

NEWS FROM ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ULSTER COUNTY RECEIVES NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR ITS “WINTER WATCH” PROGRAM

Kingston, NY (June 10, 2009) – Ulster County Executive Mike Hein is pleased to announce that Ulster County has been selected for the prestigious 2009 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award, for its “Winter Watch” program.

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of NACo’s Achievement Award program. The program is designed to recognize high caliber county programs throughout the United States that promote quality, efficiency and responsive management and administration.

“I am elated that Ulster County was chosen to receive national recognition for our “Winter Watch” program. It was truly a collaborative effort between the County, local governments, State and Federal officials and agencies, the business community, religious organizations and the non-profit sector. I’m proud of everyone who stepped up to the plate with their input, dedication and hard work,” said the County Executive. He added, “I believe this type of pro-active and cooperative approach is a great example of government at its best.”

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Due to skyrocketing fuel prices and the economic downturn in the summer of 2008, Ulster County government hosted a Home Heating Summit in July. Participants discussed contingency plans for anticipated emergencies during the winter months. Following the Summit, a “Winter Watch” taskforce was established to incorporate its recommendations into plans for the anticipated crisis. “Winter Watch” was successful because numerous high ranking County officials and non-profit leaders came together and worked closely for months to ensure that no Ulster County resident was left cold or hungry.

“Winter Watch” created a “one stop” holistic approach to imparting information and providing basic support, during this incredibly difficult time.

The objectives of the “Winter Watch” program were to:

- Keep Ulster County residents, especially the elderly and families with children, warm and fed;
- Provide working families, when needed, with one time assistance;
- Minimize housing displacements;
- Transport people to work, to ensure individuals remained employed;
- Promote safety (regarding the use of various heating appliances and devices);
- Educate the public about the available resources.

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