



# ULSTER COUNTY NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ulster County Winter Watch Receives National Recognition**

David B. Donaldson, Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature, and his colleagues were pleased to welcome Department of Social Services Commissioner Roberto Rodriguez to the June 10<sup>th</sup> session of the Legislature. Although Commissioner Rodriguez was there to present an update on the Winter Watch Program, which was implemented almost a year ago, the Legislature wanted to take time to congratulate the Commissioner and those involved with Winter Watch on receiving the National Association of Counties (NACo) 2009 Achievement Award. NACo recognizes the Winter Watch Program as an effective and creative program, and sees it as a Model Program for other Counties to consider.

Winter Watch began after a number of Legislators began being contacted by constituents and Legislator Gregorius, Chairman of the Human Development Committee, began reviewing these concerns within his committee. Winter Watch started as a Legislative initiative, with the help of the County Administrator's Office, the Department of Social Services and numerous other agencies after a "Home Heating Summit" was held to assess the existing conditions of County residents and the skyrocketing home heating fuel costs. Ulster County residents were being hard hit financially and faced potentially serious health and safety risks. This summit was a coordinated community response to the unprecedented challenges being presented throughout the Northeast and proactively addressed extremely serious issues facing many. Invitees to the summit included Federal, State and local representatives, local fuel oil companies, Central Hudson, multiple not-for-profit agencies, regional faith base organizations, and numerous County departments.

Winter Watch has proven to be a great program. The Legislature would like to publically thank Commissioner Rodriguez and the numerous individuals who have been involved with the success of the Winter Watch Program and keeping our residents warm and safe.