

STATE OF THE BOROUGH SPEECH
MAYOR WILLIAM PIKOLYCKY, WOODBINE
JANUARY 03, 2010

It is my great pleasure to report to you the State of the Borough of Woodbine along with my wishes for the best in the New Year.

- Once again this year we are all aware of the economic and financial challenges that each of us continues to face, both for Borough and for each of us personally.
- Trenton reduced our municipal aid funding for 2008 by approximately \$100,000, and by an additional \$5,000 in 2009. This has made it difficult to hold the line on taxes.
- However, I am pleased to note that for the 19th consecutive year the local purpose tax rate did not increase in 2009 and our goal is to hold the line again in 2010.
- In 2009, the Borough added more than 1 million dollars in **new ratables**. We anticipate the completion of the new Paraco Gas facility in 2010 which will be a welcome addition to the business community and the Borough as a whole.
- Also in 2009, Woodbine received more than \$ 4.2 million dollars in **grants** for community and economic development projects.
- Woodbine continues to position itself in a very strong infrastructural and business-friendly way, thereby being able to now attract commercial businesses and development.
- In particular we are proud that Woodbine has not only been among the first communities to obtain a Sustainable Jersey Certification but received recognition from Sustainable Jersey as New Jersey's first Champion Small Community.
- Woodbine has shown itself to have established a "walkability network" causing it to be often cited as a model walkable community, part of its rural and sustainable attractiveness.
- South Jersey Gas completed its gas line project to the Woodbine Developmental Center. The next phase would be to extend natural gas into downtown Woodbine.
- Garden State Ethanol continues to move forward with plans to build a 25 million gallon/year algae-to-ethanol plant.
- While this project is being reviewed, Garden State Ethanol is progressing to develop a prototype facility at the Airport Business Park.

- This will result in the reconstruction of the former Richardson's Building and will enable GSE and Rowan University to work together on the science of production of ethanol from algae.
- The Borough and Garden State Ethanol are moving forward by installing security fencing around the perimeter of the old landfill.
- This fencing will also discourage off the road vehicles from accessing both that property and its near neighbors. This fencing is being funded by GSE.
- We further anticipate that one of the other positive outcomes of the GSE project in addition to having a \$100 million dollar ratable, will be the proper closure of the Borough's landfill.
- Woodbine will continue to take advantage of the federal economic recovery package funding, which is commonly referred to as "the stimulus package", during the coming year with an application to the USDA for funds to construct a new Public Works facility, and to extend sewer lines into the Borough of Woodbine.
- This project, when completed will create significant opportunities for business expansion and new private investment on Washington Avenue and DeHirsch Avenue.
- DCA has provided funding for continuation of upgrades to our local municipal utilities water system.
- The Borough and the State of New Jersey are extending water service to Belleplain State Forest under a \$1 million project, funded by NJDEP.
- The Borough of Woodbine received a \$50,000 grant to prepare a Sustainability Element for the Borough Municipal Master Plan, which was funded by the New Jersey Office of Smart Growth.
- Our planning board is in the process of reviewing and updating our Master Plan and the sustainability element has proven to be a very important part of that update.
- We are looking into the use of both solar energy for municipal and school buildings and wind-driven energy generation.
- The New Jersey Pinelands Commission is also considering several important changes to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan.

- Chief among these changes are proposed rules regarding clustering of residential development in Pinelands Forest and Rural Development Areas.
- The Borough and the Woodbine Port Authority are presently working out a Memorandum of Agreement for the future development of the Woodbine Airport Business Park as well as the aviation expansion.
- The Borough has secured a commitment from the Painters Union to repaint the railroad trestle bridge which serves as a gateway to our community.
- We are excited about this partnership which will be a great project for their apprentices and will enlist the financial support of our business community, as well as, the Greater Woodbine Chamber of Commerce for the materials needed for this project.
- We in Woodbine have been working with the Pinelands Commission for 30 years now to achieve the balance to develop in a way that complements the community's character and protects the environment.
- As a Pinelands town, we look forward to continued cooperation as we pursue managed/responsible development of commercial areas.
- As we as a nation, as well as the State of New Jersey and our own Borough, face the challenges of renewed economic development, the Borough has undertaken a more robust marketing campaign.
- This is being funded by the USDA to help assist our Airport Business Park and our Washington/DeHirsch Avenue Business District, which has been identified by Federal and State agencies, and most importantly Pinelands, as a major Smart Growth planned development area.
- As part of the Borough's overall neighborhood revitalization strategy, Woodbine was successful in securing a grant totaling \$689,657 through the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program.
- These funds are to acquire abandoned/ foreclosed properties, to rehabilitate and make available for new homeowners.
- We have completed and filed our COAH plan, thus allowing us to move forward with any major development while recognizing our COAH obligations.
- As I mentioned earlier, in 2009, the Borough of Woodbine was successful in securing approximately \$4.2 million dollars in Federal, State, and County grants.

The projects funded will positively impact the quality of life for our residents and businesses.

- The Department of Transportation continues to provide the Borough with funding towards streetscape, bikeways, road reconstruction, sidewalks, curbing and drainage as well as airport runway/aviation improvements, thus addressing these transportation needs without increasing the burden to local taxpayers.
- The Department of Community Affairs funding is currently permitting the Borough to upgrade our outdoor recreational facilities to today's standards and regulations including reconstructing basketball and tennis courts and the baseball fields at the Borough's primary recreation complex, Lincoln Park.
- In addition, the Woodbine Recreation Commission has continued to add programs including many specifically geared toward senior citizens.
- We have been successful in preserving and enhancing our "urban forest" throughout our beautiful tree-lined community, and have recently applied for \$7,000 in additional funding for tree maintenance and removal from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Forestry Division's Business Stimulus Fund.
- We recently completed our third five-year Community Forestry Management Plan.
- The Borough continues to work with the Cape May County Animal Shelter Alliance to promote the health and safety of the Borough's animal population.
- Woodbine is promoting health-related initiatives, such as walking group, wellness days, and the continuing Recreation Commission yoga classes.
- Most significantly, the Borough also received recognition from the national Experience Works program as a New Jersey Outstanding Training Agency for 2009. Experience Works has a regional office in our Community Center.
- At this time, I would like to again thank the Federally-funded Experience Works Program, by which eight eligible individuals over the age of 55 are employed in a variety of settings throughout the municipality.
- The Borough is continuing its efforts to partner with the School District in finding funding for our Community School, especially in upgrading its various systems which have not been updated since 1965, for added health and safety considerations.
- A \$6 million dollar capital program has been developed. We are now working together to find as many grants as possible from DCA, the BPU Clean Energy Program and others to match the Department of Education's 58% grants.

- Woodbine AARP continues its work in our community.
- Our Antique District celebrated its seventh anniversary, with added walkability in this district due to our streetscape enhancements, which will continue to be embellished upon.
- Our equestrian presence is still growing and contributes to our efforts to promote eco-tourism.
- I thank the Greater Woodbine Chamber of Commerce as it continues its hard work throughout the community promoting Woodbine as a great place to live, work, shop and enjoy this unique setting in the Pinelands.
- I would also like to thank the Borough Council, appointed officials and members of our Boards, Authorities, and Commissions, Borough employees, and Borough professionals for their dedicated work for Woodbine.

In closing, as I think back to the beginning of 2009, the prospects for our economy and our very way of life were grim as we were in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

As we prepare for 2010, I think we can reflect positively on our collective efforts over this past year, difficult as it may have been.

I believe these public/private partnerships and the support from our residents and businesses in the community have put Woodbine in a strong position to be prepared to grow as the economy continues to rebound.

We have and continue to be pro-active and not wait for things to happen and, accordingly, we are ready to face the challenges and opportunities that 2010 will bring,

Thank you,

William Pikolycky, Mayor