

# Steuben County Newsletter

November / December 2016



## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK....**

As 2016 comes to an end, Steuben County continues to work on several important initiatives. This edition of the newsletter contains several year-end departmental updates on activities that have kept us busy during 2016. This edition also discusses several projects that will continue into the New Year.

One item that may be of particular interest to our municipal partners is the Planning Department's new GIS Website—discussed in the section that immediately follows. In addition, the Real Property Tax Department's recent filling of the Data Collector position, assessor internship program, and new tablet-based application may also be of interest to the municipalities in Steuben County (discussed on page 3).

It is continued cooperation and shared efforts like these that help foster positive relationships between Steuben County and the municipalities within it. As always, we welcome and encourage your municipality to reach out to Steuben County if we can assist you in your local efforts. We look forward to working with you further in 2017.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Sheriff David V. Cole on his upcoming retirement and wish him luck in his future endeavors. We also look forward to working with Sheriff-elect Jim Allard, and are confident he'll do a great job for all county residents.

Wishing You A Happy Holiday Season,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joseph Hauryski".

Joseph Hauryski  
Chairman  
Steuben County Legislature

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## **Planning – New GIS Website**

The Steuben County Planning Department is proud to announce the launch of a new public Geographic Information System (GIS) website.

The homepage can be found at <http://steubencounty.scnygis.opendata.arcgis.com/> and is accessible by visiting the Interactive GIS maps link on the Steuben County Homepage. The new website features interactive maps which help the user analyze and interpret data by viewing geographic relationships, patterns and trends. Additionally, it will help streamline requests for GIS data that were previously only handled during normal business hours.

Our goal is to support residents, municipalities, visitors, developers, business owners, real-estate professionals, and engineers who are looking for property information, local regulation, and land-use. Steuben County has invested a significant amount of time and effort into developing our GIS and we are now pleased to share it with the public.

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## **Department of Social Services – Foster Care / National Adoption Day**

Steuben County Department of Social Services will be celebrating National Adoption Day on November 17, 2016. National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children in U.S. foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. In Steuben County, we will celebrate fifteen (15) adoptions that have occurred throughout the year; ten (10) of these adoptions will be finalized on Adoption Day.

In Steuben County, there are currently 110 children served by the foster care system. Six (6) of these children have been freed for adoption and are in need of an adoptive family. Relative resources are explored as a first option for children in need of out of home care. At present there are 44 county level foster homes serving Steuben County children. There is an ongoing need for additional foster home resources. Individuals or families interested in foster care and/or adoption can contact the Steuben County Department of Social Services at (607) 664-2044.

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## **Sheriff's Office – Various Updates**

Construction on the Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Memorial Park at the Public Safety Building continues to make progress. The purpose of this park is to honor all those fallen police and peace officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Donations and/or purchase of pavers can be made by calling (607) 622-3930. You can also make donations through the Sheriff's Office Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/SteubenCSO](http://www.Facebook.com/SteubenCSO).

The Sheriff's Office continues to hold the Pistol Permit Safety Courses every month. This course is a prerequisite for applying for a Pistol Permit. The response has been overwhelming, and the classes are full. If you wish to get on the waiting list, please call (607) 622-3930 to do so. There will not be a class in December, but they will be starting back up in January.

The Sheriff's Office and Probation Department, with the assistance of the NYSP conducted a Probation Initiative Detail, on October 7. Throughout the initiative, the nine (9) law enforcement teams made home visits to ninety (90) residences and three (3) commercial locations throughout the County to ensure that the Probationers were complying with the terms of their Probation. This initiative resulted in twelve (12) Probationers being arrested.

As the end of the year approaches, we would like to take a moment to congratulate Sheriff David V. Cole on his retirement. He will be greatly missed around the Sheriff's Office. We all wish him well in his next adventures!

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## **District Attorney's Office – Update from Brooks Baker**

The District Attorney's Office looks to wrap up a challenging and successful 2016 by welcoming Seamus Donnelly as a new Assistant District Attorney. Seamus, a native of Corning, will be covering Corning City Court and other local Courts in the Eastern and Central parts of Steuben County; he will also be carrying a felony case load. Seamus is also serving as an Assistant in the Schuyler County District Attorney's Office – in what may be a first of its kind shared services agreement in New York. We have joined with Schuyler County to jointly hire Seamus thereby keeping a quality prosecutor in the region; meeting the needs of both Counties; and saving both Counties significant cost by sharing benefit and retirement expenses. Inspired by Chairman Hauryski's shared service initiative, this new hire and the legislation that made it possible will benefit Steuben County by not only bringing a solid prosecutor to our Office, but also saving taxpayer dollars at the same time.

In other news, the Office is focusing on multiagency cooperation to combat the rise in heroin and synthetic drugs facing the County – particularly in our effort to bring accountability to drug dealers whose sales lead to overdose deaths. The District Attorney’s Drug Initiative continues to battle drug trafficking throughout the County and will be closing our fifth consecutive year with a 100% trial conviction rate in drug cases.

The SWIFT - Welfare Fraud Task Force, a cooperative working group involving DSS Investigators, Sheriff’s Office and grant funded DA’s Investigators has improved, streamlined and enhanced prosecution of those who steal from taxpayers and citizens most in need. Our success has been recognized and rewarded by the State with renewal of our CARP grant – funding our Investigators through 2017.

2016 has been a challenging year, but a successful one in the Office – with new initiatives and staff in place we look forward to 2017 – continuing to: provide excellent service to the People of Steuben County; improve existing programs; and, bring forth new initiatives to enhance public safety while protecting our tax payers.

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### **Real Property Tax – Various Updates**

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, the Ad-Hoc Municipal Coordination Committee and the Real Property Tax Department have been pursuing opportunities for increased collaboration for assessment operations between the county and its municipal partners. As part of this pursuit, the Real Property Tax Department has selected an individual to fill the recently approved position of Data Collector. This person will be providing sales verification service to municipalities pursuant to a Joint Services Agreement between the county and the municipalities.

Also through an initiative of the Ad-Hoc Municipal Coordination Committee, the Real Property Tax Department has been in contact with Corning Community College to participate in an internship program to help recruit individuals interested in pursuing a career as an assessor. The internship program is expected to be in effect for the spring 2017 semester. The intern would be teamed up with one or more assessors to experience day-to-day duties and generate more interest in the profession.

The Real Property Tax Department along with Systems Development Group of Utica, New York have made available to the municipal assessors a tablet based application called Outpost. This application allows the assessor to collect inventory information and photographs while on-site and then import that data into the assessment software program in the field (if they have internet access), or import it once they return to their office. This results in an increase in efficiency for the assessor and the availability of more current information on the assessment database for anyone accessing it.

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### **Office for the Aging – A Sea of Change**

It’s all good! 2016 is sure to go down in history as the year of unprecedented change in the aging network. It is important for our community to understand that we are acutely aware of the oncoming “grey tsunami”, the swelling numbers of citizens turning 60, 70, 80 and 90. This phenomenon will put an added strain on an already stretched system that assists older persons and their caregivers as they manage the effects of aging, the changes in their public benefits, and the decisions on how to age in place.

Policy makers are doing their best to stay ahead of the needs of their constituents by adding funding to expand Office for the Aging services. Specifically, NYCONNECTS, the information and referral arm of our office, has added staff in Corning and Hornell to bring the services to the outlying areas. Additionally, part of our home delivered meal program has made a major shift to the “cook/chill” method giving way to greater client satisfaction and financial stability to a service that often is the difference between aging in

place and moving into assisted living or a nursing home. On top of these monumental changes, we are doing it in a whole new data collection system that will help us validate the important work that we do.

If you have questions about these changes, feel free to contact Patty Baroody, Director of Steuben County OFA at 607 664-2298.

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### **County Historian – Ronald Hinson’s Cemetery Restoration**

Three years ago Ronald Hinson, of Penn Yan, decided to visit his ancestors' graves in the Porter's Corner Cemetery in the Town of Barrington, Yates County, New York. He found that the cemetery had been neglected with many of the gravestones toppled and broken. It was then that he decided to learn how to restore gravestones.

Recently the Steuben County Historian, Eleanor Silliman, heard the story of the restoration being done by Ronald Hinson. She thought that his knowledge could be very helpful to other towns and villages that have older cemeteries that are also in need of attention. After contacting him they set in motion a plan for Ron to give a lecture. He put together a program with visuals and a hand-out of instructions. In September, over twenty (20) people came to hear his presentation.

Seeing the growing interest, it was decided to have a hands-on-demonstration. Porter’s Corner cemetery was the ideal location since it was his work in progress. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Hinson met with a group of people at the Porter's Corner cemetery to demonstrate his techniques. They started with the proper way to dislodge a stone from the ground and how to locate pieces that were totally buried. They helped clean gravestones, made new foundations with his advice, learned a method to put the pieces of a broken stone together and put the finished product upright.

If you would like further information regarding Ronald Hinson’s cemetery restoration efforts, please contact the Steuben County Historian, Eleanor Silliman at (607) 664-2199.