



**TOWN OF HENRIETTA**

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**STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS  
BY TOWN SUPERVISOR MICHAEL YUDELSON  
TO THE HENRIETTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2010**

Thank you all for being here today. Thank you to the Henrietta Chamber of Commerce for organizing today's luncheon.

Henrietta is truly a great community, a great place to have a business, get an education, and raise a family.

Having now served a full term and beginning my second, I am better positioned to be able to answer the question, "What do you enjoy about being Supervisor"?

There is so much good work being done every day by the team that I am proud to be a part of, namely the Town Board, our department heads and all the town employees. I enjoy being part of that team.

Let me start with the Town Board. I am but one of five on the Town Board; they are all incredibly focused on delivering a high level of services while looking for every opportunity to save our taxpayers money. We have spirited discussions, most of the time we reach consensus.... sometimes we don't. That is not a bad thing.

The residents of Henrietta know that they can call upon their elected officials, including the entire Town Board, Assemblyman Joe Errigo and Senator Jim Alesi when they have a question, concern or a suggestion. Add to that list now our newly elected County Legislator John Howland. With John's experience working in town government and serving on the Town Board, he is well prepared to be a strong voice for Henrietta at the county level.

Our department heads are the ones who must formulate a plan for their department in keeping with the Board's priorities. They work very hard and 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 thank them for joining us. I would ask that they stand for a moment to be recognized.

The residents of Henrietta are well served by the hard working employees of the town. They are the people who interact with the public and directly deliver services on a daily basis. They are the backbone of our organization. I asked that all employees be represented today by the leadership of

the Roadrunners Association, which represents the union employees. Roadrunners Vice-President Dave Moriarty is with us. Dave, please stand and accept our thanks to all Town employees.

Allow me to speak today not only about what happened in 2009 but also the opportunities and challenges we face looking forward.

What are we even to make of the economy? When I spoke to you a year ago the Dow had plummeted 4,869 points in the previous year. During the past year half of that loss was regained. Make no mistake about it, for all the reports that the worse is behind us, there is a very different financial landscape for municipalities, including Henrietta, than existed previously. This requires that we exercise the utmost of care when making financial decisions for the town.

I am pleased that we were able to complete several important projects in 2009 and still stay under budget.

Spending is mostly under our control. That is not so true for revenue however. Less consumer spending and less home sales and refinancing means less of the shared revenue for Henrietta.

Between the sales tax and mortgage tax, we forecast that when we get the final 209 payments in the next month or so, we will end up down about \$800,000 from last year. That is a lot of money for the town.

Conditions like these make the budgeting process all the more important. With a great deal of help from the Town Board and town finance director Paul Liess and our department heads, I was able to submit a 2010 budget that did not increase taxes and had only a 0.3% increase in spending, despite contracted 3% increases for most employees and a \$184,000 increase in the cost of providing health care for our employees.

2009 was a busy year.

The Town Board named new parkland after former Supervisor Jim Breese. The land is 72 acres on the west side of Henrietta along the Genesee River and is also bordered by the Berkshire Park subdivision and Route 253 (Scottsville-West Henrietta Rd).

We plan on Breese Park being a passive nature park, similar to the Tinker Park. It is a beautiful area that lends itself to trails for walking and cross-country skiing.

During 2009 The Town of Henrietta was awarded a \$213,700 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant by the U.S. Department of Energy.

The Grant will help the Town of Henrietta save money on its utility bills and reduce carbon emissions. In addition, we plan to launch a website in 2010, [RenewHenrietta.org](http://RenewHenrietta.org), to help the community's residents and businesses find and act on clean energy incentives and to update the community about Henrietta's projects and energy and environmental savings. This grant helps us continue our focus on environmental issues that earned us the "Green Community Award" from Audubon International in 2008.

We have placed a premium on pursuing grant funding for important Town initiatives. Many of the projects we would like to pursue are only feasible if we can obtain grants to fund or at least partially

fund them. So we have become serious about our efforts in this area by retaining the services of a professional grant writing firm. They will actively pursue grant opportunities for us and I hope to be standing here next year telling you about some of our successes in this area.

Because of the positive feedback we received from so many in Henrietta, we extended the sidewalks and streetlights on Calkins Road that went from Wegmans to the Senior Center further up Calkins to the Town Hall. It looks great.

With the economic situation, and people's interest in healthier lifestyles, there is more and more demand for sidewalks that help get people around town. With the recent completion of a few additional sidewalk sections, people can now walk on sidewalks all the way from East Henrietta Rd. to West Henrietta Rd.

Recently we launched a redesign of our town web site, including a domain name change to [www.henrietta.org](http://www.henrietta.org). The new site has many more features and it fits with our continuing commitment to making town government more accessible.

As I said before, we look to our department heads to present ideas on how to increase services and/or save money. Some examples:

The Town Clerk's office has implemented a new software package that will allow them to easily streamline the issuance of Dog License tags and renewals, Marriage Licenses and Certificates, and give the ability to help manage other aspects of the Town Clerk's office, which also includes daily financials.

Town Clerk Patricia Shaffer has taken many steps to increase the overall efficiency of her department. With the use of this new program, her staff will become more available to assist in receiving tax payments, digital records retention duties, and issuing a greater number of passports, which there is a huge demand for. The passports are a great example of how government needs to think. With the recent added restrictions on travel out of the country, passports are in greater demand than ever. By positioning her department to be able to issue more of them, the clerk's office is providing added service while also generating added revenue for the town.

Paul Pettrone, the Director of our Drainage, Parks and Sewer department proposed that the Town buy a sewer camera that would televise our sewers to inspect them for needed repairs. We previously contracted out that service. We implemented use of the camera in August of 2009 and to date have televised 16 miles of sewer lines. That would have cost us approximately \$60,000 to contract out so we are well on our way to this camera paying for itself.

The Town Board recently authorized purchase of a \$70,000 voice over internet phone system. It will provide enhanced phone capabilities that will benefit our employees and our residents. It will also save us about \$12,000 per year on our phone bill so it will pay for itself in about six years.

Several departments will be using Docuware, a document management software package to assist in digital records retention and retrieval. We will save money on the cost of microfiche records and renting off-site storage space for them. The real savings and efficiency will be in our employees' time. In the past, searching for a record that for example was requested through the freedom of information process, might have involved several hours, or even days, of staff time in our vaults

looking for the appropriate records. Docuware allows them to quickly retrieve the information using their desktop computer. As an illustration, a request last fall for Town Board minutes over an 8 year span of time was delivered on one memory stick. Previous to Docuware, that request would have required photocopying of over 17,000 pages.

Custodial services that previously had been contracted out are now being performed by our own staff at a savings of approximately \$40,000 per year.

With more time, I could give you more examples.

Despite the economy, businesses continued to recognize Henrietta as the place to be. Some of the projects that were completed last year include:

Kango Play Center, a family entertainment center geared towards young children opened in November on Jefferson Rd.

On the southwest corner of Winton Rd. and Brighton-Henrietta Town Line Road where there was a gas station, there is now a new gas station with an Express Mart and a McDonald's.

Jefferson Rd. is a prime location for new restaurants. Among those opening last year were the Longhorn Steakhouse and Chipotle Mexican Grill.

Federal Express built a new addition to their facility on Thruway Park Dr.

Development continued at Erie Station West Henrietta with the opening of Erie Station Fine Wine and Liquor.

The Goose Landing Senior Apts. are 20 one-bedroom apartments for seniors who need financial help, with the goal of helping seniors age in place.

Brinkman Precision built a new facility on Park Center Drive.

5 Links expanded their facility on Kenneth Drive.

Filling empty space is an ongoing item of interest to many. It has been our experience that that process is cyclical; some spaces become vacant and others get filled. Some examples from 2009 include Gates Automotive filling an empty space on Thruway Park Drive. The Sunrise Steak House filled a space on Jefferson Road opposite the entrance to the Genesee Valley Regional Market. And the popular Price Rite Grocery Store filled a vacant space in Southtown Plaza.

Not all of the construction activity in Henrietta during 2009 was for commercial purposes. Henrietta continues to be a strong market for residential development. People continue to want to make Henrietta their home because of the low taxes and high level of services. Although there was a county wide slow down in the construction of houses last year, Henrietta saw 97 new homes, down 20 units compared to the previous year. However the number of apartments and townhomes was up by 22 units.

Before talking about what is coming up in 2010, I want to thank some of our other important partners in serving this community.

The Henrietta Fire District provides critical services to our community by answering thousands of calls for assistance each year. Chief Comstock and several of the Commissioners of the Fire District are here today and I thank them on behalf of everyone who lives or does business in Henrietta.

The same must be said for the members of Henrietta Volunteer Ambulance. They also respond to thousands of calls each year and are equally dedicated to serving our community. This past year Henrietta Volunteer Ambulance was recognized as the agency of the year by the step council (Study of Trauma and Emergencies Project) of the Monroe-Livingston region.

We also continue to enjoy a close working relationship with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office. They answer more than 25,000 calls per year in Henrietta and help us with special events and situations that need extra police attention.

The bedrock of a community is its school district. They not only educate our children but they help shape them. With today's working families many children spend more hours with their teachers than with their parents during the week. We enjoy an excellent working relationship with the Rush-Henrietta School District.

It is important to say that I feel that Superintendent Ken Graham and our School Board approach their responsibilities in the same fashion as our Town Board does. They understand that it is crucial that we look at how to deliver excellent services, in this case educational services, in a fiscally responsible fashion.

The tax rate in this year's approved school budget actually decreased 1.8%. The R-H true value tax rate is still the lowest in Monroe County. I think it is important for Henrietta businesses and families to be aware of those facts.

With a combination of a town government that works well with businesses and a location at the intersection of the New York State Thruway and Route 390, Henrietta is an excellent home for businesses.

When I stood before you last year I mentioned that there were 14 Henrietta companies on the Rochester Business Alliance's 2008 list of the top 100 businesses in the area. That really seemed impressive to me. Well, even more impressive is that when the 2009 list was recently published, no fewer than 19 of the Top 100 are located here in Henrietta. Several of them are represented here today as guests of the Chamber; I congratulate all of them.

And I also express my appreciation to all the Henrietta businesses that are here today; collectively you are the business community that has helped to make Henrietta successful. Businesses bring jobs and commerce to Henrietta and many of them are good corporate citizens that get involved in giving back to the community. Their presence here is one of the main reasons for the low tax rate enjoyed by our residents.

Even with the economy struggling, there are many projects that are currently being planned or under construction.

DiBella's will open their new home on Jefferson Road soon. It will allow the popular eatery to expand their offerings and they will have other tenants as well.

Doodlebugs is building their third Rochester area day care facility, an 11,000+ square ft. center directly to the west of the Calkins Rd. Wegmans.

Build out continues at Erie Station West Henrietta for new tenants including a nail salon, a physical therapy office and a Chinese take out restaurant.

Work is also progressing on a new Chili's Restaurant on the southeast corner of Jefferson Rd. and Marketplace Drive, expected to open in the spring.

Now if I had gotten my way, the chili's might have had a neighbor to generate a little extra business, namely the Rochester Broadway Theatre League (RBTL). The conversation continues on about what is best for RBTL as well as for the community. Will the theater be built downtown? Will the theater be built in a suburb? Will the theater be built at all? Nobody really seems to know for sure.

Here are my thoughts: I do not have any problem with those who say the theater should be downtown. I do not disagree with those who say that a resurgent and hopefully someday thriving downtown is important to the overall community. I admire Mayor Duffy for his leadership and for passionately speaking out on this issue. I also give kudos to our county executive Maggie Brooks for her work last year to try to make a downtown theater a reality despite the fact that an agreement was not reached.

That is where we come in. If a theater is indeed to be built in the suburbs, than I don't believe there is a better location than Henrietta. With a thruway exit and three exits from Route 390, dozens of restaurants and an ample supply of lodging, we really have what I believe no other town can offer. as you know, currently RBTL is looking at other suburban locations, but they have told me that it is not entirely out of the question that their process could lead them to take another look at possible Henrietta locations.

In addition to new businesses and homes, a lot of the ongoing construction activity in Henrietta will provide additional rental options throughout town.

Work continues on additional units at several locations including:

- ☒ Hylan Place Apartments on Hylan Drive
- ☒ The Lehigh Park Apartments on Lehigh Station Road
- ☒ Continuation of multi-family/townhomes at the Legacy at the corner of Erie Station Rd. and East Henrietta Rd.
- ☒ The continuation of cottage units at Rivers Run.
- ☒ At Stonewood Village there is a complete interior renovation and rehab of all the units.

One of the largest apartment projects to come to Henrietta in a long time is The Province on John Street opposite RIT and park point. The Province is an upscale apartment complex consisting of thirteen 3-story buildings. These apartments will target, but not be limited to, RIT students looking for this type of housing, such as international students and graduate students. This is not RIT housing and the complex will be on the tax rolls. They plan to be open in the fall of this year.

A really exciting project for 2010 is Global Village, on the campus of RIT. In addition to housing for 414 students, the \$55 million 188,300 sq. ft. project will include a Mexican restaurant, post office, art store, shops with food and gifts from around the world, a fitness studio and a bank, all situated on campus.

In an October Democrat & Chronicle article RIT ranked first in spending on projects recently completed, in progress and planned for the near future. RIT was the highest of all area schools with 188 million dollars of capital spending.

Andrew Claus, vice-president of the Builders Exchange of Rochester, an organization representing 670 construction companies in the region was quoted in the article as saying "that such work on college campuses is really sustaining the construction industry right now. He went on to say that capital projects at area colleges account for as much as 30% of the industry's work in the region.

Other upcoming projects for this year include:

Ascension Garden Cemetery on Pinnacle Road near the Rush border.

Another vacant space will be filled as Sticky Lips BBQ will take over the former site of the Roadhouse Grill at the Regional Market.

A new Hampton Inn & Suites with 121 rooms is planned for Clay Road, behind Bugaboo Creek.

The Rockwood Center Senior Housing Facility on East Henrietta Road is a continuation of the Brentland Woods project and will include interior modifications and construction of a two-story building for a 40 unit independent living facility.

The Henrietta Chamber of Commerce plays an important role in promoting business in Henrietta. I am proud to serve as a member of the board of directors of this Chamber. The board members, many of whom are here today, bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to our meeting table each month and I look forward to the positive impact I know the Chamber will have on the Henrietta business environment this year.

If you are not a member of the Chamber, I encourage you to join and take an active role in that effort.

I looked back at my speech from a year ago to see what I told you would be some of the major projects we would work on.

One thing was the need to update our master plan. We have been working with Behan Planning on this process, which began with two public scoping sessions in the late fall. At tonight's Town Board meeting we will be authorizing Behan Planning to undertake the rest of the project. The next step will be a survey of Henrietta residents and businesses to get their views on development issues in Henrietta. We expect the plan update to be finished by early summer.

Another item on our list was the need to proceed with a study on the possibility of developing a town center, otherwise known as the main street concept. That question will be tackled as part of the master plan update process.

The other major project on our list was to undertake a process of reviewing and updating most of our town codes. As I promised at last year's meeting we put together an inclusive committee of about three dozen people; some are builders or developers, some are members of the town's planning, zoning and conservation boards, some are code enforcement officers, some are just interested citizens. They have already been working for several months and we expect that most aspects of this major project will be done by the end of this year.

These projects will continue into 2010. In addition the Town Board wants to study and plan for the long term facility needs of the Town.

I have an additional initiative I plan to pursue this year. Henrietta has long benefitted from its location and other assets to be a place that businesses want to be. I want to go further than just enjoying that situation. I plan to convene a working group to assist me in developing an economic development plan for Henrietta.

in addition to our great location and low taxes, we have a wonderful public school system, a wide variety of housing options and the Rochester Institute of Technology not only is a premier educational institution but also an economic driver for our community.

We need to think about not sitting back and waiting for Henrietta to sell itself, but rather to reach out to companies, families and students who might be considering Henrietta. I plan to work closely with the Henrietta Chamber of Commerce on this initiative and I will look forward to reporting to you on this a year from now.

No matter what the ground hog tells us in two weeks, spring is not that far off. We share the excitement of Rochester's golfing community that the LPGA's 2nd major championship of the 2010 season will be played June 21-27 at Locust Hill Country Club in Henrietta. The tournament sponsor is Wegmans and proceeds from the tournament will benefit the United Way of Greater Rochester.

Because of the 14534 zip code for the Locust Hill Country Club, many visitors from out of town are surprised to learn that the majority of the golf holes, the clubhouse, and driving range are all actually in Henrietta. Henrietta residents know this and look forward to having the tournament in Henrietta annually.

In closing, I thank you for the opportunity to give you this update on matters involving the Town of Henrietta.

President Franklin D Roosevelt's advice was: "Be sincere; be brief; be seated."

But let me first say how honored and blessed I feel to serve this community as Supervisor. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedules for this event. I look forward to our continued partnership. Please never hesitate to call my office on any matter involving the Town of Henrietta, and if you are in the Town Hall, please stop and say hello. Thank you.