

## Supervisor's November Message

This past May, the Town of Amherst acquired the town's streetlights from National Grid and launched the large undertaking of converting the lights to LED. With any large project there are going to be challenges, but the Town, in partnership with our contractors, has worked out the initial hurdles and are successfully moving forward with the conversion to LED to deliver many benefits to residents, motorists and pedestrians.

Prior to acquiring the streetlights, the Town completed an extensive Comprehensive Energy Audit that identified improvements to reduce energy and operational costs, while maintaining current lighting levels. The Town is in the process of converting all street lighting fixtures to LED, resulting in significant energy savings, as well as substantial maintenance savings. Annual savings are estimated at \$500,000. It could take over a year to complete the conversion with an estimated 9,700 installations to do. One question I hear often is where is the work currently being done. Crews started in opposite corners of town, one team in the southwest corner and the other in the northeast corner, both working inward. The process is going well, with over 40% of streetlights converted to LED at this point.



Because this is such a huge conversion, the Town still has to handle outages in old fixtures. The Town is aware of a number of outages and is strategically scheduling repairs in coordination with LED replacement. What the Town wanted to avoid was replacing an outage, and then a short time later have the town's contractor come through and convert that street. Coordinated by the Town's Engineering Department, and in coordination with LED Energy Solutions (LEDES), we are prioritizing streetlight outages. Since coming onboard in late October, LEDES has repaired over 150 of the outages assigned to them. With clocks pushed back this past weekend, we are seeing streets getting darker earlier and the Town and our partners understand the importance of having reliable streetlights to make our communities safer. The backlog of outages is being addressed and crews are working as quickly as possible.

Residents can report a streetlight outage on the Town's website by visiting [www.amherst.ny.us](http://www.amherst.ny.us) and in the Keyword Search on the home page type, "street light" or [CLICK HERE](#) to be taken directly to the form. Please provide as much information as possible including a pole number following the prompts on the form. The Town recently revamped its reporting and mapping system to improve communication and response times.

Another benefit of the updated street lights is they include smart nodes that will allow the Town to communicate directly with the poles to provide real-time street light status, including outages notification.

The Town is working directly with local companies to complete this project. I want to thank IBEW Local 41 for being an excellent partner. We have utilized local labor for both the conversion process and outage restoration effort.

The purchasing and converting of streetlights is relatively new for municipalities and comes with a learning curve. However, the process will be worth it in the end as we work toward achieving the project's main objectives, which in addition to cost savings and reducing energy consumption, includes improving light quality and uniformity, enhancing pedestrian, traffic, and community safety, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and allowing for smart city implementation.