

# Steuben County Newsletter

Winter 2023/2024



**\*\*\*Please Distribute to All Interested Board Members and the Public\*\*\***

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

I hope you are all well as we head into another great holiday season! Your representatives and staff in Steuben County government remain extremely busy, most notably with our recent adoption of the 2024 County Budget.

We're concluding a year where we've been able to adapt to new fiscal pressures, both locally and passed down from New York State. However, as the New Year is on the horizon, we are keeping an eye to Albany, with concerns about the long-term financial outlook of State government. When faced with these challenges, Albany has traditionally looked to pass additional costs to municipalities. We remain focused to advocate with you all and our respective associations to hold the State to their fiscal responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Scott VanEtten  
Chairman  
Steuben County Legislature

## **County Manager - 2024 County Budget**

The Steuben County Legislature recently adopted the 2024 County Budget, carrying a 1% increase in the tax levy, significantly below the allowable tax cap, and a -7.48% decrease in the average tax rate. The Legislature and our staff have developed another responsible spending plan, while confronting significant cost increases in employee health insurance, retirement, assigned counsel rates, and never-ending state mandates.

As the County has previously publicized, the nine largest state-mandated programs consume over 90% of the cumulative County tax levies across the State. This both demonstrates the State's reliance on Counties and municipalities in funding their mandates, and that without State and Federal aid and sales tax receipts, Counties would be unable to provide the critical services our residents expect.

**\$0.97 of every \$1.00 raised in property taxes in Steuben County pays for 9 state-mandated programs**



Medicaid

TANF/Safety Net

Child Welfare

Pension

Probation

Indigent Defense

Special Education/Pre-K

Early Intervention

Youth Detention

Remainder for  
All Other  
Programs

## **Public Health – Job Fair!**

Steuben County Public Health is partnering with Office of Emergency Management and Personnel Department to host a Job Fair! A variety of positions will be available, including but not limited to nurses, clerical, EMT, Paramedic, and others. Both full and part-time work is available. Please save the date for Wednesday, January 24, 2024, from 3:00 – 6:00 pm at Civil Defense, 7220 NY 54, Bath, NY 14810.

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## **Public Health – COVID Test Kits Available**

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free COVID-19 rapid antigen at-home tests beginning November 20. If you did not order tests this fall, you may place two orders for a total of eight tests.

<https://aspr.hhs.gov/COVID-19/Testing/Pages/default.aspx>

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## **Department of Social Services – National Adoption Day**

Steuben County Department of Social Services recognized and celebrated National Adoption Day on November 17, 2023. A total of 29 children have been adopted this year. The event was held at the County's Annex building where numerous businesses including Wegmans, Fran's Landing, Tops, Van Scoter Florist, Wendy's, Wal-Mart, Angry Oven Pizzeria, Berry Vine Creations, Del's Bar & Grill, and McDonalds provided donations for a luncheon celebration. The day was filled with children's laughter, family support, and love. There were upwards of 100 in attendance showing support for Foster Care and Adoption services including County Manager Jack Wheeler, Steuben County Legislature Chairman Scott VanEtten, Legislators Carol Ferratella and Hilda Lando and legislative staff, Family Court Judges, Attorney's for the Child, NYS Office of Children and Family Services, partner community agencies, and of course multiple staff from the Department of Social Services. This turnout was a true tribute in recognition and gratitude for the children and families.

While Adoption Day is one of the happiest days of the year, it is also a reminder of how many children are in need of permanency within the foster care system. Children of all ages are waiting to be adopted across New York State. Steuben County Department of Social Services is seeking foster/adoptive parents who want to make a difference in a child's life, can work as a member of a team including families, caseworkers and other professionals, is flexible and capable of handling stressful situations, and can prepare a child for return to their birth family or to be adopted. The Department's Home Finding/Adoption Unit strives to secure permanent resources for children who are freed for adoption in a timely manner in an effort to best support the child's overall well-being. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a certified foster/adoptive parent, please contact the Home Finding/Adoption Supervisor, Ashley Swan, at (607) 664-2044.