

Van Doren: 2020 Is A Year We Will All Long Remember

Hunterdon County successfully met the extreme challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020, Freeholder Board Director Shaun C. Van Doren stated in an end of year wrap up report.

Van Doren said, “The year 2020 is one we will all long remember. The response to the health crisis by the county Health Department, our Office of Emergency Management, the Rescue Squads and First Responders, the CERT team, medical providers, physicians, nurses, hospital workers, long term care facility workers, local government officials, the law enforcement community, and so many others, has been and continues to be nothing less than heroic.”

Van Doren, recently re-elected to a new three-year term, pointed out, “The accomplishments are many. The distribution of hundreds of thousands of PPE (personal protective equipment), a term that was new in March, but has now become part of mainstream conversation, by the County to all entities and facilities that needed it.

The establishment of COVID-19 test sites, first as a drive through with Somerset County at the RVCC campus and then in conjunction with the Hunterdon Medical Group, and now through on-line self-testing.

Thousands of volunteer hours at the test site, on the phone hotline, and in contact tracing by the members of the Hunterdon County Medical Reserve Corps.

And a contact tracing program that has reached out to over 13,000 individuals, advising of the need to quarantine to control the spread of the virus.”

Van Doren noted, “Sadly, 2020 will also be remembered for all the loved ones and friends that were lost to the disease. And to the economic hardships brought on by the shutdown of businesses. We extend our sincere condolences to the families of those lost. And pledge to take action to be as supportive as possible for our local businesses.”

The Freeholder Director added, “The County faced a seemingly endless supply of executive orders from the Governor, many of which put the onus on County governments to provide testing, contact tracing, the distribution of PPE, and other emergency response activities.

Now the next big challenge for the county's Health and OEM teams is administering vaccinations, for which the units have prepared through many exercises over the years, and planning and preparation has already begun.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the teamwork of the members of the Freeholder Board. I thank my colleagues for their partnership throughout the year, and again express my appreciation for being selected to lead the Board this year."

Next issue: Hunterdon County 2020 'business as more than usual.'