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I am truly honored to be your NYSAC President. I would like to express my sincere thanks to MaryEllen Odell for her service these past 12 months– she has been a strong leader, both for her county and for NYSAC.

This organization has been an invaluable resource to me personally and to my county. I encourage every county official to attend NYSAC conferences - there's tremendous value in disengaging from our day-to-day battles for just a little while to network and share experiences with your counterparts from across the state.

As county leaders, our challenges are many, but so too are our opportunities to improve our communities.

This fall, counties began implementing a state law designed to Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility. This law has broad and real consequences for the criminal justice and social service systems in every county across the state.

It is also the newest state mandate that counties deliver at the local level. The only question at this point is whether this is a funded mandate, partially funded mandate, or simply an unfunded mandate. We need to hold the state accountable to its commitment to fund this program.

This leads me to the first focus of my presidency: NYSAC will launch the Mandate Monitor to track the impact that existing and new state mandates have on our counties and county property taxpayers.

If state leaders are truly committed to property tax relief - and they say that they are - then the best place to start is for them to commit to reducing our mandated costs.

The Mandate Monitor will be one initiative that NYSAC takes on over the course of the next year, but there are other critical issues that we will collectively tackle as an association. These include the opioid crisis, the local impact of legalizing marijuana and sports betting, sales tax collection, cybersecurity (especially for our election systems), preparing for the 2020 census, investing in economic development, and tracking and collecting 9-1-1 surcharge revenues. Each of these public policy issues will have an impact on counties. Working together with NYSAC, we will continue to be the voice of counties in Albany as these policies are considered.

We must do the work to ensure that our state leaders, our representatives in Washington, and our colleagues at the local level understand the critical role counties play in advocating for an efficient and effective government in New York State so that our families, communities, and businesses can thrive.

I look forward to working with you in the coming year as we tackle the issues that impact every county throughout New York State.

Charles H. Nesbitt, Jr.
NYSAC President
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Now that our statewide election cycle is complete, NYSAC, as the association representing the 62 counties of NYS, including the five boroughs that make up New York City, is working to remind state officials what counties do in communities across the state.

Our counties have played a vital role in the history of this great state. In fact, some counties were here even before the State of New York was established. At that time, counties were empowered to build and maintain infrastructure, care for the needy, and provide nursing home care and workhouses for those unemployed or unable to care for themselves.

The act of thinking and acting locally prevailed. We had local responsibilities and we acted locally using local resources.

In the late 1920’s, Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt decried high property taxes when he said, “The public is at last coming to realize that the increase in real estate taxes is due wholly to the increase in the cost of local and not state government. These taxes on real estate are too high.”

The blame game began.

At that time, there was a lack of coordination between all levels of local government, with no clear authorization on who should do what. That’s why different levels of local governments created a patchwork of government service delivery, leading to duplication of services in many municipalities.

And since then the state has exerted increased control over the operations and budgeting of local and county governments.

In the post-World War II era, the state began to require counties to administer and partially fund welfare, social services, and health programs, while specifically precluding towns, villages and cities from providing the same services.

The state’s desire to more fully control local service delivery in New York led to the gradual but relentless expansion of fiscal and administrative mandates, imposition of substantial new costs on counties.

Over the next five decades, the state increasingly used local taxes to mask the fiscal responsibility and administration of its own programs, such as Medicaid, Safety Net and other social service and early learning programs.

Increasingly, counties were forced to raise property taxes to support state programs.

Today, there are nine state-mandated, state-regulated, state-controlled programs that consume over 99 percent of the total county property tax levy statewide outside of New York City.

Just last month, the State expanded its reach into county operations again with the State Law that raises the age of criminal responsibility. While the intent of this law is to be commended, it is highly complicated and requires counties to expend a great deal of local resources.

Two years ago, the State enacted the Shared Services Initiative, which mandates that counties convene all local leaders within the county to explore ways to reduce the duplication of local services and costs.

If State leaders are truly committed to reducing local services and costs, they should start in the state capitol, where 80 years of state-level decisions have forced counties and local governments to increase property taxes to pay for the costs of delivering state-mandated programs at the county level.

State leaders can cast blame onto local governments all they want. But the only way to effectively address costs at the county level, is for the State to take fiscal responsibility for its own programs and services.

Stephen J. Acquario, Esq.
NYSAC Executive Director
NYSAC’s mission is to represent, educate, advocate for, and serve member counties at the federal and state levels.

President
Charles H. Nesbitt, Jr.

Publisher
Stephen J. Acquario

Managing Editor
Mark F. LaVigne

Editor
Nicole M. Correia

Advertising Staff
Juanita Munguia

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NYSAC NEWS MAGAZINE
540 Broadway, 5th Floor, Albany, New York 12207
Phone • (518) 465-1473
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Douglas E. Goodfriend
212-506-5211
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New Members of the Board of Directors

Charles H. Nesbitt Jr., Chief Administrative Officer of Orleans County, has been elected to serve as President of NYSAC. Since 2005, Mr. Nesbitt has served as the Chief Administrative Officer of Orleans County. Prior to that Nesbitt was an Economic Development Specialist for Empire State Development in Rochester, NY. He has also served as President of the New York State Association of County Administrators and Managers since 2008.

Tioga County Chairwoman Martha "Marte" Sauerbrey has been elected to serve as 2nd Vice President for NYSAC Board of Directors. She has served the people of Tioga County for over a decade as a member of the County Legislature and has served as Chair of the Legislative Board since 2014. She appreciates the impact that NYSAC has on the public policy environment in New York, and she is honored to continue learning and contributing to the successful endeavors of the association and her community.

Otsego County Representative Margaret Kennedy will represent the 6th Judicial District on the NYSAC Board of Directors. She has 24 years of experience in family owned and operated horticultural business, and for the past ten years has served on governing bodies of two farmers markets along with the Hartwick Planning Board and the Hartwick Zoning Commission. In Otsego County she serves as chair of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee and chair of the Administration Committee on Ways & Means.

Hamilton County Treasurer Beth Hunt will represent the 4th Judicial District on the NYSAC Board of Directors. She has served Hamilton County in various positions beginning in 1996, including as the county Personnel Officer, Safety Officer, and Election Commissioner, before being elected County Treasurer in 2004. After serving as Treasurer, Secretary, and Vice President of the NYS County Treasurers and Finance Officers Association, Ms. Hunt served as President of the Association in 2017. She is also a board member of the Public Employers Risk Management Association, and a member of the Government Financial Officers Association.

Clinton County Administrator Michael Zurlo will serve as an at-large member of the NYSAC Board of Directors. He was appointed County Administrator in 2004 after three years of holding the position of Deputy County Administrator. He is currently in his third year of his third five-year appointment. Prior to his Clinton County service, Mr. Zurlo spent nine years working in the New York State Senate. During that time, he held the position of Legislative Director for New York State Senator Ronald Stafford and served as the Nominations Secretary to the Senate Finance Committee.

Additions to Staff

Ryan Gregoire has joined the NYSAC team as the Legislative Coordinator. Before coming to NYSAC he served as Assistant County Manager in Schenectady County. In this capacity, Ryan was responsible for assisting with the preparation of the annual operating budget, managing special projects, writing grants, implementing the state’s raise the age law, and coordinating the development of the annual capital improvement program. Ryan received his Master’s in Public Administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, UAlbany and his Bachelor’s in Political Science from SUNY Brockport.

Kate Pierce transitioned from NYSAC intern to full-time Multimedia Specialist following her graduation in May from the College of Saint Rose with a Bachelor’s degree in Communications and Journalism. Over the past year Kate has created podcasts and videos, along with updating and designing various digital and print materials for NYSAC.
This past summer, NYSAC created its first Climate Resiliency Committee to facilitate inter-county discussions about climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and advocate for state and federal resources. The committee is comprised of county officials from across the state in positions directly affected by changes in the climate, as well as state and national representatives that can act as a resource to county governments.

Mission

Climate change will impact New York State in several critical ways, including impacts on agriculture; increased severe heat events; heavy rain (flooding); drought; rising sea levels; and changes in disease patterns.

The committee's goal is to act as a resource to county governments by:

- Collecting information about projects and resources related to climate change;
- Sharing best practices; and
- Communicating concerns/recommendations from county departments that have and will be affected by climate change.

We recognize that all counties want to keep their residents safe, minimize the impact of severe weather events on properties and businesses, grow their local economies, identify and manage risk, improve infrastructure, and save money by taking advantage of new technologies and innovations.
The opioid crisis has gripped communities across America, and New York State is no exception. Whether rural, urban, upstate, or downstate – every county in New York State is struggling to overcome the harrowing impact of this public health crisis.

County government encounters this epidemic on many fronts: county social services, health departments, law enforcement, county jails, 9-1-1 dispatch, district attorneys, public defenders, probation, coroners, and medical examiners.

After years of seeing opioid abuse devastate families and their communities, NYSAC and the New York State County Coroners and Medical Examiners Association (NYSCCME) came together in the spring of 2018 with a common goal: educating the public about the signs of opioid abuse, and getting help to those who need it before it's too late.

They sought to do this through a powerful video public service advertisement that didn't shy away from the reality of the situation: opioid addiction leads to death.

The organizations partnered with Trellis Marketing to create a hard-hitting public service advertisement that ran on television stations throughout New York State.

Thirty-second vignettes ran on television in all NYS markets and a long form 60-second message was delivered digitally as well. (View the video at http://ny.seethesignssavealife.org/.)

NYSAC also compiled resources for counties and residents at www.nysac.org/opioids. The page includes reports, information on funding, videos, podcasts, and training information.

The Message: See the Signs, Save a Life

“From ‘first responder’ law enforcement receiving calls for help, to the ‘last responder’ Coroners and Medical Examiners confirming the cause of death, local government officials confront the effects of addiction and opioid abuse in our communities every day,” explained Stephen Acquario, Executive Director of NYSAC. “We need to continually educate and inform our communities of the danger associated with opioid abuse. We are hopeful that this campaign will raise awareness of the signs of addiction before it’s too late. We can all encourage our families, friends, and neighbors to seek help and break the all too familiar cycle of use, abuse, addiction, overdose, and death. It’s never too late to see the signs and save a life.”

Scott Schmidt, President of NYSCCME, said, “The rationale behind this PSA was simple. As Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors, we are tired of watching people die senselessly. While we aren’t on the front lines of this epidemic (such as Fire and EMS personnel), we are on the front line working with families in the aftermath as the last responders. We hear the repeated mantra of family members emphatically denying that their loved one used drugs. We are often the recipients of the overwhelming and oftentimes heart-wrenching displays of grief and violent emotion because we are the ones with the answer that no one wants to hear: ‘Your loved one died of a drug overdose.’ The far-reaching effects of a drug overdose death are mind blowing. NYSCCME felt that by showing the after-effects of using these lethal substances with an ‘in-your-face’ approach, we might be able to save at least one life.”

“Opioid abuse takes its toll on many facets of our communities, and it will take all of us, working together, to reduce its devastation,” said MaryEllen Odell, Putnam County Executive and president of NYSAC when the campaign was created.

Impact and Results

After launching on June 28, the PSA performed extremely well in its first few weeks, both in traditional media and social media. Dozens of news outlets covered the PSA release. The Facebook ad reached over 100,000 people. The NYSAC YouTube video had nearly 700 views within the first two weeks.

The video campaign was covered in several newspapers and was the topic of television interviews.

A less-measurable but critically important reach occurred directly through county leaders, who shared the video on their websites, at events, and on their own social media accounts.

The impact grew as the campaign continued through the summer, with the ad running throughout the state, ongoing social media placement, and sharing by NYSAC, NYSCCME, and county elected officials.

NYSAC strongly encourages county leaders to continue sharing the PSA through county platforms. It is a message that doesn’t expire, needs repeating, and will save lives.
Four counties and the Tompkins County Healthcare Insurance Consortium signed an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) on August 15, 2018, to form the Municipal Healthcare Financing Collective (MHFC). The Collective was created as an entity to explore ways to stabilize and/or reduce the cost of healthcare insurance for self-insured counties and eligible municipalities. The initial focus of the MHFC is to explore ways to reduce the cost of stop-loss insurance, which is a sliver, but often costly, piece of health insurance expenses for self-insured counties. The five entities that created the MHFC are Columbia, Herkimer, St. Lawrence, Ulster, and the Tompkins County Healthcare Consortium. Other counties have indicated an interest in participating in the Collective in 2019.

The MHFC stop-loss program was created by NYSAC in partnership with Relph Benefit Advisors (RBA) in early 2017 to enable self-insured municipalities to share high claims risks in a captive program with the prospect of lowering the number of high cost claims and realizing a return of a portion of premiums back to the municipality. RBA created a similar program for a collective of small colleges in New York five years ago, and the members of that collective have received returns of premium each year that they have been in operation. RBA then started a similar program with a group of other non-profits in January 2018. The MHFC stop-loss program is slated to begin in January of 2019.

With the IMA executed, NYSAC continues to work with the MHFC members to draft and adopt by-laws that will govern the ongoing operation of the Collective. At the same time, RBA gathered claims data and insurance policies from the members and prospects in order to provide competitive stop-loss premium quotes for the FY 2019.

The stop-loss program is a combination of traditional stop-loss coverage and the participation in a stop-loss captive. The captive layer will cover the claims up to $300,000 over each entities' high claims threshold, with claims exceeding that layer being covered by the traditional stop-loss insurance carrier. The amount of funds remaining in the captive layer after the fiscal year claims are all paid will be returned to the municipal members on a pro-rata premium share.

NYSAC has been working for several years, under the direction of the NYSAC Board of Directors, on identifying programs and services that can help member counties operate more efficiently and save taxpayer dollars on non-mandated programs and services. For many years, health insurance has been one of the highest-cost non-mandated functions for county governments. This led the Association to explore a number of programs that could help reduce health insurance costs.

As a result, NYSAC also has a partnership with ProAct for pharmaceutical benefits and a discount prescription drug card available to residents in participating counties, and a partnership with Health Economics Group (HEG) for a county dental network card program that provides counties with reduced dental benefit costs and access to a network of dentists that charge reduced rates for residents that do not have dental insurance.

The MHFC is a program specifically designed to help self-insured counties and other self-insured municipalities or health consortia to aggregate their contracted lives to reduce their risks and reduce costs for health insurance expenses.

For more information, contact Relph Benefit Advisors directly by calling Eric Lintala at 800-836-0026, ext. 320, or call NYSAC Deputy Director Mark LaVigne at 518-465-1473.
Fulton County Receives NYSAC Foundation Award

NYSAC presented Fulton County with the first-ever 25 Year Foundation Award for their instrumental role in creating and improving the New York Municipal Insurance Reciprocal (NYMIR), a liability/casualty insurance company created to provide insurance services to local governments in New York. In 1993, the Fulton County Board of Supervisors and local Cities, Towns and Villages banded together with 26 local government subscribing members to launch the company. A majority of over 1600 general purpose municipalities in New York State are now members, making NYMIR the largest municipal property and casualty underwriter in the entire state. Fulton County, and specifically, Jon Stead, Fulton County Administrative Officer, provided the necessary participation to launch the program.

FALL SEMINAR SNAPSHOTS

St. Lawrence County was awarded $76,263.84 from NYSAC Payment Solutions.

Winston Churchill actor Randy Otto with Monroe County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo.

Orleans County Chief Administrative Officer Charles H. Nesbit Jr. is sworn in as the 2018-2019 President of NYSAC.

Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz speaks at a workshop during the Fall Seminar.

County delegates attended dozens of educational workshops at the NYSAC Fall Seminar.

County leaders connected with colleagues from across the state during the Fall Seminar in Rochester, NY.
Marijuana Legislation in NYS: Considerations for Counties

By Alex LaMonte, NYSAC Research Analyst

New York State lawmakers are debating whether to legalize the most widely used illegal drug in the United States, marijuana, and how to do so responsibly.

As of the writing of this article, 30 states, including New York, have legalized medical marijuana. Nine states have legalized cannabis for recreational use. Thirteen have decriminalized — but not legalized — marijuana, meaning they have repealed or amended laws to make certain acts criminal but no longer subject to prosecution. In many states that have decriminalized, possession of small amounts of marijuana is treated like a minor traffic violation.

The County Impact

Moving marijuana out of the unregulated black market will impact public health, public safety, criminal justice, the economy, and the environment in New York State’s counties.

Public Health

• Positive: Marijuana has therapeutic benefits that can make it an effective treatment for pain and other health conditions, including seizures, nausea, multiple sclerosis, and PTSD. It can help to stem the tide of the opioid epidemic by providing a safer alternative to opioids for pain management.

• Negative: Cannabis may impair learning, memory, and attention. Smoking marijuana damages the lungs. Children may be at increased risk for unintentional exposure if marijuana is legalized.

Public Safety

• Traffic Safety: Legalization will impact the DWI system and result in new costs, including those associated with increases in law enforcement, prosecution, court resources, toxicology lab tests, and testimony. Drug testing is moving away from urine and towards blood, oral fluid devices, and breathing tests.

• Crime: Marijuana is a cash-only industry, even in states where it is legal. Local law enforcement should be prepared to monitor and respond to crime around dispensaries.

• Youth Access: Experts agree that there should be a minimum age for consumers to purchase and consume marijuana. Taxes and advertising restrictions can be used to reduce youth consumption.

• Education and Enforcement: Local law enforcement should be prepared to spend increased amounts of time and money on enforcing new laws surrounding legal marijuana. Education and ongoing monitoring will be necessary to protect public health and safety.

Criminal Justice

• Racial Justice: Marijuana is one of the biggest drivers of racial disparities in criminalization and incarceration, despite evidence that cannabis use among racial groups is equal.

• Criminal Records: If marijuana is legalized, lawmakers will have
to decide whether to expunge the criminal records of individuals with marijuana-related convictions. In 2010, New York State's marijuana arrest rate (535 arrests per 100,000 people) was the highest of any state and double the national average.

Economy

- Tax Revenue: The State Department of Taxation and Finance estimates that potential tax revenue in the first year of legalization could range from $248.1 million to $493.7 million with a 7% tax rate or from $340.6 million to $677.7 million with a 15% tax rate.

- Cost Reduction: Legalization is expected to reduce costs associated with illegal marijuana, including police time, court costs, jailing costs, and administrative fees.

- Job Creation: Legalization will create jobs in the marijuana industry (such as in stores and dispensaries, cultivations, and manufacturing) and ancillary jobs (such as in security, construction, real estate, and consulting). In 2015, the legal marijuana industry in Colorado created more than 18,000 new full-time jobs and generated $2.4 billion in economic activity.

- Tourism: Travelers may be interested in visits to grows, lodging in marijuana-friendly hotels, cannabis cooking classes, and other opportunities to consume marijuana. Tourists will need to be educated about local laws related to public consumption and consumption while driving.

Environment

- Energy: A typical indoor marijuana grow room has the same power density as a data center (200 watts per square foot). Counties may want to provide energy efficiency rebates to growers who use efficient lighting systems or renewable energy to help take pressure off the electrical grid.

- Water Quality: Many marijuana growers use chemicals during the cultivation process that can contaminate a water supply if not treated or disposed of properly. Counties should prepare for potential contamination issues and watch for impacts on downstream ecologies.

Legislation to Watch

S.3040B (Krueger)/A.3506B (People-Stokes): This legalization would enact “The Marihuana Regulation and Taxation Act.” As of the writing of this memo, it is the most comprehensive proposal in the State Legislature to regulate, control, and tax marijuana. The Act authorizes localities to impose a sales tax of up to 2 percent on retail sales.

Keep up to date:
To view the latest NYSAC resolutions, research, and advocacy work within this policy area, visit www.nysac.org/health
As counties across the state begin implementing the new Raise the Age legislation, many questions remain.

Part WWW of Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2017 included language to raise the age of criminal responsibility. This newly enacted legislation includes statutory amendments that create a new Adolescent Offender (AO) classification, establishes a new Youth Part in the Superior Court and requires all misdemeanor cases, except for Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) misdemeanors, to be heard in Family Court. On Monday, October 1, 2018, this legislation went into effect for 16-year-old offenders taken into custody.

Subsequently, Governor Cuomo proposed a $100 million investment for Raise the Age (RTA) related expenditures which was secured in the FY2019 state budget (Chapter 53 of the Laws of 2018).

State Agency Updates

A fiscal planning instrument and an RTA guidance document was sent to counties in June, 2018 and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and State Commission on Corrections (SCOC) have released Specialized Secure Detention (SSD) regulations. SCOC regulations can be found at: http://www.scoc.ny.gov/regulations.htm. In addition, the Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA) released proposed regulatory changes. The proposed changes can be found at: http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/opca/. The deadline for public comments was October 8, 2018.

DCJS

DCJS has also developed a detailed written memorandum which was sent to statewide Law Enforcement Agencies and Criminal Justice Executives in September, 2018. The memorandum can be found at: https://www.ny.gov/sites/ny.gov/files/atoms/files/9618_FINAL_RTA_Memo_and_Chart.pdf.

DCJS has developed enhanced five-day regional probation trainings to assist local probation departments interact with this younger population.

OCFS

OCFS has held two summits with secure detention providers to work through fiscal, regulatory, policy and operational needs for SSD facilities and one summit with non-secure detention providers to work through the implications of RTA.

On September 26, 2018, OCFS released information to counties regarding the location and initial capacity of the newly created SSD facilities. In addition, over the past couple of months, OCFS contracted with counties throughout NYS to aid in serving as an “Anchor County” to serve as a conduit for funding for voluntary placement agencies certified to house RTA youth. There are 12 approved voluntary agencies to create specialized RTA programs statewide. As of October 1, 2018, there are 24 voluntary agency beds available for RTA youth. Additional beds will open as the need increases.

Furthermore, OCFS is constructing limited secure detention facility capacity at Industry Residential Center in Monroe County to serve 80 limited secure males and re-opening the Harriett Tubman Residential Center in Cayuga County to serve 25 limited secure female beds.
DOCCS

The Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) will operate three AO facilities. Hudson Correctional Facility in Columbia County will be certified to house both males and females and Adirondack AO Facility in Essex County will be certified to house 143 males. Sonyea AO Facility (formerly Groveland Annex) in Livingston County will be operational on October 1, 2019 and will house male AO’s.

DOB

Counties that have adopted a 2018 budget that does not exceed the property tax cap must submit a certification of compliance to the NYS Division of Budget. As of September 24, DOB has received 47 certifications.

If a county’s budget exceeds the property tax cap, the state may waive the local share of RTA costs based upon a determination of financial hardship. Applications for a waiver based on financial hardship were made available to counties in June and rely on three tests to determine financial hardship:

1. Financial Restructuring Board (FRB) Criteria;
2. A Fiscal Stress Designation from the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC);
3. Additional Financial Hardship Justification (for counties that do not meet the above criteria)

To receive reimbursement for RTA expenses, counties are required to submit their comprehensive plans as one combined packet to the state. There is no submission deadline for counties, however comprehensive plans must be received and approved by New York State prior to reimbursements being issued. As of October 1, 2018, 25 plans have been submitted and received by the state.

The fiscal planning instrument can be found at https://www.ny.gov/sites/ny.gov/files/atoms/files/fiscal-planning-instrument.xlsx and plans should be submitted to LocalRTAGuide@ocfs.ny.gov.

County governments across New York are busy finalizing their fiscal planning instruments, implementing the new legislation, and monitoring the availability of secure detention and specialized secure detention beds, voluntary placement beds, and non-secure detention beds.

NYSAC will continue to work with the state to discuss counties’ concerns regarding the effective implementation of this legislation. Questions can be submitted to NYS, https://www.ny.gov/content/raise-age-ask-question.

Members can reach out to Ryan Gregoire, Legislative Coordinator at 518-465-1473 for further information or you can visit the NYSAC website at www.nysac.org/RTA.
If you are under 53 years of age and grew up in upstate New York, or under 84 and grew up in New York City – you can’t remember a time when there wasn’t a sales tax on purchases you made at a local store. For most of us, a sales tax has always been around, but in the revenue world for New York governments it is a bit of a newbie.

The primary reason counties in New York were authorized to enact local sales taxes up to 3 percent was under the premise that this new revenue stream would be necessary to help counties pay for the newly created Medicaid program – federally approved but largely state designed and controlled. Unfortunately, this was not the last program New York State or the federal government mandated counties pay for and administer over the last 50 years or so.

Only five counties and New York City enacted a local sales tax in 1965. By 1968, a couple dozen more enacted a local sales tax and by 1972, 44 counties had a local sales tax with most at a three percent rate. The last dozen or so enacted their local sales tax after 1980, with the last crossing the threshold in 1997. In the early 2000’s, the last major period of local sales tax rate increases occurred when the state enacted a large expansion in the Medicaid program. During a 5-year period, 37 counties and New York City raised their tax rates (most to 4 percent) to keep up with the dramatically increasing costs of the Medicaid program and other state mandates (mainly pension benefits) that were also enhanced around this time.

As time went on, more counties used their growing local sales tax to offset property tax increases, or to lower property tax rates. Additionally, most counties also share their local sales tax collections with cities, towns, villages and even some school districts to help them keep their property taxes lower. In 2018, counties will share nearly $1.9 billion with other municipalities, about 24 percent of total local sales tax collections. Sales tax is now the leading revenue source for 21 counties, overtaking county property taxes along the way.

Information Technology Changes the Shape of Sales Tax

As computers, microchips and other technology changed the world they also changed how sales tax was collected (or sometimes not collected). From the initial way retailers collected sales tax on in-store transactions, filed sales tax returns and then mailed checks to the state, advancements in technology allowed this function to go from a slow, cumbersome paper process to an automated paperless system.

These advances also provided the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance the ability to provide more detailed information about sales tax collections in all corners of the state, in a more transparent and timely way to county government. Today, total taxable sales by county, by industry, by quarter are available online, with only a six-month lag. Counties used to wait years to see even the most basic forms of this taxable sales data. Today a county can check on the taxable sales of any industrial sector operating within their county during the current fiscal year to see if adjustments need to be made in budgeted sales tax – this was not possible before. As the data improves, counties hope the lag can be cut further to enhance the usefulness of this newly available data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Taxable Sales</th>
<th>% of Total Taxable Sales</th>
<th>% of Cumulative Taxable Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Automobile Dealers</td>
<td>$6,785,300</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Restaurants and Other Eating Places</td>
<td>$6,067,350</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Merch. Stores, Incl. Warehouse Clubs &amp; Supercenters</td>
<td>$3,824,775</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gasoline Stations</td>
<td>$3,721,780</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clothing Stores</td>
<td>$2,846,300</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Building Material and Supplies Dealers</td>
<td>$2,822,680</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>$1,884,245</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Wired and Wireless Telecommunications Carriers</td>
<td>$1,654,490</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Traveler Accommodation</td>
<td>$1,592,204</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Department Stores</td>
<td>$1,446,450</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses</td>
<td>$1,324,250</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution</td>
<td>$1,192,300</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Automotive Equipment Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>$1,183,200</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Automotive Repair and Maintenance</td>
<td>$1,174,100</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Electronics and Appliance Stores</td>
<td>$1,143,220</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sporting Goods, Hobby, and Musical Instrument Stores</td>
<td>$1,064,550</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores</td>
<td>$95,160</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers</td>
<td>$94,405</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Computer Systems Design and Related Services</td>
<td>$93,245</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>$82,968,168</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal Top 20 in Taxable Sales $4,331,938,113 67.4%

Total All Taxable Sales 2017-18 $6,424,234,415 100.0%

How Technology Impacts Local Sales Tax in New York

By Dave Lucas, Director, Finance & Intergovernmental Affairs, NYSAC
The chart below provides a sample of online data available to counties and researchers related to taxable sales. The chart has been formatted from the raw data online into an easy to read chart of the top 20 categories, however hundreds of industrial sectors are included in the online database. This online data is updated quarterly, beginning with the 2013-14 sales tax year. The data allows counties to see how certain industries contribute to their local revenues through sales tax, whether receipts accrue cyclically through the year by industry, how sales might be influenced by commodity prices, etc.

As different as each county is, the top sales tax sources by industry for each county are widely shared – auto dealers; restaurants and eating places; building materials and supplies; general merchandise stores, including warehouse clubs and supercenters; and gasoline stations will almost always occupy the top slots in most counties.

It is interesting to note that while some items move up and down the chart as commodity prices change (gasoline and other energy products) one item that is consistently moving up the chart is “electronic shopping and mail order houses.” This category reflects the e-commerce retailers – some of which do not collect sales tax, and others that only collect sales tax for some portion of their online transactions. In the case of Albany, e-commerce sales in 2013-14 ranked 16th and accounted for only 1.5 percent of taxable sales, climbing to 11th in 2017-18 and 2.1 percent of taxable sales. The million-dollar question for counties is how much sales tax is not being collected because of online transactions?

Technology Changes Shopping

One of the biggest changes technology brought to sales tax collection was how people shop. The establishment of a fast, reliable, and secure internet that allowed electronic financial transactions to occur seamlessly changed the rules of retail. This broad acceptance flourished with the help of some favorable federal policies and no shortage of innovative companies that have used the ubiquity of the internet, and internet connected devices (i.e. mobile phones and tablets) to ease the whole shopping experience for consumers. Before these technology advancements, if you wanted to buy something not offered in your community you would have to drive to a place that might sell it or pursue it through catalogue shopping.

The internet provides unlimited “electronic catalogue” shopping options and no need for a car because it can be delivered to your front door – in a matter of hours in some cases. This new retail environment, however, did bring challenges to the state’s ability to collect sales taxes owed on purchases made over the internet. While the U.S. Supreme Court Quill decision in 1992 sought to provide clarity to how “online/remote” purchases would be treated for purposes of sales tax collection, it proved to be faulty over time and was reversed by the Court this summer.

The Supreme Court Rights a Wrong on Internet Transactions

On June 21, 2018, the Supreme Court reversed the 1992 Quill decision in a close 5-4 vote. The Court cited a variety of reasons to overturn, but four key items to highlight in the courts own words include:

• “Quill is flawed on its own terms” – the Court decided that “…the physical presence rule of Quill is unsound and incorrect.” Further, “Modern e-commerce does not align analytically with a test that relies on the sort of physical presence defined in Quill. And the court should not maintain a rule that ignores substantial virtual connections to the state.”

• “Quill creates rather than resolves market distortions.” “In effect, it is a judicially created tax shelter for businesses that limit their physical presence in a state but sell their goods and services to the state’s consumers…” “…Quill’s physical presence rule has limited states’ ability to seek long-term prosperity and has prevented market participants from competing on an even playing field.”

• Quill effectively, “…treats economically identical actors differently for arbitrary reasons.”

Because of this decision, states will be allowed to require all vendors that sell products over the internet to their state residents to collect state sales tax due and remit it back to the state. As mentioned, we still are not precisely sure how much in total sales tax owed under current law is not being collected in New York, but estimates range as high as nearly $1 billion annually (according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office).

The Court provided a blue print of sorts for states to follow as they update their tax laws to ensure sales tax lawfully owed to states is collected. The State of New York must now determine how they want to respond to the recent Supreme Court decision to ensure local retailers and local property taxpayers are treated fairly.
New York’s County-Wide Shared Services Initiative is designed to reduce property taxes and streamline local government by supporting cooperation among local governments. There are many ways we can and should be collaborating to save taxpayers’ money. One method we have used in Madison County with great success has been our program of shared IT services with towns.

If you look at the BOCES model in NYS schools, it is easy to see that IT collaboration can improve efficiency while allowing schools with less revenue to participate in services they might not otherwise afford. We have applied that same model to towns, using the county as the central organizer.

The Basics

We started four years ago when the county installed its new voice over IP (VOIP) phone system. Often, sharing most easily starts at a point when some new equipment is needed. Our first shares included the VOIP switches and firewalls that were required to operate and service the new phones.

Today we share services with six towns in the county. Each town has a custom-made set of services, with no two towns exactly the same.

Our most popular services include the aforementioned firewalls and switches, antivirus, short- and long-term planning services, computer purchasing, and security consulting. Other offerings include wireless access points, copiers, patching, vulnerability scanning, websites, computer setup, software installation, network wiring, and backups. We are not done yet—we expect to be providing spam filtering, archiving, and hosting email and town servers later this year.

The Benefits

The primary benefits to towns involve timeliness and cost effectiveness. I provide the planning service myself as a salaried employee, so the towns need not hire another expert consultant. The costs for all other services are an average of the rest of the IT staff’s hourly wages. All RFP’s (Request For Proposals) and RFB’s (Request For Bids) that I conduct include all municipalities. If a town is considering new server-based software package, or their servers are approaching end of life, we can host the server at the county rather than having the town buy new servers or pay a third party to host it in the cloud. Because we already manage and service that town’s firewall, switches, and computers, this kind of sharing is easy to do. We can also take care of the town’s backup and DR (Disaster Recovery) services rather than the town incurring these costs.

Other benefits are less obvious but no less important. Everyone is worried about computer and network security, but not everyone can afford to diagnose and mitigate what needs to be done. Madison County employs a Security Engineer, a specialist that not all towns can afford to have. Using the enterprise tools that the county owns, our Security Engineer can routinely scan computers for the software patches and updates needed to keep data safe plus identify vulnerabilities that towns would not be able to detect. Madison County’s entire IT staff works together to define the very best solutions for every town. Towns may not have the funds, people, or time to do everything that needs doing. That’s where we can help.

The Challenges

If there is anything standing in the way of shared IT services, it tends to be concerns that each town is unique, or that the county will not look out for their town’s best interests. We have found that the proof is in the delivery. As other towns begin to realize that our goals are to provide the best services possible, that we have their best interests front and center, that we are willing to tailor services to their specific needs, and that we truly care about making their lives easier and their technology secure and up-to-date, we expect to see more municipalities join up, thus improving cost effectiveness for everyone involved.
A NEW WAY TO INVEST FOR RETIREMENT.
Your Guide to Roth 457(b) Contributions

By now, you may have heard of the Roth IRA. You may have even set one up. Well, you also have the opportunity to designate all or part of your contributions to your governmental deferred compensation plan as after-tax Roth 457 contributions.

When you contribute to a Roth 457, you pay taxes on the portion of your salary that goes into the plan; but withdrawals of contributions and earnings can be tax-free during retirement if certain conditions are met.\(^1\)

If you wish, you can even split your contributions between traditional, pre-tax 457 contributions and Roth 457 contributions.

**What’s the benefit of designating some or all of your contributions as Roth? It gives you the opportunity to pay taxes on your contributions now and avoid taxes later.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Let's compare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (pre-tax) 457(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less federal taxes paid on contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net total contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value in 20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less federal taxes at distribution (25% tax bracket)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net distribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These examples are hypothetical in nature and assume a 25% tax bracket at distribution. It also assumes that the retirement plan’s value earns an average total return of 8% compounded annually. Investment return is not guaranteed and will vary depending upon the investments and market experience.

A single contribution of $10,000 will be worth the same amount in 20 years if the tax bracket remains the same. However, if the future tax rate is greater, the amount distributed from the Roth account will be greater than the post-tax amount distributed from the traditional 457(b) account.
It’s 2018, and future generations may refer to this as the Smartphone Age.

Chances are you may be reading this article from your smartphone. When you got up this morning, you probably checked your smartphone first thing for the weather, emails, news, or traffic alerts. You will probably spend two to four hours today on your smartphone. You may eat, sleep, and shower within an arm’s length of your smartphone.

If that’s the case, you are just like the nearly eight out of ten adults in the U.S. who own smartphones today.

There’s an App For That...

According to the Pew Research Center: Internet and Technology, the average smartphone user downloads 80 or more apps onto their smartphone. These apps include weather, social media, email, news, music, and games. Today their apps might also include those for the County Sheriff’s office, Office of Emergency Management, Health Department, or Parks and Recreation.

Increasingly, government agencies in New York and across the U.S. are realizing the potential of having their own innovative app to improve communications with county residents, businesses, and visitors.

“People use their phones for everything, so having a smartphone app made good sense,” said Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple. The Albany County Sheriff’s Office app is now in its third version. Sheriff Apple explained, “We appreciate having the flexibility to recently add two new features to our app: See Something/Say Something and See Something/Text Something. We made a big push with three Albany school districts, so students, staff, and faculty have access to our app and those two features. The app is being advertised through school superintendents and school notification networks, plus school resource officers have posters in their offices, business cards, and flyers to hand out.”

What results has the Albany County Sheriff’s Office seen? “We have had a couple of good cases where people have reported a crime or potential crime,” said Sheriff Apple, “so it’s working. The tips were helpful in assisting us in our investigation into those incidents.” According to Sheriff Apple, the Albany Sheriff’s Office has received numerous accolades for providing this service to the Albany community.

Health and the Opioid Crisis in New York

“Previously I struggled with getting information out to reach people: website, paid advertising, Facebook,” said Heidi Bond, director of the Otsego County Department of Health. “I thought an app would be a way to reach a larger part of the population.”

Ms. Bond said, “I decided I wanted an app because I feel that this is the way of the future to connect with people. In addition, it is easy to post in the app and send out immediate alerts, while simultaneously sending posts to Facebook and Twitter, which saves a lot of time.”

By Suzy Keenan, Communication Strategist, OCV, LLC
Still comparing apples to oranges?

U.S. Communities delivers cooperative purchasing solutions that can’t be matched.

Check out the NYSAC Conference App:

The Otsego County Department of Health app includes information on clinics and events, health issues, programs and services, and crisis hotlines. There is a suite of Opioid Resources that includes instant access to the Mobile Crisis Team, a guide to mental health and addiction services, and a map that shows treatment facilities.

The Otsego app, just recently released, is available free of charge in the Android and Apple app stores. Ms. Bond explained how the DOH will use the app: “My plan is to work with my staff to make a weekly schedule of posts to coincide with health issues, as well as push out alerts in the case of an emergency. Things are changing so fast, and we now have a way to easily update our information and get it into the hands of our community.”

Alerts and Emergency Preparedness

“If you want to reach people in today’s mobile society, you have to use technology,” shared Tim Marshall, director of Steuben County NY Emergency Services. “We realized that mobile applications are the new trend in technology and the best way to reach people.” He added, “Everybody enjoys the Ready Steuben app. They like having the ability to set up their own emergency kit checklist, get power outage information, and see shelter locations. Feedback from the public has been excellent!”

Jeffrey Smith, director of the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management echoes Tim Marshall. “We are very happy to have our smartphone app,” he said. The app, first built in 2014, is in its second generation of design and engineering. “Our residents have told me many times how thankful they are to receive alerts directly from our office in case of heat, thunderstorms, flooding, and snow emergencies, as well as road closures. They also appreciate the other features in the app, including emergency preparedness information, power outages, and Amber Alerts.”

National Weather Service alerts are automatically rebroadcast through the Herkimer County Emergency Services app, saving staff time. Director Matt Palumbo promotes the app through social media, at community meetings, and Fire and EM trainings. Like belt and suspenders, he views the app as “Another tool to alert county residents of emergency situations, and to improve our service to the community.”

When you consider developing an app for your agency, there are some important aspects to consider. Here are a few questions to ask:

- Can our app be custom designed for our communication wishes and needs?
- Does it reflect our agency’s branding, including logos, colors, and images?
- Is it a Native application that works in conjunction with the phone’s own native apps? (Native apps are preferable over HTML5/Hybrid apps that are more dependent on good Internet connection.)
- Does it include alerting options such as rebroadcast of NWS and mass notification alerts, and pin-protected alert channels?
- Will we be able to easily update the content in our app?
- Will it work well with our current communications such as website and social media?
- Will marketing materials be provided to help us promote and market our app?

Lastly, plan to make your own app a part of your daily communications, so that you can reach people in innovative ways where they are today: on their smartphones.
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE LIVES.

Thanks to the partnership with the New York State Association of Counties, it’s now easier than ever to join the New York State Donate Life Registry. Today we ask that you help us take another important step closer to achieving our goal of ensuring a transplant for every man, woman and child in need by accomplishing one simple task: Please include a link to the Donate Life Registry www.donatelifeny.gov on your website so New Yorkers can easily educate themselves on the importance of donation and to learn how they can register as an organ and tissue donor. Together, we are saving and healing lives.
By the time you dust off your policy handbook to see if you have a relevant policy in place to deal with a particularly thorny personnel issue, it’s already too late. You might be successful unearthing something supportive for the situation at hand, but too often you are looking for a policy to eliminate a longstanding problem that has reached the breaking point rather than preventing one from developing in the first place. Policies have long been an important toolset to define acceptable behavior, whether it relates to employee conduct, personal safety or other related topics. A more recent and pressing development is the need for comprehensive Information Technology (IT) policies.

Most governments have personnel policy manuals consisting of human resource policies, payroll policies, travel policies, ethics policies, workplace violence policies, etc., and many policy templates exist to allow even small organizations to develop and implement comprehensive personalized policies. What many governments lack, however, is an updated set of comprehensive IT policies.

Even for organizations with a solid policy framework in place, maintaining policies is a daunting task. Policies developed years ago may remain relatively suitable while others, including IT, require frequent updates. Governmental organizations should periodically review and update all of their policies on a regular basis, and should be prepared to update certain policies more often, as needed.

Your policy may already do a great job of explaining how to avoid phishing scams. Despite that effort, your email users continue to click on bogus emails, and try to follow the embedded links right through to your next data breach. Remind me again how the Breach Notification Policy works?

Which brings me to one of my favorite quotes:

“People do what you inspect, not what you expect,” Louis Gerstner – IBM

In the case of internet access, this should include monitoring web access and reporting internet use to management. In the case of email phishing this should include basic awareness training combined with phishing simulation exercises with measurable outcomes.

Having an adequate IT policy in place and distributed to staff however, is no longer enough. IT policies need to be communicated and referenced on a regular basis to remind everyone of their organizational importance. Policies should also be available electronically for ease of access and distribution.

In 2016, Cayuga County adopted a comprehensive set of IT policies and we update them periodically. When the new IT policy was initially adopted, we underestimated the difficulty of informing users in a useful way. At that time, we did not choose to provide orientation and training to our existing or new users and simply distributed the policy as we had always done in the past. For those that embark on a similar process, I recommend providing orientation for existing users as well as new users. Our new user orientation now includes IT topics and an opportunity to review our IT policies and ask questions.

While many governmental organizations struggle to balance competing priorities with limited resources, making the investment to provide the necessary training infrastructure is critical for successful implementation and adherence to IT policy.

Today I serve on a team tasked to review all our policies and recommend changes. I am confident that we will complete our policy review and update process and I remain optimistic that our effort to keep our IT policy as well as all of the county policies up to date will continue into the future.
Progressive county leaders are more and more turning to cloud-powered back office strategies to help their governments keep pace with change and deliver the advanced services citizens expect. Experts estimate governments spend as much as 80 percent of their IT budgets maintaining on-premises hardware. The right investment in a cloud-based back office solution — such as a finance or human resources (HR) solution — can make organizations more cost effective, efficient and productive.

Moving to the cloud can also improve decision-making, spur innovation and enable smarter capabilities that smaller municipalities could only dream of until now.

Much like larger public-sector agencies and institutions, leaders in counties, cities and K-12 schools must respond to the accelerated pace of technology and take a critical look at the performance and cost of legacy back office systems. Many of their on-premises data centers have undergone a series of hodge-podge add-ons over the years to handle new requirements and use cases. Keeping these systems up to date is an ongoing and time-consuming undertaking, and it's easy to fall behind. Individual point solutions designed to fix one problem can potentially cause another, from ineffective security measures to the inability to scale. Organizations can't sustain the systems, much less modernize them.

Cloud-based Solutions

The advent of cloud computing addresses the challenges that have prevented many municipalities from embracing back office modernization. Today, there are “cloud-native” software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions built from the ground up to operate in the solution provider’s technical environment (see sidebar, “Know the Difference: Cloud-Native vs. Cloud-Hosted).”

Unlike point solutions from niche vendors, all components are integrated and communicate with each other. Scalability and needed functionality are built in, so organizations can easily expand their capabilities over time.

To visualize the opportunities, imagine a department of public works with a mature, cloud-based financial system.

An employee at a job site can use his or her smartphone to order supplies from a pre-approved list of suppliers with pre-negotiated prices. Executives can instantly approve requisitions. Conversations and notes are attached to individual transactions, providing a clear record of due diligence and detailed information for auditors. Once a purchase order is approved, relevant information is automatically forwarded to the appropriate systems for rapid fulfillment, encumbrance, reporting and other tasks. Over time, artificial intelligence (AI) helps the finance team determine which suppliers provide the best value and how they can aggregate purchasing to obtain preferential terms and prices.

As smart city capabilities mature, the department can integrate its purchasing system with sensors and other technologies installed on street lights, bridges and other assets. When an asset needs to be replaced or is malfunctioning, it automatically requisitions new parts, creates and routes work orders, and schedules the job. Workers are more productive and citizens are more satisfied.

In addition to streamlining and improving business processes, true SaaS solutions are:

• Fast and affordable – The cloud vendor provides the underlying infrastructure, so cloud-based solutions eliminate the prohibitive capital and operational costs associated with deploying and maintaining in-house finance and HR systems. In addition, systems can be up and running within a few months at minimal cost.

• Simple to use – The best vendors design intuitive systems. Line-of-business users can get the answers they need on their own. This improves productivity and decision-making, while...
freeing analysts and IT staff to work on higher-value tasks.

- Built on best practices — Cloud finance and HR applications are often architected with industry best practices in mind. Workflows are standardized and are modeled on input from subject matter experts.

- Always modern – Cloud-powered back office solutions are more sustainable because the vendor continuously upgrades systems to keep pace with innovation and industry developments. In addition, solutions can be easily scaled to accommodate growth or contraction.

Seeking Out SaaS for Future Growth

Back office modernization is a basic requirement for the complete digital transformation of a county or small city. By migrating finance and HR applications to the cloud, local governments can bring efficiency, innovation and smart functionality to the workplace and the community — without the costs, complexity and built-in obsolescence of on-premises solutions.

The following suggestions can help organizations successfully deploy a cloud-native strategy:

- Adopt a single, complete service vs. myriad point solutions – Consider what you need today, but keep an eye on tomorrow. Be sure the cloud service can enable flexible analytics, handle complex scenarios and support deep reporting at the user level. Be sure you can opt-in to AI, chatbots and other advanced technology as your requirements evolve.

- Use open standards – Many legacy systems use proprietary code that makes it difficult to import and export data. A solution based on open standards can handle any data format and allows organizations to easily import data from heterogeneous systems.

- Ensure it’s truly cloud-native – A hosted legacy application that is retrofitted for the cloud does not provide the same features and functionality as software that is purpose-built for the cloud.

- Look for an intuitive user experience – Determine how critical metrics are exposed in dashboards, what types of reports general users can create on their own and whether reports are well integrated with other parts of the system. Can users pull narrative and numbers from multiple systems to prepare a comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) or pull data from the CAFR on an ad hoc basis?

- Use a trusted cloud – Be sure that the cloud service can meet service level agreements for availability and that it can protect confidential data whether it is in transit or at rest.

- Partner with a well-established provider that can grow with you – Look for expertise in back office modernization and in working with local government. Consider the provider’s history of innovation, financial stability and commitment to long-term viability.

- Champion change – Partner with an IT consultant that can help maximize your IT investment and smooth the transition to the cloud. Leverage the consultant’s change.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE:
CLOUD-NATIVE VS. CLOUD-HOSTED

Although cloud does afford immediate access to software and systems, merely re-platforming and hosting an application in the cloud does not provide full access to the benefits of an application that was “born in the cloud.”

True SaaS applications, built from the ground up to take advantage of cloud, are known as “cloud-native.” They are hosted in a true cloud infrastructure and are designed to maximize the benefits of the cloud. Features include:

- Short implementation cycles, with near-instantaneous provisioning for new users
- Quick upgrades, with simultaneous rollout of new features and security upgrades and patches
- Seamless scalability in response to increased demand (e.g., tax filing deadlines, elections)
- In contrast, a cloud-hosted environment is simply on-premises software that is available remotely, via the cloud.
- Although the need for a local server or local copies is eliminated, there are some disadvantages:
  - Longer implementation times, including server setup, software installation and customization
  - Manual upgrades, specific to each server — not all customers are upgraded simultaneously
  - Additional servers may be required for expansion because software is hosted on dedicated servers by the vendor
  - Security may be a greater challenge because there are more access points for intrusions
The NYS Board of Elections (BOE) is working with several state and federal partners to implement a plan to help ensure that New York’s election infrastructure is strengthened against cyber disruptions. The goal of this endeavor is to protect and ensure public trust in our voting system, which is the foundation of our democracy.

A Four-Pronged Strategy to Strengthen Elections IT Systems

The state’s plan will implement language and appropriations set forth in the 2018-19 State Budget, which includes $5 million in state funds and $19.5 million in federal funds to implement a four-pronged strategy to further strengthen cyber protections for New York’s elections. The four pronged plan is ARMOR, which stands for: Assess the risk; Remediate vulnerabilities; Monitor ongoing Operations and Response.

State officials are working directly with county boards of elections and county IT directors to assess existing risks in current information systems, develop plans to mitigate risks identified, provide ongoing monitoring support and advice, and offer response criteria for potential breaches to election and voter systems.

Risk Assessments

Earlier this month, the State BOE held a series of webinars with county leaders, county IT directors and county BOE commissioners to discuss the roll out of the risk assessments segment of this four-part plan. Through a competitive bidding process, the State BOE chose Grant Thornton to provide risk assessments, starting with a set of pilot counties. Grant Thornton will be conducting risk assessments of each county BOE’s IT systems, identifying potential vulnerabilities, and then developing a road map for mitigating those vulnerabilities.

As part of this process, Grant Thornton and the State BOE will ask each local BOE to fill out survey questionnaires designed to identify each county’s IT infrastructure and governance models. Then they will visit each county to complete their assessments onsite. Where a county BOE’s IT infrastructure interfaces with other parts of the county’s IT infrastructure, those areas will be included in the risk assessment.

These risk assessments will be funded out of the federal share of the election cybersecurity allocation in the 2018-19 State Budget. We encourage all county BOE and IT directors to actively participate in these risk assessments.

Cybersecurity Training

In addition to this upcoming risk assessment work, the State BOE has purchased 2,000 licenses for cybersecurity training for senior county staff members. We encourage you to contact the State BOE to take advantage of these free training opportunities.

Other Cybersecurity Efforts

The State BOE cybersecurity efforts are in addition to other state cybersecurity efforts. This includes a NYS Department of Homeland Security grant program announced earlier this summer and ongoing work at the NYS Office of IT Services in support of county IT Directors.
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Chief John Pate
Director of Public Safety
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Developing reliable threat intelligence is the most critical aspect of security in today's environment. To that end, many organizations have conducted risk assessments to determine their level of vulnerability to cybersecurity threats both inside and outside the organization. Unfortunately, the parties that perform these assessments don't always have the capability to actually help with the follow-up activity. If your risk assessment was done by one of these organizations, you are left with your assessment report but no direction or guidance on what you should be doing to mitigate the uncovered threats.

If you find yourself in this situation, here are four steps you can take to act on it and produce a higher degree of threat intelligence in your IT environment.

**Prioritize the results**

Your assessment will likely outline many aspects of your system that pose significant risks to your IT security. This can be overwhelming, so your first step is to prioritize the list. Not every risk is equal in terms of the possible cost to your organization, so begin by assigning values to each one. You likely are constrained by limited resources, so you won’t be able to take on everything at once. That's why it's critical that you begin with the threats that pose the highest risks so that you can mitigate them as quickly as possible.

Setting the right order can often be difficult, so many organizations engage a third-party threat intelligence expert partner to help. These companies have experience with many other organizations facing the same challenges so can bring insight that you may not have in-house.

**Establish the value of your mitigation plan**

Once you have established your prioritized list, next estimate what it would cost to remediate each one and balance that against the cost of doing nothing. This means considering the potential financial damage a specific risk can pose to your organization. While you may think you can’t afford to mitigate a certain threat, the reality may be that you can’t afford not to deal with it. In many cases, if the threat is left unchecked, the cost to the organization may be multiple times larger than if you had spent what it would take to eliminate the threat in the first place.

Again, a partner can help you estimate these costs and establish the value of a comprehensive mitigation road map.

**Identify integration points**

Now that you have a list of priorities and a budgeted plan, the next step is to identify the points where you can integrate solutions you already have to make them more effective and efficient. For example, you may have a next generation firewall, but only have the licensing turned on for half of it. Instead of purchasing additional software, maximize the solution you already have in place.

This is the point where you review your entire technology landscape to compare your current state to your desired future state. The goal is to get to your end goals in the fewest possible steps. One way to accomplish this is to deploy a defense-in-depth strategy: ensuring layers of defenses so that if one fails, another layer is there to stem the attack. In many cases you will have solutions already implemented that can be optimized to provide appropriate levels of threat intel.

**Implement continuous improvement**

The final step is to review and update your processes to ensure you're continuously improving your threat intelligence profile.

Your processes should always be testing the effectiveness of the solutions you have put into place. Establishing appropriate metrics that can be collected and reported to identify trends and drive ongoing improvement is an important element in this step. Some possible measurements include incident response time, FTE utilization, and false positive rate. One of the key processes you should have in place is incident handling. This is critical to ensure your investigations don't destroy evidence and for establishing the appropriate order of operations.

This is a key area where an expert partner can help. They can act as benchmarking experts and present procedures, processes, and metrics that have been used effectively in other organizations.
Harnessing the Spirit of Innovation in Monroe County

By Cheryl Dinolfo, Monroe County Executive

Monroe County is proud to embrace our community’s long legacy of innovation, first pioneered by legendary entrepreneurs like George Eastman, Joseph Wilson, Henry Lomb and John Jacob Bausch. Our forbearers fostered innovation to reshape our community and change the way people live – not only in our region, but all across the globe.

Imagine Monroe: Economic Development and Job Creation

Today Monroe County continues to harness innovation to improve the lives our residents, particularly through our job creation and economic development efforts. Two years ago, we re-branded our County’s Industrial Development Agency, formerly known as COMIDA, as "Imagine Monroe." We did so in an effort to better communicate our goals: we want businesses, investors and entrepreneurs to imagine the possibilities that exist in Monroe County. Imagine Monroe is a think-outside-of-the-box approach to job creation that focuses on getting boots on the ground, meeting with employers face to face, and sealing the deal when the time comes.

In the digital age, we know we need to connect with employers online as well. That’s why we recently completed a sweeping redesign of Imagine Monroe’s website to create a streamlined, one-stop-shop for businesses looking to locate or expand in Monroe County. I encourage you to visit imaginemonroe.org so you can see it for yourself. Want to know more about Imagine Monroe’s business incentives? How about our talented workforce and premier schools? Our short commute time and great transportation options? Our proximity to major markets? Or our quality of life? If you are an employer looking to grow more jobs, and you are considering Monroe County, all of this information is now available at your fingertips. Our new imaginemonroe.org is an incredible resource and it is already expanding our opportunities to grow more jobs in our community.

LadderzUp: Training for In-Demand Jobs

When it comes to economic development, creating and retaining more jobs is only half the battle. The other half is connecting local residents with the rewarding, good-paying careers that are already available. That’s why Monroe County recently launched a groundbreaking new program called LadderzUp. How does it work? First we identify businesses who have skilled jobs open in our community, or out-of-town employers who need skilled-labor to locate here. Then we partner with Monroe Community College to custom-build a training program that gives participants the specialized skills they need to get the job done. So far we have trained nearly 200 workers to fill in-demand jobs like metal fabrication, project management, precision welding, customer service, and more. That’s more than four times our original goal of 45 first-year participants when we initially launched LadderzUp.

Whether it be in person, online, or in the classroom, Monroe County is committed to harnessing our community’s spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship to continue to improve the services we provide and best represent the people who call our community home. By doing so, we hope to use innovation to grow more jobs, build better budgets, and support stronger families across Monroe County now and for years to come. If you would like to know more about any of our new economic development programs or initiatives, please feel free to reach out to us – we would be happy to share our experiences with you.
We’re drowning in a sea of data, while dying of thirst for knowledge.” -Anonymous

County leaders operate in a world of unprecedented access to data.

Never before has there been such ready access to data from a myriad of sources and a wide variety of increasingly sophisticated and powerful tools for making use of data. At the same time, counties face the dual challenge of rising expectations from citizens about the quality of service delivery, and limited resources to support county operations.

Citizen expectations about interactions with their government are directly impacted by their interactions with other institutions. The ability to order even the most obscure item on demand 24 hours a day, to track the status (and location) of orders in real time, to have your personal preferences remembered and reflected in choices that are offered to you, and to have a wide array of payment options offered for transactions are just a few of the factors that impact citizen expectations about government services.

Online retailers and digital services firms make extensive use of data to better understand their customer and to better serve their needs. Governments, too, have access to a wealth of data that can help them improve the quality of service they provide to citizens, and to better inform the way they run their operations.

But how can county governments begin to use data more strategically, to better serve their citizens? How can they begin to extract truly valuable insights from data that is locked away in a host of different legacy technology systems? And, most importantly, how can county governments forge new partnerships with external entities that can help them derive insights from data, and use it in new ways?

An effective strategy for making better use of data that has been adopted by governments across the country and around the world is open data.

What is Open Data?

Open data is defined as “data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone.” Governments at the federal, state and local level are devoting more and more time and energy to the proactive release of important information as open data as a way to improve efficiencies and spur technology innovation.

There are a number of reasons, both practical and philosophical, why releasing open data can benefit your county and the people it serves.

Open data releases can be an effective way of responding to requests for data through FOIL and similar public information requests. One open data release may address multiple requests for information than can be repetitive and costly to respond to if addressed on an individual basis.

By releasing open data, governments can help to stimulate new and innovative ideas from the technology community. There is great potential for open data to act as the fuel for new solutions, and even new businesses, that can address common problems or challenges facing governments and those they serve.

Research conducted by the Harvard Business School suggests that governments that make more data available on the operation of government may actually work to enhance citizen perceptions of government service. Specifically, a study conducted in late 2013 found that "increasing the operational transparency of government services - showing citizens the work in which government is engaging on their behalf - engenders positive attitudes toward government and greater support for maintaining or expanding the scale of government programs.”

In addition, releasing open data has the potential to generate a host of operational efficiencies for government.
barriers often prevent the free flow of information inside government, so it is often the case that what should be easy isn’t. For example - Is it possible to condition the denial of a permit from government agency on whether a person has an outstanding tax liability, an outstanding parking ticket, a violation against a property they own, or an outstanding utility bill? Doing so requires querying data sets that fall under the purview of an array of different departments and agencies across the government footprint. It also requires the development of systems that integrate all this data and allow it to be used as part of a well defined process.

Counties in New York State, like Suffolk County, and a number of cities, like Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Albany, have already started to release open data, but how can other governments in New York get started with open data?

**Getting Started with Open Data**

The best way to get started with an open data program is to identify the kinds of data people are looking for - this includes both the general public and outside data consumers, as well as your own internal agencies and employees. Some governments have used public surveys to identify high value data sets, and others have polled employees for the kinds of data they would most like to have to make their jobs easier. Talking with other county governments is also a great way to identify both strategies for releasing data as well as to get ideas for the kinds of data that make the most sense to release as open data.

With so many governments adopting open government programs, a wealth of resources has also become available for governments that are just getting started implementing their own programs. The Center for Technology in Government at SUNY Albany (https://www.ctg.albany.edu/) makes available a number of useful publications and research papers on government use of data and data analytics. The Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University (https://govex.jhu.edu/) publishes guides to help governments get started using open data and also offers online and onsite training for governments. Finally, the Sunlight Foundation (https://sunlightfoundation.com/) has released a set of tools that can help county governments craft policy documents to guide their open data programs.

The potential for data to transform the way the governments deliver services and interact with citizens is significant. Open data is a way for counties in New York to begin to realize this potential.

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Mark Headd is the former Chief Data Officer for the City of Philadelphia, serving as one of the first municipal Chief Data Officers in the United States. He is the founder of the Upstate Data Project (https://dataupstate.org/).
Are you looking to make the most of the time in the day? Maybe you might be interested in learning via listening? Do you have a pair of earbuds?

If so, you should tune in and give podcasts a listen.

Podcasts are digital audio pieces which typically focus on non-fiction educational content with a variety of topics – ranging from current events to comedy, and lifestyle to technology. Listening to podcasts is essentially like creating your own personalized radio station.

What sets podcasts apart from traditional radio, is a “do-it-yourself” format, which allows for a range in quality - from in a recording studio to on the street. Styles include panel discussions, multi-host talk shows, one-on-one interviews, and even narrative storytelling.

For local governments, podcasts offer an opportunity to get an in-depth perspective on policies and programs while utilizing spare listening time.

**How to Listen**

You can download or stream podcasts from the internet onto your phone or computer and listen at your own pace. Listening to a podcast can take place in the car, at the gym, while working around the house, or even in the background while at work. Time that would otherwise be spent in silence or listening to music can be used productively and educationally.

Listening to whatever you like whenever you would like to is the name of the game with podcasts, as portable on-demand content. That’s what sets podcasts apart as a unique player in the field of digital media – and why an estimated 73 million Americans listen to podcasts monthly (Edison Research, Consumer Surveys).

**What to listen to:**

NYSAC has created a collection of podcasts to expand our mission of education in service to the counties of New York State.

Some of our recent podcasts include topics like funding for county jail substance abuse services, Raise the Age implementation, the status of recycling markets in New York, and many other relevant topics for local leadership.

Our podcasts range in time from around 10 minutes and up to half an hour, and you can tune in and come back to it however many times you would like to revisit the topic.

You can find our podcasts on our website (www.nysac.org/media), or you can stream our podcasts from your phone using the SoundCloud app (soundcloud.com/nysac).

If there are any topics concerning county government that you would appreciate listening to – or might consider joining as a guest – you are encouraged to reach out to NYSAC to turn your idea into soundwaves.

In addition to NYSAC podcasts, there are many other sources that are relevant and helpful to county government employees at any level. Here are a few that we recommend:
Governing

With programs like “In the Arena,” “Go Public,” and “The 23%: Conversations with Women in Government,” Governing provides podcasts that explore the people and ideas in government that are solving problems and making communities better places throughout the nation.
www.governing.org/podcasts

GovLove

Produced by Engaging Local Government Leaders, GovLove is a podcast series with a goal of telling informative and unique stories about the work being done at the local level and to introduce listeners to the people who do the work of local government.
www.elgl.org/govlove

Capitol Confidential

Hosted by David Lombardo of the Albany Times Union, Capitol Confidential features the policies, politics and personalities that make up the New York state government.
www.blog.timesunion.com/capitol/

Capitol Connection

Political scientist Dr. Alan Chartock holds conversations with members from the New York State Assembly and Senate on WAMC Northeast Public Radio, which you can listen to online in addition to stations throughout the state.
http://www.wamc.org/programs/capitol-connection

International City/County Management Association

This podcast series features #LocalGovLife with topics ranging from combating the opioid crisis to reinvigorating downtown communities.
www.icma.org/podcasts

GovInnovator

The Gov Innovator podcast aims to share useful practices and insights from public sector innovators and other experts. The podcast is hosted by Andy Feldman, a director at Grant Thornton Public Sector.
www.govinnovator.com

Slate - Working

If you’ve ever wanted to step into someone else’s career for the day, tune into this podcast in which David Plotz and Adam Davidson discuss how all sorts of people – and animals - go about their jobs.
www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/working

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Five Ways to Protect the Pollinators that Foster our Food and Ecosystems

By Stephen Acquario, NYSAC Executive Director

Bees and other pollinators provide critical ecosystem services in our agricultural and natural landscapes. I am writing to share five easy-to-implement measures your county can take to protect pollinators and other beneficial insects so they can continue to support our local food systems, environment, and local economies.

Background

Pollinators, such as bees, birds, and bats, affect more third of the world’s crop production and contribute over $15 billion/year to the U.S. economy. New York State alone has seven million acres in agricultural production and 35,500 farms, many of which benefit from or depend on insect pollination.

Over the past 30 years, pollinator populations have declined throughout North America and Europe. When the number of pollinators decreases, foods we enjoy every day – like fruits, vegetables, and nuts – become less plentiful and more expensive. A combination of factors contribute to this loss, including pollution, habitat loss, pesticides, and viruses. While counties cannot control all of the factors causing pollinator decline, they can implement protection measures to help slow or reverse this trend.

The following are five pollinator protection measures I encourage your county to adopt:

1. **Mow Less.** Highways, roadsides, and other county properties can be a beneficial habitat for pollinators. Mowing less frequently and only where necessary (e.g., close to a highway but not several feet out) is a practical, economical, and timesaving way to improve pollinator habitat. One study found that mowing every three weeks resulted in as much as 2.5 times more lawn flowers (like dandelions and clover) and greater diversity of bee species when compared to mowing weekly.

2. **Limit use of pesticides and insecticides.** Several classes of pesticides and insecticides have the potential to kill or otherwise harm non-target species, including pollinators like honeybees and butterflies. Because bees are usually still in their hives early in the morning and head to bed around dusk, spraying early in the morning or at night can allow the chemicals to dry or dissolve before bees come around the plants to feed. Your county can also switch to pest fighters that will not harm pollinators, including sulfur and corn gluten.

3. **Promote vegetation on solar farms.** Pollinator-friendly solar farms can be a way to reinvigorate pollinator habitats. Conventional utility-scale solar energy management practices, such as using gravel and turfgrass, minimize or prohibit the growth of vegetation. Counties can encourage limited mowing, no pesticide application, and planned seed sowing to attract pollinators to solar farms.

4. **Plant wildflowers and native species.** Inexpensive plants like white clover and yellow sweet clover can provide sugary nectar and protein-rich pollen to honeybees and other pollinators. Counties can beautify parks, office buildings, and other spaces while creating diverse habitats for pollinators by planting low-cost and low maintenance flora on county properties.

5. **Raise Awareness.** An efficient and cost-effective way for counties to promote healthy pollinators populations is to share best management practices (BMPs) with residents and other stakeholders like beekeepers, farmers, and environmental groups. County leaders can work with their planning departments, community colleges, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Cornell Cooperative Extensions to increase awareness of the importance of pollinators and promote BMPs to improve the health of pollinator populations.
As the NY State Director for Rural Development – an agency within the United States Department of Agriculture, I am here to support New York’s rural communities. Our organization’s mission is to help improve the economy and quality of life in rural America – by making critical investments in housing business and infrastructure.

The needs of rural communities have increased throughout the state. From sorely needed updates to broadband networks, aging water and wastewater infrastructure to assistance for first responders, schools, hospitals or clinics – the USDA is there to assist in addressing these diverse challenges.

To achieve this mission, we administer programs which offer a combination of loan guarantees, direct loans, and grants. Additionally, we provide technical assistance, research, and educational materials to better inform the rural stakeholder so they may make the best possible decision. We often work in partnership with our state, local and tribal governments as well as rural businesses, cooperatives and nonprofit agencies. In New York over the past several years, we have directly funded or guaranteed over $3 billion in private capital funds and completed more than 25,000 community projects.

I believe there are numerous opportunities that exist for our agency to build robust and lasting partnerships with rural leaders to address local and vital community needs. In the coming year, one of my primary goals is to identify state and local partners to collaborate on projects. Together, we can dramatically increase overall investments, opportunities and prosperity throughout rural NY.

Should you wish to learn more about USDA Rural Development’s programs – I invite you to visit our website at: http://www.rd.usda.gov/NY. To review our program eligibility mapping tool, please visit: http://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do. Here you will be able to select specific programs and input an address to determine eligibility for our suite of programs.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me directly either by phone at (315) 477 – 6400 Ext. 4 or email me at Richard.Mayfield@ny.usda.gov.
Upcoming NYSAC Events

2019 Legislative Conference
January 28-30
Desmond Hotel
Albany County

53rd Annual Finance School
May 1-3
Sheraton Syracuse
University Hotel

Visit www.nysac.org/events
The County Government Institute, an educational partnership of NYSAC and Cornell University, is pleased to announce the graduating class of September 2018.

Congratulations!

Lisa McCafferty, Public Health Director - Tioga County

Lisa McCafferty, R.S., MPH, began her career as an Environmental Sanitarian. Subsequently, she has worked in all aspects of Public Health: disease control and surveillance, environmental protection, personal health; in both the public and private sectors. Coming from another state, participation in the County Government Institute (CGI) was a timely opportunity.

“CGI facilitated my learning about New York’s county structure, I especially valued the ‘Foundations of County Government’ and ‘County Budget & Finance’ core courses. Recognizing that counties are the cornerstone of any governmental structure, I heartily recommend this curriculum to anyone who serves in any public capacity.”

Mary M. Gates, Director of Finance - Ontario County

Mary has worked for Ontario County for 25 years. She was appointed the Director of Finance for Ontario County in March 2016. Previously, Mary served as Deputy County Administrator, worked for the Finance Department where she managed a combined budget of approximately $60 million for the Health and Public Safety Departments and worked with the Department of Economic Development as their finance manager.

“The Pelletier program provides an invaluable opportunity to learn and practice skills that will develop more effective leaders. I am thankful for the experience and believe it will provide me and my team the skills to better serve the members of our communities.”

For more information on the County Government Institute,
Contact NYSAC Records Manager

Jackie Dederick
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Alan Walther, CPA—Partner | awalther@bonadio.com
Randy Shepard, CPA—Partner | rshepard@bonadio.com
Timothy Doyle, CPA—Partner | tdoyle@bonadio.com
Kenneth Pink, CPA—Partner | kpink@bonadio.com
Gregg Evans, CPA, CFE—Partner | gevans@bonadio.com
Brian Lafountain, CPA, CFE—Partner | blafountain@bonadio.com
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The NYSAC Payment Solutions (P-Card) Program, administered by PFM Financial Services LLC (PFM), is a cost-free payments mechanism, which reduces the typical requisition process and related costs associated with purchasing materials and services. The base of the Payment Solutions program, which is a special type of credit card, streamlines the purchase of supplies, furniture, construction materials, utilities and much more, saving staff time and money for your entity.

**Benefits**

- NO COST to sign up
- Rebates on 100% of dollars spent
- Reduced check writing costs
- Expedited payment to vendors (24 - 48 hours)
- Reduced paperwork for requisitions, purchase orders and invoices
- With five cards or more, you receive employee misuse insurance of $100,000 per cardholder; with two to four cards, $25,000 per cardholder under MasterCard’s MasterCoverage©
- $0 liability for lost or stolen cards
- Ensures quick startup - program implemented 6 to 8 weeks from the receipt of application
- Best suited to clients who will spend more than $100,000 annually on goods and services

**Cash Rebates**

Participants in the NYSAC Payment Solutions Program receive cash rebates on their purchases if the aggregate annual spend on the card equals or exceeds $50,000. The more items purchased using the card, the greater the rebate percentage. Rebates are calculated on 100% of aggregate spending on the P-Card and include large-ticket items. All purchases are eligible for the rebate.

**Lower Costs, Improved Technology And Access**

The premier web-based management technology solution streamlines administrative functions and provides online access to all cardholders 24/7/365. It features multi-level access where your entity’s administrators can setup permission levels for each user. It allows for users to view/modify transactions, run and view over 100 standard and custom reports, and export report data. Online access to information on all transactions is available within 24 to 48 hours of a purchase.
PFM Added Value

- Sample policies and procedures manual
- Additional support to program administration through presentations and webinars
- Monthly spend reports with projected annual spend and rebate, plus next level spend and expected rebate
- Quarterly newsletter
- Targeted mailings throughout the year to highlight best practices which will help maximize the value of your program
- Email bulletins on current P-Card changes/initiatives and updates to online system

More Information

We continually work with our clients to help them maximize the value of their programs. You can join the hundreds of clients who now pay for goods and services using the NYSAC Payment Solutions (P-Card) Program. To learn more, please visit us at: www.pfm.com/asset-management/specializedservices/procurement-card-program/ or contact us toll free at (800) 356-5148 or by emailing smaldonek@pfm.com or mlavigne@nysac.org.

The PFM Group of Companies

PFM Financial Services LLC provides procurement card services to government, schools, and health care providers. PFM works with state associations to develop statewide card programs for their members.

PFM Asset Management LLC (PFMAM), provides investment advice and portfolio management for governmental and not-for-profit organizations, corporations, pension funds and other institutions.

PFM’s financial advisory practice (collectively refers to PFM Financial Advisors LLC and Public Financial Management, Inc.) is consistently ranked the nation’s number one financial advisor and offers its clients a complete scope of services and products to meet all of their financial needs.

Mark LaVigne
Deputy Director
New York State Association of Counties
540 Broadway, 5th Floor
Albany, NY 12207
P: 518.465.1473 • C: 518.429.0189

Kelly Smaldone
Senior Managing Consultant
PFM Financial Services LLC
Airport Corporate Center
One Corporate Drive, Suite 101
Bohemia, NY 11716
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ANN MARIE BARCLAY, MAYOR OF BERGEN

“During the 2006 floods that ravaged the Southern Tier, NYMIR covered our claims and provided a level of service that we expect from a municipally-owned insurance program, and that’s why we are a Subscriber.”

DALE WESTON, TIOGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

“Our town was sued over its adoption of a moratorium. We would like to thank NYMIR for supplying us with admirable legal counsel in the case. The Appellate Court found in favor of the town’s position and it was a pleasure to have such excellent representation provided to us.”

DAVID LEEBER, TOWN OF AVON SUPERVISOR

“We have enjoyed a great relationship with NYMIR over the past many years. Their concern, interest and courtesy are greatly appreciated and we remain thankful for the coverage provided to us and hundreds of other municipalities.”

ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR OF LAKE GEORGE

“At the time we suffered wind damage to the town and county salt shed, NYMIR went the extra mile to get it handled. Every now and then you get a pleasant surprise; this was one of those times.”

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