



www.realestateindepth.com

REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH

Official Publication of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: PUTNAM COUNTY

Driving The Economic Vitality Of Putnam County, NY



Putnam County
Economic
Development
Corporation

Follow The Putnam County
Office Of Economic Development On:
Facebook  & Linked 



(845) 808-1021 · PutnamEDC.org

A Conversation with County Executive MaryEllen Odell Striving to Improve the County's Fiscal Outlook and Quality of Life



By John Jordan

CARMEL—Putnam County's continued push to foster economic development and tourism continued in 2016 with a host of ambitious initiatives, including the continued improvements at the county-owned Putnam County Golf Course, the redevelopment of the storied Tilly Foster Farm and an initiative with the City of Danbury that could bring significant development in the future to the Route 6 corridor in Brewster.

Real Estate In-Depth recently sat down with Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell at her offices in Carmel. Odell, who spent 18 years in the

real estate business working as a title closer prior to her first taking office as Putnam County Executive in 2011, was re-elected to her second term of office in November 2014.

Immediately prior to her election as County Executive, Odell served as the New York State Senate's Director of Veterans and Local Government Affairs. She first became involved in local politics in the 1990s when Carmel proposed to build a sewer plant three times too large for its service area and potentially wasting millions of taxpayer dollars. In 1995, she co-founded the Carmel Sports Association and became



an active member of the Hamlet of Carmel Civic Association, the Carmel Industrial Development Agency, and Putnam Economic Development Council and sat on the Executive Board for the Gold Star Mothers statue in Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park.

In January 2006 Odell was appointed to fill a vacancy on the County Legislature. She represented District 5, which included the Hamlet of Carmel and portions of the towns of Kent and Patterson. During her five-year career as a legislator, she initiated the formation of and chaired the Fiscal Vision and Accountability Commission comprised of citizen volunteers, business leaders and elected officials. There she successfully fought to reduce unnecessary government expenditures and championed such innovative programs as electronic appearance and video conferencing.

Q: *What have been the cornerstones of your administration since taking office in November 2011?*

Odell: When we came on board I identified two areas that we would always focus on—one would be our social responsibility and the other would be our fiscal responsibility. So as elected



officials, you have public safety as your paramount responsibility. Working with our Sheriff, and certainly with our state legislators, we have all identified by just reading the newspapers everyday that we have a big issue here with the heroin-opiate epidemic. So we are working with our Sheriff's Department and a lot of our not-for-profits and the Mental Health Association trying to identify problem areas where we can do better and where we should be doing better and finding the funding to support the not-for-profits and law enforcement in the war on addiction.

Editor's Note: County Executive Odell singled out the fine work being done by Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, an organization focused on educating the public on the heroin and opiate addiction crisis

Continued on page 16

The State of Putnam's Housing Market: Where It's Been and Where It's Going

By Clayton Livingston

As you all may know, the real estate market in our area has become strong again within the past few years. We also know that this is primarily due to "supply and demand," coupled with historically low mortgage rates. The low interest rates are motivating many buyers to get out and buy before there is an increase in rates. Additionally, many new families and Millennials are now qualifying for mortgages, further stimulating the demand for affordable homes.

Many of these buyers cannot afford the price and property tax combination found in Westchester County, so they come over the line into Putnam County looking for affordability.

Putnam County is a great option for buyers looking for lower prices than homes available for sale in Westchester. Putnam County still offers these buyers a reasonable commute to New York City. Historically, the natural progression of the real estate market starts in New York City and expands out to Long Island, Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties. This market is driven by a south-to-north increase in activity and price point. Last year, the median single-family home price for Putnam County averaged about \$350,000. Homes priced at more than \$400,000 were not selling very quickly.

The lack of affordable inventory in relation to the number of buyers has helped push prices in Putnam County higher of late. In 2016, the median home in Putnam County was priced at \$400,000. Within the past two years, we have started to see bidding wars reappear, which we have not seen in years. Let us keep in mind that, again, the higher-priced homes (over \$450,000 in 2016) have taken longer to sell. The

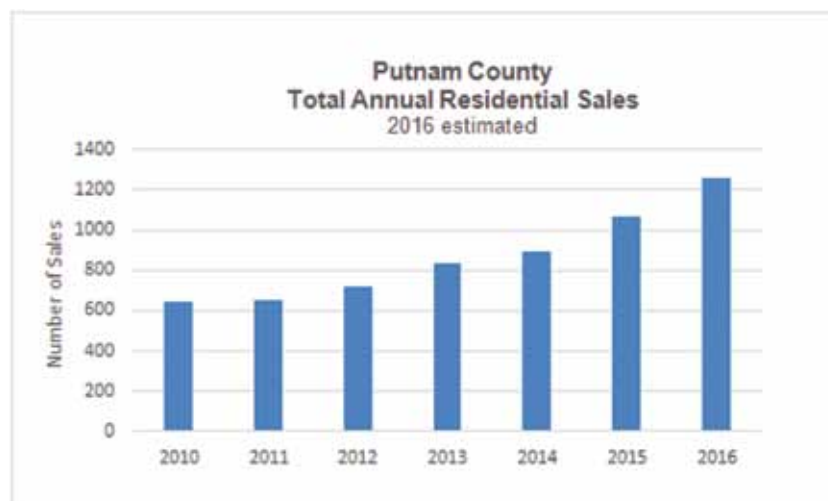
higher the price, the longer it is taking, unless the property was underpriced for what it had to offer. This tightening market typically applies to houses that are priced correctly and in good condition. Bank-owned properties are still prevalent, although not to the same extent as last year.

Another factor that has made Putnam County appealing is the new trend to work remotely. A good number of recent buyers do not need to commute on a daily basis, and are therefore amenable to a farther commute. Once buyers begin investigating Putnam, they come to realize that Putnam County has so much to offer, including boating, fishing, golfing, hiking, skiing, fine dining and so much more.

Another reason people are choosing to buy a home in Putnam County is its intrinsic natural beauty from the banks of the Hudson River to the Connecticut state line. Only six towns make up the entire county. They each possess different attributes from the golf courses and

boating of Garrison to the antique shops sidewalk cafés and bed and breakfasts of Cold Spring along the Hudson River. Recreational opportunities are abundant at the Fahnstock State Park, Lake Oscawana in Putnam Valley, Putnam County Veteran's Memorial Park in Kent, Lake Mahopac in Carmel, as well as the Thunder Ridge ski slopes and Appalachian trail of Patterson to Tilly Foster Preserve and Green Chimneys farms in Brewster.

The expansion and extension of the rail trail from the Yorktown border in Westchester now extends through Mahopac and Carmel and Brewster to connect the trail for walkers, runners, and bikers from Valhalla to Northern Westchester and now through Putnam County to Dutchess and Connecticut. The state designated wetlands surrounding the brooks streams and rivers feeding the ponds, lakes and reservoirs offer not only a variety of outdoor sporting activities, but also privacy and views that will remain protected.



Putnam County's allure continues to drive home sales higher. The latest statistics from the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors points to a continuing strong sales market in Putnam County going forward.

Putnam's total sales of 378 properties were up by 17% in the third quarter and its end of quarter inventory was down by a substantial 29%. The median sale price of a Putnam single-family house was \$340,000, an increase of 1.5% from last year.

Outlook

When recently asked, Grace Vinciguerra of RE/MAX Classic Realty quipped, "In terms of next year's outlook, let me briefly consult my crystal ball... I see all good things! One of my buyers recently told me, 'It all depends on the elections.' However, I am not convinced that the outcome of the election will have a noticeable impact on the market. I have been selling real estate since 1985. History has taught me that homes that are priced correctly and are in good condition, sell. The economy tends to affect the median price range of the homes, which readily sell. The lower priced homes sell, as they are more affordable. The higher priced homes sell when the economy is good. However, sooner or later, they all sell!"

Clayton Livingston is an Associate Broker and Senior Managing Director of the Croton-on-Hudson branch of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. He also serves as Vice President of HGAR and Putnam County RPAC co-chair. He has been licensed in New York State to practice real estate for 26 years and seven years previously in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Classes Begin at Tilly Foster Educational Institute in Carmel

CARMEL—On Tuesday, September 13th, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell and Dr. James M. Ryan, District Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer, Putnam | Northern Westchester

and hard work put forth by Putnam County in readying the facility for Tech Center students this month was clearly evident. The attention to detail, the marrying of function and aesthetics, were

culinary talents, local farms and eating establishments, as well as dovetailing with BOCES internship opportunities for students.

In 2002, the county acquired 199-acre Tilly Foster Farm with \$3.9 million from East of Hudson Water Quality Funds. The property was purchased to save it from development and to protect the county's water quality. The county took over management of the property in January 2014 and embarked on the challenge to save the historical icon of Putnam's farming heritage, while making it an economically viable county asset.

ing approximately \$1.1 million was used to completely replace the failing water supply, power supply and septic system for the entire site. In addition, the lodge was renovated and structurally made safe for public access including, bringing all utilities and amenities up to today's building code requirements. The remaining funds were used to complete extensive site work, including walls, roads, parking and drainage, and to upgrade and repair buildings 2, 4 and 9, also known as, the cottage, office/classroom space, and the barn, respectively.

To complement the BOCES' Culinary Arts program, Tilly's Table, set to open

After extensive public meetings with



Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell (center) and Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES District Superintendent James M. Ryan, Ed.D. host the ribbon cutting ceremony that officially opened the new Tilly Foster Educational Institute.

BOCES, officially opened the new Tilly Foster Educational Institute with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Attendees of the event were taken on a tour of the facility's state of the art test kitchen and classrooms, where they were greeted by BOCES students enrolled in the Culinary Arts Program.

"The reopening of Tilly Foster as the county's first public institute for career education offers a diversity of benefits by putting an under-used county asset to work," said County Executive Odell. "Rental income from BOCES will serve to offset the costs of maintaining and preserving this beautiful historical property and BOCES' Culinary Arts program, as well as future programs, including environmental science and veterinary science, and give our children greater educational and career options right here in Putnam."

"Everyone is tremendously impressed with all that has been accomplished," said Cathy Balestrieri, BOCES Tech Center Director. "All of the efforts

impressive and went beyond expectations. The Tech Center culinary program at Tilly Foster Educational Institute is now in session—in a state of the art facility. Putnam County is to be recognized and congratulated in moving forward this exciting, new collaboration."

The county anticipates expanded services and educational opportunities at Tilly Foster Educational Institute, such as early intervention pre-K and adult continuing education classes, as well as support from other private partners, including Cornell Cooperative Extension, county officials noted.

Tilly Foster Educational Institute was designed as a destination for tourists and residents of Putnam County. When BOCES is not in-session, use of the state-of-the-art teaching kitchen and classrooms will be open to Putnam County veterans, libraries, schools, seniors and non-profits. Putnam County officials added that the county hopes to kickoff Putnam's version of "Top Chef," which will incorporate the county's



The state of the art kitchen at the Tilly Foster Educational Institute.

Putnam residents, it was determined that Tilly Foster would best serve the community by opening its gates again and offering an educational component, as well as maintaining the site's farm and agricultural heritage as a way of sustaining itself. In order to bring Tilly Foster back to life, extensive rehabilitation was required to achieve code compliance, general safety and usability, including infrastructure enhancements/replacement associated with the water and power supplies and septic system.

In the last few years, the county spent an additional \$2.4 million to renovate various facilities on the property, includ-

on April 1, 2017, will offer the Hudson Valley region a uniquely enjoyable and educational farm-to-table dining experience, utilizing produce sourced from local farms.

The management of Tilly Foster Farm was expected to go out to bid recently. Upon completion in spring 2017, the new Tilly Foster will feature a farm and lodge, the aforementioned classrooms, teaching kitchen and farm-to-table venue, as well as a conference room. Plans also include a general store and visitor information center located in the main barn.

PEDC Celebrates 20th Anniversary and Year Of Business Development

By John Jordan

CARMEL—This year has been a cause for celebration for The Putnam Economic Development Corp., which launched operations 20 years. In addition, the organization charged with business attraction and retention has launched "The Year of Business Development in Putnam County."

Under the leadership of its president Jill Varricchio the PEDC has embarked on promoting the county's existing business base, but has also launched a host of initiatives geared at fostering economic growth in Putnam County. *Real Estate In-Depth* recently chatted with Varricchio and PEDC chairman Joseph D. Roberto, president of PCSB, to learn more about the organization's role in bringing new business and investment to Putnam and its strategies for the future.

"Putnam County has a lot to offer as a site for a new working environment and I think our role is to be an advocate for Putnam County and to get businesses to relocate here," Roberto said.

He continued, "I think what we have to do and I believe we have started this process is to really market the county... and by marketing the county we are go-

ing to put ourselves on the radar for anyone looking to relocate their business."

Varricchio, who was named president of PEDC in October 2015, has met with key municipal officials in Putnam County to ascertain their wants and needs.

"We called that the 'Listening Tour.' What we have done is we established some basic questions—needs, wants and hopes," Varricchio said. She added that the first tour was undertaken in the first quarter of this year. The PEDC plans to undertake a second "tour" this fall to gather the latest information on their projects and to formulate strategies for the county to pursue to "support their vision for growing their communities," Varricchio noted.

In August, the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation hosted an investor breakfast to celebrate its 20th anniversary at the Putnam County Golf Course in Mahopac. At the event, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell proposed the establishment of a Department of Excellence, which will track all of the major county-municipal projects and work with all the agencies and stakeholders. She also outlined five major projects the county, PEDC and



PEDC President Jill Varricchio



PEDC Chairman Joseph Roberto

municipal governments are pursuing that she described as "game changers."

"This is the Year of Business Development in Putnam County," said Odell, "In order to grow our economic base and create a sustainable business environment in our county, we must put the right infrastructure in place and that starts with municipal water and sewage."

She related that Putnam submitted five Consolidated Funding Application grant requests—four of which would help fund water or sewage improve-

ments in the Towns of Southeast, Putnam Valley, Kent and Carmel.

Among the CFA grant applications that seek state funding through the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council is a sewer and water line extension project from Danbury, CT to the US Route 6 corridor (western boundary of Brewster through the Town of Southeast westward). Other applications include a proposed centralized public sewer service to US Route 6, Mahopac area that would extend from the

Continued on page 14

Tourism Opportunities Abound in Putnam County

By Frank Smith

Putnam County is quietly positioned between Dutchess County to the north and Westchester County to the south; bordered by the Hudson River to the west, and Connecticut's Fairfield County to the east. Nestled in the heart of the Hudson Valley, and just sixty-miles north of Manhattan, Putnam County is the perfect place to live, work and play.

Each year, Putnam County consistently earns high marks in being considered one of New York State's safest, and healthiest counties. At the same time, Putnam is also one of the state's most employed counties, with an unemployment rate of under 4%. Excellent schools, reasonable real estate and accessibility to the New York Metropolitan Area all factor together in making Putnam County an attractive place to live and raise a family.

Before making the decision to call Putnam County home, we welcome you to come and spend a day visiting our destinations. A daytripper's dream, Putnam is sure to have an activity to pique your interest. By taking the Metro North Harlem Line visitors can choose to hop off in the Village of Brewster or the Town of Patterson. The Brewster Village is home to Bob's Diner, the Walter Brewster House, and an ever-emerging downtown area. In Patterson there is



Cold Spring Beacon Trolley

access to the Great Swamp for kayaking and canoeing, as well as seasonal transportation to the Thunder Ridge Ski Area. Conversely, if one is to take the Hudson Line, travelers have plenty of options along the river. If you're in pursuit of hiking and nature, think of hopping off at Manitou or Breakneck Ridge—but be sure to check the schedule for these whistle stops! Conven-

tional stops at Garrison's Landing and the Village of Cold Spring are sure to satisfy the fondest of small town lovers, well-versed foodies, and antiques enthusiasts abound.

Putnam also has great accessibility by car. On the western portion of the county Route 9, Route 9D and the Taconic State Parkway connect Putnam to its neighbors to the north and south. On

the eastern end, Interstates 84, 684 and Route 22 serve to further connect the region. Having the flexibility to explore by car expands what Putnam has to offer. Restaurant Row, located on Route 6N in Mahopac are home to some of the county's premier dining establishments. The Chuang Yen Monastery, the Western Hemisphere's largest Buddha statue, as well as Clarence Fahnestock State Park both sit on Route 301 in the Town of Kent, sandwiched between the Historic Town of Carmel and picturesque Village of Cold Spring.

Optimism is high, and the opportunity for development in the tourism sector of Putnam is great. There are ample locations waiting to be repurposed into craft beverage production facilities, indoor entertainment centers, and other out-of-the-box retail concepts. Putnam County understands the importance of tourism spending in the local economy, and welcomes likeminded entrepreneurs and businesspeople who also see the opportunities in Putnam.

To learn more about Putnam County as a place to live, work and play, be sure to visit TourPutnam.Org and Putnam-EDC.Org.

Frank Smith is the Acting Director of Tourism for Putnam County



Tilly Foster Farm Educational Institute Grand Opening



Fireball Run live in Mahopac

PEDC Celebrates 20th Anniversary and Year of Business Development

Continued from page 13

Villa Barone Hilltop Manor catering hall south to the Town/County line (Putnam/Westchester); a public water extension from the Town of Cortlandt in Westchester County to the hamlet of Oregon Corners in the Town of Putnam Valley; and a wastewater treatment plant to be built on Route 311, Town of Kent that will collect sewage waste from the Lake Carmel residential area, as well as the underdeveloped commercial corridors of Route 311 and Route 52 in Kent and Patterson. The county states that the treatment plant would allow for business expansion, job creation from construction and new businesses that would be established from the new public sewer system.

The county reported that it is also seeking funding for phase one of Brewster's revitalization plan that involves a transit-oriented development proposal to replace the existing buildings between Main Street, Railroad Avenue and Marvin Avenue, and the Southeast Museum to the east. The development would feature a shared below grade parking structure for 540 cars, with two mixed-use buildings around a central open space plaza. The buildings will include 290 apartments and 32,000 square feet of retail and commercial space.

Roberto said the Route 6 sewer and water line extension project with the City of Danbury, CT is very exciting because it would create new business opportunities that currently do not exist in that area. "If this project comes to fruition and I know they are working very hard on it, it would be a great opportunity for certain corridors in the county,"



Putnam County Economic Development Corporation celebrated its 20th Anniversary and Putnam County's Year of Business Development with an Investor Breakfast in August at the Putnam County Golf Course. From left, New York State Senator Dr. Terrance Murphy, Jill Varricchio, president Putnam County Economic Development Corporation, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell and Gerald J Klein, co-chairman of PCEDC Board and President of Tompkins Mahopac Bank.

he said.

While businesses have been frustrated in the past over some stalled projects or initiatives that have failed to take flight in Putnam, Varricchio and Roberto said that the recent successes such as: the redevelopment of Tilly Foster Farm, the development at the former Butterfield Hospital, the redevelopment of the Putnam County Golf Course, and the ambitious Envision Brewster program are helping create a new business environment for the county.

"Once you get a few projects done, word will go out that things are getting done in Putnam County," Roberto said.

Varricchio added that while some high-profile projects may have encountered some delay, there are a host of projects being put forward by real estate brokers and investors that are progressing.

She pointed to the Envision Brewster TOD initiative, noting that, "Envision Brewster is really taking everybody by storm. Everybody I talk to believes it is

something that is needed, overdue and they are excited about it. There are opportunities at all levels."

The project has fueled interest from technology-oriented companies and even from a higher educational institution that might want to have a presence in a re-imagined Brewster that attracts the highly-sought after Millennial demographic.

Varricchio said that moving forward while the PEDC is seeking to help foster new development and investment opportunities in Putnam, it must also protect what makes Putnam unique and therefore embark on a smart, balanced growth approach to economic development.

She said that the county must continue to harness the opportunities it has as a tourist destination and pursue development opportunities near mass transit. The PEDC has formed an Alliance for Balanced Growth Committee that is attempting to be pro-active in identifying possible development sites that are near shovel-ready status.

To close out its major events in 2016, the PEDC will hold a "Moving Forward Together" recognition dinner on Nov. 22 at the Garrison Inn. The program, which will continue to recognize PEDC's 20th Anniversary and the Year of Business Development, will also recognize Putnam County's municipal officials. The program, which begins at 6 p.m., will also feature guest speaker Jason Bram, research officer, regional analysis function for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Trades Union Buys Putnam County Property for Training Center

By John Jordan

BREWSTER—For years officials with Laborers Local No. 60 of Hawthorne had to be creative when trying to secure space to train its membership, using other trade union facilities and sometimes even vacant parking lots for classrooms and field training. That was until they found a home in Putnam County.

Real Estate In-Depth visited Laborers Local No. 60's new training facility

counties perform heavy highway, road, bridge and utility work, can finally have its own facility to train its membership, which has grown thanks to the strong local economy to 1,030 active members. Local 60 was chartered in October 1928 and originally was headquartered in Yonkers and moved to its current headquarters facility in Hawthorne in the 1980s.

Ascencao, who was elected business



The Laborers Local No. 60 Training & Education Center building in Brewster.

at 50 Prospect Hill Road in Brewster. Local 60 Business Manager Anthony Ascencao said the union acquired the 5,000-square-foot building and its adjoining three acres of land for approximately \$1.1 million in April of this year. The union subsequently performed renovations to the building to convert the former office space into classroom and training space. At press time, tradesmen were putting the finishing touches on the new training center.

The union, whose members live and work in Westchester and Putnam

manager two-and-a-half years ago, said one of his chief goals upon taking office was finding a site for a training facility, which he said was "long overdue."

"What we were doing before this was kind of piecing it together," Ascencao said. "We were using the Construction Industry Council's (of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc.) building in Tarrytown and their parking lot, we used the parking lot of our union hall (in Hawthorne) and inside for classrooms, and we would use various VFW clubs; wherever we could get a spot, that is where



Local 60's Trench & Excavation Safety class is conducted outside the training center facility.

we would train."

He continued that for digging and excavation, the Laborers would use training facilities of Operating Engineers Local No. 137. "We were all over the place," Ascencao noted.

After just a few months in Putnam County, Ascencao said the union seized on an opportunity to cement its future in Brewster. He revealed that the union is in contract to acquire an additional 24 acres adjacent to its facility through its Realtor Kevin Callahan of Covington Commercial Realty of Brewster.

The union has no plans at the moment to build on the property, but uses the property around its training center for outside field training.

Ascencao said that the union conducted a search for more than a year of both Westchester and Putnam counties for its new training center. "It was tough to find property in Westchester, affordable property in Westchester. Putnam County was cheaper and afforded us more opportunities and more land. We

needed not only a building; we needed a good amount of land. We do most of our training outside."

He added, "We could find buildings (in Westchester) that had a lot of square footage, but not much outside space for us to do the work we need to do. In Putnam County we were able to find more land."

In fact, the property was not on the market for sale. Ascencao said that Callahan had sold the former construction contractor's building to a pool supply company about two years ago and in conversations with that firm was able to strike a deal for the union to buy the property.

Frank Bisignano, president and training director for Laborers Local No. 60, said that the union conducts 33 different classes for its members and will conduct approximately 10,000 training hours by year's-end. Among the litany of courses offered by Local 60 include: HASMAT and OSHA safety courses, hoisting and

Continued on page 16

**Putnam County's
Full Service
Real Estate Company**

J. PHILIP
REAL ESTATE

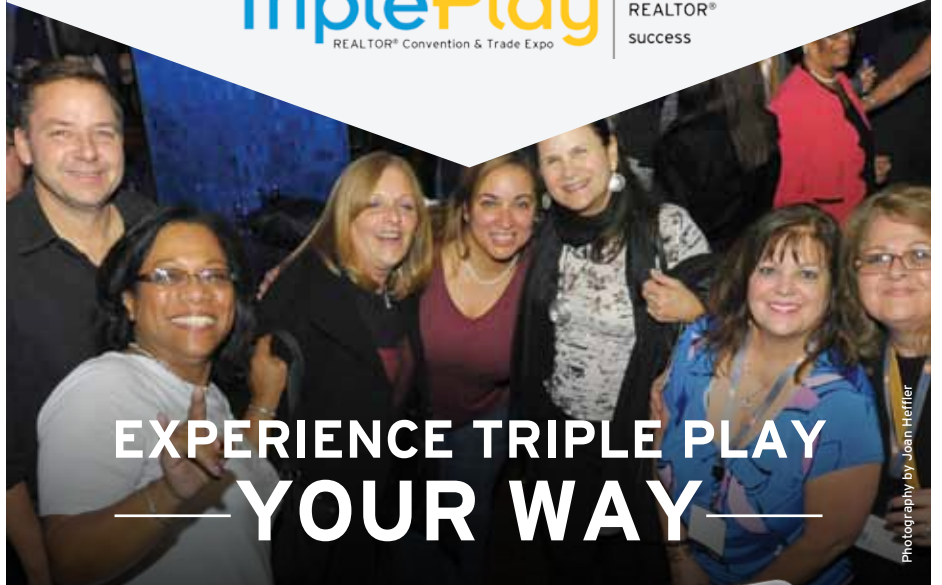
J. PHILIP
COMMERCIAL GROUP

Jphilip.com ♦ 914.338.8218 ♦ Jphilipcommercial.com

REGISTER TODAY

December 5-8, 2016
Atlantic City Convention Center, NJ

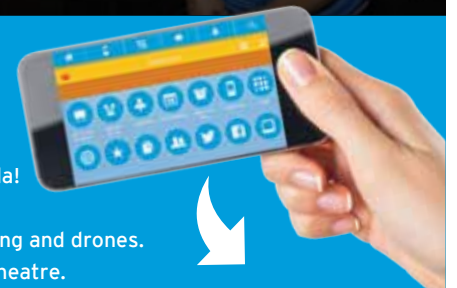
TriplePlay | promoting
REALTOR®
SUCCESS



**EXPERIENCE TRIPLE PLAY
YOUR WAY**

Triple Play 2016 will feature:

- Exciting new speakers.
- Free CE credit.
- Flexible scheduling - build your own agenda!
- Pre-convention designation courses.
- Opening day sessions about video marketing and drones.
- Vendor presentations in the Trade Expo Theatre.
- Morning coffee with exhibitors.
- YPN, Icebreaker and State Receptions.



Visit REALTORTriplePlay.com
and download the
Triple Play mobile app

▶ Register early to
pay just \$89*!
*When you register online
between 9/15 and 10/17.

Play Along!
#TP16  

Hosted by the
New Jersey,
New York State
and Pennsylvania
associations of
REALTORS®



A Conversation with County Executive MaryEllen Odell

Striving to Improve the County's Fiscal Outlook and Quality of Life

Continued from page 12

and assisting families affected by addiction, which was founded by local real estate executives Carol Christiansen and Steven Salomone and his wife Susan.

The heroin opiate epidemic hits us in both areas. Socially we don't want our families to endure that suffering. Fiscally, it costs taxpayers an awful lot of money when someone is in the legal system, in the court system, when they are on social services, when they are dependent on society, on entitlements and legal aid, and it just snowballs.

We also took a look at some of the projects that I looked at when I was a legislator that were languishing and not realizing their full potential—the Putnam County Golf Course being number one. The challenges to that (project) were to develop a partnership with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to leverage East of Hudson funds in order to establish a good infrastructure down there that complimented the facility and the grounds and our responsibilities to clean water. So clearly the parking lot and all the drainage work down there helped (fulfill) our responsibilities to clean water, but also helped the facility.

Q: What was the cost of the Putnam County Golf Course redevelopment project?

Odell: We leveraged about \$8 million worth of grants, East of Hudson funds and we kicked in about \$800,000. That project is done and flourishing. It exceeded our expectations. I can say that this season all of the improvements to the course and all the improvements to the facility really hit their maximum number. So now we are looking at areas where we can exceed that—we put what they call a 'Break House' outside where we have added two bathrooms for men and ladies out there on the course. It (The Break House) also provides refreshments and that all is generating revenue. The cart paths that we kind of had to work out with through the Watershed Agreement have been completed. Overall, the course play is excellent. I am a golfer and so I talk to people all the time and residents are just so proud of the course and so happy they have it here...

Q: Is Putnam County making a profit at the golf course?

Odell: The food and beverage side is doing very well, exceeding expectations. The rounds of golf, when you match it to what is happening in the nation, we are performing above that. It is affordable golf, it is good play, and as they say in golfer language, 'The greens are rolling well.'

Q: What are Putnam County's chief attributes and how have you tried to harness those attributes to benefit the Putnam County economy?

Odell: I think you always look at the people in Putnam County and you look at this resource of talent that we possess. We have the first responders, we have the active, we have the retired...we have our military, retired and active, and we look to them for guidance and support. Certainly one thing Putnam County is very proud of it is our patriotism...

Then you look at our landscape, the lakes, the natural beauty, the resources that are here to tap into and all of the things we have identified in tourism that we promote. The golf course has certainly helped with that. We also have the Buddhist Monastery, we have the bike trails, and we have the hiking over in

Cold Spring. Talking about Cold Spring, you have all the antique shopping and the restaurants. In Mahopac, Route 6 is becoming a 'wine and dine corridor' right now. There are some terrific restaurants in that couple of mile strip. We also have Boscobel in Cold Spring



(where the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival performs during the summer months).

Cold Spring and Garrison have sort of been the moniker for tourism (in Putnam County). They sustain themselves. We have been trying to develop (tourism-related venues) on this part of the county and we have certainly identified Tilly Foster Farm as the other gateway to the county.

Q: Can you provide us an update on the redevelopment of the Tilly Foster Farm that the county has undertaken?

Odell: The most exciting recent news about Tilly was the ribbon cutting with the partnership with BOCES (see story on page 14). So we looked at the golf course, we had a plan, we had a vision, we developed a business model, we implemented and executed it and checked it off the list. Now we have turned to Tilly Foster. What is Tilly's value outside of the 199 beautiful acres? It clearly speaks to our agricultural and historic integrity. It is a gateway property being right on I-84. Metro North is right there and so are our bus lines. What have the people of Putnam County been looking for? Educational opportunities always come up. We have talked to higher education institutions in the past about opening up something here in Putnam County. Our size, which in so many ways helps us, in this instance hasn't helped us bring in a higher educational facility. So, (we turned to) BOCES.

Everyone is familiar with BOCES, everyone is familiar with what they have to offer. It is an opportunity for those individuals who choose not to further their education after high school or it gives someone an opportunity who is embarking on an encore career or a choice in a career change to look at some of the trades. BOCES curriculum has changed from back in my day in the 1970s. So the Culinary Arts program I thought was a perfect match for us. Because of our agricultural integrity and because we still have 11,000 acres of true farming acreage here in Putnam County, I thought it was a really great integration to bring that property to the people in such a way that it offered an educational experience, brought the farm-to-table experience and was also a

wonderful gateway tourist destination...

This program is just an entrée to many other programs we will be offering (at Tilly Foster Farm): bioscience programs, equine programs and we are also hoping to implement early intervention pre-K programs... This property we look at as providing endless opportunities for our agricultural integrity and history but as a good tourist destination.

Editor's Note: Odell also discussed those new programs to be undertaken with various partners. For example, the county will be working with Cornell Cooperative Extension to convert some the acreage to organic farming. "Tilly's Table," a farm-to-table themed restaurant, is scheduled to open in April 2017. The county plans to solicit Request for Proposals for the operator of the restaurant soon.

Q: Another initiative your administration has taken on is the addition of senior services at the former Butterfield Hospital development in Cold Spring. What is the status of that project?

Odell: The Butterfield project is another example of fiscal and social responsibility. The senior population makes up 25% of the Putnam County population of a little under 100,000. The senior population is trending higher in the western part of the county. For years, as long as I have been in county government, the folks in the western part of the county have been terribly underserved for services—not just for senior services, but across the board. They have to drive over here for Motor Vehicle; they have to drive over here for health screenings; for any county service they have to come over here. It is a 16-mile, one-way trip on Route 301. So, considering what their tax base is, Butterfield has always been an opportunity to offer them their tax dollars back.

Butterfield was an opportunity with a developer (Unicorn Contracting) who is building a mixed-use residential-commercial project on this campus. And the Town of Philipstown has been asking those of us in the county to help them provide a community and services center. We thought it was a perfect public-private partnership with the developer, the county and the town to give the seniors a site to enjoy, relax and have good nutrition and social programs. We are signing a lease for 6,000 square feet there.

Editor's Note: Putnam County resi-

Trades Union Buys Putnam County Property For Training Center

Continued from page 15

rigging, line and grade, pipe, scaffold and hazardous waste handling training and a host of other specialties, as well as required certification courses.

Bisignano, who has been director of training for the past year and an instructor for Local 60 for five years, is very pleased with the new training facility in Brewster.

"We had a lot of visions and a lot of talk before I came here, but now the dream is actually reality," he said. "I put catch basing out back and now the guys are going in the catch basin and practicing compliance in real conditions. I couldn't do that before."

"We want to emulate jobsite construction the best as we can to make it as real as possible," Ascencio added.

The union is currently at 100% em-

ployed of its active membership and has about 70 members working on the new Tappan Zee Bridge project and another 50 on the Algonquin gas pipeline. Other major sources of work for the union include utility work for Consolidated Edison, road and bridge construction in the region as well as onstruction work at Metro-North's Croton-Harmon yard.

"Last year we did 1.5 million man-hours, this year we will be over that," Ascencio said. Normally, the union averages around 1 million man-hours.

In the depths of the recession in 2008-2009, the union was down to around 750 active members. He said that the union recently went over the 1,000-member plateau and has not added as many members since the 1980s.

Q: What is the latest on the sewer initiative with the City of Danbury and what is this project's potential impact on the Route 6 corridor?

Editor's Note: Odell related that the county was not selected as one of the winners of a federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) federal grant in the latest round of funding awards, but said the county plans to re-apply in subsequent rounds to secure funding for the six-mile sewer (approximately \$6 million) project. The county has also applied for state Consolidated Funding Application funding for the Putnam Valley-Cortlandt sewer water project that would bring sewer and water to the central business district in the Town of Putnam Valley.

Odell: Now that we got the information that we were not awarded any funding under the TIGER grant, we are now looking at other opportunities for funding (for the Danbury-Route 6 sewer project). We will be reaching out to property owners on the corridor that would benefit (from the project), looking at some capital investors to see if they would be interested; looking at the private-public partnership concept, which has worked for us in the past. I think this project would be ripe for that P3. Clearly my role as the co-chair for NYMTC (New York Metropolitan Transportation Council) has given me some opportunities to go down some avenues and meet some folks at the federal level. Also working with the New York State Association of Counties, I am always brought ideas from my colleagues throughout New York State who have looked at opportunities like this and (shared) how they handled these situations of getting the project funded, creating the local municipality buy-in and then marketing the project.

There's a Reason People Borrow Here

Mortgages with more flexibility and less red tape, especially for first-time homebuyers and those with low down payments. At HVFCU, our local mortgage experts understand this market and take the time to get to know your clients. Our free homebuyer education, sound guidance, and affordable home financing packages help prepare your clients for homeownership, making it easier for you to find them their next home.

Contact our mortgage experts at 845.463.3011 to get started.



HudsonValley[®]
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

845.463.3011 | hvfcu.org



Stepping Towards The Future For Putnam County, NY



Putnam County
Economic
Development
Corporation

Follow The Putnam County
Office Of Economic Development On:
Facebook  & Linked 



(845) 808-1021 · PutnamEDC.org