

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ULSTER COUNTY IMPLEMENTS VOLUNTARY TARGETED EARLY RETIREMENT PROGRAM *“Potential 5-Year Cost Savings in Excess of \$6.5 Million Dollars”*

Kingston, NY (August 10, 2009) - Ulster County Executive Michael P. Hein announced that the County is offering a voluntary targeted early retirement program to 31 CSEA retirement-eligible employees. The impact of this program would result in a *potential savings to taxpayers, over the initial 5-year period, of approximately \$6.62 million dollars in salary and benefits*, if all 31 employees accept the offer. These 31 were selected because the individuals are retirement eligible and their positions will not be refilled. Potential savings *after* the initial 5-year period would be approximately \$1.3 million, per year, thereafter.

County Executive Hein stated, “Now is the time to take decisive and pro-active steps to protect the taxpayers of Ulster County and strategically address our extraordinary fiscal challenges. This program offers a unique opportunity for eligible employees to retire, and for taxpayers to realize a true savings as we continue to explore any an all cost-saving measures.”

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The early retirement incentive provides for the County to pay an increased percentage of health care premiums. When a retiree becomes eligible for Medicare, the overall premium costs would substantially decrease as the retiree is transitioned to a County-sponsored Medicare supplement plan.

Alan Lomita, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the Ulster County Legislature said, "I commend the County Executive on his action. I believe that the proposed buyout is a win-win for all involved. With the State deficit increasing and sales tax revenue declining it is becoming more and more difficult to find ways to keep property taxes down. This action will allow the County government to scale back the size of government and potentially save more than 6 million dollars over the next 5 years for the residents of Ulster County."

Terry Gilbert, President of CSEA Local 856 said, "This is a rare opportunity for some of our members to take advantage of an early retirement option, which will provide them with assurances of continued health care coverage into their retirement years. Health care coverage in retirement is one of greatest areas of concern to our members. I think this program addresses that particular concern for the employees that accept the County's offer, while also benefiting the taxpayers of Ulster County."

The August 7, 2009 letter advising all County employees of this initiative is attached.

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