

“STATE OF THE COUNTY
JANUARY 3, 2014

“Thank you to my wife for her continued support while I serve as a Town Supervisor for another term and my second year as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. Again, thank you to my fellow Supervisors for the confidence that you have placed in me by electing me to serve as your Chairman. It is truly my privilege to serve in this capacity.

“Switching from the position as Budget Officer to Chairman of the Board has been a good experience for me. I think as I reach the end of my first term as Chairman, I am finally getting used to the position. Everyone at the County has made my transition a smooth one, the staff in the Clerks Office lead by Joan Sady, the County Attorney's office under Martin Auffredou, Administrator's Office lead by Paul Dusek, my fellow Supervisors, Department Heads and County Employees.

“It was hard to relinquish the job as Budget Officer but I feel I made the right choice in appointing Frank Thomas to succeed me. Not only has he done a great job, we are heading down a path that could lead us to ‘no tax increase in the future’.

“As we begin a new year, I think it is important to recognize the County's positive financial growth and accomplishments from last year:

- * Another year with no short term borrowing for cash flow purposes in 2013. We had a fund balance that meets our goal at the end of 2012 and again will achieve a positive fund balance at the end of this year. This couldn't be done without everyone being on the “same page” when it comes to finances. The Treasurer's office does a superb job in keeping us informed on county spending lead by Mike Swan and Rob Lynch. Thank you for your diligence and effort.

- * The Administrator's Office along with the Budget Team continues to look at multiyear financial planning. We now have a better picture of the County's future financial position. We continue to stay below the State goal of a 2% Tax Cap without depleting our fund balance.

- * In the past year a Computer Reserve Fund was created to replace the computers in the County that will not be supported with the proper software after April 2014. We have undertaken replacing or making upgrades to 250 County computers and will continue to complete the replacements by April of this year. That was no easy task but it has gone along smoothly thanks to the IT Department and Department Heads. This department continues to work flawlessly after the retirement of Rob Metthe and the search for a new IT director.

- * The vehicle replacement plan adopted by the County has allowed departments to purchase safe and reliable vehicles. Thanks to all involved for making this work.

- * The Westbrook/Gaslight Village Project has taken shape with the Environmental Park on the south side of the parcel. We hope to have the Festival Space on the north side, more viable this summer, and you know what they say “Rome wasn't built in a Day”. Rebuilding of the Beach Road is another project that will protect Lake George for future generations and I believe we will deem

the porous paving project a success. Thank you to the Department of Public Works.

* The county continues to work on inefficiencies by using technology and outside resources. The County printing project implemented in August 2012 has allowed us to reduce the copier and printer inventory by over 200 devices.

* We continue to see growth in sales and mortgage taxes which are signs that the economy is slowly recovering.

* We successfully reached collective bargaining agreements with our other labor unions: Warren County Sheriffs' Employees' Alliance, Warren County Correctional Supervisors Association - Corrections Lieutenants, and Warren County Police Supervisors Benevolent Association - Sheriff's Lieutenants which help chart the course for the future of the County.

* We completed the County's Bicentennial celebration in 2013. Thank you to all who helped make this yearlong celebration a success.

* I am proud to say that Warren County remains one of few counties in New York State that has not increased sales tax above 7%.

"While it is important to recognize and celebrate our success and achievements as a County we must also consider the important work that still lies ahead:

1. Although we have had to delay infrastructure improvements to many of our roads the last few years, the Budget Team has a plan in place to increase the amount of funding available to the Department of Public Works in the future. As long as the economy continues to grow we should be able to start getting the County roads back into shape.

2. Another project that needs to be addressed in 2014 will be the need for more court space. We will be looking at this initiative in January, to solve the overcrowding that we currently have, and make a sensible plan for the future of the Judicial System in the County. Just like the roads it's time to come up with a plan, working with our Judges, to meet the needs now and into the future.

3. We also have been the leader in the County and State in dealing with Invasive Species. Most efforts so far have been successful and we have contributed our fair share to the fight, but invasive species aren't going away. I applaud the efforts of the committee members and its Chairman Dennis Dickinson. They aren't just looking at Lake George but also to the other water bodies in the county that are so important to our economic future and growth. The challenge will continue.

4. Staffing requirements at the Correctional Facility will also have to be addressed this year.

"Other tasks that will require our continued attention and efforts are:

1. We need to continue to work with the Town of Corinth, Saratoga County and Iowa Pacific Holdings to open the rail corridor to carry freight on a regular basis.

2. We need to finish the privatization of the Westmount Skilled Nursing Facility. Once the sale is completed this important initiative will have a significant effect on County finances.

3. We need to continue our effort in Economic Development. Consolidation of the Economic Development Agencies under the leadership of Ed Bartholomew

made great strides in getting together the private sector, EDC, County Government and City Government to work together toward one goal, improving the Economic Development of the Region. Along with the Adirondack Gateway Council, the County and region are beginning to see what consolidation of governments can do for the area. The region received over \$6,000,000 in grants at the recent awards of the Consolidated Funding Applications. Warren County's Planning Department was instrumental in helping our communities secure awards.

4. We need to consider and address the real financial issues some of our communities are facing with diminishing tax bases. I would like to see that the County Management Team and the Board of Supervisors work toward finding a solution to this issue in the upcoming year since the financial stability of the municipalities is not only important for themselves but the County as a whole. After all we are all one County, from the City in the South to the most northern, eastern or western towns.

5. We need to continue to make improvements in streamlining and making operations more efficient throughout the County. The Board, Departments and Employees of the County have made remarkable improvements in this area. The operational efficiencies and cost initiatives make the goal of a 0% tax increase possible in the near future. We must do this while continuing to provide the best possible services at the lowest cost to our residents.

"As we consider the tasks ahead, I want to welcome the new County Board members: Jim Brock Ward 4 Supervisor from the City of Glens Falls, Matt Simpson, Supervisor from the Town of Horicon, John Strough, Supervisor from the Town of Queensbury, Doug Beaty County Supervisor from the Town of Queensbury and Rachel Seeber County Supervisor from the Town of Queensbury. You are going to join a great team here and we look forward to your contributions and working with you.

"We are not without challenges for 2014. I know we will continue to work together as a team to find solutions to our problems regardless of party affiliation and make Warren County a better place to live and work. Our employees, as well as the decisions made by this Board of Supervisors will make the difference.

"Respectfully submitted,
Kevin B. Geraghty, Chairman
Warren County Board of Supervisors