



## News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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# Freeholders' Somerset County Budget Keeps Spending in Check While Keeping Commitments on Critical Services, Infrastructure and Public Safety

SOMERVILLE – The Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders has adopted a \$229-million county budget for 2017 that preserves needed services to the county's more than 333,000 citizens with minimal tax impact.

"We recognize that we have an obligation to taxpayers to operate efficiently and effectively, so we've continued to streamline our operations to provide essential services while maintaining Somerset County's exceptional triple-A bond rating and keeping the property tax impact to a minimum," said Freeholder Mark Caliguire, finance liaison. "We've kept the increase in our costs to 1.97 percent, which is within the 2-percent state cap, and the increase in county property taxes on the average home in Somerset County is only \$5 annually. Our fiscally prudent management of county resources continues to be a hallmark of Somerset County government."

"As a CPA I know you need to sweat the details to keep county spending in check, and we've done that," said Freeholder Brian D. Levine. "We're still able to provide value-added services that benefit taxpayers every day, such as recycling, transportation, 911 dispatch, vehicle fueling and maintenance, and a statewide cooperative purchasing program, just to name a few."

The amount to be raised by taxation will increase 1.97 percent, to \$189.5 million. The county tax rate will increase slightly from 32.01 to 32.13 cents per \$100 of assessed value, equaling \$5 per year on an average home of \$423,006.

The 2017 budget:

- maintains 248 center-lane miles of county roads and 752 county-owned bridges.
- maintains 39 park, recreation and open-space areas encompassing nearly 15,000 acres.
- fully funds 911 communications dispatch for 20 municipalities (since 2008 this shared service has saved participating towns well over \$3 million).
- provides recycling collection and processing for 19 municipalities, including schools.
- funds nearly 200 shared services with local governments and other organizations in the county.
- partially funds budgets for the county Vocational-Technical Schools, Raritan Valley Community College, Board of Social Services and Park Commission.
- fully funds the county jail and the county emergency services training academy.

View the budget document and presentation at <http://bit.ly/SCBudget17>