

COUNTY RESPONSIBLE FOR BIGGEST SHARE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

Over 40% over the past four years.

Most people don't know what county government does. They don't even know that the county is funded by their property tax. Property taxes go to fund three government agencies, the local school system, the municipality and the county.

Roughly 50% of the property tax goes to the school system, about 25% goes to the municipality and about 25% goes to the county. Taxpayers keep tabs on their school board, mayors and councils but no one knows what the freeholders do with our money. Most people don't even know what a freeholder is.

The Freeholders run the county government, also known as the "invisible" layer of government. The Freeholders are able to do anything they want without any consequence. They have used the luxury of their actions going ignored and undetected to increase their portion of the property tax over 40% over the past four years. Since the Freeholder Board is made up entirely of Democrats, there is no one in the position to challenge what is happening.

If the local school board, mayor or council ever raised their portion of the tax at the rate the county has the officials would be voted out the following year. Freeholders are immune to that threat because they are not connected to the rise in taxes.

Most people don't look at their tax bill. The tax is usually paid along with their mortgage or is figured as part of their rent. If they did look they would see the school system, municipal and county portions separated. They would also see a fourth line on the bill, the open space trust fund, another county tax. The freeholders crafted this tax as its own line item, but make no mistake it is a county tax and a hefty one.

Unless there is a change on the freeholder board, taxpayers can expect the same increase next year. It is costly for everyone, Democrat, Republican and Independent alike. It is for the benefit of everyone in the county that Republicans are voted in this election to balance the one party rule and stop another year of oversized tax hikes.

Increase in Union County property taxes per town from 2000-2004				
	2000 Average per home	2000 Total for town (in \$ millions)	2004 Average per home	2004 Total for town (in \$ millions)
Berkeley Heights	\$1,325	\$ 8.6	\$1,700	\$ 11.3
Clark	880	5.3	1,350	7.8
Cranford	970	9.0	1,360	12.7
Elizabeth	530	14.7	780	20.9
Fanwood	910	2.4	1,260	3.4
Garwood	780	1.3	1,070	1.9
Hillside	590	4.4	790	5.7
Kenilworth	780	3.8	1,050	5.1
Linden	580	11.5	840	16.9
Mountainside	1,380	4.2	1,820	5.4
New Prov.	1,300	6.2	1,750	8.4
Plainfield	540	6.2	720	8.4
Rahway	580	6.2	760	8.3
Roselle	510	3.4	650	4.2
Roselle P.	600	2.5	860	3.4
S. Plains	1,110	8.8	1,460	11.8
Springfield	930	6.4	1,270	8.8
Summit	2,020	15.4	2,920	23.2
Union	650	14.9	950	21.7
Westfield	1,460	15.0	2,080	21.5
Winfield	60	.06	70	.07
Total Tax Collected		\$150.1 mil		\$210.8 mil

County tax jeopardize local education, health and safety programs.

Every dollar that the county takes from the pool of property taxes is less that can go to local school systems and municipalities.

Town councils and school boards struggle to make their budgets balance with the minimum amount of property tax increase. They make cuts in personal, services and equipment to save a few thousand dollars here and there.

At the same time school boards and municipalities are working hard to cut spending and ease the local property tax burden, the county is casually pounding an increase to those very same taxpayers. Ironically enough, the voters blame their school board for their property tax increase, never checking the bill to see that the county freeholders are the real culprits.

When local budgets are cut, that means less teachers and programs in

the schools, less support for police and fire departments and cuts in health programs. These services are too important to be frivolously disregarded by the freeholders. The effect on municipal and school budgets should be considered a top priority before the county needlessly increases property taxes.

The officials that are not diligent in managing the affairs of the government should feel the wrath of the voter. Separating the good officials from the bad is a tough chore. It takes a lot of research and involvement. The hard working public just doesn't have the time and so the incumbents usually win out, and usually at the tax payers expense.

Voters should try to make the best informed decision when they enter the voting booth. Too many times their choice is automatic.

WHERE'S THE BILLION DOLLARS?

County now spends a million dollars a day

The annual budget for the County of Union is \$366 million. That's \$1 MILLION per day, \$1 BILLION over the past three years! Looking for where the money goes revealed some startling slight of hand in the county's bookkeeping methods. The administration has played a shell game with tax money to hide spending practices.

The county debt is now over \$400 million. We are paying \$30 million a year just on debt maintenance.

When the budget is explored to find out where the billion dollars has gone over the past three years all that is found is a shuffling of numbers. You have to be a cross between Columbo and Kreskin to figure out where the expenditures are hidden.

Most waste goes to kickbacks to campaign contributors and political operatives in the form of no-bid contracts and patronage jobs.

RENNA, QUATTROCCHI, ARENA
AND PATERSON FOR FREEHOLDER
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Did you ever look at your tax bill?

Most people never look at their tax bill. They usually pay their taxes as part of their mortgage or rent, so they don't realize that 20 - 25% goes to the county and that percentage is climbing every year. Some people are now paying more to the county than they are to their municipality. Yet, if you ask them what is a Freeholder and what do they do with the money, the average person can't tell you.

The first two lines of this Westfield tax bill goes to the County of Union. The County accounts for 21% of the bill. The town accounts for only 16%.

TOWN OF WESTFIELD		UNION COUNTY	
ALLOCATION	DESCRIPTION	RATE PER \$100	AMOUNT OF TAX
	COUNTY TAX	1.126	2574.04
	CTY OPN SPC. REC&HIST	.044	100.58
	DISTRICT SCHOOL TAX	3.511	8026.15
	LOCAL MUNICIPAL TAX	.899	2055.11
NET TAXABLE VALUE			
228600			
2004 TOTAL TAX		5.580	12755.88
LESS DEDUCTION FOR:			.00

COUNTY WORK FORCE MORE TOP-HEAVY

New administrators account for \$20 million in payroll increase.

The payroll for the County of Union has increased from \$123.2 million to \$144.9 million over the past three years. If the \$20 million jump in payroll was spread over the 2,840 employees the county had in 2000 it would mean every employee received a 6% raise per year for three years. This did not happen. In reality, 8% of the employees accounted for the \$20 million increase.

The county keeps the total number of employees about even, 2,840 in 2000 and 2,860 in 2004. This does not include about 300 seasonal employees. What the employee list does reveal is that as rank and file workers leave, the county manager creates a new administrative position. What has happened is that the county is top heavy with administrators with a shortage of service providers.

The fancy word for creating new administrative positions is called "reorganization". Each year the county does a shuffling of departments and divisions. With each shuffle a new

layer of administration appears. Titles appear that never existed, with salaries of \$80,000 and up.

There are many problems that come along with this overgrowth of administrators. One, the positions are being filled with patronage appointments, many unqualified and incompetent. Two, the salaries are draining the county coffers. There are less employees at the working levels and so services are being cut back. The lack of proper supervision and direction is making even the most capable employee less productive.

Moral among the county work force is at an all time low. The environment of political favoritism has corrupted the merit system. Worthy employees are being passed over and dedicated workers are not being rewarded. A reversal of this top heavy structure of government must be implemented. Pressure must be put on the freeholder board to stop using the county's payroll as a political slush fund.

The claim that the increase in property taxes is beyond their control is an outrageous lie. They have raised their portion of the property tax over 40% over the last four years. Public records show that kickbacks in the

form of no bid contracts and patronage jobs going to campaign contributors and political operatives have accounted for the increases. We need to restore open and honest government with accountability. 🍷

GROWTH IN PAYROLL		
	2000	2004
Total number of employees	2840	2860
Total payroll (not including benefits)	\$123.3 million	\$144.9 million

GROWTH IN TOP LEVEL POSITIONS		
	2000	2004
Employees earning \$100,000 and up	24	64
Employees earning \$90,000 to \$99,000	42	107
Employees earning \$78,000 TO \$89,000	104	222
Total salaries	\$16 million	\$36 million
% of total payroll	13%	25%

CRISIS BROUGHT ON BY INCOMPETENCE AND CORRUPTION

Most voters don't know what effect county government has on their property tax. They relate property tax to either their school system or their municipality. What they don't realize is that the county government is responsible for the bulk of their property tax increase.

Our property tax situation has been categorized as being in a crisis. So much so that there has been a call for a constitutional convention in order to address the issue. The belief is that the crisis has occurred because of increases that are beyond the control of our elected officials. This opinion is not only absurd but gives

the elected officials a free pass on accountability. It is the charge of the elected officials to operate an efficient and effective government. The crisis occurred when our leadership shirked their responsibility and put self serving political aspirations before the public's well-being. There is no better example of this than the County of Union.

In his own words, last year, the county manager, George Devanney said the county was in a budget crisis. What he failed to explain is that he was responsible for it happening.

Devanney was appointed county manager in 2000. His strongest

credential is being the nephew of State Senator Ray Lesniak. It was under the influence of their party boss that the Freeholder Board, made up entirely of Democrats, appointed the nephew, even though he had no prior management experience. He was put in charge of a \$300 million budget and 3000 employees. This was the start of the crisis.

The county became the well from which the Union County Democratic Committee siphoned millions of tax dollars and funnelled them to campaign contributors and political operatives in the form of no bid contracts and patronage jobs. The well was replenished each year with increases in the county portion of the property tax and increases in service and licensing fees.

Since 2000 the county budget has swelled to over \$366 million. That's a million dollars a day! The county debt has surpassed the \$300 million mark. In the last three years alone the county spent over one billion dollars. Voters are looking for accountability but are not finding it.

The county is an invisible layer of government. The abuse of the system is out of range of the voter's radar. This is not by chance but by design. Public participation is not only discouraged but is rejected. Access to public records is either denied or delayed and responses are not always truthful.

The biggest factors county

officials pointed to when explaining the increase in spending are the rise in insurance costs and public safety. Using public safety is a sentimental diversion from the real causes. For instance, in 2003 the increase in taxes attributed to public safety was just \$1.4 million. Where as the county debt service has bounded over \$11 million since 2002 and is now \$33.3 million.

The cause for the county's debt is not, as claimed, "beyond our control". Indeed, the county debt is precisely the thing that the elected officials and county manager are supposed to control.

All agree that the property tax situation in Union County is in a crisis. But we don't need a constitutional convention to fix it. The voters need to elect new Freeholders who have the integrity to do the will of the people and not their party. The all Democrat Freeholder Board has been in power for ten years. They are not about to cut the flow of funds into their party's coffers.

They will continue to do the bidding of the senator and his nephew, who will be long gone when it will be time to pay the tab. Of course the taxpayer will be there to pick up the bill.

Taxpayers can look forward to more of the same treatment next year unless voters make a change in November and vote Republican. 🍷

LOWER LEVEL STAFFERS ASKED TO SUPPORT TOP MANAGEMENT GROWTH

Here are some samples of how the incompetence of the county manger manifests itself in a ballooning payroll that accounts for one third of the entire county budget.

The county laid off 96 corrections officers in 2001 when they closed the old jail in order to save money. But instead of lowering the payroll, the county created new administrative positions in other departments. Now the county has a shortage of corrections officers and a higher payroll.

The county offered a generous retirement program to entice employees to leave. 142 workers took early retirement but 116 positions were replaced, starting at or above the rate of the person who retired. A number of top administrators earning \$80,000 and up were hired back as consultants for the same rate, collecting both their retirement and salary. The county hoped to save \$1 million per year for the next ten years with their plan but it has been more costly.

Devanney's budget projected that the county would save \$500,000 in a furlough program in which he asked employees to voluntarily take two days off without pay. The county only realized \$200,000 in savings. They then rewarded those who took the days off raises. The average wage of those who participated was

boosted to \$90,000.

The employee union representative, Joan Tapia, said that asking the lower staff to give up paid work days to help the county close a \$27.5 million deficit was kind of silly.

Another program to cut salaries of the lower staff was a voluntary leave program where the manager is asking non-essential employees to take up to three weeks off without pay.

An additional scheme to entice low level employees to take off was the Vacation Purchase Program in which the county wants employees to purchase vacation days. They would get 5 days off if they give back three days pay. The county manager says he can raise as much as \$100,000 from the sale.

During this time the manager gave every employee four free hours to go for medical and cancer testing at a cost of \$250,000.

The county doesn't mention who would be doing the work of these employees while they take the time off, or how the projected savings for these programs are used to balance the budget yet none come close to realization. Every year the county must find ways to close the ever widening gap between spending and revenue. The only solution is to raise our taxes. 🍷

Come again?

If you think your confused about the how much the Early Retirement Package will save, read these quotes from the Freeholders and County Manager.

Date	Quote
1/4/02	“Early retirement will save \$1 million per year”
4/4/02	“The county hopes to save \$1 million annually with early retirement. Initially we hoped for \$3 million.”
4/24/03	“Early retirement will save \$500,000 per year.”
6/5/03	“Early retirement will save \$1 million per year.”
8/13/03	“Early retirement will save \$1.5 million per year.”
5/27/04	“We saved \$4 million per year on early retirement.”

REALITY: Early retirement program has cost more than it has saved.

THE REPUBLICAN SOLUTIONS TO THE COUNTY'S PROBLEMS

Our 3 year plan of practical solutions addresses the biggest issues that face Union County Government

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES UNION COUNTY FREEHOLDER



**VOTE LINE “B”
ON NOVEMBER 2, 2004**

WE NEED LEADERSHIP THAT
WILL DO WHAT IS BEST
FOR THE PEOPLE AND NOT
THEIR POLITICAL PARTY

- **HIRE A QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED COUNTY MANAGER**
(The present county manager never held an executive position before)
The most job experience the county manager, George Devanney, had before coming to the county was working for the New Jersey State Democratic Committee. The Freeholders appointed him without an executive search because he is the nephew of State Senator Ray Lesniak, head of the Union County Democrats. To put him in charge of 3,000 employees and a \$360 million budget is the most egregious example of political patronage. We should seek a replacement for the county manager who has qualifications and experience and would make decisions based on what is best for the residents and taxpayers of Union County and not just his political party.

WE NEED TO BREAK
THE TEN YEAR CYCLE
OF CORRUPTION CREATED
BY ONE PARTY RULE.

REDUCE PROPERTY TAXES

- PROBLEM:
- Property taxes are in a crisis situation. The county portion of our property taxes have needlessly gone up over 40% over the last four years.
- SOLUTIONS:
- **AWARD CONTRACTS THROUGH A BIDDING PROCESS**
(Negotiating down even a few percentage points would save \$ millions)
Freeholders award no-bid contracts to political campaign contributors. Without competitive bidding the county does not know if it is getting the best service at the best price. This results in the county paying more money for inferior service. When ever possible, we propose to use businesses located in Union County.
 - **REVERSE THE GROWTH OF PATRONAGE JOBS**
(Payroll has increased \$20 million in 4 years due to new administrative positions)
Every year the county reorganizes and eliminates working positions and creates administration positions to replace them. These positions have no purpose and are filled with incompetent political cronies with no qualifications. We should reorganize to decrease top-heavy non-productive administration and replace them with more service providers.
 - **PUT THE OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND ON HIATUS**
(The tax has overgrown and the funds are being misappropriated)
Within three years the county has reached its goal for open space but the tax will continue to be collected for the next 16 years. The tax has also increased 43% from \$4.9 million the first year to \$7 million last year. The county is now taking that over-funding and spending it inappropriately. We should stop collecting the tax until we need it again for its intended purpose.
 - **REDUCE OUR DEBT**
(Debt maintenance is costing the taxpayers over \$30 million per year)
The county debt went from \$250 million in 2000 to \$400 million in 2004. The Freeholders have been borrowing to produce non essential projects that will be costing taxpayers for another generation. We should only be borrowing for capital improvements and not to award no-bid contracts.

HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICES

- PROBLEM:
- The county has cut health and safety programs or have not implemented new ones because of mismanagement of funds.
- SOLUTIONS:
- **CREATE A PRIORITY FOR SPENDING THAT PUTS ESSENTIAL SERVICES ON TOP**
(There is more than enough money to deliver the services that are neglected)
The county needs a clear plan to guide spending. The county spent \$1.8 million on remodeling the atrium to their administration building while our public safety departments around the county were in need of anti-terror equipment.
 - **MORE SERVICES AND LESS BUREAUCRACY**
(The percentage of total salaries going to high level bureaucrats has doubled in 4 years)
The administration has increasingly grown at the top level while the ranks of the skilled employees has decrease. There are less employees that are working for the county that actually deliver the services.

OPEN & HONEST GOVERNMENT

- PROBLEM:
- Few people know what the county does until after the fact. The county either denies or delays access to public records and has been proven to misrepresented the truth on many occasions.
- SOLUTIONS:
- **MAKE PUBLIC RECORDS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET**
(The county has already spent millions on technology that is not being used)
The method the county uses for archiving and retrieving public records is costly and time consuming. They keep this method to retain control of the information which enables the Freeholders to stall the public long enough to get a resolution passed. The county refuses to fax documents and denies the digital existence of them. This is absurd. Public records should be available on-line.
 - **ENCOURAGE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
(The county has a policy of not answering questions at public meetings)
Strange but true. The Freeholders contend they do not have to answer questions from the public at the public comment portion of a meeting. We also think that the meetings could be held in the community that is effected by a big program.

NEGLECTING ESSENTIAL SERVICES

When money is misspent it is taken away from the service for which it was intended

Many of the services and products that the county purchases can be provided by county businesses. We believe that every business in Union County should have the opportunity to bid on the contracts that the county gives out.

The county bypasses its own procurement process to award no bid contracts to campaign contributors. We think that this form of kick backs is unethical and adds to the cost of government and leads to higher taxes. This is possible because all 9 elected Freeholders who run the county are one party, Democrat. It has been this way going on ten years. There is no opposition to their decisions and the public isn't aware of how their county tax dollars are being spent. There needs to be a balance on the Freeholder Board so that the back room wheeling and dealing can be stopped.

For example, the county uses Royal Printing in Jersey City for many of its print jobs. There are 100 printers in Union County that are capable of doing the work yet they don't even have the opportunity to bid on the job. It just so happens that Royal Printing is a big Democratic campaign contributor.

One print job went to SVO Printing, a printing broker located in Rockaway, NJ. He did a print job for the county and charged \$40,000 more than a competing quote from a county printer. The broker happened to be Richard Stender, the husband of Freeholder Linda Stender who is now an Assembly Woman.

This practice is extended to every aspect of purchasing from catering to flowers. There is hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on flowers. It just so happens that the


floral shop the county uses is owned by the wife of Democratic Mayor of Linden, John Gregorio. This is outrageous.

Another contributor that has a county contract is MediaSquared, Inc., located in New Brunswick. The company produces artwork, printing and other advertising services for the county. They also produce the artwork for the Union County Democrat Committee, sometimes using the design and artwork paid for by the county taxpayers.

MediaSquared does hundreds of thousands of dollars of work for the county, besides the \$6,000 a month retainer for consulting. According to the resolution, the county justifies giving the no-bid contract to MediaSquared based on their "extensive involvement with the County of Union in planning and development of a marketing plan for the county." A request through the Open Public Records Act found no such marketing plan.

The practice of no-bid contracts and jobs going to campaign contributors and political operatives must stop. The only way this can be achieved is by electing Republicans to sit on the Freeholder Board. There needs to be a balance. The taxpayers need a watchdog.

If elected, the Republicans can challenge the Democrats on this corrupt practice. They could push to implement a system that gives the opportunity of bidding on county contracts to every Union County business for a fair price to the taxpayer.

Right now there is no accountability in county government and the all Democratic board is taking full advantage of that. 


RUNNELLS BUDGET BEING SACKED

When MediaSquared produced the Freeholder campaign commercial featuring Runnells Hospital it sapped the budget of the Hospital of \$240,000. This is money that could have been used to care for the patients and residences of the hospital.

When patronage jobs at the hospital are doled out to Democrat operatives and elected officials like Assembly Woman Linda Stender, \$60,000; and Rahway Councilman Bob Rachlin, \$44,500; and Fanwood Council candidate Barbara Baldassarre, \$95,500; it hurts the

hospitals budget. There are a slew of volunteers who struggle to provide patients and residences with services. They try to raise money from people and organizations, and by selling snacks and gifts.

Runnells is an essential service that the county delivers but it has struggled through the years because of funds being pillaged.

This misdirection of funds is perpetrated on the budgets of every department and program. It becomes critical when the service that suffers is one of health or safety. 

SAFETY SHOULD BE FIRST - IT'S NOT

The Union County Freeholder Board shamelessly used the events of 9/11 to boost their budget and increase property taxes, as if it would be "unpatriotic" to challenge their decision.

Taxpayers would tolerate an increase in taxes if it was going toward services that were returned to them, such as safety and security and health and welfare. The outrage from the taxpayers stems from the freeholders using taxes for non-essential self-serving projects.


The budget of the County Manager's Department increased 180% where the budget for Safety and Security went up only 110%. The percentage of the budget that is appropriated for Health and Welfare actually went down!

The freeholders explained that the increase in the budget and taxes were do to "extraordinarily difficult times." If this is true why pay \$1.8 million to put an atrium on the administration building? Couldn't the

atrium wait for when the times were just ordinary.

Freeholder Daniel Sullivan crowed about a \$2 million dollar grant that the county received from the federal government. This is the big item they are campaigning on. The claim to this accomplishment came after Sullivan blamed President Bush for the county not receiving their fair share of federal money.

Security must be a priority in these trying times. Yet, while the need for anti-terror equipment should be our main concern, the freeholders spent almost as much on their atrium as the money they received from the federal grant. They have also started to spend \$6 million of the \$20 million earmarked for renovations on the Union County Arts Center.

Security does come down to money and according to the budget figures Security Health and Safety is not high on the all Democrat board's priority list no matter what they say. Numbers don't lie. 

FREEHOLDERS ARE LAX IN EFFORT TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and with domestic violence being the 2nd most reported crime in Union County it seemed appropriate to get some information out there regarding this issue.

The NJ Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board was established by executive order in March of 2000, its purpose was to study fatalities in NJ that were a direct result of domestic violence (DV) in order to identify strategies for improving our state's response to this problem.

What made the study interesting was that the research team studied 67 cases of murder-suicide and determined that these 67 cases actually produced 145 fatalities over a 5-year period from '94 thru '99. Besides the 67 homicides and 67 suicides there were also 11 other fatalities associated with these cases including a responding police officer, 7 other friends and family members, 2 children of victims and a caregiver. Currently 15% of homicides in NJ are DV related.

These are sobering facts coupled with the statistic that one in five women will experience a domestic

violence incident in their lifetime and that recently there have been several high profile cases in Union County, it appears that DV has the capability of touching every resident's life in some way.

We may be the abused, we may have a victim in our family such as a sister or daughter, it may be a neighbor, perhaps our child's teacher or scout leader and unless someone tells you their story or hints in conversation of their plight you probably wouldn't allow the possibility to cross your mind.


DV has been the nasty hidden secret of our society that "good people" don't acknowledge and many victims still deny.

Several laws have been passed in NJ since 1982 some intended to protect victims such as the stalking laws and others which deal with the gathering of data from Police Departments and Prosecutors so we can learn how to combat these crimes. And just two weeks ago the NJ Department of Consumer Affairs announced that over \$1 million was being distributed to battered women's shelters as well as transitional housing programs, evidence that some of

our tax dollars are being well spent.

Union County, sad to say, is lagging behind. For starters you will be hard pressed to locate a Freeholder resolution declaring October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Second, financial support to the Battered Women's Shelter and their other related programs has continued to be sparse, less than \$10,000 per year in the past few years and only about \$400 this year.

What a worthy cause to support, a program that helps people empower themselves to take control of their lives while developing "safety plans" to keep themselves and their children alive and well. As illustrated, surviving domestic violence can be a life or death matter. Why has so little money been appropriated for DV, a very real "quality of life" issue, while so much is spent for non-essentials?

Somehow our county government has lost its way and forgotten that its purpose is to ensure the health and safety of the citizens. When the freeholder board gets it's priorities back to where they should be and finally supports worthy programs, which actually help people, than they will truly be "Connected to you". 


CLEAN PARKS

The county has a vast system of parks that have been neglected and overrun with geese waste. It has become impossible to play in the fields or lay a picnic blanket down. For the past three seasons the freeholders have been gassing the geese in an expensive, unsuccessful effort to try to control the population which grows by 15% a year.

The freeholders stated that they have exhausted all alternatives to deal with the problem. A request for a record of any geese management program from the last 8 years showed that statement to be a lie. The freeholders have never implemented a comprehensive program to manage the problem. Though they are quick to tout how dedicated they are to open space.

There are solutions to controlling the geese population. They are even used successfully by private golf courses and corporate campuses located in Union County.

One thing that is for certain is the problem will continue to multiply. The present freeholder board has refused to address the issue and the county manager has been inept at implementing a strategy.

Without a plan, the 5,574 acres of county parkland will remain an uninviting mess overrun by geese instead of people. 

PAY TO PLAY/NO-BID CONTRACTS/KUSHNER

The practice of kickbacks to campaign contributors

Union County Democrat Freeholders should follow the Governors lead NOW and change their system of awarding professional contracts.

“Now is the time for the all-Democrat Union County Freeholder Board to take a look at to whom they are awarding millions of dollars in professional contracts.” stated Republican freeholder candidate Patricia Quattrocchi. “A simple comparison of campaign contribution records and freeholder resolutions since 2000 is a real eye-opener and shows that “Pay-to-Play” is rampant in Union County government,” Quattrocchi said.

Quattrocchi and running mates Joe Renna, Frank Arena and Bruce Paterson are urging the all-Democrat freeholder Board to do the right thing

by immediately putting into place financial restrictions to regulate the awarding of contracts to developers, contractors and professional service firms such as lawyers, architects and engineers.

“It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to see what is going on here,” says Republican freeholder candidate Bruce Paterson. “The trail of paper speaks for itself, evidenced by the recent awarding of several contracts relating to the purchase and renovations to the Union County Arts Center. The contractor is a big contributor having given in the neighborhood of \$70,000 to the Union County Democratic Committee alone since 2000,” Paterson added.

The practice adds to the cost of services which is passed along to the

taxpayers,” Joe Renna explained.

“Our freeholders often award these contracts to companies that are not even located in Union County, thus rewarding them for their contributions.” said GOP freeholder candidate Frank Arena. “Recently they ignored the fact that the principals of JCA, a Monmouth County-based engineering firm, had pleaded guilty to violating the law and rewarded them with another six-figure contract - this is unacceptable.

The Democrats have ignored our demands to return nearly \$200,000 in campaign contributions from two heavy contributors to their machine, Charles Kushner, Ronald Manzo and their companies. It’s time that they realize that they work for the people of this County and not the Democrat party,” Arena said.

With an all-Democratic Freeholder Board there is no one to challenge unethical behavior and no one to demand accountability.

Pay to work

According to the Election Law Enforcement Commission county employees who received promotions and high salary increases contributed over \$64,000 to the freeholder election campaigns over the last four years.

FREEHOLDERS BLAME BUSH FOR PROBLEMS

During a debate hosted by the League of Women's Voters the incumbent Democrat Freeholder candidates blamed the problems with the county budget on the President of the United States, George W. Bush. The statement evoked laughter from the audience. In fact most of the Democrat candidates’ responses to questions from the audience were criticizing Bush and avoiding the county issues, which prompted calls from the audience to answer the questions.

At one point Freeholder Sullivan said that Bush gave more homeland security dollars to Wyoming than he did to New Jersey. This kind of statement just shows the ignorance of Sullivan about how the federal government operates.

The freeholders put a totally inept and inexperienced person in charge of 3000 employees and a \$360 million budget only because he is the nephew of State Senator Ray Lesniak, who controls the Union County Democrat Committee. In the past three years that Devanney has been in charge the budget ballooned.

When the county manager presents his proposed budget to the freeholder Board they must approve it. There is no one else responsible for the increase in the county budget other than the freeholders.

The municipalities and school boards must balance their budgets under the same economic pressures that the county does. Yet, the county's property tax increase is almost three times that of the lower local governments.

The problem at the county, in a nut shell, is lack of competent leadership. The freeholders are doing the bidding of the Democrat party in-stead of the people for fear they may lose favor with their political bosses.

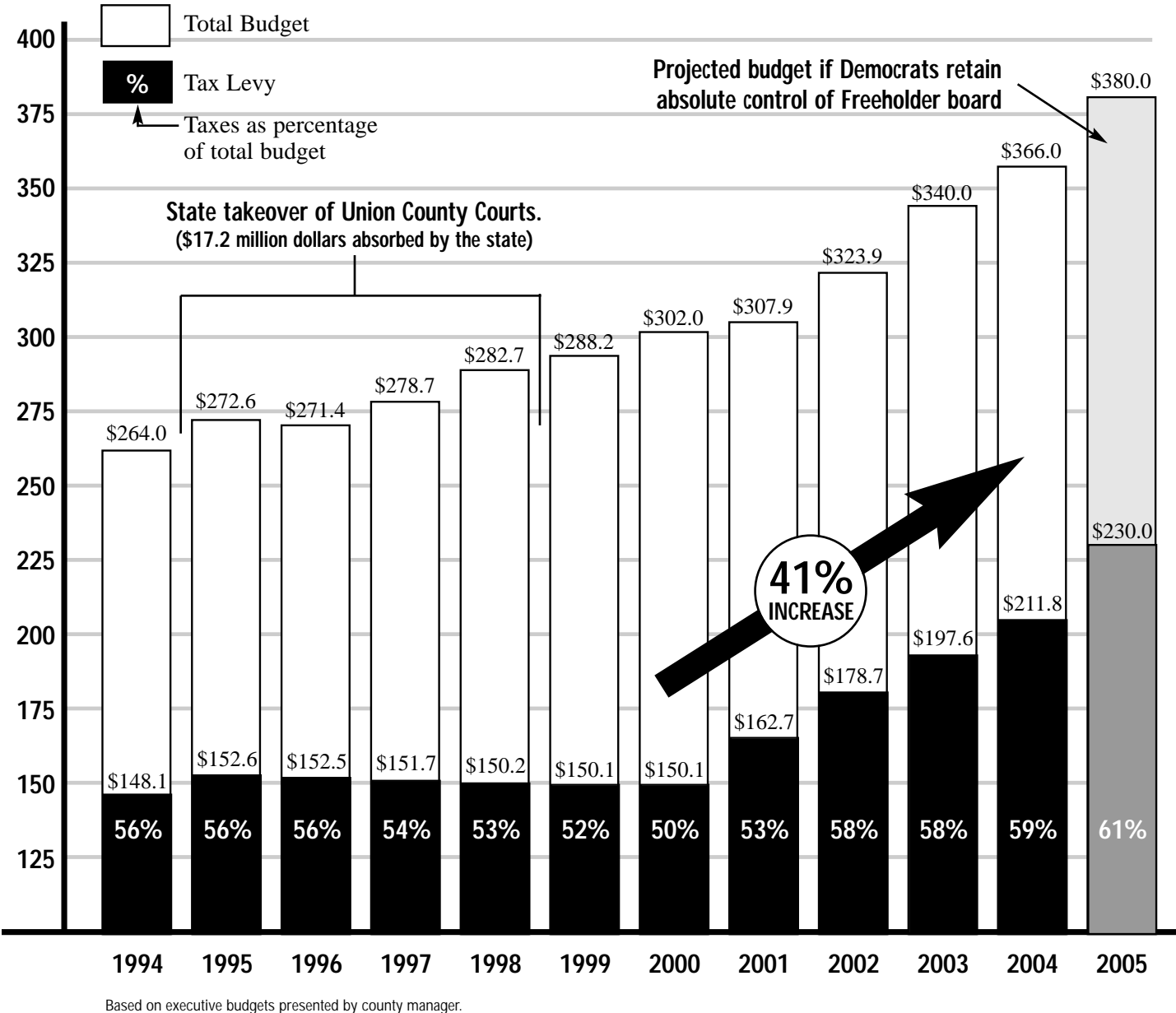
Sullivan has a six figure job with the Division of Motor Vehicles to

protect. If you count the \$30,000 he gets as a freeholder, his stipends, benefits and trips, it really adds up. Another perk of holding elected office is that every one in your family gets a job with the government. All the freeholders have to do is approve the no-bid contracts suggested by the party bosses and go along with whatever Devanney says.

Sullivan should be careful about criticizing people with no experience. He may get the county manager upset and he won't get the party line next time around.

COUNTY ON TRACK FOR ANOTHER TAX HIKE

Union County executive budgets from 1994 - 2004



Renters hit just as hard by property taxes


There is a perception among the general public that renters don't pay their fair share of housing expenses and thus are not entitled to the same rights and privileges as homeowners. Information gathered from the last US Census regarding housing in Union County in the year 2000 contradicts that notion. The census showed that there were 192,945 housing units in Union County with a little under half being renter-occupied units and the rest owner occupied units. 29.1% of households who rented expended 35 percent or more of the household income for housing, while 28% of owners spent less that 15 percent. Rental units in the county increased by approximately 4,000 over the 10-year period from 1989 to 1999. The increase in the number of private single-family units was not available.

It is apparent that renters contribute substantially to the economy of Union County since landlords traditionally base rental charges on the costs incurred to operate the rental property, cover mortgage payments, local and county property taxes, maintenance costs and generally build in a small profit. Some municipalities have rent control ordinances to protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords who raise rents unreasonably to realize substantial profits while neglecting to properly maintain the property. In New Jersey any rent increase over 4-5% is considered to be unconscionable and tenets, even

those without leases in non-rent controlled buildings, have recourse in the Landlord Tenant Relations Courts to settle the matter of an excessive rent increase, however property taxes can be considered a viable cause to increase a tenant's rent.

Landlords generally pass along property tax increases to their tenants and in Union County these increases have averaged approximately 40% over the past 4 years. In the case of a 3 or more unit building this can translate into a substantial monthly rent increase. By electing to office those candidates who are sensitive to their needs, renters can be assured that they will be able to continue to afford to stay in their "homes." By voting they can be assured that they have a voice in government, which is by and for all the people.

"As a renter I personally understand the plight of tenants and landlords first hand, this has been my family's home for over 23 years." said Freeholder candidate Patricia Quattrocchi. "I prefer not to have to move and will work hard for no tax increase budgets so that my landlord will not be forced to raise my rent to cover his property taxes."

The team of Joe Renna, Patricia Quattrocchi, Frank Arena and Bruce Paterson believe that renters have the ability to stop the county and municipal tax increases which are passed along to them by their landlords by voting for the team which proposes to reverse the current trend. 


Democrat Freeholder Candidate Resigns But Refuses to Withdraw From Election

In the wake a recent arrest Freeholder John Wohlrab, the Union County Democrats announced that Wohlrab was resigning from the Freeholder Board effective immediately. Wohlrab was arrested by the Linden Police Department on charges stemming from alleged domestic abuse. Wohlrab, a governmental affairs employee of Waste Management, Inc., was appointed last year to fill the unexpired freeholder term of Senator Nick Scutari. "The Union County Democrats have sunk to a new low in using the legal system to manipulate the electoral process and disenfranchise the voters of Union County," said Phil Morin, Union County Republican Chairman.

The Union County Democrat Committee will appoint a replacement for his vacant freeholder seat. Wohlrab, a candidate for this seat in the November election, has refused to withdraw his name from the ballot but has indicated, if elected, he will not serve. "First Torricelli, then Suliga and now Wohlrab, said Morin. Through this latest ballot sleight-of-hand, voters from Elizabeth to Springfield to Plainfield are being disenfranchised by the Union County Democrat machine's manipulation of this

freeholder seat. Wohlrab's seat was originally vacated when then-freeholder Nick Scutari filled the Senate seat of Joe Suliga following an arrest for alleged public intoxication and harassment of a female casino patron.

"This arrogance tops even Jim McGreevey's 90-day resignation notice," stated Morin. "We have entered a new low where manipulation of elections by New Jersey Democrats has become the norm. Wohlrab - a living, breathing individual intends to stay on the ballot, but has already refused to serve - before he is even up for election."

"The people of Union County will not let the Democrats highjack another election. We deserve better and until we send the all-Democrat freeholder board a message, they will continue to thumb their collective nose at the residents of this County, Morin said. "I join with our Republican Freeholder candidates Joe Renna, Patricia Quattrocchi, Frank Arena and Bruce Paterson in calling upon Freeholder Wohlrab to withdraw his name as a candidate from the election. And I further call upon the Democrats to leave this seat vacant until the people have cast their vote on November 2nd. 


If your a Democrat operative Union County has a job for you

If you volunteer to be the chairman of the your local Democrat committee your a cinch for a government job in Union County. It is a conflict of interest to be an elected official and work for the same agency that you oversee, but you may work for another. For instance some Union County Freeholders have state positions. Both Freeholder Dan Sullivan and Angel Estrata earn six figure salaries from the Department of Motor vehicle. Mary Ruotolo earns close to \$100,000 with the New Jersey Turnpike authority. This is in addition to the \$30,000 and benefits they get from the county.

If you don't want a job then the county could give the company you work for a contract. The county has a lucrative contract with Waste Management, Inc. who employs Freeholder Wohlrab as well as a contract with Chubb where Freeholder Mirabella is employed.

The County of Union does reciprocate. For instance the new postilion of Deputy Sheriff was created and filled by Assemblyman Joe Cryan, even though he is a restrauteur by trade.

The local chairmen do get first consideration. The following are the chairs of the local Democrat committees and the patronage position they have with the county.

Other chair persons secure employment in other government agencies like Doug LaPlaca of Roselle Park who gets a paycheck from the Department of Labor. Chairman Bill Malone of Rahway gets a good share of no-bid professional contracts for his insurance company that the Freeholders dish out. 

Town	Earnings from Union County
Fanwood	
Linda Stender	\$60,000
State Assembly salary:	\$49,000
Cranford	
Carolyn Vollero	\$71,000
Garwood	
Charles Lumbardo	\$60,000
Hillside	
Charlotte DeFilippo	\$120,000
Roselle	
Neil Cohen(esq. fees)	\$100,000
State Assembly salary:	\$49,000
Union	
Joe Cyan	\$97,000
State Assembly salary:	\$49,000
Winfield	
David Wright	\$79,000



Being Appointed County Manager:
\$143,000



Putting your wife on the payroll:
\$82,000



Being the nephew of a State Senator:
Priceless

There are somethings money can't buy.
•
For everything else, just raise taxes.

Train tracks don't lie


The county government does not operate with the public's interest in mind. If they did then the fiasco surrounding the negotiations to reactivate the freight line would not exist. The county government is a secret society in existence for their own benefit. This is evident when I went looking for information on this train deal.

The October 24, 2004 rally in Springfield was attended by mayors and counsel persons from towns in which the rail line is located. Not one of these elected officials were informed of the plan or included in the negotiations. These towns will bear the brunt of the effects of the train line and they have no say in the decisions being made by the county officials. It smacks of taxation without representation. These municipal officials were also elected. They have a responsibility to their constituents and they were denied their due process. As elected officials they too should have access to information that is not readily available to the public. It is bad enough to keep the public in the dark about government operations, which is par for the course in Union County,

but to keep the information from the local officials is unconscionable.

This issue has less to do about the train and more to do about the Union County Freeholders' abuse of the public trust. For they did not only hold back information but actually released misinformation. The Freeholders and County Manager contradicted themselves to a point that they are no longer credible.

The Freeholders sent a letter to the public that stated "There is no intention of restoring any rail service along these lines." Three months after they signed a contract to do so. They also said "The clearing of these rail lines is strictly for health and safety reasons, not for rail reactivation". Their statements and actions are so converse that it is impossible to know if there is truth in anything they say in the future.

Now the municipalities are battling to stop the reactivation of the train line. They have been met with a smug response from the county. Much of the waste in the county can be attributed to incompetence but the details of this issue are so calculated that they reek of corruption. 

UNION COUNTY FREEHOLDER CANDIDATES

Meet the Republicans Freeholder Candidates

“Union County taxes are out of control, abuse of power is rampant, and there is no one on the Union County Board of Freeholders who is watching out for the people of Union County. The Republican Party has put together a team that is committed to getting Union County government back in the hands of the people,” said Phil Morin, Chairman of the Union County Republican Committee. We have four great Freeholder candidates who bring a wealth of experience, energy and dedication to the table and who are determined to win the election and make a difference. Joe Renna (Cranford), Pat Quattrocchi (Garwood) and Frank Arena (Westfield) are running for the three-year term, and Bruce Paterson (Garwood) is running for the one-year unexpired term.

“We will fight to stop out of control tax increases and spending, and we will work towards creating a more open and honest government,” said Joe Renna, a Republican Freeholder candidate.

Joe Renna was born and raised in the Peterstown section of Elizabeth, NJ. He now lives in Cranford with his wife and two daughters. Renna was employed by the County of Union as a public relations official for Runnells Specialized Hospital, prior to running for Freeholder as an Independent last year. Renna is an Art Director. He specializes in marketing for government and non-profit agencies and publishes the Peterstown newspaper. He will earn his Masters in Public Administration this fall.

“The tax levy has increased by double digits in recent years. Seniors can’t afford the huge tax increases that the county has placed on them. Cutting the large county budget will give tax relief to all our citizens, and especially our seniors on fixed income,” said Pat Quattrocchi, Republican candidate for Union County Freeholder.

Mrs. Quattrocchi has served on the Garwood Borough Council. She chaired the Building and Grounds

Committee and served on the Streets and Roads and the Recreation Committees. She also served as liaison to the Union County Transportation Advisory Board and the Board of Education. Mrs. Quattrocchi has been an executive search consultant since 1983, is a member of the PTA and is the President of the Lions International in Garwood. She is the mother of seven children and lives in Garwood with her husband John.

"It is time to hold the Freeholders accountable to you, the hard working people of Union County. We are candidates who represent integrity and responsibility in our government," said Frank Arena, Republican candidate for Union County Freeholder.

Arena has been a resident of Westfield since 1994 where he resides with his wife and children. He graduated from Susquehanna University in 1980 with a BS in Economics and Marketing. Arena is a senior sales executive for a major metropolitan IT company where he is responsible for the marketing, sales and support services for major financial and government institutions including the City of New York. "My work with New York government gives me a unique perspective on many cost saving ideas and initiatives which will help to cut our taxes."


“Democrat Freeholders spent a total of over one billion dollars in tax revenues in the last 3 years. Look around and tell me if you see anything tangible for this much money. Where’s the billion dollars?” asked Bruce Paterson, Republican candidate for the unexpired term for Union County Freeholder.

Paterson lives in Garwood and is a mechanical engineer. He received his degree in engineering from Rutgers University. He has worked in Union County in two engineering firms for over twenty years. Paterson is an active member of the Garwood community, having served on a number of committees.

Republican Chairman Phil Morin also announced candidates for Union County Constitutional Offices. Michael Panagos of Westfield is running for Union County Surrogate. Panagos is an attorney in private practice since 1989, but prior to that he served as a Municipal Attorney and as First Deputy Union County Counsel. He served on the Westfield Town Council from 1987 to 1996 and served as Deputy Mayor in 1995. Panagos is a veteran of the United

States Air Force.

Peter Lijoi is running for Union County Sheriff. Lijoi is an attorney from Summit who has served the community at both the municipal and county level.

“It is time to end nepotism, pay for play, and underhanded ethics at the county; it is time to end double digit tax increases; it is time to give the county back to the people”, the Union County Republican candidates all agreed! 

Democrat Freeholder candidates at loss for excuses

Democrat Freeholder Dan
Sullivan has given up defending the reasons why he increased county taxes 40% over the last four years. He and his running mates have resorted to using their time to campaign for Kerry. Avoiding questions asked by the audience, at a debate held on the night of October 24, Sullivan blamed George Bush for the county's problems.

For his opening and closing statements, Sullivan read the same prepared speech that last year's Democrat candidate read. The statement was outdated and irrelevant.

In the statement he accused the Republican candidates of raising taxes in their own towns. Except, unlike last year, this year's candidates aren't members of their town's councils.

The Democrat candidates gave no indication that next year's budget would not continue the present rate of increase. Questions concerning the growing budget were answered again with attacks on the president.

Normally incumbents can stand on their record during a campaign. But there was little the Democrat candidates could point to.

In an earlier debate that morning Adrian Mapp told the Union County Employer Legislative Committee

that the “government was in charge of creating jobs.” Republican candidate Frank Arena quickly corrected Mapp and told the private industry leaders in the room that “they are the ones who create the jobs. Government should create an environment for businesses to thrive.”

The third Democrat candidate, Bette Jean Kowalski, had little knowledge of county government and offered no opinion while the fourth Democrat candidate, John Wohlrab, did not attend the debate. Though he remains on the ballot, he has refused to engage the public during the campaign and said he will decline the position if elected.

It seems that the upper level of the Democrat party has dissolved. Two Freeholders declined to run again and two have stepped down in the past month.

Sullivan is floundering in a mess that the Democrat party made of county government over the past ten years. He is stuck trying to explain how things got so bad.

The last straw that they are grabbing at is the popularity of the Sheriff. But the Democrat Party already created a position for a political appointee who will take over as soon as the election is over and they will nudge the Sheriff out. 🍷

★ ★ ★ VOTE NOV 2, 2004 ★ ★ ★

VOTE COLUMN

Union County Freeholders

Joe RENNA



Patricia
QUATTROCCHI

**Frank
ARENA**

**Bruce
PATERSON**

B FOR A CHANGE

VOTE REPUBLICAN

Paid for by Renna, Quattrocchi, Arena and Paterson for Freeholder

2004 TER NEWS ENDORSEMENTS

Union County Freeholders



Joe Renna



Patricia Quattrocchi



Frank L. Arena



Bruce Paterson

Surrogate Sheriff



Mike Panagos



Peter Lijoi

Berkeley Heights



David Cohen

Clark



Sal Bonaccorso



Angel Albanese



Al Barr



Sheila Whiting



Pat O'Connor

Cranford



Bob Donovan



Michael A. Plick

Elizabeth



Dr. Daniel Nozza



Ralph Fabre



Magnolia Mosquera



Chris Rivera

Fanwood



Maureen Mawby



Joel Stroz

Garwood



Victor DeFilippo



Anthony Sytko

Kenilworth



Kathi Fliamingo



Mike Batkiw

Mountainside



Werner C. Schon



Glenn Mortimer

New Providence



J. Brooke Hern



Julia MacDermott



John A. Thoms

Plainfield



Benjamin B. Miller



Karen A. Gore

Rahway



Patrick Cassio



Frank Janusz



Darren Lesinski



Irene Brouard



James Pekarofski



Elyse Medved

Roselle

Robert A. Rubilla

Park

Loren Harms

Scotch Plains



Martin Marks



Paulette Coronato

Springfield



Fran Corcione



Gary Russikoff

Summit



Tom Getzendanner



Mike Helmer

Union



Frank L. Prather, Sr.
Column F

Winfield



Bob Reilly

VOTE
COLUMN
B
FOR A CHANGE