

---

**BROOME COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION  
THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2001**

The Legislature convened at 4:02 p.m. with a call to order by the Chair, Daniel A. Schofield. The Clerk, Louis P. Augustini, read the fire exit announcement and called the Attendance Roll, Present-16, Absent-3 (Burger, Kolba, Whalen).

The Chair, Mr. Schofield, led the members of the Legislature in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**WRITTEN OR ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Chairman Schofield introduced County Executive Jeffrey P. Kraham presenting the State of the County Address for 2001.

Chairman Schofield, Respected Members of the Legislature and Distinguished Guests.

We are witnessing a renewed energy in Broome County. A general feeling that things are going well and that we are moving in the right direction. I am particularly gratified that last November the voters of Broome County expressed confidence in my leadership by re-electing me by the largest margins in County history.

Our community spirit is strong. This is evident by the outstanding success of the Empire State Games last summer...the excitement surrounding the Grand Opening of the new Binghamton Regional Airport and the new Broome County Public Library.

After hearing from many people that the Spiedie Fest should return to Otsiningo Park, where it began more than twenty years ago, I felt confident that now was the time to bring it home. We are already preparing for this year's event. It will take quite a bit of work, but I am confident that it will be a huge success.

This summer, Broome County will host the "I Love New York Summer Festival". With this designation, the State will pump thousands of dollars into promoting our summer attractions throughout the country. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase our community that has so much to offer.

There are many signs that our economy is strong. Private sector job growth continues to spread throughout all sectors of the economy, with significant gains in manufacturing, construction and engineering. Over the last two years we have added more than 4,000 new jobs to the economy. I am very proud to say that right now we have the highest number of people working since 1991. I assure you these numbers will continue to grow as IBM, L-3 Communications, Lockheed Martin and the NLX Corporation, our most recent success story, are each looking to add hundreds of well paid employees to our workforce.

Our Planning Department reports that our residential and non-residential permits issued last year remains among the highest levels since the early 1990's. This represents a long-term investment in our community.

By adopting a common sense approach, we have laid the foundation for growth including lower taxes, improved infrastructure and controlling the costs of running County government. Together we have made great strides to improve the quality of life for the people of Broome County. We have consistently lowered property taxes so that they are now the lowest in 11 years. I am especially pleased that for almost one year now, Broome County has been the largest Upstate tax-free zone for sales tax on clothing.

We completed construction on a dynamic new airport terminal, without the use of local tax dollars. This was successful because of our strong partnership with Senator Tom Libous and Governor Pataki. We are working hard to improve service at the Binghamton Regional Airport to meet the needs of our local businesses. I am pleased to announce today a \$91 one-way walk-up fare from Continental Connection for travel anytime on the three daily flights from Binghamton to

---

JFK Airport. Next week, I expect to be announcing additional air service to a new city at discounted fares. We are doing all we can to make the Binghamton Regional Airport truly our "gateway to the world."

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the theme of my message to you today...building upon the successes that we have achieved together, joining as a community to preserve our high quality of life, and working hand-in-hand with our local businesses to bring more jobs and opportunities to the people of Broome County.

It is my distinct pleasure to stand before you today to present the State of the County and to proclaim that our economy and our communities are getting stronger every day.

I have always tried to build upon our community's assets. A *small town* where you can put in a full day of work and still have time to make your son or daughter's soccer or baseball game. A leader in *high tech* industry and a rich heritage in electronics manufacturing and simulation. And a *world class* community with outstanding schools, numerous cultural and recreational activities and safe neighborhoods.

By working together with this honorable body, we have made significant progress in preserving our high quality of life. The successes that I speak of could not be achieved without our willingness to work together. I want to thank the members of the Legislature for continuing their efforts to make Broome County a great place to live and to work. Ladies and gentlemen, please help me in recognizing your Broome County Legislature.

There is another very important group that I would like to thank today. No matter what the ideas or the plans are, without a solid base of employees who believe in what they are doing, nothing will get done. We have an exemplary workforce of Broome County employees. I am continually impressed by their commitment to serving the public. I would like to a few examples of the outstanding work that is done here in Broome County.

My first example was brought to light last year when our Health Department was pressed into action on an important public health issue. I am sure that all of you sitting here today now know more about the West Nile Virus than you ever thought possible. Our Health Department public education team led by Jan Chytilo worked diligently with me to keep the public accurately informed on what steps to take to lower the risks of being infected by a mosquito carrying the West Nile strain. Jan also kept regular contact with health and environmental officials and because of her credibility, we were able to identify a lower-impact alternative to pesticide spraying. I would like to recognize Jan Chytilo for her hard work on this issue. Jan, would you please stand up and be recognized?

My long-time friend and colleague Ed Swart has taken bold steps to improving services in our Probation Department. Recognizing the need to coordinate planning efforts among our criminal justice departments, Ed is working to develop and define the position of and securing funding for a Criminal Justice Coordinator for Broome County. This individual would work collaboratively with every law enforcement agency, the district attorney, public defender and probation department to improve the collective agencies' ability to work together as a "system." Based on other jurisdictions that have adopted such a position, we expect to see a substantial increase in grant funds and cost savings through efficiencies achieved through the effort of the Coordinator. We anticipate moving forward with this project and hiring an individual for the Criminal Justice Coordinator position in the next few months.

Additionally through Ed's efforts, Broome County has been selected by the State Division of Parole's Justice System Assistance Team to do a study that would promote the development of more efficient and cost-effective criminal justice sanctions and punishments. I want to recognize Ed Swart for his efforts in coordinating and developing these projects and for his 35 years of outstanding service to Broome County. Ed, would you please stand up and be recognized.

Recently, I was honored to accept the Governor's Award for the best municipal recycling program in the State. We have had great success in improving the operations at the Nanticoke landfill and have become a model community because of our efforts. Part of this success included hiring an extremely knowledgeable individual to serve as Deputy Commissioner of Public Works for Solid Waste. We were able to lure Kevin Roche from Arizona to head up our

---

Solid Waste Division. Kevin is the perfect example of the highly skilled individuals that I intend to bring back to our community. Kevin is originally from Rochester and was missing the Northeast and I am glad that we were able to give him the opportunity to move back here. I would like to once again welcome Kevin and thank him for joining our outstanding Public Works team.

There are many other department heads and employees that I would like to thank for doing an exceptional job. As an appendix to your copy of the State of the County, you will find an extensive list of accomplishments.

Last year I outlined a plan to consolidate the economic development efforts throughout Broome County. This strategy allows us to more effectively meet the rapidly changing needs of our local businesses. The relocation of the IDA to these chambers has significantly improved communications and has simplified the process of attracting new businesses to the region. It has also laid the groundwork for an exciting new opportunity.

Today, I am pleased to announce that Broome County, in partnership with New York State, Senator Libous and Binghamton University are taking bold steps to develop a business park system to strategically plan our community's future growth. Binghamton University is currently pursuing the development of an advanced bio-technologies complex to expand their research and development efforts. By partnering with the University, Broome County will serve as a magnet for new and emerging bio-technology firms. In order to do this, I am proposing the development of a Business Park System that will strengthen the link between the University and our community by speeding the transfer of new technologies to our bio-tech park. We have already identified more than a dozen companies that have expressed willingness to locate in Broome County.

But there is more to the story...

Our Business Park System would expand to other industries as well. The Southern Tier has one of the highest concentrations of electronics manufacturing firms in the nation. We have a great need to be able to support the expansion of existing elec-tech firms and at the same time attract new synergistic high-tech firms to the region. The development of a business park system will make it possible for this to happen. It will also enable the County to assist with the general development needs of our existing businesses and the communities that they are located in.

The idea behind the development of a Business Park System is simple. There are very few sites with significant acreage where a large-scale business park could be located. For this reason, smaller parks would be created in a number of different locations giving us a unique opportunity to classify existing properties into categories that represent their highest and best use. Individually these parks would not be large enough to fulfill the demands of a typical corporate park, but by integrating them into a park system they will better serve the needs of new businesses and the community as a whole.

This initiative will be a unique partnership of government, business and our educational institutions. The development of a business park system would enable us to fully integrate underutilized and brownfield sites such as the Glendale Technology Park, the former Anitec site and the Endicott Johnson properties, to name a few. It will also assist us in identifying several large rural tracts of land with access to our excellent transportation system. We anticipate that this initiative will create more than 10,000 high-paying quality jobs with more than \$1 billion in combined private and public sector investment in our community over the next ten years.

There is another very important piece to the economic development puzzle. While job creation continues to be a top priority, we must also recognize our growing workforce development needs. We must attract a highly skilled and diversified workforce to our community. This will prevent our businesses from simply shuffling employees between each other. Secondly, we need to help individuals get the skills training that they need to attain better, higher paying jobs.

With our continued private sector job growth, our local businesses will require additional help in the recruitment, retention and training of employees. It is essential that the public sector work side-by-side with business to that end. By having a greater presence in workforce development, we will continue to broaden and stabilize our industry base.

---

To do this, Broome County has partnered with Tioga County to form the Broome-Tioga Workforce Development System. This partnership is just one of the many ways that I intend to reach out to neighboring counties to develop a stronger Southern Tier. In January of this year, I asked Patrick Doyle to serve as the Executive Director of the System. Patrick is working with business and government leaders in Broome and Tioga counties as well as forming partnerships with key community organizations including BCC and BOCES, The Broome Chamber and the School-to-Careers Partnership to name a few. The Board is currently in the process of identifying what industries have critical skill shortages and which industries should be targeted with public resources. In just a few months time, they have submitted several grant applications for several state and federal education and training initiatives. These efforts represent a strong commitment to providing quality services to help all residents of the County to find good jobs, plan careers and access services to improve their skills.

The future growth of our community depends not only on economic development and jobs, but also on quality community development. Through Governor Pataki's insight the Quality Communities Program was established to link economic growth and prosperity with environmental protection and quality of life issues. The core principles of its program include the revitalization of existing communities and the promotion of livable neighborhoods. Additionally, sustainable development and improved intermunicipal cooperation guide development of the program. Last year Broome County received the largest grant awarded through the New York State Quality Communities Demonstration Program. This grant will be used to initiate the first countywide and community-led comprehensive plan in Broome County since the 1970's.

This project will be a collaborative effort between the Broome County planning department and several community organizations. The project will be led by the newly formed Broome County Economic Development Council, headed by Broome Chamber President Alex DePersis. Through these efforts we will strengthen our public-private partnerships, work to promote the re-birth of our urban core areas and develop a plan for sustainable growth in our community. This effort will prove a valuable tool for our short-term and long-term economic development goals.

We are at the early stages of a growth spurt that this community has never experienced. It will require a seamless partnership of the public and private sector that is willing to step forward and invest in our booming future.

Thousands of new homes will need to be built and our sewage treatment capacity will have to be improved and expanded. We will have to continue the infrastructure improvements we began four years ago.

Broome County remains committed to improving and expanding upon our public safety programs and has taken many steps to ensure the safety and well being of our residents.

Last month, we successfully added the Town of Vestal into our Countywide Emergency Dispatching System and continue to work with the Village of Johnson City to bring their police dispatching on board. This consolidation has enabled our Emergency 911 dispatchers to respond to calls quickly and more efficiently. Our Emergency Services team has also expanded our Automatic External Defibrillation training to County departments, local police and fire agencies, and private corporations.

Since Sheriff David Harder took office, there has been a 39% reduction in jail overtime and a cost-savings of nearly \$400,000. Sheriff Harder has also increased the number of officers in the Special Investigations Unit. This increase saw its greatest impact last year – with a 30% increase in drug arrests. The increased presence of the Sheriff's department in drug enforcement sends a strong message that drugs are not welcome in our community and that criminal behavior will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Your support of the Sheriff's Department has helped make a huge difference in law enforcement in the County.

We are also working more aggressively to track welfare fraud. Through the successful "Operation Free Ride" our Broome County Security Department Investigators uncovered more than \$500,000 in fraudulent claims.

We will continue to improve and expand our public safety measures to keep Broome County a safe community. At the same time, it is equally important to expand our services to children, seniors and to the families that we serve.

---

We are seeing an alarming increase in the incidence of child poverty in our community. These children are not getting a good start in life because many of their basic needs are not being met. We know that children living in poverty are at a higher risk for dropping out of school, getting into trouble with the law and overall, having difficulty making the transition to becoming a productive member of our workforce. As a community, we must work together to try to eliminate the negative forces that place certain children at a disadvantage.

The Early Childhood Coalition, led by Deputy Executive for Human Services Tom Hoke, is an initiative designed to maximize the effectiveness of our relationship with young children and their families. Members of the Coalition include the Broome County Health Department, the United Way, Partnership 2000, Broome County schools and both Lourdes and UHS hospitals. The Coalition is working to develop a comprehensive strategy for preventing child abuse and neglect and enabling children to gain a healthy start in life. They are also in the process of developing programs to promote positive parenting skills, to improve family involvement and to ensure the healthy development of prenatal and young children. The Coalition will be the lead agency in the community that will work to ensure that all children get a chance at a happy and healthy life.

Preserving the integrity of the family in our community is an essential component of quality community development. This also includes expanding and improving our services to seniors.

Last year we held a grand opening of the Eastern Broome Senior Community Center in Harpursville, which culminated four years of effort to provide a facility that will enhance services offered to our seniors in the rural eastern region of the county. This year we anticipate opening a new Senior Center in Endicott. We also hope to be breaking ground soon at the Whitney Point Senior Center, which will better serve our seniors in the northern, rural parts of the county. We are working hard to address the growing needs of our seniors to see that their 'golden years' are some of the best years of their lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, the State of Broome County is strong because of our outstanding workforce of dedicated public servants, our commitment to teamwork and our rich heritage of ingenuity and innovation.

By working together, we will turn any challenge into opportunity and every opportunity into success.

Thank you.

Mr. O'Day made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Wike. **Motion to adjourn carried.** Ayes-16, Absent-3 (Burger, Kolba, Whalen). The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

---

This page intentionally left blank.

---