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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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Odell Clinches Budget Below Tax Cap Again

By David Propper

Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell unveiled her sixth straight budget that will remain under the New York State tax cap during her annual budget address Thursday night.

Presenting at the Putnam County Golf Course, Odell offered a \$155.3 million budget that will remain under the 1.84 percent cap. And average homeowner will pay about \$984 of county taxes, which is a \$22 increase from the previous year. Decrying the state mandates that eat up much of the county's expenditure plan, Odell said the county was still able to put forth a budget that is both fiscally and socially fair.

The net budget increase is about \$2.3 million from the 2017 budget, including

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DAVID PROPPER PHOTO
County Executive MaryEllen Odell presented her annual budget last week.

Budget Debate in Southeast Heats Up

By Neal Rentz

Southeast town board members said last week they would seek reductions in an attempt to stay within the New York State property tax cap, which would be broken if Supervisor Tony Hay's proposed 2018 budget was approved without changes.

Hay is proposing a \$16.8 million town budget that would increase property taxes by 9.47 percent--well above the state-mandated cap of 1.8 percent

Hay has said the garbage pickup contract, which will be hiked by 26.4 percent next year, and town employee health insurance, which will rise by 11 percent, were the major reasons for the proposed tax spike, which would translate into an \$8 tax increase on the

'We don't have to bust the tax cap.'
Councilwoman Elizabeth Hudak

average accessed house next year.

At the Oct. 5 town board meeting, Hay said his method of budgeting has been prudent over his tenure as supervisor. When he took office, the town's budget surplus was \$98,000, Hay said. Today, the surplus is \$1.9 million and the town's bond rating has risen, he

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Gloves Off in Battle for Putnam Sheriff's Office

By Anna Young and David Propper

With Election Day less than a month away, the rhetoric in the race for Putnam County sheriff has been ratcheted up as Democrat Robert Langley tries to knock off incumbent Republican Don Smith.

Langley held a press conference Thursday morning taking aim at Sheriff Smith's actions toward former district attorney Adam Levy. Surrounded by supporters outside the county Sheriff's Department, the Democratic candidate said that the sheriff's office is broken under Smith's leadership asserting that the longtime sheriff should resign immediately. Smith has served as sheriff since 2002.

"This year, Smith gave a written confession of the lies he told about the district attorney," Langley said. "Because

of Smith's lies, the citizens of Putnam County were forced to pay a civil lawsuit settlement of \$125,000. We paid for Smith's lies. And we will pay millions more in another lawsuit because Smith lied."

After Levy settled his 2013 defamation lawsuit against Smith in June, Smith admitted in a public letter that he was untruthful when he claimed Levy interfered in the Alexadru Hossu rape case and Hossu resided at Levy's house in Southeast. Levy received \$125,000 from the county and another \$25,000 personally from Smith.

Hossu, the former personal trainer of Levy, is also suing the sheriff's office for civil rights violations after his 2013 arrest-

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ANNA YOUNG PHOTO
Former sheriff investigator and Democratic candidate for sheriff Robert Langley outside the sheriff's office last week called on Don Smith to resign.

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