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New Somerset County Preservation Plan Is First In Nation To Combine Open Space, Farmland, and History

by Brad Fay, Chief Communications Officer for Somerset County



Somerset County Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson at the announcement of a new preservation plan

County has more than 24,000 acres of preserved land, with even more in the hands of local governments and non-profits,” said Commissioner Director Shanel Robinson. “This new combined Preservation Plan works to integrate these great results with enhanced management, additional acquisitions, and new marketing campaigns to tell the world about the open space, agricultural and historic gems that make Somerset County a great place to live, work, play, and visit.”

The County’s preserved land inventory includes 15,000 of open space and close to 9,000 in farmland. The goal is to increase the combined amount by 67%, carrying on the tradition that earned New Jersey’s nickname: “The Garden State.”

“There are far more benefits to preserving farms than just restricting development,” said Commissioner Paul Drake. “Farmers markets provide healthy, local foods for residents, and are also a draw for tourists who come for apple or pumpkin picking, specialty produce available only at their stands, or even family fun like summer hayrides, complex corn mazes, and Halloween scare fests.”

The creation of the plan was overseen by Walter Lane, Director of the county’s Office of Planning, Policy, & Economic Development. Lane was named Planner of the Year in December by the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Somerset County thinks of itself as the “crossroads of the crossroads of the American Revolution,” based on its rich history. That’s just one reason why the county in 2022 became the first in the nation to update and then combine its historic, open space, and farmland preservation plans into a single, comprehensive plan.

Adopted by the Somerset County Planning Board in May 2022, the plan has already won two awards, from the New Jersey Planning Officials Association and from the nonprofit Preservation New Jersey.

“Thanks to bipartisan efforts over many decades, Somerset

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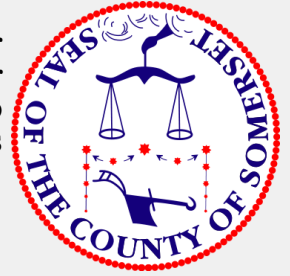
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New Somerset County Preservation Plan Is First In Nation To Combine Open Space, Farmland, and History *(continued)*

“Our new preservation plan recognizes that the quality of life we offer in Central Jersey is a key driver of our economy, by attracting residents, visitors, and businesses,” Lane said. “By preserving farms, open space, and historic resources we improve economic outcomes, too.”

The plan was celebrated at an event in September at the site of the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum (SSAAM) and the Sourland Conservancy in Montgomery Township. A [video of the event](#) includes an announcement of the county’s intention to support the museum, in keeping with the new plan’s objectives.

“By integrating historic preservation into the county’s overall preservation efforts, our Preservation Plan became unique in the nation,” said Commissioner Deputy Director Melonie Marano. “With business travel slow to recover since the pandemic, we want to bring more leisure tourism to our county to visit our parks, farms, and historic sites. This plan is a roadmap to achieving that vision.”



Connecting Government With The People They Serve

by Jessica Tamayo, President/Founder the Civic Operations Group

Counties are on the frontlines of guaranteeing public safety, health, education, and economic development. Their leadership and agencies ensure that the critical supports and programs they invest in and manage are fully utilized and reach the residents who need them most.

During the enormous challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, many jurisdictions turned to the Civic Operations Group (CivOps) to boost their capacity for in-person outreach.

CivOps core value is direct and personal contact. We build peer-to-peer programs that include traditional channels like mail, digital advertising, and social media, because moving people takes more than a passive approach. COG offers a genuine ground game.

Knowledgeable and extensively trained outreach specialists make residents aware of services and can walk them through daunting application processes.

With over 250 project managers having executed programs in 44 states, CivOps has the most experienced and diverse team of outreach specialists in the country. CivOps responds rapidly and efficiently to arising problems in the communities we serve. Over the last 18 months, we:

- knocked on nearly 2 million doors
- texted or called more than 36 million people
- and connected residents to resources over 430,000 times.

Ensuring people are connected to the government that serves them is CivOps mission. This is why governments have relied on us to increase outreach to their constituencies. We measure our impact by the number of resource connections we make for residents. A significant ancillary benefit to our outreach over time is that the governments, corporations, and charitable organizations who invested in outreach found the sustained presence in neighborhoods, the focus on assistance, and the repetitive contacts, grew respect, trust, and appreciation for their brand.

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Connecting Government With The People They Serve *(continued)*

These tactics are not new; political campaigns have used them for decades. With an increasingly fractured media landscape, a digitally distracted population, and social media flooded with misinformation, direct face-to-face contact helps break through the noise.

Crucial to the success of these outreach activities is stakeholder engagement. CivOps found successful stakeholder engagement starts with the directors of each of the respective departments and agencies. The collective resources that counties have to offer make our outreach efforts more meaningful to the constituents with whom we connect. Additional stakeholder engagement typically includes speaking with local social service not-for-profits that work with vulnerable populations. Here are examples of high-priority county goals where our expertise in targeted outreach can be applied:

- Connecting Medicaid enrollees with providers who accept Medicaid
- Ensuring complete disbursement of federally funded emergency rental and mortgage assistance.
- Image rebranding
- Improving digital equity and expanding access to broadband through enrolling residents in the Affordable Connectivity Program;
- Creating market demand for climate change; making constituents aware of massive tax incentives
- Leveraging county workforce development investments; linking potential employees to job and training resources

The CivOps model is not limited to these projects. We are adaptable to emergent situations and scalable. Our mission is to help the public and private sectors connect people to benefits, information, and resources by going beyond passive outreach models and making genuine connections.



CIVIC OPERATIONS GROUP

2023

ANNUAL CONFERENCE



*Please notify loren@njac.org if you would like to be a member of the 2023 NJAC Annual Conference Committee. Meeting takes place on **Friday, January 20th**.*

Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office Community Outreach

by Raymond Royster, Director of Community Outreach for Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office

Upon his appointment in June 2022, Prosecutor William Reynolds instituted the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office first ever Community Outreach Division, which in that time has led and participated in more than 100 different community outreach events including but not limited to regularly walking the Atlantic City Boardwalk before sunrise for homeless outreach, events at local schools, a day-long seminar on bias and discrimination, and much more.

In 2023, the Division will be hosting numerous initiatives to further positive relations with all communities in Atlantic County. First, the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office will be collaborating with local community-based organizations and local public safety organizations to host community listening sessions and establish a mobile outreach unit which will provide services to those in need seven days per week.

Next, ACPO will continue to develop and support youth-based programing throughout the county, including expansions of its current after-school programs focusing on positive interactions within the school and community, positive communication skills, anti-bullying, mindfulness, and self-regulation. The Special Needs Registry School Outreach Program will expand after partnering with three local school districts and their corresponding police departments to increase awareness and provide learning resources for law enforcement on intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in the Atlantic County. Each week an officer from each of the three police stations partnered with a Special Education class to help teach and work with young scholars that have an intellectual disability.

Also, the Community Outreach Division is collaborating with Stockton University to host numerous symposiums to address Anti-Semitism, Women in Public Safety, and Protecting Places of Worship in Atlantic County in Spring 2023.

Finally, ACPO is gearing up for multitude of summer activities within Atlantic County as well, such as, participation in community walks to promote unity and bring resources to residents in need, participation in health and resource fairs, summer camps, youth internships, and mentoring programs. For more information on these initiatives and more, please see www.acpo.org or contact outreach@acpo.org.



Mark Your Calendar!

May 3 - 5, 2023

NJAC's 72nd Annual Conference Caesars in Atlantic City

Do's And Don'ts Of Hiring And Firing

by Primepoint HRMS & Payroll



Your employees are your organization's most important resource. At the same time, for most people, their job is their primary source of income.

That means that when it comes to bringing someone new on board or firing someone, you need to work in the best interest of your organization while simultaneously respecting all applicable rules and regulations that protect employees' rights. In this article, we'll discuss some do's and don'ts of hiring and firing. Note that the information below is not intended as legal advice. In all matters concerning employment law, you're best advised to consult with an attorney.

Do's and Don'ts of Hiring

Keep these tips in mind when recruiting and hiring a new employee:

- **Do use a formal hiring process.** [Entrepreneur](#) advises against using "gut instinct" when recruiting a new employee. Instead, use a formal hiring process that selects candidates based on their must-have skills, traits, experience, and references.
- **Don't forget to ask your current team for referrals.** Often, skilled employees know other skilled professionals and can speak to their knowledge and abilities. When you're hiring for an open position, it's a good idea to ask your team to refer any interested, qualified candidates.
- **Do involve your current team members in the interview process.** Your current employees possess good insights regarding the skills and traits a new hire should have. Invite the team members who'll be working closely with the new hire to sit in on one of the interview rounds so they can discuss the position's responsibilities with the candidates and provide you with their feedback as to the candidates' suitability for the role.
- **Don't violate anti-discrimination laws.** [Stanford Law](#) advises that anti-discrimination and employment laws provide workers with protection from harassment or discrimination based on race, color, gender, ancestry, religion, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, national origin, medical condition, veteran status, and sexual orientation. That means you should not ask questions pertaining to these characteristics during the interview process.
- **Do conduct a well-thought-out onboarding process.** Onboarding is vital to introducing the new hire to the organization, their new coworkers, and the job. Make sure you provide time for the new hire to do things like review the employee handbook, have a tour of your facility, and shadow other employees. It can also be advisable to appoint somebody as their mentor.

Do's and Don'ts of Firing

If you need to fire an employee, be aware of these pointers:

- **Do have a clear, written company policy in place regarding what performance or conduct issues are grounds for termination.** [Salary.com](#) advises that it's important to properly document and verify these issues.
- **Don't neglect to warn the employee about performance or conduct issues — and what the consequences are if they don't address them.** In your company policy, you should explain how many warnings and chances to remedy the issue an employee is entitled to before they can be fired.
- **Do consider the decision to fire an employee carefully.** Firing someone will have a major impact on their life and career, so give some thought to whether or not there's another way to remedy the situation. For example, perhaps an employee who isn't performing adequately in a customer-facing position would do well in a behind-the-scenes role.

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Do's And Don'ts Of Hiring And Firing *(continued)*

- **Don't fire an employee right before a holiday or weekend.** Being fired can have severe emotional and financial consequences, and during holidays and weekends, the individual may not have access to resources to help them through this challenging experience.
- **Do be decisive once you've made up your mind.** That way, any damage to staff morale or even to your organization can be contained.
- **Don't delegate the task to somebody who doesn't directly supervise the employee.** Deliver the message yourself—in person, and without an audience.
- **Do provide the employee with a full explanation as to why they're being fired.** [The Undercover Recruiter](#) recommends preparing what you're going to say ahead of time. Allow the employee to ask questions, and do your best to answer them honestly and completely.

Hiring and firing employees impacts your organization — but it also impacts the employees' lives. So make sure to adhere to all applicable laws and your organization's policies — and to treat your employees with respect, regardless of whether they're joining or leaving your organization.

Primepoint offers an HR Support Package to help with all things HR. You may learn about it by [CLICKING HERE](#) or going to primepoint.com.



Join MRA International At Our Power Of HP Event!

Where: Sheraton Eatontown Hotel, Eatontown, NJ

When: Thursday, February 9th, 2023

Time: 8:00am – 3:00pm

Join MRA International and HP for an invaluable one-day seminar focused on innovative solutions for the public sector that will feature HP's vision for the future of technology. Each year, MRA and partners come together to enlighten attendees on how they can leverage the latest technology solutions, not to keep up with change- but to drive it.

Visit our website: www.mrainternational.com/events to register

MRA International is a leading technology expert and a value-added HP and HPE Partner with over 20 years of experience providing unique IT solutions and turn-key results to the public sector.

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Public Health Modernization

by Dr. Meg Schaeffer, Epidemiologist and National Public Health Advisor for SAS

As a career epidemiologist, I like to think experience and study have equipped me well enough to determine what will happen next. Like many of my peers, we expected SARS-CoV2 to dissipate as have pandemic predecessors, into a disease of seasonal familiarity or relative obscurity. It did not. SARS-CoV2 continues to mutate, surge, and recede without sustained predictability. The public health community knew diseases would continue to arise, new and old, while we struggled to recover from what was a distressing experience. And that happened. Monkeypox, increases in hepatitis C and SITs, and now the most severe flu season since 2017-2018.

Public health isn't getting a break. In a multitude of ways, the work is more difficult. Many have left the profession, agencies are making sweeping changes in data structure and business operations, augmentation workers are not being retained, and external influence is holding a presence over public health work. Yet the core of what public health does – protecting people from threats to human health and wellbeing – must continue.

How? There are three tenants to consider – efficiency, ingenuity, and simplification. These approaches are inspired by what the corporate world can teach. However, cost of not adapting is a company's failure but rather the potential loss of life.

Efficiency. The procurement and adoption of new technology is an enormous opportunity for creating efficiencies in data processes. The use of APIs and digital workflows can manage data ingestion, automated notifications help focus manual intervention, and advanced statistical tools remove multiple steps from report preparation. It takes time and commitment to modify a long-standing process into a more efficient one, but the result will be a more balanced workload.

Ingenuity. Agencies have a unique opportunity to get creative in designing their future state thanks to recent pandemic recovery fund distributions. Instead of Agency A simply moving data to the cloud and renewing statistical licenses for decades old software, Agency A could partner with Agency B to intersect multiple data systems. Enterprise-wide licensing of modern software reduces the number of tools an agency must purchase, while providing an unprecedented ability to collaborate. Agency A could also serve as the hub for state data and technology allowing tenants from local health agencies to join the hub and use the same tools. The options, with ingenuity applied, are almost limitless.

Simplification. With an objective of efficiency and using ingenuity as a guiding force, the daily operations of public health can be simplified. For example, many newer public health professionals are statistically ambidextrous in using several programming languages. Instead of selecting software for the majority, find a tool that facilitates native use of several languages. Support and structure the adoption process as incremental, program by program, and cultivate adoption leaders throughout the agency. Simple can be successful.

Public health is undergoing a remarkable evolution. It seems reasonable to assume we will look back at this time in 20-30 years and wonder how we managed, what we learned, and how we changed which will be for the better.

Dr. Meg Schaeffer is a career epidemiologist and National Public Health Advisor for SAS



Root Out Stealthy Threats With Managed Detection and Response

by Joanne Goodstadt, Marketing Manager for PKA Technologies, Inc.

Following a record year for cybercrime, nearly three-quarters of senior IT decision-makers say they are not sure their organizations can fend off increasingly sophisticated cyber threats. Many are turning to managed detection and response (MDR) services to boost their defenses.

MDR is an outsourced security service that gives organizations access to a provider's team of dedicated security analysts and engineers. With the tools, training and manpower that few organizations have in-house, MDR providers help customers rapidly detect, analyze and mitigate even the stealthiest threats.

Faster detection is key to limiting damage. According to a Ponemon Institute study, it takes the average company 206 days to detect a threat and another 73 days to contain it. That means attackers have the better part of a year to rummage around a victim's systems performing reconnaissance, manipulating data and stealing credentials. However, the study further finds that companies can dramatically limit damage and save roughly \$1 million in remediation costs if they can contain a threat within 30 days.

Rapid Containment is Key

That's a stretch for most organizations, though. In a recent Arctic Wolf survey of more than 1,400 senior IT decision-makers and business executives in the U.S., U.K. and Canada, 74 percent said their in-house security teams lack the ability and expertise to fend off ransomware attacks and other sophisticated threats.

More tools aren't the answer. Organizations commonly have up to 100 different security tools, but most of those are underutilized. In a separate Arctic Wolf survey of cybersecurity pros, 30 percent admitted they don't know how to use all their organization's tools effectively.

What's more, all those tools create an enormous volume of security alerts — IDC analysts say enterprise systems can generate more than 10,000 alerts per month, with more than half of them false alarms. Individually evaluating all those alerts can overwhelm security teams and lead to alert fatigue.

How MDR Can Help

Leading MDR providers such as Arctic Wolf take the pressure off in-house IT teams with automated detection and response capabilities. The Arctic Wolf system collects, aggregates and analyzes log data from throughout the existing technology stack to identify threats — without requiring the involvement of in-house IT staff. Over time, machine learning algorithms help build the threat intelligence necessary to actively hunt for and disrupt threats.

The cloud-native platform aggregates security telemetry from all network and cloud environments, endpoint devices and multiple threat intelligence communities. It forwards this data to Arctic Wolf's Concierge Security Team for analysis based on threat's unique tactics, techniques and procedures.

With the ability to reduce the duration of an attack from months to minutes, Arctic Wolf's MDR solution delivers immediate value. Contact us to learn more about using this solution to improve your cybersecurity capabilities.



The Future Of Work: Coming HR Trends

by Cameron Cushing, Intern, Industry Marketing for UKG

Welcome to 2023! As we enter the new year, it may feel as though change is all around us, the way that we work included. The pandemic sparked a number of reckonings about the landscape of work, with major changes that included flexible work locations. What other changes might be in store for the future of work? Experts weighed in during UKG's Aspire customer conference.

Employee Wellbeing

One of the primary shifts that experts expect to see in the new year is an increased focus on all aspects of employee wellbeing. This change will be led partially by managers, who are already working tirelessly on the frontlines to [supervise nearly 80%](#) of the workforce. Providing these leaders with people-first HR technology tools will enable them to do right by their reports, meeting each where they are. This is particularly important because, as [Dr. Chris Mullin](#), Executive Director of The Workforce Institute at UKG, says, "People join companies, and they leave managers."

HR professionals will also play a key role in organizations' quests to improve the lives of their people. This will begin with thoughtful job design: creating engaging roles that will allow employees to do meaningful work, then empowering them to do it. Joining an organization with a [great culture](#) built on trust, caring, and community is projected to become a priority for job searchers. To cultivate such a culture and keep pace with changes happening within their organizations, HR leaders will use pulse surveys and sentiment analysis tools. With these insights, organizations can tailor benefits offerings to retain their best talent and meet employee expectations for organization-wide wellness initiatives. This will be particularly important as employees look to their organizations for support as global trends such as [inflation](#) and [burnout](#) contribute to their stress.

Employee resource groups, commonly referred to as [ERGs](#), are internal, employee-led affinity groups that enable people to gather with others with whom they share an identity. As ERGs grow in popularity, UKG's Chief Belonging, Diversity, and Equity (DEI&B) Officer [Brian Reaves](#) encourages leaders to get in on the action. What better way for executives to learn about the uniqueness of their talent than by joining groups where individuals celebrate aspects of who they are? UKG's VP of Human Insights, [Dr. Jarik Conrad](#), says, "Delivering on the promise of DEI&B will not only help historically underrepresented groups. We all win, and organizations perform better when everyone is valued and respected and has an equal opportunity to succeed."

Data-First Approach

In our increasingly data-driven world, HR functions will benefit from tech centralization by creating easily digestible and actionable insights. Managers will be able to better understand how their teams stack up against various DEI goals and benchmarks using demographic and sentiment data. Software will offer nudges to encourage equity opportunities as well as retention initiatives; one day soon, artificial intelligence will make these insights even more powerful. Leveraging these insights will be essential to cultivating the kind of organization where everyone will want to work in the future.

Want to learn more?

[Click here](#) to read a full recap of the Aspire conference and learn about what the future of work has in store for your organization!



Is your child in crisis?

Know the signs. All kids have bad days. But, trauma and life-changing events can create lasting challenges.

Extreme behavior problems that continue for more than six months could indicate a need for help.

Watch for:

- opposition and aggression
- disrespect and property damage
- anxiety or depression
- lying and fighting
- stealing or substance use
- running away or self-harm



Don't wait to get help! For free real time de-escalation and emergency counseling, call the Children's System of Care at 1-877-652-7624.



It's Impossible To See The Big Picture If You Are Missing Important Pieces Of The Puzzle

by William "Bill" Cherry, Director, Public Partnerships for three+one®

Let's start out by saying that not every county is the same. Some of the Garden State's 21 counties face different financial pressures than their neighbors, based upon factors such as public-service needs, infrastructure improvements, or disaster-recovery projects. Counties often face similar fiscal challenges, but there can be extenuating circumstances where one county may be forced to carry a heavier financial burden than its neighboring municipalities. So that I might do a meaningful side-by-side comparison of all 21 NJ counties, I first downloaded each of their 2021 adopted budgets and then analyzed the data.

The good news is that every county in New Jersey has a strong cash balance. Combined, NJ counties had a total of \$2.3 billion on deposit last year. Cash on deposit for the 21 individual counties ranged from \$16 million to \$295 million. Their reported interest earnings indicated that some counties may have done a better job of strategically investing those funds. Annual interest revenues varied widely across the counties, from a low of essentially 0% to as high as 2.20%. Investing those funds on deposit brought in a total of \$24 million in interest earnings to NJ counties last year. That number will be even higher in 2022 because of additional American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds going to counties combined with today's rising interest rates. It's important to remember that every dollar earned in interest is one less dollar needed from taxpayers!

Another factor that differentiates NJ counties is the amount of debt load they carry. Annual debt-service payments during 2021 vary from a low of zero dollars (my congrats to that county!) to a high of \$127 million. By comparing annual debt-service payments to property-tax levies, we can determine that debt service accounts for an average of 18% of all NJ county property taxes. Every dollar that goes towards interest on debt is a dollar that isn't available to spend on safer roads or improved law enforcement. Effective cash management and reliable future forecasting can often reduce or eliminate the need for short-term borrowing, thus lowering debt-service costs and providing significant savings for taxpayers.

Reliable liquidity analysis helps counties more effectively manage their cash, often resulting in dramatically higher interest earnings and significantly lower debt-service costs. **three+one** employs the latest financial technology in our **cashVest®** liquidity analysis. We help finance officials determine precisely how much liquidity they have available, and we provide accurate future forecasts of how long those funds will remain on deposit.

We are proud to be endorsed by both NJAC and by NACo, and we always welcome the opportunity to explore ways to help NJ's government entities better serve their taxpayers.

The author served for a total of 38 years in local government at the village, town, and county levels, including 24 years as a County Treasurer/CFO responsible for investing public funds. He can be reached by phone at 585-484-0311, ext. 709 or by email at wec@threeplusone.us



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Let us know what educational or informational articles you would like published in the NJAC COUNTY BIZ

Contact

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Atlantic City Electric Readies Energy Grid And Reminds Customers To Take Steps To Manage Energy Costs This Winter

by Candice Womer, Communications for Atlantic City Electric

With colder temperatures now upon the region, and as customers begin using more energy to heat their homes and businesses, Atlantic City Electric remains committed to delivering safe and reliable energy service, while helping every customer keep energy costs manageable. Atlantic City Electric is working to manage the increasing costs of energy supply, knowing the overall higher costs of goods and services and the effects of inflation continue to present challenging times for customers.

“We know that rising energy costs and the costs of other goods and services are becoming an increasing challenge for our customers,” said Tamla Olivier, chief operating officer for Pepco Holdings, which includes Atlantic City Electric. “We recognize our customers rely on us to keep the lights on and their homes and businesses heated, no matter what we may confront. Our team is constantly working to strengthen and secure the local energy grid against severe weather and to help keep our customers connected when they need us most.”

As winter approaches, Atlantic City Electric is readying the local energy grid by performing essential work to help meet increased customer demand and keep homes and businesses warm and bright all season long. This work includes hardening the system to increase reliability and performing maintenance and inspections to prepare for severe weather. On the electric grid, this work includes inspecting and upgrading equipment; trimming trees, building new underground equipment; and installing stronger, tree-resistant aerial cable. Atlantic City Electric also continues to install smart technologies to improve system reliability, such as specialized equipment that can automatically restore service faster or isolate damage.

Just as Atlantic City Electric prepares, the company encourages customers also to be ready for severe weather and offers the following tips:

- Assemble an emergency storm kit. Include battery-powered radio, flashlight, a first-aid kit, blankets, battery-powered or windup clock, extra batteries, medications, multi-purpose tool and list of important/emergency phone numbers.
- Have a supply of bottled water and easy-to-prepare, non-perishable foods available to last at least 72 hours.
- Keep a flashlight with fresh batteries on each floor of your home.
- Identify an alternate location for you and/or your family in case of an extended outage.
- Review the manufacturer's instructions for safe operations of your generator. Do not connect a generator directly to your home's wiring. Never use a generator indoors or any enclosed area.
- Download our mobile app at atlanticcityelectric.com/MobileApp and visit our website at atlanticcityelectric.com/StormPrep for more tips on how you can prepare.

Atlantic City Electric understands some customers may use more energy to power their homes through the winter. To help, Atlantic City Electric offers the following tips to help lower customer energy costs:

- **Manage your bill on My Account.** Online energy management tools show you how much energy you are using. The bill to date feature lets you know what your bill costs are to date at any time during the month. You can also get tips based on your energy saving goals.
- **Install energy efficient light bulbs.** Energy-efficient LED bulbs use up to 75 percent less energy than standard bulbs.
- **Unplug unused electrical devices when you leave a room.** Chargers use energy when left plugged in after your device is fully charged.
- **Check your thermostat.** Set your thermostat a few degrees lower in the winter, if health permits. A few degrees could mean 10 percent savings or more on your monthly bill.
- **Adjust your blinds.** Keep your blinds up during the day to capture the radiant heating benefits of the sun. Close your blinds and curtains after the sun goes down to keep the cold air out and the heat in.

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Atlantic City Electric Readies Energy Grid And Reminds Customers To Take Steps To Manage Energy Costs This Winter *(continued)*

Atlantic City Electric recognizes its responsibility to help all customers use less energy by working to keep bills as low as possible and connecting customers with available assistance. Customers can contact Atlantic City Electric at 1-800-642-3780 to discuss payment arrangements or visit atlanticcityelectric.com/EnergyAssistance to learn more about energy assistance options.

In addition to payment arrangements and energy assistance support, Atlantic City Electric has many programs that can help customers manage their monthly energy bill, including [Budget Billing](#), which averages payments over a 12-month period. The company also offers energy efficiency programs and energy saving information to help customers reduce their energy usage. Information regarding these programs can be found at atlanticcityelectric.com/WaysToSave

To learn more about Atlantic City Electric, visit [The Source](#), Atlantic City Electric's online newsroom. Find additional information by visiting atlanticcityelectric.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/AtlanticCityElectric, and on Twitter at twitter.com/AcEleCconnect. Atlantic City Electric's mobile app is available at atlanticcityelectric.com/MobileApp.

Atlantic City Electric is a unit of Exelon (Nasdaq: EXC), a Fortune 200 company and the nation's largest utility company, serving more than 10 million customers. Atlantic City Electric provides clean, safe, reliable and affordable energy service to approximately 565,000 customers in southern New Jersey.



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Nationwide Economics

Weekly Economic Review & Outlook for December 19, 2022

by Ashleigh Leonard, Economist Specialist of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and
Daniel Vielhaber, Economist of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company

The Fed raised the federal funds rate by 50 bps at the conclusion of its December meeting, breaking its streak of four straight 75 bps hikes. In his comments, Chairman Powell maintained a hawkish stance as the Fed continues to prioritize reducing inflation, even if it means some economic pain. On the data front, November retail sales fell by more than expected, but October's strong gains and softer inflation readings over the last few months leave consumer spending in a relatively strong pace in the fourth quarter.

The FOMC slows the pace of rate hikes

As expected, the FOMC (the policy-making arm of the Fed) entered the next phase of its tightening cycle last week as it raised the fed funds rate by a reduced 50 basis points to increase the range to 4.25-4.50 percent. The updated summary of economic projections (SEP) showed a median fed funds forecast of 5.13 percent for economic projection (SEP) showed a median fed funds forecast of 5.13 percent for 2023 (up from 4.6 percent in September), indicating that more rate hikes are expected at upcoming meetings. Chairman Powell also suggested that the future path to the terminal rate could be slower, implying only 25 bps increases as the Fed calibrates monetary policy more gradually.

The FOMC also cut its forecast for 2023 real GDP growth to 0.5 percent from 1.2 percent in September, while lifting its inflation forecast. Expected stickier inflation underpins Powell's comment that "historical experience cautions against prematurely reducing rates." While financial markets are pricing in rate cuts later in 2023, the Fed has strongly signaled that it will maintain restrictive monetary policy until it is convinced inflation is under control. We see the Fed keeping the fed funds rate above 5.00 percent through 2023, and it's not until 2024 that we anticipate rate cuts. This policy stance could be tested next year if the economy slips into a recession, but the less severe nature of a potential downturn should help the Fed to maintain its restrictive course.

Retail sales pull back in November with slower inflation

November's retail sales fell by 0.6 percent, and by 0.2 percent when excluding auto sales. A sharp decline in unit vehicle sales and falling gasoline prices were notable, but slower sales were broad-based and appears to be partly a result of lower-than-normal holiday spending. Sales for electronics and appliances, sporting goods and hobbies, clothing and clothing accessories, and nonstore retailers-all popular categories for gifts-declined. However, strong growth in restaurant spending suggests the trend of consumers shifting purchases from goods to services resumed in November after a one-month hiatus in October.

Consumers did get a reprieve from inflation in November as the consumer price index (CPI) climbed by only 0.1 percent, extending the weaker price increases seen in recent months. Sharp declines in energy and goods (especially used cars) prices helped to offset further acceleration in services costs. The core CPI also rose by a smaller 0.2 percent for November, with a reduced annual growth rate of 6.0 percent-the slowest pace of core inflation since July. Although improved, inflation continues to run well above trend, reinforcing the hawkish rhetoric from the Fed.

Despite the decline in retail sales, strong growth in October combined with weaker inflation readings mean that fourth quarter personal consumption expenditures should contribute strongly to growth. We expect the economy to end 2022 on the uptrend with annualized real GDP growth around 3.0 percent. Until the labor market and wage gains materially weaken, consumers should continue to support growth event with high inflation and rising interest rates. To date, the tight labor market has shown only modest signs of easing, with the number of job openings remaining at high levels and initial jobless claims at very low levels.

continued on page 15

Economics *(continued)*

Housing market slowdown continues

We look for November housing starts to decline 1.4 percent from October, falling to an annualized 1.41 million units. That level would represent a 22 percent decline from the peak 1.8 million in April 2022-recorded just a month after the Fed started to lift rates from the effective zero lower bound. Building permits, a key leading indicator for the housing market and the overall economy, likely fell 1.7 percent in November to a 1.50 million annualized level.

Income, spending, and inflation to cool

Personal income likely slowed to a 0.3 percent advance in November, following a strong 0.7 percent jump in October. However, income gains remain sturdy, underpinned by strong employment and wage growth. Consumer spending should also cool to a 0.2 percent increase in November as retail sales were weak. However, the strong rise in October places real consumer spending on a buoyant trajectory for the fourth quarter-around 3 percent annualized. Headline and core PCE inflation should trend lower, with the headline year-on-year pace falling to 5.5 percent from 6 percent in October and core reading decelerating to 4.6 percent from 5 percent in October.

Durable goods orders fall with decline in aircraft orders

Durable goods orders likely fell 1.1 percent in November as a drop in aircraft orders depress the overall order count. Excluding transportation, orders likely were flat on the month. The core-nondefense capital goods ex aircraft-orders and shipment advances should be soft on the month, reflecting businesses' caution given the uncertainty surrounding the economic outlook.

For further information please contact Michelle Murphy, MBA, AIF, Executive Relationship Manager at Michelle.Murphy@Nationwide.com, or Bina Kumar, Managing Director - East Region, at kumarb1@nationwide.com



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Congress Passes Appropriations Package Including Key County Priorities

by NACo



Congress passed a bipartisan \$1.7 trillion bill that boosts domestic and defense spending through most of 2023, investing in key county priorities and averting a government shutdown.

Among the bill's numerous investments in counties nationwide, NACo applauds the inclusion of the bipartisan State, Local Tribal, and Territorial Fiscal Recovery, Infrastructure, and Disaster Relief Flexibility Act, also known as the Cornyn/Padilla proposal, as an amendment to the bill. NACo fiercely advocated for over a year for the passage of this provision, which will grant additional flexibility to county governments in investing resources from the American Rescue Plan's Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. The amendment will also provide the U.S. Treasury with much-needed resources to assist counties in deploying recovery funds.

In addition to the inclusion of this proposal, other key county priorities that made it into the deal are:

- One year of full, mandatory funding for Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) for federal public lands counties
 - Funding for direct county investments authorized by the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act, including \$500 million for technology hubs and \$200 million for the RECOMPETE pilot
 - Reforms to the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy, providing access to Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program benefits for juveniles awaiting trial, for which NACo aggressively advocated
 - County mental health priorities, such as funding for the 988 crisis line and reauthorization of the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant program
- Permanent extension of the American Rescue Plan Act's state option to provide 12 months of continuous Medicaid coverage for post-partum care

- \$75 million for Election Security Grants to improve the administration of federal elections, enhance election technology and make security improvements as authorized by Help America Vote Act (HAVA)
- Additional funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund
- One year reauthorization of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program
- A \$100 million increase in funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development programs, with funding now totaling \$4 billion

Funds the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) at the highest level in history, including additional funds for direct, county-eligible RAISE grants

NACo will release a full analysis of all the programmatic funding in the omnibus appropriations bill soon.



National Association of Counties Leadership Development: Learn from the Best!

by NACo

We would like to acknowledge and congratulate the September NACo Leadership Academy graduates from New Jersey. They join over 5,000 graduates and current participants from across the country benefitting from the 12-week online program enabling existing and emerging county leaders to achieve their highest potential.

Adam Rosen, Rosen, Camden County
Alecia Scruggs-Hill, Supervisor, Atlantic County
Andrea Orsini, Library Director, Cape May County
Arti Kakkar, Director, Human Services of Passaic, Passaic County
Coleen Knauff, Supervisor, Atlantic County
Dale A. Cross, County Clerk, Salem County
Daniel Mulraney, Director of Fare Free Transportation, Cape May County
Diego Otero, Bureau Chief, Information Technologies, Union County
Donna Groome, Human Services Department Head, Cape May County
Drew Helmandollar, Director of Public Works, Cape May County
Ebony Witherspoon, Deputy Clerk, Mercer County
Heather Darling, Morris Surrogate, Morris County
Helen Cheatham, Supervisor, Atlantic County
Iris Baker, Assistant Nursing Home Administrator, Atlantic County
Jennifer Merlock, Administrator Analyst, Purchasing, Atlantic County
Karen McDonald, Manager, Atlantic County
Luz Santiago, Supervisor, Atlantic County
Patrick Lanie, Clerk 2, Gloucester County
Philip Kandl, Director, Division of Strategic Planning, Union County
Serena Sinclair, Supervisor, Atlantic County
Shawn Buskirk, Director of Human Services, Warren County
Spencer Perry, Supervisor, Atlantic County
Teri O'Connor, Administrator, Monmouth County

Start the new year off with Leadership Development!

Our January cohort is just around the corner. Prioritize leadership development for your team today and deliver results for your team and County. Scholarship are available.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE AND ENROLL](#)

Developed by General Colin Powell, the Professional Development Academy and NACo, the High Performance Leadership Academy is an online 12-week program that helps your workforce develop fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties/boroughs and our residents.

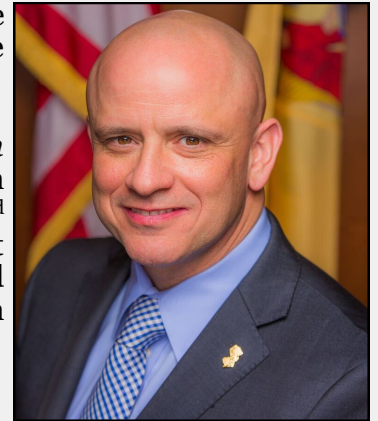


FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I hope you and your families have a happy, healthy, and successful New Year. As we begin planning for a terrific 2023, please make sure to mark your calendars for the following upcoming dates and events.

NJAC'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE KICK-OFF MEETING 1/20 In-Person

Don't miss the opportunity to serve on NJAC's conference committee as we begin planning for an outstanding celebration of county government set for May 3rd through May 5th at Caesars in Atlantic City. The Committee is hosting its first in-person meeting since 2019 at 11:00 a.m. on *January 20th* at NJAC's office located at 150 West State Street in Trenton, so please let us know if you're interested in helping prepare for county governments' premiere event.



John G. Donnadio, Esq.

NJAC'S REORGANIZATION MEETING 1/27 In-Person

We look forward to seeing you at the swearing-in of NJAC's 2023 board of directors, executive officers, and Camden County Commissioner Jonathan Young as NJAC's 82nd President at 11:00 a.m. on January 27th in the Senate Chambers of the State House in Trenton. You're also welcome to join us for a terrific lunch at the historic Masonic Temple immediately following the reorganization meeting.

NJAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE WORKSHOP PROPOSALS DUE 02/11

We're currently accepting proposals for annual conference workshops. Space is limited, so please submit your proposal no later than *February 3rd* to Loren Wizman by email at loren@njac.org. To make sure that our elected officials, administrators, finance officers, purchasing officials, planners, engineers, attorneys, public works employees, accountants, and other county officials actively participate in our conference, the conference committee will give priority consideration to workshops approved for continuing education credits by the appropriate State agencies and the Rutgers University Center for Local Government Services.

1. Workshop sessions should be educational and informative, and 50-60 minutes long.
2. Proposals should include the name, title, and organization of those presenting.
3. Proposals should contain a title and one-page informative summary of the workshop.
4. Proposals should include handouts, power point presentations, and other materials.
5. Proposals should be submitted by *February 3rd*.

We'll make sure to notify you in writing of the time, location, and other important detail concerning your workshop well in advance of the conference.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SERIES OF VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS 2/22, 4/19, 7/12, 9/13, & 11/1

Please make sure to mark your calendars with the above dates and stay tuned for additional details about our series of free virtual workshops. These educational and informative seminars will include key discussions on important county matters. We plan to secure continuing education credits for all (5) workshops and will provide sponsors with the opportunity to showcase their businesses with additional details to follow shortly.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

EVENTS & HOLIDAYS

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
 <p>HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023</p>	<p>NY Giants ² vs. Indianapolis Colts 4pm MetLife Stadium <i>East Rutherford Bergen County</i></p>			 <p>Super Pet Expo ⁵ 1/7 10am - 7pm NJ Expo Center <i>Edison Middlesex County</i></p>	 <p>SPONGEBOB MUSICAL ⁶ 730pm Register Here Scottish Rite Auditorium <i>Collingswood Camden County</i></p>	<p>Hunterdon Central Winter Invitational ⁷ 930am - 1030am Hunterdon Central Regional High School <i>Flemington Hunterdon County</i></p>
<p>Nutcracker Suite Youth Dance Ensemble ⁸ 5pm - 7pm Register Here UnionPAC <i>Rahway Union County</i></p>			<p>Laura Cheadle Listening Party ¹¹ 1/14 8pm - 10pm Register Here The Blue Moon Theatre <i>Woodstown Salem County</i></p>	<p>Chaka Khan ¹² 8pm Register Here MorrisPAC <i>Morristown Morris County</i></p>	<p>The Three Little Pigs ¹³ 1/14 10am & 1pm Register Here Broadway Theatre <i>Pitman Gloucester County</i></p>	<p>Wild Con Comic Convention ¹⁴ 10am - 5pm Wildwood Convention Center <i>Wildwood Cape May County</i></p>
	<p><i>Martin Luther King Day</i> ¹⁶ </p>	 <p>CANNABIS JOB FAIR January 17, 2023 10 AM - 1 PM Passaic County Community College <i>Paterson Passaic County</i></p>	<p>Canning ¹⁸ 1/17 6pm - 9pm Register Here Burlington County Agriculture Center <i>Mt. Laurel Burlington County</i></p>	<p>South Football's Impossible Dream ¹⁹ 1/22 2pm Register Here Jay & Linda Grunin Center for the Arts <i>Toms River Ocean County</i></p>	<p>Hudson County Health & Wellness Expo ²⁰ 1/21 10am - 2pm Newport Centre <i>Jersey City Hudson County</i></p>	<p>Jersey Shore Home Show ²¹ 10am - 8pm Brookdale Comm. College <i>Lincroft Monmouth County</i></p>
<p>Central NJ Health & Wellness Expo ²² 11am - 3pm MarketFair <i>Princeton Mercer County</i></p>		<p>Little Storytime Listeners ²⁴ 130pm - 230pm Warren County Library <i>Belvidere Warren County</i></p>	<p>Project Homeless Connect Day ²⁵ FREE 10am - 2pm Essex County College Gymnasium <i>Newark Essex County</i></p>	<p>Phil Collins Experience ²⁶ 1/27 8pm Register Here Levoy Theatre <i>Millville Cumberland County</i></p>	<p>Indoor Outdoor Racing ²⁷ 730 pm Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall <i>Atlantic City Atlantic County</i></p>	 <p>FAMILY GAME DAY ²⁸ 9am-5pm Ted Blum 4-H Center <i>Bridgewater Twshp. Somerset County</i></p>
<p>Garden State Winter Fest ²⁹ 1/28 & 1/29 10am - 4pm County Fairgrounds <i>Augusta Sussex County</i></p>						