

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY – PUBLIC SAFETY (EMS)**

Community Profiles

Chautauqua County and its principal municipality, the City of Jamestown, are of average population for New York State counties and cities, respectively. Both the county and the city have a lower than average proportion of their revenues coming from state and federal aid, an important measure of fiscal distress.

2005	Chautauqua County	NYS County Average¹	City of Jamestown	NYS City Average¹
Population	139,750	192,424	31,730	37,146
State and Federal Aid/Revenues	27.1%	39.8%	6.9%	24.9%

1. Excludes New York City

Background

Many communities in Chautauqua County face increasing unemployment, lagging growth in personal income, and outmigration. This has had a negative impact on the tax base, leading to increasing property taxes. To save taxpayer money, the City of Jamestown proposed consolidation of its dispatch services into the county’s emergency dispatch service. The rationale for the merger was that city residents paid for both city and county dispatch services through their city and county taxes respectively. It was unfair that city residents should have to pay for their own services as well as services for all other county residents. The city’s goal was to merge the services, have it apply to neighboring villages and towns, and have it all funded through county taxes.

Funding

The proposal was funded by the municipalities without SMSI involvement.

Outcome

The outcome of the City of Jamestown’s proposal was an almost complete merger of local and county dispatch services. All former city dispatchers became county employees at a central dispatch center in the Sheriffs Department, doubling the number of county dispatchers. This allowed the number of dispatchers at the county to increase from three to five per shift (plus a supervisor) in order to give more comprehensive coverage to calls originating in the City of Jamestown as well as throughout other areas of Chautauqua County now covered. Only the City of Dunkirk and The Village of Fredonia chose not to participate in the centralized county dispatch service.