

## Young professionals talk tax

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Topics: Small Business, Government

“Tonight is not just about complaining.”

Instead, Joseph Kenner, a Port Chester village trustee and young professional in Westchester County, said last week’s Westchester County Association Young Professional Group forum in White Plains was about “education.”

“We want to learn how we can get involved and how we can effect change,” he said of the event, which addressed the county’s high tax rates and growing budget numbers. “One of the first steps is just voting.”

Julia Salem, director of events at the WCA and young professional like Kenner, acknowledged the net migration from New York state because of fiscal concerns.

“It definitely is a trend, the exodus out of New York in general,” she said. “The average person doesn’t know about it and coupled with other issues like health care ... we want to be able to educate our own first.”

One of the forum panelists, Brian Sampson, executive director of Unshackle Upstate, a statewide bipartisan trade organization, reviewed several statistics, including:

The New York state property tax burden is 60 percent higher than the national average, according to the New York state comptroller.

Since 2000, the state budget increased from \$75 billion to a proposed \$134 billion.

New York is home to the 10 highest-taxed counties as a percentage of home value in the country.

The expected budget for 2012 to 2013 is \$149 billion.

February's deficit reduction plan last year added \$700 million in health insurance increases.

"Decades of reckless spending have crippled our economy," Sampson said. "The job losses you see, the taxes you continue to pay ... we're having long-term ramifications from the bad decisions of the past. If we don't demand more accountability now, what is our future going to look like?"

Panelists answered questions from the audience, which included one in regard to controlled spending.

"There was a time when we tried to get the comptroller to certify revenue," said Alfred DeIBello, chairman of the Westchester County Association and partner at White Plains-based DeIBello, Donnellan, Weingarten, Wise & Wiederkehr L.L.P. "The debate always is, the governor says 'We have 'x' amount of dollars coming in next year.' The Assembly says, 'Oh we don't believe you. It's x plus.' And the Senate says, 'It's x plus plus.' So they fool around with the revenue projections, which allows them to build in the programs and the expenditures they want. There's nobody certifying the revenue."