

# Spotlight



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

CELEBRATING  
25 Years  
of Baseball



Somerset County Board of County Commissioners



# Somerset County Government is Here to Serve You



**Shanel Y. Robinson**  
*Director*



**Douglas Singleterry**  
*Deputy Director*



**Melonie Marano**  
*Commissioner*



**Paul M. Drake**  
*Commissioner*



**Sara Sooy**  
*Commissioner*

Somerset County's government serves over 345,000 residents in 21 municipalities. The county is governed by a Board of County Commissioners of five members elected countywide. In January, the Commissioners elect one member to be Commissioner Director and another to be Deputy Director.

The Board of County Commissioners holds regular public meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month in the County Administration Building at 20 Grove Street, Somerville. Regular meetings start immediately following the 5:00 pm agenda session and are streamed live on the County website and Facebook page. Items discussed at each agenda session will be voted on at the next regular meeting that occurs two or three weeks later.

Three other elected officials serve the people of Somerset County. The County Clerk is responsible for recordkeeping for real estate, businesses, and elections; and for receiving election petitions, designing election ballots, and certifying election results, among other functions.

The County Sheriff provides security at the Somerset County Courthouse and the County Complex; operates the Somerset County Jail; transports County prisoners; and is responsible for Sheriff's Sales, a K-9 Unit, and the execution of civil and criminal court warrants, among other duties.

The County Surrogate probates wills; qualifies executors, administrators, and trustees; and issues necessary documents for administering estates. 🏠



**Steve Peter**  
*County Clerk*



**Darrin J. Russo**  
*Sheriff*



**Bernice "Tina" Jalloh**  
*Surrogate*

## On Our Cover: Somerset Patriots Turn 25

The Somerset Patriots have a lot to celebrate in their 25th season at their home, TD Bank Ballpark, which is owned by Somerset County. Recently affiliated with the New York Yankees, they are the reigning champions of the Double-A Eastern League, having won their 2022 championship with a 15-0 no-hit shutout last September. From the beginning, the Patriots were made possible by a collaboration between the Kalafer family and the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders, who are now called County Commissioners. Join current and former County Commissioners/Freeholders on Saturday night, June 3, for a game against the Portland Sea Dogs (Boston Red Sox) and a 25th anniversary party! 🏠

JOIN OUR TEAM AT SOMERSET COUNTY

[SOCONJ.GOV/GETHIRED](https://soconj.gov/gethired)

# We're Hiring!

(908) 231-7120



# Join the Fun at Somerset County's Six Senior Wellness Centers!



*"I believe the Senior Center is wonderful. They are always kind and open to the needs of the Seniors, 100%."*

– Warren resident

*"The Senior Center greatly helps me fight depression. Improves health through exercise. Breaks boredom."*

– Bridgewater resident



*"Nice meeting and socializing with Seniors gathering here. The food served is very good. Pick up is very helpful and punctual."*

– Hillsborough resident



*"I like the electric atmosphere here. Always something going on."*

– Franklin Township resident

*"I love the center. It saved my life. Somerset has wonderful Senior Centers."*

– Bridgewater resident



Somerset County operates six Senior Wellness Centers Monday through Friday that are free to any resident 60 or older. The centers offer a rich variety of in-person and virtual programs. Lunch is available for a \$2.50 suggested donation.

Learn more at [www.SoCoNJ.gov/seniorcenters](http://www.SoCoNJ.gov/seniorcenters) or call (908) 704-6346. 

*"My friends are fabulous and I'm still making them."*

– Hillsborough resident

# Mobile Outreach Van to Bring Services to Communities



Somerset County’s Human Services Department in May is launching a new Somerset HELPS mobile outreach van intended to bring services directly to neighborhoods in need of support.

“This program can have an enormous impact on underserved communities,” said Somerset County Commissioner Paul M. Drake, liaison to the Human Services Department. “It recognizes that many people in need struggle with transportation to get to our Human Services headquarters in Somerville. We will now bring services to people in need.”

The program is funded by Somerset County Board of County Commissioners through the Human Services Department and from the Opioid Settlement Fund. The Sheriff’s office is contributing staff time in the form of a deputy who will drive the van, which will include bilingual staff.

At the beginning, The Somerset HELPS van will be on the road about one day per week and will announce its schedule one month in advance. It will also attend major events, such as the 4-H Fair in August. 🏠

## Scheduled Stops of SOMERSET HELPS Van

DATE	PLACE	OCCASSION
<b>May 12 6-8pm</b>	Franklin Middle School-Hamilton Campus, 415 Francis St., Somerset	<i>Diversity Night Festival</i>
<b>May 19 9-3pm</b>	Raritan Valley Community College, Branchburg	<i>Stigma-Free Conference</i>
<b>May 19 4-8pm</b>	Good Shephard Lutheran, 300 Union Ave., Somerville	<i>Comm. Resource Event</i>
<b>May 30 9-2pm</b>	County Food Bank Network, 7E Easy St., Bound Brook	<i>Food distribution</i>
<b>June 3 9-11am</b>	Vermeule Comm. Center, 11 Vermeule Pl., N. Plainfield	<i>Food distribution</i>
<b>June 24 1-5pm</b>	Franklin Youth Center, 429 Lewis St., Somerset	<i>Youth Festival</i>

# County Clerk Peter Takes His Office to Communities

Somerset County Clerk Steve Peter’s office provides many valuable services for the public, but it can be difficult to get to his Somerville office during regular business hours. To make it easier, the Clerk’s office now holds mobile office hours throughout the county on weekends and at special events. Residents can get the new Somerset County ID, apply for a passport, register military discharge papers, register a deed, and more with the help of trained staff.

You can ask Clerk Peter to bring the mobile office to your community by visiting [soconj.gov/clerk](http://soconj.gov/clerk), emailing [CountyClerk@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:CountyClerk@co.somerset.nj.us), or calling (908) 231-7013 during business hours. 🏠



# Richard Hall Partners with Zufall to Offer Medical, Dental Services



Officials join Somerset County Commissioner Paul M. Drake in cutting the ribbon on Zufall Health at Richard Hall.

Somerset County in March cut the ceremonial ribbon on the new Zufall Health Center at Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center in Bridgewater to provide primary medical and dental care to Richard Hall clients and residents of Somerset County.

Supported by a federal grant, the partnership coordinates care to ensure that Richard Hall's mental health and substance use clients have holistic wellness plans to include body, mind and spirit care, while expanding medical services to area residents.

"For so many of our neighbors and loved ones dealing with mental health issues, just the process of getting the care they need can be overwhelming. Somerset County is committed to removing as many of these barriers as possible," said Commissioner Paul M. Drake, liaison to Human Services. "The simple convenience for our Richard Hall clients of scheduling mental health and physical health appointments closely together in time and location can mean the difference between getting and not getting care."

Richard Hall has worked with Zufall Health, a Federally Qualified Health Center, as one of its offsite partners for the past eight years and developed an excellent working relationship over that time.

"Zufall Health is grateful to partner with Richard Hall Community Health & Wellness Center to establish our third service location in Somerset County and 14th statewide," said Frances Palm, President & Chief Executive Officer, Zufall Health. 🏡

## Supporting Diversity in Law Enforcement



Somerset County Prosecutor John P. McDonald introduces Steffany Marroquin, the first Somerset County Police Scholarship recipient to enter the police academy. Upon completing her academy training, Marroquin will join the North Plainfield Police Department. The Somerset County Commissioners are providing police academy scholarships to promote diversity in local police departments.



Bernice Jalloh Surrogate

## Surrogate Jalloh Launches Online Probate Filing

The loss of a loved one can be extremely difficult, especially for family members who serve as Executor of the will or administrator of the estate. Somerset County Surrogate Bernice "Tina" Jalloh understands how hard it can be to juggle work, funeral arrangements, family obligations as well as one's own grief, and is committed to simplifying the process for all.

Beginning this spring, executors can submit probate information such as death certificates, wills, and information on family and beneficiaries online, removing the need for an initial in-person trip to the Surrogate's office in Somerville. The online service means executors/administrators can submit the information in a timely manner even if they do not live locally themselves, saving time and expense.

To learn more about estate planning and the process of probating a will, visit [soconj.gov/surrogate](https://soconj.gov/surrogate). 🏡

# Guided Trail Rides Return to Lord Stirling Park



Commissioner Sara Sooy (L) at Lord Stirling Park.

The Somerset County Park Commission and Board of County Commissioners announced the restoration of staff-guided trail rides at the Stable at Lord Stirling Park in Basking Ridge following the acquisition of six new horses. The return of Park Commission owned horses is part of the two-year effort during COVID to restore the Stable to self-sufficiency while expanding equestrian program access to all residents.

"I am thrilled to be here today to celebrate the continued expansion of equestrian programming at the Stable at Lord Stirling Park, and to look forward to even more programming in the future," said Somerset County Commissioner Paul Drake, liaison to the Park Commission. "The Stable has been a hidden jewel of Somerset County's Park system for decades, and we are all committed to ensuring all our residents and visitors not only

know about it but can enjoy it with families and friends."

Guided trail rides help riders with limited experience on horses experience the joy of trail rides in groups of two or three in a safe, secure environment with professionals leading the way. For more information on how to participate in trail riding visit the Parks Commission website at [www.somersetcountyparks.org/](http://www.somersetcountyparks.org/).

"The Park Commission is absolutely excited to be back in the business of offering equine programming at the Stable at Lord Stirling Park," said Park Commission President D.J. Hunsinger. "We are grateful that the County Commissioners have made a serious financial commitment to expand the facilities at Lord Stirling Park and reinvigorate the equestrian component for County residents." 🏛️

## Summer Concerts in Somerset County Parks!

### NORTH BRANCH PARK \*

JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> New York Bee Gees

### DUKE ISLAND PARK

JULY 9<sup>TH</sup> Vito Picone & The Elegants

JULY 16<sup>TH</sup> Here's Elton

JULY 23<sup>RD</sup> K Brown Express

JULY 30<sup>TH</sup> Kickin Nash

AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup> Super Trans Am

**GATES OPEN AT 5:30 PM**

**CONCERTS AT 6:30 PM**

\* July 4th celebration at North Branch Park, gates open at 6PM followed by fireworks at 9:30PM.

## Somerset County Municipalities are “Film Ready!”

The New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission named four Somerset County municipalities as the first in the state to be “film ready.” Franklin, Hillsborough, South Bound Brook, and Watchung are the first members of New Jersey’s Film Ready Communities program.

The program takes advantage of the state’s exploding video production industry and the economic benefits that come with filmmaking. These towns demonstrated they have locations, expertise, and resources to support video shoots. The Somerset County Commissioners launched the Somerset County Film Commission in 2021 to take advantage of the state’s generous tax credit program for video productions.

“Somerset County is pleased to provide New Jersey’s inaugural class of Film Ready Communities, demonstrating the fantastic opportunities offered by our diverse filming locations, local businesses, and proximity to major cities and transportation hubs,” said Somerset County Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson. 🏛️



*The Van Lieu Farmstead in Franklin Township was used recently to film scenes for a Stephen King film.*

## Somerset County Promotes Tourism Through Sports

More than 3,000 families traveling from 17 states will be staying in Somerset County hotels July 6-8 this summer thanks to the Top Threat girl’s lacrosse tournament that is being made possible, in part, by an American Rescue Plan grant of \$53,000 through the Somerset County Commissioners.

The event will be held at Iron Peak Sports in Hillsborough, with participants staying throughout the county. “We’re now fully booked for that weekend,” said Roland Mracek, the Director of Sales at the Hyatt House in Bridgewater. He said 80 of 128 suites were booked for the tournament.

“We’re very focused on supporting agritourism, heritage tourism, and sports tourism to replace business travel lost since the pandemic,” said Somerset County Commissioner Melonie Marano. 🏛️



## County Invests \$3 Million in Next Generation Jobs at RVCC

The Somerset County Board of County Commissioners allocated \$3 million in American Rescue Plan funding to Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) to expand workforce training to help students secure next-generation technology jobs. The allocation will help RVCC continue its advanced manufacturing leadership and support the County’s vibrant high-tech industries.

“Somerset County and RVCC are committed to ensuring every resident has the education and training to get the good jobs of the future, and that employers have access to the best workforce in the world right here in Somerset County,” said Deputy Director Singleterry. “This grant is a continuation of our partnership with RVCC engaging leading high-tech employers to identify their visions for the future, and working to ensure Somerset County is poised to make those visions a reality.” 🏛️



*Commissioner Douglas Singleterry at RVCC.*

Somerset County  
20 Grove Street  
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Somerville, NJ  
08876-1262

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## Nueva Camioneta de Alcance Móvil del Condado de Somerset Ofrece Ayuda a Todos los Residentes.

“Somerset County HELPS” es el nombre de una nueva camioneta de alcance móvil que visitará los vecindarios para ofrecer servicios a todos los residentes, independientemente de su estado migratorio. Los servicios incluyen salud mental, uso de sustancias, asistencia alimentaria, entrenamiento de trabajo, y más.



*Nueva Camioneta de Alcance Móvil del Condado de Somerset Ofrece Ayuda a Todos los Residentes.*



Sheriff Darrin J. Russo announced that his newest K-9 officer, a male yellow Labrador retriever, will be named “Patriot” following a contest that received more than a thousand entries. The winning name was selected by two entrants, sixth grader Timmy Miessler from Branchburg and Ruthanne Ungerleider, a Certified Shorthand Reporter from Bedminster.

[www.co.somerset.nj.us](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us)



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