



STAMFORD MAYOR  
MICHAEL A. PAVIA

**O**n April 6th, I delivered my State of the City Address at the Annual Chamber of Commerce luncheon to share with the business community an update on Stamford and new initiatives my Administration is pursuing.

Stamford's continued growth is remarkable. Recent census results show that Stamford has grown 4.7 percent in population since 2000, to 122,000 residents, and also had the highest increase in housing units among Connecticut cities during that period.

Fiscally, our City faces challenges similar to cities across the country; a weak and unpredictable economy, rising costs, budget constraints and a costly infrastructure. This difficult economic climate makes our ability to deliver customary core services to residents a challenge. Structural costs and employee benefits have more than doubled in the past three years. Stamford's revenues are relatively strong due to our diverse property tax base. Our annual tax collection rate is excellent, averaging an above 98 percent success rate. The revaluation scheduled to take place this year will hopefully be postponed until 2013, pending legislative approval. The postponement would allow for some near term budget savings for the City and would reflect a better market two years from now.

There has been a \$20 million decline in non-tax revenue sources such as building permits, conveyance taxes and tipping fees, etc., which serves as a reflection of the poor economy and dramatically impacts our total revenues. We are examining the City's non-tax revenue sources, most of which have remained flat for the past 10 years, for possible increases. In addition to increasing non-tax revenues, we continue to closely monitor all expenditures, operating costs required to deliver core services and overtime costs. Labor contracts, several of which are under negotiation, will play a significant role in our ability to keep these costs down.

The Capital Budget has been set at \$45 million, of which the majority of those funds will go to maintaining our infrastructure,

including road and sidewalks, schools and other municipal sites. Although there is a tax increase, it remains a modest one. In fact, this year and last year's tax increases represent the lowest back-to-back increases in 20 years.

#### *Delivery of Services to our Residents*

Public Safety plays an integral role in keeping Stamford safe. I am extremely proud of our police, fire and emergency personnel as Stamford was recently ranked the 8th safest city in the entire country (among cities with a population of 100,000+). Crime has been reduced by 7.4 percent since 2009, due largely to more than 1,000 narcotics arrests, a record number of seized firearms, neighborhood patrols and visits to families in crisis by the Special Victims Unit. Our fire departments have responded to 15,887 emergency response calls and 1,466 fire calls.

Improving Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security is one of my top priorities and requires us to be fully prepared for the unexpected. Stamford is in the midst of comprehensively updating its Emergency Plan which was last revised in 1999. Members of the Mayor's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Group are working with our law enforcement and emergency personnel to update school plans, conduct training in emergency planning, and organize a Certified Emergency Response Team. Trainers for School & Workplace Violence will work with the team.

We are in the process of negotiating a new volunteer fire service agreement for the proposed Stamford Volunteer Fire Department. The agreement represents my recommendation, along with the volunteer companies' willingness to consolidate four of Stamford's volunteer fire companies into one department. This plan will provide continuity and consistency and is the most effective plan to provide fire protection in the new proposed district. The Fire Plan remains in the hands of the Board of Representatives for approval.

Stamford's Public Schools have seen marked improvement in SAT scores since 2006: Critical Reading is up 18 points, Math is up 24 points and Writing is up by 19 points.

The percentage of students taking four year programs in English has also increased to 89 percent (up 7 percent) and Math to 77 percent (up 14 percent). These impressive numbers reflect the dedication and hard work of our teachers and administrators as they prepare our students for success.

Operationally, we have made it through one of the worst winters on record. This winter, 80 inches of snow fell during the course of multiple storms and subfreezing temperatures made sure it stayed for months, taking its toll on our roads and sidewalks. The cost for snow removal totaled \$1.6 million. While the City is seeking emergency funding through FEMA to help offset the cost, our Operations crews are hard at work cleaning our parks and beaches in preparation for summer.

Closure of the Scofieldtown landfill is underway. The City has received a proposed closure plan from the TRC Environmental Corporation that will soon be put into action. The capping and resurfacing of the landfill will transform the area to allow safe, public use of the property for recreational or park use.

As you may recall, in the last issue of Stamford Plus magazine, I launched a study to examine efficiency in City government and ways to improve how we do business today.

After close examination of more than 40 appointed boards and commissions, the Governance Task Force has recently delivered its recommendations to me. It is now with the Board of Representatives for their consideration for adoption.

These are challenging times for all of us, but I believe strongly that in times of adversity, opportunities emerge. Stamford is a vibrant city that has a strong history of being an economic engine for the state and the region as a whole. As we work our way out of the worst recession we have experienced in this country since the Great Depression, I am confident that the City of Stamford will continue to be a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I wish all of Stamford's citizens an enjoyable and safe summer and I hope to see you at the many exciting events that will be taking place in our great City.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Pavia  
Mayor

## New Initiatives from the Office of the Mayor

### **SMALL BUSINESS ADVANTAGE SERIES**

"The development and sustainability of small business in Stamford is a focus of my Administration and I hope that small business owners, and those aspiring to become one, will take advantage of what promises to be an exciting and informative program," said Mayor Pavia. The Small Business Advantage Series held the first of five workshops on May 18, 2011, during National Small Business Week, at Stamford High School, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The session will focus on important issues facing many small businesses including how to access capital and how to use social media to grow your business. The remaining workshops will be held in June, September, October and November.

"I am grateful to a distinguished group of local successful entrepre-

neurs who have offered to lead the series: Kristella Garcia of Stella's Café & Bakery, Miguel Juarez of MJM Stone Supply, Regina Kirschbaum of Agabhum The Best of Bali, Courtney Nelthropp of Sir Speedy Printing & Marketing and Stamford's own Bobby Valentine of Bobby Valentine Sports Café & Restaurant." Please visit our website: [www.cityofstamford.org](http://www.cityofstamford.org) for further information and to sign up. All of the workshops are free and open to the public.

### **SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

"The key economic issue today is job creation, and those most often excluded from this picture are our youth," said the Mayor. "My initiative is to provide a six-week summer job internship program to high school juniors in Stamford, which will provide

not only a job but in parallel, mentoring, job skill coaching and a week-long wrap up program to assist in career and/or college planning." Recognizing how the difficult economy has posed challenges for many businesses, Mayor Pavia is asking for the help and support of businesses to either sponsor a six-week internship for a youth, or donate funds which will allow the program to place students in one of Stamford's not-for-profit organizations.

"I hope to make this inaugural program a permanent part of teaming Stamford businesses with our youth and sincerely thank the business community for their help in making this possible," added Mayor Pavia.

For more information about the program, please contact the Office of the Mayor at 203-977-5089, or email: [lcavaliero@ci.stamford.ct.us](mailto:lcavaliero@ci.stamford.ct.us).