

WSPK

Quarterly Issues/Programming Report January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024

TRAFFIC/TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION AND PORT AUTHORITY

WSPK runs local traffic reports at 6a, 6:30a, 7a, 7:30a, 8a, 8:30a, 4:30p, 4:50p, 5:20p, 5:50p and 6:20p. Here, WSPK delivers information impacting the travel concerns related to Metro North, MTA Bridges, Airports as well as local road, parkways, highways and interstates. Road construction warning and information were also covered. These live reports run Monday through Friday.

January 5, news segment, 8a, :30 - - The closing of the northbound lanes of the New York State Thruway/I-87 between exit 17 in Newburgh and exit 18 in New Paltz was scheduled to occur on Saturday, January 6 and last for at least 12 hours but has been postponed due to the potential for heavy snowfall this weekend. Thruway Authority officials said, "With several inches of snow expected to fall Saturday night into Sunday, the Thruway Authority has decided to postpone this work for the safety of all involved — our motorists, our employees, and the crews involved in the removal of the overpass — and to allow our maintenance forces to focus their efforts on clearing and treating the highway. The overpass removal will be rescheduled as soon as the weather allows." The authority also issued a safety advisory to motorists for the weekend. "While this work won't be happening this weekend, many motorists will be experiencing their first snowfall of the season and should exercise caution on the roads — remember to drive slowly and don't crowd the plow." The previously scheduled closure of the northbound lanes of the Thruway (I-87) from exit 17 in Newburgh to exit 18 in New Paltz would have fully shut down to all traffic at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, January 6, for at least 12 hours so a portion of the damaged Brookside Road overpass in New Paltz could be safely removed over the northbound lanes. When the closure is rescheduled, the Plattekill Service Area will also be closed during the operation

January 18, news segment, 6a, :25 - If all goes according to plan, you could see a third lane in each direction on Route 17 by 2029-2030.

State transportation department officials and their consultants explained the process at two public sessions in the Town of Wallkill on Wednesday.

The environmental process has just begun, said DOT project manager Mark Kruk.

"We are just getting started with preliminary design. We are looking to do a notice of intent that goes to the Federal Highway Administration this spring," he said. A draft environmental impact statement could be completed by the end of 2025.

February 1, news segment, 8a, :25 - - Orange County and the STOP DWI and Traffic Safety Program have collaborated on the "Parents as Driving Partners" initiative, which fosters safer

driving habits, and creating safe drivers by encouraging active involvement and shared responsibility between teens and their parents during the early stages of driving. Orange and Putnam County officials introduced the program on Wednesday at the County's Department of Motor Vehicles office at the Government Center in Goshen. Orange County Clerk Kelly Eskew said this initiative follows similar ones already in place in Dutchess and Columbia counties. "It's to start the conversation with teen drivers on safe driving habits, and it's an agreement – there's a booklet with safety things in it, and there is an agreement in the booklet that parents and their kids can agree to, to encourage safe driving," she said. "Safe teen driving begins well before your child gets their permit," Orange County Sheriff Paul Arteta said. "They watch you, observe everything that you do, and then they mimic you. What you do while in the car with your child matters. It is critical you set a good example of safe driving habits in front of them, no matter how old they are. Be a part of their journey early on and take the pledge to continue when they finally reach driving age; it is worth the investment in their safety."

March 28, news segment, 8a, :25 - – Rockland County has filed a lawsuit against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority over its congestion pricing plan. The complaint seeks an injunction against the commencement of the upcoming Central Business District Toll in Manhattan.

"We are joining the fight against the Congestion Pricing Plan and its grossly unfair impact on Rocklanders and other west of the Hudson commuters," County Executive Ed Day said Wednesday. The way the plan is being implemented is "unfair and inequitable," said County Attorney Thomas Humbach.

"If you keep your car inside the central business district and you live on 59th Street and you drive down to your office on Wall Street every day, go to restaurants and everything in midtown or south, you never have to pay the toll no matter how much congestion you are causing," he said. The complaint contends the toll is invalid and should be enjoined. State Senator James Skoufis (D, Cornwall), meanwhile, responded to the MTA passage of the plan with just four words: "See you in court."

Education

March 22, WSPK participated in the Career Fair on John Jay High School East Fishkill, 6:30a-11a.

PSA Campaigns

NY Lottery Responsible Gambling WSPK 50 spots :30's each. 1/22 – 2/25

Anderson Center for Autism (WSPK 105 :60's 1/1-3/31)

Community foundation of Orange/Sullivan Counties Hudson Valley Gives WSPK 45 :60's 3/23-3/31

PSA - American Cancer society annual PSA – (40 spots :30's 03/04-3/31)

Pamal Sales Recruitment (42 spots ;30's 3/18-3/31)

EAS weekly testing (WSPK 13 spots :10's Jan 2-March 28)

Promo - JOB NOTIFICATION ORGANIZATION APPEAL

Veteran's Issues

February 2, news segment, 6a, :25 - The State Office of Mental Health is granting Ulster County \$192,400 to fund the Dwyer Vet to Vet Peer Support program.

County Veterans Services Director Mark Cozzupoli told the legislature's Health, Human Services and Housing Committee that the program has a very important role.

"It is veterans who have social working degrees who are also trained peer mentors working with other veterans who are facing those emotional and mental health issues so they can be the first stop to commit to helping stop veteran suicide," he said.

Cozzupoli noted the program has grown to every county in the state.

February 7, news segment, 7a, :25 - Vietnam veteran and Rhinebeck resident Steven Cole received several honors and recognitions during his service in the US Army. The medals, including the Purple Heart, were misplaced in the years since he returned from Vietnam, and Congressman Pat Ryan (D, NY-18) and his staff worked diligently to replace them, according to Cole. At the Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, Cole gathered with his family and friends as the congressman presented replacement medals and honors to the soldier who was injured in a Vietnam booby trap. Cole served in the US Army 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division attached to the intelligence section in Southeast Asia. He was part of a small patrol reconnaissance and ambush team that operated in Vietnam's Central Highlands near the Cambodian border and the La Drang Valley. During a reconnaissance patrol, Sergeant Cole suffered wounds when his team took fire and he hit the deck - only to fall into a punji stick pit where one of the sharpened bamboo sticks impaled his leg. "My injury was not life-threatening. It was painful; it hurt," Cole told the attendees.

March 22, news segment, 8a. :25 - The Rumshock Veterans Village project in Port Jervis will move forward in the months ahead as Congressman Pat Ryan (D, NY-18) secured \$1 million to bring it closer to reality. The congressman will formally announce the grant this weekend. The money will be used to build 10 tiny homes for veterans on land that local developer and veterans supporter Bill Whetsel owns in the city.

Veteran homelessness, suicides and support outreach are national concerns and Port Jervis Councilman Stan Siegel, who is the veterans' representative, brought the idea to Whetsel's attention and assisted in moving it through the planning processes.

March 26, news segment, 7a, :25 - – Town Supervisor Ozzie Albra would like to explore development of tiny homes for veterans in Fishkill.

The town had eyed land for such a project, but its availability was lost.

Albra would like to explore something similar to the Rumshock Village for veterans in the City of Port Jervis. “It could take some time. We are waiting to see what the governor comes up with her housing address and once we find out what is going on with that, then we can make a program in the Town of Fishkill that can help with veterans and maybe some accessory buildings or accessory dwellings in the Town of Fishkill,” he said.

The project in Port Jervis will see 10 tiny homes constructed for homeless veterans.

Tourism

January 29, news segment, 8a, :30 - The Bannerman Castle Trust will receive a \$107,000 state grant for repairs and upgrades to Bannerman’s Island in the Hudson River off the Town of Fishkill. The funding will be used to repair the trails from the waterfront dock to the new section of the North Trail. The project includes replacing two floating docks, repairing steps on the staircase, installing a new outdoor classroom/multi-purpose deck, replacing the concrete sidewalk, and installing railing on the middle section of the North Trail.

Friends of Mills Mansion will receive \$300,000 to restore the walls and ceilings of the mansion’s historic kitchen creating a new space for programming at Staatsburgh State Historic Site.

Walkway Over the Hudson will receive a more than \$33,000 grant to create a strategic plan to guide the next phase of its growth by engaging the public and several stakeholders to determine how the Walkway can be a true resource to the community.

Mohonk Preserve will receive \$41,000 to create a capital improvement plan for the Samuel F. Pryor III Shawangunk Gateway Campground that considers the water system, drainage, septic, trash and recycling, staff housing, parking and accessibility.

Little Stony Point Citizens Association will receive \$30,000 to create safer public access to Hudson Highlands State Park Reserve at Little Stony Point by re-engineering the gateway trail at Fair Street, installing interpretive signage along the way to raise awareness of their mission and the State Parks Centennial, and to provide ADA access to programming at the Volunteer Center and the park by resurfacing the parking lot and bridge ramp entryways.

January 30, news segment, 6a, :30 - Construction is continuing at the home of the Hudson Valley Renegades. The facility, known as Heritage Financial Park, is owned by Dutchess County and the legislature has allocated funds to make repairs and improvements to the ballpark that has been in operation since 1994. Current construction is taking place just over the left field wall and is visible from Route 9D. The large building, currently shielded in bright pink insulation, will house the team's clubhouse on the ground level and feature a conference center on the top floor. The conference center will be available for rent for events including weddings. Construction is intended to be completed before the start of the 2024 Renegades season, with the first home game being played on April 16. Additional schedule information can be found

here. The ballpark hosts over 200 events annually and has generated millions of dollars of economic impact on the local community, according to Renegades officials.

March 6, news segment, 7a, :30 - – For the second year in a row, Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus and the county's Tourism and Film Office will begin the Municipal Tourism Grant program, which will assist municipalities with additional funding as they plan and execute tourism initiatives. "These grants will help our towns, villages, and cities to promote and highlight some of the great events that they offer throughout the year," Neuhaus said. "Orange County has many popular events that generate interest and revenue, and this grant program allows us to show our support and invest in our communities. Building upon last year's successful grant program, we look forward to receiving applications from our municipalities and continuing the promotion of our beautiful county."

Applications will be sent to municipal leaders and will be accepted until October 1. Grants of up to \$4,999 will be awarded to municipalities based upon need and application approval.

Recipients must use the funds provided for promotion or execution of a tourism event and/or activity that will result in the attraction of visitors to Orange County. Only municipalities may apply.

Economy

January 4, news segment, 7a, :20 - – The Orange County Partnership is setting its sights in the new year on attracting advanced manufacturing semiconductor and supply chain businesses. To that end, Partnership President Maureen Halahan will be attending a symposium on that in San Francisco this coming weekend. "We have fabulous relationships with site selectors all over the country but we don't yet have a bonded relationship with companies in advanced manufacturing and supply chain, and that's what we are going after in 2024," she said. "We have some sites that can accommodate it. We don't know exactly what we are going to expect but we know the guest list, we know our targets and we know what we plan on doing when we get out there." Halahan said while Dutchess and Ulster counties have iParks where IBM was once located, Orange County has its own benefits to attract global technology manufacturers.

Health/Public Outreach

January 31, news segment, 6a, :20 - households that come to us that are experiencing very serious medical and health concerns and so they are really trying to juggle all of these expenses." Fareground is dedicated to nourishing the community by operating free marketplaces, community fridges, tiny food pantries, and other programs to distribute fresh and prepared foods. Just recently, the group moved to a former restaurant space at 37 Lamplight Street in Beacon where they have more kitchen and freezer storage space for foods they distribute, most of which they receive from the Food Bank of the Hudson Valley and local farms.

February 6, news segment, 8a, :25 - – The Westchester County Departments of Community Mental Health and Corrections have teamed up to implement a new program that unites both mental health and addition peer training at the county jail.

Called “Lives Forward,” the program will connect people who are successfully in recovery known as “peers,” with those who are currently seeking recovery.

The program began on Monday, said Joe Glazer, Mental Health Deputy Commissioner Joseph Glazer.

“We have 10 students who are starting today. People who are in the facility, who fit the criteria of what we are looking for, and are willing – and this is the important part – are willing to go forward and talk about their experience, their experience in recovery, their experience with criminal with criminal justice, their experience with incarceration,” he said.

Nory Padilla, first deputy commissioner of corrections, said the new program will place participants on a path that allows them to transition back into the community with guidance and support.

Taxes:

January 30, news segment, 8a, :30 - The State Department of Taxation and Finance announced the start of the 2024 income tax filing season.

The tax department and the IRS began processing income tax returns on Monday, January 29. The deadline to file returns and pay any tax owed (or request an extension of time to file) is midnight on April 15. The Department urges taxpayers to explore submitting their taxes using Free File software available on the tax department website at www.tax.ny.gov.

Taxpayers who meet income and other qualifications may be eligible to file both federal and New York State returns with private online tax preparers at no cost through the tax department website using Free File. “Too often, taxpayers who use commercial tax preparation software are surprised by charges for additional fees when completing their annual filing,” said Acting Commissioner Amanda Hiller. “For a truly free experience, go to the New York State Tax Department website, where there are no added costs or hidden fees – ever – for those who qualify.” Free File information is available in multiple languages on the department’s website. The tax department website also offers income tax filing resources for taxpayers. It explains how to get started, how to check for available tax credits and how to check the status of your refund. It also provides tips for hiring a tax preparer for people who prefer to have someone do their taxes for them.

Public Safety/War on Drugs:

January 5, news segment, 8a, :25 - The Newburgh Free Academy campuses opened three hours late on Thursday after the school district received an “unverified threat” Wednesday night mentioning the high school, district officials wrote on social media.

The delay allowed local police time to investigate the matter.

All other school buildings in the Enlarged Newburgh City School District opened on their normal schedules.

January 8, news segment, 7a, :25 - -- The director of a New York City-based anti-violence program has been sentenced in Orange County Court to 10 years in state prison on his guilty plea on felony drug and conspiracy charges. Michael Rodriguez, 49, of Yonkers is the director of Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence, an anti-violence program that received government money and works in the Bronx to promote safer streets. He will also face five years of post-release supervision, forfeit a car and \$165,000 as ill-gotten proceeds of his crimes. Middletown City Police had engaged in a two-year investigation into cocaine trafficking in around the city allegedly committed by Angelica Rodriguez, also known as 'Jelly,' 49, of Otisville. The Orange County Drug Task Force assisted in the investigation.

January 22, news segment, 6a, :30 - The new more than 16,000 square foot Beacon City firehouse is taking shape. Construction began last summer and it will be completed in less than 11 months, says Mayor Lee Kyriacou. "We are expecting to open it before the end of this year and it's just about closed in now and I think all of the wells for our geothermal are done so most of the work is going to move inside to start to finish," he said. The former main firehouse, at the same location as the new one, was 10,000 square feet in size. The new facility will include bays for additional firetrucks and ambulances. The project will consolidate apparatus that has been located at three different firehouses in the hybrid department of paid firefighters and volunteers.

February 2, news segment, 7a, :25 -- The Dutchess County Drug Task Force has arrested a Poughkeepsie man suspected of selling fentanyl mixed with xylazine, known on the street as "Tranq" or "Zombie Drug." The arrest is part of an ongoing investigation into the sale of drugs including fentanyl and "Tranq" on the south side of the City of Poughkeepsie. The target area, according to the task force, has been the area of Academy and Montgomery Streets. Joseph Parquet, 32, was arrested around noon on Thursday, February 1, in front of Clinton Elementary School on Montgomery Street in Poughkeepsie. At the time of his arrest, the accused drug dealer had a large quantity of fentanyl packaged for sale in his possession. He was taken into custody and charged with the felonies of criminal possession of a controlled substance and criminal possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell. It was learned that Parquet had active warrants in the Towns of Hyde Park and Poughkeepsie

February 13, news segment, 6a, :25 - -- It is a known fact that the City of Newburgh, like other urban areas in the Hudson Valley, has a chronic illicit drug problem. Councilman Robert McLymore, whose full-time job is as a lieutenant in the Town of Wallkill Police Department, wants to know what the Newburgh PD is doing about the problem. "I would like to have the data for narcotics enforcement. Apparently, we have a lot of narcotic issues in our city, so I want to start addressing that," he told fellow council members at Monday night's session. "Also, is there a need for narcotics enforcement; what is needed, personnel, equipment." The Newburgh Police Department is often aided by the FBI Hudson Valley Safe Streets Task Force in investigating drug trafficking

Tolerance/Anti-Semitism/Hate Crimes/Racial Injustice/Black Lives Matter/Policing

January 10, news segment, 6a, :45 - - Orange County District Attorney David Hoovler acknowledged Tuesday, January 9 as Law Enforcement Appreciation Day (LEAD) this year.

The appreciation day is an annual nationwide day of support for police officers, established by the organization Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS).

“Police officers work every day to protect and serve us all,” said Hoovler.

“Their work is often thankless in addition to dangerous, so we should all make sure to take time to show our gratitude for our law enforcement officers. I urge decision makers to increase the pay for law enforcement to attract and retain skilled officers who will deliver justice fairly.”

Hoovler said while the day “stands as a reminder to appreciate our law enforcement officers, I encourage everyone to show that same appreciation every day of the year. Today, I call on Orange County’s citizens to show their support for our men and women who, for us, daily put on uniforms of blue, and black, and gray, and green.”

The LEAD organizers at COPS have suggested several ways that citizens may show their support for police officers:

- Wear blue clothing in support of law enforcement.
- Send a card of support to your local police department or state agency.
- Share a story about a positive law enforcement experience on social media.
- Ask children in your community to write letters in support of law enforcement.
- Participate in Project Blue Light - Proudly display your blue light in support of law enforcement. Advertise your support through local media outlets/billboards.
- Post the public service announcement supplied by COPS to your organization’s webpage or social media pages.
- Coordinate and/or participate in a Blue Blood Drive.

For further information about Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, please visit the COPS

Covid:

March 12, news segment, 8a, :20 - An audit of the Ulster County CARES I program to provide aid for businesses impacted by COVID-19 found “significant issues” with the awarding of funds, County Comptroller March Gallagher said Monday.

The audit found discrepancies from the intent of the relief plan, she said.

“Eight ineligible businesses were made awards, ineligibility based on not being Ulster County residents or making too much income,” she said. “We found that the use of the funds, we felt, may have deviated from legislative priorities.” The audit found one case where funds were used to fit up an Airbnb and another instance where a potentially fraudulent award resulted in a \$15,000 loss to county taxpayers.

Gallagher said the county must “redouble our efforts to ensure that program implementation is aligned with legislative intent.

The county had planned a CARES II but that was delayed pending the outcome of the audit of the first program.

Black History Month

February: to celebrate Black History Month WSPK posted several social posts acknowledging Black History Month.

January 15, news segment, 8a, :30 - -- Well over 100 people participated in the annual Dr., Martin Luther King Jr. event in Middletown on Sunday. Sponsored by the Middletown Interfaith Council, the attendees heard singing, dancing and speeches. Father Victor Sharrizin, president of the interfaith group, said unfortunately we are facing issues Dr. King confronted all those years ago. "We are seeking such a resurgence of hate and separatism and elitism, and it's vital to continue to get this message out," he said. "There are folks who actually care about each other. We actually get along with each other; we work together." Those at the commemoration were black, brown and white, something of which Middletown Mayor Joseph DeStefano took note. "That's Middletown. It's a diverse community both ethnically and racially. It's a community that supports each other," he said. Other Dr. King Day ceremonies are being held around the region today (Monday), the national holiday marking Dr. King's birth.

January 16, news segment, 7a, :25 - - The Black History Committee of the Hudson Valley honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. all day Monday on the federal holiday, and his actual birthday, January 15, at the Baptist Temple in Newburgh. Bishop Terry Dorsey, president of the Black History Committee, delivered remarks acknowledging the work of MLK. Sadie Tallie, founder of the committee, also praised the work of Dr. King. State Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson and Newburgh Mayor Torrance Harvey greeted the gathering. The program included speeches, youth workshops and songs, including "Lift Every Voice and Sing," often referred to as "The Black National Anthem." The civil rights leader, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is the only federal holiday dedicated to volunteerism. The holiday encourages Americans to observe the day with acts of civic work and community service in honor of King's legacy.

March 1, news segment, 6a, :35 - The City of Kingston closed out February Thursday evening with a celebration "Honoring the Dream: From Our Ancestors to Us," at city hall to honor Black History Month. "We have a leap year," said Mayor Steve Noble, "so we have one extra day of Black History Month. So we thought it would be a great opportunity throw an event here at city hall." The event featured talks by Michael Sussman, a civil rights attorney, and Anthony Dandridge, black history professor at SUNY New Paltz and executive director of the A.J. Williams-Myers African Roots Center. "One of the banners we have upstairs is someone who's a Kingston native who is no longer with us, Everette Hodge," said Noble. Kingston's Everette Hodge Community Center is dedicated to Hodge's memory.

Weather/Winter Storms:

January 8, news segment, 7a, :20 - -- In areas of Putnam County, the new year's first snow fall averaged about five inches. In parts of Orange and Ulster, a foot or more of the white stuff fell.

Municipal plow crews were out plowing, sanding salting the roads to minimize travel problems. By Sunday evening, most roads were just wet creating the worry of slippery conditions as temperatures fall. By mid-evening police were being called out to accidents with skidding and a couple reporting overturned vehicles.

January 8, news segment, 8a, :20 - THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HAS DECLARE A FLOOD WATCH IN THE COUNTIES OF ULSTER, GREENE, DUTCHESS, COLUMBIA, AND SULLIVAN

January, 10, news segment, 7a, :30 - Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus has activated the county's Emergency Operations Center in response to Winter Storm Finn.

"The county's emergency services team continues to monitor the storm closely and our public works crews, in collaboration with the Orange County Sheriff's Office, State Police and local police, will make every effort to keep roads passable and safe," Neuhaus said. "I encourage residents to check in on their neighbors, particularly senior citizens, during the storm and travel only if necessary." For more information about storm-preparation efforts in Orange County as well as current weather advisories, go to the county's emergency services website at www.orangecountygov.com or its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/OrangeCountyEmergencyManagement/

January 17, news segment, 8a, :25 - -- Tuesday's frigid temperatures did not give sand and salt a chance to melt the snow that accumulated on area roads.

Several accidents were reported from cars skidding off roads to trucks tipping over.

Road crews were out for much of the day but could not seem to keep up with the roads freezing over. Schools were closed on Tuesday and several have delayed openings today (Wednesday) because of icy roads. Check your district's website or Facebook page to learn if your schools have a late start.

Education/Schools:

January 19, news segment, 7a, :30 - Governor Hochul's Executive Budget is cutting funding to several school districts in the Hudson Valley, including the Poughkeepsie City School District. State Senator Rob Rolison (R, Poughkeepsie) said the budget also makes cuts to other school districts he represents, including Wallkill Central Schools, Beacon City Schools, and the Garrison Union Free School District. The Poughkeepsie City School District stands to lose \$1.4 million in projected state aid for 2024-25, which equates to a 1.4 percent reduction, according to Superintendent Dr. Eric Rosser. The Governor's budget summary says "Foundation Aid is the State's main education operating aid formula. It is focused on allocating State funds equitably to all school districts, especially high-need districts, based on student need, community wealth, and regional cost differences," and says there is a funding increase of 2.1 percent, totaling a \$507 million increase across the state. Poughkeepsie schools will lose \$600,000 in Foundation Aid, according to the governor's office. Additionally, the district is losing more than \$800,000 in Charter School Transition Aid and \$840,000 in Universal Pre-K money.

Rosser says the potential cuts "will place some challenges on the school district being able to continue forward progress and meeting the needs of the children and the families here in the

City of Poughkeepsie." The superintendent also pointed out that his district is in the last year of COVID funding, which is \$1.5 million. "Combined with the cut from the state, it's a \$2.9 million deficit," in a budget that he expected to see an increase in state funding.

January 22, news segment, 8a, :30 - The City of Poughkeepsie's new mayor plans to keep the momentum going with the Children's Cabinet, a collaboration with the city's school district. Mayor Yvonne Flowers said she wants to work with Schools Superintendent Eric Rosser to address ongoing concerns. "If our children are going through housing insecurity, they are going through food insecurity, they are dealing with mental health challenges, they are dealing with other things that are causing them not to focus on their education, then you see a lot of our kids as they get further into the school system, they start to drop out," she said. And those are the issues Flowers wants to tackle. The Children's Cabinet was first formed with Rosser and former Mayor Rob Rolison, now a state senator.

February 1, news segment, 6a, :25 - - For the first time in 13 years, all five elementary schools in the Poughkeepsie City School District have been designated as being in "Good Standing" by the State Department of Education. The announcement comes just days after Governor Hochul announced plans to cut funding to the struggling school district - a plan that is opposed by Senator Rob Rolison and PCSD Superintendent Dr. Eric Rosser.

The improved designations for the 2023-2024 school year mean all elementary schools in the district have demonstrated progress in the areas of student achievement, student growth, chronic absenteeism, and English language learners. The district rolled out an absentee program in the fall of last year to help improve attendance. More on the attendance plan can be found [here](#). "I am beyond ecstatic of this historical achievement the Poughkeepsie City School District has achieved. For over a decade, the Poughkeepsie City School District has been considered a low-performing school district," said Dr. Rosser. "The efforts of all of our elementary school teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and strategic community partners are evidenced through the 2023-2024 state accountability designations."

February 2, news segment, 8a, :30 - - Wappingers Central School District has received \$2.5 million in state funding to expand and support practices that promote mental health and wellness. The program intends to improve the ability of staff and students to identify mental health concerns and increase help-seeking behaviors.

The funding for the district is part of Governor Hochul's \$100 million New York State Recover from COVID School Programs (RECOVS) grant program to address pandemic learning loss and provide students with mental health support.

"New York is making historic investments to ensure all of our students are on the path towards success," Governor Hochul said. "This funding will help our teachers and school staff pinpoint where students have fallen behind and provide students with the crucial resources needed to support their mental health, especially after the pandemic."

Wappingers School Superintendent Dr. Dwight Bonk welcomed the funding. "The health, welfare, and safety of our students and staff remains our top priority. In recent years, we have added staff and services to address mental health and foster a safe school environment: this includes additional social workers, psychologists, nurses, and local law enforcement."

Employment:

January 4, news segment, 6a, 25 - The State Department of Labor says unemployment tax forms will be automatically mailed to those who claimed benefits in 2023.

The 1099-G provides the total amount of money a customer received in benefits during the year, as well as any adjustments or tax withholding made to those benefits.

Customers can expect the forms to arrive in mailboxes by the end of January. By mid-January, customers will be able to access their 1099-G tax forms on the labor department website.

"We aim to alleviate the stress of tax season by simplifying the process for our customers," said Commissioner Roberta Reardon. "Eliminating the need for calls to request forms takes a proactive stance, ensuring timely and accurate tax completion for New Yorkers who've received unemployment benefits, making the process smoother and more successful."

Housing

January 11, news segment, 6a, :25 - – The Hudson Valley Property Owners Association plans to sue the City of Newburgh over its declaration that it qualifies for renter protection under the Emergency Tenant Protection Act. In order to opt into the program, a community must prove that its vacancy rate is under five percent and Executive Director Rich Lanzarone said Newburgh's calculations were wrong. "The vacancy study they based the resolution on was defective . It contained multiple mistakes. They were informed in advance of the mistakes; they went ahead anyway," he said. "When you correct the mistakes it brings the vacancy rate to above five percent, at least 6.35 percent." Lanzarone said his organization plans to file an Article 78 proceeding challenging the city's decision in Orange County State Supreme Court. The landlords' group is currently in court challenging the City of Kingston's similar designation.

January 18, news segment, 7a, :25 - – Tenants and advocates rallied in Newburgh on Wednesday evening to celebrate the city council's approval of rent stabilization. Advocate and Orange County Legislator Genesis Ramos said there was more than one message of the evening. "To both celebrate the ETPA (Emergency Tenant Protection Act) win, to emphasize ad put focus on the need for further education and information to the community members who are impacted by ETPA, and to really support and uplift the launch of the Statewide Housing for All Coalition, she said. The goal of the rent stabilization movement includes good cause eviction protections, rental assistance, and deploying the public sector to create new social housing. The end goal of tenants' groups is to have rent stabilization approved on the state level.

January 29, news segment, 6a, :25 - – A survey of homeless individuals was taken across America last week as part of a mission to create quality affordable homes for all. While surveys are still being tallied, including in Orange County, one of the county's cities – Port Jervis – reported a total of 21 individuals surveyed. Jack Austin, Port Jervis' coordinator for the annual Housing and Urban Development Point in Time Count (PIT), conducted the city's count with Orange County veteran Andy Finnegan. "They in turn transfer that data back to the states and municipalities so that it is of great use locally as well. It does impact funding that the federal and state governments release to the various municipalities, so it has that effect as well," he

said. “But it really gives the government a much better handle on who the homeless are and what their conditions are.” Austin reported 15 men and 6 women as having been surveyed at various locations during the city’s counts. Those spoken with included some who regularly spend nights at the Port Jervis warming station, where Austin is also a coordinator. He and others routinely assist the homeless through the warming station throughout the cold months.

January 29, 8a, :30 - Enterprise Community Partners has expanded its Making Moves housing mobility program to help families secure better housing. The new area of concentration will be in Orange and Dutchess counties, said Catherine West, the senior program officer.

“The Making Moves program is a regional program seeking to address residential segregation throughout New York State, so we serve Section 8 housing choice vouchers families with children under the age of 18 that are seeking to move into neighborhoods with lower poverty rates and better performing schools,” she said. “Enterprise administers the program with funding from New York State Homes and Community Renewal.”

The new areas of concentration will be in Newburgh and Poughkeepsie and surrounding areas of Orange and Dutchess counties.

February 21, news segment, 6a, :30 - – The US Supreme Court has declined to hear rent stabilization cases and advocates say that has a positive ramification for other communities including those in the Hudson Valley.

Ritti Singh of Housing Justice for All said the court’s decision should apply to the cities of Kingston and Newburgh, both of which have declare a housing crisis.

“What we expect this to mean for the local challenges to rent stabilization in the Hudson Valley is that cities’ decisions to opt into rent stabilization will be upheld,” she said.

“The solution to New York’s housing crisis is more stability for renters; too many tenants in unregulated private rentals still live in constant fear of the next rent hike or eviction,” said Cea Weaver, campaign coordinator of Housing Justice for All. “Our state must ensure that every New Yorker has a safe, stable home by passing statewide Good Cause Eviction protections and continuing to strengthen and expand rent stabilization for New Yorkers.”

Go Green Initiatives/Green Space/Renewable Energy:

January 5, news segment, 7a, :25 - – Legislation to require the state to develop a Clean Energy Mapping Tool to allow communities to identify lands best suited for renewable energy siting has been signed into law by the governor. The measure was sponsored by Assemblywoman Didi Barrett (D, Hudson) and Senator Michelle Hinchey (D, Saugerties).

Barrett said the measure brings localities to the table before siting decisions are made.

“We have seen the challenges of balancing the need for more clean energy but also preserving farmland for food and ensuring the viability of local economies and we want to be sure that our communities, our municipalities are at the table when these important decisions of siting large-scale renewable energy projects happen,” she said. Barrett said that bill empowers communities to be part of the process to ensure their voices are heard.

February 7, news segment, 6a, :30 - – The US Department of Energy has awarded \$3.4 million to Central Hudson Gas and Electric to be applied toward a turbine replacement and generator rehabilitation project for units one and two at Dashville Hydroelectric plant in the Town of Esopus. Utility company spokesman Joseph Jenkins said the upgrades are vital to the facility located on the Wallkill River. “This is important because at a time when energy supply prices remain volatile, these upgrades allow this hydroelectric facility to more efficiently produce up to 5.3 megawatts of emission-free electricity and what that does, that directly reduces the amount of power that we have to purchase on behalf of our customers,” he said. The total price tag for the project is \$11.35 million with the remainder built into the customer rates over many years, said Jenkins.

SPCA:

January 17, news segment, 7a, :25 - Just days after several animal rescue groups saved more than 20 Great Danes from horrific conditions in a Milan home, Dutchess County officials have begun investigating complaints about the Dutchess County SPCA (DCSPCA). County Legislature Chairman Will Truitt and County Executive Sue Serino indicated they will look into the situation.

After speaking with people who are familiar with the Milan rescue, the county officials indicated that an investigation into the Dutchess SPCA is likely.

"This is a horrific tragedy," said Truitt. He noted that he has heard of "numerous instances" of questionable behavior by the DCSPCA. said Truitt. "We're going to look at everything to make sure things like this don't happen again. This never should have happened," and he indicated that the agency should have intervened years earlier. The rescue that occurred on Friday, January 12 involved several out-of-county rescue groups saving the dogs from a Dutchess County residence where the owner had died

Utilities:

January 4, news segment, 6a, :30 - Westchester County has received over \$361,500 from NuEnergy, LLC. for the county's enrollment in three summer demand response programs – bringing the total money earned by the county through this program to \$1.5 million.

The county works with NuEnergy to provide it with a demand response program that both earn the county income as well as provide an opportunity to further enhance its sustainability efforts. Demand response is an electricity grid and utility-run series of programs that offer financial incentives to owners of facilities, in this case, the county, that reduce the need for kilowatts during times of high stress on the region's electric grid. It also eliminates or minimizes the need to build expensive infrastructure or fire up dormant fossil fuel burning “peaker plants.” In the program, Westchester remains on ‘stand-by’ to lower energy usage during times of great stress – like days with sweltering heat. On those “high-stress” days, the county is alerted of a “demand response” event beginning and reduces energy usage at some of its facilities like powering down a building and taking them off the electric grid.

January 5, news segment, 8a, 30 - – The State Public Service Commission has initiated formal litigation in the Fortis/Central Hudson rate case rather than negotiate the company's proposed three-year rate request.

Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger had called on regulators to pursue litigation rather than enter into confidential settlement negotiations. "I don't think there should be any rate increase until the investigation until the billing fiasco is completed and they are held accountable for it," she said. "It doesn't make any sense to proceed in the face of this ongoing investigation in my opinion." The PSC has set an evidentiary hearing for Wednesday, January 24 continuing daily as needed. The decision by the administrative law judge overseeing the case would be binding, Metzger said

January 10, news segment, 8a, :30 - The Beacon City Council has gone on record opposed to the Central Hudson Gas and Electric's proposed rate increases for delivery of electricity and natural gas. Mayor Lee Kyriacou said the double-digit hikes are exorbitant, especially given the ongoing issues with billing that the utility has been facing for over a year.

It certainly doesn't give a lot of credit to the ability that they have been through such a difficult time in terms of billing," he said. "And I understand there are lots of issues, but it just looks pretty bad." Beacon's opposing is the latest of many municipalities that have gone on record with the State Public Service Commission.

January 18, news segment, 6a, :30 - An economic impact study conducted by HR&A Advisors found that Orange and Rockland Utilities contributes \$1.9 billion annually to New York's and New Jersey's economies. The utility also supports more than 3,400 jobs through direct employees and additional jobs that are generated through the company's economic activity. O&R President Robert Sanchez said the utility is "building the grid of the future to provide our New York and New Jersey customers with safe, reliable, clean energy. By hiring a diverse workforce, creating an inclusive workplace, and supporting the trades, local businesses, and women and minority business enterprises, we're also supporting the values of the communities we serve." The study found that in 2022, Orange and Rockland Utilities paid \$159 million in state and local taxes in New York, and \$25 million in state and local taxes in New Jersey. That's enough tax revenue to pay 2,300 public school teachers or 2,800 social workers.

Over 95 percent of O&R employees live in New York or New Jersey. The typical O&R employee works at the company for 14 years, more than twice the national industry average. Across O&R's workforce, the study found that 27 percent of employees identify as female and 28 percent as people of color, both higher than the national averages.

Approximately 52 percent of O&R's employees are union members of IBEW Local 503. That number is 2.5 times the industry average, the study said.

January 25, news segment, 7a, :30 - As billing issues continue to plague Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corporation, the utility announced it will hold the first of two customer open houses this year in its Kingston office on Thursday, February 15 and in its Newburgh District Office on Wednesday, March 6. The sessions will be by appointment only and customers will be provided a time slot to meet with a customer service representative who will walk each customer through their account in a one-on-one setting to address any questions or concerns.

“Rebuilding trust in our communities will take time and it will happen one customer at a time,” Central Hudson Senior Vice President of Customer Services Anthony Campagiorni said. “We believe that these in-person events, along with our transition to monthly meter reading, which is already underway, are vital to rebuilding that trust.” The company says that since December 2022, it has worked to increase its overall accessibility to the communities it serves by inviting more than 100,000 customers to 10 different open house-style events throughout the service area, including two previous events in Kingston and Newburgh.

January 30, news segment, 8a, :30 - Congressman Pat Ryan (NY-18) joined with state and local elected officials and business owners in Poughkeepsie to denounce the rate hikes proposed by Central Hudson Gas & Electric. The utility company is proposing a rate increase of 16 percent for electric and 19 percent for natural gas delivery.

“Central Hudson’s proposed double-digit rate increase is blatant corporate greed,” said Congressman Pat Ryan. “Raising prices this much, with Hudson Valley families already feeling the economic pressure, would be unacceptable even if everything at Central Hudson was running perfectly. But everything isn’t running perfectly or even close to it,” he said, adding on behalf of our entire Hudson Valley community, we’re calling on the PSC to reject Central Hudson’s rate increase.” Central Hudson spokesman Joe Jenkins said the utility is “committed to addressing and resolving all of our customer concerns in a timely fashion, and that includes those that come to us through our elected officials.”

Gaza Attack/anti-Semitism/Palestine

January 22, news segment, 6a, :30 -- Dozens of members of Jewish Federations of Ulster, Dutchess and Orange counties thanked Congressman Pat Ryan (D, NY-18) for his continued work to free hostages still being held by Hamas, including Americans and the families of Hudson Valley residents. The group presented a ‘thank you’ letter with 400 signatures from local constituents to Ryan’s staff at his Kingston Office.

“The last few weeks have been exceptionally difficult for Jews both in Israel and worldwide,” the letter states. “As many have lamented, October 7th was the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Ghoulis images of non-combatants being kidnapped at gunpoint, women raped, infant children burnt alive, and entire families massacred brings to mind the very worst atrocities committed in Nazi Germany.” The letter said, “as the number of anti-Semitic incidents continues to increase at an alarming rate, we applaud your continued efforts to root out hate from the Hudson Valley.” Rondavid Gold, president of the Jewish Federation of Ulster County called Ryan a “true champion of the Hudson Valley Jewish community.”

January 25, news segment, 7a, :30 - Congressman Pat Ryan (D, NY-18) was the keynote speaker at Wednesday’s Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce breakfast. He was to address issues pertaining to the business community, but his remarks were abruptly interrupted as a dozen people stood up holding signs and demanding that he support an immediate ceasefire the fighting in Gaza. Ryan has maintained Israel has the right to defend itself following the October 7 Hamas attack that murdered over 1,000 civilians.

Maurice Shnaider, a Kingston native was at the breakfast. His sister, Margit Silverman, and his brother-in-law, Yosi Silverman, were killed on October 7th. Maurice's niece Shiri, her husband Yarden, and their children, Kfir and Ariel Bibas are still believed to be among the hostages. Maurice spoke up on behalf of Israel during the protest, noting that Hamas killed his family. Since Israel began its attacks on Gaza to root out the terrorists, over 20,000 people have been reported killed leading groups calling for him to support the ceasefire.

February 19, news segment, 8a, :30 - Rallies held in Kingston, Beacon, Poughkeepsie and Middletown on Sunday called for an end to what protestors say is Israel's ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. One of the organizers, Mia Inouye attended the Middletown rally, and she believes Israel's goal is not to eliminate the Hamas terrorist organization permanently. "We know, first of all, what's happening in Gaza right now, there no plan to get rid of Hamas. That is actually the strategy is that Israel is trying to make a land grab, and so we need to stop that, first of all, and stop the killing of civilians so that the Palestinian people can continue to pursue their own self-determination," she said. Given that Hamas' goal is to destroy Israel, Inouye was asked if the Palestinian people should take up arms to rid Gaza of Hamas. "I don't have a position on that. As an American I don't think that is our fight. I trust the Palestinian people to organize and to what the political organization is that can best represent them for self-determination." Meanwhile, Israel is said to be preparing a ground assault on Rafah.

Governor Hochul's State of the State:

January 10, news segment, 6a, :30 - Governor Kathy Hochul, the state's 57th governor, delivered the 2024 State of the State address in Albany on Tuesday. Hochul's address focused on reducing the cost of living, addressing inflation, and creating more housing throughout the state. She also addressed public safety and pledged to focus on reducing retail theft, domestic violence, and hate crimes. "The State of New York is strong, stronger today than when I became governor two years ago. It's healthier, safer, more affordable. We have traversed some rocky terrain and there are still some switchbacks before we reach the summit" she said. "If government can't keep its citizens safe, nothing else matters," she said. Hochul said that in 2023, statewide gun crimes dropped by 30 percent. She also said that modifications to the state's bail reform laws have reduced crime and have made the state safer, both indications that her public safety plan is making a difference. Hochul unveiled what she called a "targeted plan" to focus on reducing domestic violence. According to the governor, in New York City alone, 84 percent of domestic violence arrests lead to dismissals. To help hold domestic abusers accountable, Hochul pledged an additional \$20 million of targeted funding for district attorneys.

WSPK Podcasts:

www.k104online.com host a podcast page that serves as a landing spot for 3 self help/inspirational programs.

Shine On with Kacey is a Health and Happiness show with deep dives into self help topics. Here are some of the programs that covered health related topics:

- 3/24 Tapping For Love
- 3/17 Eat This and Meditate
- 3/10 Make Room for Peace
- 3/3 Let's Heal the Old Pattern
- 2/25 Walk This Way
- 2/28 Reach Out
- 2/11 WTF Do We Know
- 2/4 Clearing Stress Problems
- 1/28 An Elevation of Spirit
- 1/21 Sparks of Light in Winter
- 1/14 Talk To The Animals
- 1/7 Curious Without Judgement

Kacey's Wellness Minute is a condensed recap of Shine One host K104's Podcast Page

Happy Hour with Jonna and Karyl – a one hour show on personal empowerment that airs Sunday mornings 7a-8a.