

## More Than 75 Officials Attend Shared Services Meeting

UNION — More than 75 education, municipal and county government officials last week formulated a series of new cost-savings ideas, while continuing the advancement of several other opportunities during the County of Union's second Shared Services meeting held at Kean University. The purpose of the meeting was to bring all governmental entities together to talk about ways to save tax dollars and share services.

"As I mentioned in my speech for this New Year, the County of Union's number one priority is to seek out more shared services opportunities and cost savings," Freeholder Chairwoman Bette Jane Kowalski said.

The County of Union has already won a \$104,500 grant from the state Department of Community Affairs that enabled it to create the Shared Services committee. The county is also in the process of applying for a three-year \$300,000 additional state grant that will enable it keep moving forward on shared services.

"We've been in close contact with the state and it looks positive," said Freeholder Kowalski of the grant application.

The January 10 meeting consisted of representatives from 24 school entities and districts, 20 municipalities, and county government officials. The meeting lasted three hours and was moderated by the Forums Institute for Public Policy.

The officials in attendance spoke about next steps on several shared services opportunities they established at the previous meeting in September — in the areas of information technologies, emergency communications/911 dispatching, and animal control.

Needs assessment forms will be distributed to the municipalities to gauge participation in the proposed county-wide animal shelter.

A consultant, who is being paid out of a state grant, is currently examining the feasibility of coordinating regionalized or shared services in emergency communications/911 dispatching. In the area of information technologies (IT), the county is about to apply for a \$35,000 state grant to conduct a feasibility study for website and e-mail hosting for municipal governments as the first part of an IT shared service program.

Participants at last week's meeting also examined new areas for shared services including everything from copy paper to Wi-Fi, including: municipal court security services, EMS response, a central recycling center, library consolidation, sharing personnel, a centralized records storage facility, transportation services, bulk purchasing, public works machinery, and sewage services.

Roselle Park Borough Clerk Doreen Cali proposed the county hold

monthly meetings to spotlight a new department or area each month for the discussion of shared services.

Frank Guzzo, the Director of Human Services for Union County, suggested that counties and municipalities could be empowered by the state to make direct decisions on how and where to distribute state social service funds intended for mental health and youth services. This would lead to a more effective and efficient use for state funding, he said.

Paulette Coronato, the deputy mayor of Scotch Plains, reported that Scotch Plains and Fanwood share numerous items including a tax collector and joint school system. Ms. Coronato pointed to the success of Scotch Plains' partnership with the county in its deer management program, and added that animal control services could be an area that can be shared countywide among the municipalities.

There was also some discussion about concerns that could arise from sharing personnel and governmental consolidation. Kim Coleman, Superintendent of Schools for the Morris-Union Jointure Commission, added that it would take some "strong" decision making to consolidate staff, and realize cost-efficiencies by sharing personnel.

On the matter of governmental consolidation (the merging of governments and/or school boards), County Manager George Devaney said it could only occur with a strong will from the state to do so, a clear consensus among all local partners involved, and a mandate from the public.

"We're not here to force things on our residents that they may not want," Mr. Devaney said. "As we go down the road, consolidation will not work out without the approval of our voters."

Mr. Devaney said Union County and its municipal and school board partners were at the "forefront" of the creation of shared services, and would continue to move aggressively toward implementation.

"We are on the brink of historic change in New Jersey, and a part of this will include shared services," Mr. Devaney said.

### WF Board of Ed. Mails Letter to All Residents

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Board of Education mailed a newsletter to all Westfield households on the week of January 16. It contained information about the BOE school bond referendum that will be voted on Tuesday, January 23. Polls will be open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Information on the bond referendum is posted on [westfieldnj12.org/bond](http://westfieldnj12.org/bond).



**SCHOOL BOND TEAM...**The Citizens for Education Committee in Westfield meet to discuss promotions in support of the \$9.4-million school bond referendum to be presented for citizen vote on January 23. Pictured (seated) from left to right, are: Linda Habgood, Jane McCreedy, Kristy Bangs, Eric Leuthold and Scott Gleason; and (standing): Elisa Gallagher, Kathie Caminiti, Roseanne Kurstedt, Josephine Stokes, Gina Totino and Amy Root. Not pictured are: Barbara Bagger, Lisa Black-Polak, Sue Hopper, Sara Miller, Marcee Rogers, Amy Seid, Carol Snyder, Lisa Stern and Carrie Mumford, plus board of education representatives Beth Cassie, Ginny Leiz, Ann Cary and Jane Clancy.

## Bramnick Blasts Countywide School Plan on TV's CN8

WESTFIELD — Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21) appeared on CN8's *Newsmakers* show January 10 and blasted a plan to allow county takeover of local schools.

"Local parents control their children's education and we do not need help from the state. The state's record of solving problems speaks for itself," said Asm. Bramnick. "Leave us alone, our schools do not need state meddling."

Jamie Lynn Drohan interviewed Mr. Bramnick and the show will air in the next few weeks.

Assemblyman Bramnick asked, "Do you think we will be better off under the control of the county?" He answered his own question, "hands off."

"To save money, the state should send in forensic accountants to all schools to find out where the real waste exists," said Mr. Bramnick.

## Groundwork Elizabeth Receives \$25,000 Grant

ELIZABETH — Groundwork Elizabeth, a 501c3 non-profit organization, was awarded a grant of \$25,000 from the Federal Recreational Trails Program to be applied to the upcoming Elizabeth River Trail. The money will be used for signs and landscaping along the trail, which is currently in the design stage. Groundwork Elizabeth is coordinating the effort.

"With redevelopment pressure increasing and as New Jersey's urban communities undergo economic revitalization, the need for recreational trails is greater than ever," said Lisa Jackson, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. "We are proud to provide funding that will enable city residents to explore and experience a variety of leisure activities."

Freeholder Deborah Scanlon, former chairwoman of the Union County Open Space Recreational and Historic Trust Fund, said: "As the trail will venture through Elizabeth River Parkway and Mattano Park, it is important that the public be aware

of the design of our parks by Fredric Law Olmsted," she said. "The signage afforded by the grant will help everyone using the trail understand a little bit more about the county's role in the Elizabeth River and its associated parks."

Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage said, "The Elizabeth River Trail will certainly allow the public to enjoy our city in a non-motorized way and the signage associated with the National Recreational Trail grants will help to highlight the great history that our city has."

Linda Morgan, chairwoman of the Elizabeth River Trail Program Committee, said, "This grant award adds to the success and the excitement that the project will bring to everyone living and visiting the city."

To learn more about the project, call Groundwork Elizabeth at (908) 289-0262, or e-mail [groundwork-elizabeth@groundworkusa.net](mailto:groundwork-elizabeth@groundworkusa.net).

**are you a writer? register for the annual creative writing contest [goleader.com/tiw/contest](http://goleader.com/tiw/contest)**

## Community Business News The Mattress Factory And Dr. Todd

By Kara Shovlin  
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

You may have heard of The Mattress Factory, you may even be sleeping on one of their beds. Did you know they have a beautiful new location in Fanwood? Brothers Ron and Rick along with mom Marlene have owned this business for about 20 years now and have been running it for just as long. A year ago last October, they moved their operation to a new facility at 35 South Avenue in Fanwood. The Borough of Fanwood has welcomed them with open arms. In turn, The Mattress Factory has taken a couple of the older buildings on South Avenue and beautified them — making a real improvement on their block. Among The Mattress Factory's standout qualities is their ability to provide their customers with a superior product at a lesser price. How do they do this? They are a small operation that is factory direct. That means they have less overhead than the larger brands and there is no middleman. Much of what you purchase from them is actually made to order — and if you don't see it on their showroom floor, ask for it. They can make just about anything.

The owners say, "A mattress is a big ticket item and we try to take the stress out of buying one. We don't want to sell our customers anything more than what they need, and they're never stuck if they're not happy; we value our repeat business." Visit them at [mattressfac.com](http://mattressfac.com).

Have you ever noticed the sign across from the North Avenue train station that says Westfield Health and Rehabilitation? It went up about four-and-a-half years ago. If you go inside,

you'll find a bustling chiropractic and physical therapy office with two young, dynamic chiropractors. Dr. Todd Carnucci owns the practice where he and his associate, Dr. Stan Nosal, treat patients with an array of physical symptoms, most of which include pain of some kind. A visit to this office is truly a comprehensive experience that begins with x-rays for every patient and, if needed, can include time with a staff MD, one of the physical therapists and any number of other tests and treatments. Dr. Todd, as his patients affectionately call him, is passionate about delivering his patients to a pain free existence so that they can return to their normal lives. In case you were wondering, Dr. Todd points out that chiropractic is safe and effective. He says, it pays the lowest rate in malpractice insurance — and that his patients rave about the quality of care and the positive impact in their lives.

Final words from Dr. Todd? "You only have one spine so keep it as healthy as possible." E-mail [DrCarnucci@yahoo.com](mailto:DrCarnucci@yahoo.com). There are hundreds of retail and professional establishments in this area and each one has something unique to offer.

*Editor's Note:* Mrs. Shovlin is a member of the board of directors of the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce (WACC). Working with WACC Executive Director, Naomi McEllynn, she will write about member businesses on a regular basis. WACC serves Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Westfield, Garwood and Mountainside. Their website is [westfieldareachamber.com](http://westfieldareachamber.com).

**WACC**  
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

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The Mattress Factory  
And Dr. Todd  
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## Bulldog Club of NJ to Host Match Show February 4

BRIDGEWATER — The Bulldog Club of New Jersey invites the public to its match show on Sunday, February 4, in Bridgewater. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. at the Somerset County 4-H Building, 310 Milltown Road. Judging will begin at 12:30 p.m. The cost of admission is \$8 and includes lunch.



Axel

Bulldogs are often called sournugs, but they are comical, loveable dogs. Bulldogs are very popular pets. As with any breed, they are not the ideal dogs for everyone. The club is committed to promoting responsible dog ownership by educating the public about these animals.

The match show is sponsored by the club each year to provide a forum for the public to learn more about bulldogs; connect current and would-be bulldog owners with knowledgeable bulldoggers plus give dogs and humans new to the show ring some training and practice before entering point shows.

Dogs 3 months of age and older are eligible to compete. No puppies less

than 3 months old will be permitted. "We invite anyone interest in learning more about bulldogs to join us for this fun event," said Marianne Ayers, show chairman. "They will meet many people who enjoy educating others about bulldogs, and there will be plenty of puppies of all ages, as well as adult dogs, who can't wait to make a new friend."

The Bulldog Club of New Jersey (BCNJ) is concerned with the education of pet owners and breeders of bulldogs. The club encourages responsible pet ownership. BCNJ is a member club of The Bulldog Club of America and the New Jersey Federation of Dog Clubs. Membership in BCNJ includes both people who participate in dog shows and those who simply couldn't imagine life without a bulldog. Members include bulldoggers from throughout the state and surrounding region. The club meets monthly.

For more information, visit [bcnj.org](http://bcnj.org) or call Ms. Ayers at (732) 431-0535.

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\* Instant Rebate on Pillowtop sets: \$50 twin, \$75 full, \$100 queen, \$200 king. - Instant Rebate on Non-Pillowtop sets: \$25 twin, \$50 full, \$75 queen, \$100 king. After rebate prices based on purchase of complete set — no rebate on purchase of mattress or boxspring only. Applies to Shifman Ultra Premium sets (8-way hand-tied styles).

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