

2013 State of the County Address

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Ulster County Executive

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I am honored to be with you here tonight at the beautiful SUNY Ulster Campus, to present the 2013 State of the County Address.

Working together, we have made great progress in 2012; and with an aggressive agenda, we can expect to do even more this year.

As we do, I am well aware that it is a privilege to serve as the County Executive, I never forget exactly who I work for: the 183,000 amazing people of Ulster County. So with every decision I make, and every action we, as a government take, I will always put the interests of the people first. In furtherance of this effort, I am blessed to work with a dedicated team of highly qualified individuals who embrace our administration's commitment to put the people of Ulster County first. You see, it has never been about creating either bigger government or a smaller government; it has always been about creating a better government.

Whether it is protecting taxpayers or delivering service to those most in need, I believe the choice before us must never be, to just be fiscally responsible or just socially responsible. I believe we, as a government, should embrace innovation and change, so we can actually deliver both. At its core, that is what my administration is all about.

What I find personally most gratifying, is the fact that we have successfully tackled the kinds of challenges that have driven other county governments to the brink of bankruptcy. We did this together, while still providing more services for those in need than ever before. And we did it while simultaneously recovering from the worst natural disaster in our County's history in Hurricane Irene.

Because of that ability to make difficult choices and implement timely solutions, in the past four years, in many ways, Ulster County has emerged as a reform leader within the State of New York. While some counties have seen their bond ratings plunge to "junk bond" status, ours remains strong. While some County governments have been taken over by State control boards, we have tackled complicated problems with innovative solutions and our taxpayers have benefited, with the first County property tax cut in over a decade.

Ladies and gentlemen, yes, we still face serious challenges, but the "State of the County" for Ulster County is strong, and getting stronger because it is built on a foundation of progress. The kind of progress only made possible with cooperation

forged through difficult decisions. As a result, the sheer volume of progress has been nothing short of ground-breaking. Each and every person involved should be proud of their efforts.

We have addressed: Golden Hill Nursing Home, we have kept it open and averted a major fiscal crisis; Safety Net, the 3 year phase-in has brought tax relief directly to Town and City residents; RRA, the elimination of the Net Service Fee saves millions of dollars of taxpayer subsidy every year; the new "Office of Business Services," cuts bureaucracy and better serves job creating entrepreneurs in Ulster County. Last, but definitely not least, the S.T.R.I.V.E. project; that among other things, improves access to education for our most disadvantaged youth. All of these actions tackled fundamental issues that have haunted Ulster County for decades.

However, as we celebrate the successes of 2012, I must also caution about a unique danger, one that could undo all the progress we have made so far. A hidden danger that only comes with success; and that danger is complacency. The mistaken idea is that all the hard work has already been done, and all of the politically charged issues have already been addressed.

Worse, and even more dangerous, there are some who mistakenly believe that County Government must now be flush with money. Although I wish that were true, unfortunately, it is not. What we have accomplished so far is to avoid massive property tax increases. The people I serve, the great people of Ulster County, have every right to demand their leaders continue to move this County forward; and so, our work is far from done.

Yes, with a historic "Safety Net" solution we have delivered \$1.7 million dollars of tax relief directly to the Towns and City of Kingston, but there is more work to be done; especially, if we are to identify the next \$1.7 million dollars of savings to help finish the job.

And yes, we have designed a practical solution to the \$23 million dollars of RRA debt placed upon the people of Ulster County by past Legislatures, but there is more work to be done.

And yes, Economic Development has been overhauled with the newly minted "Office of Business Services." Gone are the days of disjointed and complicated bureaucracy. We now have a single point of contact and the ability to move at the speed of business. And to help this effort, through an unprecedented collaboration with my fellow County Executives in Orange and Dutchess Counties, we have garnered from Central Hudson an enhanced \$5 million dollar economic development fund, and on top of that, we have secured a 12 month rate freeze that does not just help businesses, it applies to everyone; but our work is not done.

And in our efforts to protect our pristine environment, yes, having the Federal EPA recently align with Ulster County in our battle with the New York City DEP for clean

water in the Lower Esopus may prove valuable; but our work is far from done. We have a long way to go in order to right the wrongs associated with 107 years of abuse.

And yes, I am proud we designed an entirely new and highly successful model to move through the politically charged world of County Nursing homes in crisis. Our “compassionate alternative to closure” has helped depoliticize this issue and instead focus the attention where it belongs, on caring for our residents.

The LDC model we designed for Golden Hill is now being replicated by five different counties across New York State. That is rewarding since it means these facilities will continue to remain open, the residents will continue to receive high quality care and the jobs will continue to remain in the community; and in our case, much needed capital improvements will expand services for those most in need.

Hopefully, in the end, innovation and change will be the hallmarks of our administration; because in addition to simply becoming more efficient, I believe we have an obligation to create and improve.

And so yes, we are excited to bring forward the S.T.R.I.V.E. project which has become a state-wide model in its own right. Not only does it improve access to higher education by placing a satellite college right next to the Kingston High School, but by freeing up space in the Business Resource Center, it allows us to improve health and human services by centralizing everything under one roof. It puts valuable, County-owned property back on the tax rolls while creating an economic engine for the area. Working with Mayor Gallo, BOCES, SUNY Ulster, and the school district, we are creating an educational corridor in the heart of Kingston, while repurposing what would have been just another closed and vacant school building.

Even though our work on S.T.R.I.V.E. is far from done; in the end, it will **save** taxpayers millions of dollars while drastically improving access to higher education. Saving millions is critical because we can never shy away from addressing the financial realities affecting our County, like the 4,300% increase in pension costs since 2002, a number that now exceeds \$19 million dollars.

Additionally, since the taxpayers of Ulster County have every right to know where their money is being spent, I am glad to say that County government has now become more transparent and accountable than ever, with an easy to read tax bill insert and our “Citizen’s Access” website that provides details on virtually every county contract.

Even after all this, there will still be some unclear as to why all this change was needed. So to answer that question I want to show you exactly what trajectory Ulster County Government was on: the hard working people of Ulster County were facing a 66% cumulative tax increase over the last 4 years if County Government

had not drastically changed its ways. And the truth is, we are not out of the woods yet.

In spite of the serious challenges ahead, it is important to highlight that none of the historic reforms enacted could have been accomplished without an extraordinary, high performing and incredibly adaptable county workforce.

So, I would like to say a personal thank you to the members of CSEA, PBA, CWA and NYSET, and our County managers as well. None of this is possible without you.

Add to that the fact that we have taken on the long standing and troublesome issues of nepotism and cronyism with an Executive Order and an integrity based Corporate Compliance program that is second to none. If our citizens are to have confidence in their government, then Government hiring should not be about who you know, it should be about what you know.

Most of all, yes, by thinking differently and acting differently, we have delivered the first County property tax cut in over a decade. Because as long as families and seniors are struggling to make ends meet, and as long as we lose even one of our college graduates because they do not have a job to come home to, our work is not done. As long as the playing field for the American dream is not completely level, our work is not done.

Looking back, 2012 was an extremely productive year, and 2013 can be too. With an aggressive agenda and a cooperative spirit of working together, we can remain at the forefront of government reform, while we continue to take the necessary steps to ensure the people of Ulster County can, and will ultimately, thrive.

If we are to fulfil that hope, there is still much work to do. Some of the most important issues facing our County also fall under the heading of policy decisions. Policy decisions that I respectfully submit, must be addressed by the County Legislature.

There is time for debate and for deliberation but as leaders in difficult times, there must also come a time for action.

I know for a fact there are real leaders within the Ulster County Legislature, individuals committed to taking action, on both sides of the aisle. Over the past four years, I have had the great pleasure of working with them and so, I know there are leaders within.

Whether it is Minority Leader Dave Donaldson and Majority Leader Ken Ronk with their steadfast support of shared services; or Legislators Gerentine and Gregorius, or Maio and Provenzano for their work in helping control property taxes, I applaud the leaders within.

Whether it is Legislators Loughran, Briggs, Roberts and Wawro, all who were instrumental in fighting to get “Safety Net” passed; or Legislators Rodriguez, Wishnick, Bartels and Belfiglio pressing to implement a first in the state ban on fracking brine for our roads, I applaud the leaders within.

And there were others; I also want to personally thank Legislator Harris for being so supportive of the S.T.R.I.V.E. project, and Legislator Maloney on Economic Development. Most of all, I want to recognize Legislator Provenzano for her Herculean efforts on the LDC, as she works to properly transition our County Nursing Home and serve the people. So, in the end, we can all applaud the leaders within.

I would like to highlight just a few of the significant policy issues I believe require even more leadership and swift Legislative action.

With respect to the RRA, I know all too well that Flow Control is no panacea. It is a huge first step, but I believe the time has come for the Ulster County Legislature to adopt a serious, long term, fiscally responsible policy surrounding the solid waste issues in our County; and I urge them to act.

Addressing major policy issues are critical because what now worries me as County Executive is the possibility of running out of money to provide the appropriate levels of law enforcement for our community. Especially, in an environment in which we now spend over \$32 million dollars in this critical area, if we are unwilling to examine the serious issues at hand, available resources may ultimately become insufficient. Therefore, I am calling on the Legislature to form a “Special Law Enforcement Sustainability Commission” to examine the best way to ensure that long term, sustainable police protection is available for our community.

In order to do this, they have at their disposal, some of the finest minds on the subject anywhere: from Dr. Gerry Benjamin, at SUNY New Paltz, and Jonathan Drapkin at the regional think tank, Patterns for Progress, to Sheriff Paul Van Blarcum and many other extremely well-trained law enforcement experts in our County.

And with regard to public safety, I want to be clear; I take this issue very seriously. You will find no bigger supporter of law enforcement on the planet than me. My late brother, Sergeant Warner Hein, was a decorated, 20 year New York State Police officer; so I know first hand the courage, commitment and sacrifice the brave men and women of law enforcement make everyday in their efforts to keep us safe.

But in an environment in which State mandates continue to escalate and are running the risk of crippling local governments, an honest assessment is essential; because we can not and must not run out of resources to fund government’s most important job of all, and that is public safety.

And on the heels of the all too frequent national tragedies, one of the major areas that has come to the forefront of the debate is better identifying those with serious mental illness. So I am urging the County Legislature to align with my entire administration and the members of the Community Services Board, in aggressively calling for an increase to State and Federal funding for mental health services. What most people do not know is that Ulster County now spends over \$13 million dollars a year on mental health services; all while at the same time, the State and Federal Aid for mental health has fallen by over 50% in the last 5 years.

As troubling as these facts are, we do have a unique opportunity to right this wrong. Ulster County's own State Legislative delegation, with their recent committee assignments, is now well positioned to take action. So I ask that you join me in imploring them to increase state funding for both mental health services and school safety programs and, in addition, we must encourage them to re-examine the effectiveness of the entire State system to help de-stigmatize and better serve those with serious mental health issues.

Though money is part of the problem, money alone is not the entire solution. Ensuring the best possible system is just as important. With this in mind, my administration will continue to re-design how we deliver mental health services at the local level.

Beginning this year, children's mental health services are being delivered by Astor Home for Children and Family Services who, in many ways, are the gold standard of children's mental health services in the Hudson Valley.

The truth is, previously if a child was in distress and if a parent was concerned that they were potentially a danger to either themselves or to others, the answer from the County was, other than the emergency room, potentially an appointment in up to three weeks; and that is completely unacceptable.

Now with Astor Home, in this type of volatile situation, if you go into one of their clinics a mental health professional will see your child immediately. That is not only better for the child; it is better for their family and better for our entire community as well.

In addition to these very serious health and safety issues, there are other areas that require both Legislative and Executive action. And so now, I would like to discuss with you an exciting and transformational project.

I believe that by connecting the wildly popular, "Walkway Over The Hudson" with the beautiful Ashokan Reservoir, via rail trail, and at the same time, opening up the Ashokan Reservoir to recreation, we can dramatically help our regional economy, help our public health efforts, and help tourism industry as well.

These kinds of projects are already strongly supported by existing County legislative policy; and by working together, we can create a world class inter-connected rail trail system, which will be a one of kind tourist attraction that can benefit everyone.

But to get there, we can not get gridlocked in the endless railroad vs. rail trail debate. Simply put, we can not let more decades pass and more opportunity pass us by, especially when now is the perfect time to act.

For railroad enthusiasts, I believe in, and will fully support, a tourism-based railroad operation in the Phoenicia / Mt. Tremper area. But the fact remains, decades are passing, and the tens of millions of dollars needed to build out and operate a fully functional railroad system have not come and will not be coming anytime soon.

Since the focus of my administration must always be on moving Ulster County forward, I believe we have a unique opportunity to do something extraordinary here, so my Administration will remain focused on making this rail trail project a reality.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are not alone in this vision. On top of the State DEC, officials from DEP, private philanthropic groups, as well as our entire United States Congressional delegation all of whom see the incredible promise in this project; Governor Cuomo has included \$2 million dollars in this year's budget to help launch this transformational project for our entire region.

In addition to this exciting project, my administration has an aggressive agenda that continues to move Ulster County forward while focusing on results. An agenda that clearly states that the choice must not be between fiscal responsibility or social responsibility; the goal should be to deliver both, because at the heart of the matter, as a community, our compassion runs deep.

We collectively raise and spend millions of dollars a year offering a hand up to those among us who are most in need. What we all understand is that these are our neighbors, and being an American means caring for your neighbor.

We all gladly participate because somewhere deep inside, we realize we are all just a few bad breaks from needing that same kind of help ourselves.

And because we care so much, there is one thing that infuriates us all and that is when we hear stories of people trying to "game" the system; taking benefits they are not entitled to. Every stolen taxpayer dollar is money that can not go to help someone truly in need, and to add insult to injury, it also drives up taxes for the very people trying to help.

It is stealing and we will not stand for it. So today, in addition to our current efforts, we are launching an aggressive DSS Anti-Fraud Waste and Abuse initiative. We will

partner with the District Attorney and law enforcement to strengthen the current, hard working DSS Special Investigations Unit.

On the front end there will be a “zero tolerance” education program to make it clear that we are checking. We will also work to improve permissible information sharing between DSS and Law Enforcement to increase successful prosecutions of welfare fraud. And to further strengthen our ability to catch these violators, we are adding a team of highly specialized forensic accountants to the system.

And in a unique, ironic and very fitting twist much of this initiative will be paid for using the \$158,000 of restitution funds from the well publicized SUNOCO Food Stamp fraud arrests.

As always, we will gladly provide care for people in need with compassion and respect; but with today’s initiative, What we are saying to any criminal in Ulster County trying to abuse the system is, “If we catch you, we will prosecute you, and if you are trying to defraud the system, I’m happy to say your schemes just got an awful lot harder.”

When asked why my Administration is so focused on fiscally responsibility the answer is always, to protect taxpayers and to make sure we have enough money to properly support essential, but non mandated programs. Programs like Domestic Violence prevention.

Because when you see the consequences of domestic violence the way that law enforcement, or Cathy Welby-Moretti from our Domestic Violence Prevention Unit, sees them, then you too will see the very real and practical reason why it is so important for County government to be fiscally responsible. It is so we can save enough money to keep these valuable programs alive.

One of the other areas I am proud to bring attention to is our proactive “anti-bullying” efforts in our schools. Whether it is intimidation, physical bullying or now even cyber bullying, we understand the deep societal impact of bullying. Each of us has been affected by the troubling stories of suicides and emotional scarring.

My Administration has been at the forefront, with partners like school officials, law enforcement, mental health professionals, members of the faith-based community, LGBTQ, and so many others; not only to raise awareness, but more importantly, to provide “real world” tools for our children who are being bullied. There is help here in Ulster County, and we are working together to make sure victims know exactly how to get it.

And so I am pleased to say that this week is our third annual “No Name Calling Week” in Ulster County. I want to thank each and every one of the schools for their participation. Working together we can make a huge difference in the lives of our children.

As a government, I believe we also have a fundamental obligation to care for those who have served our country; and to acknowledge the reality that some of our heroes are experiencing huge difficulties. For these veterans, our veterans in need, after the parades are over and the patriotic speeches are done, the troubles adjusting to civilian life are just beginning. These are the Veterans who fought for our freedom and now face enormous challenges, like substance abuse, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression or other serious mental health issues.

As a nation, we can not, should not, must not and, in Ulster County will not, ask them to do this alone. We have an obligation to show our appreciation for their service with meaningful actions. I believe that is what being patriotic is really all about.

This is not just a problem facing other parts of our nation. You can imagine my dismay when I learned that some our own Ulster County veterans were actually sleeping in the streets suffering from the same challenges. And what made this news even worse, was when I was told that at the County level, it was virtually impossible to deliver real solutions. There was no money to fund an appropriate answer to this complicated problem.

As an American I found that unacceptable and I knew you would too. And so we designed an entirely new solution, from the ground up.

We identified a state-owned former group home that was standing vacant. This home could be repurposed, and become a single location where our Veterans in need could both live in high quality, transitional housing and receive the services they so desperately need.

The home overlooks the Hudson River and is right next door to a park with a Veterans monument; it was perfect. The question then became how would we make this a reality and also fund the necessary renovations, upkeep and service delivery?

In the end, we made some difficult choices, and the Community College Board of Trustees made some difficult choices too. By moving to sell what was the Community College President's house we will now be able to fund this appropriate project for our Veterans in need. So for their selfless act, I want to personally thank President Don Katt and the entire Community College Board of Trustees.

When the Governor and State Legislature agreed to transfer that former group home to the County, the project was brought even closer to fruition; and our goal is to now get this home for our homeless Veterans open in 2013.

As we do, I want to say a sincere thank you to the veterans' groups for their immediate commitments to help. In fact, I am not afraid to say I was moved to tears when I was informed that a veteran was already mowing the lawn and trimming the bushes, before we even closed the deal. So to our service men in need, this is your

house; and on behalf of the 183,000 residents of Ulster County I am proud to say, once and for all, welcome home.

I am confident we can get this Veteran's Home project done because of what I am about to tell you. As you know, I believe we must be a strong and clear voice for those most in need. What I am going to talk about right now is a very difficult subject and as a parent, I find it deeply troubling.

But that said, it also speaks to the very heart of what my administration and County government itself is all about; it is about people. You see, in our community, just like every other throughout the world, there are crimes that we all find reprehensible, and the worst of all of these are the crimes against children.

In the past when there was a crime against a child, the unimaginable truth was the very process of investigating and prosecuting the crime was likely to cause further trauma to the victim.

There was the need for a medical examination, an interview with the police, and discussions with prosecutors and counselors, with all of this taking place in different locations.

Simply put, even though the professionals were well trained and deeply compassionate, the mere fact that victims had to experience hospital exam rooms and police stations, prosecutor's offices and counselor's offices, the process itself was insensitive and far less than ideal.

But you know what separates Ulster County from so many other places? It is our people. People who dream of something better even in the worst of situations. People like Barbara Sorkin, the Deputy Commissioner of Social Services, and her team. They dreamed of creating a single location where the necessary work could be done, but where child victims would not be further victimized; a place that would foster the beginning of the healing process and a place where services could be brought directly to the children.

I am proud to say that working with partners like the District Attorney, Holly Carnright, Sheriff Van Blarcum, the State Police, the Children's Unit of DSS, the Crime Victim's Unit as well as the Church Communities, we have collectively- made this dream a reality.

In November, Ulster County opened our very own Child Advocacy Center. It is an amazing place. A place that, as a parent, I constantly pray is never needed, but a place that, as the County Executive, I thank god it exists for those children in need.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to introduce to you and publicly thank: DSS Commissioner Mike Iapoce, Deputy Commissioner Barbara Sorkin and members of their amazing team.

With respect to difficult situations and outstanding public servants, it is important to discuss the nightmare flooding situation that has affected many residents in Wawarsing. The problem was homeowners were suffering at the hands of the New York City DEP's leaking aqueduct system and could not get relief.

I have great admiration for these families. They showed perseverance and courage as they fought for their property, for their rights and for their loved ones, against the "mighty" DEP.

Their basements were flooded, wells were ruined and lives were turned upside down. After years of wrangling, finally some old flood dollars were repurposed by the State and the DEP reluctantly provided funds to help limit their liability, while having the State actually help pay for what was essentially a DEP created problem.

But there was a huge stumbling block, a major problem in getting relief to the people in need; neither the State nor the DEP wanted to do the hard work of administering a buyout program. Not only did they know the work would be complex, but they also knew the deep frustrations of the residents were going to be raw.

And even though it did not technically qualify as a county responsibility, as the County Executive, I believed we had a moral obligation. So I instructed my staff to step in, and do what others either could not or would not, and administer the buyout program and get these families out of harm's way.

Tonight I would like to take a moment and recognize the real people who are responsible for getting flood victims in Wawarsing out of harm's way; honest public servants like Art Snyder, Bea Havranek, Sue Plonski, Pam Longley, Dennis Doyle, and a long list of others. They are the real unsung heroes of Wawarsing.

Since 2012 was very much a year in which we rebuilt after Hurricane Irene, all while focusing on moving Ulster County forward, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to recognize the exemplary work done by our outstanding Emergency Management Personnel and our DPW personnel as well.

Following Hurricane Irene, even though we were very pleased with the efforts of everyone involved, we believed we could do even better; and that our citizens would benefit from the creation of an EOC or Emergency Operations Center.

Since 100 year weather events unfortunately, seem to be happening every two years or so now, I want to say thank you to the members of our EOC for working day and night, and functioning like a well-oiled machine during Superstorm Sandy. In addition to many of their rolls as first responders, members of the team provided valuable assistance, coordination and data to help communities throughout Ulster County. And for those communities up and down the Hudson River, the EOC

provided advance warning and GIS mapping of precisely where the record setting 9 1/2 feet storm surge would go. This enabled first responders everywhere to get people out of harm's way. So a special thank you to the entire team.

In government, like everywhere else, we often talk about doing more with less. After Hurricane Irene, and with 24 percent less staffing, the DPW re-built all of the damaged infrastructure in Ulster County, ahead of schedule and under budget; in addition to their regular work. That is a testament not only to a committed workforce, but it is a great example of accomplishing more with less.

Among their countless projects, their work included: Phoenicia. Completing the Bridge St. Bridge, not only ahead of schedule and under budget, it was completed well ahead of schedule and in time to provide a major economic boost to Phoenicia by improving access for 7000 people attending this years "Festival of the Voice" event. The bridge crew embraced my administration's vision that they too were part of our economic development efforts; and their results speak for themselves.

So you see, when it came time to name a new bridge; a bridge we needed to build from scratch since Hurricane Irene ripped a 35 foot deep and 50 foot across canyon in County Route 47 in Shandaken, I decided it would not be named after yet another politician. But instead, we would honor the hard working men and women of the DPW, honor the entire workforce who roll up their sleeves every day and get things done.

It was at their request, that we named it after a beloved member of the DPW team. And so, the people of Ulster County now have the Steven F. Fisher Memorial Bridge. Steve was a wonderful man who passed away from a tragic illness far too soon. At the young age of 44, he left a loving wife, a young son, a wonderful family and an entire department who both loved him and respected him; and now miss him. They are an amazing group of people.

Now, in conclusion, I would like to share with you an experience I had. I ask that you think back to where you were the day after Hurricane Irene. There was devastation throughout many parts of our County. Houses had been ripped off their foundations, roads and bridges had been swept away and countless people's lives had been turned completely upside down.

As I flew over our magnificent County to better survey the damage and deploy our resources, it looked from the air, like we had been bombed.

Later that day, I overheard a New York reporter here on assignment, say to a cameraman, "I don't think this place can ever be rebuilt." When I heard that I told him, "You don't know the people of Ulster County very well. You don't know the heart and the perseverance of the people that I know." You see, what he didn't know was that Ulster County is the kind of place where the impossible is possible.

They said it was impossible to transition a County Nursing Home in New York State, but together we did. They said it was impossible to deliver a tax cut during difficult financial times, but together we did.

They said it was impossible to solve the “safety net” gridlock, but together we did. And they said it was impossible to improve access to higher education while saving taxpayers millions, but with S.T.R.I.V.E. we will.

And so when they said we could not rebuild after Hurricane Irene, I always knew that we would.

I was born and raised here and I know exactly how amazing the people of Ulster County are. I know for a fact, that this is a place where the impossible is possible. It is the kind of place that can take on two hurricanes, a tropical storm, record storm surges, and an earthquake; plus the toughest national economy since the Great Depression and still come out fighting.

And so, my fellow Ulster County residents, I ask that you join me as we work to build a better Ulster County. Yes, we will face challenges but the state of the County for Ulster County is strong and getting stronger; and it is built on a foundation of progress.

Regardless of any of the challenges before us, we hold dear to the understanding that we are privileged to live in the greatest nation on the face of this earth. If we are to fulfill the promise of our forefathers, we must remember that our Country is precious, and our county is precious; but most importantly, that they are made up of people.

So when asked who my Administration is here to serve, the answer is clear; it is about each and every one of you, because it is your government.

It is about children and adults, it is about families and seniors, it is about taxpayers and small business owners, and it is about now and it is about the future. Ultimately, it is about making Ulster County the finest place anywhere to live, work and raise a family. Ladies and gentlemen, I know for a fact that our finest days are yet to come. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.