



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **March 15, 2011** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Frank Kruppa Appointed Public Health Director

The Tompkins County Legislature tonight confirmed the appointment of Frank Kruppa to the position of Public Health Director. The appointment of Kruppa to the top position in the County's Health Department comes after a year-long national search to replace former Director Alice Cole. Kruppa currently serves as the County Health Officer and Administrator in Okeechobee County, Florida.

Mr. Kruppa (pron: KROO-pa) is a native of the Southern Tier and earned his bachelors degree in Environmental Studies from SUNY Binghamton. He received his Masters in Public Administration from Central Florida University.

His career has progressed rapidly through positions within the State of Florida, beginning as an environmental specialist and culminating in his current position as County Health Officer and Administrator, responsible for the operation of a \$3.3 million health department.

"Frank has shown himself to be a dynamic leader, a skilled manager, and a passionate advocate for public health," said Health and Human Services Committee Chair Frank Proto. "To a person, those involved in the search process have come away with a real enthusiasm for Frank's ability to lead this important County department into a future that will present new challenges and opportunities."

The search committee for the position included two members of the County Board of Health, two County legislators, the medical director of Cayuga Medical Center, the director of the Health Planning Council, the program director of the Finger Lakes Independence Center, the Commissioner of Social Services, the interim director of the Health Department, a Health Department staff member representing labor, and the County Administrator.

Last Tuesday, upon hearing the recommendation of the Search Committee, the County Board of Health unanimously recommended the appointment of Mr. Kruppa. The selection of the Public Health Director requires the recommendation of the Board of Health, appointment by the County Administrator, and confirmation by the County Legislature.

"Over the past year, we have undertaken a very methodical process to find the right person to lead this critically important department," said County Administrator Joe Mareane. "Frank Kruppa stood out from a very distinguished group of candidates. I'm particularly pleased that the management and staff of the Health Department was strongly supportive of Mr. Kruppa's candidacy for the position."

"I greatly appreciate the work of the search committee in coming up with what all believe to be an excellent selection," said Legislature Chair Martha Robertson. "It is clear to me that Frank understands the value and power of partnerships within an engaged community. I speak for the full Legislature in saying we look forward to working with Frank in the years ahead."

Robertson also cited the excellent work of Interim Director Brenda Grinnell Crosby in managing the department in the absence of a permanent Director, and in the dedication of management and staff of the Health Department that has resulted in the maintenance of programs at a high level of quality throughout the transition period.

The Public Health Director position carries a starting annual salary of \$87,310. Mr. Kruppa begins service with the County in mid-April.

Contact: Frank Proto, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee, 277-4875; Martha Robertson, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 272-0584; County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.

Legislature Supports Youth Services Funding and Community Action Programs

In two separate actions, the Legislature voiced their official support for two programs which face serious potential budget challenges.

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, urged Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature to preserve current funding streams to fund youth services programs, instead of shifting to a competitive bidding process, which it predicts will cause inequities in prevention and positive youth development services across the state, as well as a loss in local control. The action also calls for the State to maintain the current youth bureau system and structure, which it maintains is in the best interest of the children and youth of Tompkins County and the entire state. It is expected that the Governor's executive budget, if passed, would reduce County funding for youth programs by more than \$200,000.

The Legislature, also by unanimous vote, urged that Community Services Block Grant funding be restored in the federal budget, and recognized and endorsed the mission and dedication of the nation's Community Action network, and especially Tompkins Community Action, as local representative of that national network. In its 45-year history, legislators note, Tompkins Community Action has made "an essential contribution" to local low-income individuals and families by providing "innovative and cost-effective programs." Tompkins County, New York State, and the entire United States, the measure states, must continue to wage war on poverty by providing support and opportunities for all citizens. Legislator Kathy Luz Herrera noted that some have characterized the proposed federal funding cut as "a war on poor people," and she maintained that such a cut "would be very debilitating to those we need to help."

Contact: Frank Proto, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee, 277-4875.

Legislature Authorizes Funding Application for Regional Transportation Study

The Legislature authorized the County to apply for up to \$250,000 in Federal Transit Administration funds to access funds set aside by the Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC) to support a regional transportation study. The study will be focused on addressing regional transportation problems, especially those faced by rural households community to work, education, and other regional services—including ways to integrate cost-effective, appropriate-scale transportation options to facilitate movement of people in the multi-county area surrounding Tompkins County, including the 15,000 daily commuters to, and 4,500 daily commuters from Tompkins County. A multi-agency working group, organized by TC3 President Dr. Carl Haynes, and involving Tompkins and neighboring counties; Cornell University and SUNY Cortland; Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) and other transportation operators, along with the State Transportation Department and ITCTC conceived the study concept. The program will be funded through \$200,000 in federal funds, with \$25,000 each from the State and local funding. Planning Committee Chair Pam Mackesey called the study "an incredibly exciting possibility"

Contact: Pamela Mackesey, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 273-6203.

Cody Austern-Aceto Recognized as Distinguished Youth

Cody Austern-Aceto, a student at Ithaca's Lehman Alternative Community School, is honored as this month's Tompkins County Distinguished Youth for his many contributions in service as a member of the Ithaca Youth Council. IYC program leader Jen Handy describes Cody as a "natural leader," and praises "his energy and enthusiasm for youth issues, upbeat attitude, ability to facilitate complex discussions, and motivated effort outside of meetings," serving as "an exemplary council member and an inspiration for those around him," helping to create an organizational culture at Youth Council that is both fun and productive." He helped

facilitate many of the Council's largest initiatives and individually initiated and organized a day-long service learning day at the Finger Lakes ReUse eCenter to raise teen awareness of local nonprofit services and increase youth service participation in community service opportunities. New York State also recently awarded Cody the Ann M. Irvin Youth Recognition Award for his contributions, character, commitment, and service to the community. The Distinguished Youth Award is cosponsored by A&B Awards and Engraving, Bangs Ambulance Service, Purity Ice Cream, and Cayuga Radio Group.
Contact: Legislature Office, 274-5434.

Among other actions, the Legislature

- Approved 2011 Tourism Capital Grant awards, through county room occupancy tax dollars, for the Cayuga Nature Center, the Science Center, and the Ithaca Skate Park renovation; and approved a contract with the Community Arts Partnership for arts and cultural organization development, also supported through county room occupancy tax. The contract includes \$167,898 in Arts And Culture Stabilization Grants for nine local organizations.
- Awarded Clean Harbors Environmental Services, Inc. of Syracuse a two-year contract, with the potential for renewal, to operate the County Household Hazardous Waste Management Facility for the Solid Waste Management Division, expected to conduct five collection events per year.
- Approved a \$5,000 appropriation, from Planning Department rollover funding, to contribute to a market study which will assess demand for multi-family housing, being undertaken by the Downtown Ithaca Alliance. The allocation will allow the study to be expanded, from a focus solely on downtown Ithaca, to all of Tompkins County.
- Heard a presentation from Personnel Commissioner Anita Fitzpatrick, providing an overview of Personnel Department programs.

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