

The following Minority Freeholder Report was read by Freeholder Timberman:

Happy New Year! Distinguished guests, friends and family, members of the public, and fellow members of the 2012 Salem County Freeholder Board, it is my honor to be giving the Minority Speech for this year's county reorganization meeting. On behalf of the entire Freeholder Board, I would like to thank the elected officials who attended this year's meeting and have sworn in our freeholders and officers. I would also like to thank the clergy who are here, and participating, ROTC Color Guard, the Sheriff's Office Honor Guard, and Amber Vanderslice, the staff who worked tirelessly to make this evening happen, and SCC for allowing us to once again, hold our annual reorganization meeting here in Davidow Hall.

In assuming our new role as the minority party of the Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders, may I begin by offering our congratulations to Julie Acton, our new director. Julie has been a dedicated member of this Board, and is deserving of this leadership role. We also congratulate Ben Laury in his new role as Deputy Director and Bruce Bobbitt and Dale Cross in their re-election. I also congratulate newcomer Bob Vanderslice in his election to the board.

As we remember the last nine years of Democratic leadership, we would like to be remembered as being "good stewards":

We have been good stewards of the people of Salem County...

The Office of Disability Services was opened under our direction and has proved to be an important public service to thousands of Salem County Citizens. We started a successful annual drive through flu clinic, which provides flu shots free of charge, to any Salem County residents.

We have been good stewards of County property...

Railroad infrastructure, once a forgotten line, became a viable transportation alternative to more expensive trucking for our local businesses who reported that if the railroad were to stop operating, they would likely close down due to severely increased costs. Seeing the possibilities of not only keeping heavy truck traffic off our county roads, but also keeping and expanding businesses along the rail, and eventually the possibility of passenger rail with a tourism angle, the majority made this their priority to find funding during the past nine years. Now, as Salem County gets ready to accept millions of dollars in TIGER III funding, it looks like this initiative will finally pay off and we will see businesses profit as well as the potential growth of new ratable businesses and jobs along the railroad.

The Old Salem County Courthouse saw a major facelift in the past few years as it received funding due to its status as the second oldest continually operating courthouse in the country. Now a showpiece for the county, it is a vibrant anchor to this historic area.

County offices, desperately overcrowded, were declared a necessity by the entire freeholder board, and we are now in the process of renovating an existing building in downtown Salem to accommodate the public service staff that we employ. We saw the opportunity to put people to work again as well as the dire need for staff and citizens to have a safe and viable place to conduct county government work as a win-win situation.

District 3 Legislators established a presence in Salem when they were first elected and have continued to be part of our county by not only having an accessible office here in our county seat, but by being extremely accessible to our citizens and elected officials throughout the county. There is rarely an event that occurs in this county without one or

more of our legislators in attendance. We applaud their cooperative spirit and wish to carry on this relationship.

Bridges and roads have been greatly improved in our county in the last nine years due to a cooperative effort on the part of our engineering office and their relationships with the state, SJTPA and other entities. More miles of roads and bridges were repaired as part of the routine schedule than ever before (over 156 miles of roadway). We saw expert and speedy repairs to many roads and bridges after two devastating storms this past summer. Safety was paramount and we recognize these accomplishments.

We have been good stewards financially...

The Democrats took control of County Government in 2003. At that time the tax rate was at .99 cents. During Republican rule it had gone over the 1.00 dollar mark. In 2011 the tax rate had been dropped through hard work and planning to .87 cents.

Tourism was a tremendous boon to an otherwise economically depressed county, and we saw our little county come out of last place for tourism spending and move well up the list in the last few years. Our initiatives saw existing businesses report an increase in traffic and spending in their businesses as well as the start of new businesses in this area. In a state that counts tourism spending as one of the top three economies, Salem County finally could take part in all the success.

Shared Services was an initiative that we introduced in our county before the state made it their initiative as well. Well ahead of the curve, we reported success in a shared 911 system, shared joint courts, incarceration for other counties as well as state and federal prisoners, to name a few. We began researching the feasibility of sharing a juvenile justice facility. And just last week we took a giant step forward by initiating a countywide EMS System. All of these programs had two goals in mind, 1) consolidation where we could in order to save precious taxpayer's money, and 2) better service to all of the citizens of this great County.

Cooperation among the freeholders was perhaps the key point to making all of these things happen as we saw the Democrat majority name a minority member to the Administrative Committee for the first time in county history. A proven leader, our Democrat Director, Lee Ware showed genuine leadership by appointing a Republican to this important committee and allowing transparency to prevail more than ever before.

We would encourage the new majority to continue support for these worthwhile projects.

Our role of being the minority representation on this Board will be a different experience for us. In order to understand this new role, I talked to my father, Benjamin Timberman, who served on this Board for 24 years, 13 years in the majority, and 11 years in the minority. He told me that when we first experience the minority status, we may feel like that "lonely little petunia in the onion patch" but we are not to go around and "cry, cry, cry all day long!" Instead, we are to rededicate ourselves to the purpose of serving Salem County and its people to the best of our abilities. This may include voting for the majority's position if we believe it is in the best interest of Salem County. Conversely, it may mean that if we believe there is a better alternative than the majority's proposal, then we must support our belief. As Plato stated "Your silence gives consent". My challenge to the new minority is not to be silent.

Meeting the challenges that face Salem County requires the best judgment of all seven of its Freeholder members. Together, we can fulfill our common purpose of serving Salem County and its people to the best of our abilities. We look forward to working with the majority party in the year 2012 and for providing success for Salem County. Remember

good government is not always the choice with the smallest bottom line, but instead, it means making the choice that is best for the people of Salem County.

May God Bless Salem County. Thank you.