

## **Westchester County**

### **County Web Site Uses More Video**

Westchester County, N.Y., offers information on a variety of topics via newscasts.

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. -- With broadband Internet access becoming more available at home and work, county officials have turned to video news-clips to begin delivering information to county residents.

[A page](http://www.westchestergov.com/currentnews/newsvideos.htm) on the county's Web site offers seven news videos covering a range of topics and issues, from the 2002 budget spending plan to the opening of a new community-college satellite in Yonkers to the county's first Hispanic Summit.

All news videos are available in both English and Spanish, and all are produced in-house by county staff, said Norman Jacknis, CIO of Westchester County.

"There's a fair amount of effort that goes into this to make it professional," Jacknis said. "You begin to appreciate what CBS, NBC and all those other stations go through every single day when they have their nightly newscasts."

He said the county officially announced the availability of the newscasts two weeks ago and will introduce two or three new news videos each month.

"What we've moved into is actually creating almost a news show of our own," he said. "We're a large county, but, in the metropolitan area, we're just a drop in the bucket. It's very hard for people here to know what's going on in the county. We've had to use our Web site and now these videos to educate people about what's happening in their own county."

The gradual penetration of broadband Internet access is making it possible for the county to make more use of video clips, he noted, and is giving government the freedom to think about information differently.

"We've been trying to get at this in a variety of ways, and one is delivering information in ways that are not purely text-based on the Internet," he said. "This is one of the kinds of things that people can now see with broadband access. For government, this is very useful because if you're in the TV business, you've really got to worry about rationing out the limited airtime you have."

"On the Internet, you don't have that kind of problem," he said. "You don't need to worry that there's a very small audience. You can just do it and serve all the elements of your community. You're in a position to target all sorts of audiences now."

The county will eventually move to interactive video conferencing, he said, and a couple of libraries in remote areas of the county are already outfitted with interactive video workstations.

"Those can be used for health-care education, which we can create videos for, and also have people be able to ask questions of health officials on the other side of the county," he said.

<I>Shane Peterson, News Editor</I>