



News From

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Monroe County Executive

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THE 2013 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS AS DELIVERED BY MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MAGGIE BROOKS

*Thursday, May 23rd, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.
Eastman Business Park, Colonial Dining Room*

Good Evening.

As a proud West Webster resident I am grateful to the police and fire representatives from my town that led us in the salute to our nation's flag this evening. Thank you to Lieutenant Dennis Kohlmeier of the Webster Police Department and Assistant Chief Vince Pratt of the West Webster Fire Department for leading us in the Pledge, and the members of the Webster Police Department and West Webster Fire Department who presented the colors in the Joint Honor Guard.

Last Christmas Eve, the lives of many in the town "where life is worth living" were changed forever.

We saw the worst of mankind in the cowardly actions of one man. We saw the best of humanity in the outpouring of love and support that came from our community, our nation, and around the world.

Today, families on Lake Road are working to rebuild their homes. And families who lost loved ones are working to rebuild their lives. Lieutenant Mike Chiapperini was a West Webster Fire Fighter and a proud member of the Webster Police Department. Tomasz Kaczowka, 19 years old, was a West Webster Fire Fighter and 911 Dispatcher.

Both men answered the call of duty that day and were killed in service to this community. Greece Officer John Ritter, and firefighters Ted Scardino and Joseph Hofstetter, also answered the call that day and their wounds continue to heal.

All of these men are heroes. And their actions on that tragic day truly are a reflection of the daily contributions of Monroe County's first responders. They risk their lives and face unparalleled dangers every time they report for duty. They put service above self.

Tonight, let's take a moment to offer our thoughts and prayers to these incredible men and women who serve in Webster, as well as those who serve throughout our County. I'd like to ask Lieutenant Dennis Kohlmeier and Assistant Chief Vince Pratt to stand to be recognized.

I'd also like to recognize the brave men and women in our armed forces, who have stepped up to serve our country - especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice this past year. They are:

US Army Private First Class Theodore Matthew Glende, US Army Specialist Raliek Quinter "Roke" Boswell, US Army Sergeant First Class Daniel Thomas Metcalfe, US Army Staff Sergeant Nicholas John Reid, and US Army Private First Class Grant Walker Wise.

Please join me in a moment of silence to honor our community's fallen heroes.

Special thanks tonight to Mayor Tom Richards, Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn, County Clerk Cheryl Dinolfo, and District Attorney Sandra Doorley for attending.

To Legislature President Jeff Adair, Majority Leader Steve Tucciarello, Minority Leader Carrie Andrews, and all County lawmakers in attendance - I started my tenure in government as a County Legislator. I recognize and appreciate the important work you do and I thank you for your partnership.

To all of our government leaders at the town, village, city, and school district level here tonight, thank you for the work you do to put taxpayers first in Monroe County.

John LiDestri, many thanks for those kind words of introduction. John LiDestri has demonstrated his commitment to this community in so many ways. His confidence in the local economy has resulted in the growth and expansion of his company. His investments have produced hundreds of local jobs and have enhanced quality of life in our community.

LiDestri Foods has become one of the nation's premier food and beverage manufacturers. Chances are you have one of LiDestri's many products in your home - maybe a Francesco Rinaldi sauce, or a Sante Fe salsa, or a bottle of LiDestri Sangria.

The company is headquartered in Fairport and manufactures there and in three other States. But in October of 2009, John LiDestri made a decision to purchase a former Kodak building and move operations from Dundee, New York and Pennsauken, New Jersey to their new Rochester home. John LiDestri has since invested over \$50,000,000 creating a state of the art sauce plant and spirits business here.

John is a dedicated and driven leader and never one to slow down. Soon, LiDestri Foods will be purchasing even more space from Kodak - this time, a nearly 400,000 square foot facility. The expansion will give the company more operational space and will pave the way for the creation of a new Center for Excellence, a corporate test kitchen to create new and exciting products.

LiDestri Foods has invested nearly \$70,000,000 in the local economy and his investments sustain more than 650 local jobs.

John - in today's global economy, successful companies like yours have the choice and ability to do business anywhere in the world. Thank you for choosing Rochester.

There's a reason we chose to highlight the success of LiDestri Foods and a reason we chose this backdrop for our State of the County speech. Eastman Business Park, to me, represents our community's ongoing transformation from a big box image capital to a hub for innovation and technology.

Eastman Business Park is the largest and most diverse industrial park in the Northeast. The park is over 1,000 acres of land with 2,500,000 square feet of available manufacturing, laboratory, warehouse, and office space.

At the time when Eastman Kodak employed more than 65,000 workers and was our largest employer, the company filled this space and the park was a focal point for Kodak manufacturing operations. It was known as a "City within a City" and had its own on-site utilities, railroad, waste treatment, security, and emergency services.

We all know that Kodak is changing. It's a company with a different mission, a smaller workforce, and needs a smaller footprint. That means places like Eastman Business Park, which have served our economy well in the past, have become an opportunity for Rochester's economic future. This site has the infrastructure and assets needed to become one of the most effective incubators for economic growth not only in our County and region, but in the entire country.

Today, Eastman Business Park has opened its doors to new ideas and new business. The park's turn-key infrastructure is helping middle-stage technology companies accelerate their ideas from prototype to commercialization, keeping products and jobs in Rochester.

Today, there are 28 companies here. There are 6,500 people working in this park. Companies like Quintel, TrueSense Imaging, and Natcore Technology are making investments in this park. Some are here because of a past connection to Kodak. Others are here because of the access to this unique manufacturing space.

We all know that the Park is a work in progress. With Mayor Richards helping to lead the charge, the City and County are working closely with Governor Cuomo, our State delegation, and Eastman Kodak on the transformation of this space. The tenants here expect it and quite frankly they deserve it.

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council is fully invested in this effort. I'd like to thank co-chairs Joel Seligman and Danny Wegman.

Our economic development partners are fully invested and I'd like to thank Vinnie Esposito at Empire State Development, Mark Peterson at Greater Rochester Enterprise, and Sandy Parker at Rochester Business Alliance.

Several years ago, Monroe County Pure Waters worked with Kodak and took control of 15,000 feet of pipe, one pump station, and other infrastructure needed to provide sanitary

sewer service for nearly 500 acres of this property. By the end of 2013, we will add 13,000 more feet of pipe and two pump stations, adopting another 300 acres into the system.

Kodak's contributions to the project saved money for pure waters ratepayers. The utility upgrades will help Kodak as it continues to market this property to new business.

George Eastman had a vision for the Kodak company, but also for this community. He had a unique understanding that public entities and private institutions could do more in tandem than they ever could in isolation. That spirit of partnership was the foundation for many of Eastman's legacy projects.

I think he would be proud that the same spirit of partnership is guiding much of what we do to create and retain jobs in Monroe County today. There is no question that government can't do it alone.

Eastman Business Park is a place where some of our strongest private partners succeed each and every day.

Optimation is a one stop shop for engineering, automation, construction, and maintenance services. They specialize in providing all of the custom-made tools and machinery necessary to bring a major manufacturing project from concept, to prototype, into full-scale production.

Focused on meeting the needs of a very diverse industry, including aerospace, automotive, glass, and chemical applications, Optimation is home to many incredible engineers, designers, and skilled trades workers who produce important, cutting-edge products for clients around the world.

The company operates 150,000 square feet of fabrication, assembly, and experimentation space right here in Eastman Business Park.

ITT Exelis is a global supplier of innovative night vision, remote sensing, and navigation solutions for applications on the ground, in the air, and even in space. A few years ago, the company acquired Kodak's Remote Sensing Systems operation, and chose Rochester as a headquarters for its world-leading Space Systems Division.

Monroe County worked with ITT Exelis early on and the company created more than 750 local jobs. Recently the company expanded again. In fact, it relocated an entire manufacturing line from a plant in Massachusetts to its cutting-edge facility here at Eastman Business Park. The move brought \$50,000,000 in new private investment to this site.

LiDestri, Optimation and ITT Exellis have something in common. All have worked with Monroe County's most powerful economic development tool, COMIDA, to grow their investment in our community.

Before expanding, LiDestri Foods employed about 350 people. Since that time, LiDestri has nearly doubled its workforce. Optimization has nearly quadrupled its workforce growing from 90 people 350. And ITT Exelis has grown its local workforce from 600 employees to almost 1,200 employees.

We already know that John LiDestri is here with us tonight, but we are also fortunate to be joined by President John Pollock and Vice President Doug Dobson from Optimization and David Volkmuth, the Rochester Facilities and Site Manager with ITT Exelis. I'd like to ask them all to stand so we can thank them for their success and their confidence in Monroe County.

There are some who talk about the cost of COMIDA assistance. But make no mistake about it, COMIDA projects are an investment that bring our community great return. According to the New York State Comptroller, COMIDA continues to feature one of lowest cost-to-job-created ratios for county IDAs in the State.

But you don't have to take my word or the Comptroller's word for it. Let me share one of COMIDA's success stories.

GENESEE BREWERY VIDEO PLAYS

The Brewery project also demonstrates the sort of due-diligence that goes into each and every project that COMIDA approves. Four years ago, a clause was included to require repayment of incentives in the event of an ownership change.

In 2012, the Brewery's parent company did sell its rights to the facility, and COMIDA recaptured \$600,000 for local taxpayers.

But this public-private partnership also preserved an iconic local company, preserved a piece of Rochester history, and there are now 600 people working at that plant.

Rich Lozyniak, CEO at Genesee Brewery was unable to be here tonight, but I want to thank him for his ongoing commitment to the site and the community.

A vibrant City is critical to the overall health of our County. Since 2007, COMIDA projects have injected over \$600,000,000 into private investment in the City alone. Last year, 30% of all COMIDA projects were in Rochester.

Check out the newly-renovated Culver Road Armory.

CULVER ROAD ARMORY VIDEO PLAYS

It's an incredible success story. Let's welcome President Fred Rainaldi Sr. and Vice President Fred Rainaldi Jr. from the Armory and acknowledge the amazing transformation of a once dormant space.

Since 2004, our IDA has assisted more than 1,000 companies and projects, helping to create over 17,000 jobs and retain over 75,000 jobs. For the coming year, COMIDA will be using a series of documentary-style video profiles - including the two we just saw - to help show local and out-of-town employers why we are such a great place to set-up-shop or expand their operations.

Everyday COMIDA touches local companies that are having a national and even a global impact.

Rochester Optical Manufacturing makes eyeglass frames for the US military. Truesense Imaging produces nearly all the satellite and bird's eye view images you see on Google maps. Flower City Tissue Mills makes paper used by retailers including Neiman Marcus. Star of the West Flour company in Churchville produces much of the flour for Dunkin Donuts east of the Mississippi. Maidstone Coffee in Henrietta produces coffee for all Tim Hortons restaurants in the United States. McAlpin Industries produces metal parts for the Operation game that kids of all ages have enjoyed. And, Maximus is a Pittsford company that processes all the Medicare appeal claims in the country.

That's the short list, just a few examples of companies putting people to work in our community and putting Rochester on the map.

Judy Seil is our Director of Economic Development and is the face of business in Monroe County. Judy - thanks for all you do to promote our community as a world class place to do business.

Throughout our nation's history, men and women have put on the uniform of this country and gone off to fight in defense of our freedom. For some, the transition back to civilian life can sometimes be even more challenging than military service, especially if they don't have a job.

Government has a moral responsibility to help those who have served this country find gainful and rewarding employment when they return home. But government can't do it alone.

Helmets to Hardhats is a national, nonprofit program that connects National Guard, Reserve retired, and transitioning active-duty military service members with skilled-training and career opportunities in the construction industry. The program is designed to connect veterans to a job where they can put many of the skills they learned in the military to good use.

Thanks to the partnership of local building and construction trades organizations, Monroe County will be launching this program to help our veterans not just find a job, but establish a career. The trades organizations will administer the actual technical training and Monroe County will provide a \$1,500 bonus to the veteran upon certification. And, if a veteran already has certification and starts a job in that trade, they will receive a \$500 bonus.

I want to say a special thank you to Dave Young, President of the Rochester Building and Construction Trades Council, and Ken Warner, Executive Director of Unions and Businesses United in Construction, for their work to make this program a reality for our local heroes.

Monroe County is home to 50,000 veterans and our Veterans Service Agency works each and every day with community partners to protect their quality of life. VSA Director and US Army Veteran Laura Stradley has done much during her short tenure to increase the agencies efficiency and improve its effectiveness.

This year, the VSA launched a new branding and outreach campaign to ensure local veterans access to the benefits they have earned. In the last six months of 2012 alone, the VSA offered its services at more than 40 events throughout the County.

And because our Monroe County Veteran's Discount Card has been such a huge success, we will be expanding that program by providing on-the-spot Veteran's Discount Card processing at the VSA Office and at outreach events throughout our community. The card provides savings for veterans and their families who do business with participating retail companies and restaurants.

I'd like to thank Outreach Coordinator and Service Officer Ken Moore, and the entire VSA team for their service to those who have served us.

Public safety is government's most important responsibility and Monroe County is home to one of the finest public safety teams in the entire nation. Our team works on a daily basis with talented and professional partners in area law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies. The County never loses site of its core mission: to ensure that first responders are the best equipped and the best trained anywhere.

Long before other counties were talking about collaboration in public safety, Monroe County was leading the pack with best practices – embracing mutual aid, establishing a centralized 9-1-1 system, and building an under-one-roof training facility and emergency operations center.

In a time of heightened security awareness, new Federal requirements for Homeland Security, and shrinking resources at the local level, governments are being challenged to think out-of-the-box to develop innovative solutions to protect our citizens.

Monroe County is making great progress by revolutionizing the way first responders in our community communicate with each other. But government can't do it alone.

The events of September 11th, 2001 taught us a lot about the need for interoperability. In the past few years, our teams have been working with experts in the private sector to lay the groundwork for a system of technology and equipment upgrades that will provide first responders with the latest and most advanced communications capability now and in the future.

Last month, the County reached an important milestone in that project. On April 5th, the County took delivery of our new radio system from a local company, Harris RF. The new technologies include additional towers to increase our system's ability to reach all corners of Monroe County, and a cutting edge ability to route radio transmissions to their intended recipients while using fewer frequencies.

As the system comes fully online, we will continue to add users. By the end of 2013, we will have added all County vehicles in our Public Service sector, including parks, transportation and environmental services. These departments will benefit from better communications at a lower cost.

With strong support from the Monroe County Legislature, the County has been able to implement an innovative public-private model that incorporates the efficiency of the private sector with the accountability demanded of government. The Monroe Safety and Security Systems Local Development Corporation – or M3S LDC for short – will save taxpayers money and ensure that every first responder in Monroe County will be able to communicate with one another on a state-of-the-art system.

When Jerome Hauer, Commissioner of the State's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, toured Harris RF in March and learned more about this public-private partnership he remarked, "Monroe County is doing it right."

Mr. Hauer, I couldn't agree more.

Our innovative approach to public safety continues at our soon to be opened Monitoring and Reaction Center.

This cutting edge center is unique in New York State and, just like our 9-1-1 center, centralizes all emergency calls. The center will consolidate all security and monitoring functions for county-owned and operated buildings, and the Monroe County Water Authority. County infrastructure will be safer and the safety of our water supply will be enhanced. The center will eliminate duplication of service in the County and at the Authority and will use the latest technology to reduce costs for taxpayers. It will also be a backup to our current 9-1-1 Center and our Emergency Operations Center.

For the last nine years, we have had an incredibly talented and capable Director at the helm of Public Safety efforts in our County. Steve Bowman has demonstrated incomparable leadership and provided dedicated service to our residents with unmatched character and integrity. As Steve begins a well-deserved retirement, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his service. Steve – best wishes as you head to the next adventure.

Great leaders are often hard to follow, but I am confident that we have found a successor who will protect the standard of excellence set in our public safety community.

David Moore has demonstrated his commitment to our community as Chief of the Rochester Police Department, the Director of the City's Office of Public Integrity, and more recently as Security Director at Monroe Community College.

He is highly respected for his work ethic and his collaborative public safety approach. Please join me now in welcoming David Moore to his new post.

In 2011, we cut the ribbon on a state of the art crime lab, the only regional crime lab in Upstate New York. It was much needed and work began immediately on clearing a backlog of casework left behind as a by-product of operating for years in an antiquated facility.

In the area of DNA evidence alone, there were over 800 cases waiting to be tested at the end of last year. Tonight, we can tell you that our lab investment is paying off. By the end of next year, any remaining backlog will be completely eliminated.

Our crime lab is a critical partner in law enforcement's efforts to solve crime, prosecute suspects, and keep criminals in jail and off our streets.

Please join me in recognizing Laboratory Administrator John Clark and his staff for this achievement, and the incredible work they do each and every day.

Monroe County took a huge step this past year to give prosecutors an additional tool to protect our community's most vulnerable but more precious asset, our children.

The County Legislature passed and I signed a new law making cyber-bullying a crime in Monroe County. We want to help eradicate bullying in our community and this new law sends a clear message to those who engage in this behavior – It won't be tolerated anywhere in this County.

More than 200 local teachers, advocates, community leaders, parents, and young people joined together to help support Monroe County's inaugural Call to Action to prevent bullying. And recently, our Youth Bureau joined with the City school district to host a community conversation that featured Dr. Sameer Hinduja, Co-Director of the National Cyberbullying Research Center.

Research has shown that one in every five students locally have been victims of cyber bullying.

The statistics are disturbing. We can be the community that makes a difference.

Counties in New York State came into existence to be the social service providers for New York State government. In fact, the largest department in County government exists to serve children and families in need in our community.

Much of our service is mandated by the State. Even though the burden of mandated spending grows every year, the State's reimbursements do not. Human Services

Commissioner Kelly Reed shares my belief that we can reduce costs and improve outcomes at the same time.

But government can't do it alone.

Monroe County's Family Finding Initiative is a great example of a proven model that works. The Family Finding model is groundbreaking because it acknowledges that some of our community's most at-risk children are better served by receiving care from family members, rather than government programs. The challenge is that kids in broken homes often fall between the cracks and into the system - even when there is a relative out there who would be happy to provide the love and care they need.

By using advanced search technologies, caseworkers can work with children who are neglected by their immediate family to find other relatives that are willing to provide a loving home and direct care.

The Family Finding Initiative is less about how the program works and more about the people it serves. Brianna is one of them.

Brianna was eight years old when she was first placed in foster care. She moved a total of 19 times, spending time in 11 different foster homes in only four years. Despite these challenges, Brianna always excelled in school. She was also musically talented and even learned to play the violin. She set a goal to attend Cornell to become a lawyer.

But it was clear that Brianna would never be able to reach her full potential in foster care. It simply didn't meet her unique needs as a child. So Brianna began working with a team of dedicated professionals who would explore different options to put her on the right track. Throughout this process, her team identified Brianna's strong desire for biological family involvement.

Brianna was a perfect fit for the Family Finding Initiative. So her caseworkers prepared a video testimonial and began to search across the country for family connections. Here's Brianna in her own words.

TESTIMONIAL VIDEO PLAYS

That powerful video made its way to a long-lost great aunt and uncle in Michigan, who became involved in Brianna's life. A little over a year ago, Brianna moved to live with them. She continues to do well in school and is excelling in sports. She has made friends in her new school and still dreams about being a lawyer.

Brianna is an exceptionally brave and promising young woman, and I thank her for her courage in sharing her story. She couldn't be here tonight because she is happily at home with her family. Yet, if there's anything Brianna's story can show us, it's that the human spirit of caring is never constrained by the miles between us. So let's all give Brianna a big round of applause here tonight.

Let me tell you about another partnership producing results for fathers in our County. Reggie Cox is the Pastor of Changing Lives Worship Center. He knows that investing in fathers gives us a better shot at keeping kids in school and out of trouble.

That's why we've adopted a program called the Fatherhood Connection. The program includes 13 weeks of training targeting fathers of all ages and focuses on parenting, personal development, healthy relationships, and domestic violence prevention.

And based on our success with the fatherhood initiative model, Monroe County is working with Pastor Cox to implement a program for adolescent males. It's called Boys to Men, and it provides young men with opportunities for personal growth, a sense of community, and a chance to develop important leadership skills that will serve them well in the future.

Pastor Cox is here with us tonight, let's thank him for being such a strong force for good in our community.

During his State of the City, Mayor Richards talked about the challenge of truancy. We all have a responsibility to do everything we can to keep students in the classroom and off the streets during the school day.

The Rochester City School District and our Department of Human Services are working together on a pilot program at four City elementary schools to help crack down on truancy. This initiative is especially important because it's focused on grades one through three, when students are learning to read. If they aren't attending school they will not learn the literacy skills they need to succeed. They are also much more likely to drop out of school later on.

Our Family Access Connection Team, which pairs our caseworkers with Probation Officers, also works with students old enough to self-elect to drop out of school. The program helps caseworkers better determine the root causes of truancy, including abuse, neglect, or undiagnosed mental health conditions. All told, the Family Access Connection Team receives an average of nearly 175 referrals each month with over 600 open cases at any given time.

My thanks to Commissioner Reed, Probation Director Bob Burns, and City Schools Superintendent Bolgen Vargas for working together on this critical issue.

Monroe Community Hospital has touched the lives of many individuals and families in our community throughout its long and dynamic history. It wasn't always called a hospital. In fact in 1826, MCH was just a small building on South Avenue that was called the County Almshouse. In 1929, the County made a decision to build a new facility, and in 1931, the Monroe Community Home and Infirmary opened on East Henrietta Road.

Over the decades, MCH has evolved into what it is today – a long-term health care facility that provides skilled nursing, rehabilitation, and specialty care. There are more than 550

residents who call MCH their home. It serves infants just over 8 weeks old and has residents who are older than 100.

And despite a history full of change to meet the community's needs, one thing has remained the same – MCH's commitment to serve those who may not have anywhere else to go. If you look around the State you will see many counties selling their nursing homes or closing them. They can't afford to be in the business anymore.

As County Executive, I serve as the governing body for our hospital. Two of my grandparents received care in that hospital and my commitment to preserving MCH as a community treasure runs deep.

A recent State survey said MCH failed to live up to its tradition of excellence and our mission of putting residents first as the result of one isolated incident. We have made a necessary leadership change. We have re-trained our staff on new resident care policies. We've empowered a new board of community advocates. And I will personally be overseeing the implementation of the State-approved corrective plan in the months ahead.

MCH is bigger than one isolated incident. Here's what MCH is really all about. Quality care provided daily by a dedicated team of professional people who do incredible work with little or no fanfare. MCH is short for Monroe Community Hospital, but it may as well stand for Miracles Can Happen. Quiet miracles, like Kadeem Fulmore.

Kadeem grew up in Rochester and attended Aquinas High School. He went on to attend Lincoln University outside of Philadelphia, where he was pursuing a degree in business. In 2011, Kadeem was a Senior when he was in a car accident with two friends. He was a passenger in a car that hit a tree and caught fire. He was pinned in the car while it was burning.

His best friend died in that crash. Kadeem suffered burns on more than 50% of his body. Both of his legs were amputated. He had two collapsed lungs and a brain injury. He spent five months in a coma. He came to Monroe Community Hospital for rehabilitation in 2012.

As a result of the quality care he received at MCH, Kadeem can now speak again, he can feed himself again, and he can remember people and conversations again. But best of all, two weeks ago Kadeem walked with the help of a walker and two prosthetic legs for the first time!

Kadeem plans to go back to college and finish-out his last semester. His goal is to be able to walk across the stage to receive his degree. When hospital staff recently threw a birthday party for him, Kadeem told them, "I don't think of you as staff, I think of you as family." His new family plans to be there when he crosses that stage.

An important part of Kadeem's story is that no other rehabilitation service provider in the Rochester area would accept him as a patient - none except MCH. Its mission is literally

carved in stone above the arch as you walk through the front door. It says “Dedicated to the welfare of humanity.”

Monroe County has been and continues to be wholeheartedly invested in supporting that mission. To the critics who have just recently discovered a new interest in MCH, I call on you to join that mission too.

Volunteer at the Hospital, donate to the MCH Foundation Board, do what you can to help us continue to make MCH not just a world-class long-term care facility, but a world-class home for the residents it serves.

For 23 years, Dr. Andy Doniger has had a great partnership with this community. As Director of Public Health, he has had an incredible career.

Dr. Doniger has been a pioneer and a true champion for wellness in Monroe County. Under his leadership, the County implemented some of the nation’s first smoking bans in restaurants. He fought to educate and raise awareness about critical problems like teen pregnancy, childhood obesity, and lead poisoning levels in children.

I could dedicate this entire address tonight to Dr. Doniger’s legacy of accomplishment. Our community is a better and healthier place because he has served.

While he wasn’t able to make it tonight, you can help me thank Dr. Doniger for a job well done. Let’s all wish him the best for a well-deserved retirement.

When searching for a successor we didn’t need to look any further than our Deputy Health Director. Dr. Byron Kennedy joined the County in 2010 and has proven to be a valuable asset to our team.

Recently, Dr. Kennedy was featured in a New England Journal of Medicine report detailing our Health Department’s investigation into infections triggered by tattoos. Dr. Kennedy’s investigation revealed that the ink itself was the carrier of bacteria. As a result of his discovery, the batch of ink was recalled nationwide, preventing many more people from being infected.

The quality of life in any community is only as good as its public health efforts. Let’s all take this opportunity to welcome Dr. Kennedy to his new post and wish him the best of luck moving forward.

Quality of life is not just about people, it’s about building the kind of community we want to live in. Monroe County recently did something that it hasn’t done in some time. We built a brand new road. We didn’t just pave, or resurface. We actually created a new road to provide better access from commercial and industrial parks in Henrietta to I-390 and the New York State Thruway.

The John Street Extension project took a while. Started in 2005, this project paves the way - yes, pun intended - for new businesses to grow and expand in an area that is

increasingly an engine that drives our local economy. The project will also ease congestion and delays for all types of traveling public in the Town of Henrietta.

I want to say thank you to Terry Rice, our County's Director of Transportation, and the rest of his staff for going above and beyond to improve our area's world-class transportation system every day.

The Greater Rochester International Airport is our local gateway to the world. The success we have had meeting the needs of the traveling public is the result of an important partnership between the FAA, the airlines, and the County.

More than 2,000,000 people use our airport each year and enplanements are increasing. We pride ourselves on good customer experience. Providing affordable and safe travel options is a priority.

Unfortunately, there are times when policy adopted in Washington has unintended consequences here at home.

Recently, Congress voted to impose across the board cuts to programs and services and because of the sequester, as it's been called, the airport could lose 70% of its airport infrastructure funds. That could impact our ability to move ahead with important projects that will enhance the safety of our runways.

I recently traveled to Washington to talk with members of our delegation about the problem. Shifting dollars from airport projects to pay for other programs in the federal budget compromises public safety.

I do want to publicly thank Senator Chuck Schumer for quick action on another critical airport issue. The FAA had asked for a plan to operate our airport overnight without air traffic controllers in the tower. Airport Director Mike Giardino was concerned that overnight planes may have to be diverted to ensure safety. I met with the Senator on Tuesday and on Wednesday the FAA told us that Rochester would not lose its air traffic controllers after all.

As County Executive, I truly understand the need to make tough budget decisions. Every level of government needs to spend less, borrow less, and follow the lead of most families in our community who each and every day take action to live within their means.

For years you've heard me talk about the crushing burden of Medicaid. Providing Medicaid is a mandate, the largest in our budget. County taxpayers pick up 25% of the cost in New York State, and we live in one of only two States that requires local support of the Medicaid Program.

Starting in 2015, the State will be picking up the entire cost of growth in the Medicaid program. This is a big deal for counties and I applaud Governor Cuomo and our State Legislature for making it happen.

But counties will still have a Medicaid bill to pay each year and in Monroe County the total will be about \$185,000,000, which is over 18% of our total operating budget. When I was in Washington, I promoted an idea that would save County, State, and Federal taxpayers money.

Right now, when someone insured by Medicaid or Medicare calls an ambulance, the reimbursement to the ambulance company will only be provided if the patient is delivered to an emergency room. The reimbursement would not apply to anyone taken to an Urgent care facility or clinic.

That includes people who simply have a cut or scrape, a toothache, sunburn, or flu symptoms. Those things hurt, for sure, but are far from being emergencies.

If you receive Medicaid it costs more than \$1,700 on average to treat you in an emergency room. For Medicare patients the cost is upwards of \$2,800. At Urgent care the same person can be treated for \$212.

A simple change in federal Medicaid reimbursement law could save Monroe County \$190,000,000 a year and the federal government nearly \$75,000,000,000 a year.

The County has asked for a three year pilot to put the idea to the test and validate the savings. Once again, all eyes really are on Monroe.

Because of Medicaid and other mandated programs, balancing the County budget continues to be a challenge. Each year we have to overcome a structural imbalance of nearly \$50,000,000.

Mandates are 82% of our budget and 100% of our problem.

State mandated programs include the pension program, safety net, child welfare, special ed/pre-k programs, early intervention, indigent defense, probation, youth detention, and our jail – and that’s only half the list.

No one will argue that our friends and neighbors don’t benefit from these programs and there is a constituency behind every one of these programs. The problem is counties have no control over the cost of the programs. Sometimes the State provides partial reimbursement to counties, but often times the mandate comes without corresponding State revenue.

Recently the Governor created a Financial Restructuring Board to assist local governments who are struggling with their budgets. The Governor is listening.

Counties, like many local governments, are distressed. But the answer isn’t creating a statewide control board. To me, the solution is clear. Fix the mandates and you fix the counties. And, local property taxpayers will be able to keep more money in the family budget.

The Governor says counties need to tighten our belts. Monroe County agrees. For nine years, we've maintained our commitment to property tax rate stability and we continue to hold spending below inflation.

Our budget complies with the property tax cap that controls the growth of the levy. Our budget complies with the Taxpayer Protection Act that controls non-mandated spending. Our operational streamlining efforts are paying off. Our 2013 budget actually reduced the on-going, year to year forecasted deficit created by the mandates we just talked about.

I grew up in Rochester and have worked here as an adult for 36 years. When you live and work somewhere for that amount of time you get to know a lot about a community. You learn about history, tradition, industry, assets, priorities, strengths, and liabilities. But you also learn about people. As County Executive my priorities have always been about Rochester's people.

Rochester's people want to be able to work and earn a decent paycheck; they want to be able to buy food and provide shelter for their families; they want to feel safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods; and they want their children and grandchildren to be better off tomorrow than they are today.

I will continue to put taxpayers first. I will continue to focus on jobs and opportunities for residents, young and old. I will continue to invest in our quality of life.

Tonight we've talked about the critical partnerships we have in economic development, public safety, in public health, in programs advancing our commitment to children and families. Government can't do it alone.

It was Henry Ford who said, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success."

Eastman Business Park is an example of the limitless potential we have for success in our County. Gathering in this room, at the site of an iconic Rochester company, we are reminded that history is on our side.

Our eyes are wide open to the challenges, but we can't stop looking for opportunities. Because as Frederick Douglass once noted, "Without a struggle there can be no progress."

When you grow up in Rochester as I did; when you view life in Rochester through the eyes of a reporter for 18 years as I did; when you work in government for 18 years and witness the true impact of public policy as I have, you get to know a lot about the spirit of Rochester's people.

Rochester's people have a great spirit. They're innovative, compassionate, generous to a fault, informed, and engaged. They have a great sense of place and a respect of heritage and tradition. They respect history but absolutely know the kind of community they want to live in.

Whether in moments of pride or moments of crisis, it is the spirit of Rochester's people, not their government, that will define our future. The State of our County depends on it.

Thank you for coming tonight. God Bless.

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