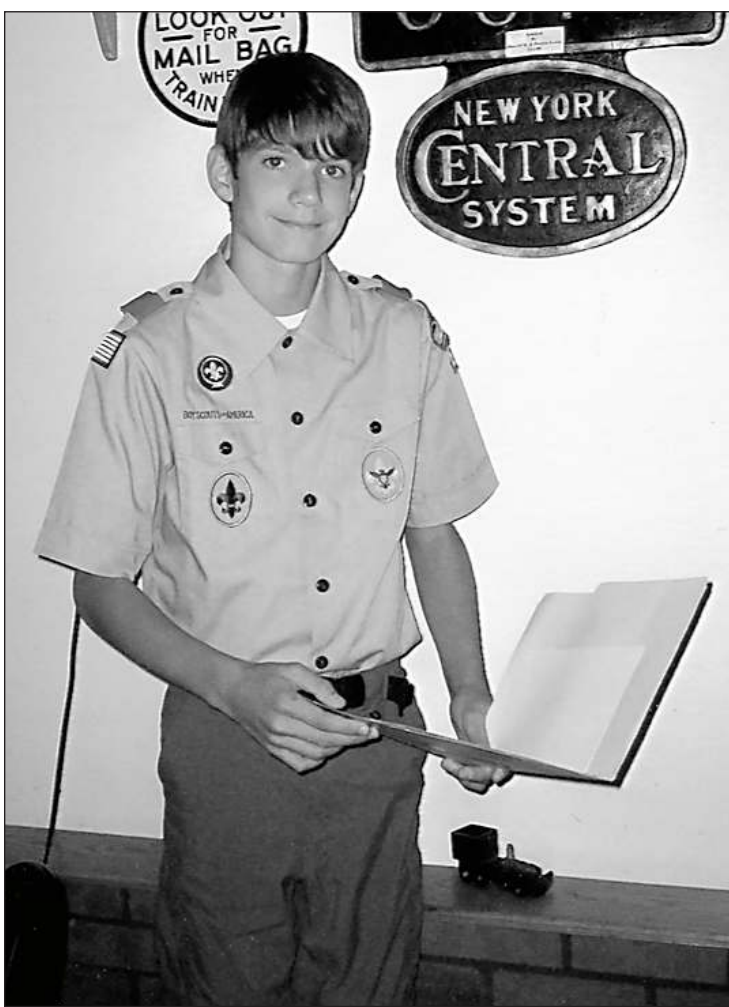


GOOD NEWS



PROVIDED TO THE LEADER

Boy Scouts of America member, 14-year-old Josh Holleran, of Corning, presented a commentary on the Preamble to the Constitution as part of the Constitution Week in America celebration during the first 2008 meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



PROVIDED TO THE LEADER

Pauline Lewis of Corning, a retiring long-time member of the Onwentsia Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, was recognized for 18 years of service to the organization as Regent and Chaplain during the organization's first 2008 meeting held on Sept. 20 at the Central Restaurant in Painted Post. The event was titled "In Honor of the Constitution, Our Membership and Our Memories."

COUNTY ROAD WORK

Committee agrees to up funding

BY MARY PERHAM
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BATH | Road maintenance and construction in Steuben County should continue on pace next year based on budget recommendations Thursday by the county Legislature's Finance Committee.

Committee members, meeting for their third budget workshop this week, agreed to county Administrator Mark Alger's proposal to increase road work funds next year by \$800,000. The increase brings county funding for all Public Works' capital and repair projects' up to roughly \$5.3 million.

But with lean times ahead and a shaky state budget, the committee cut highway equipment purchases and fuel costs by \$300,000 each.

Plans to upgrade the electrical system at Kanakadea Park in Hornell for \$30,000 were included in the budget under major projects, and given pre-

liminary approval. Salaries and benefits in the department will increase next year, but all other expenses will remain at current spending levels.

Alger said the public works budget will allow the department to "continue to do the roads at a level that makes sense."

Public Works Commissioner Vince Spagnoletti said the department will be able to do most of the projects planned for next year.

"In a crisis time for budgets, this is all right," Spagnoletti said. "They've been good to us."

Spagnoletti said the fuel allotment next year should be enough, provided the cost of diesel doesn't increase significantly.

Committee members appeared critical of some of Spagnoletti's requests, referring them as a "Christmas

SEE FUNDING | 5A

Winner, Tonello spar in debate at CCC

BY JOHN ZICK
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CORNING | The incumbent and challenger for the 53rd Senate District continued to push their agendas Thursday during a debate at Corning Community College.



State Sen. George Winner reiterated the economy being the number one issue facing the state government.

"Your next state senator has to put the fight for economic security first," Winner said.

Winner said lowering property taxes and cutting spending are two keys to reinvigorating the economy.

Challenger John Tonello said "Albany is broken" and true reform is needed within the state government.



Thursday's debate between Winner, R-Elmira, and Tonello, Elmira's Democratic mayor, came one day after the men participated in a live televised debate.

Some of the talking points were the same - including jobs, the economy, same-sex marriage and health care - but Thursday's debate focused on other issues, too.

Some of Thursday's issues included:

The death penalty

Tonello said he supports capital punishment for cop-killers but said the death

penalty is rarely effective. He said life imprisonment without parole is actually a cheaper alternative to death row.

Winner said he has been a death-penalty advocate his entire career.

The senator cited the March 2006 shooting death of state Trooper Andrew Sperr in Big Flats. According to trial testimony, the man who shot and killed Sperr, Anthony Horton, discussed New York not having capital punishment moments before he shot Sperr.

"There are instances where capital punishment can act as a deterrent," Winner said.

The death penalty - as written in New York - has been ruled unconstitutional because of inadequate jury instructions.

Taxes

Winner said the state needs

a property tax cap and should not take away taxpayer exemptions.

"Real property tax relief is holding back business in New York state," Winner said.

Tonello said not only are property taxes too high, but income and sales tax are high as well.

"Taxes are a product of overspending by the state," Tonello said.

Tonello said broad tax reform is needed and the state should consider eliminating tax exemptions for everyone except seniors and veterans.

"Everyone should pay their fair share," Tonello said.

According to Tonello, 65 percent of people in Ithaca and 38 percent of people in Elmira are exempt from paying property taxes, meaning the remaining percentage of

SEE DEBATE | 5A

Program to receive \$1M state grant

THE LEADER STAFF

PENN YAN | The Yates County Organic and Viticulture Market Expansion Program will receive a \$1 million state grant.

The funds will help establish a new center to assist organic and viticulture businesses in Yates County.

State Sen. George Winner Jr., R-Elmira, and Assemblyman Jim Bacalles, R-Corning, joined local farmers and business leaders Thursday to announce the details of the funding.

"We need to stay focused on revitalizing the upstate econo-

my and here, in Yates County, one of the economic foundations we can build upon is agriculture," Winner said.

Bacalles said organic farming and viticulture business is a vital part of Yates County's economic structure.

"This program will benefit the area on every level," Bacalles said. "It creates jobs, strengthens the agriculture industry and delivers an initiative which will bring tremendous dividends to the entire region."

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Yates County economy

SEE GRANT | 5A



PROVIDED TO THE LEADER

Elmira City Councilman Sue Skidmore and Steuben County Legislator Tom Schwartz, R-Corning Town, have endorsed Democratic candidate for Congress Eric Massa.

Politicians endorse Massa

BY JEFFERY SMITH
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CORNING | The congressional campaign of Democrat Eric Massa received backing Thursday from two local politicians with long histories in the Republican Party.

Steuben County Legislator Tom Schwartz, R-Corning Town, and Elmira City Councilman Sue Skidmore endorsed Massa in his run against U.S. Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondspport.

"Eric sees through partisan politics and is always willing to reach across the aisle," Schwartz said. "In Congress,

Eric will put us first and I am confident that he will fight for bipartisan solutions to our everyday problems."

Skidmore, a Republican for more than 20 years who switched parties this month, said she is proud to endorse Massa.

Massa said the people of western New York are tired of the failures of the Bush-Kuhl administration.

"I am honored by the endorsement of my friends Sue Skidmore and Tom Schwartz because they have decided to put western New Yorkers above partisan politics," Massa said.

this year. Kuhl, R-Hammondspport, serves on the House Agriculture Committee talks about the bill's investment in fruit and vegetable production, specialty crops, conservation programs and the food stamp program. The program airs at 10 p.m.

■ Staff report

Kuhl to appear on ABC's '20/20' show

BATH | Viewers of ABC's "20/20" may notice a familiar face when they tune in tonight. U.S. Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr. will appear on the news show and discuss the federal Farm Bill passed by Congress

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