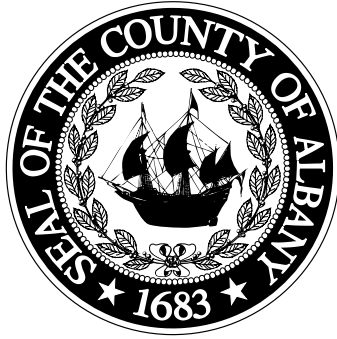




ALBANY COUNTY STATE OF THE COUNTY

Daniel P. McCoy, Albany County Executive

Thursday, February 23, 2023

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you Dan Lynch for your kind words and introduction. You are a most valuable part of this team and Albany County is better for you. I also want to thank Plug Power and their CEO Andy Marsh for their hospitality in hosting this event. Many of us were here a few weeks ago to cut the ribbon on this most astounding warehouse and corporate office.

As we enter into 2023, my 12th year as the County Executive, I wanted to deliver this address in a new way. As we enter into 2023, we are entering a new day.

A day where hope is strong.

A day where finances are secure.

And a day where we embrace equitable solutions, data driven analysis and real time responses coordinated through technological advancements.

And so, to show all of you an image of where we have been and where we are going in this new day, I thought it better this year to present a video presentation in lieu of my words.

the video may be viewed at www.albanycounty.com/sotc

Thank you Mary Rozak and our communications team, together with Baker Public Relations for putting this video together.

As we just saw, there are many projects and programs to be proud of here in Albany County and I would like to thank all of my department heads, deputies and staff for their continued commitment and dedication to the citizens of Albany County.

We have taken many steps forward this past year in the area of green energy and economic development and much more is ahead of us. But, as I always say, we can't do it alone and it takes partnerships.

Today, we have with us Doreen Harris, the Executive Director of NYSERDA, who has continually been a strong partner with Albany County as we work toward the goal of being the greenest county in the US, and as we move forward in our designation as a hub for green energy with expected wind power manufacturing in our ports of Coeymans and Albany. Thank you, Doreen.

In the news lately, we have all seen the images of bullying that is occurring in our schools and we have heard the story of the tragic suicide death of a young girl. Suicide rates throughout the US have continued to

soar. This is tragic and we need to do more. We must invest in mental health curriculum within our schools.

Here in Albany County, over this academic school year, we have 2 Rockefeller Fellows that are working with school districts on development and implementation of curriculum. Fostering programs within schools will provide our youth with tools and coping mechanisms, as well as support systems. Recognizing the need for attention to one's mental health, as well as physical health at an early age is a start to a healthier community.

These investments must be made to end bullying, remove the stigma from mental health services and save children's lives. Last year, we helped 296 young people in our Children's Mental Health Clinic.

As the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Let us not be silent. Let us All take a stand now and protect our children.

As mentioned earlier, we know all too well the impact opioids have on our communities. Since I have been in office, I have been leading the charge to hold Big Pharma responsible.

Now, settlements are coming through and distributions of monies from Big Pharma to localities are becoming a reality. Our Commissioner of Mental Health, Dr. Giordano is the former chairman and current member of the New York State Advisory Board in charge of oversight of the some of the funds from these settlements.

The first round of funding is coming and is in the amount of \$1.5 million for Albany County. Expected distributions will be for 16 years.

I also would like to mention the success of our ACCORD program run by Dr. Giordano in partnership with our Sheriff, which is a crisis intervention program for behavioral health.

Since the inception of ACCORD in June of 2021, Dr. Giordano's team has responded to 742 calls in the hill towns. The team successfully deescalates tenuous situations, evaluates the needs of individuals and provides support, not just at the moment, but also in the future in conjunction with other resources available.

This success of this program has led us expand this program beyond the hill towns to all municipalities. Great job by the whole team. Special thanks to Matt

Peter and the Albany County Legislature for their continued support.

Everything that Albany County does would not be possible without strong finances. Fiscal responsibility is imperative to the success of government and I would like to applaud the efforts of Dave Reilly, our Commissioner of Management and Budget and his entire team.

We have built our reserves to record levels! We continue to implement fiscal strategies that preserve and bolster our financial health. We do this all at the same time as lowering our tax rate. We have effectively lowered our tax rate by nearly 20%!

And while there are many economists out there predicting a downturn and rough financial times, I am confident in the position that Albany County is placed so that we may endure the bumps in the road as we forge on toward a bright future.

We've kept this in mind as we turned our attention toward federal ARPA funding. That is why the first round of ARPA funding was used to replenish lost revenues from the pandemic, and I would like to thank the legislature, on both sides of the aisle, for supporting this strategy.

Now, as we move forward to distribute the second round of ARPA, our key goal in allocating funds is to provide support for community members and organizations that have been impacted or disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, while at the same time make calculated decisions that will help to stimulate economic growth.

This includes the use of funds to combat the root cause of identified pandemic-related impacts. Additionally, we shall invest in strategic and sustainable long-term benefits for the County's vast number of stakeholders through an inclusive process that seeks results that sustain our economy.

Today, I would like to announce that our application process is opening in April and I look forward to hearing about all of the ideas submitted.

President John F. Kennedy said, "If art is to nourish the root of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him."

Indeed, the history of our culture is not merely written in books, but is more revealed, expressed and understood through the arts; through the telling of stories and through the expression of what is within the hearts and spirits of our people. The importance of

preserving, protecting and promoting arts and culture cannot be overstated. Yet, we have seen the catastrophic effects that the pandemic had on the arts. And, while many other industries have made recoveries, we have not seen the same rebound with the arts, and this is tragic.

We must work together to change the current path. This is why I am announcing a new public and private partnership to ensure the health and viability of Arts and Culture in Albany County. I am asking the Advance Albany County Alliance to form a subcommittee to focus on Arts and Culture. The goal of this subcommittee is to provide a mechanism to create an essential backstop for this industry to make sure it continues to flourish for generations to come.

Let us work together to save our arts and to tell the story of our culture for future generations.

As many of you know, I was born and raised here in Albany and I consider it a privilege to serve as the Executive for this great County. I am honored to come before you today to announce the state of our county and to tell you all that ... THE STATE OF OUR COUNTY IS STRONG. We are strong because of our workforce, we are strong because of our citizenry, we are strong because of our partners in government and

we are strong because of our local businesses, like Plug Power.

Let us continue on this path of strength and continue toward a new day filled with hope and rooted in data based solutions that provide equitable and exceptional programs to our citizens and visitors.

Thank you, May God Bless You and the great County of Albany.