that communities cannot get credit for any efficiency created or implemented before 2012. We included the list anyway, because those many local examples shine a light on just how much cooperation was taking place before anyone in Albany told us we had too. Pre-2012 efficiencies account for \$35 million in savings each year and represent only a fraction of the thousands of agreements that exist between all levels of government.

Compiling this plan has been a valuable exercise in self-assessment and a worthwhile review of the way we have operated for many years. As local leaders we need to continue to communicate with our residents regarding savings we have accomplished and the difficult decisions we make on a daily basis to protect taxpayers in face of crushing State mandates.

When the Property Tax Cap was first passed, leaders from both parties promised "significant mandate relief for municipalities." At that time mandates consumed 81% of our billion dollar County budget. Now they consume 85%. Mandate reform equals real sustainable property tax reform. We need to stop talking about caps and freezes and start talking about cuts.

As government leaders we have a responsibility to take advantage of every opportunity to reduce costs for taxpayers. But, one thing I've come to realize during my 12 years as County Executive is that government cannot do it alone.

Counties are nothing if not creative and innovative when it comes to being more efficient and effective. And while we can't always operate government like a business, we can learn a lot from the private sector on doing more with less.

As governments all across this country struggle to identify new resources to support critical services, public-private partnerships are being formed to assist governments with service delivery. These partnerships allow governments to provide some services by harnessing the innovation of the private sector without additional bureaucracy or cost. Public private partnerships save money for taxpayers.

Some great examples are located in our Department of Environmental Services. When I ran for this office in 2003, one goal was to make Monroe County a leader in the area of recycling and sustainability.

Twelve years later, I am proud to say we have had great success, and in many respects we have been national leaders. This past year we implemented a new, innovative and streamlined way for residents to recycle. Single-stream recycling has evolved from a public-private partnership with Waste Management, and I'd like to thank Senior District Manager Jeff Richardson, who is here tonight. Single stream means no more sorting recyclables at the curb. It's easier for residents and for collectors.

Recycling information cards are currently being mailed out to all residents in Monroe County Water Authority bills and the City of Rochester has begun a single stream toter pilot program to take full advantage of the recycling center's flexible capabilities.

We also continue to promote new hours at our one of a kind ecopark, where you can drop off virtually all things hard to dispose of. We're proud of our progress, and to chart a course for a greener future the County has prepared a new Solid Waste Management Plan. For the next ten years the plan will establish goals and objectives to reduce waste generation, increase waste recovery and decrease waste disposal. Because we own a recycling center, a municipal waste transfer station, and landfill and wastewater treatment facilities, Monroe County is in a unique position to identify future community needs and protect taxpayer investments. Our plan will include enhanced public education, solid waste and recycling law revisions, and the establishment of a yard waste and organic material coalition to help provide additional options for residents and businesses, helping keep unnecessary material out of landfills.

Alternative disposal methods are always being explored, but an important part of the plan is to secure the benefits of having a landfill. The Millseat Landfill ensures stable disposal costs. We want to protect that benefit for the next 30 years. The landfill's final cell has been constructed and is in use, and the process has begun to expand the footprint. That will mean continued disposal capacity for County and City residents over the next three decades. DES is also building a second power plant at the site to convert captured methane gas from waste decomposition to renewable green energy – or as we like to say, waste to watts.

Working with Waste Management, our private partner, to extend the short-term life of this public investment ensures that locally-controlled, environmentally-sound and reliable disposal activity will be provided without interruption to this community's residents, governments and businesses for decades to come.

Another partnership I am proud of is from 2010, when the Sands Family helped support efforts to build a first-of-its-kind, under-one-roof center for foster care children and their families. We knew that if we could combine those services with a supervised visitation center and co-locate with our Starlight Pediatrics clinic we could reduce the length of stay for children in foster care and help local families improve outcomes and help children return to their families or find permanent homes through adoption. It's worked, and since 2008 we have reduced the number of children in foster care by 50%.

None of this would have been possible without the compassion and generosity of Richard Sands, the Chairman of Constellation Brands. The Sands Family-Constellation Brands Building represents innovation at its best. Thank you Richard, for being a true champion for our children.

Partnerships and programs like Encompass, Nurse Family Partnership, Hillside Work Scholarship Connection, and Building Healthy Children represent Monroe County's strong commitment to reducing costs while improving outcomes for children and families in our community. We have an amazing team in our Department of Human Services led by Commissioner Kelly Reed. Kelly, your leadership will pay dividends for our residents for years to come.

Later this year I will become the President of the New York State Association of Counties. It will be an honor and privilege to lead an organization dedicated to raising public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of this unique level of government.

I've been in County government for 20 years. I know that counties matter. County governments were originally created to deliver social service programs for the State of New York. Our mission has evolved to provide hundreds of services ranging from public health to public safety, services essential to the creation of healthy, vibrant and safe communities.

But in addition to our expansive services menu, counties protect the health and welfare of our residents through resolutions, ordinances and local laws. During my time as County Executive, there are 3 laws I am especially proud of. In 2005, we passed a Pesticide Notification Law to protect the health of our residents. In 2011, we honored our veterans and passed a law making it a crime to stage a protest within one mile of a military funeral. And in 2012 we took a strong stand to protect the safety of our children when we passed a Cyber-Bullying law.

Counties matter and often-times lead the fight against increasingly dangerous and daunting societal challenges.

Approximately one in every four women will fall victim to domestic violence at some point in their lives. It's a number that is both unacceptable and intolerable. Domestic violence is an epidemic, a community challenge, and we will be judged on how we as a community respond.

Monroe County has been proud to work with community partners in many ways to address domestic violence where we can make the biggest difference – on a local level.

Led by our Office of Mental Health and Director Dave Putney, the Intimate Partner Violence Project was formed to look at how we can provide effective and evidence-based treatment to offenders within substance abuse treatment settings.

RIT is a key part of the project, which will ultimately assist coordination efforts of key stakeholders from the courts, judiciary, probation, the Public Defender's office, treatment providers, community coalitions and advocacy groups.

Forming a united front, we have a much better chance of achieving our goal of preventing domestic violence.

Heroin is an epidemic that is plaguing our community, destroying our families, and inciting violence in our streets. Heroin is a true modern day danger threatening our quality of life. Heroin is not just an urban problem. It's finding its way into schools and homes in every part of Monroe County.

The numbers are staggering. From 2011 to 2014, the number of heroin cases submitted to the Monroe County Crime Lab has increased by over 300%. The amount of heroin tested by our lab has increased 700%.

It's a sad and growing reality that hardly a week goes by without news that heroin has taken a life... a life with promise... a life with potential... a life that shouldn't have been lost to drugs. Our community is not unique in facing this challenge but by being proactive we are making a difference. Our nationally accredited Regional Crime Lab is led by Administrator John Clark and our Drug Chemistry Supervisor Jim Wesley.

The lab is one of our most important crime fighting assets, and it works closely with law enforcement and prosecutors to process and analyze suspected illegal drugs and produce results that can be used in the prosecution of suspected crimes. The lab also works closely with Medical Examiner Dr. Caroline Dignan and her staff to examine deaths of known heroin users. Drugs from a scene can be sent directly to the crime lab for analysis to determine if something other than heroin may have contributed to the cause of death.

In one case, the Crime Lab tested heroin seized during an arrest in the Southern Tier. The analysis showed that a known horse tranquilizer was mixed with the heroin. The lead agency was notified along with law enforcement partners in the surrounding area.

When Erie County heard the news, they re-examined four recent heroin overdose cases and discovered the same mixture caused the deaths. Good local work that led to far reaching results.

Counties matter because results matter when it comes to services that touch, in our case almost 750-thousand residents. None of it happens without a tireless and dedicated workforce.

Here in Monroe County there are 45-hundred people who are responsible for our effective and impactful government. No matter how big or how small their job, I admire them, I respect them and I am proud of them.

The people who work in Monroe County government embody the spirit of public service and often times that effort is recognized by the greater community, State and Nation.

Collectively our Sheriff's Office received its accreditation for the eighth consecutive time, being recognized for "demonstrating a commitment to professional excellence."

Deputy Bridget Davis was named Deputy of the Year for her actions on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, when she pursued and apprehended an armed suspect who was in a stolen car and had been suspected of shoplifting, hitting a vehicle, and attempting to carjack a minivan.

Deputy Robert Costello was named Correction Officer of the Year. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Deputy Costello helped save a man at Bristol Mountain Winter Resort. He was off-duty but performed CPR on the man who was unconscious after suffering a heart attack. The man was transported to Strong Memorial Hospital by Mercy Flight and made a full recovery.

It's not every day that we are presented with a call to action as drastic as helping a fellow human being in need of life-saving support. It's these moments that can define us. It was a near-tragic moment on March 31<sup>st</sup> of this year that made two men 'hometown heroes'.

An employee with the District Attorney's Office, David Dys and local resident, David Hill proved what it means to be a Good Samaritan. After coming across a woman collapsed on Spring Street, both David Dys and David Hill quickly took action. As a result, Valerie Richards was taken to the hospital and treated. I am pleased to report that she is doing very well in her recovery. But there's no question the heroic actions of these two men saved her life.

This year we welcomed a new interim Director of Public Health – Dr. Jeremy Cushman. Dr. Cushman has a reputation as a dedicated professional, who puts the lives of others before his own on a daily basis. As physician for Emergency Medical Services, Dr. Cushman was honored by area Fire Chiefs for his efforts to save the life of a traffic accident victim.

I'd like to recognize our Department of Environmental Services Director Mike Garland and Department of Transportation Director Terry Rice, who are both here tonight. Each and every year we have Monroe County projects singled out and recognized by the American Public Works Association. From the Crime Lab to the Green Fueling Stations to the Civic Center Green Roof project, to accolades for our green fleet and awards for innovation road and bridge designs.

This year Dan Cavallaro was honored with the Douglas Zefting Award for excellence in public works. I want to congratulate him on this well-deserved honor. He's been a part of our DES team for 30 years, and the community has benefitted from his good work.

As some of you may know I was the Chairperson for the Genesee Transportation Council for four years, and during that time I was able to work with an incredibly skilled group of people from our region. Rich Perrin is the Executive Director of the GTC and was also honored by the APWA for his outstanding work in transportation planning. Congratulations!

Public works employees are unsung heroes that deserve our gratitude. Their work is truly the foundation of our quality of life.

This year for the first time Monroe County identified a young leader to support our annual United Way campaign. Nicole Dobson from our Human Resources Department was recently recognized by the United Way of Greater Rochester as the 2015 Young Leaders' Club Champion. This Club is made up of about 400 of Rochester's most inspiring and active leaders who are dedicated to making a true impact in our community. Together, they invested nearly half a million dollars through their donations to help the United Way reach its goal.

Each year, I am amazed by the outpouring of generosity demonstrated by Monroe County employees. This year our employees donated \$360,000 to support the United Way to help our residents. I'd like to thank our Human Resources Director, Brayton Connard who has overseen Monroe County's United Way campaign each year and grown it into a tremendous success. Brayton was also presented with the prestigious "President's Award" from the New York State Civil Service Commission - the highest statewide award for a civil service professional.

Laura Stradley, a U.S. Army veteran and the Director of the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency, was recently inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame. Laura served honorably in the United States Army from 1996 through 2004, retiring at the rank of Staff Sergeant E-6. Laura, thank you for your service to our community and to our country.

Recently, our Veterans Service Agency received the PFC Dwyer peer-to-peer grant from the New York State Office of Mental Health. The grant supports the work of veterans who personally understand the effects of war, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Traumatic Brain Injury so they can help other veterans.

The VSA will be partnering with Compeer to deliver these services, and will also purchase several computers to create an "Internet café" in the agency waiting room where veterans will be able to connect with one another in person using a social network that will be on each terminal and using Skype to reach those still serving overseas.

Those are a few of the accolades and recognitions, but really I am only scratching the surface when it comes to individual impact. For 12 years I have had a front row seat, watching the many men and women who serve this community with dignity and pride. The level of professionalism is astounding and their contributions immeasurable. I am proud to have been part of their team.

Tonight, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognize each of my Department Heads. A County Executive is only as good as his or her team, and this team has accomplished much. So please stand as I read your names.

You all represent the best and brightest in local government. Thank you.

12 years ago I promised to govern collaboratively, govern fairly, govern with integrity, honesty and professionalism. I promised to work hard, to spend your tax dollars wisely and promote a smaller, smarter, more efficient government that lives within its means.

Fulfilling the promise. Protecting the future. Tonight let me end with one more thank you. Thank you to the residents of Monroe County. You have given me a great gift - the chance to make a difference, to give back. I have never forgotten that I work for you.

Sometimes I pinch myself and find it hard to believe that a little girl raised in this wonderful town got the chance to become the County Executive and help unleash the unlimited opportunities we have as a community.

My ties to Rochester run deep because of my childhood, but also because of a 38 year career that started in a radio newsroom and brought me to a place in the County Office Building where I follow in the footsteps of those incredible leaders who came before me.

Whether sitting at the anchor desk or in the legislative chambers, whether constructing a newscast or creating public policy, this has been an incredibly rewarding experience largely because of people I have met along the way.

Every day my life is touched by people who remind me why our work in government is so important, people who bring into focus the value of public service and the impact of public policy.

Preparing for tonight was a time of reflection for me, and tonight is a night of great emotion.

Many have asked me - what do you want your legacy to be? That's a hard question to answer because this job was never about me.

But if I had to answer I would say that my legacy is that I stayed the course, from beginning to end, because I believed in something greater than myself. I believed in Monroe County, and it has been my great honor and privilege to serve.

Ronald Reagan once said, "If you're afraid of the future then get out of the way. Stand aside. The people of this country are ready to move again."

I think that's a great way to describe the State of our County. Monroe County residents are ready to move. They feel the wind at their backs and they know we are a community with a rich and proud history behind us and unlimited potential in front of us. It is that spirit that defines us and that spirit which will continue to be the cornerstone of our success.

Thank you for coming tonight and God Bless You.