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Forum on reducing property taxes to be held in Northvale

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BY DENISA R. SUPERVILLE
THE RECORD
STAFF WRITER

NORTHVALE — Courage to Connect NJ, a non-profit that promotes consolidation to reduce the state's skyrocketing property taxes, will hold a free forum at Borough Hall tonight to discuss consolidating municipal services in the Northern Valley area.

Gina Genovese, the group's executive director and a former mayor of Long Hill in Morris County, will talk to residents about how the duplication of services in the state's 566 municipalities is contributing to the state's fiscal crisis.

IF YOU GO

A forum on reducing property taxes will be tonight from 7:30 to 9 at Northvale Borough Hall, 116 Paris Ave. A similar meeting in Englewood is scheduled for Oct. 20.

"There is so much duplication of municipal services from one end of the state to the other," Genovese said in a press release promoting the event. "New Jersey's municipal framework must ultimately be reduced to 100

to 150 towns, or our state will become unaffordable for most of us to live here."

Genovese will address how municipalities can maintain their identities, while being part of a larger entity that shares departments such as police, public works and tax functions.

Genovese said Monday she was invited by Borough Councilman Andrew Gullestad, who heard the group's presentation earlier this year.

It was important for residents to participate in the discussion about consolidation and reducing property taxes, she said.

"They have to have their voice heard, and they need to become educated about this enormous issue facing New Jersey," Genovese said. "And that's why it's wonderful when a governing body and the people can get together in a room and start talking about it, start the discussion that can potentially lead to property tax reduction in the state."

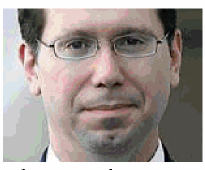
Residents will have the opportunity to ask questions during a 45-minute question-and-answer forum after the presentation, she said. A similar meeting will be held in Englewood on Oct. 20, she said.

Northern Valley towns already share a number of services. Students from Closter, Demarest, Haworth, Harrington Park, Northvale, Norwood and Old Tappan attend Northern Valley Regional High School.

Towns such as Norwood and Harrington Park are asking the voters in November whether they want the governing bodies to explore consolidating local police



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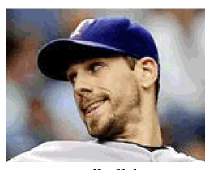


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