

District 17 • FALL 2010

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LEGISLATIVE WATCH

from Suffolk County Legislator

LOU D'AMARO

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A Message From Legislator D'Amaro

As the holidays approach, we in government must do everything possible to ease the financial burden afflicting our residents during these difficult economic times. That is why I am continuing to lead the fight against high taxes and wasteful spending in order to protect taxpayers. Earlier this year, I successfully advocated for a proposal that capped the Suffolk sales tax on gasoline (page 4). This consumer friendly legislation will give much needed relief to the pockets of frustrated motorists just as gas prices are starting to rise again. In addition, Suffolk County's recently adopted 2011 Operating Budget holds the line on County General Fund property taxes for a 7th consecutive year while still providing vital services, such as 220 new police officers as part of the County's public safety plan. These new officers will complement some of the measures I recently implemented in Huntington Station to deter crime and eliminate gangs, including the creation of an electronic neighborhood watch program and the formation of a special sector within a sector to provide enhanced police patrols, in a block by block approach, to the most at-risk areas of our community.



Legislator D'Amaro at press conference announcing gas tax cap. See Page 4.

Like our residents, the County does not have a limitless credit card and we cannot afford to spend recklessly at a time when revenue is way down and we are struggling with delivering services. We no longer have the luxury of funding every project, or spending on services that do not relate to core government functions like public safety. Instead, we must closely evaluate each spending item on its merits to determine whether it warrants the cost, during a period when spending priorities must take precedence over politics. You have my commitment that I will continue to take a pro-active approach to tightening the County's fiscal belt just as you do at home.

Thank you for continuing to put your trust in me as your representative in County government. I wish you and your families a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season and, as always, I encourage you to contact me should the need arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lou D'Amaro".



New Voting Machines Unveiled

This past Election Day marked the end of an era when, for the first time in a general election, voters cast ballots utilizing electronic voting technology instead of the traditional mechanical lever machines. Legislator D’Amaro offered local residents an opportunity to view the new machines and partake in a step-by-step training session about how to properly cast their votes by arranging for bi-partisan teams of Board of Elections officials to provide demonstrations to local community members at locations throughout Huntington and Babylon. He is pictured here participating in a demonstration held at the Knolls Senior Housing Complex in Melville.

Friends of Karen: Helping to Make a Difference

For 32 years, the not-for-profit agency Friends of Karen has been lifting the lives of families with critically-ill children by providing financial, emotional and advocacy support to those in need throughout the tri-state area. The organization serves as a true lifeline to these families, who frequently call up seeking assistance after learning the devastating news that their precious child has been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Last year alone, Friends of Karen helped improve the quality of life for 1,344 children. Additionally, they made sure that each sick child and their siblings received gifts for the holidays, childcare as needed and clothing and supplies for the school year.

If you know of anyone who may be in need of these services, I recommend that they contact Friends of Karen at (631) 473-1768. To learn more about Friends of Karen, please visit www.friendsofkaren.org.

Operation Medicine Cabinet Expands

Legislator D’Amaro wants to remind residents that all seven Suffolk County Police Department precincts now have pharmaceutical medication drop boxes in their lobbies so that individuals with unneeded or outdated prescriptions can safely “Shed the Meds” just by taking a drive to their nearest police station. The drop boxes are continuously monitored an accessible to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. There are two police precincts conveniently located within Legislator D’Amaro’s district: the First Precinct, located at 555 Route 109 in **West Babylon**, and the Second Precinct, locted at 1071 Park Ave in **Huntington**. Protect your family and the environment by bringing any unused or expired medications to your local police precinct today.



North Babylon Library Celebrates Golden Anniversary

Back in August 1960, five community leaders came together to bring North Babylon residents something they had previously only dreamed of having – their very own library. On Sunday, October 3rd, the entire community came out to celebrate the North Babylon Public Library’s 50th Anniversary at its 815 Deer Park Avenue location. Legislator D’Amaro, County Executive Steve Levy and Legislator Steve Stern joined Library Director Marc Horowitz at the event which featured a full afternoon of music, activities and fun for community residents of all ages.

Huntington Unity Day Parade a Success

In a true show of community pride, thousands of residents, civic groups, local organizations, businesses and elected officials recently gathered together on a sunny Saturday morning in Huntington Station for the First Annual Huntington “Unity in the Community” Festival. Legislator D’Amaro, who served on the organizing committee, was proud to participate in the day-long event, which featured a parade up New York Avenue in Huntington Station and culminated with a festival featuring almost 75 vendors and not-for-profit organizations, as well as free family-friendly entertainment.



Firefighter of the Year Honored

In recognition of her extraordinary service and commitment to the community, and in conjunction with the Suffolk County Legislature's annual Volunteer Recognition Program, Legislator D'Amato named North Babylon Fire Company member Aleksandra Klimas-Mikalauskas the 17th Legislative District's 2010 Volunteer Firefighter/EMS Worker of the Year. A firefighter and emergency medical services volunteer, Aleksandra Klimas-Mikalauskas has been with the North Babylon Fire Company since 2006 when she was named Probationary Firefighter of the Year. She received the Department's prestigious Top Responder Award for responding to 685 alarms last year and was honored with a Town of Babylon Firemen's Association Commendation for Life Saving Efforts as a member of a the crew that revived an elderly patient who had gone into cardiac arrest.



Ms. Klimas-Mikalauskas also goes out into the community to teach fire prevention classes to elementary school children as a member of the Department's Fire Prevention Committee and is an at-large member on the Board of the Suffolk County Volunteer Firefighters Burn Center Fund.

Woman of Distinction Recognized

Eileen Grubert, an outstanding 25-year member of the Deer Park Fire District, was recently named District 17's 2010 Woman of Distinction. The Woman of Distinction is presented annually to one woman in each legislative district in recognition of her contributions to the growth and progress of the community. As a result of her leadership, the Deer Park Fire Department now provides fully staffed Advanced Life Support (ALS) services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week utilizing the finest, most cutting edge equipment that arrives at patients' sides in an average time of under four minutes. In 2009, Ms. Grubert received the Suffolk County EMS Leadership Award, an honor bestowed upon an individual based on his/her longevity, innovation, dedication, responsibility, executive and management skills in establishing, maintaining, promoting or expanding EMS operations. Legislator D'Amato and Ms. Grubert are shown here with Deer Park Fire District Commissioner Tom Donnelly, Commissioner and Chairman Anthony Macaluso, Human Resources Assistant Colleen Keefe and Treasurer Buddy Gillespie.



Senior Home Services Available

Legislator D'Amato is pleased to inform residents about a County-funded program that offers free repair services to senior citizens to help them maintain and stay in their homes. Funded jointly through the Suffolk County Office for the Aging and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and run under the auspices of the Towns of Huntington and Babylon, the Residential Repair Program for Seniors offers free craftsmen who are available by appointment to provide seniors with simple home repairs. Eligible residents must be 60 or older, own their own homes and live alone or with other seniors. The program offers simple maintenance and repair services like cleaning gutters, fixing faucets and installing special-needs hand rails. Clients are responsible for the cost of the materials, but the installation and repair work are free.

Appointments should be made via phone in the individual's town of residence by calling the following numbers:

Huntington (631) 351-3253 or Babylon (631) 422-7680



Stimson Science Student Wins Regional Competition

Stimson Middle School student Jameson Latko of Huntington Station received a Proclamation from Legislator D’Amaro for fetching top honors in the Long Island Science Fair and honorable mention in the New York State Science Congress Fair for his project titled “Can Prolonged Listening to a DVD in a Car Through Headphones Cause TTS?” Pictured with Jameson are his sisters Katie and Maelyn, Parents Kim and Mike, Stimson Science Department Chair Marcus Maddy and Jameson’s grandparents, Pauline and Bill Eagen.



South Huntington Hall of Fame Inductees Honored

Pride in the community was evident when seven accomplished individuals of local, national and international prominence, who share the unique bond of being products of the local community, were honored as the second class of inductees in the South Huntington School District Hall of Fame. Pictured from left are Irene Moore (attending on behalf of her inducted son Julian Moore ’94), Patrick McMullan ’73, Maureen McCormick-Grudens ’79, Linda Fusina Freeman ’71, Gene Gross ’65 and Jason Mailhot ’74. Not pictured is Richard P. Mills ’68.

Count on This!

Legislator D’Amaro’s two consumer-friendly laws enabling local diners to both make more informed menu choices when eating out and to feel confident that the food they are being served is artificial trans fat free recently went into effect throughout Suffolk County. Effective October 28, 2010, all chain restaurants in Suffolk County with at least 15 locations nationwide must prominently post the caloric contents of their foods on any and all menus, including sign menus, drive through boards and menus distributed off-premises. In addition, all food establishments in Suffolk County are banned from using dangerous artificial trans fats in oils, shortenings and margarines that are used for frying and in spreads. The two laws are an important step toward enhancing the County’s ongoing efforts to promote health and fitness and to combat obesity, according to Legislator D’Amaro who drafted, sponsored and spearheaded the proposals.



“These initiatives go a long way toward reducing a host of serious health problems and I am proud to have brought them to Suffolk County,” said Legislator D’Amaro. “Scientific studies have clearly established a direct link between coronary heart disease, diabetes, and trans fats, so banning this dangerous food additive fulfills the government’s obligation to do all it can to protect public health. In addition, caloric content postings provide each of us with a valuable tool in our anti-obesity efforts because it enables us to make informed choices about what we eat, especially at fast food restaurants.”

Consumers who notice any chain restaurants that are failing to post the required calorie information, or who suspect that neighborhood eating establishments may not be in compliance with the first phase of the artificial trans fat ban, are urged to report these observations by contacting the Suffolk County Bureau of Public Health at (631) 852-5999 .

Gas Tax Cap Bill Provides Relief

Seeking to provide some much-needed relief for those who rely on their cars for transportation, Legislator D’Amaro co-sponsored a recently-passed bi-partisan resolution that limits the Suffolk sales tax on gasoline. The resolution was approved by the full Legislature during its August 3rd General Meeting and caps the County sales tax on motor fuel when the price goes above \$3.00 per gallon.

“While driving is a privilege, the fact remains that here on Long Island, and especially in Suffolk County, most of us cannot get by without our cars,” said Legislator D’Amaro. “As a result, when prices go up, we have no choice but to pay. This legislation provides much-needed relief for all County residents that are truly feeling the squeeze at the pump.”