



**We Bring the World to New Jersey**

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## **NJSEA To Save Taxpayers \$16M in FY2016 Expected 48 Percent Cost Savings Over FY 2015**

**LYNDHURST, N.J.** – The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA) today announced that State taxpayers will save a projected \$16 million in fiscal year 2016 as a result of downsizing efforts initiated in 2015 in conjunction with the February consolidation of the former New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) into the NJSEA. In total, these reductions represent a 48 percent cost savings over fiscal year 2015.

“The Authority is pleased to have implemented Governor Christie's directive of creating a leaner Meadowlands agency that maintains and advances the key mandates of promoting economic growth and protecting and preserving the environment,” said Mike Ferguson, Chairman of the NJSEA. “The Authority was able to seamlessly effectuate this cost-saving merger in a remarkably short timeframe through prudent and thoughtful planning.”

Savings for 2016 include an estimated \$9 million decrease in salaries and fringe benefit achieved through a reduction in staffs. On Jan. 1, 2015, the NJSEA and NJMC had a combined 255 employees. As of Dec. 1, 2015, the staff count of the merged agencies will stand at 139. Additional savings were realized from the temporary closing of the Meadowlands Arena and from efficiencies including reductions in utility costs and elimination of redundancies.

A key component to the NJSEA's success has been its proactive effort in reaching out to numerous stakeholders in the business, environmental and local government communities. This outreach has fostered positive relationships, providing the Authority with an opportunity to enhance understanding of constituents' needs and best serve residents and property owners.

“At the onset of the merger between the NJSEA and NJMC, the business community was hoping the new entity would be better positioned to facilitate economic growth and development that benefits the Meadowlands region and the entire state while further establishing the Meadowlands region as a primary tourism destination,” said Jim Kirkos, CEO of the Meadowlands Regional Chamber.

“In just a few short months this newly consolidated agency has worked hard to gain the trust of the business community through its willingness to not only meet with developers and business owners, but more

importantly to take the time to better understand their concerns and act upon them,” Kirkos said. “The new NJSEA’s action plan is about collaboration, not lip service.”

The NJSEA has also embraced and advanced the former NJMC’s mandate to preserve, protect and enhance the Meadowlands’ critical wetlands and unique urban ecosystem. Since the merger, the NJSEA has not only maintained environmental programs but has enhanced scientific research and environmental education efforts.

For example, the NJSEA recently announced a partnership with Rutgers-Newark University that will join the Authority’s Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI) and Rutgers-Newark’s Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences. This collaboration will allow top-level scientists at MERI and Rutgers-Newark to pool their exceptional intellectual knowledge and technological resources to benefit and continue the revitalization of the Meadowlands’ environment, including its 8,400 acres of crucial wetlands.

In July, the NJSEA reopened its William D. McDowell Observatory through a partnership with Bergen Community College. The Observatory is open to the public for free year-round viewing on Wednesday nights.

“The NJSEA has shown itself to recognize the vital importance of protecting the Hackensack River, the wetlands and the entire Meadowlands District environment,” said Hackensack Riverkeeper Bill Sheehan. “I have total confidence in the Authority acting responsibly in adhering to the agency’s mandate of protecting our natural resources.”

Another important aspect of the transition has been the NJSEA’s significant progress in improving relationships with Meadowlands District officials.

“The newly merged agency has been attentive to the concerns of Meadowlands District municipalities,” said Secaucus Mayor Michael Gonnelli. “While we may have differing viewpoints in the future on certain issues, I have confidence that we will work together to find solutions.”

In addition to implementing savings through efficiencies in several areas, the NJSEA executed the merger bill’s mandate to give Meadowlands District municipalities the option to assume certain zoning and planning decisions in portions of their towns that previously fell within the Authority’s jurisdiction. To date, Secaucus and Kearny have assumed this responsibility.

"I am very proud of the extremely smooth and ongoing transition process that followed the consolidation of the former NJMC into the NJSEA," said Wayne Hasenbalg, President and CEO of the Authority. "Credit is due to the hard work and dedication of the newly consolidated Authority's staff, which quickly came together as a unified whole in the interest of good government.

"These are exciting times in the Meadowlands, and the NJSEA looks forward to contributing to the region's growth as an economic engine and environmental treasure."

**About the NJSEA:** The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority is the planning and zoning agency for the 30.4-square-mile Meadowlands District, which consists of portions of 14 municipalities in Bergen and Hudson counties. The NJSEA also offers environmental public education programs and workshops for all ages through its Meadowlands Environment Center.

The NJSEA is a multi-faceted agency whose operations include land use management functions, including overseeing redevelopment projects, promoting economic growth, scientific research, environmental preservation and education, sports and entertainment marketing, and solid waste disposal.

In addition, the NJSEA provides support for the ongoing operation of the MetLife Sports Complex, which includes MetLife Stadium and the New Meadowlands Racetrack. Coverage includes onsite Emergency Medical Technicians, doctors, and nurses for all Sports Complex events. The NJSEA also coordinates State Police security at stadium football games, concerts and other special events.

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