

Prosecutor's Office Looking Into MusicFest Revenues  
By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times COUNTY - The Union County Prosecutor's Office is investigating whether all revenues from parking receipts at last year's two-day MusicFest at Oak Ridge Park in Clark have been accounted for after a watchdog organization claimed hundreds of thousands of dollars were missing. Union County officials have reported that 80,000 persons attended the festival and that parking was available for \$10 a day at the park or for free at other off-site locations with transportation to Oak Ridge provided.

According to the minutes of the September 16, 2010 Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting, County Manager George Devanney reported that the county paid \$500,000 to outside contractors to produce the festival. He said these costs were offset by \$150,000 received in private sponsorships.

However, Tina Renna, president of the Union County Watchdog Association (UCWA), believes there may be up to \$250,000 in parking fees and additional revenue from the sale of beer at the venue not accounted for.

According to a copy of a letter dated April 25 from the Attorney's General Office to Mrs. Renna and obtained by The Westfield Leader and The Times, the county prosecutor's office has an "open investigation" on the matter. Prosecutor Ted Romankow previously sent a letter to Mrs. Renna on March 18 asking for her "assistance in providing us with any information regarding the missing monies and source of this information." Mrs. Renna was skeptical on whether prosecutor's office was going to find anything in its investigation. "Why is Union County investigating this? They can't police themselves," she said.

Mrs. Renna told The Leader and The Times that the UWA has been unable to find receipts for any of the parking fees or from the sale of beer. She said it was her understanding that the county changed Musicfest parking vendors last year. She said the previous vendor estimated that one-fourth or 20,000 of the cars coming to Musicfest would have parked at Oak Ridge generating \$200,000 in revenue. "My concern is this year's vendor had no apparent internal controls over the cash intake. There were no tickets or receipts issued, and it appeared that no one was counting cars. The employees looked like they were temps," Mrs. Renna said in an email to The Leader and The Times.

County spokesman Sebastian D'Elia said the county is cooperating with

the probe. "We've provided all documents to the prosecutor's office and are fully cooperating with his office," Mr. D'Elia said.

"MusicFest is a public-private partnership and we've accounted for all public monies involved in public meetings. We are fully confident that everything was done properly."

John Holl, a spokesman for the prosecutor's office, could not shed any light on any investigation. "I can neither confirm nor deny any investigation as a matter of course.