

# Hughes sees hard times ahead for Mercer Co.

*County Executive Brian Hughes calls for government cut backs in his State of the County address.*

**By Janine Logue  
Editor**

Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes predicted a "gloomy" economic forecast in his State of the County address given in front of the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce on Jan. 17.

Hughes also highlighted the need to ease the tax burden on county residents by cutting government costs over the next four years.

"It is time for government at all levels to push away from the table and begin losing the fat," Hughes said. "Along with the challenge of a fiscal diet, now is the time to focus on the long-term challenges we face that are not simply County government problems, but that affect all County residents."

Hughes pointed out to the crowd of business professionals that the county has recently cut costs

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## Hughes gives State of the County address

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totalling approximately \$1 million by combining the administrative services of the Mercer County Special Services School District and the county's technical school.

Other focuses of the County Executive's speech included a plea to local businesses to help New Jersey continue to encourage clean energy business practices. Hughes hopes that solar- and hydrogen-

powered energy products companies will bring hundreds of jobs to the county.

According to Hughes, New Jersey currently ranks fifth in the nation in encouraging the growth of clean energy start-up companies.

Hughes also urged local business owners to welcome home returning military service members with "open arms." He asks that business owners do what they can to offer jobs or employment

assistance to this newest group of veterans.

Also, during Hughes time with the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce, he performed the ceremonial oath of citizenship for Piero "Pete" Porfirio of Hamilton who is an in the maintenance department at the N.J. State House.

Porfirio , was born in Abruzzi, Italy and immigrated to America in his teens. He became a U.S. citizen in 1962, but never took part in a ceremony.

Porfirio wiped away tears as he thank Hughes and the chamber for taking the time to perform his ceremony.