

The Southern Dutchess News

Originally published: February 9, 2011

East Fishkill supervisor: 'never thought winter would be as difficult as this'

By Kristine Coulter
Staff Writer

EAST FISHKILL — "I never thought the winter would be as difficult as this," said East Fishkill Town Supervisor John Hickman recently. With snow falling every week since the Dec. 26 blizzard, municipalities have had to keep an eye on their snow budgets.

"The highway guys are doing a great job," stated Hickman.

At the end of 2010, the town "still had money left in the budget," said Hickman. The money that was left goes back into the highway general fund, said the supervisor.

The overtime for snow removal, which is a separate budget line, had \$20,000 left, said Hickman. Snow materials had \$86,000 left.

"That December storm was big enough that Dutchess County Office of Emergency Management asked how much it cost," remarked Hickman.

For 2011 winter season Mark Pozniak, part-time comptroller for the town and of the Red Hook accounting firm D'Achille &

Associates, said \$1,080,000 was budgeted, which includes overtime for town employees, subcontractors and snow removal materials as a whole.

So far, said Pozniak, "roughly about fifty percent (has been) spent when looked at as a whole."

He said January and February are worse than November and December.

"If we're 50 percent spent, we're in good shape," he said.

"The big savings appears to be in the materials line," said Pozniak.

The Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies released its findings last December regarding the human and environmental impacts of road salt use during the winter months. The Institute, which is located in Millbrook, held up the Town of East Fishkill as an example, because it has recouped \$243,810 in salt savings during its first year of using retrofitted road salt trucks.

"I think so much of the savings (comes from) the computers on the salt trucks," said Hickman.

Hickman said \$700,000 has been budgeted for 2011 for materials, such

as salt and ice control materials. So far, \$270,000 has been used, said Hickman.

"As far as snow materials, we're doing very well," said Hickman.

There are 16 subcontractors the town hires, according to town officials. The budget includes \$250,000 for subcontractors. Hickman said approximately \$170,000 has been used.

There are 194 miles of roads the town is responsible for plowing and clearing of snow, said Hickman.

Last year the town board approved taking out a budget note as a cushion, said Hickman, which leaves the town in "good shape." Last year there was a highway surplus but "brush pickup ate up most of that," said the supervisor.

Hickman said when he and Pozniak worked on numbers for 2011 budget for snow removal they looked at the "actual" numbers from the past three years, "trying to estimate what the expenses were going to be.

"We'll be very happy when spring is here," said the supervisor.