

Good evening...

Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno, Senate President Sweeney, Assemblywoman Celeste Riley, Sheriff Chuck Mill, County Clerk Gilda Gill, Surrogate Nikki Burke, former freeholders, honored guests; I would like to thank everyone for attending the annual Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders Reorganization meeting.

Congratulations to Freeholders Dale Cross and Bruce Bobbitt for winning re-election.

Welcome Freeholder Bob Vanderslice. I am excited to have on board and look forward to working with you. Thank you Dave Lindenmuth for your years of service on the Freeholder Board. I wish you all the best.

A heartfelt thank you to my family: my Mother, my husband John, and our sons Jonathan and Justin for their continued love and support.

Former Director Ware; thank you for your friendship and leadership.

I am honored and humble that my colleagues have selected me to serve as Director this year. Thank you for your confidence. I look forward to working with this board to improve the quality of life for our residents.

**2012 will be a challenging year for Salem County.** It is time for us to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

The eyes of our constituents are on this new administration, their expectations are understandably high. They will be watching closely, especially during the first 100 days. First impressions are lasting impressions. WE will work hard to make a positive impact on Salem County.

The focus this evening is, of course, the shift in the majority. After nine years, the Republicans once again maintain the majority of the seats on this freeholder board. And for the first time in nearly a decade will be in a position to effectuate change in our great county. **Gaining majority was just the means, not the objective.** The goal is to bring a better, effective, responsive and efficient government to the citizens of this County. For the last nine years the Republican minority has had the passion, but not the position to enact true change.

Because the people of Salem County deserve to know what is happening with their government, I am proud to announce a major change in the way we conduct county business. This year in addition to our regular Freeholder meetings we, the entire board will meet two hours prior in a public workshop. NO official action will be taken at these workshop meetings. These workshops will provide a forum for all seven freeholders to review proposals, discuss policy, conduct research and properly plan for the future of Salem County. These meetings will ensure that all freeholders and the public have an opportunity to understand proposals before official action is taken.

Let me be perfectly clear, these meetings are **OPEN** to the public.

Today is just the beginning on the long journey of change. Not change for the sake of change but change that sets this County on the right course. I am honored to serve on a Freeholder Board made up of seven intelligent, caring and dedicated people. My goal as Director is to unite and channel their efforts for you, the people of Salem County. I pledge to work with my colleagues as just that colleagues, not "us" and "them".

**As Director I will embrace strategic planning and will incorporate administrative reforms that will enhance the efficiency of county government. I will focus on the needs of the constituency and value the wishes of the taxpayer.**

I pledge that we will work to finish a project that was started over a decade ago: **modernizing** the county's emergency services communications system. Our law enforcement personnel and emergency responders deserve a state of the art communication system. They risk their lives every time they receive the call to duty. It is high time we put our first responders at the top of the priority list.

I have always tried my best to treat others with love and respect, to listen to people's concerns and be their voice when their own goes unheeded. I have been told by others that I find time when seemingly none exists. As your Freeholder Director, this will not change. I am still the same Julie Acton, the friend, the neighbor, and servant of and for the people.

In closing, I want to again thank everyone for sharing this evening with us. Thank you for your encouragement and continued support. I would like to leave you with this quote from **Abraham Lincoln** *"I am a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down."*

Good night and may God Bless you and Salem County.