

# Erie County Taxpayer Newsletter



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## From County Executive Chris Collins



There have been some changes on the 16th floor of the Rath Building this past month. Six Sigma Director Al Hammonds replaced Mark Davis as Deputy County Executive earlier this month.

Mark leaves county government after successfully implementing a business focus throughout the County. He initiated a thorough review of all county contracts and spearheaded the administration's new cell phone and take home vehicle policies.

Al is a Six Sigma Master Black Belt and has mastered Six Sigma techniques throughout his career. It has always been my goal to appoint a Six Sigma Black Belt to the position of Deputy County Executive. Al's appointment reflects my confidence not only in his abilities, but my commitment to making Six Sigma a centerpiece of my administration.

## Contact the County Executive

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## Six Sigma Update

The Six Sigma program is currently working on twelve different initiatives throughout the County under the direction of Deputy County Executive Al Hammonds. Stan Jemiolo, Deputy Commissioner of the Parks Department and a Six Sigma Green Belt, is currently managing one of these projects. Jemiolo is working with the Parks Department's Equipment Management Division to reduce the time and money that is spent on the repair and maintenance of Parks Department equipment.

Based on data that has been recorded, the greatest opportunities for improvement are in the areas of inventory control, preventative maintenance, and outsourcing. By re-engineering the processes that are currently used as well as the existing decision making criteria, Jemiolo and his team are on track to save the County \$95,000 when the project is completed.

## Fire Training Facility to Be Upgraded

The landscape at Erie County's Emergency Services Training and Operations Center in Cheektowaga will soon be changing drastically. As part of a three year capital project, the concrete fire training buildings which were built in the early 1970's will be replaced with a state-of-the-art structural steel and metal clad fire training facility.

The new facility will provide the most realistic and safest fire training available to the County's 5,000+ firefighters while reducing maintenance and operating costs.

Demolition of the old facilities and construction of the new facility is planned to start later this year and will be put to the test as soon as it is ready.

## Erie County Creates DWI Crash Response Team

Erie County has launched an initiative which will provide expert investigation at serious injury and fatal DWI crashes. A group of specially trained and equipped officers from local, state, and county police agencies have joined forces to create Erie County's DWI Crash Response Team (CRT). The CRT will process crash scenes and gather evidence to help attorneys successfully prosecute DWI offenders.

Through a cost effective, mutual aid system, incident ready personnel and equipment can be requested by any police agency investigating a crash.

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## Six Sigma Green Belt Training Complete

The first wave of Six Sigma Green Belt Training in Erie County is now complete. Nine Erie County employees have received 24 hours of classroom training, and passed their exams. The test, which is based on Six Sigma methodology, takes four hours to complete. The employees will now complete their Six Sigma projects aimed at reducing waste and increasing efficiency within Erie County. October is the target date for the completion of all twelve projects, ending the County's first wave of Green Belt Certification.

Congratulations to the following individuals who are completing their Green Belt Training:

- Amy Rockwood – Department of Health  
Family Planning Benefit Program Enrollement
- Gary Zawodzinski – Department of Public Works  
Fleet Management and Equipment Repairs
- Jim Hart – Parks Department  
Parks Preparedness and Readiness
- Kevin Madoo – Department of Public Works  
Buildings & Grounds Overtime Reduction
- Marie Morilus-Black – Mental Health  
Interdepartmental Children System of Care Reducing the Number of Children Placed in Residential Treatment Centers
- Peter Curtis – Mental Health  
Managing CPL 730 Bed Day Use
- Shawn Hughes – Department of Social Services  
Department of Social Services Overtime Reduction
- Stan Jemiolo – Parks Department  
Management of Equipment, Repairs and Mechanics Utilization
- Tim Konicki – Department of Social Services  
Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Case Building Backlog

## EMS Division Scores Well Statewide

In July of 2008 the results of a Technical Assistance Review (TAR) by the New York State Department of Health, Division of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were released. Erie County's Emergency Medical Service's SNS Unit received an impressive score of 91%. This success story can be attributed to the continuing collaborative efforts of the Health Department, Emergency Services, state agencies, the private sector, and local towns and villages. The hard work and dedication of Health Department and Emergency Services staff assigned to this project has positioned the county as a national leader in disaster planning.

The scoring of all counties and states nationwide will be released for public scrutiny in a few months. Congress is expected to base future funding for communities on the overall performance and this review. Scoring for this TAR was based on key preparedness benchmarks, including but not limited to: overall preparedness; developing an SNS plan; management of SNS and command and control; tactical communication; public information and communication; security; regional/local distribution site; controlling inventory; dispensing prophylaxis; and treatment center coordination.

## DPW Working Hard this Construction Season

Since early spring, the Department of Public Works Division of Highways, with the assistance of various Town Highway Departments and the New York State Department of Transportation, has completed numerous road projects in Erie County. Erie County would like to thank the towns for their much appreciated regional effort in helping with mowing, equipment and sweeping some of our roads. Assistance from NYSDOT and the use of the message boards is also appreciated.



Some of the projects that have been completed so far this season are:

- Ditching 70,418 feet and grading 99,222 feet on Trevett, Morse, Foote, Allen, Pratham and Sibley roads with the help of funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Moving Zoar Valley road by 40 feet off its original road bed and reconstructing 300 feet to open the road.
- Milling and paving 1.5 miles between Bergtold Rd. and Gunnville Rd. in the Town of Clarence and 1.4 miles on Central Ave. in the Town of Lancaster.
- Preparing for paving on Wolcott Rd. in the Town of Clarence by ditching 1.5 miles and installing 1 mile of pipe. Replacing numerous culverts and driveway pipes through Erie County.

## Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Employees Keeping Busy

Business at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) has been booming in recent months. Through June 2008, the use of free public access computers at B&ECPL branches increased more than 47% and circulation of library material has increased more than 5% from previous years. At the flagship Central Library, patron visits have increased 19% since this time last year. Additionally, library patrons are saving gas by using the Library's request system more frequently to have books and other library material delivered to the library closest to their home. Through June, a total of 30,868 boxes of library materials were shipped between facilities, a 16% increase since last year.

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## Director of Veterans Services to Speak in Albany

Erie County's Director of Veterans Services Patrick Welch will be giving two presentations to the National Alliance on Mental Illness – New York State Group in Albany on Saturday, November 15, 2008. The program Welch will give is titled Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Warrior, the Family and Beyond.

The program will discuss the affects of PTSD on the military family in three phases:

- How the warrior handles stress while they are deployed in a combat zone and how the family copes at home.
- When they return home and face the challenges of re-integration with their family and the civilian world.
- What are the long term consequences?

The conference attracts 300 family members and consumers from 56 NAMI affiliates across the State of New York with speakers ranging from scientists to activists.

*DWI cont'd from pg. 1*

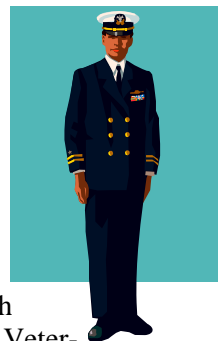
The initiative also includes expanding the capacity of local agencies with funding for Total Station equipment and professional development of DWI crash investigators. The mission of the CRT is to deliver , comprehensive investigations of DWI crashes regardless of where they occur.

The CRT will function at no cost to Erie County taxpayers. The County's STOP-DWI Office, a Division of Central Police Services, collects fines paid by convicted DWI offenders and uses them to fund efforts, like the CRT, that are designed to prevent the tragic consequences of drunken driving.

## Veterans Services Offering Monthly Newsletter

The Erie County Department of Veterans Services is now providing a newsletter to all area military veterans. The purpose of the newsletter is to make sure information gets to the local veteran community and provides a communication source for them. The monthly newsletter features articles on benefits, jobs, education and business opportunities.

This month's newsletter features a locally owned veteran business as well as an article on Horizon Health Services, a nonprofit affiliate of the Veterans Service Office. For more information, or to sign up to receive the newsletter, please contact the Erie County Veterans Service office at 858-6363.



## Erie County Veterans Office and Senior Services Team Up

Beginning in August, the Erie County Veterans Services Office will be participating with the Erie County Senior Services Department in a series of outreach programs throughout the county. This program will help ensure that all of our local seniors are aware of the many benefits that may be available to them.

The August programs will be held on the following days:



**Friday August 15, 2008**  
City of Tonawanda Senior Center  
35 Main St., Tonawanda, NY  
12:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Friday August 29, 2008**  
Tosh Collins Senior Center  
35 Cazenovia St., Buffalo, NY  
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



Card holders are also using the Library's digital download service to browse the 1,200 titles currently available, as well as check-out audio books for use on their home computer or mp3 player. In the first six months of 2008, almost 9,000 titles have been electronically borrowed.

### Meet the Author Series Continues

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has teamed up with WBFO 88.7 to present a lunchtime Meet the Author series. The next installment, which is scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup> at Noon in Fables Café at the Central Library, will feature author Gustav Niebuhr's new book, "Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Inter-faith Understanding in America."

The Meet the Author series features contemporary writers and interesting books for open, thoughtful discussion. Each session features a reading from the author, an exchange with the host, and questions from the audience. Every Meet the Author event is free, but seating is limited, so please arrive early. For more information visit the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library website at [www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org).

### Erie County Improving Parks and Beaches



Erie County has brand new playground sets that have been in storage since their purchase in 2004. County employees are now removing old playground equipment and replacing them with the new ones from storage. New playground sets will be installed at Spraguebrook Park, Como Lake Park, and Ellicott Creek Park throughout the rest of the month.

The Parks Department is currently refurbishing damaged shelters within the parks system. Shelters will be refurbished at Como Lake Park and also on the Island at Ellicott Creek Park. For more information on renting a shelter, please visit <http://www.erie.gov/parks/index.asp> or call 858-8355.

The County has also been pleased to re-open Wendt and Bennett Beaches. Beachgoers have been able to enjoy the Lake seven days a week this year. Beaches will remain open until September 1, 2008.

### Elma Meadows Shelter Updated

The Erie County Parks Department staff has spent the past month rebuilding Shelter #4 at Elma Meadows. They have replaced the roof, reinforced the support columns, poured a new concrete floor, and added new grills to the site. This shelter has electricity and water and is available for rent for \$50.00 per day. There is also a playground and restrooms nearby.

To rent Shelter #4 at Elma Meadows, please call the Erie County Parks Department at 858-8355.



### Taxpayers Reserving Park Shelters Online

The online pilot program for the Erie County Parks Department shelter reservation system has completed its first month. Three county parks, Akron Falls, Chestnut Ridge, and Ellicott Creek, are participating in the trial on Erie County's website.

Nearly 200 people requested information on reserving a shelter at Akron Falls, Chestnut Ridge or Ellicott Creek Parks. Of these requests, nearly 100 people ended up making online reservations. Forty-seven credit card payments were made on the Parks Department website, earning the department \$2,775 in shelter rental revenue.

The online parks reservations program is a Six Sigma initiative created to better serve Erie County taxpayers which was created this spring. In order to increase customer satisfaction, the Parks Department created this new online reservation system.

To make an online reservations for Akron Falls, Chestnut Ridge, or Ellicott Creek Parks, please visit the Parks Department website at [http://www.erie.gov/parks/shelter\\_reservations.asp](http://www.erie.gov/parks/shelter_reservations.asp)