

Steuben County Newsletter

Spring 2024



*****Please Distribute to All Interested Board Members and the Public*****

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK....

We gladly welcome spring weather and all the wonderful daylight that comes with it. Your County officials and all of the staff are working hard and focusing on a number of important initiatives.

In this newsletter, you will find updates on new programs that are being implemented along with updates on other County services.

Please feel free to reach out to your County officials with questions or suggestions. We work with you and for you to make our communities the best that they can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly H Fitzpatrick".

Kelly Fitzpatrick
Chair
Steuben County Legislature

Supplemental County EMS Services

Steuben County is slated to begin supplemental EMS services the week of June 24th. County staff have been working closely with the Legislature to procure needed supplies and services, including equipment, medications, and billing and charting software, along with submission of all required documents for the County to obtain a Municipal Certificate of Need to operate. In addition, we are currently recruiting temporary part-time Paramedics and EMTs.

The County's plan is to have two staffed BLS ambulances operational Monday-Friday from 6am-6pm along with one ALS Flycar operational 24x7x365. These resources will be able to operate anywhere within Steuben County.

As a reminder, these services are meant to be supplemental in nature; helping to fill coverage gaps and reduce the need for agencies to leave their home territory for mutual aid calls. With this, the County will not be able to assume full coverage of any one municipality or groups of municipalities. This will be a work in progress for us all, and our EMS Coordinator and other staff will work hard to position these assets where gaps can be best filled.

In addition, the County does intend to bill the patient/insurance for service when it's County crews that respond. This may be a change for some residents, as there are a number of agencies in the County that do not bill for their services. We would welcome your assistance in communicating this to our residents.

This is certainly a dynamic situation and we aim to be flexible as we begin these supplemental services. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Jack Wheeler, County Manager or Tim Marshall, Director of Public Safety.

Youth Bureau - Youth Sports Funding Available

The Youth Bureau published a Request for Proposals from not-profit and municipal entities to provide sports related activities in 2024 through three different funding opportunities, per the direction of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS): Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding (YSEF), YSEF Infrastructure (YSEF-I), Youth Team Sports (YTS).

Multiple awards in each funding opportunity are anticipated, and the goals for the collective impact across the County are to: benefit as many youth as possible, provide a variety of sports for a broad range of youth interests, and provide sports activities in under-resourced communities where resources are scarce and for underrepresented populations.

The eligibility and activities of each funding opportunity vary, and eligible entities may submit proposals for one or more opportunities. Questions pertaining to the RFP must be submitted by June 19th, and the completed proposals must be received by June 26th. The funding period is January 1, 2024 to September 30, 2024. The RFP and associated materials are available on the Youth Bureau's webpage at <https://www.steubencountyny.gov/bids.aspx?bidID=250>.

Office For the Aging – AmeriCorps Seniors Grant Award

We are thrilled to announce that the Steuben County Office for the Aging has been awarded a new AmeriCorps Seniors project, bringing the Senior Companions Program (SCP) to our community! This exciting initiative, set to launch with federal funding of \$202,356, will make a significant impact on the lives of our elderly residents and their caregivers.

The Senior Companions Program is a unique opportunity that pairs volunteers aged 55 and over with clients in the EISEP (Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program) and Caregiver Resources Program. These volunteers will provide vital support to help seniors maintain their independence and offer respite services to caregivers.

Volunteers in the SCP commit to serving between 260 and 2,080 hours annually, which equates to 5 to 40 hours a week. What sets this program apart is the \$4/hour stipend available to income-qualified volunteers. To be eligible for the stipend, volunteers must have an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

The primary goal of the SCP is to engage a minimum of 30 dedicated AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers who will serve approximately 85 clients. This initiative will also create a new position within the county—the SCP Caseworker—who will oversee the program and ensure its success.

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers will provide invaluable support to EISEP clients by offering companionship, assisting with light chores, and providing transportation to essential appointments. For caregivers, the program offers respite services, allowing them to take much-needed breaks, run errands, or simply take time for self-care, knowing their loved ones are in good hands.

We are particularly proud that this is the first SCP project designed to serve a completely rural area, a distinction that sets it apart from similar projects in urban centers like Buffalo, Rochester, and New York City. The funding for the SCP project begins on July 1, 2024, and while it will take some time to fully implement, we anticipate beginning volunteer-client matches in 2025.

This initiative marks a significant step forward in supporting our elderly residents and their caregivers. The Steuben County Office for the Aging is excited to bring this much-needed program to our community, and we look forward to the positive impact it will have.

Stay tuned for more updates as we progress with the Senior Companions Program and join us in celebrating this wonderful addition to our county's services!

Finance Office

The County ended the 2023 fiscal year with strong sales tax collections. Year-to-date gross collections in 2024 are below where we were at this time in 2023 by 4.34%, yet remain strong. We project gross collections at year-end will be slightly under 2022 and 2023 levels, but significantly greater than collections experienced in 2020 and 2021. We remain on track to meet the County's 2024 budget and, if collections remain at the current levels, should end the 2024 year with collections exceeding our budget.

Public Health – COVID-19 Test Kits

Public Health has procured a new supply COVID-19 home test kits for community distribution. We are working closely again with the Southern Tier Library System for distribution to every library in the County as well as some food pantries. If you are interested in having a supply of these home test kits in your municipal buildings and offices, we would be happy to set up a time for delivery directly to you. Please call our office at 607-664-2438 and ask for Ryan to make drop off arrangements.

Veterans' Service Agency – Lifetime Liberty Pass

As summer is fast approaching and we look forward to spending more time outdoors in our beautiful County and State, New York State has expanded the eligibility as of April 1st, 2024. Previously, the Lifetime Liberty Pass program required a disability rating but has now been extended to include all Veterans and Gold Star parents, Spouses and Children who are New York residents.

Members receive the following benefits:

- Free vehicle entry to state parks and Department of Environmental Conservation-operated campgrounds and day use areas, boat launch sites, historic sites, arboretums and park preserves;
- Free greens fees at state park-operated golf courses;
- Free swimming pool entrance at pools operated by state parks;
- Discounted campsite and cabin rentals at state parks- and DEC-operated campgrounds.

For additional information about the Lifetime Liberty Pass, National Parks Pass or Veterans benefits contact the Steuben County Veterans' Service Agency at (607) 664-2528/2198.

Department of Social Services – National Adoption Day

The annual Foster Parent Banquet was held on May 16, 2024, at the Bath Country Club. Our theme, Bridging the Gap, included 50 participants where the Department of Social Services recognized the dedication of all individuals who provide support and stability, bridging the gap between adversity and opportunity, uncertainty, and security.

It was a night of celebration with our community of foster parents recognizing their dedication to partnering with the Department to not only building bridges but creating pathways that bring brighter tomorrows. We were very fortunate once again to have the presence and support of our Steuben County Legislature and many Community Partners. Several local establishments donated door prizes to show their appreciation for our foster parents. Each foster parent received a certificate of acknowledgement and enjoyed a catered meal by Frans Landing out of Addison, NY. Additionally, Foster Parents, Troy Preston and Kevin Hillman, donated \$25 gift certificates for Fran's Landing to each Foster Parent. We want to recognize our staff who truly made the night a success arranging, decorating, and generously providing childcare so that our foster parents were able to have an evening solely dedicated to them.