

Democrats focus on reducing capital spending

Among the new ways of doing business in Erie County, the Legislature is reviewing the 2007 capital project spending plan.

The Legislature is the fiscal house in Erie County. We are living more within our means in the county, and a reform-based, responsible capital spending process and budget are essential to this.

The Legislature's early deliberations will assist in determining an appropriate amount of borrowing for 2007. The borrowing is done on Wall Street by the county comptroller. Our goal is to continue enhancing the county's credit rating for attaining the best rates. The executive, comptroller and legislative branches are working cooperatively to limit borrowing, pay off past debt, and improve prioritizing and tracking of projects. The administration has proposed \$44,685,000. This includes projects for the Botanical Gardens, Erie Community College, roadwork, the fire tower, the convention center, and the correctional facility's roof. The Legislature has already approved \$2.75 million for Ralph Wilson Stadium, which is contractually obligat-

ed and will be used for a new scoreboard this year. Also, \$4 million has been authorized for the Buffalo Zoo's rainforest exhibit. At least 10 of the 15 legislators' votes are required for approval. The Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority also has approval powers under state law.

The Finance and Management Committee, chaired by Legislator Robert Reynolds, met Feb. 8 to discuss with the county executive, the county comptroller and department heads the amount and details of upcoming proposed capital projects. This discussion is one of the first steps in the Legislature formulating its capital budget.

Over the years, I have led the fight for more responsible capital project spending. While yearly department requests are three times the funding amount and many worthy projects are ultimately proposed, we must act prudently on

approving bond projects that are needed and are as cost-efficient as possible. Wise spending practices are required in these fiscal times when we have to do more with less.

- A Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Outreach will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27 at the Kenilworth Fire Hall, 84 Hawthorne Ave., Tonawanda. The first 80 applicants who sign in are guaranteed service, and people should bring one form of identification (including a birth certificate, driver's license or Social Security card), proof of income and household resources, and they must meet the specified household income guidelines.

- The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is offering its annual conservation tree and shrub seedling program sale and accepts orders of 34 varieties of trees and shrubs through March 16. For details, call my district office at 832-0493.



LYNN MARINELLI
Legislature Chairperson



Heard

call: 632-0390

(Editor's note: Call The Bee at 632-0390 and record a one-minute comment on our Bee Heard line. It gives readers an opportunity to comment quickly and candidly on items of local or regional interest. Callers do not have to identify themselves and no callers' names will be used. In the interest of fairness and good taste, The Bee will not publish derogatory or insulting comments. All comments are by our readers and are subject to editing.)

✓Why can't the fire departments call out their junior firemen after school until 6 p.m. to shovel out the fire hydrants in the district? I'm sure they have enough junior firemen to go around with one or two to each hydrant and shovel it out. This would save some of the senior citizens the backache of trying to shovel.

✓When is Bill Kindel going to take responsibility for his own actions instead of blaming Satish

Mohan for everything? I hope he doesn't get re-elected.

✓A word of caution to Williamsville taxpayers: the smug spring announcements of no tax increase have proven to be untrue. Their recent announcements do not mention how, in less than a decade, the school budget has reached beyond \$100 million and is aiming at \$150 million. The average salaries of teachers and administrators are beyond reason. Current parents, although well-intentioned, are gullible and naive, and all of us are paying for more than we should. Stop this Rolls Royce! Stop the sham!

✓He may call it a pre-endorsement meeting at his home, but it's just Mohan meeting behind closed doors with other party bosses conducting politics as usual. Wake up, Amherst, and check your tax bills. My town tax went up 13 percent, and I attribute it directly to Mohan's inability to work with others to get the job done.

letters

to the Editor

Postal Service asks

(Continued from page five)

collectors. Snow and ice around mail and collection boxes make it hazardous for our employees to deliver and retrieve mail safely.

That is why I'm appealing to all our customers. Please keep driveways, walkways, and porches clear of snow and ice if using a house-mounted mail box. If the box is at the curb, ensuring that snow does not prevent the carrier from reaching the box from his or her vehicle is helpful, too.

Last year, more than 100 postal employees were injured on the job from trips, slips and falls. Not only is this traumatic for the employee, but it can be disruptive to service when an employee familiar with the route and area needs to be replaced due to an injury.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance. And thanks for allowing us to provide you excellent customer service as safely as possible.

Kimberly J. Peters
WNY district manager



Obituary

(Please turn to page eight for more obituaries)

Bee policy on obituaries

The Bee publishes death notices and obituaries free of charge. Please request that your funeral director send written information to The Bee. Submissions may be made by the funeral director or by family members.

An obituary form is available from The Bee by contact our office at 632-4700, or from our Website at www.beenews.com.

Robert C. Christensen, veteran broadcaster

Robert Charles Christensen, 64, a broadcast veteran in the Western New York market, died Friday, Feb. 16, 2007.

Mr. Christensen grew up in Amherst, attended School 13 and graduated from Amherst High School in 1960.

He worked in broadcasting since he was 17 and used his grandfather's first name, "Christian" in his professional radio career.

Mr. Christensen was WJYE's

morning anchor for 11 years and a "jock" and newsmen for WKBW, WGR-AM, WEBR, WNIA, WRLT, WNED, and WBEN. He also worked

in Ithaca, Rochester (WHAM and WROC), Roanoke, Va. and Miami, Fla. Most recently, he ran his own business producing "on hold" messages and doing agency voice-overs.

Steve Mitchell a friend of Christensen since the late 1950's, said when they were younger, several guys were interested in radio plus all had basement radio stations.

"On different weekends, one of us would 'travel' to another guy's house and do a 'show' for a few hours. This went on long enough that we met other 'jocks' from other schools and a friendship formed that remains to this day. I would say a good 99 percent of us continued in the business. Some of us went into sales, others into management, while the rest stayed on the air in one fashion or another," Mitchell said. "Bob could be a jock at one station, then get a job as a newsmen for another. He excelled at either."

Mr. Christensen is survived by his mother, the former Elizabeth Betty; two sons, Robert J. and Erin M.; and a brother, James L.

Services will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday at Dietrich Funeral Home, 2840 Kensington Ave., Amherst.



Christensen

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