

# Tarrytown-SleepyHollowPatch

## ASTORINO SPEAKS IN TARRYTOWN

Businesses and taxes are a top priority according to the new County Executive.

By Sean Roach  
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Newly inaugurated Westchester County Executive, Rob Astorino, spoke to a gathering of Westchester business professionals in Tarrytown today at the 13th annual Breakfast with the County Executive.

The event was organized by the Westchester County Association – a business-based membership organization that addresses public policy and business advocacy.

Astorino took the opportunity to announce his first legislative action as County Executive, a measure that would mandate contributions to healthcare costs by some county employees.

"Today my office is sending the first piece of legislation from my administration," he said. "In it I am calling for all of Westchester County non-union managerial employees to contribute to 15 percent of the cost of their healthcare insurance."

The legislation will be forwarded to the seventeen-member Westchester County Board of Legislators for approval. If passed, it would also affect elected officials and county officers appointed to set terms. Astorino said he would participate in the plan once it was passed.

The rest of Astorino's speech focused on the fiscal direction of county government and setting a more accommodating atmosphere with the business community – a community he said has been disenfranchised by high taxation and cumbersome regulation.

"Right here we have 338 taxing districts in Westchester," Astorino said. "We are expensive, too expensive a place to live in work. We have taxes that are the highest in the country and a general cost of living that is well above the U.S. average."

To facilitate a more open-door approach at the county, Astorino outlined a conceptual work group that would act as a liaison between the business community and the government. The group would be comprised of county officials, business owners, non-profits and academics. It would work to implement concepts and ideas generated from the business community.

"It will be designed to be permanent group, to create continuity," he said.

The executive also promised to deliver on reducing taxes and cutting the cost of government. He said he expects cost-cutting plans from county departments within the next few weeks.

Over 500 people attended the event at the Double Tree Hotel on South Broadway. It was the largest turnout in the event's history, organizers said.

"It's a real tribute to our new County Executive and the initiatives he has set out," said Alfred Delbello, a WCA chairman.