

# WSPK

## Quarterly Issues/Programming Report January 1, 2023 – March 31, 2023

### TRAFFIC/TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTION 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 rough Friday.

January 12, news segment, 7a, :20 - A computer glitch that told pilots to beware of runway obstructions before taking off, grounded domestic commercial and military flights for Wednesday morning. The FAA was looking into the situation and US Senator Charles Schumer, at West Point in the afternoon, said it did not appear to be anything nefarious.

☒“They were looking into what caused it. They are going to get to the bottom of it and try to find out why,” he said. “So far, there is no evidence of any outside pernicious influence doing this, but they are going to keep looking at it.” The delayed flights were expected to cause secondary issues at airports on Thursday.

January 17, news segment, 8a, :20 - Ridership on Sullivan County’s transit system, “Move Sullivan,” has rise by 133 percent since the county eliminated the bus fares last August. Ridership went from 90 passengers per day to 210 and dropping of fares and double routes from two to four have contributed to the growth, said Laura Quigley, commissioner of the Division of Community Resources. “The feedback that we’ve gotten from riders is obviously super positive about not charging the \$2 fare. They are very grateful for that,” he said. Last summer the county legislature vote to pick up the cost of the service provided by a contract bus company.

January 20, news segment, 8a, :20 - First responders in Westchester County have found a missing single-engine plane that disappeared late Thursday afternoon. The two people onboard were reported to have been killed. FAA air traffic controllers lost radio contact with the aircraft near the county airport around 5 p.m. The aircraft was traveling to Cuyahoga County Airport in Ohio from New York when it went missing and was not visible on radar. Several police and fire departments were dispatched to the scene to search for the missing aircraft that vanished from radar approximately two miles from the airport in Westchester. The Beechcraft A36 had departed from JFK airport in New York City and was traveling to Ohio. The FAA said that the airplane reported having engine issues as it neared the Westchester County Airport.

February 6, news segment, 7a, :30 - – Route 17 was shut down in both directions for a while at mid-morning on Saturday when a natural gas main ruptured under the overpass at Arcadia Road in the Town of Goshen. Goshen and Chester fire departments responded to the scene along with the State Police. New York State Electric and Gas responded to seal leak. The highway and overpass were reopened once the leak was plugged, said Orange County Fire Coordinator Vini Tankasali. There has been no word from NYSEG as to why the line leaked or the repairing of it.

February 8, news segment, 8a, :25 - While a major effort is underway to have the state and federal governments widen Route 17 from Harriman to Liberty from two to four lanes, an opposing consortium has emerged. Led by Catskill Mountainkeeper, the opponents are urging Governor Kathy Hochul not to move forward with the plans. Mountainkeeper Executive Director Ramsay Adams said the project is counter to guidelines set by the state’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. ¶ “Now, for a lot of reasons including the fact that expanding the highway won’t reduce traffic, the major piece, it will also increase climate pollution,” he said. “So, the many folks on this coalition are asking the governor to rethink it and there is time to rethink it, and the time is now.” Adams said the widening concept has been around since the Borscht Belt era of the Catskills, but Adams said money can be better spent by repairing the current highway rather than widen it.

February 9, news segment, 8a, :25 - The state has released \$13.6 million in funding for state roads impacted by extreme weather in the greater Hudson Valley region. The money will be appropriated to four projects. A total of \$5.2 million will be used to resurface Route 35/202 from the Taconic State Parkway interchange to Route 118 in the Town of Yorktown. A total of \$3.6 million will be used to resurface Route 52 from Route 311 to Fowler Avenue in the towns of Carmel and Kent. A total of \$3.6 million will be used to resurface Route 28 from Hurley Mountain Road in the towns of Ulster and Kingston. And \$1.2 million will be used to resurface Rout 97 from a half-mile north of Kirks Road intersection to the Cocheton town line in the Town of Tusten. The funding is coming from the State Department of Transportation.

### **Race/Equality/Social Relations/ Cultural News and Issues:**

January 12, news segment, 9a, :30 - Rockland County legislators are condemning a hate slur targeting members of the LGBTQ+ community after it was found spray-painted on the outside wall of the building housing the Rockland County Pride Center in Nyack.

“This is completely unacceptable language and behavior and like all hate speech, I condemn it in the strongest way possible,” Rockland County Legislature Chairman Jay Hood Jr. said. “It is hard to see that in 2023, there are still bullies and haters out there who think nothing of spewing such horrible language toward other people. It is wrong and I want everyone who works or uses the services at the Pride Center to know that I stand with them and against the animosity someone has hatefully put on display.”

January 30, news segment, 7a, :30 - The Affiliated Police Associations of Westchester County, representing all 4,000-plus sworn officers in the county, is “horrified” by the actions of the five Memphis police officers responsible for the murder of Tyre Nichols, said Det. Keith Olson, president of the Westchester organization.

He said the “utter lack of humanity shown by these officers is abhorrent” and he commended the swift firing and charging of these officers by the Memphis police chief and district attorney’s office. “Acts of cowardice in law enforcement are unacceptable,” Olson said. “There is no place for this type of behavior in our profession. We understand the community’s outrage and we pledge to work together to improve on training on the duty to intervene and to render aid, on the use of force and on any other initiatives that will improve outcomes between police officers and the people we serve.”

### **Gun Violence/Crimes/law enforcement:**

January 10, news segment, 5a, :30 -- Monday marked the annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Day established by the organization Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS).

“Every single day, police officers go to work to protect and serve us all, and every single time they do so, they put their lives at risk,” said Orange County District Attorney David Hoovler, who visited many of the local departments on that day.

“Too frequently, the sacrifices of police officers are ignored, in favor of advancing political agendas that seek to blame police officers in those extremely rare cases where their duty to all of us requires them to use force.” Day stands as a reminder to appreciate police offices, “I encourage everyone to show that same appreciation every day of the year.”

January 12, news segment, 6a, :35 - Members of the New York State Police Special Investigations Unit (SIU) raided the Albany headquarters of the New York State Troopers PBA on Tuesday afternoon. The raid took place at the same time, less than a block away, from where Governor Hochul was giving her State of the State address. Two Hudson Valley residents have involvement with the raided office. The Trooper PBA represents thousands of uniformed troopers across the state but does not represent the members of the SIU that conducted the raid. A trooper told Mid-Hudson News that the raid is the result of many complaints against union leaders and business practices in the past few months; namely PBA President Thomas Mungeer, a resident of Rock Hill in Sullivan County, and former PBA General Counsel Richard Mulvaney of LaGrange in Dutchess County. Troopers investigating the finances of their union discovered that both Mungeer and Mulvaney are believed to be licensed to sell insurance in New York State. Further investigation revealed that both licenses are believed to be linked to the Goshen insurance firm Epic Risk Solutions, owned by Michael Klugman. The troopers also determined that the PBA had a longstanding contract with Epic that was not disclosed to the general membership.

January 17, news segment, 9a, :30 -- Newburgh Mayor Torrance Harvey is creating a Mayor's Anti-Gun Violence Task Force. The mayor has already brought together religious leaders to discuss the issue. "We are in an exploratory stage in creating a mayor's anti-gun violence task force. We are starting out with faith-based leaders – the churches, the synagogues, the religious folk in our city – so we are in an exploratory phase in doing this collaboration to fight against gun violence," he said. The city and a number of organizations and religious leaders have been working their efforts to curb the scourge of gun violence.

January 19, news segment, 7a, :30 - The City of Middletown is now facing what other cities in the area have experienced in recent times – shootings.

Police Chief John Ewanciw said they are being given top priority by detectives and patrol officers alike in an effort to crack down on this latest rash of violence, but he acknowledges it is a challenge. "We don't have specific victims. It's not like we have someone coming forward saying, 'hey, this is what was done to me'," he said. "We have presumed victims that are not 100 percent cooperative at this point, so that creates a challenge in and of itself. So, a lot of that legwork is being done through technology, through the support of community residents that are providing us with some digital evidence."

The gun violence epidemic is being felt across the region from Poughkeepsie and Newburgh south to Yonkers.

January 20, news segment, 8a, :30 - Transportation Security Administration officers stopped 39 handguns at area airport checkpoints in 2022, an increase from 26 guns caught in 2021.

The two local airports – New York Stewart International and Westchester County – saw increased gun confiscations last year. Four guns were seized in 2022 at Westchester, up from none in 2021. At Stewart, three guns were seized last year compared with one the year before. Travelers who bring firearms to the checkpoint are subject to criminal charges from law enforcement and civil penalties from TSA. Even if a traveler has a concealed weapon permit, firearms are not permitted to be carried on an airline. Travelers with proper firearm permits can travel legally with their firearms in their checked bags if they follow a few guidelines.

January 20, news segment, 9a, :30 - Westchester launched its Misdemeanor Wellness Court on Thursday, which will offer eligible individuals community-based mental health treatment and services as an alternative to conventional prosecution.

District Attorney Miriam Rocah said the court "will serve as a practical and humane alternative for individuals who commit low-level crimes and are in need of treatment and services. In addition to it being the right thing to do, the WMWC will also be an effective early intervention tool, to help prevent some individuals from committing more serious or violent felony crimes in

the future.” The establishment of the new program, operating out of White Plains City Court, is the latest step in Rocah’s agenda to advance community-based violence prevention and rehabilitation for low-level offenders, like Fresh Start, Westchester’s first pre-arraignment diversion program. Launched in 2021, in partnership with the Westchester County Executive and the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, Fresh Start expanded to all 42 police departments countywide in 2022, and has successfully produced more than 200 participants who received rehabilitative services instead of convictions and fines

February 9, news segment, 5a, :20 - Only four of 17 establishments checked for compliance of serving underage people with alcohol failed the test during a State Police operation in the Cortlandt area. The initiative used a trooper in plainclothes and an underage operative utilizing a valid driver’s license. Thirteen establishments were in compliance and refused to sell any alcoholic beverages to the underage operative. Four establishments illegally sold an alcoholic beverage to a minor resulting in four arrests.

March 9, news segment, 8a, :30 - A Hastings-on-Hudson man has been arraigned on a 113-county felony indictment charging him with illegally possessing more than a dozen guns, including assault weapons, and 86 high-capacity magazines in his home. “This case highlights the benefits of law enforcement working together at the local and federal level, across multiple jurisdictions, to remove an arsenal of illegal and dangerous weapons from our community,” said Westchester District Attorney Miriam Rocah. Jianqiao Lu, 29, was indicted for several counts of possession of a weapon, criminal possession of a firearm, and illegal possession of large capacity ammunitions feeding devices.

#### **PSA Campaigns:**

March 1-31, To celebrate National Women Month, WSPK highlight Rihanna, Lady Gaga, Beyonce and other on their accomplishments and humanitarian and charitable work.

#### **Housing:**

January 17, news segment, 7a, :20 - Single-family home sales in Hudson Valley county members of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors declined in 2022 when compared to 2021. At the same time, mean prices rose. The greatest decline in sales was in Putnam County with a decline of 21.9 percent. The mean sale price, though, rose by 8.2 percent.

Rockland County followed by a 21.2 percent decline in sales, but a 10.6 percent increase in prices. Westchester County saw a 17.8 percent in drop in sales, and a 7.2 percent increase in prices. Sullivan County had a 15.8 percent decline in sales, while prices rose 8.7 percent. Orange County sales dropped by 15.6 percent as prices rose by 11 percent.

February 6, news segment, 6a, :25 - – A plan to construct “tiny homes” in the City of Kingston is working its way through the build process, Mayor Steven Noble says. The initial plan would see four of those residences constructed, said the mayor.

“We are going through the designs with our building department to see if we can figure out how to make it work. It is not easy to build tiny homes right now with the state’s building codes, but we are trying to make it work and we are looking forward to hopefully getting more of that type of housing in Kingston,” he said.

The initial plan would build those homes in the Midtown area of the city.

### **Martin Luther King Jr:**

January 17, news segment, 8a, :20 - It was a little breezy with annoying chill, but marchers left Sacred Heart Church and proceeded to Memorial Park Monday, singing “We Shall Overcome” to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. “It’s just a replica of the March on Selma,” said Town of Highlands Councilman Ty King. “Why march on anything? Because we want justice, we want freedom. And just now want to remind the children of the history behind all the things that we have and how did we get to this point right now.”

King helped organized the march, and he feels civil rights have improved for all Americans since MLK organized protests and boycotts to demand equality for every citizen.

### **Employment:**

January 20, news segment, 9a, :25 - Sullivan County, with a 7.9 percent growth rate of new jobs year over year in December, topped the Hudson Valley/Catskills. Coming in second, with 3.5 percent growth, was the Orange-Rockland-Westchester Metro Area.

Ulster County followed with 3.5 percent growth with the Dutchess-Putnam Metropolitan Division recording only 0.1 percent growth. Columbia County lost jobs to the tune of 0.6 percent, with Greene County falling behind with a 0.9 percent loss and Delaware County losing 8.1 percent of its jobs. March 24, news segment, 8:20, :15 - Job Fair for future employees of Playland to take place March 25 in White Plains. Jobs for 700 employees over the age of 16 must be filled for the 2023 Playland season. Daily announcements about the job fair ran for the week leading up to the event.

### **Public Safety/Residential Impacts and Police:**

January 3, news segment, 7a, :15 - - The City of Poughkeepsie's professional firefighters, members of IAFF Local 596, responded to 5,428 calls for service in 2022, with the last one coming in at 11:40 p.m. on New Year's Eve. The call volume is a 16 percent increase over 2021. The firefighters, operating out of stations on North Clover Street, Main Street, and Hooker Avenue, cover the three square miles of the city as well as a section of the Hudson River.

January 9, news segment, 7a, :25 - An Orange County Firefighter 1 graduation ceremony was held this weekend at the Sugar Loaf Performing Arts Center.

County Executive Steven Neuhaus was joined at the graduation by District Attorney David Hoovler, Sheriff Paul Arteta, County Clerk Kelly Eskew and Commissioner of Emergency Services Brendan Casey. “I was glad to recognize and congratulate these brave men and women,” said

Neuhaus, a past graduate of the County's Fire Training Program. "We appreciate their commitment to public service and their willingness to risk their own lives to save others. It takes a special person to become a firefighter and I commend the graduates, along with the training instructors, participating fire departments, and their friends and families on being a part of this impressive achievement." The six Firefighter 1 graduating classes consisted of 106 residents from various county fire departments.

January 12, news segment, 8a, :30 - The 44-member West Point Fire Department has requested over \$1.7 million for new equipment, but Army headquarters only funded the unit to the tune of \$96,000. On Wednesday, US Senator Charles Schumer was at the military academy calling for Washington to approve the rest of the money so that new, modern equipment can be purchased. Connor Miller, president of Local F-7 of the International Association of Firefighters said it is difficult to operate with their current budget.

March 31, news segment, 9a, :25 - Putnam County Sheriff's deputies placed all school buildings in the Carmel Central School District placed in a lock out due to several swatting incidents across two counties. A building lock out is used to secure buildings and grounds during an incident that poses a concern outside the school. Under that procedure, no one could enter the building. A short time later the lock out was lifted. District officials note swatting is a criminal harassment tactic of deceiving an emergency service – using a hoax of an emergency – sending a police or emergency service response team to another person's address. There were no known swatting incidents directed at any Carmel school on Thursday, authorities said.

### **Health and Health Care Issues:**

January 5, news segment, 8a, :20 - – Finding a new home for the Newburgh City Police Department continues to be a front burner issue, Mayor Torrance Harvey said. City officials are exploring possible options, the mayor told Mid-Hudson News.

☐ "We did the Med-Tech acquisition a while back where we bought the old Med-Tech building on West Street. We're talking with the county about the county building on Broadway and we're looking also at 123 Grand," he said. The current police station, built in the early 1970s, has *mold and air quality issues*.

January 10, news segment, 8a, :35 - – As of Monday, January 9, a total of 14,071 polio vaccines have been administered in Rockland since a confirmed case of Polio was detected in a local resident. Of those doses, 77 percent were administered to children ages zero to four, signaling that work by Rockland County Department of Health, the State Health Department, and Centers for Disease Control to boost vaccinations is working, officials said.

"While certainly the number of doses is a strong indicator that our messaging is having an impact, these vaccines are a series leaving us unable to know the full weight of impact until those series are completed which is why it is crucial for schools and the State Education Department to maintain and enforce these required vaccinations," said County Executive Ed Day. "While the State Health Department reported on 12/30/22 that polio hasn't been detected

in Rockland County wastewater since October, it is critical that families remain vigilant and work to ensure that you and your children are up-to-date on the polio vaccine,” said County Health Commissioner Dr. Patricia Schnabel Ruppert. “Now is the time to check your own and your children’s immunization status and protect everyone from all vaccine preventable diseases.”

January 19, news segment, 9a, :30 -- An investigation by the US Labor Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration, has resulted in the agency citing the giant warehouse delivery retailer for failing to keep workers safe, and has issued a hazard warning letter after the inspections at the New Windsor facility.

Among the findings in the study, which began last July, were ergonomic issues, specifically that workers face immense pressure to meet pace of work and production quotas at the risk of sustaining musculoskeletal injuries, which are often acute; and that injuries may not have been reported, because Amazon’s on-site first-aid clinic is not staffed appropriately.

Inspectors said employees were required to pull full ‘go-carts’ and pallets loaded with packages with manual pallet jacks out of semitruck trailers.

“Employees were exposed to high pull forces when initiating pallets and go-carts, and when go-cart wheels were locked exposing them to an increased risk of low back and shoulder MSDs (musculoskeletal disorders),” according to a letter from Rita Young, OSHA area director.

The company was also cited for requiring employees to continuously grip scanners weighing 1.6 to 2.0 pounds while scanning packages at a high rate of frequency.

### **Economy/Tourism/Park**

January 5, news segment, 6, :30 - Minimum wage workers in New York, except for those in New York City, Long Island, and Westchester County, began receiving an increase of one dollar per hour on December 31, 2022. The new minimum wage is \$14.20 per hour. Fast food workers are in a distinct category and make \$15 per hour statewide and will not receive a mandated increase. Minimum wage earners in NYC, Long Island, and Westchester already make \$15 an hour and will not receive a boost. Restaurant workers, such as wait staff are considered "tipped" workers, and their hourly rate fluctuates depending on the region where they work. In 2016 the state created a structured schedule that periodically raises the minimum wage, seeking to create a \$15 per hour minimum wage statewide. The annual raise to the minimum wage is based on markers such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which measures inflation. The New York State Division of Budget is tasked with determining the amount of the annual increase

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January 10, news segment, 9a, :30 - – More than \$278,000 in grants will be awarded to 29 organizations promoting tourism in Rockland County. “Tourism has endless benefits; it creates jobs, strengthens economies, and contributes to infrastructure development,” said County Executive Day. “When visitors explore our downtowns, eat at our restaurants, or shop in our stores, they are not just fueling our economy, they are stabilizing taxes for our residents,” he said. The average household in Rockland would have to pay an additional \$556 in yearly property taxes to maintain current services if not for tourism-generated sales and local taxes. “Economic development via tourism plays a major role in the health and vitality of the county,” said Economic Development and Tourism Director Lucy Redzeposki. “The organizations awarded today will be able to showcase our county and attract visitors.” The county-funded grants are competitive and performance expectations are attached to every dollar awarded.

January 12, news segment, 7a, :25 - – Open Space Institute has been awarded \$500,000 in state funding toward construction of a new 2.7-mile multi-use trail and major improvement to the Otterkill Road trailhead at Schunнемunk State Park in Orange County. The trail will meander through the park’s meadows and hayfields that run along the Moodna Creek. Work will expand recreational access to a section of OSI-protected land that was recently added to the Schunнемunk State Park, and create an accessible, four-season recreational experience in the western Hudson Highlands for walkers, runners, hikers, bikers, anglers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers.

January 30, news segment, 7a, :30 - – The Town of Orangetown is looking into bringing a farmers’ market to downtown Pearl River this spring. “Being aware of the last failed attempt at one, we engaged the manager of another (successful) local farmers market to assist us,” said Town Supervisor Teresa Kenny. She said the town is also forming a committee and is conducting a survey to gather input on the idea. “We recognize the importance of reaching out to local businesses, including discussions about whether they want to participate in the farmers’ market and how they think it can help drive business to their establishments.” The survey was posted on the town’s Facebook page and sent out to the town’s email list and has received over 900 responses. Kenny said 99.7 percent were “highly in favor” of having a market and of those, 67 percent said they would shop weekly.

February 6, news segment, 8a, :30 - Orange County’s plans to develop a 10-mile-long Schunнемunk trail in the Salisbury Mills area have taken the first steps as the county has begun plans to purchase the land from the Open Space Institute, conduct the state’s required environmental quality review, and design the project. County Planning Commissioner Alan Sorensen said the total project will cost about \$2.8 million with most of the funding coming from federal grants and a small portion from the county.

Sorensen said this would be another portion of what could be, in the long term, a countywide trail. "The confluence of that trail with the Heritage Trail at Camp LaGuardia, so it really provides many benefits. It will create a bikeway system that will enable people to travel from Salisbury Mills all the way up to Middletown, from Middletown along the Heritage Trail all the way down to Monroe," he said. To the east of the future Schunemunk Trail, Sorensen said a trail could eventually connect to the Newburgh waterfront of the Hudson River.

March 14, news segment, 9a, :30 - – The Hudson Valley has turned into a mecca for the film industry with its many diverse locations and sound stages. Major motion pictures as well as many for the emerging streaming services are being shot in counties up and down the valley. The latest economic figures to come out are from Westchester County, says Tourism and Film Office Director Natasha Caputo. "It generates over \$1.1 billion of economic activity throughout Westchester County. The report also showed that the industry supports over 3,784 jobs. That's well over \$360 million of wages here within the county," she said. Caputo said the production days are over 1,288 days of filming in the county, surpassing the pre-pandemic levels.

March 28, news segment, 7a, :30 - – Westchester County Executive George Latimer and Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus joined forces on Monday to talk about common issues. Chief among them is the growing tourism industry in the Hudson Valley and Neuhaus pointed to the latest entry into Orange County's visitor attraction – Legoland.

☑ "We have about a million dollars alone comes in hotel-motel tax, so they have really brought a lot of attention," he said. "We're seeing spinoff tourism attractions; not only hotels coming, but other types of theme parks. We are seeing adventure theme parks. We are even kicking the tires about bringing in a dinosaur theme park. Latimer said all of the counties in the region are partners in some of the same issues including the Hudson River, the Thruway and other highways, and other tourism.

### **Regional Utilities/Gas Prices/Public Works**

January 20, news segment, 6a - Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corporation has released its 92-page response to major criticism over its billing problems.

Converting to a new system a year ago resulted in customers receiving massive increases in charges and little recourse. While the report is voluminous, Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger said it has not fully addressed the issues. "It claimed that it had corrected customer bills and ensured that each customer has an accurate bill, but we know this is not the case," she said. The county executive said she has continually been contacted by constituents who have been waited months for Central Hudson to resolve their billing issues. "They haven't gotten regress and new problems appear to continue to arise," she said.

Metzger said her own mother received three Central Hudson bills in one week as the billing SNAFU continues.

February 2, news segment, 8a, :30 - As Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corporation continues to try to unravel its massive billing debacle, Congressman Pat Ryan (D, NY-18) Wednesday called for its president, Charles Freni, to resign.

Ryan made his appeal during a speech on the House Floor, saying the utility has “screwed over and ripped off” its customers. He spoke of a farmer in Gardiner of over \$16,000, 17 times her usual bill, leaving her to contemplate suicide. “She described the debt which put her at risk of losing her family farm as a guillotine hanging over her head,” he said. “I rise for the single mother in Kingston who told me she is afraid to cook for her four kids because turning on the stove means facing a gigantic gas bill; for the mayor of our City of Newburgh who received a bill of \$708,000 for a single month of electricity at his three-bedroom family home.”

Ryan said Central Hudson has put “profit over people.”

March 22, news segment, 7a, :30 - A week after Congressman Pat Ryan (D, NY-18) called for Central Hudson Gas and Electric President Charles Freni to resign following the utility’s debacle over a new billing system, he is resigning.

The announcement came from the company on Monday, saying the board of directors has decided to appoint Christopher Capone as the new president and CEO.

The company said Freni will stay on to assist with the transition before retiring.

Ryan called the management change a good first step. “Now they actually have to take action, fix the broken system, repay customers who are still owed money, so I will certainly continue to be fighting on behalf of all the families in the Hudson Valley, myself included, who are customers who have been dealing with this mess,” he said.

Ryan was among a number of local officials who have been demanding action over the billing scandal that saw some monthly electric bills source into the thousands of dollars.

### **Environment/Weather/Safety:**

January 18, news segment, 6a, :25 - State Senator Rob Rolison (R, Poughkeepsie) Tuesday launched an online petition calling on Governor Kathy Hochul and the Climate Action Council to reverse their proposed statewide ban on fossil fuel connections in new residential building construction starting in 2025. Under the additional terms of the proposal laid out by the council and repeated in the governor’s State of the State address, fossil fuel heating equipment would be phased out in all existing residential buildings by 2030 and 2035 for commercial structures. Sen. Rolison’s petition can be viewed [here](#). “We can all agree that protecting the environment should be a nonpartisan issue. After all, the American conservation movement was launched by a native New Yorker, Teddy Roosevelt,” Rolison said. “But preventing middle-class homeowners and small business proprietors such as restaurant owners from efficiently cooking in and heating their homes in a cost-effective way is a recipe for disaster.”

January 19, news segment, 7a, :30 - The Hurley Town Board voted unanimously on Tuesday, for a Government Operations Climate Action Plan to be prepared as part of the town's participation in the state's Climate Smart Communities Certification Program. Hurley will submit the plan to the state's Office of Climate Change for the consideration of points toward Climate Smart Communities certification. A Government Operations Climate Action Plan is a strategy document that sets goals and outlines a set of initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provides a framework for achieving those targets. Hurley's Climate Smart Task Force, comprised of municipal officials and environmental volunteers from the community, will collaborate with the Hudson Valley Regional Council to develop the Climate Action Plan. As part of the process, the task force will provide an opportunity for public input as and comment. The task force then will present a summary of the draft plan to the town board for consideration.

March 13, news segment, 7a, :30 - The National Weather Service has issued a Winter Storm Watch, which remains in effect from Monday evening through Tuesday evening. Heavy snow is possible, with total accumulations of six to 10 inches possible. To the north and west, in Sullivan and Delaware counties, the weather service said 10 to 20 inches of the white stuff could fall. Winds could gust as high as 40 MPH. The storm is expected to impact the entire region. The area's utility companies, Orange and Rockland, Central Hudson and NYSEG, are all preparing to fight the storm with additional crews and equipment. Periods of heavy snow are expected from Monday evening through Tuesday evening with the strongest winds occurring from Tuesday morning into Tuesday afternoon. Travel will be difficult, and area highway crews spent the weekend preparing for what is anticipated to be the largest snowfall of the season. In the Town of Wallkill, Department of Public Works Commissioner Lou Ingrassia, Highway Supervisor Mike Aumick, and their crew were busy readying their trucks for the impending storm.

March 21, news segment, 5a, :30 - The Beacon City Council Monday night passed environmentally friendly legislation, which will require all electric construction beginning in 2024. "We think it's the right thing to do," said City Councilman George Mansfield. "We will be leading by example and hopefully others will follow suit." Mansfield and others gathered at a park across from city hall prior to the city council meeting to praise residents for supporting this legislation. "There will be no more gas hookups, no more oil heat," said Mansfield. "It will be all electric, and then ultimately we hope all electric will be generated in sustainable ways." Beacon becomes the third city in the state, after New York City and Ithaca, to pass bans on new building construction using fossil fuels as part of the design. Buildings are considered the largest polluters in the state, releasing 32 percent of the state's greenhouse emissions. The State Assembly and Senate recently endorsed statewide bans on fossil fuels in new construction in their budget proposals. And Dan Aymar-Blair, a Beacon city councilmember, thinks Beacon should do its part, too. "Beacon has to do its part in cutting emissions," he said.

March 16, news segment, 7a, :30 - Action is expected to begin shortly to address contamination in Peekskill Bay related to the Pemart Avenue manufactured gas plant at 189-199 North Water Street in Peekskill. The cleanup activities will be performed by contractors working for the responsible party, Consolidated Edison Company of New York.

The remedial work is being completed in two phases. Phase one, completed in April 2022, included excavation of MGP contaminated soil in upland areas that are designated as operable unit one. Phase two will address contamination in the off-site sediments of Peekskill Bay, designated as operable unit two. The site's former MGP operated from 1899 through 1931 and an electric generating plant also operated from 1905 to 1950. After closure of the MGP, the site operated as a gas storage station until 1966. The gas manufacturing process involved the heating of coal and/or petroleum products to produce a gas mixture. Once cooled and purified, the gas was distributed through a local pipeline network. The gas was used for heating and cooking, much like natural gas is used today. In the early years, the gas was also used for lighting in homes and streetlights. The primary contaminant of concern is coal tar and associated compounds

#### **Local Government and Community Information:**

January 3, news segment, 8a, :20 - - Volunteer organization Red Hook Responds delivered 8,955 meals free of charge to Red Hook and Rhinebeck residents in need in 2022, serving an average of 25 meals per day. Founded in April 2020 by Daniel Budd and Chris Donohue in response to the pandemic, Red Hook Responds is beginning 2023 with the highest level of community need they've seen since the early days of the pandemic. "Nobody wants to be in the situation of being hungry, of not being able to cook for themselves or not having a dinner for a child. When someone is, they should be able to ask for help and receive it," said Budd. "To continue our mission we need steady volunteerism and resources. Without either of these, all the magic will come to a halt."

January 9, news segment, 8a, :35 - After four days of voting, the House of Representatives elected California Republican Kevin McCarthy as Speaker of the House for the 118th Congress. The election required 15 different ballots which is the most in 164 years. McCarthy's bid was originally blocked by 20 hardline conservative congressmen. After lengthy negotiations, McCarthy was able to win a majority of them over to win the election. Until the Speaker was elected, no other business could take place in the House of Representatives, including the administering of the oath of office to each of the members. Marc Molinaro (NY-19) did not take his oath until early Saturday morning before returning to New York to speak at a ceremony for State Senator Rob Rolison.

February 16, in studio guest, 9a, 5 minute interview with Leah Feldman CEO of Dutchess County Family Services spoke on the upcoming community events.

March 10, in studio guest, Anthony and Sara Capozzoli, 9:10, 5 minutes – on behalf of the Premier Cares Foundation, spoke on the upcoming Cars for a Cause Car Show benefiting and creating awareness for Colon Cancer in June.

March 21, news segment, 7a, :35 - The controversy over the lies spewed by Congressman George Santos about his life history has prompted the Westchester County Board of Legislators to unanimously approve its “Truthful Disclosure for Candidates” bill. The measure approved 15-0 on Monday night, would require candidates for county legislator and county executive to complete a disclosure form that provides biographical information, including a candidate’s educational, military, and employment histories.

### **SPCA**

February 3, news segment, 8:50a, :30 - The Humane Law Enforcement Unit of SPCA of Westchester seized 150 cats living in filth and squalor after Yorktown Police discovered the residence was filled with what seemed like an endless number of cats being hoarded in a small, dilapidated home. Local police were asked to perform a wellness check with they discovered two homeowners dead include. Officials were unable to clear the scene until the SPCA rescue team removed many of the cats that were found in every room of the home, including in the ceilings and walls. All of the cats are suffering with upper respiratory, eye and skin infections, malnutrition, dehydration, and some have more severe injuries that require immediate medical attention, authorities said.

All of the cats were starving when rescued and had not eaten for many days; some were already dead, they said. “This is the largest hoarding case SPCA Westchester has ever undertaken, and we desperately need the support of the community to help care for these neglected and sick cats who need urgent medical attention,” said Executive Director Shannon Laukhuf. She said the agency needs financial support, cat food, litter, blankets and towels. Rescue partners have included Best Friends Animal Society, Mohawk Hudson Humane Society, Westchester Humane Society, Rescue Right, and Columbia Greene Humane Society.

### **Education**

March 7, news segment, 8a, :25 - Adoption of the state budget is less than a month away and officials of SUNY Sullivan and the county are concerned about potential cuts in state budget. Albany’s commitment of covering one-third of the costs has not been met in decades and other state reductions could be coming down the pike. Speaking for the entire Sullivan County Legislature, that has Deputy Chairman Mike Brooks worried. “It think it’s time to fully focus on education and as one of the paramount priorities, because without that, I don’t think we want to live in a world where education gets diminished and diminished each year,” he said. SUNY Sullivan President Jay Quaintance said one hit to the college this coming year could be interest on late payments to employee health insurance benefits.

### **National Guard/Veteran Affairs:**

January 10, news segment 9a, :25 - – As of Monday, January 9, a total of 14,071 polio vaccines have been administered in Rockland since a confirmed case of Polio was detected in a local resident. Of those doses, 77 percent were administered to children ages zero to four, signaling that work by Rockland County Department of Health, the State Health Department, and Centers for Disease Control to boost vaccinations is working, officials said.

“While certainly the number of doses is a strong indicator that our messaging is having an impact, these vaccines are a series leaving us unable to know the full weight of impact until those series are completed which is why it is crucial for schools and the State Education Department to maintain and enforce these required vaccinations,” said County Executive Ed Day. “While the State Health Department reported on 12/30/22 that polio hasn’t been detected in Rockland County wastewater since October, it is critical that families remain vigilant and work to ensure that you and your children are up-to-date on the polio vaccine,” said County Health Commissioner Dr. Patricia Schnabel Ruppert. “Now is the time to check your own and your children’s immunization status and protect everyone from all vaccine preventable diseases.”

March 22, news segment, 8a, :30 - – The Putnam County Veterans Treatment Court, a court targeting justice-involved veterans charged with felonies who may be suffering from addiction, mental health issues and other combat-related disorders, has opened.

The new court, in the Putnam Supreme and County Courthouse, is a partnership of the Ninth Judicial District, the Putnam County District Attorney’s Office, the local defense bar, the US Department of Veterans Administration and local service providers, among others.

Veterans Treatment Courts divert appropriate cases of justice-involved veterans, offering substance treatment, mental health treatment and other customized services as an alternative to conventional prosecution and incarceration. An important component in ensuring participants’ success is the use of peer mentors, military veterans who volunteer their time to offer support and motivation to help justice-involved veterans re-adjust to civilian life.

Veterans who are not considered a public safety threat and are willing to comply with the court-imposed conditions will be considered for participation in the new court.

Participants may have their charges reduced or dismissed upon successful completion of treatment and other court requirements. Judge Joseph Spofford will preside over the new court. He also presides over the county’s Drug Treatment Court.

“To those veterans who are suffering from substance abuse issues, PTSD and other related ailments, our court will provide the services and resources that have earned and entitled to,” he said.

### **Taxes**

January 20, news segment, 9a, :25 - Putnam County lawmakers took swift action Thursday night and approved a 10 percent property tax exemption on assessed value for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers. The move comes after the state gave localities permission to enact the

tax reduction. The goal of the measure is to assist those volunteers with their tax bills, but also help in recruitment and retention of new members. County Executive Kevin Byrne supports the effort. "This is government at its best; supporting and giving back to those who do the selfless work of protecting their communities and neighbors," he said. "This isn't traditionally thought of as a public safety issue, but it is," said County Legislature Chairman Paul Jonke. "Providing this tax deduction is just another incentive in retaining a strong volunteer fire and ambulance corps."

February 9, news segment, 8a, :30 - – Democrats and Republicans have established a bipartisan SALT Caucus for the 118th Congress. The group, which includes Rep. Pat Ryan (D, NY-18), is dedicated to restoring the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction, which would provide significant relief from this unfair double taxation.

"I came to Congress to deliver relief for middle class New Yorkers who are struggling to afford everything from housing to healthcare, heating their home to fueling their car," said Ryan. "The SALT deduction cap is blatant double taxation and unjustly punishes hard working families across the Hudson Valley. I'm proud to stand and fight with colleagues from both parties to reinstate this deduction and put dollars back in the pockets of Hudson Valley families."

#### **WSPK PSA INITIATIVES:**

K104's Find Work Network – This is an effort to find employment for Hudson Valley residents. It is support with a main rotator on stations web site and 21 promos per week.

K104's Small Business Booster - On air promo 5x/day with social media to support this local business initiative.

#### **WSPK Podcasts:**

[www.k104online.com](http://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:

Kacey's Wellness Minute is a condensed recap of Shine One

Happy Hour with Jonna and Karyl – a one hour show on personal empowerment.



