

**2012 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS**  
**NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE EDWARD P. MANGANO**

**March 14, 2012 at The Cradle of Aviation Museum**

Good evening, Nassau County.

Let me begin by acknowledging my colleagues who have joined us here today.

Presiding Officer Schmitt, thank you for hosting today's State of the County Address along with the Members of the Legislature.

Minority Leader Abrahams, County Comptroller Maragos, County Clerk O'Connell and District Attorney Rice, it's a pleasure to have you here. To the judges of our great County, thank you for joining us.

I would also like to thank the **Bethpage, Hicksville and Westbury Fire Departments** for serving as our Color Guard and Legislator Becker for leading us in the Star Spangled Banner.

Before we begin....everyone with an iPhone or Android, please remove it from your pocket, go to your App Store, search Nassau County and download the free Nassau County Application; Nassau Now. You will need it later in the speech.

Neighbors, friends and colleagues, I speak with you tonight from the Cradle of Aviation Museum – a monument to our rich history.

We should certainly be proud of our past. Here, at Mitchel Field, air races lit up the sky in the 1920's.

Those were amazing times to live, but they were not the best times. The best time shall be the future, and in the infinite tomorrow's ahead of us. That is where the excitement lies. That is where our best days are.

Nassau County, just like the nation's economy, is in a state of recovery from a decade of poor fiscal policies.

Each day our county and economy progresses from where we are, to where we are meant to be. This journey is not an easy one. There are many hurdles between here and there.

Whether you're a resident or an employer, you are feeling the negative impact of our

nation's economy.

Make no mistake about it, times are tough. The decisions needed to improve the lives of our citizens are even tougher.

Most economists agree! We face a stagnant economy....high taxes....a failure to retain jobs, an exodus of our youth, a government that seems to grow bigger and more expensive by the day, partisan politics running rampant, and individuals fear mongering.

Our first problem is that Nassau is among the highest property-taxed counties in the nation, and these taxes are driving companies and jobs out of New York.

Plainly put, property taxes are killing jobs and depressing home values.

My administration is combating what economist Pearl Kamer refers to as TAXFLATION – or ever increasing property taxes.

With respect to your wallet....my administration is the first in recent history to put money back in your pocket by repealing the home energy tax that was placed on everything and anything used to heat or cool your home.....oil, gas, electricity and even firewood.

My action fulfilled my pledge and reinforced my commitment to save taxpayer dollars by cutting the cost of government.

Together with the Republican Majority in the Legislature, I eliminated a planned 16 and a half percent property tax hike for every homeowner and business.

We have cut spending and held the line on property taxes for two consecutive years.

The old ways of hiking property taxes, spending lavishly and ignoring the need for reforms has ended.

Unfortunately, the problems they created have not.

The Legislature and I inherited a decade's worth of problems, along with several years' of projected deficits.

2012 was no exception!

Fiscal experts determined our County faced a 310 million dollar deficit due to Nassau's rising pension costs, increasing Medicaid costs, the stagnant economy, a greater demand on social services and 100 million dollars in debt associated with the broken property tax

assessment system.

Over the past decade, government had simply grown too large.....we put it on a diet!

The Legislature and I, in cooperation with NIFA, addressed Nassau's challenges with real solutions while recognizing residents cannot afford a property tax increase.

Rather than increase property taxes to pay for Nassau's past mistakes, the Republican Legislature, NIFA and I passed a budget that cut spending and reduced the County payroll by 150 million dollars in 2012.

These cuts were necessary as payroll accounts for nearly 50 percent of Nassau's budget, that without action, our children would have to shoulder this burden.

Reducing the workforce began, not with union employees, but in the offices of my administration where we are now operating with over 110 fewer appointed positions – often referred to as patronage. This alone has saved our taxpayers 14 million dollars a year.

Despite these cuts and other cost saving actions, Nassau's fiscal challenges required harsher remedies as the County continued to face higher costs from unfunded mandates, pensions and health care.

Accordingly, my administration has reduced the number of employee positions by one-thousand seven-hundred and seventy-six (1,776).

The reforms implemented during the past two years have stopped business as usual in Nassau.

It is for that reason that well-funded special interests have fought reform and attempted to influence certain politicians to oppose my solutions.

While reform is a nice **NAME** for change.....**REFORM** is a word the career politicians and special interests **HATE!**

Reform is another word for hard-work and for tough decisions.

A famous philosopher once wrote, **QUOTE** All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident. **END QUOTE.**

How true that statement is.

If you follow me in the press, you will notice that changes I propose, or in most cases just utter, are often criticized for countless hours and people chime in on how County government shouldn't change!

Special interests cajole, threaten, lobby and often launch misleading media campaigns. They have not learned that personal attacks and fear-mongering get us nowhere.

Whether you're a Republican or Democrat, Liberal or Conservative, union or appointed, we must all come together and work in the public's best interest.

For that reason, I again extend an invitation to the Democrats on the County Legislature to join me in reforming Nassau.

Over the past two years, I have put forth many proposals that have stimulated debate, most successful....one or two not....but let me tell you....they were all intended to turn this County around.

A good illustration of thoughtful reform is in our police department.

Since 2010, we eliminated more than 225 desk jobs, assigned 88 more police officers to patrol, reduced crime by more than 10 percent and saved taxpayers 30 million dollars a year.

Just last week, the Legislature implemented additional solutions to address Nassau's finances by approving a plan that transforms four current police precincts into new Policing Centers and helps fight costly overtime.

The plan modernizes Nassau's 1972 eight precinct-building plan to account for the last 40 years of technology and crime fighting enhancements.

Rather than discuss this plan on its merits and on what it actually accomplishes, the special interests and a few legislators they enlisted, used fear-mongering tactics.

Fortunately, they could not skew the fact that public safety remains intact, all 177 patrol cars remain in their current neighborhoods assignments and 48 additional police officers are joining the 40 I reassigned from desks to patrol.

I commend the Republican Legislature for defending good government and having the courage to protect taxpayers by implementing efficiencies that the special interests opposed.

I remain optimistic that my Democrat colleagues will embrace these reforms as we address Nassau's structural problems with reoccurring savings.

To truly fix Nassau County, we must address each and every structural problem with real solutions. We must recognize that all cannot be fixed in one year.

It took a decade to get us here and it will take a few years to fix.

Accordingly, the Legislature and I have applied innovative, private-sector solutions to several costly public-sector problems.

A notable example has been my initiative which created a public-private partnership for Nassau's bus system.

In 2011, Nassau's bus operator, the MTA, presented our County with two options....

**Option 1**.....pay the MTA 26 million dollars more or **Option 2**...cut bus service in half.

Both ultimatums were **WRONG** for Nassau, as one hurt our residents and the other penalized riders.

Accordingly, I sought a public-private partnership.

Today, Veolia Transportation operates Nassau buses.

Nassau taxpayers saved over 26 million dollars annually.

Nassau riders receive more efficient bus service.

Nassau is providing the disabled with a reliable Able-Ride service.

And for the first time in recent memory, every bus left the terminal to pick up riders.

See, on average, 10 percent of the MTA buses never left the terminal....creating delays and missed service each and every day.

In fact, let me share a **TRUE STORY** with you.

A rider called my office just days after Veolia began operating our buses to complain that he missed the bus because it was on time and had been historically late.

If you read the news stories or attended meetings of the Legislature, you would have thought I proposed to put a toll on the L-I-E.

A second successful public-private-partnership implemented by my administration involves inmate health care.

At the Nassau jail, when an inmate needed care, whether it be for a stomachache, stitches, physical therapy, or x-rays... it required a trip to the local hospital.

The problem?

It required residents to pay for **TWO** correction officers per inmate to stay at the hospital during the entire visit.

My solution?

We now provide health care services at the jail.

This has resulted in 4,000 clinic runs being reduced to 200 – a 95% reduction.

400 hospital visits have been reduced to a mere 50 – an 87% reduction.

And guess what my friends....taxpayers are saving nearly 6 million dollars per year.

Building on the success at the jail and with our bus system, I am exploring a public-private partnership to address problems at Nassau's sewage treatment plants.

Disturbingly, I inherited a bankrupt sewer district with facilities that were severely neglected for a decade.

This neglect resulted in violations by the New York State DEC and an outcry from the public.

Together with Senator Schumer, Hempstead Town Councilman Santino and Legislators Becker, Dunne, Ford and Kopel, we began implementing solutions to the problems associated with both sewage facilities.

Accordingly, Nassau has invested over 70 million dollars for improvements in the County's plants at Cedar Creek and Bay Park.

It amazes me that special interests, with the assistance of a legislator, have criticized this progress after having been responsible for the years of neglect.

**The facts remain.** Under my watch critical repairs that were ignored for a decade have been completed. New equipment has been purchased and the overall operation and

condition of the plant has improved dramatically.

In fact, last month Bay Park marked one year without any violations. Although the goal is to never receive any violations at all, it is a tremendous victory for the men and women at the plant. The success does not stop there.

Last year, Cedar Creek's success was reflected in favorable reports by the DEC.

However, I still am not satisfied. That is why Legislators Ford and Kopel joined with me in creating a new notification system designed to help protect our residents and keep them informed of problems that occur at these facilities.

Our work is not finished! We must continue to seek operational and managerial improvements.

I have continually sought to do what many of you are doing in your businesses and households. That is to reduce spending.

My solution to Nassau's bloated government has been to identify and cut wasteful spending.

To that end, I along with the Republican Legislature consolidated over 10 departments into 4, saving taxpayers 4 million dollars a year.

Nassau's newly created Department of Human Services is an example of how our County has integrated and utilized its resources to achieve efficiency and cost-effectiveness while maintaining services for our residents.

The merger alone enabled the County to reduce staff performing duplicative functions and realize a savings of 1.8 million dollars annually.

Under my direction, we have implemented many additional cost saving measures.

We have reduced energy costs by 7 and a half million dollars a year by simply creating competition among providers.

And, we have eliminated nearly 1 million dollars in annual telephone line costs that were unnecessary.

To maximize revenues, Nassau's jail is now housing Federal and Suffolk inmates. This alone increased revenue by 11.2 million dollars a year for our County despite a 5.5 percent reduction in the number of corrections officers and an overtime reduction of 10,000 hours at the jail.

The County is also generating common-sense revenue by selling hundreds of surplus vehicles and by charging non-residents a fee for using our parks.

Everyone in my administration is doing more with less.

In the Coordinated Agency for Spanish Americans, we are providing service to more clients than ever. In fact, this year we assisted 5,000 clients despite a 55 percent reduction in County employees.

And in the Office of Minority Affairs, we have maintained our commitment to diversity with more Minority and Women-Owned Enterprises being certified under this administration than ever before.

My administration has cut 200 million dollars in wasteful spending – the equivalent of a 25 percent property tax increase had these spending cuts not been made.

We have saved over 30 million dollars through public-private-partnerships, reduced payroll by over 100 million dollars a year and are doing more work than ever before.

Rather than simply raise taxes and add to Nassau's ailments, these solutions help advance **RECOVERY** and create a strong foundation for our future.

Nassau's problems have not only developed due to wasteful spending, but also due to fraud.

To address this problem, my administration has implemented fraud detection solutions that protect taxpayers and ensure that only eligible recipients receive public assistance.

I've sent the message out loud and clear: **if you're cheating the system, we will catch you!**

I am pleased to announce that to date; our Department of Social Services Office of Investigations has uncovered more than **23 million dollars** in welfare fraud, waste and abuse resulting in the recovery to our taxpayers of **7 million dollars**.

Our team of investigators has also prevented **8 million** dollars in additional fraud by uncovering it in its earliest stages. In addition, an extra **8 million dollars** in inaccurate and improper provider billing has been uncovered through audits of Medicaid billing and claims.

The County has also achieved millions more in recoveries from improperly paid welfare benefits detected by the Special Investigations Unit.



Please join me in giving special recognition to our Department of Social Services Director of Investigations who has led this incredible effort on behalf of our taxpayers – **Scott Skrynecki**. Scott, please stand and be recognized.

The solution to Nassau's high taxes lies not just in County government, but in all layers of government.

Nassau County represents one of the smallest portions of your tax bill. We all know the largest share comes from our schools.

That is why Nassau and Suffolk counties formed the Long Island Intergovernmental Purchasing Council. This Council purchases items in bulk and I am proud to report that over the past year, many of Nassau's 56 school districts joined the Council to participate in its various money-saving initiatives.

High school taxes are also the reason I joined with Governor Cuomo in supporting a property tax cap.

Together, these solutions have helped stop the bleeding; however, the real surgery for Nassau County must occur with our broken property tax assessment system.

For too many years, Nassau simply ignored its future and settled for quick fixes rather than address the real underlying problems. This band-aide approach left our great County on life support.

Nassau, like other counties and states, is facing significant fiscal challenges; however, our challenges are amplified when compared to neighboring counties, due to its broken property tax assessment system.

Nassau County has stood alone in the State - as the **ONLY** County to collect 17 cents on the dollar in taxes, yet return the whole dollar when an error is made.

Imagine having to return one dollar for every 17 cents received?

Well, the Supreme Court upheld the reforms passed by the Republican Legislature and myself to end this practice that has resulted in 1.6 billion dollars in debt related to property tax refunds that accumulated under this wasteful system.

The interest on this debt costs the average homeowner 20 percent more annually on their County tax bill.

As you can imagine, this alone has made holding the line on property taxes difficult.

Together with the Nassau County Interim Finance Authority – also known as NIFA – the Republican Legislature and I have advanced a plan that pays off this debt and **ENDS** the practice of borrowing against our children's future to pay tax refunds once and for all - **without raising property taxes.**

If this Multi-Year Plan is not supported, residents would be forced to pay for a decade of waste in a single year. **This would mean a massive property tax hike or deep, deep cuts that impact all levels of service.**

Nassau's plan stops that....pays off refunds and ends borrowing in a responsible way.

Rather than play political games and threaten to block the solution to Nassau's fiscal stability, the time is now for three Democrat County Legislators to lay politics aside, stand up and join NIFA, the Majority in the Legislature and me in implementing a plan that prevents a property tax hike and pays off the tax refunds owed to our residents.

The Legislature and I continue to face the daunting task of fixing Nassau's broken property tax assessment system – a system governed by New York State Law - the only assessment system of its kind in the State and the only one with a billion dollars in debt.

Absent State support to change this system, I have set forth a plan to reduce and correct errors prior to demanding payment.

This is why I froze assessments for four years....just as the majority of assessing jurisdictions throughout the state do as well.

To further address assessment problems, Nassau implemented a program that ensures, for the first time ever, that homeowners who grieved their taxes and reached a settlement or judgment see that justice reflected in their assessment.

This reform alone saves residents 28 million dollars annually!

While I have implemented many reforms aimed at saving taxpayer dollars, I have also sought improvements in overall operations within all departments, including the police department.

Over the past year, the department has faced a series of setbacks from problems at the crime lab to the performance of a hand full of officers on the streets.

Recognizing these serious concerns, I found it necessary to recruit a fresh leader to serve as Nassau's Top Cop.

I sought to appoint an individual with years of experience, and I found that in Commissioner Tom Dale.

Commissioner Dale has begun to provide strong leadership in the department and address supervisory concerns.

He is a man of great character and conviction who will set example for our police department to follow in the decades to come.

Tom Dale will highlight the great and brave work Nassau police officers perform, in part by restoring discipline and the respect our officers deserve.

Commissioner Dale, please stand to be recognized.

When I hired Commissioner Dale earlier this year, I made it clear that despite crime being down over 10%, Nassau must crackdown on burglaries.

Well my friends, the Nassau County Police Department has and continues to send a clear message to burglars: **Stay Out of Nassau!**

Putting burglars behind bars is a top priority!

In the first 8 weeks of Tom Dale's leadership, the Police Department cracked down on burglaries and made 77 burglary arrests.

While we live in one of the safest counties in the nation, there is always more work to do to identify and fight changing crime trends.

These trends include the prescription drug epidemic that is plaguing our region and nation.

Last month, Commissioner Dale and I announced a sweep conducted by the Police Department's Narcotics Squad that resulted in the arrest of 17 individuals for forging prescriptions at various pharmacies.

Prescription drugs are clearly driving individuals to commit burglaries, including residential burglaries in an effort to find ways to pay for their addiction.

Prescription drug abuse has reached epidemic proportions nationwide.

Statistics now indicate that three times as many residents have died from prescription opiates than from heroin, and while the number of heroin arrests has dropped significantly, opiate arrests have doubled.

Statistics also indicate that there have been more than 200 pharmacy robberies throughout the nation in the past year, and 7,000 such incidents since 2004.

In Nassau, we have felt first-hand the devastating effects of prescription drug abuse during a deadly pharmacy robbery on New Year's Eve in Seaford.

Tonight, we pause and remember the life of ATF Agent John Capano.

John responded to assist his fellow neighbors and made the ultimate sacrifice.

Our community owes John and his family a debt of gratitude that we can never repay.

I speak on behalf of every resident when I say that we remember John Capano for his courage and dedication each and every day.

John's family joins us tonight.

I ask that his sister, brother in-law, niece and nephews stand and be recognized.

Nassau has established a task force to work on solutions to the problem of prescription drug misuse and abuse. This task force put together a dozen recommendations to enhance education, awareness and enforcement.

The County has also partnered with the FBI-supported Long Island Pharmacy Crimes Task Force to combat the potentially deadly prescription drug abuse crisis.

Together we hosted a security summit to advise pharmacy workers how they can better protect their businesses and keep pharmaceuticals out of the hands of addicts.

Under my direction, police officers are visiting local schools to speak with students about the dangers of prescription drugs.

Members of our Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Committee are also educating parents on the signs of drug abuse and addiction in their children.

To help residents shed their unused and unwanted meds, the County has installed prescription drug disposal bins at all police precincts and policing centers to ensure these drugs do not end up in the hands of children.

On the treatment side...I announced the availability of 70 additional drug addiction treatment spots at the County's Opioid Treatment Program. This nationally recognized program presently treats 580 clients per month.

The success of our police programs would not be possible without the commitment of each and every officer.

Their commitment has resulted in major crime being down more than 10 percent since I took office.

Our police department employs effective programs to take guns off the streets, reduce violence and crack down on drug abuse.

Over the past year, the Police Department has hosted two Gun Buy Back Programs which took 1,500 illegal guns off our streets.

Although we often hear of guns and drugs impacting our community, we don't always hear of the impact domestic violence has on our families.

Please join me in acknowledging the dedicated and hardworking members of the Family Violence Task Force for their commitment to combating this public health emergency.

In addition to a tsunami of fiscal issues and a tide of reforms, last August Mother Nature literally tested Nassau and its ability to respond to the needs of its residents. I'm proud to report that we stepped up to the plate and succeeded.

A good part of our preparation is due to a friend and late colleague, OEM Commissioner Jim Callahan!

Just before the hurricane, Jim passed on.

This evening, we are joined by Jim's wife Patricia and his family.

Pat, we thank you for sharing Jim with us. Together, let us pause to remember the legacy of Jim Callahan.

Under the direction of Commissioner Craig Craft, OEM led the way in hurricane preparedness.

Facing a potential direct hit from the eye of Hurricane Irene, I along with many elected officials throughout the tri-state area ordered a Mandatory Evacuation of individuals residing in storm surge zones.

The Nassau County OEM opened an Emergency Operations Center with other governmental agencies and provided guidance, support and coordination working with the Towns, Cities and Villages, fire districts, healthcare facilities and individual

constituents at a time when we needed it most.

With their oversight, 400,000 residents were ordered to evacuate and 21 shelters were opened in addition to shelters for pets and individuals with medical needs.

I would like to recognize Nassau's new Commissioner of Health, Dr. Larry Eisenstein, for his efforts in facilitating the safe evacuation of 1,500 frail residents housed in a hospital and 6 nursing homes.

Dr. Eisenstein's success provided me the opportunity to recommend his appointment as Commissioner of Health to the Legislature.

Dr. Eisenstein, please stand and be recognized for your efforts.

Even though Hurricane Irene was downgraded to a tropical storm by the time it hit our shores, it left quite a mark.

The Department of Public Works worked tirelessly to make County roadways and facilities safe during and after Hurricane Irene.

This massive undertaking involved the cutting and removal of more than 2,400 trees, grinding of dangerous stumps and the emergency repair of sidewalks.

I'm proud to report that Commissioner Shila Shah, and the men and women of Public Works, had all County roads cleared and open by 8pm on the evening of the storm.

Managed by OEM, the County's Emergency Operations Center was activated and over 50 separate agencies reacted to coordinate response and resources.

After the storm clean up concluded, OEM continued to push forward – working tirelessly to help individuals and businesses who suffered damage from the storm. I'm proud to report that OEM was successful in securing Federal relief for residents and employers totaling nearly 16 million dollars.

I would like to thank Presiding Officer Schmitt and the County Legislature for providing support throughout the storm.

Throughout the storm, Nassau's bravest, our volunteer firefighters, responded to calls and continued to push forward to help those most in need.

To assist our volunteers and our senior citizen population, I launched two life-saving programs this past year. The **Yellow Dot Program** assists in lifesaving measures involving victims of automobile accidents and the **Vial of Life Program** similarly assists

individuals during emergencies at home.

It is my hope that these programs help save lives, along with the proper training our firefighters receive from the new burn buildings at Nassau's training academy.

As volunteers, the brave men and women from our fire departments must be commended not only today, but every day.

To do so, Nassau has provided free community college tuition to 621 volunteer firefighters and is processing 170 applications for the Spring 2012 semester.

I cannot think of a better way to thank our volunteers who answer the call of duty to protect their fellow neighbors.

We stand here today in The Cradle of Aviation Museum located on Mitchel Field.

This museum is dedicated to the heroes that defended our nation's freedom and advanced our nation forward in aviation.

Shortly, I will ask the Legislature to pass a law renaming Oak Street in Hempstead in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen who fought for our nation's freedom.

In Nassau County, I have made it a priority to honor our veterans and active duty military who are serving our nation here and abroad.

This is why we are enhancing services for veterans.

This past year, we established 42 County-owned homes, located on Mitchel Field, to provide affordable housing for veterans and their families and an additional 18 homes for active-duty military personnel.

The County also transferred land in Hicksville to a not-for-profit named Homes For Our Homecoming Heroes, which plans to construct a home for a veteran returning from the Middle East.

Tonight, I announce the establishment of a brand-new **Housing For Our Freedom Program**.

This groundbreaking program, which is the first program of its kind in the nation, will provide affordable and sustainable housing to soldiers and their families.

To accomplish this, the IDA will purchase foreclosed homes from banks. The homes will be rehabilitated and then rented to members of our Armed Forces so that they can

raise their families in safe and stable housing. After 3 years, soldiers will be given the opportunity to purchase these homes.

There is no better way to thank the brave men and women of our Armed Forces than to give them the chance to live the American Dream that they fought to protect. We owe them that, and so much more.

Continuing our dedication to veterans, I along with the Legislature opened a new office for the Nassau Veterans Service Agency in East Meadow at Nassau University Medical Center.

The County also joined in the opening of a new Veterans Affairs (VA) health clinic at this same location to provide state-of-the-art medical care for our veterans.

The County also honored the service of our veterans in Eisenhower Park and hosted two successful stand downs in 2011 which provided food, clothing and access to valuable services for our veterans in need.

I'm proud to report that these stand downs will continue in 2012, along with the transportation to the Northport VA that our County provides to veterans.

The County, in conjunction with Winthrop Hospital, will also host a veteran specific job fair this coming April. With the large number of returning veterans, we encourage local employers to join us in employing our hometown heroes.

I believe government should provide open space and recreation opportunities.

After a decade of poor upkeep and outright neglect, our parks have risen from the ashes as vibrant destinations for our children and families of Nassau.

To help families with two working parents, we offered a low-cost Summer Recreation Program for children at our parks and made it affordable by charging nonresidents an entrance fee for using our parks.

Parks programs are kept affordable by the generosity of private-sector partners and sponsors such as Joe Vitrano, owner of all Long Island Friendly's restaurants, the HISTORY Channel, RXR, Canon USA, TD Bank, JJT Energy, Unified Windows, CBS-FM, WBAB, KJOY and B103.

The County parks system continues to serve as a strength for Nassau, and this is why I have continued my "Take Back the Parks" Campaign.

We all grew up playing baseball and lacrosse.



Our children and grandchildren deserve no less.

Under this initiative, we have reestablished all Athletic Leagues for lacrosse, baseball, and softball.

I am also proud to report that my administration saved the Games for the Physically Challenged in 2011 by raising the private funds needed to keep the Games alive. We will do so again this year.

In addition to sports and recreation, parks events raise revenue for our County by attracting thousands from the tri-state area.

Local businesses benefit, and these events help support local jobs through hotel stays and restaurant visits.

These events generate significant sales and hotel taxes for the County's coffers while bringing people together from all different backgrounds.

That can also be said for the County's Car Show which attracted the great Governor of the State of New York, Andrew Cuomo, in his classic corvette.

It is events such as these that draw outside dollars to be spent inside our County. That's an economic benefit that we **MUST** encourage.

Nassau itself, like our parks, continues to progress

We are not only in a state of fiscal recovery, but a recovery of the spirit.

Nearly two decades ago, when the defense industry in Bethpage was downsized, Nassau and its residents were not prepared to deal with the economic fallout. That is why I became involved in public service.

I had a desire to replace the jobs lost and help my neighbors recover their spirits.

As a County Legislator, I worked to return 15,000 jobs to the former Grumman property and diversified industry at the site.

Today the Grumman Property is home to the first of its kind in the United States, Homeland Defense Research and Development Center, affordable housing and Nassau's fast growing movie and television industry.

Despite these improvements we cannot relent. We **MUST** build on these successes and

create and retain more jobs if we are going to be ready for the economy of tomorrow.

Since taking office as County Executive, I have focused on attracting new employers and jobs to our County.

My administration has facilitated 13 economic development projects that have committed to create 1,600 new jobs and retain 1,000 permanent ones.

Collectively, these projects are estimated to generate more than 1.3 billion dollars in economic activity.

From diversifying local industry, to the creation of workforce housing and the retention of a 100 year old family-owned business, we are making significant strides at improving the business climate.

The IDA is currently working to make Mark Fasciano's vision for a "Thought Box" a reality. Thought Box will be an integrated commercial/residential center designed primarily for technology companies with affordable housing and amenities to provide opportunities for our college graduates.

Projects like Thought Box are exactly what this region needs. We must not only focus on the jobs we have, but look to create new jobs for the future.

For that reason, I have invested millions of dollars in local job training and retraining centers through agreements with our towns and villages.

While we will continue to train our workforce, we **MUST** build on my efforts to attract new jobs and increase County revenue without relying on property taxes.

That is exactly why I launched "Accelerate Nassau Now" – a plan that seeks to partner with Governor Cuomo's Economic Development Council to launch new development opportunities at the Hub.....along with development at Belmont Park on the western end of Nassau and the former Navy property to the eastern end of the County.

Nassau's Hub, home to Long Island's only major professional sports team and its 200 million dollars of local economic activity, has **L-O-N-G** been the victim of Long Island's most notable export, the word "**NO**".

To solve that problem, I challenged developers with privately-financed plans to come forward; and I challenge critics today, to become supporters of redeveloping the Hub.

I am confident that if we come together, we will find a path forward that leads not to empty parking lots, but **RATHER** to a vibrant center of economic activity with Islanders

banners hanging from every post and the Stanley Cup on display at its heart.

To jump-start success at the Hub, I challenged the private-sector to build a multi-purpose Expo Center on Mitchel Field.

I am happy to report that two companies have answered the call.

Tonight, I announce that I will recommend Nassau Sports and Events, LLC to the Legislature to construct a state-of-the-art 105,000 square foot exhibition center at Mitchel Field that includes multi-purpose fields, basketball and volley ball courts, a rock wall, high ropes, gym and a fitness center.

This project is estimated to create jobs, generate millions for the County and benefit our local economy to the tune of 35 million dollars over the next 5 years.

Most importantly, this is the Hub's first progress in over a decade!

Everyone in this room can help create more jobs by urging government officials to work together to create opportunities, not just at the Hub, but throughout Nassau County.

Government officials and civic and business leaders can do much to accelerate the solutions that lead to a brighter future on Long Island.

**It is the anti-business, anti-job, anti-everything climate that we must change, as it has created our problems and held back progress.**

My administration has worked to solve these problems by assisting local businesses.

My administration has partnered with GEICO, and will soon partner with Healthplex, to fill 100 private-sector job opportunities.

We have hosted two well-attended private-sector job fairs.....and a third with Family Residences and Essential Enterprises....to help those with autism and disabilities, or might I say differently-abled job seekers, find employment.

In May, we will host two additional private-sector job fairs.

My administration also worked tirelessly to support existing businesses with clinics and underwriter workshops.

To foster an environment of job creation and innovation, I helped create a Nassau Chapter of the Inventors and Entrepreneur Club. This organization provides a network for local inventors and entrepreneurs to collaborate, learn from experts, and avail

themselves of County resources.

To illustrate the importance of local businesses and local products, I joined with the Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce to launch a Spend It, Buy It, Keep It Local initiative.

On Small Business Saturday, we stood together to encourage residents to support their local mom and pop shops and my administration has done just that by investing Federal dollars in downtown business districts, such as those in the Villages of Cedarhurst, Hempstead, Lynbrook and New Hyde Park.

To support larger local employers, I launched in 2011 an Employer of the Month program to recognize good corporate citizens who employ our residents.

I'm proud to report that these companies are on the rise in Nassau County, and hiring new employees.

Believe it or not, government **CAN** help create jobs!

One example can be found in a compact between the IDA and Grumman Studios.

This collaborate effort of government and the private-sector is helping to make Nassau the Hollywood East of the movie industry.

Movies filmed this year in Nassau include:

**Men in Black III** starring Will Smith & Tommy Lee Jones

**Phil Spector**, starring Al Pacino; and

**The Dictator**, starring Megan Fox and Sacha Cohen.

Last month premiered **Man on a Ledge**, a film starring Sam Worthington and Elizabeth Banks, which was shot in Nassau County at Gold Coast Studios.

Television shows are also being filmed here, including:

**Law & Order Criminal Intent;**

**The Ringer;**

**Royal Pains;**

**Boardwalk Empire;**

**Celebrity Ghost Stories;**

**The Good Wife; and**

**Da Brick**, directed by Spike Lee.

Together, these movie and television shows resulted in 704 production days. To our benefit, the industry spent 90 million dollars in the local economy.

It is these jobs, and new industries, that are so desperately needed and help solve our economic problems on Long Island.

**NOW**, I ask you all to return to your smart phones and go to the “Nassau Now” app.

As you may have heard, I launched “Nassau Now,” our newest state-of-the-art mobile and web application designed to assist residents in communicating more efficiently and effectively with County government.

I encourage you all to communicate effectively with me right now by selecting the comments section and sending me your suggestions.

I ask that you please be NICE...just like our buses.

My friends two years ago I pledged to repeal the onerous home energy tax --- and that was accomplished .

I pledged to cut wasteful spending -----to date I have cut 200 million in waste, fraud and abuse and put forth reforms that will realize annual recurring savings.

I pledged to freeze and fix Nassau’s broken assessment system—I have put forth reforms that do just that .....all that’s required now is a little help from Albany and the some bipartisan cooperation.

Heck! If NIFA and I can agree then surely a few others can join in!

Finally, I pledged to create jobs and opportunities—and my Office of Economic Development, the Nassau IDA and Accelerate Nassau have created thousands of jobs and opportunities.

Over the past two years Nassau has faced many challenges. We have met each challenge without raising real property taxes. In fact, Nassau County has overcome many

challenges that counties around the state are just now confronting.

While Nassau faces a few more hurdles, most of which can be overcome with bipartisan cooperation, I am confident that we will tackle these obstacles as well.

The good news is, for the first time, in a long time, government is addressing its problems.

For the first time, in a long time, government is honestly discussing unfunded mandates, pension reform, health care costs and wasteful practices.

For the first time, in a long time, citizen voices are being heard louder than special interests.

The good news is, we have charted a course for our county that fixes decades of wrongs over the next few years.

The good news is, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Let's finally, put our differences aside and set our sights and our course in the same direction...the right direction.

A direction that leads us to **A GREAT NASSAU COUNTY** for each and every one of us, and for generations to come.

Thank you all for being here tonight...and for withstanding yet another State of the County Address. **It ain't easy!**

God Bless you, God Bless Nassau County and God Bless America.

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