

President's Note

August marks the opening of Annual Conference registration and I'd like to officially invite you and the elected and appointed officials in your municipality to join me and the League Officers, Executive Board, and staff in Atlantic City November 14-16. Every year, we gather to network, learn, and guide the League's actions for the year to come. I'm proud to serve as President this year and look forward to celebrating a successful year.



Much of that success has been thanks to your cooperation with the League regarding pressing matters including Energy Tax Restoration. After a rigorous effort involving more than 400 of your signatures on a letter from the League, the Conference of Mayors, and the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association, we have made progress on this critical topic. This year, the State Budget includes an addition \$150 million funding, classified as "Municipal Relief Funding." While this is not the full amount municipalities are due, it is a significant step forward, and we will continue striving until the matter is resolved for our taxpayers. We will also be watching for next best steps in the matter of the State Health Benefits Program. While funding to the tune of \$200 million in relief for municipalities was removed from the FY2024 State Budget, we will continue to fight for municipalities and their employees.

We remain committed to education and have held several Lunch and Learn sessions with state agencies covering changing policies and procedures including CDL licensing, Department of Labor law changes, and extreme heat guidance from the Department of Environmental Protection. Thanks for attending and thanks so much to those who joined me, or supported municipal staff attending, this June at the League's Mini-Conference. I wear a few different hats along with my President's cap and attending gave me a great opportunity to catch up on my CEUs for certification while meeting League members from around the state. It was well done, and I suggest sending staff and maybe attending yourself next year.

Looking forward to seeing you in Atlantic City,

Mayor Ray Heck, President, NJ State League of Municipalities

Action Links: August

- Make your [nominations to the NJLM Mayors' Hall of Fame](#) by August 18.
- Encourage your staff to [register for the League Conference](#).
- Consider sending in a [Conference Resolution or resolution suggestion](#).
- Review the [Town Crier blog for updates on legislative activities](#).
- Renew your subscription or subscribe to [NJ Municipalities magazine](#).

League News

Grant Center

[Community Firewise Grants](#): Hazardous wildland fuel mitigation projects and outreach.

Funding: Up to half the project cost, \$5,000

Applications: [NJDEP SAGE System](#)

Contact: joseph.battersby@dep.nj.gov

[Spotted Lanternfly Program-2023 Chemical Control Treatment Grant](#): Assisting counties and municipalities slow, reduce spotted lanternfly populations.

Funding: Up to \$15,000 for municipalities.

Closing Date: Sept. 1, 2023

Contact: joseph.zoltowski@ag.nj.gov

[NJDEP Green Acres Funding](#): Funding for land acquisition, park development, stewardship, implementing Jake's Law inclusive playgrounds, and Urban Parks projects.

Program Window: October 2023-February 2024

Contact: GreenAcres@dep.nj.gov

Legislative Highlights

- [State Enables Expansion of Harm Reduction Centers](#)
- [Governor Signs General Election Bills](#)
- [SHBP Local Government Plan Year 2024 Proposed Increase](#)
- [Anti-Theft Automotive Laws Signed](#)

Learning Opportunities

- **August 9.** [NJLM Educational Foundation](#): Inaugural Climate Resilience Roundtable. Focusing on topics from hazard mitigation, stormwater management, polar power, and offshore wind energy with an eye to creating lasting changes that will help protect future generations from the ever-growing environmental crisis.
- **Sept. 28-29.** [2023 Governor's Conference on Housing & Economic Development](#). Brought to you by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, the event is a contemplation of the ways that affordable housing and economic development can be wielded as tools to foster community growth and well-being.

Get to Know Your Executive Board



Mayor Gary Passanante

Mayor Gary Passanante has served nearly 30 years as Mayor of the Borough of Somerdale. He has served on the Executive Board of the New Jersey League of Municipalities for over a decade. Mayor Passanante is a past president and current member of the Executive Board for the Camden County Mayors Association and

was the first recipient for the “Mayor of the Year” award in 2005. He is a founding member of the Camden County Open Space Advisory Board. He has served on the state’s Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission (LUARCC). Mayor Passanante has served on many League committees, has testified on behalf of the League before the state legislature on a broad range of municipal issues, and has been a speaker at the league’s Annual Conference and the Annual Mayor’s Legislative Day. He was named to the Mayors Hall of Fame Gold Level in 2015. Mayor Passanante is graduated from Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, and St. Joseph’s University. He has over 30 years of experience in the private corporate sector and as an entrepreneur in the founding and operations of a multimedia firm in South Jersey. He is married to Jeanne; they have two sons, Steven and Tyler.

Mayor Michael Venezia

Michael Venezia is a third-generation Bloomfield Resident who was first elected to office as Councilman at Large in 2011 before running for Mayor in 2013. Mayor Venezia was elected at the age of 31, the youngest mayor elected to office in Bloomfield. He is also the current Director or Human Resources for Essex County Schools of Technology. He joined the League’s Executive Board in 2019. Previously, Mayor Venezia was the Assistant



County Administrator under the direction of the Essex County Executive. He also served as a senior advisor for the late Senator Lautenberg and served as a field representative for U.S Representative Bill Pascrell. Mayor Venezia’s was recognized at the 2018 NJMMA Awards Luncheon where he was honored with the Elected Officials Award. Mayor Venezia resides in Bloomfield with his wife Laura and their two daughters Ella and Sophia.

 Share on Facebook

 Share on Twitter

 Share via Email