

AIRPORT AGREEMENT LIMITS IMPACT

We also reached an agreement with the airlines which establishes permanent restrictions to safeguard our no-expansion policy at the Westchester County Airport -- limiting the number of commercial passengers and flights.

FIGHTING IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft is a major problem. The Federal Trade Commission has highlighted how the use of social security numbers as an all-purpose ID facilitates thieves' access to private information. I'm pressing legislation which I proposed last year to limit when Westchester residents may be forced to reveal their social security numbers -- so social security numbers will again be used only for employment activities as originally intended. Hopefully, in 2005 we can stop the unfettered accumulation of our personal data by government and corporations.

PROTESTING THE P.A.T.R.I.O.T. A.C.T.

I joined local citizens and the thousands across the country who expressed concern that our basic liberties are threatened by federal laws hastily enacted just after the September 11 tragedy. Through our efforts, the Westchester Legislature studied the laws and called on Congress to make some common sense revisions.



County Legislator
Tom Abinanti announcing
support for U.S. Sen.
Charles Schumer's proposal
to give tax credits to
volunteer firefighters and
other emergency workers.

REDUCING INSURANCE RATES FOR SAFETY

For several years, I've urged the N.Y.S. Legislature to require insurance companies to lower rates for boat owners who take safety courses. Safety courses reduce accidents, injuries and deaths. The Assembly has passed the legislation several times; it has stalled in the Senate. Hopefully, this year we will give this little incentive/reward to deserving boaters.

TAKING CARE OF OUR SENIORS

We again broadened the income eligibility standards so more moderate-income seniors qualify for exemptions from county property taxes. Too often senior citizens who seek home improvements fall victim to predatory lending practices. Some have found themselves buried in debt. Some have even lost their homes. We recently passed a law requiring home contractors to disclose when they profit by financing seniors' home improvements.



Westchester County Update from County Legislator ***Tom Abinanti***

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JUNE 2005

Here we are -- midway through 2005 already. We've been busy at the County Legislature. While overseas and national events continue to attract the most attention, we continue our efforts to make life better in our Westchester community. Here's a brief review of some of what we've done recently and also what I am working on.

2005 BUDGET: NO PROPERTY TAX INCREASE; IMPORTANT SERVICES ENHANCED

The Board of Legislators passed a 2005 Westchester County Budget that required no property tax increase in 2005.

Just as importantly, we enhanced some vital county services. We increased day care subsidies so low-income parents can keep working and kids can get good care. We increased funding for a variety of nonprofit agencies that do everything from combat domestic violence to further the arts to provide legal services for the elderly -- with new grants for some excellent Greenburgh Nature Center programs.

We also continue to share the county's sales tax revenues with localities and school districts that can't impose their own. In 2005, we'll share some \$42 million with Greenburgh municipalities and \$14 million Greenburgh school districts.

PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

We must continue to preserve our open space and stop the unbridled development that's choking us with traffic and threatening our quality of life.

In the years that I have served as your county legislator, I've worked to get county money to purchase and preserve large tracts of open space. No matter where you live in Greenburgh, we've enhanced your community with more dedicated open space with the county, state and local governments sharing the cost:

Hartsdale. The 130-acre Gaisman Estate is now Hartsbrook Park.

Irvington. The 200-acre Unification Church property (on the Irvington/East Irvington/Tarrytown border) is now Taxter Ridge Park. The 30-acre Westwood property will remain open space as part of a nature center.

Tarrytown. Glenville Woods (Tarrytown Road opposite the Marriott) and the Unification Church's 39-acres on the Hudson (between Lyndhurst and Sunnyside) are now passive recreation parks.

Hastings. Hillside Woods was the first jointly financed project. Part of Graham Windham is now dedicated parkland.

Local First Refusal Option. We've acted to protect smaller parcels as well. The County

Board enacted a law that I proposed to require that the county first offer excess land to municipalities before selling the parcels to others. (At my suggestion, the state legislature passed a similar law but the governor vetoed it.)

Agricultural & Farmland Protection. We adopted a plan, which preserves farmland and the county's pastoral landscapes from threatened development.

Ball fields. We've added needed athletic fields open to all county residents in Yonkers (Tibbets Brook Park) and White Plains (Saxon Woods Park) and in Mount Pleasant and Port Chester. We've been looking for additional sites.



County Legislator Tom Abinanti discusses South County Trailway completion with County Parks Board Chairman Bill Greenawalt

PROTECTING YOU FROM PESTICIDES

We're looking to strengthen a law that we passed last year requiring commercial pesticide applicators to give neighbors a 48-hour warning before spraying -- so you know about nearby pesticides and can safeguard your children and pets. Now, we're reviewing apartment dwellers' complaints that they're not getting notices.

I've long been concerned about pesticide use. You'll recall that several years ago I strongly objected to county spraying -- by air and then truck-- as a futile effort to kill West Nile infected mosquitoes. The county is now using a preventive approach that I had suggested -- applying larvicides -- and it seems to be working.

PLAN FOR CLEAN AIR

Our area doesn't meet federal air quality standards. Much of our pollution comes from the Midwest but some comes from local sources. As chair of the Board's Environment Committee, I appointed a task force of experts to develop a plan to reduce locally generated pollution. The Environment Committee has reviewed the task force's report. The Board will soon consider the legislation that I have drafted to implement the report's recommendations.



Task Force Members from the Federated Conservationists of Westchester, American Lung Association and American Cancer Society present their Report to Legislators Abinanti and Kaplowitz

CLEAN INDOOR AIR

The law we passed two years ago banning smoking in all workplaces is proving effective. The law, which I drafted and cosponsored, was designed to protect workers from second hand smoke. But it protects all of us. Now that the state has enacted similar legislation, all New Yorkers enjoy cleaner indoor air.

INDIAN POINT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

As a result of my efforts and those of hundreds of citizens worried about public safety, a little over a year ago, we passed a resolution opposing re-licensing of the Indian Point nuclear power plants. This followed our call for federal regulators to close the plants. In December and again earlier this year, several municipal officials and I met with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to reiterate our concerns. We must remain vigilant and keep the pressure on.