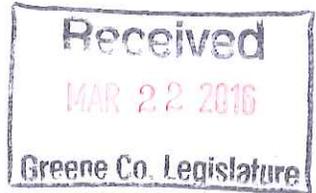


District Attorney of Greene County

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March 22, 2016

Hand Delivered

Greene County Legislature
411 Main Street, Suite 408
Catskill, New York 12414

Attn: Tammy L. Sciavillo, Clerk

Re: 2015 Annual Report of the Greene County District Attorney

Dear Tammy:

Attached hereto please find my "2015 Annual Report of the Greene County District Attorney" for filing.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,


JOSEPH STANZIONE, ESQ., Jr.
District Attorney

JS/ba
Enc.

2015 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GREENE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Staff: 5 ADA's, 1 Investigator, 1 Victim Advocate/Legal Secretary, 2 Legal Secretaries

The 2015 year was my first full year of service to our County as District Attorney. It was a year of "policy making" which would define certain parameters of my Administration.

Violent Crimes

In the beginning of the year my Office was confronted with the arrest of a man who burglarized the home of a County Employee. The defendant's attorney sought a "plea bargain" by way of a reduction of the charge of "Burglary 2nd" to "Burglary 3rd" upon the argument that "such a reduction is common practice for crimes of this nature".

In response, I implemented a policy that "home invasions" will not be tolerated, and therefore a person charged with Burglary 2nd will be required to plead guilty to the charge or proceed to a Trial of the matter.

In this case, the defendant ultimately entered a plea of guilty to the original charge of Burglary 2nd and was sentenced to a term of 5 years in State Prison.

Weekly Meetings

In January 2015 I instituted a policy requiring attendance at weekly staff meetings. During these meetings my staff and I review both felony and serious misdemeanor cases. Our weekly meetings have created a pattern of consistency among attorneys with respect to the manner in which similar cases are handled and disposed of, regardless of which Court a criminal offense may be pending in.

The weekly meetings have further proven to be of tremendous value as the review of a complex criminal case by six attorneys, as opposed to one, has revealed the unique knowledge and skills that each of us possess as attorneys. As such, our collaborative efforts have resulted in the creation of powerful strategies for the prosecution of various serious and complex crimes that we have been faced with.

This new "case review process" has resulted in convictions after Trial and pleas of guilty by defendants who initially demanded a Trial.

Drug Dealers

Upon the commencement of my term of office I stressed that our office must be “proactive” in both investigating and pursuing arrests of drug dealers.

Throughout the past year my Investigator has worked with various Police Agencies on weekends, late night hours and early morning hours gathering information on persons selling illegal drugs in our County. These investigations have resulted in undercover buys of heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine and other narcotics from major drug dealers. These buys, in turn, have resulted in the arrest and prosecution of dozens of drug dealers, most of which have been sentenced to State Prison.

Substance Awareness/Victim Impact Panel

Upon the commencement of my term of Office I also stressed the need to address the problem of alcohol and drug abuse by those charged with offenses such as DWI, DWAI Drugs and Criminal Possession of Controlled Substances. In an effort to “educate” the public as to the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse, I implemented a policy that requires **all persons** charged with an alcohol or drug related offense to attend a “Victim Impact Panel”. The “VIP” is a 2 hour program during which attendees hear from a panel of speakers which include:

- (a) People who have served serious sentences as a result of substance related offenses (they discuss how their crime has impacted their lives as well as the lives of their family and friends);
- (b) People who have been seriously injured or who have lost a loved one due to an alcohol or drug related offense;
- (c) Members of law enforcement;
- (d) Members of the Greene County Probation Department; and
- (e) Members of the Greene County District Attorney’s Office.

Prior to my Term in Office Greene County held 1 Victim Impact Panel per year with an attendance of approximately 20 persons.

During the 2015 year 3 Victim Impact Panels were held, with in excess of 70 people attending the last one alone.

School Involvement in Substance Awareness

In a further effort to become “proactive” in educating the public about “substance abuse”, my Office, in conjunction with the Greene County Probation Department, has arranged to bring the VIP into the High Schools throughout Greene County. With the help of Ms. Ann

Marie Barkman, Superintendent of Catskill High School, our first High School VIP will be held at CHS on June 2, 2016. The focus of the Panel will be on the dangers of substance use/abuse as well as the dangers of driving after consuming alcohol and/or drugs.

I believe that in order to cut down on the alcohol and drug abuse problems that seem to be plaguing our County, it is necessary to educate our youth as to the dangers of such use and abuse, starting with our High Schools. The 6/2/16 date for the Victim Impact Panel was specifically selected because that date falls 2 days before the CHS Prom and only a few weeks before the CHS Graduation.

It is common knowledge that all too often a tragedy occurs during "Prom weekend" and during "Graduation" parties due to the use and/or abuse of alcohol and other mind altering substances. It is my hope that the Victim Impact Panel will have a positive effect on our High School students. My Office will strive to expand the VIP to all of our High Schools in Greene County.

Crime in the Prisons

Upon the commencement of my term of Office I stressed the need to keep the Correction Officers within our local Jail and State Prisons (Coxsackie and Greene Correctional) safe. The one way my Office can assist in doing this is by prosecuting such crimes as "assaults on Officers", "possession of weapons in the Prisons" and "possession of controlled substances in the Prisons". During the 2015 year dozens of inmates were Indicted and prosecuted on weapons charges, drug charges and assaults. A focus on these crimes reflects an increase of more than ten times the number of inmate prosecutions over the 2014 year. I am advised by Prison Officials that "due to the number of Indictments in 2015 the Prison population is now well aware that the Greene County District Attorney's Office has no tolerance for crimes in the Prisons".

It is my hope and expectation that the additional time and effort that my Office has spent on prosecuting crime in the Prisons will cause a significant reduction in future Prison crime, thereby making our Prisons a safer place for its employees.

On the one hand, prosecution of Prison cases adds a tremendous number of work hours to my staff. On the other hand, Greene County is fully reimbursed by the State of New York for every hour of work that my staff spends on these cases as well as every penny that is spent on transcripts, travel and experts. Unless there is a significant reduction in crime within the Prisons there may be a future need for additional man power (one additional assistant) to handle crimes of this nature. If such need arises, any cost to the County would be reimbursed by the State.

Limited Plea Bargaining

My Office has implemented a policy of moving the "serious crimes" to Trial, rather than engaging in the plea bargaining process. Due to our successful conviction rate over the past

year we find that many defendants are now more likely to enter a plea of guilty to their original charges prior to Trial.

Rather than demand a plea bargain, defendants now request a degree of leniency from the Judge for sparing the Court the time and cost of a lengthy Trial.

Conclusion

In conclusion the Greene County District Attorney's Office was extremely active last year. My Office staff was focused and motivated to prosecute crime in an ethical, professional and efficient manner. My staff pulled together to work as a unified body which resulted in the creation of powerful prosecution strategies. My Office worked hand in hand with the Greene County Probation Department, the Greene County Sheriff's Office, the New York State Police and the various local Police Agencies in investigations, arrests and prosecutions of criminals.

I believe 2015 was a good year for Greene County with respect to the strength of the District Attorney's Office in the prosecution of crime, as well as the implementation of policies to educate both our youth and the general public about the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse.

I am proud of my staff of dedicated public servants who make up the Greene County District Attorney's Office. In a short time they pulled together to form a strong bond capable not only of maintaining the strength of the Office, as it existed under our former D.A., Terry J. Wilhelm, but of moving the Office to a new level of sharp tactical and ethical prosecutions.

I have worked hard to run a financially responsible Office and I am thankful for the support our Greene County Legislators and Greene County Administrator have extended to me and to my Office since my election.

Respectively submitted,



JOSEPH STANZIONE, ESQ.,
Greene County District Attorney