



Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that summer has come to an end and fall is upon us! For those of you with children, I hope you've had a great start to the school year.

This is also a time of many fun town festivals and celebrations. **Over the last couple of weeks I have been to a number of events including Chappaqua Community Day, Armonk's Cider and Donut Festival & Run for Love 5K, the 100th Anniversary of the Bedford Fire Department, and the Lewisboro Library Fair**, Lewisboro's largest community event, which raises funds for the Lewisboro Library.

It was in the spirit of raising those funds that I volunteered for my first (and surely not last) stint in the infamous Library Fair dunk tank, where **early into my shift my Chief of Staff Heather Mieko Lackey joyously dunked me on her first try.**

Clearly, she was highly motivated.



It has been a busy time, so let's get to it! But before that...

**Shana Tova to everyone celebrating the Jewish New Year.
Wishing you a happy and healthy 5784!**



[Exciting News: Route 35 Repaving Update!](#)

I am thrilled to announce that the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) has slated Route 35 between Route 22 in Katonah and Bouton Road in South Salem for repaving, with the project expected to begin in Spring 2024. This construction expands an earlier-announced project to repave a smaller portion of Route 35 in Cross River, and follows continuous discussions between the DOT and Senator Pete Harckham, County Legislator Erika Pierce, Lewisboro Town Supervisor Tony Gonçalves, and myself regarding the deteriorating condition of Route 35.

The paving will be scheduled at night to avoid major disruption to the community. It is expected to be funded entirely from state funds and will go out for bid this winter.

Since taking office in January 2021, repaving Route 35 has been one of my top repaving priorities for District 93. **I am grateful to all my colleagues in government who joined me in advocating relentlessly for this project, as well as all the residents who contacted my office and the DOT regarding the serious need for repaving.** I am also grateful to DOT Regional Director Lance MacMillan and his staff, who took the time to meet with us, stay in close communication, and ultimately agree that this stretch of Route 35 needs to be redone.



And as a new resident of the Town of Lewisboro who finds himself on Route 35 regularly, I look forward to driving the newly-repaved road!

As the repaving of Route 35 will not begin until next year, **I am encouraging all residents to keep my office and the DOT apprised of any serious issues that arise on Route 35**, and to call 1-800-POTHOLE for any potholes that crop up.

(Project details can be found on the DOT website [here](#). You can read my joint press release with Senator Harckham regarding the announcement [here](#).)

[Sponsored Legislation Signed into Law](#)

I am pleased to report that Governor Kathy Hochul recently signed into law two pieces of legislation I sponsored in the Assembly.

- **[S.4878-A / A.398-A](#) requires employers to give notice to their employees that they are eligible for unemployment insurance when the employer terminates or interrupts employment or reduces hours to a point that the employee qualifies for total or partial unemployment.** I am especially pleased this legislation [has been signed](#) for those who are partially unemployed and may not realize they could be eligible for unemployment benefits.

My thanks to State Senator Shelley Mayer for drafting and sponsoring this important legislation in the Senate, which I was honored to sponsor in the Assembly

- **[S.6363A / A.7247](#) will assist and bolster the South Salem Fire Department, expanding the purpose of the South Salem Exempt Fireman's Benevolent Association to now include: promoting friendly association for the betterment of its members; providing relief, aid, and**

assistance to its members and family members who are injured, disabled or in need of financial relief; providing for the health and safety of its members; maintaining suitable headquarters for its members; promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the members; enhancing the morale of the members by providing social and recreational activities; and promoting the volunteer fire service within the territory served.

Our volunteer fire agencies are struggling to recruit and retain members. We owe these brave volunteers a debt of gratitude for all that they do to keep us safe, and **I am delighted that this new law – which was sponsored by Senator Pete Harckham in the Senate – will provide additional tools to the South Salem Fire Department in their recruitment and retainment effort.**

“Save the Hudson” Bill Signed into Law

I am also very pleased that Governor Kathy Hochul **last month signed** the "Save the Hudson Bill"



(S.6893/A.7208) **to restrict the discharge of any radiological substance into the Hudson River in connection with the decommissioning of a nuclear power plant,** blocking Holtec's plan to dump an additional 1 ½ million gallons of radioactive water into the river as part of its "safety plan" to decommission Indian Point. The environmental community in Westchester and throughout the State are thrilled and grateful.

Congratulations to my colleagues Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg for sponsoring this legislation (of which I was a proud cosponsor) and spearheading this effort in the Legislature.

Learning from Our Neighboring State

In trying to find solutions to some of New York's most pressing problems, sometimes we can look to our neighboring states to see what solutions they are utilizing and what might be a good model for New York. **It was with that in mind that I joined Senator Harckham last month in New Jersey for two interesting and important site visits.**

The **Bergen County United Way** (UW) is a true trailblazer in the creation of affordable, supportive housing for people with disabilities, veterans, and seniors. Senator Harckham and I were highly impressed with a tour we took, led by UW CEO Tom Toronto, of The Green at Florham Park: 62 units of independent living apartments and one four-bedroom licensed group home for people with disabilities.



The project is just one of many that UW has undertaken in northern New Jersey, in collaboration with the NJ Department of Developmental Disabilities. It's a model for success that bears replication in New York. **My thanks to parent advocates Wendy Belzberg and Suzanne Aisenberg for their trailblazing and for arranging the insightful tour.**

Later that day, [New Jersey American Water](#), owner and operator of the Canoe Brook Reservoir in Short Hills, NJ, provided Senator Harckham and me a tour of its new floating solar array. It is the largest floating array in the country, with more than 16,000 solar panels that can produce 8.9 megawatts of clean energy, providing nearly all of the electricity needed for its water treatment plant.



With New York's vast acreage of reservoirs, especially in New York City, this cutting-edge technology provides significant opportunities here in New York which Senator Harckham – who chairs the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee – and I will be pursuing.

[Touring Local Correctional Facilities](#)

Upon entering the Assembly in 2021, one of the committees I requested to join – and was pleased to be assigned to – was the Standing Committee on Correction. As Bedford Town Supervisor, I established the [Bedford Prison Relations Advisory Committee](#) (PRAC) as an advisory committee to the Town Board, and have always felt very strongly that the goal of incarceration should be rehabilitation. I take my position on the Correction Committee very seriously, and to help me with that effort, I set up a Correction Advisory Committee made up of advocates, formerly incarcerated individuals, a former correction officer, and others.

I recently joined a tour of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility (BHCF), the State's only maximum-security correctional facility for women. BHCF Superintendent Eileen Russell arranged the tour with Sharon Ballen, head of PRAC and a member of my Correction Advisory Committee.

The tour took us to several sections of the BHCF. We were able to see the library/computer lab where classes are held for those going for their Associates or Bachelors degrees, the truck driving simulator for those starting the process of getting their commercial driver license (my Chief of Staff tested it out!), and the classrooms that also offer vocational training for areas such as cosmetology. We also saw the office of the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles, where incarcerated individuals serve as the intake call center for incoming calls to the DMV (any call requiring personal information is transferred to another DMV unit).



Other stops on the tour were visiting the babies in the Wellness Nursery, the extensive and thorough medical building, and the puppies with the Puppies Behind Bars program.

I thank Superintendent Russell and her staff for their humane treatment of the women incarcerated at BHCF and for promoting the goal of rehabilitation.

I also took a tour over the summer of the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, arranged by the visionary [Rehabilitation Through the Arts](#) (RTA), with a focus on RTA's work to help change the lives of those incarcerated at the facility. Founded at Sing Sing in 1996, and now operating in six facilities, RTA's mission is to "develop critical life skills through the arts, modeling an approach to the justice system based on human dignity rather than punishment." Professional teaching artists lead year-round workshops in theatre, dance, music, creative writing, and visual arts. The goal is to

build critical life skills, so that RTA members can meet the challenges of connecting with family and community when released.

RTA has worked in close partnership with the highest leadership of the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS). **Their programs have proved to be an enormous success, with a less than 3% recidivism rate (compared to the national rate of 60%) amongst those who graduated from RTA's program and re-entered society.**

I was delighted that my colleague in the Legislature, State Senator Julia Salazar, who chairs the Senate Committee on Crime and Corrections, and DOCCS Acting Commissioner Dan Martuscello joined on the tour, led by the Sing Sing Superintendent. Our thanks to RTA Board Chair E. Annette Nash Govan for arranging the tour.

[From the Desk of the NYS Attorney General...](#)

News from New York State Attorney General Letitia James

September Highlights

Attorney General Letitia James, along with NY State Education Department Commissioner Betty Rosa, reminds New Yorkers that every young person in New York between the ages of 5 and 21 has the right to a free public-school education, regardless of nationality or immigration status. In a newly released "Know Your Rights" publication, Attorney General James reminds New Yorkers of their rights and offers specific information regarding what documentation can and cannot be requested to prove residency.



You must live in a school district to attend its schools for free. And while a school may ask you to submit documents proving where you live, they must accept many different kinds of proof, such as a letter or affidavit from a social worker, teacher, lawyer, religious leader or other person with personal knowledge of your address. Schools should not require that all residency proofs be less than 30 days old and should not report or threaten to report information about your living situation to local code-enforcement authorities.

In addition, when a student requests enrollment, the school must allow that student to begin attending classes as soon as possible – ideally the next school day. The student then has three business days to prove residency and if the school decides that the student is not a resident, it must provide a written explanation of its decision and tell you how to appeal it.

All of this information and lots more can be found online at: ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/letters/kyr-ed.pdf. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) encourages New Yorkers who have been denied enrollment at their local public school to file a complaint by calling 1-800-771-7755 or on the OAG website (ag.ny.gov/file-complaint).

[New Student Loan Payment Initiative](#)

The Biden administration recently announced a new student loan repayment initiative called the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan. Many borrowers with loans held by the Education Department – which include direct subsidized and unsubsidized loans, Direct PLUS loans for graduate and professional students, and direct consolidation loans – will be able to lower or eliminate their monthly payments. **For more information and to sign up [please click here.](#)**



[September 28: Multilingual Job Fair](#)

Looking for a job or know someone who is? **On September 28, Westchester County is holding a Multilingual Job Fair at the Westchester County Center.** Companies, the government, and other organizations in Westchester are looking to hire employees who speak different languages, and at all levels.

Registration is suggested by [clicking here.](#)

Red Cross Seeking Volunteers!

The American Red Cross is currently holding its Fall into Service Recruitment Initiative. **Communities across the country look to the Red Cross every day, and their need for volunteers is urgent.**

If you are interested in volunteering with the Red Cross, [please click here.](#)



Join Us and Volunteer!

This fall please help us spread the word about our Fall into Service Recruitment Initiative. Communities across the country count on the Red Cross every day. The need remains critical and constant during the fall season. From helping people effected by disasters, like home fires and floods, to supporting the collection of lifesaving blood, volunteers can make a difference. Ninety percent of our workforce are volunteers who are inspired to give back. You can be a part of this effort by helping us spread the word to your [employees, members, volunteers.



Volunteers Urgently Needed for the Following Positions in Your Community:

Disaster Action Team

Help comfort and support people in your community by meeting any immediate needs such as food, shelter, clothing or supplies and connecting them to long term recovery services. We supply all the training you need.

Disaster Health Services Team

Use your professional skills as a licensed healthcare provider to deliver hands on care and education to shelter residents. Free online training will be provided and can count towards nursing continuing education units.

Shelter Service Associate

Support the day-to-day activities within a shelter which may include working in reception, registration, feeding, dormitory, information, or other areas within a shelter.

Disaster Workforce Engagement Volunteer

Support the regional disaster workforce with readiness activities and behind the scenes projects. Must have computer skills and great phone etiquette.

Discover the role that's right for you!



Scan with cell phone camera to apply.

redcross.org/volunteertoday

recruitmentgny@redcross.org

Another Summer of Wonderful Interns!

Finally, **our office once again lucked out this summer with an amazing group of interns.** Unfortunately, we've had to say goodbye to many of them as they leave for colleges across the country.

Ian Rhodes is heading off to Colgate University after interning with us since June of 2022; Emmy Kahan is heading to Columbia University; Kerry Hernandez is heading back to SUNY New Paltz; Tyler Leitner is heading back to Binghamton University; Samuel Berger is heading back to Occidental College in California; Kyle Vinski is heading back to Manhattanville College; and Flora Elghanayan is going back to Skidmore College. Thank you also to our high school interns Divya Sharma, Alex Woodworth, Matt Samalin, and Maggie Pollack.

We thank them for all their hard work and know they have bright futures ahead of them.



*Some of our amazing summer interns:
Ian Rhodes, Emmy Kahan, Kerry Hernandez, Tyler Leitner, Samuel Berger,
Kyle Vinski, Divya Sharma*

As always, **please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or if there is any assistance we can provide.** You can always reach me at burdickc@nyassembly.gov or by calling (914) 244-4450. My staff and I are always ready to help. Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for continued up-to-date information.

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Burdick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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