

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Maureen Barrows, Chair

Katharin K. Pratt, Vice-Chair

C. Donald Stritch, Clerk

As Rockingham County Commissioners, it is our duty to provide essential services to the taxpayers of Rockingham County in the most efficient, cost effective manner.

The County has been cited on numerous occasions as one of the best locations to call home and establish a thriving business. Portsmouth was recently identified as one of the top thirty best cities for jobs and businesses in the United States. This has been accomplished by providing residents with outstanding opportunities in education, strategic business location, a skilled labor force, and an excellent quality of life. The United States Census Bureau estimated the population of the county to be 299,276 and the trend continues to show population growth. This represents a 7.9% increase in the population since 2000.

In 2009, the Commissioners accepted the following grant awards:

- New Hampshire Highway Safety Agency: enforcement patrols
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: power outage expense reimbursement
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: oral care program for residents
- New Hampshire Highway Safety Agency: DWI hunter patrols
- United States Department of Justice: grants to 6 police departments in the county
- New Hampshire Department of Safety: emergency communications
- United States Department of Justice: recovery act grant funds to 16 police departments in the county
- New Hampshire Department of Safety: acoustic emergency communications

Rockingham County continued its active role in Community Development Block Grants in 2009. Two open grants for Crossroads House and The Housing Partnership were managed by the county. The Crossroads House grant for replacement of the homeless shelter main building was completed in 2009. The county is hopeful that Phase II of a building construction housing grant will be applied for and accepted in 2010 for Crossroads House. The Housing Partnership Rye senior housing project was in preliminary stages with an expected groundbreaking in 2010. In 2009 the federal government changed regulations and the permitting process for the fishing industry. This has a major economic impact on the region. With the assistance of the Coastal Economic Development Corporation an economic development grant was applied for and we are hopeful for an award and implementation in 2010.

On February 13, 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was signed into law by the President four days later. The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 directly affected Rockingham County in many ways. Rockingham County applied for an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant from the United States Department of Energy in the amount of \$1,966,700 for a biomass heating project on the complex. We are hopeful for a grant award and groundbreaking in 2010. Further, The New Hampshire Business Finance Authority managed Rockingham County's Recovery Zone Facilities Bond volume allocation cap in the amount of

\$38,055,000. In 2010, we anticipate a Recovery Zone Economic Development Bond for the county to be managed by the New Hampshire State Treasurer.

We continue alternatives to reduce the pre-trial population at the jail with teamwork from the Rockingham County Human Services Department, the House of Corrections, and the Rockingham County Attorney's Office. These initiatives are having a positive impact. The Commissioners continue to explore the expansion of video arraignment to reduce the number of transports of detainees to the courts.

Finances are in order and Moody's rating service has once again awarded Rockingham County the highest short term borrowing rating available however Moody's has expressed concern about the long term effects on county finances of the cost shifting by the State of New Hampshire to the counties. The Commissioners worked diligently against increasing unfunded mandates by the legislature.

The discount card program continued in 2009 to help our residents with the high price of prescription drugs. Rockingham County is making discount cards available at no cost under a program sponsored by the National Association of Counties. Caremark Rx Incorporated administers the discount card program and offers a toll free number for assistance with the program along with a website. The cards may be used by all county residents, regardless of age, income, or existing health coverage, and are accepted by most pharmacies in Rockingham County. Cards have been distributed and available for pickup through town offices, head start offices, community action agencies, senior centers, and distributed to patrons of nursing homes, adult day care centers, visiting nurses agencies, and for download at the county website.

District 1
Commissioner Pratt
Term: 2008-2010

Serving: Danville, East
Kingston, Greenland, Hampton,
Hampton Falls, Kensington,
Kingston, New Castle,
Newington, Newton, North
Hampton, Plaistow, Portsmouth,
Rye, Seabrook, South Hampton,
Stratham

District 2
Commissioner Barrows
Term: 2006-2010

Serving: Atkinson, Brentwood,
Epping, Exeter, Fremont,
Hampstead, Newfields,
Newmarket, Raymond, Salem,
Sandown

District 3
Commissioner Stritch
Term: 2008-2012

Serving: Auburn, Candia,
Chester, Deerfield, Derry,
Londonderry, Northwood,
Nottingham, Windham