



Westchester
County Association

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For Immediate Release

Westchester County Association Calls On Lawmakers to Act Immediately On Five-Point Plan to Control Spending

Citing Worst Financial Crisis Since the Depression,
Business Organization Says the Public Cannot Wait

WHITE PLAINS, NY (September 24, 2008) – Citing the current financial crisis as the worst since the Great Depression, The Westchester County Association (WCA)—the area’s preeminent business membership organization—today presented a **Five-Point Plan**. The Plan is directed at controlling spending and avoiding potentially major property tax increases and an exodus of businesses from our area.

WCA President William M. Mooney, Jr. said: “Given the meltdown on Wall Street and its potentially negative impact on the finances of the state, it’s time for our state lawmakers to hold a special session to deal with this financial crisis. We also look to our county officials to take a leadership role in articulating specific action steps. The residents of Westchester County, who once again have the dubious distinction of paying the highest property taxes in the nation, deserve no less than the full attention of its elected representatives.”

Al DelBello, Chairman of the Westchester County Association, added: “We are facing an unprecedented economic emergency that requires both bold leadership and a willingness to make tough choices. The so-called *tipping point* has not only been reached but passed.”

Mooney described the five recommendations as “reality based.” He pointed to the City of New York where Mayor Bloomberg immediately called on all departments including the police to cut their budgets by 5%. “Throughout the United States, all levels of government, businesses and households are cutting expenses to survive this financial crisis, yet our lawmakers have remained mute.” The Five Point Plan calls for:

- 1) No tax increases at any government level, beginning immediately with the 2009 budgets that are typically prepared at the end of the year
- 2) 5% across the board reduction in expenses at all government levels including an immediate hiring freeze.
- 3) Seek state mandate reforms to help reduce fiscal burden that the state passes on to county governments and local municipalities
- 4) Centralize government operations and purchasing (i.,e., information technology, accounting, legal, fuel oil and supplies)
- 5) Require public sector employees (government workers, teachers, police, firefighters, etc.) to adopt private sector model of contributing to their health care and pension benefits.

Richard E. French, Jr., President of Regional News Network (RNN) and Chair of the WCA Advocacy Committee, also called upon county, municipal and public school districts to adopt the Five Point Plan recommendations in their own operations. “The ripple effect across all government and public sector entities, combined with the state initiatives, will add up to significant savings. We are all in the same boat. At this point, it’s unreasonable for any one sector to be considered exempt.”

“We call upon the members of Westchester’s delegation in Albany as well as our local officials to pledge their support for the 5 Point Plan and to return to the legislature and sponsor measures immediately to help bring financial relief,” French declared.

Mooney stated that the WCA will undertake an in-depth evaluation and review of the county’s proposed 2009 budget that is to be released in November. He said the WCA will draw on its members who have financial expertise “to help us in examining the budget and making comments and recommendations for the county to reduce expenses.”

The Westchester County Association (www/Westchester.org) is the preeminent business membership organization in Westchester County. The Association is committed to business advocacy, economic vitality and to providing a strong and clear voice for the interests of businesses on the regional, national and international levels. Its key objectives are: promoting positive economic development in the region; fostering business development; and providing its members with access and interaction with key public and private sector individuals, agencies and organizations.