



CITY OF PEEKSKILL

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa  
Mayor

## **Peekskill Organizations Banding Together To Help Businesses Hit By Mall Fire.**

*City Forms Disaster Assistance Team To Assist Businesses Damaged By Mall Fire; Chamber of Commerce, Fire Department, Business Improvement District, Local Companies Also Pitching In.*

Effort Is Targeted At Helping Companies Get Up And Running As Soon As Possible.

***For Immediate Release***

**Thursday, Dec. 14, 2004**

**Contact: Mayor John Testa  
914-734-4105**

PEEKSKILL, NY—Civic, government, businesses and other groups are banding together to support the businesses and employees whose livelihoods were destroyed by last week's fire at the Peekskill Shopping Mall.

To help coordinate the effort, the Peekskill City Planning Department has formed a Disaster Assistance Team under the guidance of Brian Havranek, director of planning, development and code assistance.

840 Main Street, Peekskill, NY 10566 (914) 734-4105

“People with potential jobs and those who are looking for work should call me,” Havranek says. His phone number 914-734-4210. The Planning department has an intimate knowledge of both economic development resources and potential business sites all over the city. It is using that information to assist the businesses hit by the fire.

There is still no certainty as to when and if the Peekskill Shopping Mall will open again. Even if the facility were completely reconstructed, it would take at least six months and probably more than a year before new space was available. Even then, because the structure would be new construction, its rents might be considerably higher than those charged at the old facility.

Because of this, the Disaster Assistance Team is making support available in a number of different ways:

**Collecting information on potential jobs.** Several area businesses have already called the city and told officials that they might have jobs available for those who lost them because of the fire. Shopping mall personnel looking for work should call the Economic Development Department at 914-734-4214.

**Providing assistance in finding new locations.** Peekskill officials try to stay aware of what properties are available. The Economic Development Office has already begun helping bring businesses together with prospective property owners, and plans to continue doing this in as many cases as possible. Businesspeople who find locations themselves can contact the Planning Department for information about possible financial assistance.

**Guiding businesses through the paperwork needed to gain support.**

Companies seeking state or federal financial support must deal with significant amounts of paperwork and regulations even when emergency funding is involved. Different programs are available depending on whether businesses had insurance or not and many other factors. The Economic Development Department is helping victims of the fire understand what is available to them and how they can get it.

**Press and Public Information Support.** City representatives are working with the local media to ensure word of both the unemployed and potential jobs gets out as effectively as possible. The same resources will be deployed to support businesses as they reopen or change locales.

Other organizations are also doing what they can to assist. The Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce is tapping into the expertise of its members and providing guidance to government programs. The Peekskill Business Improvement District is also trying to help out. So is the Peekskill Fire Department.

“I’m pleased and proud of the way our City has mobilized behind those who lost so much in the fire,” says Peekskill Mayor John Testa. “The loss of these buildings was a tragedy, but the way our community has come out in support of these individuals is truly inspiring.”

“Our city is committed to assisting the businesses who have suffered because of this tragic event,” Testa says. “I’m committed and so is the staff at City Hall to helping people through this difficult time.”

Support efforts are reaching to Albany and Washington and beyond. Both the governor's office and that of Congresswoman Sue Kelly have been contacted and are doing what they can to get support from state and federal sources. Kelly sponsored a Small Business Administration conference in the City two years ago that helped energize revitalization efforts.

For more information, call Brian Havranek at 914-734-4210.

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