

Inside the Chamber

Ellenville - Wawarsing Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 227 * Ellenville, NY 12428 * 845-647-4620

\$200,000 fixer-uppers... A 64-acre mountaintop property with a two-story building with no heat, bathrooms, sewage, bedrooms, or garage, bought by legendary rock star David Bowie for almost \$1.62 million. Here THEY come!

The August 4th New York Magazine had an in-depth article listing all the great real estate bargains in the Catskills. In fact, the former home of my first grade teacher, Miss Cushner, is pictured with a price tag of \$300,000. "The call of the Catskills" is capitalized on the front cover, as well as property descriptions with the subtitles of "All this for less than a Manhattan Studio." After reading the article, I likened the exodus of "city people" to the land given away in our country's western territories following the Civil War.

What our residents perceive as soaring prices can be of great profit to local sellers. These prices are still bargains for people coming into our community with NYC-type money, but also difficult for most of our locals whose household annual incomes hover just below \$30,000. Could it be that many of our young people may never be able to purchase a home in the community in which they grew up? Ask the natives of towns like Pine Bush and New Paltz.

We need housing! We need housing of varied price ranges. Ask our local realtors and they will tell you the same thing. Affordable housing does not always mean low-income housing. Affordable housing simply means housing that people can afford. Incomes determine what is affordable for a family.

So why is the president of the local chamber of commerce discussing affordable housing? The answer is "Commerce!" To drive local commerce you not only need consumers, but employees. It has become extremely difficult for a small business to provide for their employees. The costs of benefit packages have skyrocketed and, in many instances, are on the verge of extinction due to irrational inflationary costs. Businesses are surviving on an ever-increasing shrinking profit margin, and are not able to give their employees the wage increases they need to provide for their families. The bosses themselves are trying to do more while generating less.

A community that can provide affordable housing for all income levels will be a stable and prosperous community. It takes many income levels to drive local commerce. Each level is equally important and this diversity insures a bright future for a community. Local employers can no longer afford to offer a living wage. If this trend continues, the businesses that remain in our community may not have the manpower to prosper, let alone survive. Is this a possible scenario? Perhaps.

Affordable housing is not the only thing that draws "city people" here. The beautiful surroundings and country life-style that keeps so many of us here also attracts them. They, too, value this way of life. These new residents tell me what they find when they move here are friendly people and business-owners ready to make them feel welcome.

New York Magazine describes our area this way: "It's old Hampton lifestyle without the new Hampton scene - though there's certainly no shortage of beautiful people." Let's show those "city people" that we have a few beautiful people of our own!

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark R. Craft

President

The 2003 Board of Directors of the Chamber:

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Boffo Music in the Square!

The *Ellenville-Wawarsing Chamber of Commerce* would like to thank all those responsible for making this year's *Music in the Square* a huge success. Sponsors for the evenings included:

- ☛ *The Village of Ellenville*
- ☛ *Mary Sheeley of H& R Block*
- ☛ *Craft Chiropractic*
- ☛ *Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream*
- ☛ *Gillette Creamery*
- ☛ *M&T Bank*
- ☛ *The Ellenville National Bank*

The **Chamber's Pride Committee** organized and hosted this event. This year's concerts featured the Carl Richard Band, The Hudson Valley Brass, The Swing Shift Orchestra, and The Expressions. Thanks go to Ellenville's Street and Police Departments for all their help at the concerts. This is one more event that brings many people together to enjoy what our community can offer. ✨

Ellenville Regional Hospital
AUXILIARY



LUNCHEON

The Eagle's Nest - Bloomingburg, NY

September 15, 2003 at 12:30pm

Tickets are \$26.00 per person

Reservations required by September 2, 2003

Please call Carol Lounsbery at 210-1431