

# TOWN MANAGER'S WEEKLY REPORT



## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS ...

- ✓ **Sussex County Association of Towns:** Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 6:00 PM, hosted by Bridgeville at the Bridgeville Fire House
- ✓ **Town Council Meeting:** Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM: Regular Meeting, Town Hall
- ✓ **Planning Commission:** Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM, Town Hall
- ✓ **Town Council Meeting:** Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 PM: Certification of Candidates, Town Hall
- ✓ **Town Offices Closed:** Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, in observation of Good Friday

## UPDATES FROM DEPARTMENTS ...

### **Finance**

- Utility billing and Newsletter prepared and ready to go out on April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Quarterly Payroll Tax Reports completed

### **Planning**

- Annexation Ordinance research has begun
- Predevelopment meeting for potential Annexation (21825 Zoar Road)
- Building Permit Summary (February 2014)

Building Activity	February 2014	January 2014	February 2013
Permits Issued	16	16	21
Value of Improvements	\$121,536	\$874,437	\$779,209
Permit Revenue	\$1,005	\$4,630	\$4,290

### **Police**

- Significant Incident Reports distributed as received
- PFC Cordrey conducted classes at the Georgetown Middle School informing students of what encompasses a law enforcement career
- CPL Diaz provided an informational lecture on domestic violence at a community meeting in Seaford

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## Public Works

- Asplundh is in Town trimming trees along Delmarva Power lines
- All grass cutting and summer equipment has been serviced and ready for use
- Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, snow event had all snow cleared during regular work hours, no overtime incurred
- Event Stage construction continues (see photo 1)

## Wastewater

- Large Lagoon depth is 17 ¼ feet and Small Lagoon depth is 5 feet
- Sludge removal by Synagro is scheduled to begin the week of April 7<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting
- Removed one of the air chains to begin rebuilding of the diffusers

## TOWN MANAGER'S UPDATE ...

- Held mid-project update with Onix Group (Redner's). Topics included: Update on tenants, US 113 Improvements, Carmean Way roadwork, Village of College Park zoning, roadway dedication, regional pump station (Bill Bradley, Jamie Craddock, Gene Dvornick, Jocelyn Godwin, Eric Rust, Jeff Ward, DBF, Onix Group)
- Planning meeting for DSU "Day of Service" (Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>) – clean up to assist Georgetown Arts & Flowers – Wilson Park, East Market Street, Circle (Anita Burney, Gene Dvornick, Barbara Holston, Bruce Wright)
- Reviewed, with Georgetown Arts & Flowers, East Market Street improvements (Anita Burney, Gene Dvornick, Barbara Holston, Chris Lecates)
- Met with Georgetown-Millsboro Rotary to coordinate "Flags for Heroes" pipe placement on The Circle (Bill Bradley, Gene Dvornick)
- Reviewed Inflow & Infiltration Project – anticipate advertisement for bid in May, project award in June (Bill Bradley, Gene Dvornick, Eric Rust, DBF)
- Review of Downtown Merchant Survey results and planning for Merchant Meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup> (Linda Dennis, Gene Dvornick, Rick Ferrell, Jocelyn Godwin, Angie Townsend)
- Met with Wyndham site representatives to discuss Final Plan submission and Building Permit requirements (Gene Dvornick, Jocelyn Godwin, Ernie Felici, Bob Ruggio)
- Attended State of Delaware, Contracting and Procurement training (Gene Dvornick, Olga Holm)
- Represented the Town at Delaware League of Local Governments. Presentation by Joe Farrell on the University of Delaware, Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program – focus on land use and impacts on storm water and wastewater
- Presenter at SCAT Legislative Breakfast (copy attached)

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**Photo 1 - Event Stage Construction Continues**



**Photo 2 - Cherry Tree in Bloom – East Market Street**

***PLEASE NOTE THIS REPORT AND ANY ATTACHMENTS ARE ONLY BEING SENT ELECTRONICALLY UNLESS OTHERWISE REQUESTED***





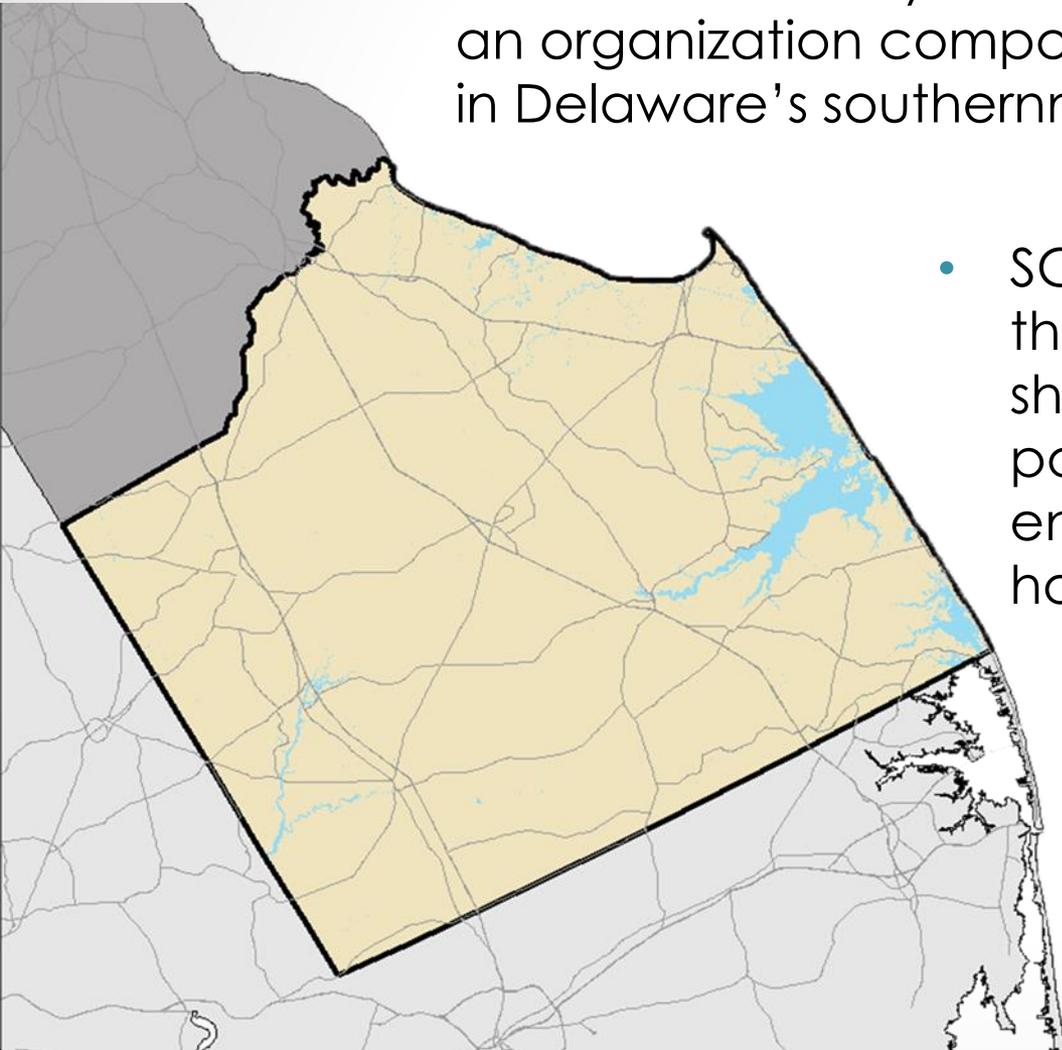
# Sussex County Association of Towns

## 2014 Legislative Issues

March 28, 2014

# Who is SCAT?

- The Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT) is an organization composed of the 25 municipalities in Delaware's southernmost county.



- SCAT accomplishes its mission through discussion, networking, sharing information, and positive political action with a view toward enhancing self-sufficiency of home rule government.

# What does SCAT do?

- Meets monthly to discuss common issues affecting municipalities
- Follows legislation in the Delaware General Assembly and prioritizes matters for the annual legislative agenda
- Fosters better communication among member municipalities, as well as with lawmakers, policy-makers, and other stakeholders
- Takes an active role in promoting awareness and education of municipalities and the challenges they face

# Legislative Issues

- Labor
  - Collective Bargaining
- Transportation
  - Motor Fuel Tax Increase
  - Municipal Street Aid
  - Community Transportation Fund
- Environment
  - Clean Water Initiative
  - Wastewater Regulations
  - Stormwater Regulations
- Transparency
  - Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- Revenue
  - Paramedic Funding
  - Reality Transfer Tax
- Other
  - Downtown Development Districts
  - Tax Intercept

# Labor

Presented by  
Gene Dvornick  
Town of Georgetown



# Labor – Collective Bargaining

- HB 81 would amend the Police Officers' and Firefighters' Employment Relations Act
  - Bill proposes reducing the number of full-time employees that a public employer must employ from twenty five (25) or more to three (3) or more employees to be subject to Act
  - Municipalities with three (3) or more employees – the police department could organize a collective bargaining unit
- Collective Bargaining adds complexities, especially when contract renegotiation takes place
- Smaller municipalities, with minimal staff and expertise, may be faced with the potential for significant cost for collective bargaining (attorney fees, mediation, etc.)
- Coupled with increased payroll and benefits costs, many municipalities may be pushed into financial devastation
- How could legislation affect other public employees?
  - Could create a sense of professional jealousy if not allowed collective bargaining
  - Act could be expanded to include other public employees to enter into collective bargaining



# Transportation

Presented by  
John McDonnell, Town Manager  
Town of Greenwood



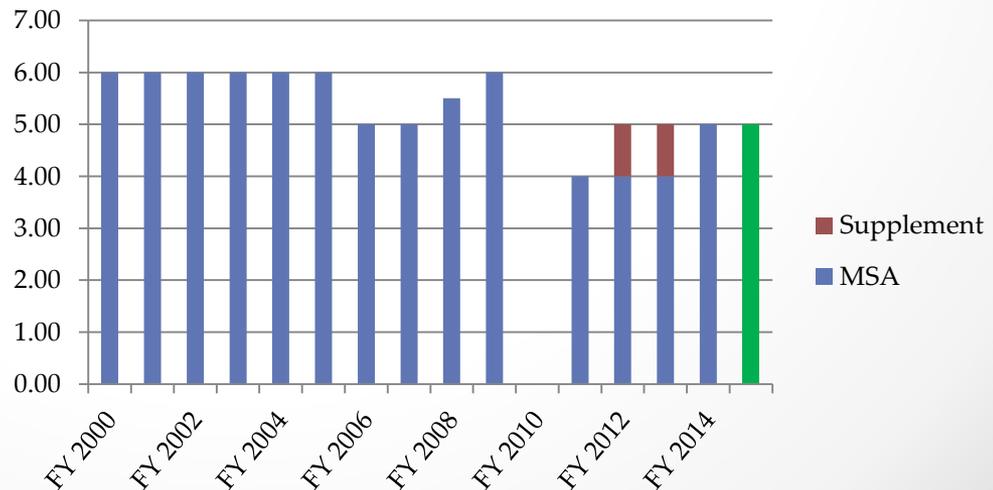
# Transportation – Motor Fuel Tax

- SCAT is concerned about Gov. Markell's proposal to increase the State motor fuel tax by 10 cents
  - Presents economic hardship for constituents
  - Drives up fleet fuel costs for vendors and contractors, which could pass surcharges on to municipalities, affected limited budgets
- SCAT recommends the governor, legislature offer incentives rather than worst-case scenarios to build 'buy-in'
  - Municipalities might consider support of motor fuel tax IF portion of increase was to be directed to towns and cities for local street projects
    - Added revenue could replace lost or complement MSA/CTF funding

# Transportation – MSA/CTF

- Thank you for the additional \$1M in Municipal Street Aid funding in FY 2012, FY 2013 and FY2014
  - Since initial reduction in FY 2006, municipalities have seen a \$14.5M reduction in support (see graph)
- SCAT requests consideration for restoration of the full \$6 million to the Municipal Street Aid fund
  - SCAT also recommends 'indexing' funding to CPI to account for inflation, provide stable stream of revenue
- SCAT opposes further reduction of Community Transportation Fund (CTF), as proposed by Gov. Markell
  - Municipalities lose twice

## MSA Funding History



# Environment

Presented by  
Dolores Slatcher, City Manager  
City of Seaford



# Environment – Clean Waters Initiative

- Gov. Markell has proposed Clean Waters for Delaware's Future initiative to clean pollution, ensure healthy waterways
- SCAT applauds the intent of this initiative, but questions funding mechanism, details of proposal
  - Proposed annual fee for homeowners, commercial sites, industrial users could create burden on household and business budgets, economy
  - Utilization of new funding stream
    - Would funding be directed to municipalities?
    - Increased grant opportunities
      - SCAT supports more grant funding for towns, or 100 percent principal forgiveness and a zero percent interest rate
  - Difficult for municipal leaders, SCAT to take position at this time without further details (introduction of legislation, promulgation of regulations)

# Environment – Wastewater/Stormwater

- Several member municipalities within SCAT are undergoing or facing major wastewater projects in the years ahead
  - Communities in Chesapeake Bay watershed have been presented with new federal regulations
- Changing wastewater regulations at State, federal levels requiring more capital investment from small communities
  - Requires increased budgeting, borrowing and, often, local voter approval
  - If referendums to fund projects fail, will DNREC fine municipalities regardless of community support?
  - Municipal leaders are faced with difficult dilemma: comply with regulations or follow will of the voters
- Stormwater regulations and statewide drainage code
  - Is legislation forthcoming?
  - How could municipalities, local governments be affected by new rules?



# Transparency

Presented by  
Stan Mills, Commissioner  
City of Rehoboth Beach



# Transparency - FOIA

- Confusion continues among municipalities regarding requirements, application of the Delaware Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
  - Inconsistent Attorney General's Office opinions, lack of guidance
  - Need clear direction from AG's office, such as guide book
  - Need assistance with training of staff and committee members
    - FOIA Roadshow so far has prompted more questions than offered answers
- Ambiguities in FOIA need to be addressed
  - SCAT requests legislators consider draft legislation to clarify the statute, establish consistency in implementation and enforcement of FOIA
  - SCAT desires involvement in the submission of any proposed legislation regarding FOIA, before it is submitted from the AG's office
- Undue burden from frivolous requests is a growing concern
  - Expense and time issues

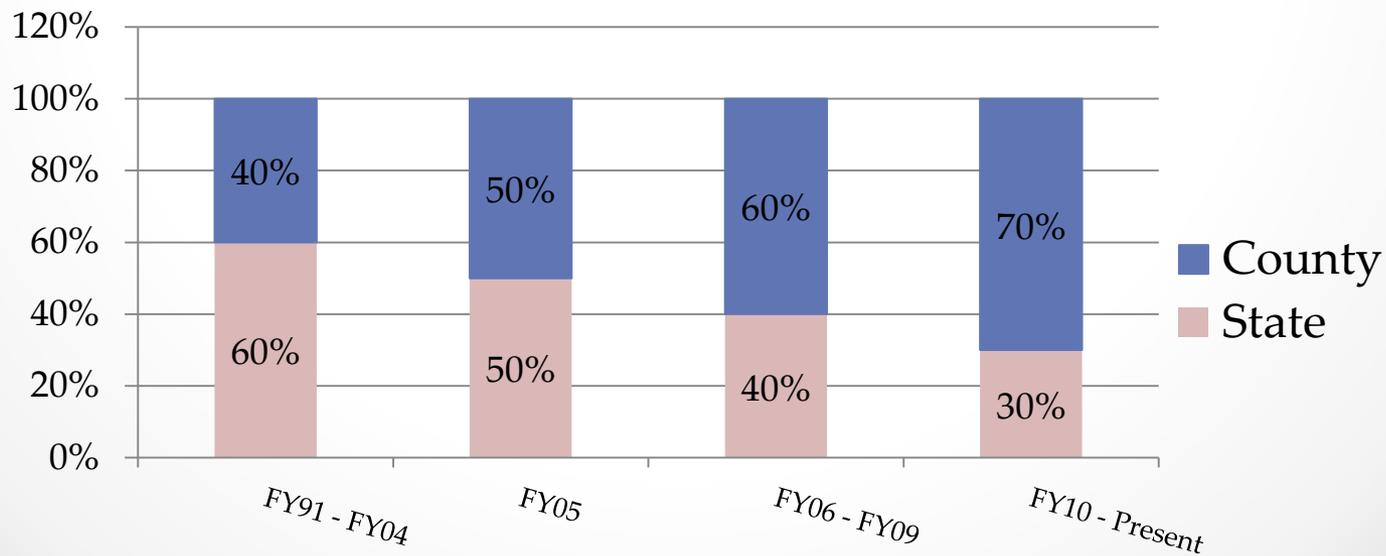
# Revenue

Presented by  
Merritt Burke IV, Town Manager  
Town of Fenwick Island



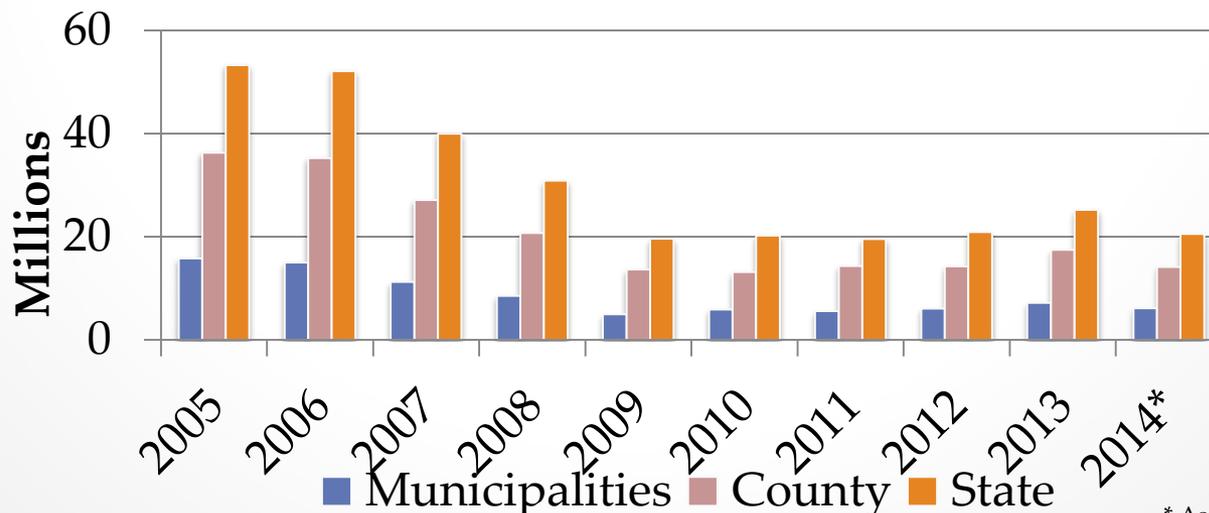
# Revenue – Paramedic Funding

- State of Delaware contributions have decreased from 60 percent to 30 percent in the previous decade
  - 50 percent cut in State funding since 2004
  - Higher cost to County taxpayers
- SCAT requests that no further reductions be imposed on this vital, lifesaving service
- SCAT recommends the General Assembly move paramedic funding from Grant-in-Aid to the State's general operating budget



# Revenue – Realty Transfer Tax

- State, County, and municipalities each have experienced drastic declines in Realty Transfer Tax (RTT) revenue between FY2005 and FY2013
  - Municipalities are down 54% (\$8.6M)
  - County is down 52% (\$18.8M)
  - State is down 61% (\$32.7M)
- On a positive note, compared to this time last fiscal year, RTT collections at all levels are up by 25 percent to 30 percent
- SCAT continues to support the current RTT formula
  - 3 percent levy split equally (1.5 percent each) between State and local jurisdiction



\* As of 02/28/14

# Other Issues

Presented by  
Michael Wyatt, Mayor  
Town of Georgetown



# Other Issues

- Downtown Development Districts
  - Legislation is designed to promote investment, revitalization in downtown areas
  - Draft legislation appears to only apply to three municipalities (one in each county)
  - SCAT is concerned about implementation, feasibility, narrow focus of the initiative
    - Excludes 54 other municipalities in Delaware
- SCAT supports HB 27 adding political subdivisions as authorized “claimants” under the State’s tax intercept program
  - Program already authorized for State departments, agencies, courts, public universities
  - Would benefit local governments, allowing them to collect past due property taxes, other debts that average 8 years delinquency
  - More than \$1M owed to a sample of Sussex County municipalities in 2014(Principal + Penalties/Interest)
    - Sample includes Bethany Beach, Blades, Fenwick Island, Georgetown, Milford, Milton, Ocean View, Seaford, and South Bethany
  - Legislation passed House, assigned to Senate Finance Committee

# Closing Remarks

- Communication among State lawmakers, County officials and municipal leaders is important when considering legislation and issues
  - SCAT appreciates the long history of strong communication, relationships with our legislators, particularly when bills could affect Sussex municipalities
- As always, SCAT appreciates all that our legislators do to make Sussex County and its municipalities a wonderful place to live and do business

Thank you