

President's Note

Thank you so much to everyone who attended, and encouraged their municipal team members to attend, the 2023 League Conference. We congratulated our honorees for the Mayors' Hall of Fame, the Local Government Leadership Program, the Innovation in Governance Awards, the Distinguished Public Service and Public Sector Career Awards, and the Women in Municipal Government Awards (WIMG). They are amazing examples of hard and thoughtful work resulting in better lives for those in communities around the state.



New NJLM President,
Mayor William Chegwidan,
Wharton

We also swore in our new League Officers. I'm proud to serve as your president this year and look forward to working with Vice Presidents Mayors Paul Tomasko of Alpine, Sean Elwell of Elsinboro, and Shelley Brindle of Westfield.

The week before Thanksgiving gave the League a lot to give thanks for and a good list of things to in 2024, from continuing work on Energy Tax Receipts to building the pipeline for future local government employees. In my role as President, I look forward to listening to what you say and helping the League advance the goals of municipal government in Trenton and Washington.

At the Conference, we approved [19 Resolutions](#) that were proposed by officials in office that will help guide the work of the League throughout the coming year covering topics ranging from reimbursement of municipal costs pertaining to emergency service on the state highway systems to farmland preservation and affordable housing.

As we approach the end of the year, 2023's activities are winding down, but in Trenton Lane Duck continues with a whirlwind of activity. Are you following the legislative action in the League's news flashes and newsletters? If not, visit the [newsflash signup page](#) and get the latest information in your mailbox.

Finally, encourage your team to grow professionally in the new year, particularly with League online and in-person education events. There's always something new to learn as we move forward into a brand-new year.

Happy Holidays and I look forward to working with you in the year to come.

Action Links: December

Photo contest. The 2024 Show Off Your City Photo Contest is now accepting entries! Share your municipal pride with photos of your tourist attractions, downtown areas, economic development initiatives, parks, public art, municipal buildings, community groups, and more. Entries will be featured in the April issue of *NJ Municipalities Magazine* and on the League's social media, website, and in other League materials. Submit your entries by February 9.

NJ MWC Healthy Town Designation. The NJ Mayors Wellness Campaign [Healthy Town Designation](#) is now open. [Applications](#) are due by January 19, 2024, at 5 p.m.

Local Government Week Planning. The 2024 NJ Local Government Week will be held April 7-13. We invite you to join in with municipalities across the Garden State to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government. For more information, visit the [NJ Local Government week information page](#).



Food Drive Success

Thanks to all the individuals and communities who donated to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey at the Conference—we saw Jodi Stephens (shown above) from Mayor David Fried's office in Robbinsville contributing many bags with help from Convention Center staff! In total, an inspiring 476 pounds of food were collected. If you would like to further contribute to CFBNJ, [monetary donations are still being accepted](#).

League News

Grant Center

[The Forest Service's Request for Applications for Fiscal Year 2024](#) is now available. This competitive federal grant program provides funding to purchase land from private forest owners to become "community forests/open space" for community benefit and conservation. Funded projects are for full acquisition of the land, not conservation or other easements/protection.

Individual grant applications may not exceed \$600,000.

Detailed information on this grant opportunity can be found in the [Request for Applications \(RFA\) for the Community Forest Program \(CFP\)](#). For more information on the federal Community Forest Program, including information on past funded projects, please see the National [CFP website](#).

Closing Date: Applications due to the NJ State Forester by January 12, 2024.

Contact: Todd Wyckoff, New Jersey State Forester, Todd.Wyckoff@dep.nj.gov

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 23 NJ State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP). The State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) is a federal grant program administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The overall goal of the SLCGP is to improve the cybersecurity posture of state, local, and territorial (SLT) government organizations by providing assistance for managing and reducing systemic cyber risk.

Closing Date: December 8. All submissions are required to be made using the online [application forms](#).

Contact: [NJ SLCGP webpage](#)

Legislative Highlights

- The Governor took action on a variety of bills, [vetoing S-861](#), which would have allowed municipalities to hold annual events to burn Christmas trees, and [conditionally vetoing S-3038](#), a brewery bill that would have helped reintroduce inactive, pocket, liquor licenses and pave the way for liquor licenses for establishments in shopping malls.
- In an active lame duck period, the bills are moving fast and furious. Some, including legislation advancing [requiring the use of cooperative purchasing systems](#), have stalled. While others, including bills revising [workers' compensation coverage](#) and reducing [parking space requirements](#), are in play. The League's legislative team is holding Lame Duck update webinars this month. Please watch your email box for notifications.

Learning Opportunities

- **Dec. 8. [ASK RMS-Records Retention and Storage](#).** COVID-19 stalled the records retention process in many offices. Now it's time to catch up. This webinar will be an interactive program with Karen Perry from the State's Records Management Services. We ask attendees to submit questions in advance of the webinar to help shape the discussion. Some helpful topics to ask questions about are: Public Records & OPRA, Records Retention Schedules, Records Destruction Requests–Artemis, Imaging Records & Imaging Certification, Damaged Records Reports. Please submit your questions in advance of the webinar to dholland@njlm.org using the subject line "Ask RMS."

- **Jan. 20.** Orientation for Newly Elected, Reelected, and Experiences Municipal Officials-South Jersey. A fast-paced update designed to bring officials up to date on important municipal issues. This is a great instruction for newly elected officials and a great refresher for those who are currently serving. In addition, this orientation is a good opportunity for councils and committees to attend together as a jumping off point for the year. The member rate is \$130 per person. To register, visit the [seminar page](#).
- **New for 2024: Practical Management Workshops.** The League is partnering with longtime professional manager Matt Watkins for a series of Practical Management Workshops, providing small group instruction and hands-on learning to educate those working in key local government positions. Please keep an eye out for more information on the sessions.

Get to Know Your Executive Board

Village President Sheena Collum

The Honorable Sheena C. Collum was elected to the Executive Board at the League Business Meeting in Atlantic City on Nov. 16. She serves as the 49th Village President of Township of South Orange Village and is the first female to hold this role in a municipality of 18,500 residents, which is also the proud home to the Seton Hall University Pirates. She has concentrated her priorities around smart growth and economic development, infrastructure and capital planning, citizen engagement and volunteerism, and streamlining municipal operations through consolidations, shared services, and the expansion of technology.



Professionally, Sheena is the Executive Director of the American Planning Association - New Jersey Chapter, a statewide planning organization whose mission is to help build stronger communities and provide more choices for how people work and live while meeting the challenges of both growth and change. In her role, Sheena works regularly with local and state officials, professional and nonprofit organizations, and state and federal agencies on arrange of public policy issues affecting New Jersey's municipalities including smart growth, state and regional planning, transportation, public health, sustainability, economic development, redevelopment, and affordable housing.

Sheena is a proud alumna of Seton Hall University, where she graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in political science and a Master's Degree in Public Administration with a concentration in public policy.



Mayor Nick Kappatos

Mayor Kappatos started his third term as Mayor of the Borough of Runnemede in 2022 and was elected to the League's Executive Board at the Business Meeting on Nov. 16 in Atlantic City. He served on Council for two terms and was Council President for his last three years before becoming Mayor in 2015. He serves on the Runnemede Redevelopment Committee and the Bellmawr Redevelopment Agency. He has also been a member of the Runnemede-Bellmawr-Glendora Rotary

since 2002.

After graduating from Haddon Township High School, Mayor Kappatos graduated from Rowan University with a B.A. in Economics. He is the owner and President of SignPros, located in Gloucester Township since 1992. SignPros designs, manufactures, and installs signs throughout the tri-state area and has a staff of over 20 employees.

Mayor Kappatos is the current Vice President of the Camden County Mayor's Association and on the NJCM Board of Directors.

Married for 25 years to his wife Lisa they have two children, their daughter Lilly graduated Rutgers-Camden and is currently at the Temple School of Pharmacy, and their son Jack, graduated Triton High School in Runnemede and is currently working in the family business.

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