



MICHAEL B. YUDELSON  
SUPERVISOR

**State of the Town Address**  
**By Henrietta Town Supervisor Michael Yudelson**  
**To the Henrietta Chamber of Commerce**  
**Wednesday, January 30, 2013**

Since becoming Supervisor, I have really stressed open communication and making information available to the public so I hope you will find today's program informative and useful.

There is a lot to report regarding the State of the Town, so let me dig right in.

**2013 Budget**

Just like businesses and families, the Town of Henrietta has been very mindful of the difficult economic situation of the past few years and has worked hard to operate within our means.

Our 2013 Budgeted expenses are only 1% higher than in the 2012 Budget.

The 2013 town tax rate remains the same as it was when I became Supervisor, at \$1.21 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Given what has happened the past few years with the economy, it seemed especially important to not place any additional burden on Town taxpayers.

What were our challenges and how did we accomplish this?

**Benefits**

Annual Town spending has increased by a total of only 6% over the 5 years I have been Supervisor, a little more than 1% per year.

But that includes the Cost of Benefits and that cost has increased a total of 61% over that same time period, an average of over 12% per year.

The benefits for an average Town employee add an additional 60% of their wages, (sometimes more) to the total amount they are being compensated. That figure was less than 50% when I took office. There really is not much the Town can do to control these costs. It is also important to note that the employees cannot control the cost of mandated benefits.

We are most directly affected by the required contribution by the Town to the NYS Retirement System.

Consider these numbers:

- Almost 85% of the employees of the Town are in Tier 3 or Tier 4 of the system. For an average Town employee, earning \$50,000 in a year, the Town has to pay another \$9,300 annually to the Retirement System on their behalf.
- Our required contribution to the Retirement System in December 2009 was \$314,600.
- The payment we just made in December 2012 \$ was 732,047.
- The State has advised us that in December of 2013, the end of this year, our payment will be \$877,064; a whopping 20% increase in just one year.
- Overall that equates to an increase of 179% or \$562,000 more than we were paying just four years ago.
- Just to give you some context, \$562,000 added to the Town of Henrietta budget on an ongoing basis without any other adjustments for salary increases, health insurance and other costs we cannot control unilaterally, would require us to raise our tax rate by 17%.

The State is looking at a long term averaging method that would provide more consistent billing over the years, but that does not change the overall amount. The introduction of yet another new tier, Tier 6 is a good step but it will only apply to employees hired going forward. Because we have a very low turnover rate, this new Tier will have little or no benefit to us for many years.

There was a lot of talk at this time last year about the Tax Cap but that really did not have a great effect on Henrietta this year because we were far below the allowable limit of increase in taxes to be levied.

### **Health Care Consortium**

Health Care costs are still rising significantly, but our membership in the Finger Lakes Municipal Health Insurance Trust continues to yield good results for our taxpayers. By joining with other towns and agencies, the Trust has controlled the amount of our rate increases as together we have more leverage to obtain the best possible rates.

Whereas for years we were seeing increases of 18% to 20% or even more in our Health Care costs, last year the Trust was able to leverage our collective buying power to secure an increase of 12.4% for 2013 and for 2014 we have already negotiated that the overall increase will be no more than 9% with no individual plan that is part of our offering increasing by more than 11%. This year I am serving as a member of the Executive Board of the Trust and that Board is very encouraged by the results to date. We continue to be approached by other municipalities and public agencies about joining with us and each one of those is evaluated carefully to see if they would be an addition that would be economically advantageous to the Trust.

It is this type of creativity and cooperation that is necessary if we are to find ways to control costs. Current State Insurance laws do not allow municipalities with fewer than 50 employees to join these trusts. This is a topic that we look forward to talking to our new State representatives about.

Another way that we have controlled costs is by not filling vacancies as they occur, if at all possible. In most cases this has been done at the department head level and duties and responsibilities have been absorbed by others.

### **Team Effort**

To do so took a real team effort. Let me mention who makes up that team, namely the Town Board, our department heads and all the Town employees.

Our Town Board members have diverse backgrounds and experiences and each one contributes to the Board in a different way. What we have in common is that we understand that providing services to our taxpayers is very important and beyond that, we are doing so with their money. We all take that responsibility very seriously and I believe that as a result we reach decisions together that are in the best interest of those taxpayers.

Our department heads are the ones who must lead their departments including advancing the Town Board's priorities. We do not get the chance often enough to recognize them for their efforts. Several of our department heads are with us today and I would ask you to join me in giving them a round of applause.

There are so many really good employees of the town who work so hard on behalf of our residents. They really care about the Town and the people they serve. They are the backbone of our organization.

Dave Moriarty, President of the Roadrunners, the union that represents more than half of the town employees is here and I would ask him to please stand and accept our thanks to the members of the Roadrunners and all Town employees.

As local elected officials, it is always reassuring to know that if we need assistance at the State level that we can reach out to our State representatives. As a result of redistricting Henrietta has new representatives, but I don't think it could have worked out better than it did.

Senator Gallivan is Chairman of the Senate's Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee. He also chairs the Senate's Social Services Committee.

I got to know Senator Gallivan very well several years ago when he was a member of the New York State Police and was stationed at the barracks which used to be directly across the parking lot from the Town Hall. He later served two terms as the Sheriff of Erie County.

As was mentioned, Assemblyman Bronson did serve part of Henrietta during his time in the Monroe County Legislature but now represents the entire town in the Assembly. He is a well-

respected member of the Assembly and is a member of the Committee on Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry as well as the Committee on Local Government.

I look forward to working with both of these gentlemen.

### **2012 projects**

Despite the economy, businesses continued to recognize Henrietta as the place to be. Let's talk about some of the projects that were completed during the past year.

Henrietta continues to be a prime location for new restaurants:

- CiCi Pizza opened in Henrietta Plaza a couple of months ago.
- The space that for many years was Perkins on Jefferson Road reopened as Opa!, serving authentic Greek food.
- A new Tim Horton's opened on East Henrietta Road opposite Suburban Plaza.
- The Texas Roadhouse opened in December on West Henrietta Road in the same plaza as Kohls.
- And Dairy Queen opened on Jefferson Road in July.

There were more than just new places to eat:

After enjoying those extra calories at Dairy Queen, you can go up the road and work them off at the new L.A. Fitness on Marketplace Drive.

Rochester Precision Optics added 43,000 sq. ft. to its headquarters on John Street, bringing the total size to over 100,000 sq. ft. Along with the expansion, which was supported by Monroe County, there will be 150 new jobs.

Konar Properties added a 38,000 sq. ft. building at their Erie Station Business Park.

Reflexite Precision Technology added 49,000 sq. ft. of space to their facility on Park Center Drive.

A new building on Hylan Drive in front of Value City Furniture houses a new First Niagara Bank as well as Aspen Dental.

2012 saw many changes on West Henrietta Road.

Dorschel Mini of Rochester opened their new and unique sales facility on West Henrietta Road. Rick Dorschel once told me that West Henrietta Road is "the #1 location to sell cars in the Greater Rochester area". In addition to location, let's not think for a minute that this is not in large part due to Rick's investment, innovation and commitment over the years.

But now Rick has decided it is time to transition to new leadership under his son-in-law, Will Trafton.

Another person who played a huge role in developing this part of West Henrietta Road into what it is today is Jon Holtz, who recently sold Holtz House of Vehicles to the well respected Garber Automotive Group. They will be remodeling many of their properties along that stretch, further enhancing the car-buying options on West Henrietta Road for area consumers.

RIT completed two important projects in 2012. The Golisano Institute for Sustainability is an 84,000 sq. ft. LEED Platinum facility that will serve as a center for sustainability research, education and outreach. This project was a component of the plan submitted by the Finger Lakes region to Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council. Many in the area were disappointed when our region was not selected for one of the larger awards in the initial round of this process. However in Round Two, the Finger Lakes region was selected as having the Best Plan and was awarded \$96.2 million for 76 projects including \$5 million for the Golisano Institute.

The other project completed by RIT is "Institute Hall", an 87,000 sq. ft. building that includes Chemistry, Biomedical Engineering and Chemical Engineering classrooms, and laboratory space for funded research projects.

RIT is a huge economic driver for the economy of Henrietta and Monroe County as a whole. Over the past few years RIT has been averaging over \$40 million annually in construction projects on their campus, generating many jobs in the construction field. In addition to creating jobs on campus as a result of their growth, RIT continues to contribute to economic development by creating new businesses and new jobs here in Henrietta through Venture Creations, their business incubator.

There are many, many events at RIT that are open to the public. Here is one that I highly recommend. "Imagine RIT" is an annual campus-wide event that showcases the innovative and creative spirit of RIT students, faculty and staff. Visitors experience this through interactive presentations, hands-on demonstrations, and hundreds of exhibits. Held annually each spring, this family-friendly celebration is the first big event of Rochester's festival season. Last year 35,000 people attended.

"Imagine RIT" for 2013 will be held on Saturday, May 4, rain or shine.

### **Filling empty space**

Some of the business expansion in Henrietta involved the filling of empty space. A few examples include:

- Toshiba Business Solutions relocated its regional headquarters to LeFrois Development's Calkins Road Business Park. In addition to filling empty space, they also added space.
- Roberts Wesleyan College has taken space in the office building at 1200 Jefferson Rd.

- I mentioned Cici Pizza and Opa! previously. They both went into vacant spaces.
- Continuing their growth as one of the premiere destination spots for music lovers and fans of good food, Lovin' Cup expanded into adjacent space at Park Point that had been vacant.

### **Tops and John St.**

Sometimes good economic news is not about new businesses coming to Henrietta but rather ones that have considered leaving Henrietta but ultimately decided to stay. I was approached about two years ago by Tops Market and Flaum Management. Tops did not want to leave Henrietta but their store needs modernizing and corporate strategy requires that new or remodeled stores have to have a fueling operation associated with them. The end result is that they will be moving across the street to Frontier Commons Plaza to the building currently occupied by Frontier and Frontier will be moving to another location in the plaza and will actually be adding jobs.

Another important project that was finished in 2012 was the long-planned connection of John Street from Bailey Road to Lehigh Station Road. This provides relief for West Henrietta Road as well as Bailey Rd. and provides easier access to the NYS Thruway for people in the RIT and Bailey Road areas.

### **Residential Construction**

Not all of the construction activity in Henrietta during 2012 was for commercial purposes. Everyone is anxious for signs that the economy is recovering so it was encouraging to hear last week that sales of existing single-family homes in the Greater Rochester region rose for the sixth consecutive quarter.

Henrietta continues to be a strong market for new residential development. 101 new homes were built in Henrietta last year, an increase of 9% over 2011. According to data from the Rochester Home Builders Association, nearly 13% of all the single-family homes built in Monroe County in 2012 were built in Henrietta.

### **Community Partners**

I mention each year the importance of collaborations and working closely with important partners. Allow me to mention some of the Town's partners in serving this community.

During the past year I was President of the Monroe County Supervisors' Association and in comparing notes with my counterparts, I was proud and grateful for the close working relationship that the Town has long enjoyed with the Rush-Henrietta School District.

As Supervisor, I am thankful to get to work with Superintendent Ken Graham. While collaboration has become a "buzz word" in Albany in recent years, the District and the Town have considered that to be standard operating procedure for many years.

As a parent and District taxpayer, I am proud that Dr. Graham and the School Board have continuously ensured that our young people are receiving an excellent education as well as the support services and extra opportunities that are so important if they are to be successful.

Last year Henrietta Volunteer Ambulance celebrated their 50th anniversary of serving the Henrietta Community. In addition to answering over 6,000 calls per year they have continued to increase their outreach into the community and offer many free training opportunities.

The Henrietta Fire District also provides critical services to our community by answering thousands of calls for assistance each year.

I have already shared this with many of the members of the District who are here today, but I want to share it with you as well:

At the recent MLK Community Celebration which is co-sponsored by the Town, the R-H School District and the R-H Interracial Clergy Council, I shared with the attendees how proud I was that within just a few hours of the horrible tragedy in Webster on Christmas Eve, Henrietta firefighters were manning the W. Webster station so that those firefighters could take care of their families and each other. When the MLK Celebration audience heard that they broke into such applause that I had to make a pause in my remarks for several seconds.

The community is so appreciative of the contributions of the members of the Fire District and Henrietta Ambulance as well as the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, which provides police services to Henrietta.

### **Top 100**

Every year in this speech I talk about what a great place Henrietta is to locate a business in. You don't have to take my word for it; the Rochester Business Alliance's annual list of the top 100 businesses in the region confirms it each year. There are 19 companies located in Henrietta that are on this year's list. And remember, that is not just Monroe County, it's the entire Greater Rochester Region!

This includes 5Linx, which is #1 on this year's list.

The Rochester Business Alliance also is the parent organization to the Small Business Council of Rochester. It comes as no surprise to those who know John Nichols of The Nichols Team, that he was selected as the most recent winner of their Person of the Year award for his demonstrated record of success in both professional and civic areas. In addition, the Nichols Team was ranked #9 on the RBA's Top 100 list.

### **Community Service**

In the same way that so many business organizations give back to the community, we are also so lucky to have several organizations whose focus is on helping others. You can see their imprint all over Henrietta.

- It would be hard to find a park in Henrietta that has not been the beneficiary of a project completed by Rush-Henrietta Rotarians.
- Take a walk on the Lehigh Valley Trail and see the work of the Henrietta Foundation.
- There are families throughout Henrietta that have been helped, when help was really needed, by the R-H Area Food Terminal.
- Speaking of food, many people know that you can get wonderful pies at School of the Holy Childhood. But the real treat available there is a tour to see the wonderful school and programs in action. Every day students with developmental disabilities from 39 different school districts in Monroe and surrounding counties come to Holy Childhood and receive services to prepare them for maximum independence and integration in the community. I have visited several times and each time I am there I make at least one new best friend. I highly recommend the experience.
- If you have attended Make A Difference Day in October each year, you will see many people who are here in this room, volunteering their time to help others in the community. And this is not limited to adults. At Make A Difference Day you will see dozens of young people from the Town's Youth Asset Team, but beyond that, on alternating Mondays throughout the year those same students come together at our Senior Center to plan ways to address issues facing youth and come up with new ideas on how to make meaningful contributions to their community.
- Speaking of the Senior Center, we are very proud of our Center and our staff, who really go above and beyond to make the Center enjoyable for the seniors every day. The Seniors themselves often volunteer at various town events.

## **New Projects**

Even as we all carefully watch to see just how much forward movement of the economy there is, there are many projects that are currently being planned or are underway, and some of them also will fill empty spaces:

- Construction continues on a new Hampton Inn & Suites on Clay Road, behind Bugaboo Creek. It is a four-story hotel with 120 rooms; they hope to be open in March or April.
- Mark's Pizzeria is moving to Saginaw Plaza and will be adding onto the space they are moving into.
- A new Home2 Hotel will be built at the site of the former Harris Seed store at the corner of Jefferson and East Henrietta Road.
- The DDS Companies will move to the former site of Calvary Automation on Thruway Park Drive.

- Systems Management Planning, an IT solutions company is moving into the former Girl Scouts headquarters on John Street.
- And of course, this year's restaurant "buzz" is from fans of the Golden Corral. That is under construction where the "Goodyear" store formerly was, on the north side of Jefferson Road opposite Southtown Plaza.

There are also some very significant residential projects in the works. Faber Homes continues development of Berkshire Park in southwest Henrietta. Berkshire Park is one of the fastest moving projects in the area of town that has experienced a majority of the Town's residential development over the past couple of years. Other builders have a strong presence in the Henrietta area as well.

I continue to communicate with the Rochester Home Builders Association to track development trends in the County and in Henrietta.

In the past couple of years there has been a marked increase in the number of apartment projects coming before us:

- The Rockwood Center at Brentland Woods is 40 rental units for seniors being built by Episcopal Senior Life Communities next to their existing facility on East Henrietta Road.
- The Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation will construct sixty (60) units for seniors, to be known as Calkins Corners behind the Doodlebugs Day Care Center on Calkins Road next to Wegmans.
- Morgan Management is redeveloping the former Conti Meat Packing facility on Brighton-Henrietta T.L. Road as 100 apartments.
- Heritage Christian Services is planning on building 53 units on Commons Way next to the Pieters Family Life Center.
- DePaul Properties is adding 60 apartments on the west side of W. Henrietta Road that will be assisted living especially targeted for the hearing impaired.
- And Graywood Meadows is a large project between East River Rd. and the Genesee River that will be a blend of townhomes and apartments.

Greater Rochester Immediate Care will be building on the parcel to the south of Walgreens.

That is a lot of projects and that is just a sample. My mantra to our hard-working staff has always been that while we have the responsibility to enforce State and Town building codes, we are in a working partnership with the builders and developers

I did have the opportunity to meet with Dr. Hrywnak, the owner of the Razorsharks and purchaser of the Fairgrounds property recently. Many people wondered if his announcement of moving the Razorsharks to Henrietta was a tactic to try to pressure the Blue Cross Arena to

offer a better deal. Apparently not. He seems genuinely set on moving the team's games here and fixing up the Dome Arena to allow for more seating.

Even more intriguing to me was that he talked about his interest in making the complex a "sports and entertainment" center that would attract people as a destination point. They are looking at a lot of different options and have no firm plans yet, but it was encouraging that he was thinking beyond just establishing a new home for the Razorsharks. I took the opportunity to tell him about the conversations we have had for several years about establishing a Town Center in the area and gave him some of my impressions about how there might be an opportunity to work together on something that would be mutually beneficial.

In closing, allow me to thank you for the opportunity to give you this update on matters involving the Town of Henrietta. I continue to feel incredibly honored and privileged to serve this community as Supervisor.

Thank you.