

## News from SALEM COUNTY

Office of Public Information

Mr. Robin B. Weinstein, Public Information Officer Office Phone: (856) 935-7510 ext. 8202 After Hours: (609) 504-4275

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 14, 2006

## SALEM COUNTY IS ON THE MOVE

The Board of Chosen Freeholders declares that Salem County is moving forward on many fronts which will focus on preservation, renovation, and innovation.

(Salem, NJ)-- Freeholder Director Lee Ware today announced that the Salem County team has been making excellent progress on many fronts including the renovation of the county railroad, preserving farmland/open space, and achieving economic growth through innovative cooperative measures. The success of these projects is deeply connected to the team mentality that pervades Salem County.

"We are in this together and we are in it to be successful," said Director Ware. "Salem County is a great place to live, work, play, and relax. The Freeholders have been actively working with businesses and various government entities to ensure continued success in our county."

In 2005, the Freeholders were alerted that Anchor Glass in Salem City was considering leaving New Jersey because of the high cost of doing business that State mandates created. Under the direction of Freeholder (then Director) Charles "Chuck" Sullivan, Chairman of the Business Retention Task Force for Salem County, the County reached out to the Third District Legislators and the New Jersey Department of Commerce and orchestrated a meeting between all parties involved. Through cooperation and perseverance legislation was crafted that would help Anchor Glass, while also encouraging future economic growth throughout the region.

"When you receive word that a valued employer such as Anchor Glass is thinking about leaving you have to spring into immediate action because the potential impact is huge," said Freeholder Chuck Sullivan. "We were able to get everyone together in a room and work out the problems and potential solutions and then we got to work to make those potentialities a reality."

A key component of the plan to retain Anchor Glass was and is the continued rehabilitation of the Salem County railroad. The 18 mile short line railroad, which runs from Swedesboro to the Salem Port, over the Oldman's Creek Trestle, provides raw materials freight delivery to various businesses in Salem County, including Anchor Glass, Mannington Mills, South Jersey Farmer's Exchange and others. Currently, the condition of the rail prevents the trains from traveling more than 5 miles per hour, taking

the operator nearly half a shift to simply move the cars from Swedesboro to Salem in addition to the time it takes to load and unload cars.

"We were able to work with our Federal and State representatives to secure various levels of funding to make the renovations of the railroad a reality," said Freeholder Beth Timberman, Chair of the Planning & Transportation Committee. "During the last couple of years we have made a concentrated effort to obtain funds to improve the rail, thereby helping industry. Last year we obtained over \$7 million in free money from CREDA, DRPA, DOT, etc. Additionally, for the first time last year we established a line item for matching funds, minor repairs and purchases."

Salem County has achieved great successes in attracting and retaining businesses that promote economic growth through innovative proactive measures, such as working with the Third District Legislators in helping to keep Anchor in Salem, and renovating existing resources in order to provide an infrastructure to support our economic development plan. These are great achievements that are matched by the Freeholders active commitment in sustaining the rich environmental resources in the County.

"We believe that the environment does not need to be sacrificed in order to achieve positive economic growth," said Director Lee Ware. "We are continuing our efforts to preserve open space and farmland through proper planning and community input. This year we will be continuing our commitment to open space protection by preserving our 20,000<sup>th</sup> acre of farmland. Additionally, we will continue to seek the public's input in our preservation models to ensure that we are doing this important task responsibly."

Salem County continues to combine tradition with innovation in order to promote positive economic development and environmental protection. "By protecting our resources, capitalizing on our strengths, and working as a team we have been able to achieve great success and we are optimistic as we look toward a future of promise," said Director Ware.