

WCA chief offers his view

Kathy Kahn

Oct-30-09

William Mooney Jr., president of the Westchester County Association, was in the audience when Gov. David Paterson unveiled his budget deficit reduction plan Oct. 26 at the HVEDC headquarters in New Windsor.

“He’s trying to garner support for the plan. We can argue how to do it, but at the end of the day, the (state) budget director’s report says the state will be insolvent in six weeks,” Mooney said.

He asked the governor how he plans to handle public sector employees when it comes to the “shared pain” he spoke of to the group of invitation-only guests at his presentation. “No concessions have been made by them, and their compensation is the second highest in the U.S.,” Mooney said. “In Long Island alone, the public sector pays an average of \$57,000 a year; the same job in the private sector averages \$39,000 a year – that’s almost a 45 percent differential. How much can private businesses afford to pay employees and negotiate?”

Mooney said the state workers need to share the pain with private enterprise. “We now pay 100 percent of their health benefits...concessions must be made across the board, and that includes the public work force, if the state is to survive.”

“In 2000, the pension fund was \$991 million; in 2009, it is up to \$10 billion. Even if Paterson doesn’t succeed, he is trying. I do applaud the effort, but at the end of the day, the Legislature is the only body that can act. Right now, they aren’t even in session.”