



# NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN DELIVERS 2017 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS**

### **Working Together – Anything Is Possible In Ulster County**

New Paltz, N.Y. – Ulster County Executive Mike Hein delivered his ninth annual State of the County Address at the conference center of Ulster BOCES in New Paltz to a large gathering of residents, business owners, and State and local officials. The County Executive highlighted the many accomplishments of the previous year and detailed his vision for 2017. His message of working “*together*” with the community to “build up and make better” resonated throughout his speech as he touched on the County’s achievements and the potential of an even brighter future with endless possibilities.

“As a reformer, I knew there had to be a better way, and so did the great people of Ulster County, and with their support we set about trying to rethink absolutely everything. I believed that if we were bold enough we could actually create something special, a government that functions very different than the ones we’ve come to expect, and I am thrilled to say it’s working. We’ve reinvented County government and the real winners are the people,” said **County Executive Mike Hein**. “I am pleased to report that since 2009 our spending is down across the board by over \$30 million, the departments of the executive branch are over 40% smaller, and the property tax levy for this year in Ulster County is actually less than it was all the way back in 2010. We have provided millions to help our towns and the City of Kingston all while improving access to services for our citizens. These kinds of historic accomplishments are hard fought and only possible when we all work together.”

**County Executive Hein** continued, “Last year, we had a number of exciting things happen, not the least of which was having Ulster County and some of our environmental initiatives featured in National Geographic Magazine. It’s hard to imagine that 6.7 million readers in forty different languages got the opportunity to learn more about Ulster County. That’s the kind of advertising you just can’t buy and it should provide a significant boost to our already booming \$533 million dollar Tourism Industry. In addition, the great people of Ulster County voted for, in a landslide, the common sense approach of moving family court from its current inadequate and expensive rental location to a County owned facility right next to the Department of Social Services where so many children actually receive critical services. Family Court is about real people and the complex issues that alter the course of their lives forever. When we all stand together, those among us ‘most in need’ can truly benefit from our collective humanity. I believe that here in Ulster County, by working together, we can show exactly what’s possible and as we look together over the horizon of our future, the opportunities for Ulster County are simply endless.”

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

- Since 2009, County government spending is down across the board by over \$30 million with departments controlled by the executive branch being 40% smaller. In fact, the property tax levy for this year in Ulster County is less than it was in 2010 while improving access to services for citizens.
- Ulster County continues to lead the way in environmental stewardship being the first and only “Net Carbon Neutral” County in New York State with 100% of County government’s energy being generated from renewable resources, creating the largest concentration of municipal electric car charging stations in New York State and converting the County’s fleet to alternate fuel vehicles. In fact, Ulster County was recognized by National Geographic Magazine which included a featured supplement of a full-colored map “Dreaming Green” which highlights some of the County Executive’s amazing environmental achievements.
- In addition to completing a Utility-Scale Solar Project in 2017, that will generate 20% of the County’s entire electric needs, the County Executive will propose expanding the County’s investment in farmland protection and open space initiatives with partners like Scenic Hudson and the John Burrough’s Association. Also, through NYSERDA’S designation of Ulster County as the State’s first “Clean Energy Community,” the County Executive will propose using the associated \$250,000 State grant award toward a massive energy efficiency plan for the County Law Enforcement Center, including an energy efficient lighting upgrade, more efficient solar hot water heaters, and an innovative “ozone-based” laundry system at the Law Enforcement Center.
- An unprecedented \$46 million investment in public infrastructure over a three year period under the County’s “Building a Better Ulster County” initiative which will improve 15 bridges and over 50% of all County roads (three times the traditional pace of construction) was highlighted with the recently completed Carmine Liberta Memorial Bridge in New Paltz. This bridge, designed with community involvement was built with wider sidewalks for pedestrians with multiple bike lanes and also includes an entirely new public space that showcases the breathtaking view of the Shawangunk Ridge and creates a real waterfront in the Village of New Paltz for the first time since the 1600’s.
- Ulster County is uniquely positioned to experience long-term economic benefits from New York State’s plan to build a statewide interconnected rail-trail system and the County Executive was pleased to announce that an additional \$1 million to further Ulster County’s rail trail efforts has been allocated in New York State’s proposed budget.
- Ulster County will begin construction of the new Family County that recently received overwhelming voters support in the last election. This new facility will improve efficiency and services for children and families.
- Continued to address the growing National Heroin crisis by hiring a Family Advocate to assist individuals and their families to navigate the complex world of health insurance and unveiled a dedicated Ulster County smartphone app that provides “instant access” to important resources for all those suffering from addiction, as well as their friends and families. In addition to being amongst the first to provide NARCAN to all first responders, directed the Commissioner of Health

to establish a voluntary program in which “each and every” county employee will have access to training on the lifesaving anti-overdose medication NARCAN.

- Building on Ulster County’s rise in the Robert Wood Johnson National Health Rankings to #16 in New York State - a better than 50% improvement from 2010, the County Executive announced that he will propose to the Ulster County Legislature and key stakeholders in 2017 to add e-cigarettes to the list of items banned in the Clean Indoor Air Act and to Raise the legal age to purchase cigarettes and e-cigarettes from 18 to 21 years of age.
- In further honoring our veterans, the County Executive announced that major work is nearing completion at the Ulster County Veterans Cemetery and in 2017 he will propose that Ulster County policy be changed to allow the spouses of Ulster County Veterans to be buried in the Ulster County Cemetery with their loved one without charge.
- In addition to the fact that Ulster County’s unemployment rate is down to 4.3%, approximately half of what it was in 2009, the County Executive highlighted \$9.3 Million received from the New York State Regional Economic Development Council for projects throughout Ulster County and was pleased to report that we achieved his goal of expanding the New York State Film Tax Credit program to include Ulster County which will further expand the County’s creative economy, leveling the playing field among upstate counties, and will create high quality film industry and new media production jobs.

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For 2017 State of the County Speech and Presentation please visit  
<http://ulstercountyny.gov/executive/state-county>