



Town Highway

New York State Association of Town

Lines

Superintendents of Highways, Inc. Newsletter

2026 Winter Edition

Better Transportation.
Safer Roads.
Stronger New York.

Built and maintained by New York's local highway professionals

The New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, Inc. (NYSAOTSOH) is the State's largest transportation association representing Highway Superintendents in 933 towns, that are responsible for local highways.



A Message from the NYSAOTSOH President



James A. Dussing
Town of Clarence
NYSAOTSOH President

Hello NYSAOTSOH Members,

It is a privilege to serve as your president this year. I would like to sincerely thank my predecessor, Matt Mustico, for the leadership he provided to our Association. I also want to recognize our Executive Committee members for their continued dedication and commitment. As always, thank you to all of our Highway Superintendent members and Associate Members for your ongoing support of this great organization.

To our newly elected Highway Superintendents — welcome. We hope you will become active in the Association and take advantage of all NYSAOTSOH has to offer. Please be sure to send your updated contact information to headquarters if you have not already done so.

I am personally asking every member to mark your calendar and plan to participate in our Local Roads Are Essential Advocacy Day, being held March 3–4, 2026, at the Hilton Albany in Albany, NY. Your participation is extremely important. Advocacy Day gives us the opportunity to directly educate legislators on the growing need to increase investment in local infrastructure.

This year, participation is more critical than ever. The Governor’s Executive Budget flat-funds local transportation programs, even as costs continue to rise. NYSAOTSOH and NYSCHSA are requesting the consolidation of CHIPS, PAVE NY, and EWR into a new “Combined CHIPS” program, with an additional \$250 million in funding and the consolidation of POP/STR bringing total annual support to approximately \$1.138 billion. Your voice is essential to making this increase a reality.

Please also save the date for our 97th Annual Conference, Education Symposium & Expo, taking place September 29 – October 2, 2026, at the Saratoga Hilton in Saratoga Springs, NY.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your president. I look forward to a productive and successful year ahead. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Thank you,


James A. Dussing
Town of Clarence

PRESIDENT

James A. Dussing
Town of Clarence – Erie Co.

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- Kurt VanWycke**
Town of Carlton – Orleans Co.
- Matthew Sech**
Town of Champion – Jefferson Co.
- Ben Perry**
Town of Ghent – Columbia Co.



Welcome New Executive Committee Members



Ben Perry Town of Ghent, Columbia County

Ben Perry began his career with the Town of Ghent in December 2008—right in the middle of an ice storm—as Head Mechanic, coming from Mack Trucks. In 2013, Ben was encouraged to run for Highway Superintendent, and on January 1, 2014, he became the youngest Highway Superintendent in the Town of Ghent’s history at just 32 years old. Since then, Ben has been elected to four consecutive terms, each time running unopposed with the full support of all political parties.

Outside of work, Ben enjoys hunting, fishing, and camping with his family, as well as traveling extensively to follow his children’s college sports careers—a commitment that keeps both him and his wife very busy. Ben is also a member of his local gun club and currently serves on four different county committees, assisting in a variety of roles to support his community.

Ben is honored to be stepping into the very large shoes of Gary Thorington on the Executive Committee and looks forward to continuing to serve in this expanded leadership role.

Matthew Sech Town of Champion, Jefferson County

Matthew Sech began working for the Town of Champion Highway Department in 2018 as a Motor Equipment Operator (MEO). Prior to joining the town, he spent ten years with Anderson Equipment, a Komatsu construction equipment dealership, where he worked as a mobile mechanic.

In November 2023, Matt was appointed Highway Superintendent following the sudden passing of the previous superintendent. He was subsequently elected in 2024 to complete the remainder of the term.

Matt oversees six full-time MEOs and is responsible for the maintenance of 45 centerline miles of town roads. His department also maintains the town office grounds, parks, two cemeteries, and the pump houses for the town’s water system.

Outside of work, Matt operates a small hobby farm and enjoys spending time with his family.



Kurt Van Wyck Town of Carlton, Orleans County

Kurt began as Highway Superintendent in 2018. Prior to becoming the Highway Superintendent, Kurt served as Highway Deputy since 2004 and as MEO since 1991. Kurt is currently serving in his second term as Highway Superintendent. He has also served various roles in the Orleans County Highway Superintendents Association.

Kurt’s great-grandfather, Martin III, started the hometown fire company and ran the service station with his two sons, Audrey and Martin. Audrey served as chief of the fire company. Kurt’s father, Martin, served as chief of the fire company as well. Kurt joined the fire company at the age of 14 and has served as President. He has also helped and served on the board of a couple local sportsmen’s clubs and helped organize the Town of Carlton’s 200 year celebration, bringing back a parade after 30 years without one in the town.

Kurt has been married to his wife Tammie Lyn for 36 years and together for 40. They have two wonderful children, Erick (34) and Sierra (30). While, he’s not busy serving his town, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time at his family camp, of 54 years, in Redfield, NY. He says the advantage of living in Carlton is that he has been able to work for the town of Carlton and also to have been available to coach his children as well as others in the community throughout the years.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Local Infrastructure, Real Needs: Why Advocacy Day Participation Matters!

By Megan Osika and Fred Hiffa
Park Strategies

Every day, you and your staff are doing the work that keeps New York moving. Local highway departments are responsible for 87% of the state's public roads and more than half of its bridges. Our municipalities also plow over a quarter of the New York State Department of Transportation's roads. When snowstorms hit, when floods wash out culverts, when freeze-thaw cycles tear up the pavements, it's you who make sure New Yorkers can still get to work, school, healthcare facilities, and home safely.

Local transportation funding is being kept flat in the 2026-27 Executive Budget. At a time when construction costs are at historic highs and the needs of the local system are estimated at over \$100 billion, flat funding is effectively a cut. The state must step up its commitment to the local system that carries nearly half of all vehicle miles traveled.

The reality is simple: most of New York's roads and bridges are local, and they are deteriorating faster than we can fix them. Without increased CHIPS funding, municipalities are being forced to delay maintenance, cancel projects, and stretch already thin budgets even further.

Our Local Need Is Enormous—and Growing

The numbers are staggering. According to the Federal Highway Administration, the cost of needed work on locally owned bridges alone was about \$29 billion in 2023. Yet from 2016 to 2024, the total combined federal and state investment through the local BRIDGENY program was just \$1.7 billion.

Bridges are only part of the story. NYSDOT's last 20-year assessment estimated local pavement needs at 2.5 times that of bridge needs. Using that formula, the combined pavement and bridge needs of local governments exceeds \$100 billion statewide.

Simultaneously, local governments are facing new and growing pressures. Climate mandates and environmental regulations will potentially require major investments in highway garages, materials, and energy systems. Expanded wetland permitting, road salt shortages, and more frequent extreme weather events will all increase costs and cause project delays. It will all directly affect our ability to maintain safe roads with limited resources.

2026-2027 Budget Request

We are calling on the Governor and Legislature to add \$250 million to CHIPS in the 2026–27 budget. This increase would begin to restore the real value lost to construction material cost inflation and help slow the deterioration of local infrastructure.

We are also urging the state to streamline local transportation programs by combining them where their uses are nearly identical. Fewer programs mean less administrative burden and more time and money focused on actual maintenance.

NYS DOT Local Transportation Funding (in Million \$s)	Enacted 2024-25	Enacted 2025-26	Executive 2026-27	Request 2026-27
CHIPS	\$598.1	\$648.1	\$648.1	Combined CHIPS \$1,138.1 (+\$250M)
Extreme Winter Recovery	\$100	\$100	\$100	
State Touring Routes	\$140	\$140	\$140	
Local PAVENY	\$150	\$150	\$150	Combined POP \$250
Local Pave our Potholes	\$100	\$100	\$100	
Local BRIDGE-NY	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
Marchiselli	\$39.7	\$39.7	\$39.7	\$39.7
Total	\$1,327.8	\$1,377.8	\$1,377.8	\$1,627.8 (+\$250M)

✓ **Support combining the following three programs into “Combined CHIPS” with an increase of \$250 million; totaling \$1,138.1 million.**

- Increase CHIPS by \$250 million to \$898.1 million.
- Maintain Extreme Winter Recovery funding at \$100 million.
- Maintain State Touring Route funding at \$140 million.

✓ **Support combining the following two programs into “Combined POP”; totaling \$250 million.**

- Maintain local PAVE-NY funding program at \$150 million.
- Maintain POP funding program at \$100 million.

✓ **Support maintaining the Marchiselli program at \$39.7 million.**

✓ **Support maintaining the local BRIDGE-NY program at \$200 million.**

- BRIDGE-NY continues to be very successful for addressing local bridge and culvert needs, but demand far exceeds available funding.

We also strongly support the Executive Budget proposals to enhance work zone safety protections. Our members and staff face serious risks every day. Adding assault protections, strengthening penalties for intrusions into work zones, and expanding automated work zone speed enforcement are common-sense steps that will help ensure highway workers go home safely at the end of every shift.

Local roads and bridges are the backbone of New York’s economy, delaying investment today only guarantees higher costs tomorrow.

We need a budget that makes the investment necessary to preserve the system New Yorkers rely on every day. Now is the time to make your voice heard. No one tells our story better than the people who maintain the system every day. **Register to attend our joint NYSCHSA & NYSAOTSOH Local Roads are Essential Advocacy Day, March 3-4 in Albany!** It is your opportunity to meet directly with legislators, share real-world experiences from your communities, and advocate for the funding and policies our local transportation system depends on.



Legal Corner

Public Funds for Private Purposes - A Big No-No

Information provided by Harris Beach Murtha PLLC

Congratulations – you are a newly elected and/or appointed Highway Superintendent – Would you like to know the fastest way to tank your career? Utilizing public funds for private purposes is not only the fastest way for you to lose your job – it may also be the fastest way for you to end up in prison.

The New York State Comptroller’s Office has taken a special interest in this issue. Indeed, public officers who misappropriate even small amounts of public funds for private purposes have been indicted and charged with criminal offenses. For instance, the Officer in charge of the Town of Hoosick Falls Rescue Squad was charged with Fourth Degree Grand Larceny as a crime of public corruption and official misconduct (a felony) for allegedly using municipal funds to purchase approximately \$1,000.00 worth of tires for a personal vehicle. He was terminated from his position as a result.

So where does the prohibition come from? The New York State Constitution, Article VIII, Section 1 (also known as the Gifts and Loans Provision) prohibits

municipalities from making gifts and loans of public funds for purely private purposes. The most obvious example of this prohibition would be the outright gifting of municipal funds to a private individual for private purposes (i.e., appropriating town funds for a private vehicle); however, the prohibition can take more nuanced forms. Indeed, in relation to Highway Superintendents and Highway Departments, the Comptroller has specifically found that the following scenarios run afoul of the Gifts and Loans Provision of the Constitution: (i) a highway department’s maintenance of a private road, (ii) a highway department’s plowing of the private road of a disabled individual, and (iii) a highway department’s construction of a private road for a not-for-profit corporation.

Morale of the story is to take care of Town funds and assets as a public steward – when in doubt, consult with your Town Attorney.

Even if you think no one is watching, the New York State Comptroller very well may be.

Congratulations 2025 VISION Award Recipients

Every year, the Association recognizes our Associate Members for their distinguished service in the advancement of New York’s highway industry and support for the Town Highway Conference. The association introduced the VISION award program in 1990. The VISION Acronym stands for Vendors Involved Supportive Influential Outreaching Networking.



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PAST PRESIDENTS



A Fond Farewell

We wish a happy retirement to our friend, colleague and Association Executive Committee Member, Gary Thorington, town of Windham, Greene County. You will be missed!

SAVE THE DATE

September 29 - October 2, 2026

97th Annual Conference,
Education Symposium & EXPO

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The Saratoga Hilton
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EDUCATION SESSIONS



NETWORKING



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Questions?

Todd Smitka, Sales Manager

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