

**2013 State of the County Address**  
**delivered by Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano**  
**March 13, 2013**

Good evening. Thank you Presiding Officer Norma Gonsalves, Minority Leader Kevan Abrahams and all County Legislators for hosting our State of the County Address.

I appreciate the presence of my colleagues in government - District Attorney Kathleen Rice, Comptroller George Maragos, County Clerk Maureen O'Connell and members of our learned judiciary.

Thank you to our veterans for serving as honor guard this evening.

Will all our veterans please stand and be recognized for your service to our nation.

And thank you, Legislator Fran Becker, for leading us in our National Anthem and the Nassau County Community Choir, including members of the Antioch Baptist Church.

Before I begin my address, I wish to acknowledge those in government who lost their lives serving our great county.

Police Officer Arthur Lopez, who was murdered in cold blood while protecting the residents of Nassau County - at the age of 29 he had already earned distinction in Nassau County's Emergency Services Unit.

Arthur leaves behind a loving mother, father and sister. We join with the Lopez family, our police department and citizens in mourning his loss. Artie was, is, and will forever remain a hero in our hearts.

Police Officer Joseph Oliveri gave his life last year in the line of duty as a distinguished highway patrol officer. Officer Oliveri, while assisting motor vehicle accident victims, was tragically struck down by a passing motorist.

Joseph leaves behind two loving children, Amanda and Dan and his parents Joseph and Maryann, all of whom join us here tonight.

We join our police force and our citizens who mourn his loss and remain steadfast in alerting motorists to obey New York State's "Move Over Law."

Tonight we are also joined by the father of fallen Highway Patrol Officer Michael Califano.

Mike, thank you for joining us this evening. Your son was, is and will always be in our hearts and minds for his dedicated and heroic service to our county.

We also mourn the loss of Nassau County Presiding Officer Peter J. Schmitt.

Peter was a good friend and colleague. He led the Legislature with decorum while serving as an outspoken leader for the residents of the 12th Legislative District.

Peter had a passion for making his constituents' voices heard. He maintained order and dignity as Presiding Officer and made significant advances in environmental preservation as a Legislator.

It is my honor to join the Legislature in renaming the Massapequa Preserve, the Peter J. Schmitt Memorial Preserve this coming April. We are joined tonight by Peter's wife, Lois. Lois, we truly miss Peter; all of Nassau County was honored by his service.

Ladies and Gentlemen, just over three years ago, we inherited a broken Nassau County.

For the years preceding my administration, property taxes had been raised by more than 42 percent. On 6 occasions, property tax increases exceeded Governor Cuomo's property tax cap.

In that same time period, spending increased over \$500 million. And Nassau County faced a \$400 million deficit. How did the former administration choose to close the deficit?

They introduced a new home energy tax on everything and anything used to heat or cool your home - oil, gas, electric, propane and even firewood.

They also sought to raise property taxes by another 16.5% and fill deficits by borrowing money that your children and grandchildren will have to pay back.

Nassau's former plan was clear - take more money from taxpayers to feed the out of control spending habits of government.

I heard the cries of help from our residents, who were struggling to pay their bills, who were terrified about losing their jobs, who worried about how they would provide a college education for their children.

They expressed concern about how their children would ever afford a home and how they would be able to retire in the community they helped build. I did not like what I saw and heard.

Like many of you at home, my wife Linda and I also feared the relocation of our two sons and their grandparents to other areas of the nation where taxes were lower. Accordingly, I chose the path that made sense; NO property tax increases for three consecutive budgets. I chose to repeal the home energy tax, putting money back into our residents' pockets.

I chose to eliminate 16.5% property tax hikes planned by the former administration and stopped the County tax on food in its tracks.

To prevent future politicians from hiking your taxes by large margins, I crossed political party lines and joined with Governor Cuomo in supporting a property tax cap. It is this type of bi-partisan common-sense policy that we must support.

When I first came into office, I set down one rule for my administration above all others. "Help residents".

Everyone in public service should keep in mind that we work for our residents - not special interest groups or lobbyists.

What some politicians don't understand is that government doesn't need more of your money. In fact, the tax cutting actions of my administration have protected our future by removing a 485 million dollar tax burden off the backs of Nassau taxpayers.

These actions sent a loud and clear message. They showed that we would not let government get further into our resident's wallets!

Nassau County had the distinction of being the highest property taxed County in the nation, that is no longer true. While we still have more work to do, we are headed in the right direction.

The actions of my administration have shocked the system - they forced a change in Nassau's ways and they provided a path to REINVENT and Rebuild Nassau through:

**Reducing the Size of Government;**  
**Efficiency Implementations;**  
**Increasing Economic Development and Job Opportunities;**  
**New Public Facilities via Public-Private Partnerships;**  
**Veteran Housing Opportunities;**  
**Engaging a diverse group of residents to lead Nassau;**  
**Never returning to Nassau's Past Practices; and through**  
**Technology Improvements we are Saving Tax Dollars.**

Together, we are reinventing and rebuilding Nassau.

### **Reducing the Size of Government:**

When I took office, Nassau County government was bloated and needed to lose weight. I put it on a diet by reducing the size of government.

Today, Nassau County has 1,776 less positions. That's 1,776 less pensions to fund for this generation and future generations. That's real reform!

Today, Nassau has 33% less patronage positions. That's real reform!

Today, Nassau has 2,500 less copy machines, 1,668 fewer phone lines, and 100 less vehicles. That's real savings!

Today, Nassau has 6 less departments thanks to true consolidation efforts. That's real savings!

Today, Nassau has 123 less administrators. That's real savings!

Through Nassau County's Shared Services initiative, we have realized significant energy savings, approximately \$16 million, thus far, in the cost of natural gas. That's real savings!

Despite being burdened with unfunded mandates and a \$100 million increase in pension and Medicaid costs, we did NOT raise property taxes. That's real savings!

My administration has right-sized government and maintained an efficient workforce that is 20% leaner than we inherited. We also instituted technological solutions and job training to assist our workforce in delivering the excellent services they provide our residents.

From emergency preparedness to snow removal, public safety to parks programs, Nassau's right-sized workforce gets the job done and I wish to thank them for their service before, during and after Hurricane Sandy.

### **Efficiency Implementations:**

We have also reinvented government with efficiency implementations.

In order to fight the tax and spend status quo, I launched innovative solutions to save tax dollars and continue important services.

Efficiencies were made in our bus system, where a private contractor, Veolia, now operates Nassau-owned buses - saving taxpayers \$33 million a year and providing ridership with reliable efficient bus service without raising cash fares. Now that's NICE bus service!

This year, expanded bus service routes will connect riders with growing economic centers.

Efficiencies were also made at the County jail, with the assistance of Sheriff Sposato, where private health care professionals were brought in to deliver health care onsite - thereby eliminating the costly expense of correction guards accompanying convicts to local hospitals and clinics.

This initiative saves taxpayers over \$7 million a year.

### **Increasing Economic Development and Job Opportunities:**

Reinventing Nassau County government required increasing economic development and job opportunities for our residents.

My Bethpage neighbors and I earned experience and skills in this area as we sought to revitalize the former Northrop Grumman property when the company eliminated 20,000 jobs in the 90's.

We worked hard to return over 15,000 jobs in diverse industries to this property. My home community of Bethpage is no longer beholden to one employer.

We attracted a first-of-its-kind homeland security center, high-tech complementary job creators, 100-acres of industry, Motion Picture and Television Production Studios as well as 1,000 units of affordable senior housing.

Today, the property is home to dozens of companies.

It is this initiative that has strengthened our local economy and enabled it to withstand even Northrop's Grumman's recent actions.

After a decade of skyrocketing taxes under the past administration, business leaders have responded to the dramatic end of annual County tax hikes by returning to Nassau County.

For example, my economic development team has helped create and retain nearly 4,000 private-sector jobs.

After shedding jobs for more than 10 years, good middle-class jobs are beginning to return. I commend my aggressive and experienced team of economic development experts for their success in winning fierce competitions from neighboring states.

We stand here today with new jobs and new opportunities. From the new Hain-Celestial Headquarters in Lake Success to attracting a New York City lighting company bound for LA, jobs are coming back to Nassau.

Many local companies are once again expanding operations. Clever Devices for example, which is developing technology for our bus systems and transportation systems internationally, has doubled its employees in Woodbury.

While our local economy is once again growing and our unemployment rate is the lowest in the region, many residents still remain underemployed.

We are addressing this issue by creating a stronger economic climate that encourages job growth and equips our residents with job training opportunities.

In fact, in an effort to reduce the demand on social services, my administration has invested millions of dollars in local job training and retraining centers through agreements with our towns and villages.

We have also supported existing businesses with free clinics, job fairs and financial workshops so that they can succeed.

Small businesses, including Mom and Pop Shops in our downtowns, make up 60 percent of the job opportunities.

Partnering with the Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce, we supported their Buy Local-Shop Local Campaign to remind shoppers of the importance of supporting local downtowns.

Outside our downtowns, I supported programs that convert empty office buildings into affordable housing opportunities for our young people.

This effort along with several housing programs offered by the County is helping young families combat the affordable housing crisis on Long Island.

#### **New Public Facilities via Public-Private Partnerships:**

My Accelerate Nassau Economic Development Plan is my administration's vision for future job opportunities.

My plan calls for advancing development opportunities from Belmont Park in the West of our County to the former Grumman Corporation property in the East.

Exciting plans launched by Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Senator Jack Martins to redevelop parts of Belmont Park into a sports-entertainment and retail center are consistent with our goal of improving the quality of life in Nassau County and continuing to attract tourism dollars that help hold the line on property taxes.

On the Grumman property, motion picture and television production is growing.

We now have two production companies and 9 sound stages that compete internationally for film and television production.

Collectively, the economic impact of this industry in Nassau County was 90 million dollars in 2012. Nassau now has more filming days than four of the five New York City boroughs and regularly employs electricians, carpenters and artisans.

As we sit here today, the most expensive motion picture in history is underway right here in Nassau County.

Building on our successes in film and television, and in an effort to continue growing jobs, we launched efforts to attract digital editing post production companies to Nassau.

I want to thank Deputy Presiding Officer Richard Nicoletto and Legislators Denise Ford and Rose Walker for their efforts in supporting film production here in Nassau County.

My vision is to build on our job creation success in the areas of homeland security, composite manufacturing and digital post-production editing, as well as in the high-tech and bio-tech sectors.

Public-private partnerships are allowing my administration to reinvent and rebuild Nassau with new public facilities that benefit our residents.

The Hub, long a victim of the Long Island “NO,” is now on a clear path to reuse. I was disappointed when a public referendum to build a new sports arena and minor league baseball stadium failed. I warned that a failed referendum would likely result in the loss of the Islanders.

We stand here today with that reality, but as my mom taught me “When presented lemons, make lemonade.” Our lemonade includes a vision for a refreshed Hub that continues to accommodate family entertainment, concerts, the circus and sporting events.

Through a public-private partnership, my vision includes a downsized privately funded arena that continues sports and family entertainment while also freeing up excess parking acreage so that a Rockefeller Center type destination can be built.

The plan calls for Nassau County to share in a percentage of gross revenue to be dedicated to pay down years of accumulated assessment debt. A Request for Proposal has been issued with responses due in April.

I am also pleased to report that a new public-private partnership is underway in the Hub, where twin indoor ice skating rinks are being built - at NO cost to taxpayers - to provide a venue for national and international sporting events as well as public recreational and youth athletic opportunities.

### **Veteran Housing Opportunities:**

While reinventing, we have honored our veterans by creating new housing opportunities for those who dedicated their lives to protect us.

My administration established 42 homes, located on Mitchel Field, to provide affordable housing for veterans and their families and an additional 18 homes for active-duty military personnel.

Working with Congressman Peter King, we developed the Homes for the Brave Program that seeks to use tax-exempt bonds to buy foreclosed homes from banks, restore those homes and then rent them to veterans.

The County also transferred land in Hicksville to Homes For Our Homecoming Heroes, a not-for-profit who is constructing a home for a veteran returning from the Middle East.

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.

I would like to acknowledge Presiding Officer Norma Gonsalves and veterans Legislators Dennis Dunne and Joe Belesi for their work in this regard.

We restored dignity to our veteran monuments and established a comfort station for visitors. We honored the service of our veterans by providing food, clothing and access to valuable services for our veterans in need.

I want to thank Crown Ford, Rockville Centre American Legion, Nassau County American Legion and Wilhelmina Talpasz for donating new vans for veteran transportation purposes.

I'm proud to report that these programs will continue in 2013, along with additional County provided free transportation to the Northport VA hospital.

### **Engaging a Diverse Group of Residents to Lead Nassau:**

By engaging a diverse group of residents to lead Nassau, we have furthered our reinvent and rebuild Nassau initiative.

Diversity and opportunity for every American is found in our government where we employ leaders who reflect the melting pot we are today. I am proud of the work Nassau's employees are performing to make certain all residents have a strong voice in our administration.

I wish to recognize Deputy County Executive Bishop Phillip Elliott who leads the Office of Minority Affairs in certifying women-owned and minority-owned businesses in Nassau County.



Social Service Commissioner John Imhof, for cracking down on welfare fraud and protecting our taxpayers from abuse.

I also wish to recognize Eldia Gonsalves, Executive Director of the Coordinating Agency for Spanish Americans, for launching successful language and small business programs that benefit our entire region.

Dr. Larry Eisenstein, Commissioner of Health, for his many West Nile Virus community information meetings.

I commend Commissioner of Public Works, Shila Shah, for her department's exemplary work with Hurricane Sandy and snow removal.

Human Services Commissioner Lisa Murphy for working to provide important services to our senior citizen community.

I thank Human Rights Commissioner, Zahid Syed, for chairing the Commission and ensuring equality among our residents.

Craig Craft, Commissioner of Emergency Management for working tirelessly before, during and after Hurricane Sandy.

Parks Commissioner, Carnell Foskey, for working to establish a Summer Recreation Program that serve over 1,000 of Nassau's children at a rate parents can afford.

Police Commissioner Tom Dale, for leading the department with dignity and professionalism while cracking down on crime and taking illegal guns off our streets.

I am equally proud of our residents who stepped up to lead important committees....

My Family Violence Task Force, comprised of dedicated individuals, who developed an awareness campaign to reduce instances of domestic violence. I want to applaud them for the great work they do!

My Prescription Drug Task Force, which is comprised of a panel of experts that developed an awareness, education, enforcement and counseling program that includes training parents to administer "NARCAN" a powerful drug that can save a life if quickly administered.

Too many kids are dying from Heroin overdoses and this task force is truly making a difference!

My Committee to Save the Games for the Physically Challenged for their work in providing an important program for our differently abled athletes.

My Business Advisory Council who meets regularly to provide advice and guidance to advance Nassau's economy and create jobs;

The Nassau Hurricane Recovery Fund Committee, led by Nassau's Fire and Police Department clergy for raising funds to help victims of Hurricane Sandy; and my Business Recovery Task force for assisting businesses damaged by Hurricane Sandy.

### **Never Returning to Nassau's Past Practices:**

We have truly reinvented and are rebuilding a stronger, better and brighter Nassau County. That is why we must never return to our past practices.

Clearly, Nassau's past spending practices and lack of reforms resulted in enormous debt and tax increases. I've set a new path to move Nassau forward.

The difference between myself and some Mineola politicians is that I do NOT believe the enormous debt we inherited should be thrust upon our residents in a single year.

It clearly would NOT be fair or helpful for families to pay for all of Nassau's past problems in one year.

What you NEVER read in the newspaper is that Nassau County's finances utilize two accounting methods. That's correct!

For decades, Nassau County utilized an accounting principle known as budgetary basis. Judging Nassau County from this standard, the same standard other counties utilize to measure their finances, we have made monumental strides.

For example, despite record storms, lingering effects of a severe recession, and Nassau Democrat Legislators refusal to approve the funds needed to pay homeowners and businesses their rightful property tax refunds, the County is still projecting a budgetary surplus.

That being said, upon taking office, NIFA discovered past administrators incorrectly utilized budgetary basis accounting when measuring Nassau's finances.

They insisted, and we ultimately agreed, on transitioning to a more stringent GAAP accounting practice as further modified by NIFA.

To effectively move forward without placing an undue tax burden on our residents, we must work together to implement Nassau's fiscal recovery plan, and work in a bipartisan manner to protect residents from tax increases while transitioning to these more stringent GAAP accounting principles.

This plan addresses NIFA's obligation to protect bondholders and my policy of protecting residents' wallets.

It's sensible, it's realistic and it addresses Nassau's debt while NOT placing undue burden on residents. Together, we can and will achieve this goal.

My administration has achieved real structural recurring savings. We have right-sized our workforce, employed technology and cut wasteful spending. At times, it's been an unpleasant task, but it was necessary for our future and our work continues to bring closure to challenging issues.

As you may know, I sought voluntary labor concessions, my ordered concessions were rebuffed and consequently an employee wage freeze was enacted pursuant to NIFA's statutory powers. Those very powers are now in the hands of our court system.

Clearly, now is the time for a settlement that fosters structural savings for Nassau taxpayers while returning a salary path for workers frozen at starting pay and steps.

To that end, NIFA has agreed to meet with me to earnestly discuss cost saving proposals. Settlement of this dispute will provide closure, incentive and a clear path for a more affordable Nassau County.

When I took office, my administration identified that nearly half of Nassau's \$3 billion in debt came from the broken assessment system. Accordingly, my administration set forth to reform the system.

Our goal is to stop this growth of debt, and pay it down WITHOUT forcing residents to pay off a decade of debt in a single year.

I advanced a plan, which was approved by a Majority of the Legislature and NIFA, to pay down Nassau's assessment debt over 10 years and end the practice of borrowing against our children's future.

My plan descended Nassau's borrowing schedule to ZERO over four years as reforms took place. Disturbingly, 3 of the 13 votes necessary to enact my plan remain victim to petty politics. I remain steadfast in my call to the Democrats in the Legislature to release Nassau's fiscal recovery plan from the grip of partisan politics.

Now that redistricting has concluded and legislators returned to districts, it's time to come together to support Nassau's approved fiscal recovery plan. I have worked in a productive, bipartisan manner with many Democrats, including Governor Cuomo, Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, Congressional Representatives Israel, McCarthy and Meeks.

It is this bipartisan relationship that must be forged locally in the County Legislature, and I once again encourage my Democrat colleagues to join me in facing Nassau's past while not placing undue tax burdens on today's residents in order to secure a brighter future for our children.

Just as Legislator Judy Jacobs and I work together on local issues, we all must come together on county-wide issues.

With respect to reforming Nassau's assessment system, it is critical that we avoid the creation of new debt. To accomplish this goal, we have departed from Nassau's past practices of forcing residents to overpay property taxes and then seek a refund.

My administration is the first administration to work with homeowners and settle all challenges before demanding payment of their taxes. Simply put, we correct the errors thereby eliminating the overpayment and consequently the refund. This plan saves money for every taxpayer and every municipality now and in the future.

In fact, this saves all taxpayers money - to the tune of \$58 million over the past two years! And for the first time ever, we eliminated future residential debt. We must stay on this plan to avoid creating debt.

With respect to commercial tax grievances, we are settling larger numbers than ever in Nassau's history. This success can only be enhanced through bi-partisan cooperation. Nassau's ability to repair the system is largely governed by New York State law which holds Nassau to different standards than other counties.

The clear fact remains. If Nassau County's finances are to look like other counties, and our taxpayers are to be treated fairly, we must be afforded the same level playing field.

Nassau is the only county of 62 counties in the state that is subject to such onerous provisions. Accordingly, I sought to amend our administrative code to end the practice of paying back money the county never received.

Powerful lobbyists protect this current inequity, and that's why my reforms are currently working their way through the courts. My administration will continue our plan to settle challenges prior to setting the assessment roll - thus eliminating the ability of governments to hold onto money they should never have received in the first place.

And our plan transitions to a system in which we pay 100 percent each year - a standard no administration has achieved. Why is this important you might ask?

The current system works against taxpayers and in favor of the special interests. This scheme creates taxpayer liability whereby tax dollars get wasted so special interests can get rich.

Even in the face of unique obstacles, we can and will forge ahead to foster an accurate assessment roll. In large part, cyclical assessment and our claim processing is assisting Nassau in achieving this reality.

While dealing with the present system, we were struck a blow by Hurricane Sandy which left homes and businesses with reduced property values.

To address this, the County Assessor sent special forms to affected homes to report damages and posted the form online to collect the necessary information.

We have sought State authorization to correct these assessments and have called for a grant program through the Federal relief dollars to make all taxing jurisdictions whole.

We are working very closely with Governor Cuomo and the Federal government to make certain that unaffected property owners don't bear the tax burden of the reduced assessment claims from properties damaged by the superstorm.

Our vision for the first cyclical re-assessment, which will take place in 2014, is to retain the best and brightest appraisers to implement a plan that engages all taxing jurisdictions and property owners in a process to build on four years of assessment data while providing the opportunity for challenges and settlements to take place prior to demanding payment from residents - thus ending debt creation and ensuring fairness and equity to all.

No doubt, Nassau's fiscal footing could be strengthened by taking more of your hard earned tax dollars. I, however, DO NOT believe you have the dollars to give.

The path I chose, keeps your dollars in your pocket while steadily repairing Nassau County, addressing its past debt and staying true to our polices of reforming government operations.

### **Technology Improvements Save Dollars:**

Technological advancements have allowed my administration to increase efficiency, communications, public safety, create jobs and save lives.

"Nassau Now", a free mobile and online application, now connects residents and government. From reporting potholes to issuing important public safety alerts, "Nassau Now" connects us.

"Nassau Works", a free mobile and online application, connects job seekers with 19,000 local employment opportunities through the convenience of their phone or laptop via social media forums.

DPW snow plows, through the use of GPS, can now be tracked on an electronic map so that supervisors know where they are and whether their plow is down and salter on. This system helps us efficiently manage our resources.

An Online Hospital Pharmacy Program, developed by our IT Department, connects hospital pharmacists throughout Nassau County in real time so they can share the short supply of critical medication - especially for those being treated for cancer.

Shot Spotter, employed in several communities, identifies when a gun was fired, where the shot occurred, what caliber bullet and sends the information to police sector cars in 6 seconds. We recently upgraded the system to record real time video. This program saves lives and enhances police officer safety.

Our Police Department's Intelligence Led Policing Model has earned national recognition as it employs powerful technology in each police car.

This technology, along with special units such as the CIRRT team, has resulted in Nassau County having the lowest crime rate of any large County in the nation. Crime is down 10% since I took office 3 years ago.

In fact, the newly created special CIRRT team has made 1,000 arrests and recently took dozens of illegal guns and drugs off our streets.

I thank Commissioner Dale and the Nassau police force for their service.

I want to acknowledge District Attorney Kathleen Rice, for her partnership in the successful Gun Buy Back Programs which utilize assets seized from criminals to take illegal guns off our streets.

Together, we have removed over 2,613 illegal guns from Nassau communities; including handguns, assault rifles, sawed off shotguns, Tec-9's and more.

Gun violence has placed our nation on edge after the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

As a parent, the thought of that day shakes me to the soul and as County Executive I've launched aggressive measures to avoid such senseless crimes.

While we all hope to never face such an active shooter situation, Nassau County is leading the nation in preparing public and private school administrators to protect students as well as effectively respond to active shooters.

The safety of our children - our most precious resource - is of paramount concern and working with the Nassau County Police Department we will continue to advance preventative measures that enhance education and preparedness.

Nassau has hosted 5 active shooter seminars which were well attended by public school districts, private and parochial schools, and libraries, as well as colleges and universities in Nassau County, wherein law enforcement experts advised administrators of preventative and responsive measures.

The topic was a sobering look at school violence. Incidents such as the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School; Columbine High School and Virginia Tech taught school officials the significance of preparation, early detection and maintaining close contact with the police department.

The seminar also explored the best practices and compared law enforcement and school protocols. The goal of the seminar was to ensure public safety by coordinating the County's protocols and reinforcing our see something, say something program.

### **Rebuilding Nassau:**

Successfully reinventing Nassau County operations has been a challenge; however, rebuilding our great County is an even greater challenge due to the damage inflicted on our residents by Hurricane Sandy.

Tonight, I speak to you from The Morrelly Center for Homeland Security which served as the Emergency Operations Center during the hurricane.

As the superstorm went from radar screen to real world just over 4 months ago, I activated this center wherein over 50 separate agencies came together to coordinate resources and institute a pre-storm lifesaving plan where I called for the evacuation of 400,000 residents.

This action, coupled with the leadership in our Department of Health, successfully evacuated 1,400 frail residents from one hospital and 6 nursing homes.

### **PAUSE**

As the dire reports came ashore ahead of the storm, it became apparent that our residents would face short-term, interim and long-term issues unlike anything we had faced before.

Our South Shore and Barrier Island was battered by the hurricane winds and storm surge.

I would like to pause to recognize our first responders - police officers, volunteer firefighters and fire marshals, ambulance workers, correction officers and personnel from the Office of Emergency Management - who aided our residents during the storm and worked together to minimize loss of life. Please stand and be recognized for your efforts.

I also wish to recognize the outstanding service of County employees in the Departments of Public Works, Parks, Emergency Management and other County workers who cleaned up our communities after the storm and continue to assist citizens with recovery and rebuilding efforts. Please stand and be recognized.

Day one after landfall, I knew we had a long and hard recovery before us.

Our residents faced unprecedented and widespread property damage to 74,000 homes and 4,000 businesses. Critical infrastructure was also damaged, our environment was harmed and our economy was in a shockwave.

Since Hurricane Sandy struck Long Island, my administration has worked tirelessly - helping our residents respond to one of the most destructive storms in decades.

We have witnessed acts of incredible generosity, brotherhood and courage. We have seen entire communities come together in ways that will be woven into our heritage of a proud and unbroken Nassau County.

Nassau County, in conjunction with Federal and State agencies, is hard at work addressing the immediate needs of our residents. It is an ongoing effort that will continue for some time.

In an effort to serve residents through the initial recovery period, we provided shelters, pet shelters, meal distribution sites, hot showers, laundry facilities, insurance and FEMA assistance centers and worked on a comprehensive housing plan to help keep people in their local neighborhoods.

Housing so many displaced people was a number one priority as housing is at a premium in Nassau County on the best of days.

On the tightest of deadlines, Governor Cuomo and I worked with FEMA to implement a new innovative program that would eventually be called STEP.

Families with damaged homes were displaced and housed in hundreds of hotel rooms and separated from their neighborhoods, schools, families and friends. STEP was designed to fix damaged heating, electrical and hot water systems so that families could stay in their homes while planning and undertaking permanent repairs.

Over 800 houses have been temporarily repaired, thus allowing many residents to live in their homes while carrying out bigger repairs. Not only are they not trapped in hotel rooms, they remain in their neighborhoods where they are surrounded by friends and family.

Nassau's response and recovery efforts after Hurricane Sandy are ongoing as we now live in a Post-Hurricane Sandy world. This Post-Hurricane world still contains thousands of homeowners who face the financial struggle of rebuilding their lives and homes.

The ability for residents to quickly rebuild became a greater challenge when Congress delayed the supplemental appropriation funds for rebuilding programs.



If not for the leadership of Congressional Representatives King, Israel, McCarthy and Meeks, as well as very dedicated residents from the south shore communities who joined me in marching on Washington, we would still be in limbo.

I wish to acknowledge the residents who marched on Washington for their determination to recover and rebuild. We were successful in lobbying Congress.

While Federal programs are still being formed, we launched efforts to assist our residents, rebuild our critical infrastructure, repair our economy and clean up our environment.

Our commitment to rebuild and assist homeowners is embodied in programs we have developed with Governor Cuomo and in communication with Federal officials. Together, we will strengthen homes, mitigate mold and provide community planning programs to engage local residents in shaping a rebuilt Nassau.

In anticipation of federal dollars funding requested programs, we encourage homeowners to complete New York State's pre-registration process online at [www.NYSANDYHELP.NY.GOV](http://www.NYSANDYHELP.NY.GOV).

Employers were also hit hard by Hurricane Sandy. To support small businesses in recovering from storm damage, I opened a Nassau County Business Recovery Center to help them cut through the red tape.

The web site, [www.NassauBackInBusiness.org](http://www.NassauBackInBusiness.org) includes information, contacts and online links for small and medium-sized businesses in need of assistance navigating federal and state disaster relief offerings. To date, the Business Recovery Center has helped over 500 small businesses in recovering from the superstorm.

This center also offers gas stations an incentive to install generators so that the next time the power goes out, the pumps stay on.

I also want to thank Hofstra Law for providing students and lawyers to assist in this effort. This assistance was critical as small businesses are the backbone of our economy as they are important employers - simply put, helping them rebuild keeps residents employed.

As we look to aid homeowners and businesses, so too must we repair our infrastructure - where repairs must be made to our bridges and roadways. Repairs are underway in many areas of the County, including on West Shore Road where the seawall and roadway collapsed. Hurricane Sandy damaged critical infrastructure - from our wastewater treatment plants to hospitals and roadways. There are significant challenges ahead.

With respect to our wastewater treatment plants, prior to the storm, we instituted plans and improved operations to the point where they were operating at 100% efficiency and we ridded their torrid past of noncompliance and fines.

In fact, the Bay Park plant operated for over a year without any violations at all.

We had launched plans to continue improvements; however, Hurricane Sandy deposited 9 ½ feet of salt water into the plant - creating significant and lasting damage.

Post Sandy, we have launched a combined County-State-Federal effort to not only rebuild our wastewater treatment plants but also to harden them from future storms. We are working in conjunction with Long Beach - whose waste water treatment plant also failed during the Hurricane. Rebuilding presents the opportunity to address and improve our environment.

We are in the planning stage and seeking to utilize recovery dollars to construct an ocean outflow pipe that will significantly improve our bays and waterways. We have requested programs to restore our beaches, bulkheads and waterways.

The rebuilding challenges before us are great; however, it presents an opportunity for Nassau County, along with its cities, towns and villages to emerge even better, stronger and more united than ever before.

Due to the determination of our residents and the strength of our intellect, we will look back on Hurricane Sandy and recall the stories of bravery, struggle, hardship and most importantly renewal of the unbroken spirit of Nassau.

My friends, it has been an honor to serve as your County Executive for the past 3 and a-half years.

We have and will continue to reinvent and rebuild Nassau.

While Nassau still faces fiscal hurdles and Post Hurricane Sandy challenges, most of which can be overcome through bipartisan cooperation and hard work, I am confident that we will meet these challenges head on.

We have addressed a decade of crises and mismanagement.

We have enacted emergency management protocols to protect citizens in times of crisis.

We have improved our public works to meet weather challenges.

We have improved our parks through smart cost-saving partnerships.

We have launched bold money saving public-private partnerships.

We have honored our veterans and protected our senior citizens.

and

Nassau no longer taxes too high, spends too much or reforms too little.

We have met each challenge **WITHOUT** raising County property taxes.

We have repealed the onerous home energy tax, cut wasteful spending, created over 4,000 private-sector jobs for our middle-class and for the first time, in a long time, our citizens' voices are being heard louder than special interests.

I thank you!

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.