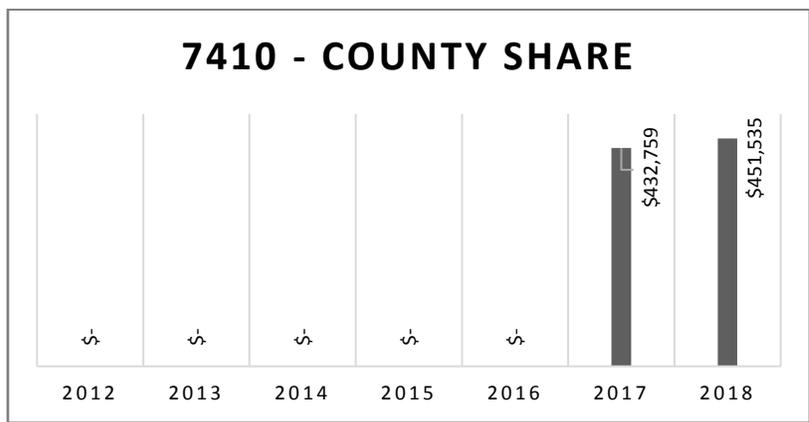


## RECREATION

7410



### MISSION

The Albany County Recreation Department's mission is to provide structured recreational programming for the youth of the county, and other recreational opportunities to our families. The ability to offer positive diversions for youth who have historically not had the resources or opportunities, because of their location or personal background, is vital for Albany County. By providing a comprehensive approach which combines experienced coaches, staff, effective programs, and recreational areas, the youth and families of Albany County will truly benefit, thereby ensuring healthy, productive lives.

### WHO WE SERVE

With our various free youth recreation programs, we serve youths ages 5-18 from around the county. We have formed a partnership with the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union), the first of its kind in the country. The AAU was formed in 1888 to establish standards and uniformity in amateur sports. "Sports for All, Forever" is their motto, and the youths in our programs join 670,000 participants and 100,000 volunteers across the country in this prestigious organization.

With the addition of Lawson Lake County Park, the Hockey Facility, and the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail, we add to our service population families across the county that seek fun, healthy, inexpensive outdoor and indoor recreation and athletic activities.

### ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT

The Albany County Recreation Department's focus on providing quality **Recreational Programs** such as karate, lacrosse, flag football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, track & field, and learn to skate/hockey, is at our core. In conjunction with our partnership with the AAU, we run these programs around the county, in some of the lowest income and least served areas. By bringing these free programs to our youth, we aim to give them structured, fun activities that not only keep them active and off the streets, but teach them discipline and respect for themselves and others.

Not to be forgotten as part of the Recreation Department is the jewel of Albany County that is **Lawson Lake County Park**. Once a neglected former camp, in recent years it has been transformed into a destination for youth in summer camp programs, and for the general public seeking outdoor activities such as hiking, picnicking, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, bird watching, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and nature study. The park is open year round from dawn to dusk, and is located on the border of the towns of Coeymans and New Scotland.

**The Hockey Facility** offers a diversified program of recreational and competitive programs for people of all ages and abilities, and is home to the Department's free learn to skate/learn to play hockey program. The Facility is open ten months a year and averages over 100 hours of activity per week. In addition to programs, a food concession, full service pro shop, and skate rentals are available to residents.

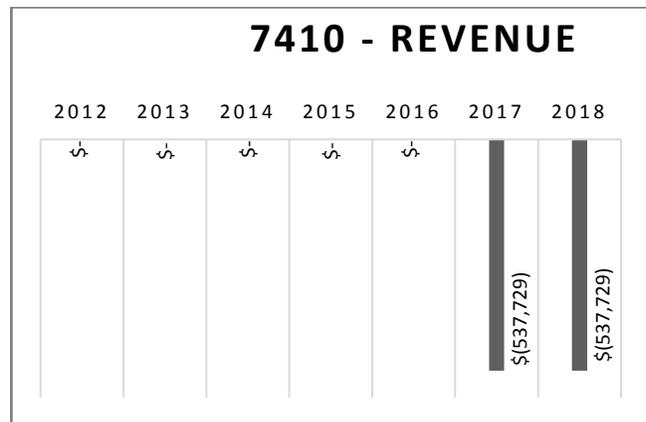
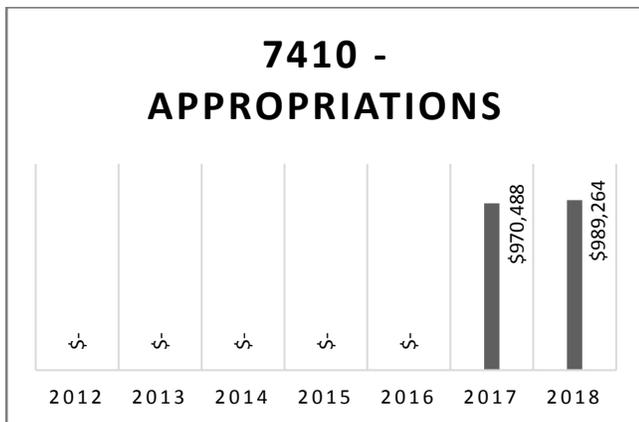
**The Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail** is a project that converted a nine-mile stretch of the old Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Railroad between the Port of Albany and Voorheesville to a public recreational trail. It has linked municipalities along a safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle route. The many benefits of the Rail Trail include the preservation of open space, community linkages, opportunities for physical fitness, and the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.

### 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In 2017, almost 1,400 children took part in our youth recreation programs, many taking advantage of more than one program.
- The bedrock of our youth recreation program, karate, operating in five different locations, served nearly 500 children around the county.

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- Our flag football and lacrosse programs continued to grow, and we added new baseball and track & field programs.
- Our learn to skate/learn to play hockey program was an even bigger success this year, drawing over 300 children to the Hockey Facility.
- Lawson Lake County Park co-hosted the New York State's first ever Lack Water Animal Rescue Training, along with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the ASPCA Disaster Response Team.
- Waldman Lodge at Lawson Lake was fully insulated and is now heated, enabling it to be used year-round for events and activities.
- The First Annual Winter Festival was held at Lawson Lake, with ice fishing, tractor rides, refreshments, and many other fun activities for families.
- The Hockey Facility was able to prevent an increase in fees for all public programs, including admission for skating, skate rentals, open hockey, and stick & puck.
- The emergency lighting was replaced throughout the hockey facility, and the Zamboni was refurbished.
- In July, the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, in conjunction with their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and in partnership with the Department, held a Hike-A-Thon on the Rail Trail that included both a botany & history hike and a fun ride, both wheelchair accessible.
- We have continued to receive and answer many calls and e-mails from various community members and groups regarding questions about the Rail Trail, which is incredibly popular with the public. The online registration request form for events on the Trail is now up and running.
- A program to let the public purchase and donate benches that will be placed along the Rail Trail through the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy was approved by the Legislature, and is up and running, with five benches already purchased.
- A "Little Library" has been donated, and placed near the intersection of Adams Street and Hudson Avenue on the Rail Trail.



## 2018 GOALS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- In 2018, we are working to steadily increase the number of children we serve with our recreation programs. In addition to our karate, flag football, basketball, lacrosse, baseball, track & field and learn to skate/learn to play hockey programs, we are planning to add volleyball and Tae Kwon Do.
- The maintenance on the existing buildings at Lawson Lake will continue. There is now a Capital Plan in place to do this, and install running water on the lower camp by the spring.
- Lawson Lake will continue their work to grow and develop educational programs for school groups and the general public.
- The Hockey Facility will be hosting a summer hockey camp for children ages 5-18, as well as The Cougars, a special needs hockey team.
- The United Way Hockey Tournament and the Annual Troy-Albany Rink Rat Hockey Tournament will be held at the Hockey Facility.
- There are plans to install a series of fitness stations along the Rail Trail.
- The Rail Trail is slated to be completely paved, finishing the work by paving from the Slingerlands Trailhead to the end of the Trail in Voorheesville.