

April 2015

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

Please consult the League [Web Calendar](#)

April 17-[How New Jersey Manages Its Fiscally Distressed Cities Webinar -Your Computer](#)

April 24- [D Variances under The MLUL: What Are They And How Do They Get Approved Webinar-Your Computer](#)

May 5- [A Review of the Tax Assessment Pilot Programs-Conference Center at Mercer, West Windsor](#)

May 7- [NJLM 100th Anniversary and William G. Dressel, Jr Retirement Banquet-Hilton Hotel, East Brunswick](#)

May 13 - [Leaves of Absences in NJ: A Look at The FMLA, NJFLA, and ADA Requirements-Doubletree Hotel, Tinton Falls](#)

June 12- SAVE THE DATE-NJLM One Day Mini Conference, Conference Center at Mercer, West Windsor

- ✓ 100th Anniversary Banquet
- ✓ Century of Information and Ideas
- ✓ Deadline for 2014 NJLM Annual Conference CEUs
- ✓ 100th Annual Conference Housing Forms
- ✓ 2015 Municipal Directory
- ✓ Census Report

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By, Mayor Brian Wahler, President

On February 24 Governor Christie's Pension and Health Benefit Study Commission released their "Roadmap to Resolution" report. The report highlights the fiscal challenges faced by the State Government in funding pensions and health benefits going forward. The report then proposes options that, in the Commission's viewpoint, require shared sacrifice and willingness to let go of the status quo. We have raised concerns with the report's failure to acknowledge that municipalities and their employees have consistently contributed to the local PERS and PFRS funds and that the real issue is with the State's pension funds – PERS, TPAF, PFRS, JRS, and SPRS. We also raised our concern that the Commission is recommending that savings from health benefit reforms be used to off-set the pension costs at the State level.

Recently I convened a meeting with League Officers, Management Reform Chair Wilda Diaz, Mayor of Perth Amboy, and representatives of each affiliated group to discuss the State Pension and Health Benefit Commission Roadmap Report. At the meeting, Pension and Health Benefit Commissioner Tom Byrne and the Commission's Counsel Ken Wilbur discussed the report and expressed a willingness to consider alternatives to the proposals in the report.

Continued under "Presidents Message"

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE CONTINUED

As a result of this meeting, five subcommittees have been created to explore and research different options.

1. Freezing the Pension Plan with concessions.

The Commission recommended that the current plan be closed to new members and existing members would no longer be able to accrue additional benefits under the current plan. Existing members benefits earned to date would not be affected; however, their retirement benefit would consist of pre-freeze and post-freeze components. A new retirement plan, a cash balance plan, would be created to provide future retirement benefits.

This subcommittee will explore the pros and cons of freezing the pension plan and creating a cash balance plan as well as the impact of this proposal on new, mid-career and end of career employees.

2. Transfer the fund assets and liabilities to local governments, in some fashion, to manage.

One alternative option is the transferring the local pension fund assets and liabilities to local governments, in some fashion, to manage.

This subcommittee will explore the pros and cons of transferring the local pension fund assets and liabilities to local governments to manage. This subcommittee will identify the issues for small, medium and large size local government entities to manage the pension funds.

3. Create a structure to manage the local pension funds similar to the JIF/MEL model.

Another alternative option is to create a structure similar to the JIF/MEL model to manage the local pension fund assets and liabilities to local governments.

This subcommittee will explore the pros and cons of creating a structure to manage the local pension funds similar to the JIF/MEL model. This subcommittee will provide a blueprint of such a structure.

4. Suggested reforms to the Health Benefits program.

The Commission recommended that public employee health benefits be “reset” to a benchmark of 80% actuarial value level and explore how these benefits can be augmented. The Commission suggested such programs as increased wellness programs, value based insurance design, creation of patient centered “medical homes”, referenced based pricing programs and medical malpractice reform. In addition, the Commission recommended that public employee health benefits be uniform across the State regardless of their employer.

This subcommittee will explore the impact of uniform health benefits for all public employees regardless of their employer as well as the impact that uniform health benefits would have on Health Insurance Funds and self-insured health benefits plans. In addition, this subcommittee will explore the pros and cons of the suggested programs of increased wellness programs, value based insurance design, creation of patient centered “medical homes”, referenced based pricing programs and medical malpractice reform.

5. Property Tax Impact

The Commission claims their recommendations will be cost-neutral. The savings from the health benefit reforms will pay for the increase in the pension cost.

The Commission's recommendations appear to shift the cost from the State level, in particular the education employee expense, back to the local government.

This subcommittee will provide the impact on property taxes on the proposals in the Roadmap Report and the proposals put forth by the League.

The subcommittees will be meeting in the upcoming weeks and report back their findings. We will continue to keep you posted on any future developments.

**100TH ANNIVERSARY & WILLIAM G. DRESSEL, JR. RETIREMENT BANQUET:
CELEBRATING TWO MAJOR MILESTONES IN ONE EVENING**

-For more information visit www.njslom.org/100banquet

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of the establishment of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities; 100 years of local government cooperation and dedication to good self-government. All 565 municipalities choose to be members of the League and this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to pause and recognize the importance of local government in New Jersey. At the same time, we are commemorating Bill Dressel's retirement after 41 years of service with the League. This event will be held on **May 7** at the **Hilton East Brunswick**, commencing at **6:30pm**.

Tickets are on sale now! For more information, or to order tickets, visit www.njslom.org/100banquet.

A CENTURY OF INFORMATION & IDEAS

After the League's organizational structure was in place, early leadership began looking for ways to keep its growing membership informed. It was decided that a monthly magazine, published nine times annually, would be an effective medium to communicate the state's news and events, and an important addition to the services that the organization provided.

And thus, the first issue of *New Jersey Municipalities* was published in January 1917. To read this article in full, pick up a copy of the April issue of *New Jersey Municipalities* magazine (subscription required). [New Jersey Municipalities](#) is the League's official monthly magazine publication (available in print or [digital format](#) by subscription), and will be highlighting the League's centennial each month throughout the year 2015.

Follow the League's centennial celebration at www.njslom.org/100years and #njlm100.

DEADLINE TO CLAIM CEUS FROM 99TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS MAY 1

-Contact Danielle Holland-Htut ext. 118 or dholland@njslom.org

Please remind your licensed officials that the deadline to claim CEU credits from the 99th Annual Conference is May 1, 2015. To claim credits, licensed officials should click the following link www.njslom.org/confceu and follow the prompts.

100th ANNUAL CONFERENCE HOUSING FORMS COMING

-Contact Dee Kotch ext. 115 or dkotch@njslom.org

Municipal housing forms for the 100th Annual Conference will be mailed to all Municipal Clerks in early June. Non-municipal forms will be available in the June issue of *New Jersey Municipalities* magazine. Be sure to get your housing requests in early to help ensure your requirements get first consideration.

2015 MUNICIPAL DIRECTORY

-Contact Dee Kotch ext. 115 or dkotch@njslom.org

The annual Municipal Directory was mailed to all mayors the first week of March. There is no cost for this first copy. Additional print copies are \$25 each and PDF copies are \$49. Use it to keep in touch with your colleagues around the state.

NEW CENSUS BUREAU POPULATION ESTIMATES PINPOINT FASTEST-GROWING COUNTIES IN NEW JERSEY

-For more information contact: Brunilda Sánchez, Data Dissemination Branch, 973-735-3404 or email: brunilda.sanchez@census.gov

The U.S. Census Bureau has reported on where the heaviest population growth in New Jersey was concentrated last year. The fastest-growing county in New Jersey between July 1, 2013, and July 1, 2014, was Hudson County, whose population rose 0.8 percent over the period. Hudson County was followed by Bergen County 0.7 percent, Middlesex County 0.7 percent, Union County 0.6 percent and Ocean County 0.5 percent. With respect to numerical growth, Bergen County added 6,138 people over the period, more than any other county in the state. It was followed by Middlesex County, which grew by 5,482 people, Hudson County 5,209, Essex County 3,632 and Union County 3,216. Bergen County is the most populous county in New Jersey, with 933,572 residents, followed by Middlesex County and Essex County.

This information is based on annual population estimates for each of the nation's counties, county equivalents, metropolitan statistical areas, and micropolitan statistical areas since the 2010 Census and up to July 1, 2014. Internet tables are available showing rankings and components of population change (births, deaths, migration).

Throughout this year, on a flow basis, the Census Bureau is telling the economic side of this story through the release of statistics from its Economic Census Geographic Area Series. The economic census is conducted every five years and provides a comprehensive and detailed profile of the U.S. economy, covering millions of businesses representing more than 1,000 industries and providing unique portraits of American industries and local communities. Data on measures such as the number of establishments and employees, revenues and payroll are included. Statistics are being provided for states, counties and places, including for more than 5,000 communities not available from previous economic censuses.