

## Study: Monroe County governments pay out \$14M in lawsuits

By **Melissa Daniels**, staff writer

**Messenger Post**

Posted Nov 11, 2011 @ 10:33 AM

Rochester, N.Y. —

A new study from the University of Albany shows that Monroe County ranks in the top 10 of municipal payouts in lawsuit settlements.

The county ranks ninth in the state, with municipalities paying out \$14 million in total from 2004 to 2009. But the amount is far less than Erie County, where municipalities paid out \$70 million in the same time frame.

“New York is undergoing an unprecedented, close examination of government spending and we hope this report will show policymakers the cost of lawsuits on New York’s municipalities,” said Sydney Creswell, senior researcher at the University at Albany, in a statement. “With every line item under scrutiny, there is no reason these costs should be overlooked.”

Wyoming County placed last in the study with just \$2,585 in total payments over the five-year period, which was the lowest in the state in both total payments and payments per capita.

Tom Stebbins is the executive director of the Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York, a non-profit group that advocates against frivolous lawsuits. He says studies show the negative effects of lawsuits.

“New York has dozens of laws, like the Scaffold Law, that make it very easy and very profitable to sue in our state. Under the Scaffold Law, which only exists in New York, a municipality can be financially liable for an injury, even if it was not at fault,” Stebbins said in a statement. “With laws like that, it is no wonder our municipalities pay millions in settlements.”

Copyright 2011 Penfield Post. Some rights reserved