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Over 150 show up to demand MTA Board oppose payroll tax

BY DYLAN SKRILOFF

A proposed 0.333% payroll tax on businesses in a twelve-county region to help the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) bridge a \$1.2 billion budget gap is continuing to draw fierce opposition in the four-county region of Rockland, Orange, Dutchess and Putnam. The four counties together only have one slot on the 17-member MTA Board, but its constituents pay the same in taxes.

Calling the tax unfair and "taxation without representation" over 150 gathered at a rare meeting of the MTA Board in the Hudson Valley last Monday, to voice their protest. It was called a "Boston Tea Party" and the region's politicians were leading the charge. Heavy hitters included Senators John Bonacic and Steve Saland, Orange County Executive Ed Diana and Assemblymen Joel Miller. Representatives attended for Senator Thomas P. Morahan and Assemblyman Frank K. Skartados. Seven members of the MTA Board were in attendance to absorb the outrage; Robert C. MacLaeger, Robert C. Bickford, Carl V. Wortendyke, Christopher P. Boylan, Susan G. Metzger, James L. Sedore Jr. and Chariman H. Dale Hemmerdinger.

Most speakers that took the podium placed tea bags on a table adjacent to the podium to symbolize their disapproval of both the tax and the perceived lack of representation on the board. The one board member is slightly out of ratio given the entire population of the 12-county area in 14.6 million and the population of the four counties is around 1.1 million. Were the four counties given a second seat without further expansion of the Board, they'd be slightly over represented. Usage of MTA transit systems is far less in Rockland, Putnam, Orange and Dutchess than the other eight counties, but they still are on the hook for the same taxes for the entire system as New York City business owners.

Charlie North, CEO of Dutchess Regional Chamber of Commerce, and representing 1,742 members illustrated the region's frustration with the proposal.

He said, "let them understand this is taxation without representation. We want you to oppose this for us. It's \$17 million from Dutchess County for only 4,100 riders. Please, please, oppose this tax for us."

North said, to wild applause. "The only thing we are going to get for this are people are going to get on the train and leave the State of

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Orange County Executive Edward Diana addressing the MTA Board.

PHOTO CREDIT: Hank Gross, www.midhudsonnews.com

County executives in the valley share thoughts at Patterns event

BY DEBBIE KWIATOSKI

"It's usually the case today of deciding between the ugly, the uglier ...and the ugliest," Orange County Executive Edward Diana admitted at a recent Pattern For

As the Hudson Valley, New York State, the country and the entire world face into what is shaping up to be one of the longest and deepest recessions anyone can remember, county executives from Dutchess, Orange, Ulster,



Dutchess County Executive William Steinhaus, Ulster County Executive Michael Hein and Orange County Executive Edward Diana at event.

PHOTO CREDIT: Linda Engler, Ad Essentials

Progress event in Poughkeepie. "There are no good decisions, only ways to go that are slightly better than any other alternative."

Putnam, and Sullivan shared a stage to discuss the ways they have been trying to create

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Ski areas plan coordinated response to lift tax proposal

BY GREG DRAISS

Ski areas in Greene and Ulster County are attempting to join together in marketing efforts consisting of a billboard campaign coupled with discounted lift tickets. While the county legislators of Greene

outside the area. Vermont heavily advertises its ski facilities in the Albany area even though there are dozens of ski venues in the Catskills and the Adirondacks, which are a much shorter drive.

The group is planning both long range

Greene officials have gone as far as to request the state comptroller's office to investigate any damage done by state facilities to private ski areas. They wanted a complete audit of Belleayre's operating costs and revenues. In retaliation, Ulster officials called for Ulster residents to boycott events held at Hunter and Windham.

Ulster officials proposed a joint ski pass that would offer discounts and could be used at ski areas in Greene, Ulster and Delaware counties. The government initiative has failed to take place thus far.

The billboard proposal would be used to attract skiers that are using other ski areas in the state and even out of state. So far officials in Ulster and Greene support the idea of a marketing effort by the ski areas.

The ski center operators are also united on another front. Governor Paterson's new budget calls for an "entertainment tax." This new tax is scheduled to be an additional four percent tax above the current sales tax always in place. State owned

ski areas such as Belleayre would not be required to charge the tax. This is certain to add fuel to the fire already burning between Ulster And Greene County Legislatures.

The ski industry in New York is responsible for \$1.1 billion dollars in economic activity during a four month operating season according to a study conducted last year. Ski industry supporters call the tax counterproductive and hypocritical. They say imposing a tax on unhealthy soft drinks while taxing healthy exercise sends a contradictory message to the consumer.

The ski industry is not the only industry subject to the entertainment tax. Golfers, campers using private campgrounds, bowlers, movie goers and others will have to pony up the additional four percent if the proposal becomes law in next year's state budget. Greene County Legislature Chair Wayne Speenburgh added his dissent by saying it is wrong to add a sales tax to private facilities and exempting state run operations.



and Ulster argue over the state owned Belleayre facility in Ulster having an unfair advantage. Owners and operators of sites in Ulster, Delaware and Greene are attempting to market the entire Catskill region in one unified effort. The sites, Windham, Hunter, Belleayre and Platekill met recently to discuss the use of billboards and discounted lift tickets. The discounted tickets would be issued when skiers present old tickets from ski areas

and short term goals set to begin for the 2009-2010 ski season. Greene legislators have long let it be known they are unhappy that the state operated Belleayre ski center has the fair advantage of almost unlimited state promotional monies. They claim that Belleayre offers tickets at below cost rates to attract skiers from out of state. Greene officials also say that Belleayre can operate in the red with the state always picking up the tab.

Columbia and Greene counties oppose plan to sell wine in supermarkets

BY GREG DRAISS

Opposition to sales of wine in grocery stores and supermarkets has united Greene County government and Columbia County business leaders. The Greene County legislature unanimously voted on a resolution opposing Governor Paterson's plan to introduce wine sales in supermarkets. The resolution said allowing sales of wine in grocery stores would put small businesses that sell wine and

liquor now out of business. They also raised concern that such a move would make alcohol more accessible to minors. County legislative Chairman Wayne Speenburgh also issued a concern about the impact the proposal would have on Empire Merchants North. Empire is a large distributor of wine and liquor. They are building a new 250,000 sq. ft. distribution center in Coxsackie.

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P065073 07/06

Trendspotting - No job, no health insurance

BY JUNE LAMBA-LUTWANA

America may be one of the world's wealthiest nations with high standards of healthcare, but the healthcare is often also

jobs in December and 1.9 million during last year's final four months. This year 2009 is worse and many have lost their jobs with minimal severance pay. For

many who are laid off, that means losing their health insurance.

There is little hope, even for those still employed. Many small employers cannot offer health benefits due to rising insurance premiums. Some companies that do offer health insurance require employees to contribute more towards their coverage.

Many people have opted to go without health insurance because they simply cannot afford it.

With so many people without health insurance either because they don't have a job or because of uncertain terms with their employers, there are solutions for accessing healthcare during tough times.

If you have no insurance because you have lost a job, applying for COBRA, which allows former employees who leave a company to pay their own premium for the company's health care plan up to a year and a half, is one way to go. If you qualify, it may give you some breathing space, hopefully until you get another job.

Specific foundations and organizations for certain ailments and diseases such as the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, American Kidney Fund or the Access Project for HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, may offer help. These may offer free screenings and support for people who are already diagnosed with such conditions, says the financial savvy website Financial Web.

People on prescription drugs, may get help from their local pharmacies to reduce costs. One way to save your dollars is to get the manufacturer's contact details from the pharmacy to directly inquire about discounts for prescription drugs. It is also a good idea to negotiate monthly payment plans with pharmacies.

Prescription costs may also be lowered by buying generic drugs which may work

just as well.

Some organizations such as the Veteran's Administration offer a network of hospitals that provide care and services at reduced rates. They may help members find affordable health care providers.

For those who have children, they can sign up for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). SCHIP offers low cost insurance for families and children.

Families may also locate "free clinics" which usually offer a minimum fee for services.

Applying for Medicaid, even temporarily, may be the most viable solution for some people. Beyond Medicaid you can look at for free health screenings by the local health department says the financial savvy website Financial Web.



unaffordable. Nearly 46 million Americans - 18 percent of the population - under the age of 65 were without health insurance in 2007, says the National Coalition on Healthcare (NCHC).

That number is rising as more and more people lose their jobs in the economic downturn. A U.S. Labor Department jobs report showed the economy lost 524,000

Dutchess Community Foundation Fund gives grant for breast cancer support counseling

Support Connection Inc., a not-for-profit organization based in Yorktown Heights offering free, confidential support services to people affected by breast and ovarian cancer, recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation Fund of the Community Foundation of Dutchess County. The grant will help fund Support Connection's Peer-to-Peer Counseling Program for women with breast cancer.

Support Connection's Peer Counselors provide personalized, confidential support and education to women with breast cancer. All services are provided free of charge. Peer Counselors are women who have experienced cancer and have also received professional training. Peer counseling is provided on the phone or in person, and is available from the time of diagnosis for as long as it is needed, as often as it is needed. Support is available to family members and loved ones as well. The demand for this service has grown steadily over the years, and this grant will help Support Connection meet this critical need.

The Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation Fund of the Community

Foundation of Dutchess County, based in LaGrangeville, NY, is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) public charity established in March of 2003. Their mission is to provide funding to non-profit organizations for support services and outreach for people affected by breast cancer in the Hudson Valley, New York. To learn more about Miles of Hope, visit their website at <http://www.milesofhopebcf.org/>.

Support Connection, Inc. was established in 1996 and since then has provided a wide range of individual and group services to people affected by breast and ovarian cancer. In addition to the services funded by this grant, Support Connection offers in-person breast and ovarian cancer support groups in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties, as well as a toll-free telephone support groups. Additional services include wellness workshops and educational programs offered at various sites, a toll-free cancer information and support hotline; resource and referral information. To learn more about Support Connection's programs and services, call 914-962-6402 or 800-532-4290 or visit www.supportconnection.org.

Catskill Regional expands outpatient radiological services

Catskill Regional Medical Center's Grover M. Hermann Hospital Division in Callicoon has significantly expanded on-site outpatient radiology services to better serve the community. Starting Monday, February 16, radiology technicians will be on-site Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The expansion of evening and weekend hours is designed to specifically accommodate patients who find it difficult to make appointments during the business week.

Grover M. Hermann Hospital's

Radiology Department provides outpatient radiological services as well as EKG's with little to no wait time. It is not necessary for patients to make appointments however patients must be sure to bring their script. All tests are promptly read by Board Certified Radiologists and reports are sent to the patient's physician.

Catskill Regional Medical Center's Grover M. Hermann Hospital Division is located on NYS Route 97, 2 miles south of Callicoon.

For more information call 845-887-5530.

Ulster Savings hosts public party

Ulster Savings Bank will be hosting an artist reception for The Red Hook Pastel Society on Friday, March 20 from 5pm - 8pm at their Red Hook branch, located at 7296 South Broadway.

The public is invited to attend. Light refreshments will be served.

The Red Hook branch will feature artwork from Society members Elaine Ring, Janet Borda, Milly Sugarman, Ginger

Crab, Anna Bagnall and Keith Gunderson until April 11th.

Ulster Savings Bank continuously features artwork from many local artists at several of its branch locations throughout the Hudson Valley.

For more information about the upcoming artist reception, please contact Patricia Pennisi, Red Hook Branch Manager, at 845-758-4020, ext. 6506.

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‘I want to be a welder when I grow up’

Helping kids make good career choices early

**BY GERALD SHANKEL,
PRESIDENT AND CEO
FABRICATORS & MANUFACTURERS
ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL**

There is a burgeoning movement to motivate students in America to consider careers in the unlikeliest of places – the factory floor.

Even in the face of job cuts amid the current economic turbulence, U.S. manufacturers have great concern about the growing shortage of young skilled labor needed to make products used in industries ranging from aerospace and medical devices to alternative energy and infrastructure improvements.

Those heralding the cause include leading trade associations, regional economic development groups, TV personalities such as Jay Leno and John Ratzenberger, and even a teenage race car driver. Mark Tomlinson, executive director and general manager for the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, says that although there have been significant job losses in certain industries and regions, many areas of the country are clamoring for skilled employees. “In Texas, the oil and gas industry has created a thriving manufacturing community, and parts of the Southeast have seen tremendous growth in several segments,” he said.

A recent poll conducted by sponsors of the FABTECH International & AWS Welding Show revealed executives cited the lack of employee skills as a leading obstacle to growth.

That supports what we’ve heard from a couple of years from executives in the metal forming, fabricating and welding industries. They report their biggest challenge today is finding skilled workers, especially young people, who have the

knowledge to handle the increasingly sophisticated tasks required in manufacturing. For example, laser light often is used to cut metal now, and this requires a person proficient in math and science skills.

The outreach to students and educators is taking two parallel tracks in response to

comedy “Cheers,” host of the factory-focused Travel Channel show “John Ratzenberger’s Made in America” and spokesperson for the Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs (NBT): the Foundation of the Fabricators & Manufacturers Association, Intl., that encourages young people to consider careers in manufactur-

Here are just a few of the hundreds of initiatives taking place across America:

The Cleveland-based Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network sponsors videos shown in seven Ohio high schools that illustrate why manufacturing is a good career choice. A recent program on welding even featured Jay Leno, who extolled the virtues of the welders who restore his prized autos.

Two business groups in Manitowoc County, Wis., sponsor “Project Mini-Chopper” that showcases career opportunities by giving students real-life experiences with manufacturing. Student groups actually build motorcycles as school projects.

The NBT offers more real-life manufacturing experiences by issuing grants to educational and not-for-profit institutions that conduct summer manufacturing camps for kids with courses that focus on designing and building things. The camps give the kids a tangible experience to make something they can be proud of and take home, inspiring the next generation of engineers, builders and manufacturers.

The OSU-Okmulgee MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor, Okla., conducts a two-day program called, “All About Manufacturing,” that targets K-12 educators and teaches them about manufacturing as a career choice – knowledge they can pass on to their students.

FMA is now in its second year of featuring Florida teenage race car driver and welder Brennan Palmiter in efforts to reach young people. Initiatives include the “GO Brennan” scholarship program in which students apply by posting videos on YouTube, and a “Be True to Your School” program tied to FMA magazine Practical Welding today that has Palmiter visiting schools accompanied by his race car, to talk about welding, racing and manufacturing. Palmiter knows it’s important that people his age realize there are opportunities in the manufacturing field for them to pursue.

It’s critical to get parents and teachers involved. If parents and teachers don’t have personal experience in today’s manufacturing, they can’t guide their children with accurate opinions and information about manufacturing careers. For example, our local Chamber of Commerce Manufacturers Council in Rockford, Ill., compiled a web resource on manufacturing careers and provided it to the local high school district. The district then created a web page on its site that is visited regularly by both students and parents.

I see this entire movement is starting to

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the challenge. One dispels the negative image many have of factories as dark, dingy and dangerous, and such work as unfulfilling. The second highlights the chance to use fun, high-tech, computer skills and the opportunity to secure a career that pays well and offers advancement.

Actor John Ratzenberger, star of the

ing, believes the media are part of the problem. “Media and Hollywood often portray manufacturing in a poor light, denigrating anyone who works with their hands,” Ratzenberger said.

Ratzenberger believes that the manufacturing community must do a better job informing children that working in a factory is rewarding both personally and financially. “It all starts with getting young people to take pride in tinkering and inspiring them to work with both their hands and their minds,” he added.

Many agree with Ratzenberger. The image of manufacturing is still very much misunderstood; people, particularly young people, believe that we have the manufacturing plants of the 1950s and ’60s.

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Labor also noted, “Popular perceptions of manufacturing jobs as dark, dangerous and dirty are largely outdated as advanced robotics and other ‘intelligent’ systems become pervasive throughout the manufacturing process.”

Combating this image and shining a spotlight on the career opportunities in manufacturing now represent missions of more and more organizations, whether these are grassroots or national efforts.

Deadline approaching for scholarship

Scholarships totaling \$86,000 are now available for new students at Rockland Community College. Incoming students of any age, whether they are just graduating from high school or are adults wishing to enter college, are eligible to apply.

Twenty-five scholarships are available, including many for full tuition for two years, a \$6,800 value. The scholarships, which are made available by the Rockland Community College Foundation, are for children of alumni, minorities, art students, nursing students, honor students and more.

A booklet listing detailed information

about scholarship opportunities is available in high school guidance offices or at Rockland Community College’s Offices of Admissions and Financial Aid.

Those interested in applying for scholarships should obtain a booklet immediately since there is an application deadline, which includes all supporting documents, of March 20 for Rockland Negro Scholarship, May 15 for Knights of Pythias and July 13 for all others.

For further information, contact Admissions at 845-574-4224, Financial Aid at 845-574-4282 or visit www.suny-rockland.edu

A fascination for math leads to a NYS scholarship

At a young age, Meaghan Masterson of Stillwater, New York was attracted to math. Her fascination with numbers and the relationship between figures and forms soon turned to a love of the subject. With the inspiration of a favorite teacher, Masterson realized that she was meant to be a math teacher.

Currently a junior at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, Masterson is pursuing that dream. And,

Iona College students offer free tax help

Students from Iona College’s Hagan School of Business are offering free tax help to the public on four Saturday mornings leading up to April 15, Tax Day.

Volunteers will be available for consultations between 9:30 a.m. and noon on March 7, March 14, March 28 and April 4. The service is first-come, first-served, walk-in only, and will be located at the lower level Computer Lab of Hagan Hall on Iona’s campus, 715 North Avenue, New Rochelle, New York.

Taxpayers looking to utilize this service should bring the following items:

- Last year’s tax returns
- This year’s tax package and/or label
- W-2 and 1099 forms
- Information on any other income
- Information on deductions or credits

For more information, please call (914) 633-2267.

with the help of the New York State Math and Science Teaching Incentive Scholarship, she will be able to graduate with a lighter financial burden than some other college students. Masterson was one of 237 recipients of the scholarship granted to New York math and science education majors in the award’s inaugural year.

“This scholarship will help achieve my goal by helping me pay my student loans off, so I do not have to worry about my loans when I start teaching,” said Masterson.

Now in its second year, the Math and Science Teaching Incentive Scholarship was created to meet the need for more dedicated math and science teachers in New York’s high schools. The scholarship is administered by the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), the agency that helps people pay for college.

The maximum award is equal to the annual undergraduate state resident tuition charged at the State University of New York.

Scholarship recipients, in return, agree to teach math or science on a full-time basis at any secondary school in the State for five years.

The application deadline is March 15. Eligibility details and supplemental application for the 2008-09 New York State Math and Science Teaching Incentive Scholarship are available now on the HESC Web site at www.hesc.org.

Home remodeling, the cheaper option in a bad economy

BY JUNE LAMBA-LUTWAMA

2008 was a challenging year for the real estate market. The credit market tightened, foreclosures increased and everything seemed to be falling apart. Things are not very different in 2009, experts say. Home builders are still concerned about the rising number of foreclosures and short sales.

Many Americans are opting to remodel or re-decorate rather than buy a house or build a house because of the disturbed credit market because sales conditions have not changed, say economists. While many Americans are not buying houses or building houses, 69% believe that making any home improvements will increase the value of their home, according to an America Online (AOL) real estate survey.

With both the economy and the housing market suffering, home improvement trends look good in 2009. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, trends in home sales are the primary driver of home improvement sales. Remodeling expenditures typically rise less than residential spending during an upturn and decline less during a downturn.

The center's research shows that new residential spending declined more than 50% in the last quarter of 2008, while spending on home improvements declined only 16%.

Cost is a basic factor when making the decision to buy or simply remodel. In many cases it is cheaper to remodel an existing home than it is to build a new home.

If you do decide to remodel there are certain trends that are popular in 2009. Greener spaces and bigger spaces are definitely in this year. Many homeowners want bigger bathrooms and kitchens and greener living spaces.

Many homeowners want lavishly expanded bathrooms where people can relax. Standard showerheads are being replaced with oversized rain showerheads, and for those who can are going for showerheads with body sprays and steam showers says an Edina article. Concrete floors are popular because of their reasonable cost.

The trends also point to larger more functional kitchens because the kitchen has become a haven of comfort, not just a place to prepare and eat meals but gathering, doing homework, paying bills and more. Commercial grade stainless steel appliances, says Ezine.com.

As for power options, integrated solar power panels are in. More homeowners are looking at solar technology as a viable option. In fact architects and engineers that are turning to simple biodegradable materials and methods say an About.com article.

As homeowners move closer to nature, neutral, down to earth colors are in, says Ezine.com. Soft green tones, such as sage, have recently become a popular choice, particularly as an accent color on kitchen cabinets.

Green furniture tops it all. Eco-friendly furniture is the way to go for many people. Many pro-green home remodeling consultants advise doing a little research into furniture manufacturers and see that employs eco-friendly technology in their manufacturing process. Some furniture manufacturer has their manufacturing process certified for compliance with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) guidelines for sustainable management of tropical forests. Other s replaces every tree used in the furniture manufacturing process.

Whatever your taste is, whether green or not, money still talks and tough choices still have to be made in this bad economy about living spaces.



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- The HVBj's subscriber list is a dynamic and finely-tuned database that is systematically reviewed and updated to ensure that it accurately reflects the region's active business community. (Subscription price: \$35/ year...52 issues). We do not buy unverified mailing lists, nor is ours available to any other party.
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Opinion

Procrastination can be an asset in a challenging economy

Are Hudson Valley Organizations open to considering that; He who hesitates is lost... may be wrong? Haste makes waste... may be right? Sometimes you can ready, aim, fire and at others you must ready, fire, aim?

Conventional wisdom considers it a valuable skill to be able to make decisions as quickly as possible. But we also caution that speed can be a negative factor as well. Rather than leaping to a conclusion, often the smartest thing that an organization can do is to “think gray.”

Many people immediately categorize everything is black or white, good or bad, true or false. A truly effective business leader needs to be able to see the shades of gray in situations in order to make truly wise decisions.

“Thinking gray,” however, is only necessary for the weightiest and most difficult issues. F. Scott Fitzgerald described “thinking gray” as the ability to hold two opposing thoughts at the same time, while still retaining the ability to function. For example, in collegiate style debating, teams are often asked to be able to argue both sides of the assigned issue, depend-

ing entirely upon the “draw” before the match begins.

Moreover, our typical view of great leaders is that they are bold and decisive, like Teddy Roosevelt or Vince Lombardi. This black-and-white approach to thinking may be a successful strategy, especially in flight - or - fight situations. However, many noted military leaders were skill that “thinking gray” on the battlefield.

Napoleon, Washington and Rommel all knew the value of suspending judgment about many important matters until the last possible moment. Forming opinions before it is absolutely necessary closes the mind to new information that becomes available later.

Just as you can think gray without ever needing to reach a conclusion, you can also listen gray without ever needing to deliver a response. Active listening, with relevant and probing questions, can help the speaker realized that they have to be able to support their arguments with data. The top business leaders never just take comments at face value. Rather, they ask, “Who is saying what to whom? Is this communicating the opinions of two or

Business Ideas by The DreamSpeaker™ Joe Murtagh



200?”

The best advice is that you don’t have to make up your mind about a persons credibility until it’s absolutely necessary. Many failed businesses have been taken in by glib, highly educated “specialist” and have found it difficult to carry out what they knew was best for their customers.

A graphic design firm insisted that the typeface in a brochure had to be small to preserve the “artistic integrity” of the end product. The client, however, wanted to use large typeface because its elderly customers couldn’t read the fine print. The designers were more interested in impressing their colleagues and winning awards than communicating their client’s message effectively.

Bill Laverly, President of W.J. Laverly Real Estate said, “People seem to expect leaders to know everything about everything all the time. Resisting the urge to give your opinion until you know what

you’re talking about is a very valuable trait for anyone who expects to be a leader on a long-term basis.”

When it comes to decision-making, the vast majority of us have been brought up with a clean desk mentality. “Never put off to tomorrow a decision you can make today,” may be the worst advice ever given to a Hudson Valley business.

This article is provided by Joe Murtagh, The DreamSpeaker™, International keynote speaker and business trainer. Email questions or comments to Joe@TheDreamSpeaker.com, logon to www.TheDreamSpeaker.com or call 800-239-0058. Develop unstoppable power by connecting with your unique “Purpose” and achieve it thru a can-do “Attitude” empowered by acquiring the “Competencies” necessary to succeed and implement them thru interdependent “Teams” of like minded people.

The positives and negatives of different marketing media

Part I of 2

Every businessman knows that marketing is not a luxury, but a necessity. The problem always is, in which marketing media to advertise. The answer is that there are both pros and cons to every type of media. This article will compare several types of media, in an attempt to assist in that critical decision.

In this first part of a two-part article we will discuss television, billboards, radio, and newspapers as marketing media.

Television

Almost every household in the United States owns at least one television. Remarkably, the average viewership is almost seven hours a day. The impact of television as a marketing media is based

Judy Lewis

Savvy Solutions and Suggestions for Small Businesses



on the fact that television reaches mass audiences with every single exposure. The color and motion, unique to television is perfect for impacting viewers with product demonstrations and brand recognition.

The cons of television as a media are threefold. The first is the lack of retention, because the message that television presents “disappears” when the television is turned off, unless the marketing message is repeated often. The second downside to television advertising, is that the audience is divided amongst the subsets, i.e., cables, independent stations, VCRs, DVDs, and BlueRay. Lastly, the cost of television commercials, tends to be high compared to other media.

Outdoor-Billboards

Outdoor advertising now has a quick turnaround time, because of the new materials used for billboards. Where once it would have taken eight weeks to develop and produce a billboard ad, today it can take less than one week. Billboards require no effort or action on the part of the viewer, in order for a viewer to be reached with the marketing message. Billboards are highly visible and particularly appropriate to targeting a very specific audience.

This media too has its cons. The advertiser is subject to legal restrictions in the area in which it would be preferable to advertise. There are also, in several states, bans on such advertising, because the population sees them as aesthetically offensive.

Radio

Radio advertising has approximately the same reach as television, except for the fact that the number of hours that

adults listen to the radio is substantially less, an average of about three hours a day. Radio has as its strongest pro that it reaches audiences on the go. Because this is such a mobile population, the reach of radio appears to be increasing. Radio ads have a relatively quick production time and relatively low production costs. Radio advertising can be targeted to specific audiences, by choosing to advertise on radio stations, which draw particular demographics.

The downsides to radio are that radio oftentimes serves the purpose of providing “background noise” and commercials must be run often, in order to achieve the desired impact. Radio, of course, is limited by the fact that commercials are heard and not seen. The last con is that at some times of the year, there are so many ads running that the listener “shuts them out.”

Newspapers

Newspapers get wide exposure and have significant reach, especially to upscale audiences. The technology available today, makes ad time preparation relatively quick. The advertiser can, if they choose, run the same ad, simultaneously, in several newspapers, reaching different audiences. Newspapers remained the best suited for disseminating detailed information, especially so with complicated products or services.

Audiences continue to read newspapers, but many are doing so, online, as apposed to actually holding the paper in their hands. During certain seasons, the newspaper is filled with so many advertisements for audiences to focus on individual ads. The newspapers which are fairing the best are those which reach niche market.

Letters to the Editor

The impact of an MTA tax

I attended the hearing Monday evening, March 2nd, in Newburgh and echo the comments made by those who spoke. I am the Executive Director of Dutchess ARC - an organization serving over 500 families in Dutchess County and employing 350 people. This tax penalizes our organization to the tune of about \$30,000. Now this may not sound like a great deal to you, but in our community, it is someone’s job.

Our agency spends \$.91 of every dollar we receive on our programs and services. We are an agency with a reputation for quality, compassion, and efficient use of public dollars. When projected costs exceed expected revenue we do not have the option of looking in other peoples’ pockets. We go without raises, reconfigure and attrition positions, lead, and manage. We are experts at doing more with less. We have tightened our belts!

That said, I find it exceptionally offensive that my organization along with my colleagues in the Hudson Valley, are being expected to accommodate your budget shortfall. Most organizations at this point

have cut their annual budgets for 2009 just to get to breakeven. Tonight, the Chairman of the MTA Board suggested that the audience should be focusing energy on the Legislature rather than the Board because this was “not your idea” which seemed to allow you to abdicate any accountability. (Interesting that the comment was made after our Legislative Representatives who spoke against the tax had left the hearing.) But moving on ... the idea was clearly seeded by the MTA. You presented a budget with insufficient revenue and said, “help.” Your budget set the stage for the Commission and the Legislature to find a solution for you.

As an employer in Dutchess County I am deeply concerned and urge you to exercise leadership, and take responsibility for creating an alternate solution to address this shortage. This responsibility belongs to you rather than the business and nonprofit community of the Hudson Valley.

Thank you,
Crys McCuin, Executive Director
Dutchess ARC



Opinion

What works?

The word “depression,” which I was using a year ago, is the only thing about the economy that is gaining currency. This dismal word has now flopped off the lips of General Electric’s CEO and Great Britain’s Prime Minister like a dead fish. Another D-word, “denial,” still holds the teeth clenched when it comes to speaking the word “depression.” We only speak that word looking backward because no one likes to admit they’re currently depressed. It’s fine to talk about later when the wine is pouring. Our great denial right now is to think we are witnessing the burst of a real-estate bubble. We are not. We are witnessing the failure of an entire economic model. Recessions correct market bubbles. Depressions correct failed economies.

What doesn’t work

When the expansion of debt ends, the economic expansion built on debt ends. You cannot expand the capacity of individuals to increase debt forever by loosening the terms of credit. Debt was our economic foundation, and it has failed. We were fundamentally unsound. Unfortunately, the new U.S. government talks of change but clearly doesn’t know how to change. Most of its recovery plan is aimed at bailing out the old economy to get it to float again, but you cannot bail out a ship that is already underwater. We need to build a new economy that is more durable model and let the old ship rest in the sand bars of history.

Instead, the government’s program aims at stimulating debt-based consumption all over again, but you cannot solve a fundamental problem of excess debt by re-

expanding credit. That’s why the biggest interest cuts people have ever seen plus hundreds of billions spent on bank bailouts have accomplished nothing.

Moreover, that additional debt is passed to the next generation, but it gives that generation nothing in return for the bill. What does the next generation care if Citigroup still exists? They will still have banks. Passing our mountain of bad debt into the future may come to be seen as the most selfish act any one generation has foisted upon another in order to avoid its own pain.

What works

Let’s hope “the government of change” did not mean putting a little change in people’s pockets with more tax breaks that are just one more bill to hand to the future. With jobless claims now at a twenty-six-year high, the government’s stimulus plan should focus entirely on job creation as the path to avoid suffering. In a true-wealth economy, wealth is created by good-paying, sustainable jobs that give rise to the ownership of durable goods. Assets are accumulated that can be passed to the next generation, not debt. Those jobs are not created by investment breaks. They’re created by demand for the goods. In this case, government demand.

Only one kind of enormous deficit spending can create a new economy that does not damage the future — spending money now to build and repair things that the next generation will have to build and repair anyway (the creation of very durable goods). By that path, we hand the next generation the trillion dollar bill, but we also hand them more than a trillion

publicly traded entity has a right to share in the growth and profits of the business in the same manner as highly paid employees.

Section Eight: Corporate Financial Statements.

Section Nine: Taxation Considerations. Investors have a right to formulate their investment and retirement plans without having to worry about changing tax code requirements. IBOR compliant retirement plans would be exempt from taxation.

Section Ten: Financial Industry Restructuring.

Section Eleven: Global Reform Investor Protection and Education Board. A 15 to 25 member multi-national GRIPE

What is IBOR?

The purpose of IBOR is to protect financial markets and to create self-sufficient investors who produce economic growth instead of government deficits. IBOR standards create transparent financial markets, regulate speculation, and protect retirement portfolios. Here’s a sampling:

Section One: Product Transparency. All investors have a right to see precisely what securities are inside any investment product by accessing real time information that includes names and cost-based allocation percentages.

Section Two: Regulation and Education.

Section Three: Protection from Speculators. Investors have a right to protection from risks added to portfolios without their control, knowledge, or permission.

Naked shorting, index fund ownership of large share positions, and all naked option transactions would be prohibited.

Section Four: Controls of Hedge Funds.

Section Five: Brokerage Account Statements. Investors have a right to account statements that: 1) help manage asset allocation targets, 2) report realized gains and losses, 3) track cost basis and net deposits, and 4) emphasize the long-term, cyclical nature of the investment process.

Section Six: Retirement Account Investments.

Section Seven: Executive Compensation. Every shareholder of a

Downtime with David Haggith

dollars in value-added assets — new rail systems, repaired highways, new schools, etc. The debt handed to the future is offset by their cost savings in not having to build those things.

By way of example, my parents grew up through the Great Depression. My father still raves at how the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps — one of the WPA-type projects created by Roosevelt) kept him alive with the only sustainable employment he could find. As the next generation, I benefited in the 70’s when I attended a high school built under the Works Progress Administration in the Great Depression. I traveled over bridges built by my grandfather. I hiked on trails created by my father. The WPA produced over half a billion miles in roads, 125,000 public buildings, 75,000 bridges, 8,000 parks and 800 airports. My alma mater was recently renovated into the most modern school I’ve seen because its essential structures were still rock-solid. So, it has become an asset handed to yet another generation. That’s wealth accumulation, instead of debt accumulation.

Reality today

At the beginning of January, I predicted that those long lines at Walmart over the Christmas season meant nothing. While sales volume appeared O.K., it was only because goods were being sold at no profit. As soon as those cheap goods were cleared, nothing sold. Data released at the

end of January confirmed that the final quarter of 2008 saw a drop in consumption of American goods that can only be matched by one other quarter since records began at the end of World War II.

In spite of these enormous job losses, the “government of change” is putting the same old pork fat in its stimulus bill when we need all muscle. Here are some examples: \$335 million for sex education. (I don’t think the stimulation here is economic, unless it’s to create jobs in the world’s oldest and most stimulating occupation.) Over half a billion dollars to help people switch to digital T.V. (I suppose with so many people out of work, the government gurus figure there will be a lot of couch potatoes needing public assistance.) \$70 million to help people quit smoking. (The government should realize that money will need to be spent on drinking problems.)

These are not durable assets, so they hand nothing to the future in exchange for the bill. While some of these may be worthy ideas in good times, they are frivolous additions to a critical bill that should be nothing but lean meat in jobs that produce durable assets. Their inclusion demonstrates that the reality about depression has not sunk in, nor has the reality about the bill we are handing to the future. Some of those future people may wish a few of us had died of smoking.



Open Mike This week: Steve Selengut

board will be established with representatives of regulatory agencies, investor associations, academia, the media, and just one person each from Banking, Brokerage, Insurance, and Investment Banking.

Section Twelve: Transactional Fear and Greed Controls.

General Note: The above is a summary of the October 2008 SIBORAP report, published by Steve Selengut, in collabora-

tion with Claus Silfverberg, Managing Director, World Federation of Investors Corporations — for the whole thing, google the title.

Steve Selengut is the author of “The Brainwashing of the American Investor: The Book that Wall Street Does Not Want YOU to Read”, and “A Millionaire’s Secret Investment Strategy”

<http://www.sancoservices.com/>

Letters continued from page 8

Selling wine in grocery stores is a bad idea

The New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association, which represents fire fighters and emergency medical technicians from around the state has joined the Law Enforcement Against Drunk Driving (LEADD) coalition in its campaign against Governor Paterson’s plan to legalize the sale of wine in grocery stores, delis, gas stations, bodegas and anywhere beer is sold.

All too often, our members have seen the tragic impact of drunk driving when responding to fatal car accidents. Just last

month, we mourned the death of a Suffolk County police officer as a result of a drunk driving accident. This tragedy, and those that involve underage drinking, should remind us that we must continue to find new ways to reduce drunk driving. We share the concern from LEADD that the Governor’s plan will increase drunk driving and underage drinking. For that reason, we urge the State Legislature to reject this proposal.

Last year, Massachusetts voters rejected a similar idea because of the devastating

impact it would have had on teenagers, and no state has passed this kind of measure in 23 years. In Florida, California and Texas, three states where wine is sold everywhere, the number of alcohol related fatalities per 100,000 is more than double that of New York State. Even worse, alcohol related fatalities of those under age 21 are three times higher in these states where wine is sold everywhere, as compared to New York which has independently owned licensees, legally

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Newsmakers

Anne E. Pitter joins Hartman & Craven LLP as Partner

Anne E. Pitter has joined Hartman & Craven LLP, a Manhattan-based law firm established in 1921 that represents domestic and international clients in various practice areas, as partner. Pitter brings significant legal expertise in corporate/business services, creditors' rights, workouts and restructuring, and real estate law, clearly bolstering the firm's respective practices in these areas.

Prior to joining Hartman & Craven, Pitter was a partner in the New York office of law firm Thelen LLP. Pitter became a partner at Thelen LLP as a result of its merger with another prominent New York firm, Brown Raysman Millstein Felder & Steiner LLP. Pitter joined Brown Raysman as a partner when it acquired several practice groups formerly at Baer

Marks & Upham LLP.

In the corporate/business services area, she has worked in the areas of mergers, acquisitions and dispositions, equity investments in joint ventures, partnerships and limited liability companies, employment agreements, licensing and distributorship agreements, and intellectual property issues, among many others. Her industries of focus have included media and communications (cable television, out of home media and print), apparel and sporting goods, insurance and real estate brokerage, liquor and cigarette distributors, manufacturing, as well as private equity and venture capital funds.

In bankruptcy/creditors' rights, she has acted as a trustee and has represented both debtors and secured and unsecured credi-

tors in connection with work outs, restructures, reorganizations, liquidations, and auctions as well as other asset sales.

In real estate, Pitter has expertise in the areas of transactional real estate, including the acquisition, sale and financing (construction, permanent and mezzanine) of commercial and residential projects. She also has significant experience representing hotels, real estate investors, devel-

opers and management companies in numerous types of real estate and commercial transactions throughout the United States.

Pitter is admitted to the New York State Bar and the U.S. District Court for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York. She earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Rochester and her J.D. degree at Albany Law School.

Fran Zoske joins CDPHP

Fran Zoske, MSN, RN has joined CDPHP as director, health promotion and wellness programs. Zoske brings more than 30 years of nursing and management experience to her new post.

Most recently, Zoske served as associate professor and curriculum coordinator for Empire State College Nursing Program. Prior to that, she was the founder and director of faith community nursing, a nationally acclaimed nursing network for Seton Health/St Mary's Hospital. The program introduced the concept of parish nursing to the Capital District and achieved national "Best Practice" status for health and wellness promotion. Zoske developed an extensive network of collaborative community health programs, service organizations, and academic institutions during her

tenure with Seton Health/St Mary's Hospital.

In addition, Zoske has held nursing positions in New York hospitals: Samaritan/Albany Memorial Hospital, Saratoga Hospital, University of Rochester Medical Center/Strong Memorial Hospital, and St. Barnabas Hospital, as well as University of Chicago Hospital and Clinics.

Zoske holds a master's of science degree in nursing/organizational development from Arizona State University, Tempe, Ariz, and a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Winona State University, Winona, Minn. She is a published author and national speaker on topics ranging from health promotion and wellness to faith community nursing.

Friendly Honda earns Honda's top dealership award

Eric Kahn, owner of Friendly Honda has been named by American Honda Motor Co., Inc. as a recipient of the 2008 Honda President's Award. The award is presented to top ranking Honda dealerships across the country and recognizes excellence in all areas of operation – customer service, sales, training, and facility operation.

"Being honored by Honda validates Friendly Honda's commitment to providing a unique car buying and ownership experience in which we strive to deliver unparalleled value and customer satisfaction. I want to thank my exceptional and hard-working staff as well as our loyal customers for making 2008 a record breaking year despite a struggling economy," said Kahn.

More than 1,000 Honda automobile dealerships participate in the President's Award program annually. Each year, award objectives are established to inspire

dealerships to achieve even higher levels of customer satisfaction. This year, 157 dealerships achieved these objectives and ranked to merit Honda's highest honor. Friendly Honda was the only dealership in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam and Ulster counties to receive the award.

"Earning the Honda President's Award takes a team of dedicated professionals unwavering in its pursuit of superb customer care," says Richard Colliver, executive vice president, Automotive Sales at American Honda Motor Co. "We are proud to recognize Friendly Honda as one of our Honda elite. See for yourself what a difference working with a Honda award-winning dealership can make to your automotive experience."

Kahn purchased Friendly Honda, located on Route 44 in Poughkeepsie, in October 2007. He is also the owner of Capital Volvo of Albany in Colonie, New York.

John Patrick Jackson earns 'green' LEED credential

John Patrick Jackson, Senior Project Manager for Arris Contracting Co., Inc. Of Poughkeepsie has earned the U.S.Green Building Councils Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professional Status. The LEED Green Building Rating system is designed to encourage energy and resource conservation in the construction and operation of buildings.

"Arris Contracting has recognized the

growth of green building and sustainable development in the construction industry" said Paul Tozzi Principle of ACCI. "John's accomplishment supports our firms commitment to energy efficiency, resource recovery and sustainable building."

Jackson has been working at Arris Contracting for the past 12 years. He received his bachelors degree from Pace University and earned his Master degree in 2000.

I want to be a welder

change the nation's mindset on manufacturing. So many organizations now are committed to make this happen and we're beginning to see results. Applications for our scholarships have reached record levels. Educators are paying attention. And, young people are flocking to manufacturing camps.

Positioning industrial jobs as desirable and rewarding will fulfill specific needs of manufacturers and, without question, strengthen our economy.

Gerald Shankel is president and chief executive officer of Rockford, Ill.-based Fabricators & Manufacturers

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Association, International (FMA), a professional organization with more than 2,300 members working together to improve the metal forming and fabricating industry. Founded in 1970, FMA brings metal fabricators and fabricating equipment manufacturers together through technology councils, educational programs, networking events, and the FABTECH International/AWS Welding Show. FMA also has a technology affiliate, the Tube & Pipe Association, International (TPA), which focuses on the unique needs of companies engaged in tube and pipe producing and fabricating.

Robert A. Holtz joins CDPHP

Robert A. Holtz MA, MBA, LMHC, has Joined CDPHP as vice president, behavioral health services. In his new position, Holtz will oversee, modify, and administer behavioral health operations at CDPHP.

"It is a pleasure to announce Bob has joined our growing team," said John D. Bennett, MD, president and CEO, CDPHP. "He brings nearly 30 years behavioral health experience to his new post, and will be an important asset in maintaining the quality of mental health benefits CDPHP offers to its membership."

Most recently, Bob served as behavioral

health director, MVP Healthcare. He also held behavioral health management capacities for Conifer Park, Kaiser Permanente, and Community Health Plan (CHP).

He holds a master's degree in business administration from the State University of New York at Albany; a master's degree in psychology from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh; and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Boston University College of Liberal Arts. Bob is licensed as a NYS Mental Health Counselor and Certified Addiction Specialist.

Wine in supermarkets

Under the governor's proposal, stores like Wal-Mart, Price Chopper and other supermarkets would be allowed to sell wine. The fear is that small liquor stores, often mom and pop size operations, would be put out of business. The buying power of the larger stores would hamper the ability of smaller stores to compete on price. Large supermarkets would buy in volume and display pallet quantities at low prices. Small liquor stores do not have the space for such large inventory buys or would have to drastically reduce offerings in order to buy a few products in such volume.

Opponents of the plan also say the end result would not be any increase in revenue to the state. Taxes make up almost 40% of the retail price of alcohol in New York. Opponents including liquor store owners in Columbia County claim any sales in supermarkets would be offset by fewer sales at liquor stores. They claim almost 4,000 jobs would be lost if supermarkets are allowed to sell wine. The New York State Liquor Association estimates that as many as 1,000 liquor stores would be run out of business. There

continued from page 3

are more than 2600 liquor stores in the state.

Another aspect of selling wine in supermarkets concerns the age of cashiers and clerks in those stores. There is a good possibility cashiers as young as 14 or 15 would be ring wine sales at registers. These young employees present a control problem. Young inexperienced workers could easily be harassed or talked into selling wine to older intimidating customers who may not want to show proper ID.

The state would receive a windfall in new license fees. However if 1,000 small stores are forced out of business there would be a dramatic drop off in license renewals in a s little as three years. License fees run about \$19,000 for a three year term.

States in which wine and liquor are sold in grocery stores have, according to opponents and the State Liquor Association, deaths from auto related accidents involving alcohol as high as three times that of New York.

Datebook

Locust Grove hosts fine art auction

Over 125 of the Hudson Valley's most prominent artists have been invited to participate in a spring art auction to be held in collaboration with Poughkeepsie's Locust

trails, educational programs for children and preservation of the 40-room Italianate mansion.

The concept for this event was inspired by the annual Woodstock Artists Association and Museum Labor Day Weekend Auction, which Cox has co-sponsored for the past six years.

Artists with studios along the Hudson River from Troy, throughout the Valley and as far south as New York City have been invited to offer work for the benefit auction. Included among this distinguished group is best selling author/illustrator

James Gurney, noted for his popular and lavishly illustrated Dinotopia book series. His entry in the Locust Grove auction, Poet's Walk, was recently returned from a year long exhibition at the American embassy in Switzerland.

Among the region's photographers represented in the sale is Eric Lindbloom,

who is well known for his pictorial photographs of the Hudson Valley. Lindbloom has also published a series of books and has been featured in prestigious museum exhibitions. Former member of George Balanchine's New York City Ballet company Jurg Lanzrein will also be a featured ceramic artist. After changing careers from dance to art in 1971, the Swiss born artist went on to create exclusively for Tiffany and Company. His work has been featured in Architectural Digest, Elle and House and Garden.

A full preview of all works up for auction will be on view starting Tuesday,

April 21 from 10 am to 5 pm. A preview reception and party with the artists starting at 5 p.m. Friday, April 24 in the gracious West Gallery at Locust Grove, free to the public, will highlight the week long preview.

An online catalogue will be provided, and phone and order bids will be accepted from those who are unable to attend the auction. For more information, contact Locust Grove at (845) 454-4500 or visit the website at www.lgny.org.

Locust Grove is located at 2683 South Road (Route 9) in Poughkeepsie, just 2 miles south of the Mid-Hudson Bridge.

Hudson Valley Vegetable School returns in 2009

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster and Orange Counties invite commercial vegetable growers to attend the 2009 Hudson Valley Vegetable

School. This day long event will take place on Tuesday, March 24, at Banta's Steak and Stein located at 935 Union Avenue in New Windsor.

Expert speakers from Cornell University and industry professionals will cover nutrient management, environmental and production benefits of zone tillage, the Department of Agriculture and Markets Fresh Produce

Verification Program, and updates on vegetable pest research.

Registration begins at 9:30am the day of the event, seating is very limited and pre-registration is encouraged. The cost for the program is \$50 per person, if pre-registered by March 20. Registration is \$70 after March 20 (including by phone) and at the door the day of the event. Fee includes lunch and hand-outs.

For more information or to pre-register call Teresa Rusinek or Jenny Burkins at 845-340-3990.



Maple Weekends show off local sugar at Frost Valley YMCA

It's Maple Sugar time at Frost Valley YMCA with two open house weekends planned at the Sugar Shack on March 21-22 and March 28-29.

This free event runs from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily, with tours every half hour and activities throughout the day. Guided seasonal activities will also be plentiful for overnight guests.

Maple Sugaring Weekend is a special time in the forest of the Catskills High Peaks, where visitors can experience all the elements of sugaring including mid-winter hike, brisk mountain air, swelling buds, tapping trees. Frost Valley demonstrates both traditional and state-of-the-art collection of sweet sap and fuels the process with firewood harvested with sustainable forest management practices. When the steam of evaporating water and the sweet taste of the sap arrives at 67 percent sugar, the maple syrup is here!

Frost Valley's Maple Weekends give families a way to experience Maple Sugar season firsthand, learn how to identify a good sugar maple tree, tap trees, boil sap to make delicious maple syrup. The north-eastern U.S. is the only place in the world

where sugar maple trees grow, making it a truly local product. Frost Valley's own brand of syrup will also be for sale.

For more information, email: info@frostvalley.org or visit: www.frostvalley.org.



Located at 2000 Frost Valley Road, eight miles from Claryville and 13 miles from Big Indian, Frost Valley YMCA provides four seasons of outdoor, experiential and educational opportunities. Activities include: summer camping for children, environmental education, year-round activities for families and conference and retreat facilities for groups and businesses.

Murder, most intriguing...

Enjoy an evening of cocktails in The Manor Room at Catlin Gardens, a lavish sit-down dinner, and the newest murder mystery performance by the National Theater Group, Jest Mysteries.

Friday, March 27th

Cocktail Hour: 6PM

Showtime: 7PM

\$49 per person

(includes tax & gratuity)

Cash Bar

Please call 845-355-3555, ext. 2 to make your prepaid reservations.

For more information visit: www.catlingardens.com.



Putting a smile on a faceless company

The Business Marketing Association's March meeting will feature John Lonczak, the Managing Director of Product/Brand Development. Lonczak will discuss how good branding and design can solve a multitude of problems in marketing a small company and expand its business opportunities.

Lonczak is the recipient of more than 30 patents and trademarks, two Industrial Designers Society of America/Business Week Gold Awards, the Package Design Council Gold Award, and the London

Advertising Award.

Dinner meeting will take place at the Ship Lantern Inn, 1725 Route 9W in Milton, NY 12547, from 6 to 9 p.m., Wednesday, March 18. The cost is \$35 for BMA-HV members, \$35 for co-workers of members (accompanied by the member), and \$45 for all others. You may register at BMA-HV event registration or by contacting Rebecca Jones, BMA-HV Treasurer, at the law firm of McCabe & Mack LLP in Poughkeepsie, at (845) 486-6813 or RJones@mccm.com.

Letters

responsible for preventing youth from purchasing alcohol.

We welcome the support of the New York Professional Fire Fighters Association in our campaign against this misguided idea. Like police officers and troopers, these first responders must confront the havoc wrought by drunk driving and underage drinking all over New York. We urge the Legislature to work together to reduce drunk driving, not make alcohol more readily available to teenagers.

This proposal would give teenagers easier access to alcohol without the scrutiny that wine sellers and liquor stores provide. That's a dangerous idea that will only lead to an increase in underage drinking and drunk driving deaths. Underage drinking is a serious problem and we must do all we can to eliminate it rather than encourage it. We urge the State Legislature to find a better way to deal with the budget problems.

The LEADD coalition includes: New

continued from page 9

York State Association of PBAs; Police Conference of New York; New York State Association of Chiefs of Police; New York City District Attorney Investigators Association; Police Conference of New York; New York State Troopers PBA; New York City PBA; Nassau County PBA; Suffolk County PBA; New York City Detectives Endowment Association; New York State Sheriffs Association; Port Authority PBA; New York City LBA; New York City CBA; New York State Capital District Parents Who Host Lose the Most Steering Committee; New York State Environmental Prevention Task Force; Choices 301, Inc.; Long Beach Medical Center's Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking; Western New York Prevention Resource Center at GCASA; Chatham Middle School SADD Chapter.

Charles Morello

President of the New York Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Kingston Mayor under fire for ‘discounting’ Hibernians

BY GREG DRAISS

Less than one week ago the Rondout Business Association cancelled plans for the annual Mardi Gras parade. The Association has sponsored the parade for the last few years as a celebration of Mari-Gras in association with the big party thrown in New Orleans just before the beginning of Lent. Under a new policy, the City of Kingston Police Dept. is no longer providing security or police protection for public events sponsored by groups other than the City of Kingston itself. The move is part of a plan to control costs in city departments. In the past, the police dept. would provide traffic control and security for events. The security positions were paid for mostly by overtime funds. Parade and festival organizers are still permitted to have public events but are now being charged for police

security and traffic control provided by the police department.

However, the Ancient order of Hibernians were given a discount totaling \$1000 in the charges for coverage for the annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade held each March in Kingston. B.C. Gee, President of the Rondout Business Association is highly critical of the reduced fee. The Mardi Gras Parade was to be held on Saturday, February 28, and was, according to Gee, a much smaller event.

Sottile defended his position by saying the Hibernians have always contributed \$1000 each year to help the city defray the cost of providing security and cleanup. Sottile also claims to have single-handedly raised in excess of \$60,000 each year for the city’s Fourth of July celebration. He claims he gets no help from anyone else with fund raising for the annual July

event. The celebration is held in the Rondout area and brings in thousands of party-goers who spend money in the Rondout Business area buying food and drink.

Gee responded by saying that the Rondout Business Association never sought credit for rescuing the fireworks portion of the Touch of Italy bash when the city came up short.

Sottile responded by suggesting the uptown jazz festival be cancelled as well as he will never again charge by one cent money for civic events in the future.

Gee also takes issue with what businesses actually benefit by the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Gee claims that restaurants and bars are the only ones who really benefit. According to Gee parade goers only frequent bars and do not stop by other retail shops such as antique centers on St.

Patrick’s Day.

Gee added that businesses who are not in the drinking business close up shop to avoid the drinkers who may cause damage and get rowdy during the St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

Gee has asked the city to move other events away from the waterfront since she claims businesses in the waterfront area are actually hurt by the crowds who take up parking spots that would otherwise be used by regular shoppers. In addition, Gee said businesses would be better able to pay for their own events if the city’s homestead tax structure were more fair to businesses. Currently, businesses pay far more in total tax dollars than residential properties under “The Homestead Rule”. The city recently voted to change the structure to shift the burden more evenly to residential owners. However, the change was not as big as Sottile wanted. Even with the smaller shift to residential properties the tax burden was to increase to residential properties by as much as 15 percent .

Sottile is a member of the Ancient order of Hibernians.

Hudson Valley Hospital Center ‘tops off’ its latest project

On February 26, workers lifted the highest beam into place, on the Hudson Valley Hospital Center’s \$115 million expansion project. Called a “topping off” ceremony, the event signals a milestone in every large construction project. The beam placed atop the four-story Patient Tower, the cornerstone of the project was signed by all members of the hospital community, including Board of Directors, administrators, employees, and the construction crew and architects, will be lifted by crane and swung into place. As the beam was lifted, ambulance sirens blared, confetti will flew, and an American flag was unfurled on the beam once it was put firmly into place.

“Even in these difficult economic times, Hudson Valley Hospital Center is moving ahead with our ambitious building project,” said John C. Federspiel, hospital President and CEO. “We are committed to building a new breed of hospital, offering our patients the most advanced technology available and the best care in this area.”

When the Patient Tower opens next year, the hospital’s main entrance, lobby and coffee shop and groupings of comfortable seating will occupy the first floor of this tower, along with an expanded Emergency Department. The top three floors will house 84 private patient rooms. Plans call for more natural light, better views to the outside, and a soft, calming color scheme, which benefits patients, families and staff. As Mr. Federspiel describes it: “Upon entering the first floor, one will experience a hotel-like atmosphere, where a unique design will complement the wonderful caring of our hospital staff, creating a life-affirming environment for healing.

” The Topping Off ceremony will be followed this spring by the opening of the new state-of-the-art Institute for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine, offering patients suffering from chronic, non-healing wounds the comprehensive care they need, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

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County lawmakers adopt new DCC teacher contract

By Rich Flaherty

POUGHKEEPSIE - A new three year contract for teachers and professional staff at Dutchess Community College was approved last week by the full county legislature. The package is retroactive to September 1, 2008 and expires on August 31, 2011.

The agreement calls for a 2.01 percent pay hike the first year, 2.11 percent the second year and a 2.33 percent increase in the third year. The contract covers 513 full and part-time employees.

Legislator James Doxsey (C-Town of Poughkeepsie), was the only member of the legislature who voted against the contract last Wednesday evening. "Only because I don't believe at this fiscal time that we can afford the increase in the teacher's salaries." He said the pay hike would cost the county roughly \$440,000 for three consecutive years. "I'd like to see the teacher salaries frozen right now when people are losing jobs and homes," he added.

Dutchess County Executive William R. Steinhaus released a memorandum last week against the labor agreement. "Thousands of families, that would be the taxpayers expected to pay for this union

settlement, are losing their paychecks with potential for thousands more jobs lost over coming months." He said those that have jobs are sacrificing to stay employed. "Families who still have jobs are getting small if any raises, and worse, some are being presented with wage cuts all across the private sector."

He questioned if lawmakers were aware of the financial impact. "Does the Legislature have a plan to close the current \$1.8 million in funding reduction for DCC under the current state budget proposal? No." Steinhaus called for new negotiations for the labor agreement. "This contract needs to go back to the negotiating table and reflect the financial reality confronting the families and businesses of this county who are expected to pay for this union agreement - one that is far too rich for the taxpayer's wallet."

"We are still the lowest paid (teachers) in the county," said Joseph Norton, President of Dutchess United Educators. "The economy is bad and we took a very austerity type approach," he said. "We also stepped up to the plate and realize we have to do the best we can for our students and for the county."

The new contract calls for the faculty

and professional staff to pay more for health insurance, including higher deductibles and co-pays. Norton said the new health insurance plan will save the county between \$175,000 to \$225,000 per year for each year of the contract. "We (teachers) probably pay the most (health insurance) in Dutchess County of all the school districts."

"This means that we will be able to have a contract with our faculty and professional staff," said Dr. D. David Conklin, President of Dutchess Community College. "The current agreement expired in August of 2008. We haven't been without a contract for several months, so it's always nice to have a contract."

The county legislature also approved a new, scrap metal law in an effort to combat the growing theft of metal that is sold as scrap. The local law was crafted to deter the recent rise in thefts from businesses, construction sites, churches and homes.

The law requires scrap metal processors to conduct an identification check of individuals, record the name of the parties, record the description of the property to be sold to help combat the marketing

of stolen metal items. Phil Kirschner of Charles Effron & Son thanked the county legislature for its effort in creating the local law. "Being open minded and everyone's best interest," he said. "Law enforcement was helpful."

County lawmakers also approved the appropriation of \$101,000 to purchase updated photos for the county's GIS website.

The legislature also approved a measure to take certain actions under state environmental law to permit the continuation of the "Runway 24 End Obstruction Removal Project" at the Dutchess County Airport. The project began in the late 1980's in removing certain trees. A public hearing will be held in the future.

The county legislature also appointed Michael O'Connor and Krista Gobins to the Citizens Advisory Committee on Domestic Violence through June 30, 2009.

And county lawmakers also approved proposed activities and funding for the Dutchess County Stop-DWI Program for 2009.

Do you Tweet, Link, YouTube or Facebook? You will soon...

BY DYLAN SKRILOFF

Author, blogger and new media/social media expert Lena West was the guest speaker at a recent meeting of the Rockland Business Association Technology Initiative. West informed and inspired the forty or so RBA members who turned out to learn how they can make better use of social media.

Social media sites allow users to create profiles that offer window's into their personality or professional activities, including regular updates. It creates an online reservoir of constant interaction. Websites such as myspace, facebook, linkedin, twitter and youtube, as well as online tools that monitor online conversations (buzzlogic and radian6), google alerts, TweetBeep and RSS feeds would be considered social media.

West sought to remove the negative stereotype regarding social media that says it depersonalizes and dehumanizes social interaction.

"All social media does is facilitate human interaction in a streamlined, efficient manner. It allows me to talk to you in a more authentic way. If you focus on the human aspect you are going to win with social media every time. Think of social media as a cocktail part. Be authentic, people can see phoniness," she said.

West gave tips on how business owners can start to create a plan of action to use social media. First deciding which tool suited them. Choices include - blog, podcast, video, wiki, widget and the aforementioned websites and implements. She suggested the internet could be used to create forums where a business' customers could talk to each other. Dave Heinrich, President of Smart Money Mortgages in West Nyack said he found the presentation helpful and that his company was looking to get more involved in the internet. "This was great," he said.

West is the owner www.xynomedia.com and offers a free "Social Media Strategy Blueprint" to subscribers along with her regular publication, The X Dossier.

continued from page 1

Central School District stands to lose \$160,000 if the tax is passed. She offered a suggestion to the board - pricing zones as many other cities have. The further you go the more you pay. She also put the gauntlet to the MTA Board.

"Maybe reduce administration staffing. Put your own house in order. Do an audit," she said.

The MTA videotaped the three-hour hearing and it is posted at www.mta.info. The hearing was the last of nine regarding plans to raise fares and tolls and cut service to close their 2009 budget gap. The tax hike was proposed by the Governor's special Ravitch Commission. Action is expected from the MTA by March 25. The Board hearing took place at the Hilton Garden Inn in Newburgh.

continued from page 1

together as a region (in opposition) as never before. Hopefully, we can continue to think and act as a region in the future...on so many other issues."

Sharing municipal services between counties is one way all the executives felt a new kind of regionalism could be achieved.

"In case you didn't hear, we just spent a lot of money on a new jail," Ulster County Executive Mike Hein quipped, referring to one of the biggest boondoggles in the county's history. "Now we have extra beds, and could even renovate another building (the old jail) to hold 200 more inmates very cost effectively. Why shouldn't nearby counties house their overflow with us?"

Others noted that it might be possible to develop large buying consortiums to bargain better for many of the goods and services every county needs to contract for.

On one thing, all agreed: with looming deficits on all levels, anything the counties can do to tighten their respective purse strings and keep their counties afloat is going to be on the table in 2009.

Payroll tax

New York."

Terrence Olivo, COO of Orange Ulster BOCES said, "Orange Ulster BOCES and its component school districts oppose the payroll tax in the strongest possible terms. It will be \$2.2 million from [Orange County] school district's budget. That's the equivalent to 35 to 40 new teaching positions. Orange County businesses will have the privilege of paying twice, once through their payroll and once through their school tax."

Tony Marino, Orange County Legislator, 17th district said, "The MTA already receives its fair share of taxes from Orange County," listing several surcharges that are levied on the agency's behalf. "Overall Orange County ridership is probably the lowest in the twelve county region. I question why such a low ridership justifies the right to tax."

Maureen Hallahan, Executive Director of the Orange County Partnership pointed out the new tax sends the wrong signals to business people in New York who already face some of the highest tax burdens in the country.

"The message is - locate your business somewhere else. We need to draw a line in the sand and say no more taxes. The formula is broken. New York has to stop biting the hand that feeds it," she said.

David Ping of Health Quest, Vice President of Strategic Planning and Business Development, said his organization will be among those hardest hit. For Health Quest the tax amounts to \$880,000. Considering the state is also cutting Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement to the hospital by \$2,000,000 it represents a significant overall burden.

Elizabeth Blashka said the Valley

County executives

a culture of innovation within the halls of county governments to deal with the myriad of problems having too little revenue to deal with too many issues puts on their plates.

"It goes beyond having the staff remove every other light bulb in the county building," said Diana. (a move he took last year, saving thousands in electric bills). "You have to always be thinking about how you can trim costs or do something differently to save money."

Dutchess County Executive William Steinhaus noted that the recent economic setbacks are, indeed, severe, but it's nothing the valley hasn't lived through before.

"We've been through this before, and survived, and we will again," he said. "From the 1950s to the 1980s, we were an IBM company town....I was welcomed into office in the late eighties with a notice that IBM was re-locating most of its operations elsewhere."

Last month, Dutchess County - and indeed the whole Mid-Hudson Valley - reeled once again from another massive lay-off at IBM which, once all the heads have actually rolled, will put hundreds of more people who once worked in East

Fishkill into the unemployment lines.

The last time around, the valley took the hit to its workforce and economic base and, in time, grew a multitude of new small businesses to absorb many of the laid-off workers. Now, with the Wall Street crash and the credit crunch, many small businesses are finding it difficult to access cash flow. The valley is bracing for even more lay-offs.

Meanwhile, the state budget proposed by Gov. David Paterson offer further challenges for county leaders. Cuts in everything from its share of Medicaid and Medicare payments and cuts in education funding are only two of the areas that the executives see as being especially difficult for them to deal with - if that proposal passes in the state legislature.

A proposed new payroll tax to help the MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) dig out of its hole also angers the executives, as they see it as another way the state and MTA is trying to force them to pay for New York City's problems. (see top story on page one).

"There is one small spot of blue sky in this, if it goes through," Pattern president Jon Drapkin noted. "It has brought us

Banking & Finance

U.S. Venture capital investment slips in a tight market

BY CHRIS MILLER

After three strong quarters of resistance, private equity fund-raising stalled to a virtual standstill in the fourth quarter of 2008. Numbers from the Dow Jones Private Equity Analyst reported that 99 funds raised approximately \$43 billion in the fourth quarter, which was a significant decrease from the almost \$100 billion raised by 208 funds during the same period in 2007.

Overall, the \$265.6 billion raised with private equity funds in 2008 was 18 percent below the 506 equity funds that raised \$325 billion in 2007.

Fundraising by U.S. venture capitalists plummeted last quarter, marking lows that haven't been seen since the industry started to recover from the dot-com bust.

2008 fourth quarter Venture capital investment in U.S. companies accelerated its descent with 554 deals accumulating only \$5.5 billion. The figures showed a 30 percent drop from the \$7.9 billion invested in 718 contracts during the same period in 2007. According to statistics released in January by Dow Jones VentureSource, the fourth quarter of '08 was the lowest investment period the industry has seen in three years.

2008 saw 2,550 agreements come to fruition and \$28.8 billion in venture capital invested in U.S. companies, again down from 2007 figures. 2008 showed an 8 percent decline from 2007's \$31.4 billion investment in 2,823 contracts but managed to squeak by the 2006 figures of \$28.2 billion.

According to a report for venture capital initiatives in 2008, the New York metropolitan region saw investment climb 11 percent to roughly \$2 billion with a total of 201 deals completed.

Very few areas of venture capital investments have proved to be immune from the economic crisis that spiraled out of control by the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy in early September and reports suggest that what we've been hearing for some time to be true. The slowdown is expected to continue well into 2009 and most venture capital firms are waiting until the markets stabilize to go and raise funds, and many won't need to fundraise for another year or two.

Venture firms have been squeezed and their limited partners have seen the value of their own holdings drop as the stock market crashed – changing the way they do business. Lately, venture firms are forced to hold onto startups longer than they would in better times because it's become increasingly more difficult for companies to go public. That translates into less available money for new companies.

Reports suggest that well stocked venture-backed companies in the traditional areas of investment like IT and health care are seeing predictable pullbacks. Venture capitalists were still eager to put capital to work in burgeoning areas like energy and consumer goods, which saw record investment in 2008. This year could tell a different story for alternative energy, according to Hudson Valley Center for Innovation (HVCFI) Managing Director Les Neumann.

HVCFI, like many organizations that rely on investors, is faced with the difficulties of finding funding for a multitude of projects in difficult times. Neumann said that from his standpoint all sectors of

innovation are being affected. He noted that many seem to want to talk about major investments in alternative renewable energy but the economic crisis is preventing anyone from stepping up to the plate and taking a swing.

"Even the stimulus package that was just announced has no provisions, or any that we could find, for early-stage emerging companies in that dollar figure," explained Neumann. "Nor does it provide any tax incentives for investors looking to get involved."

In the Hudson Valley, small business is the foundation and if there is no money or proviso for small business, stated Neumann, then that becomes an impediment.

Neumann said that although that early stage investing could be the most lucrative, it is always the riskiest.

"The investment community, right now, is very gun shy. There are many investors that have lost a lot of money and there is a lot of money sitting on the sidelines waiting to see what's going to shake out


and from where," he said.

Neumann said that HVCFI maintains a well-established Rolodex of contacts from private investors, angel investors, venture capitalists, and private equity. He said that it has become increasingly more difficult to help fund the emerging companies that are looking for capital from \$100,000 - \$2 - \$3 million, stating, "It's a tough bucket to fill right now."

The HVCFI Managing Director said that each day the organization is dealing

continued on page 19

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Banking & Finance

Credit Unions announce increased lending

New York credit unions report that they are actively lending while other financial institutions have dramatically reduced their lending portfolio. As recently as last week, in fact, HSBC joined the pack as word of their plans to scale back, or possibly eliminate all consumer lending in the states, as well as close hundreds of branches here was reported.

Amid the recession, New York credit unions increased their lending by 8.1 percent in 2008.* That number suggests that more and more consumers struggling in

today's economy are finding affordable credit access at their credit unions.

Natural person credit unions, where more than 90 million Americans now save and borrow, are well-capitalized; their 11 percent capital-to-assets ratio exceeds the 7 percent federal requirement. This is due to credit union's conservative, responsible lending practices – the same practices that have prevented credit unions from being severely impacted by the ongoing mortgage crisis that set off the current financial meltdown.

"As talk continues about HSBC eliminating personal loans, we want everyone to know that New York credit unions, as well as those across the country, will actively be continuing to lend in 2009, staying true to their original mission, 'not for profit, not for charity – but for service,'" said William J. Mellin, president and CEO of the Credit Union Association of New York.

Consumers looking for a safe financial harbor and sensible lending practices need look no further than their local credit

unions, which are open to and true to people from all walks of life.

For more information on credit unions, or finding one that's right for you, visit www.CreditUnionsForYou.com.

The Credit Union Association of New York has served as the trade association for the state's credit unions for 92 years. It is the fifth largest association in the country. New York credit unions have assets of more than \$43 billion and 4.2 million members. To learn more about the Association, visit www.nyscul.org.

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From L to R: Raymond Francis, Loan Officer (Rockland); Eric Wiggins, President & CEO; Jennifer Bonhomme, Credit/Loan Officer; Greg Monteith, CLO; and Diane Elias, Loan Officer (Orange)

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Banking & Finance

Factoring can be an option when traditional financing isn't

BY CHRIS MILLER

Many small business owners, start-up businesses, and entrepreneurs know first hand the struggle of attaining capital to finance the growth of their business or to meet cash flow shortages. With the current economic and industry conditions, taking the accounts receivable funding plunge could be the difference between a company's survival and growth and that of bankruptcy.

Accounts receivable financing or "factoring" is a secondary market that is an alternative to bank financing. Typically, a factoring client's profile is that of a company that has been in business under two years or of the entrepreneur that does not have the necessary credit score to attain bank financing.

"What a factoring or accounts receivable financing program does is go more on the basis that their customers can pay,"

explained Sierra Capital Inc. President Sally Stark-McGlynn. "A factor does not lend money, we buy an asset that a small



Sally Stark-McGlynn

business owns, and that is the accounts receivables."

Stark-McGlynn, a credit analyst for 25 years, said she determines what assets to purchase by her client's customers' ability of repayment. Accounts receivable financing companies serve as an interim or long-term replacement for conventional bank relationships. Stark-McGlynn noted that a Sierra Capital factoring client is, usually, on a program for an average of 12 – 36 months.

The change of season brings in a change of clientele looking to take advantage of the assets of their receivables. The Hillsdale-based Sierra Capital provides capital to several service industries, manufacturing industries, and some construction.

"I've found that entrepreneurs are good at providing their specialty or service but, typically, don't like to deal with the other areas of the business," said Stark-McGlynn when describing the other services her company offers, such as negotiating with vendors, suppliers and the IRS. "We make sure they have enough money to run their business based on their receivables."

Generally, factors funded businesses grow at a more rapid rate than businesses that rely on loans or lines of credit. For example, a \$100,000 line of credit from a bank will not fund \$400,000 worth of new contracts. However, \$400,000 worth of new contracts translates into available account receivables that could cover payroll and fund company growth.

Stark-McGlynn said one of her clients, a 40-year old company, didn't have a credit score problem that led them to her office. The well-established company needed to more cash on hand for the newly established contracts than their bank could provide for them.

"That's what a good factor relationship does – it stays with you when you're in a growth period when a bank can't keep up with the growth," she expressed. "You can't keep going back to the bank every two months asking for another \$100,000."

Companies like Sierra Capital are seeing a distinct volume increase of foot traffic. Due to the fact that the large national banks are more scrupulous and have significantly cut back in their lending, many that were bankable six months ago now find they are not. Stark-McGlynn said she can see the constraints that the state of the economy is putting on her clients' customers as well.

"Our fees are based on the number of days that our cash is outstanding and is

based on ten day increments," she said. "We are seeing a slight upward trend that the payments are taking a little longer to come in than they did six months ago."

Stark-McGlynn said that prior to be a factor for any business, they're spending a longer period of time to confirm the invoices. She said her firm also is an accounts receivable management program that follows up on the invoices.

"Part of the bang for their buck that they get for their fees is that we're doing a lot more follow up calls," explained Stark-McGlynn. "I have an industry-specific software that tracks the number of days that the payments are outstanding and allows me to perform a trends analysis."

She said that factoring programs are secondary markets that provide accounts receivable management service, but comparatively the fees are higher than the interest rates of banks because the money is not being given to firms like Sierra Capital at prime rates.

According to Stark-McGlynn, accounts receivable financing in 2007 was an estimated \$140 billion industry.

One of the criteria that Sierra Capital looks for in its potential clients is a proper margin. She said that she wouldn't take on a small business, start-up business or entrepreneur that doesn't have the margin to cover the factoring fees.

"The factoring fees are higher than what they could get against the home equity line on their house or traditional bank financing," she said. "I've had to turn people down. In order for this to make sense for a business owner their margins have to be more than 10 percent."

Stark-McGlynn said that she has had clients on the factoring program for as long as seven years and for as little as seven months, stating the length of time could be whatever the needs are of a specific company. She said she makes it a priority to spend a lot of time with her clients, whereas the banker wouldn't drive from project to project with their clients.

"I have a construction client in the Albany area and about once a month I ride around with her in her truck and look at her work. She's so proud of what she does and nobody in the banking community would give her the time of day," said Stark-McGlynn.

She said that a factoring business is not in competition with the banks, rather institutions such as Sierra Capital help incubate future banking customers and also keep them off the intercept list.

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Excess line brokers can file online

Excess line brokers have an online tool to help simplify their lives this tax filing season: an interactive online excess line premium tax program provided by the New York State Insurance Department. This simpler, faster, and more accurate method of filing returns is available free to producers at the Department's website, www.ins.state.ny.us.

The online system for excess premium line tax filing should help producers save time and increase accuracy. Excess line brokers using the system will actually need to enter less information than they would were they filling in the forms man-

ually. The system will then automatically calculate the tax due. In addition, the online premium tax statement will be available to brokers for future reference on the Department's portal.

Excess line brokers who do not already have access to the Department's web portal will need to obtain a Brokersite user ID from the department. Visit the Department's website at www.ins.state.ny.us for more information.

The deadline for filing the excess premium line tax statement is March 16, 2009.

Banking & Finance

Ed. Note: The following is an Op-Ed written and submitted by NYS Insurance Department Director, Eric Dinallo. It reflects his take on the issue and is presented solely as such.

Buyers should pay for bond ratings

BY ERIC DINALLO

There has been a great deal of justified criticism of the credit-rating agencies that gave triple-A and double-A ratings to billions of dollars of debt securities that clearly did not deserve these high ratings. Everyone agrees that something needs to be done to prevent inflated ratings. But what?

A recent report by the Group of 30 (international financial experts led by Paul Volcker) recommended that regulators encourage the development of payment models that "improve the alignment of incentives" and permit rating users to hold rating providers accountable. Similarly, Securities and Exchange Commission head Mary Schapiro recently called for an examination of "how the rating agencies are compensated, how they manage conflicts of interest, and what role they should play in our markets."

The insurance industry and its regulators can lead the way by implementing the only effective proposal: self-funded, independent buy-side ratings. Ratings, that is, that are paid for by the investors who use them.

Rating agencies' failures are not rooted in a lack of talent or insight, but rather in a fundamentally flawed business model. Those who issue the securities also pay for their ratings. This structure has created

powerful incentives to bias ratings to keep debt securities' sellers satisfied and the rating fees flowing.

Consider that in 2003, on the equity side, regulators entered into settlements with Wall Street firms to resolve conflict-of-interest issues between their research and investment banking divisions. Like the rating agencies, equity research analysts held themselves out to be objective in their analysis. But they were paid by the issuers and their bankers. The regulators' investigations demonstrated that the firms and their client-issuers pressured equity analysts to provide bullish recommendations on their worst stocks.

The solution is for investors to buy and control publicly available bond ratings. Insurance regulators, who use ratings to determine capital reserves for insurance companies, can contract with rating agencies on a competitive basis to provide public ratings of issuers and their securities. This approach would solve the conflict-of-interest problem, because the primary users of the ratings are the ones who will be paying for them.

To fund a buy-side proposal, insurance commissions could collect a small fee from insurance companies that hold nearly \$3 trillion in rated bonds, making them the largest industry sector that relies on credit ratings. The New York State

Insurance Department estimates that for less than two basis points (0.02%) per year on that \$3 trillion, insurers in partnership with insurance regulators can purchase transparent, conflict-free and cost-effective ratings. Buyers have a strong incentive to pay into a system that ensures the independence and accuracy of their ratings.

Ratings will never be flawless — no institution can have perfect foresight. But buy-side ratings will be conflict-free, and the process will be controlled by the investors that bear the long-term risk of the rated securities. Rating agencies with poor track records, errors or conflicts will not be trusted to serve and protect policy holders. And rating agencies will bid for contract renewals based on merit, so that

they remain independent of the issuers they evaluate.

I am co-chairing a working group of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners that is investigating the suitability of the current rating system in insurance regulation. We will examine issues including conflicts of interest, performance, methodology and complaints for all accredited rating organizations currently recognized by insurance regulators.

The collapse of confidence in ratings paid for by sellers has caused and sustained the disruption in our credit markets. A buy-side system can finally restore integrity to a rating system that has lost the trust of regulators, legislators, markets, purchasers, the press and the public. It's time for a change.

Venture capital

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with new potential sources of investments, whether they're regional, national, or international.


"The climate of risk enters into the process. The company that we're looking for has to have a degree of risk tolerance that matches the companies and technologies we're dealing with," Neumann expressed.

Neumann said the current investor reluctance reminds him of the dot-com

era. He said investors were flooded with so many deals during that time and so many possibilities that they could scrutinize which investment would work best for them and which had the potential of being the next rising star.

He feels, right now, there are so many deals out there and that many people are looking for start-up capital to early stage capital, giving investors a wide range of


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Banking & Finance

Provident Bank announces three appointments

Patrick Doulin, Vice President, Regional Commercial Banking Team Leader: Doulin joins Provident Bank with more than 30 years of banking experience. Most recently, he served as Senior Vice President, Regional Commercial Executive, Commercial Banking for HSBC Bank USA, N.A. in Greenwich, Conn. In his new role with Provident Bank, Doulin



will manage the commercial banking team members and develop complex commercial banking business for the bank in the greater Westchester County area. Doulin lives in Salisbury Mills, N.Y.

Michael Goldrick, Vice President, Commercial Relationship Center Manager: Goldrick joins Provident Bank with more than 20 years of experience in the banking industry. Most recently, he has served as Executive Vice President of Business and Professional Banking for Hudson Valley Bank in Yonkers. In his

role with Provident Bank, Goldrick will manage and develop commercial banking business in the greater Westchester County area. He will be responsible for new business development, including solicitation of various prospects and customers and advising customers on business products and services. Goldrick lives in Katonah, N.Y.



Dwayne McNeil, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Services Center Manager: McNeil joins Provident with more than 10 years of experience in the banking industry. He most recently served as Assistant Vice President, Business Development Officer for Washington Mutual Bank in Westchester County. In his new role at Provident Bank, McNeil will be responsible for selling bank products and services along with business and personal depository and loan products in Westchester. He will work with commercial lenders, branches, marketing, operations and finance to ensure a product competitive edge. McNeil resides in New Rochelle, N.Y.



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Venture capital

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choices.

Even facilities like HVCFI are not being funded and that becomes symptomatic of where things are. A lot of IDAs, EDAs and investors are looking very short term at their initiatives. Neumann said that the only way the Hudson Valley would establish a technology focused infrastructure and foundation is to invest in these small companies to help them become larger growth oriented companies that will hire skilled and unskilled labor over the long-term.

"The local economic development climate is not suited to extend these small companies in any way, shape, or form and private investors look at that and ask, 'if your own community isn't going to get involved, then why should we?'" Neumann explained.

The reluctance is very real among "angel" investors — private individuals that invest their own money in new businesses. These angels have seen the values of their portfolios shrink dramatically during this recession and they are feeling less inspired to take chances.

Neumann said that if some of these issues aren't addressed the region runs the risk of losing a lot of the talent that currently resides in the Hudson Valley.

Over the years, people have felt very comfortable putting their money into Wall Street because that presented the longest growth opportunity. Is the current state of Wall Street going to help investors shift to Main Street?

"Many people out of work are going to try to start their own businesses focused on the industries that seem to be beneficiary of what's coming down the pike," said Neumann. "Our claim is that those are going to be the small businesses with the talent but not the funding to grow. If we can't help ourselves help Main Street, then we just can't keep looking towards the government and all these external sources to help. Main Street is us."

Neumann said we can look towards the government for long-term funding but he believes the government should look towards economic development agencies to help them help Main Street.

"That's where I think we're faltering," he said.

Banking & Finance

Customers need cash to resurrect auto industry

BY DYLAN SKRILOFF

Raul Vazquez of Tampa, Florida has been the brains behind the ad and infomercial campaigns for American product lines such as Juiceman, the Sonicare Toothbrush, Carleton Sheets, the Ab Roller, Tiger Direct and the

going to the auto industry used to guarantee loans to consumers. Vazquez said, "GM lost \$9 billion last quarter. How much more can they lose? All their plans have all these ways that are going to cut cost. Nowhere does it talk about where they are going to make money. Common

danger of closing.

"I really didn't expect that high of a number," said Vazquez. "They all have a pretty positive outlook toward the future. I think it's because in the car industry, the last big issue was back in and dealers are resilient. They've seen this over their lifetime. They see this from time to time, it happens, everything goes in cycles."

Vazquez noted that the real estate and car markets are connected in the economy.

"It's amazing, a lot of the problems in real estate market are now effecting lending in auto market." Other effects on the industry have been that used car sales are up and so the price of used cars are going up. Today dealers are keeping the trade-ins they get and selling them. There are less cars at auction as manufacturers are making a push to sell certified used cars.

When asked about what he's observed regarding the economic model of the United States, the marketing master said he's learned a few things over the years and that he could be called the "ultimate knower of what to do." He imparted the following line of sagacity.

"I find it amazing in this country, whenever we have a problem, then we overreact to the problem and we are a country that repeatedly repeats its mistakes. People who have been around a long time know when they make a mistake. I think that it can be fixed, but I think that the problem is that these bailout plans give appearance they are being written by a budget department. You can't cut your way to survive the problem. What are you doing to change? No one is paying attention to what has to happen."



George Foreman Grill. These days Vazquez is CEO of Focus, a sales and marketing force in over 60 countries. During the current economic crisis, Vazquez's clients in the auto industry are not only asking for his help marketing their product but locating lenders that will provide them money to lend to potential customers.

"The auto industry situation is that every month since October you think it can't get any worse, but it gets worse. It has not hit bottom yet," he said.

Vazquez said he believes customer demand is still high enough to support the industry, it's a lack of credit that is killing dealer's bottom lines.

"A lot of people don't have money but one thing we need in this country is a car. The demand for vehicles is not going down. The number one reason for low car sales is people are getting turned down for loans. That makes people not want to show up, it's embarrassing."

Vazquez wants to see federal monies

sense approach is you are going to have to sell cars sooner or later. Why not, as Congress, we'll give you money but this much has to go to guaranteeing funds that you loan to consumers?"

With a little marketing magic the economic crisis also could be used for an unprecedented turn toward American's buying American cars, Vazquez believes.

"All they have to do is put a little spin on this. It's federally guarantee money and if you buy American your loan will be guaranteed. It really does come down to the consumer, if you can't give them enough confidence to buy it doesn't matter how much you cut cost," he said.

Despite the massive problem in the market at the moment, a recent poll conducted by Focus of 600 industry insiders found that the majority of car dealers were optimistic about the future. Included in the poll were over 200 general managers of big three [GM, Ford and Chrysler] dealerships. In all 83 percent said they felt their dealership was not in

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Banking & Finance

USB still lending, still healthy

BY THERESA KEEGAN

Word on the street may be no one's lending, but at Ulster Savings things are running smoothly – and effectively. In fact, the company is embracing its centuries-old history of serving the business client's needs. After all, there's no need for sub-primes and mega-mergers when you already possess a winning record.

"Community banks tend to go out of their way to know their customers and their businesses," says Steve Hack, commercial loan officer for Ulster Savings.

That approach allows the bank to be proactive. And the result is they fill a niche by having a strong, active loan department - despite the current economic situation.

"We're safe, happy and lending," says Mike Shaughnessy, the bank's executive vice president and chief lending officer.

That dependability and stability has been a great asset to Victoria Coyne, owner of Victoria Gardens, a landscaping and retail shop in Rosendale.

Six years ago she planned to expand her

business when it became obvious constraints in her home office were limiting her landscaping company. She found an abandoned store with a convenient location for sale and realized it was a perfect fit. Yet the bank she was using at the time refused to finance the endeavor. In fact the nationwide chain, with a local branch, rejected the loan without even reviewing the facility.

"It was so upsetting. I ranted to everyone I saw," she recalls. And surprisingly, her tirades were often met with the same

advice: Go see Ulster Savings.

With nothing to lose, she went. It was a totally different experience with her loan officer.

"He made a decision on who I was, what my business was and how hard we were willing to work."

The end result is that a dilapidated cement block building is now a beautifully refurbished retail shop and classroom setting, thanks to the hard work of Coyne and her husband, Wayne Waddell. The 400 tires that were once dumped on the property have been removed and every spring the lot is replenished with lush landscaping that is for sale and also acts as inventory for the landscaping business.

Her company is active in the chamber, landscapes public signs in Rosendale, holds educational gardening classes and hosts an annual quilt show, with proceeds going to local food pantries. And her more efficient business model also means that seven to 12 people are now employed by the company, depending on the season.

"Ulster Savings has been great to me," said Coyne.

"We do business the old fashioned way," Shaughnessy explains of Ulster Savings' loan philosophy. "And keeping it simple has worked to our advantage."

The bank's local knowledge, which has been built up since it first opened in 1851, also aids clients.

Ulster Savings will often team up with other nearby funding sources to best serve customers' needs. Funds from The Catskill Watershed Corporation, New York Business Development Corporation, the Small Business Administration and various government agencies are often used to complement the bank's loans, says Hack. Also, the Small Business Development Corp, which operates out of Ulster Community College has been a great asset to people developing business plans and are a credible link for Ulster Savings.

"They help people who are truly invested in the process, and have a realistic opportunity to get there," says Shaughnessy, adding that Ulster Savings also has a history of standing by struggling small businesses to make sure they ride out turmoil and emerge stronger. And despite current predictions of economic gloom and doom, the number of loan applications and approvals has remained consistent throughout all the branches (nine in Ulster, four in Dutchess, one in Greene and a loan officer in Orange County).

When Cecilia Savona Madden opened her own business, Madden's Fine Wines and Liquors, last year, she immediately turned to Ulster Savings to help with financing.

"I've been banking with them for over 20 years, for both personal and business needs," she says. "I know Ulster Savings cares about the people in their community." They'll do whatever's necessary to help people succeed, explains the Kingston entrepreneur who knew her business plan had to be perfect in order to successfully secure a license from the New York State Liquor Authority.

"I needed to get everything done very quickly. I sat down with the folks at Ulster Savings, explained what I needed to do,

continued on page 23



For Judy and Barry Rompella, owners of the Hudson Valley Cycle Center in Kingston, getting the support they needed to expand their motorsports business was easy – thanks to Ulster Savings.

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Banking & Finance

Business Week names Key Bank tops in customer service

In its March 2 issue, BusinessWeek, using data from market researcher J.D.Power & Associates and the magazine, has named KeyBank one of its top 25 "Customer Service Champs" for 2009. Ranked eleventh in the survey, KeyBank joins a group of companies including Amazon.com, Lexus, Apple,

USB

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and that time was of the essence," she recalled. "They directed me in the best financial solution and in a timely manner."

The end result was that Madden Fine Wines and Spirits opened its doors on the Rondout District, blessed with the Luck of the Irish, on March 17, 2008. And although it's only been one year, Savona Madden isn't one to sit on her laurels.

"I have a lot of plans for the future, and I plan on going to Ulster Savings for that. They are looking out for me, and will help me achieve what I want to achieve. You're not a number to them."

Hack credits the personal relationship the loan officers develop with loan recipients as making a difference.

"We're not just there when they have a problem, or need money. We see how their businesses are doing, so when opportunities come up they think of their local bank."

Both Coyne and Savona Madden cite the benefits of dealing locally, in their banking options and for consumers — especially given the current economic turmoil.

"In today's economy everything is scary," says Savona Madden. "Sometimes it's really better to take really good care of a smaller spectrum, than to spread yourself too wide." Coyne says that the buy local effort is good for people's pocket-books, as well as the community. "People are much more aware about shopping locally, and its benefits," she says.

Shaughnessy is quick to point out that Ulster Savings has been able to avoid sub-prime problems and many of the issues that plague larger banks by keeping its focus on the Hudson Valley.

"We're more conservative by nature and not as bureaucratic as larger banks," he says. Managers answer the phone and deal directly with clients. "We're a community bank and we'll always be part of the community."

Keegan is a freelance writer in the Hudson Valley. She can be reached at tkeegan1@yahoo.com.

Ritz-Carlton Hotels and Nordstrom. Key is the only bank on the list.

"We're delighted to receive this award from BusinessWeek," says KeyCorp CEO Henry L. Meyer III, "because it says that our continual efforts to strengthen customer service are paying off. We were rated on customer feedback about multiple aspects of our bank, including perceptions of our employees. I'm proud of everyone at Key for their part in contributing to our success."

In disclosing the Customer Service Champs list, BusinessWeek noted the difficulty of maintaining good service in a shrinking economy. At the same time, the magazine notes, "customers want more attention, better quality and greater

value for their money."

Like Key, top performers on the list are investing in technology that will improve service. Key is implementing Teller 21, a new service software, in its 986 branches across the country. The software is part of a larger multi-year program to upgrade Key's branches both physically and technologically to provide more effective customer service. Teller 21 includes a robust check imaging program that has made Key a national leader in image capture.

BusinessWeek also noted Key's services for small business owners, including Key Business Online, a powerful new technology that provides small businesses with many of the cash management

services typically offered only to large companies, as well as more protections against check fraud.

About KeyCorp

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Banking & Finance

The 2009 Stimulus: What you should know

FROM WACHOVIA

Rousing the economy from its current slump has proven more difficult than most of us ever imagined. Although Washington’s moves in 2008 helped stave off potential disaster, getting the economy growing again has proven a vexing challenge. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), enacted Feb. 17, is the government’s latest attempt to “right the ship.”

This report features perspectives on the legislation from Wachovia Securities’ Chief Investment Officer Tom McManus and Senior Economist Gary Thayer. In addition, we’ve combed the legislation and included an overview of provisions that may benefit you, your family or your business.

Within the Legislation’s 400-Plus Pages Are Provisions That May Benefit You

Taxpayer Relief

One of the legislation’s primary goals is to get money into consumers’ hands so they can use it to stimulate economic activity. To take advantage of some of the legislation’s provisions, you have to do something; however, if you qualify, you can benefit from the provisions discussed on page 2 with little or no action on your part.

Consumer Incentives

The legislation contains incentives to encourage consumers to stimulate the housing and automotive markets and to help alleviate the country’s dependence on foreign energy sources.

However, to benefit from these provisions, outlined on page 3, you have to purchase a first home or a new vehicle or take steps to make your home more energy efficient.

Education Enhancements

Affording higher education is perhaps more difficult now than ever. Before you send your child off to college, see page 2 for information about the legislation’s provisions to help alleviate the financial burden.

Business Assistance

In addition to those provisions for individuals, the act contains a number of provisions, some of which are listed on page 3, aimed at business owners

Giving taxpayers some relief

New Tax Credit for Workers - Single taxpayers will receive a Making Work Pay credit of up to \$400 on earned income; married taxpayers will receive up to \$800. This credit, available for both the 2009 and 2010 tax years, will be calculated at a rate of 6.2% of earned income and phased out for higher-income taxpayers (adjusted gross income [AGI] of \$75,000 or more for single taxpayers, or \$150,000 or more for joint tax filers).

Special one-time payment

The following may be eligible to receive a one-time \$250 Economic Recovery Payment:

- Individuals receiving retirement, survivor or disability benefits from the Social Security Administration
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients
- Railroad Retirement beneficiaries
- Certain recipients of disability, death or pension benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

This payment will be a reduction to any benefit received under the Making Work Pay credit. The payment will be disbursed in the same manner as these government benefits. It will not be a tax credit you must claim on your 2009 tax return.

Alternative Minimum Tax Relief

The bill will increase the exemption amounts used to adjust a taxpayer’s alternative minimum taxable (AMT) income. As a result, fewer taxpayers may be subject to the AMT. The 2009 exemptions will be:

- Married filing jointly: \$70,950
- Single: \$46,700

Reduced Taxation of Unemployment Benefits

For 2009 only, the first \$2,400 of unemployment compensation will be federal-income-tax-free.

Credit for Certain Federal and State Pensioners

A \$250 refundable credit will be available in 2009 to certain government retirees who are not eligible for Social Security benefits. This payment will be a reduction to any benefit received under the Making Work Pay credit.

COBRA Benefits Subsidy

The act will provide a subsidy for laid-off workers (and their families) who are eligible for COBRA coverage. The subsidy will be 65% of the health insurance premium for up to nine months. This means eligible individuals will pay only 35% of the cost. It will be important to contact your former employer to determine your eligibility for this benefit. The subsidy will apply to individuals involuntarily terminated between Sept. 1, 2008, and Dec. 31, 2009. 529 College Savings Plan Enhancement

As in the past, distributions from 529 plans may be federal-income-tax-free if used to pay for qualified education expenses. For 2009 and 2010 only, the definition of qualified expenses will be expanded to include computers/laptops, related equipment and Internet access expenses.

Please consider the investment objectives, risk, charges and expenses carefully before investing in a 529 savings plan. The official statement, which contains this and other information, can be obtained by calling your Financial Advisor. Read it carefully before you invest.

Education Credit Enrichment

The act will enhance and rename the HOPE education credit as the American Opportunity Tax Credit. The act will provide a tax credit of up to \$2,500 per student for tuition and related expenses paid during 2009 and 2010. The credit will be phased out at higher-income levels (\$80,000 or more AGI for singles; \$160,000 or more for joint filers). The credit will apply to expenses incurred in any of the first four years of post-secondary education.

Consult Your Tax Advisor

This brief overview highlights only a handful of the significant provisions in the ARRA. If you believe one or more of these new provisions may apply to your specific situation, talk with your tax advisor to determine how it may benefit you.

First-Time Home Buyer Credit Increase

A first-time home buyer credit was originally established under the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008. A first-time homeowner is someone

who has not owned a principal residence in the past three years. The new act will let a first-time home buyer claim a refundable credit of up to \$8,000. There will be no repayment requirement for homes purchased after Dec. 31, 2008, and before Dec. 1, 2009, unless the home is sold or no longer used as a primary residence within three years of the purchase date.

This tax credit will be phased out for higher-income taxpayers, defined as AGIs in excess of \$75,000 for single taxpayers or \$150,000 for joint filers.

New Vehicle Tax Deduction

For 2009, taxpayers may be eligible to deduct state and local sales taxes paid on the first \$49,500 for the purchase of a new car, light truck (less than 8,500 pounds), motorcycle or motor home. This provision will apply to vehicle purchases made after Feb. 16 through the end of 2009. The deduction will be phased out for taxpayers with AGIs of \$125,000 or more (single taxpayers) or \$250,000 or more (joint filers).

Enhanced Energy Efficient Property Credit

For 2009 and 2010, a credit will be available for 30% of the cost of qualified energy-efficient home improvements, up to a \$1,500 maximum credit. Qualified improvements will include exterior doors, windows, insulation or heating/cooling units meeting certain efficiency standards.

Many of the legislation’s provisions apply to businesses and business owners, and the details are beyond the scope of this overview. However, here is a short list of some items business owners may want to discuss with their tax advisors:

- Extension of bonus depreciation
- Incentives to hire unemployed veterans and disconnected youth
- Five-year carryback period for 2008 net operating losses for businesses with gross receipts of \$15 million or less
- Extension of enhanced small-business expensing
- Increased capital-gain exclusion on sales of qualified small-business stock acquired after Feb. 16, 2009, and before Jan. 1, 2011
- Reduction of the built-in gain period that applies to a C corporation that has converted to an S corporation.

Provident contributes \$12,500 to Home Aides of Rockland

The Provident Bank Charitable Foundation has contributed \$12,500 to Home Aides of Rockland, Inc. in New City, in support of the organization’s Reduced Rate Home Care Program.

Nursing home care can be costly both to the individual and to the community. For low-income individuals with no medical necessity to stay in a nursing home and who are not Medicaid-eligible, the Reduced Rate Home Care Program is the only alternative. This program addresses the growing need for affordable home care services that will maintain Rockland County’s low-income, homebound residents in the safety and comfort of their own homes without becoming dependent on government assistance.

“Home Aides of Rockland has been providing home care services to Rockland County residents for 40 years,” said George Strayton, President and Chief Executive Officer of Provident Bank. “The Provident Bank Charitable Foundation supports this organization and

believes in its mission of providing vital home care services to low-income seniors and others coping with various ailments. This program is beneficial to the local community and promotes a higher quality

of life for the individuals in need.”

Home Aides of Rockland, Inc. is a licensed, not-for-profit home care agency that has been serving the Rockland County community since 1969. The

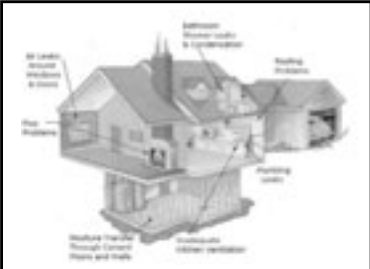


The Provident Bank Charitable Foundation recently contributed \$12,500 to Home Aides Of Rockland, Inc. Pictured from left to right: Debbie McGuinness, Vice President, Board of Directors, Home Aides of Rockland, Inc.; Harold Peterson, Senior Vice President, Municipal Affairs and Not-For-Profit Organizations, Provident Bank; Celia Juris, Executive Director, Home Aides of Rockland, Inc.

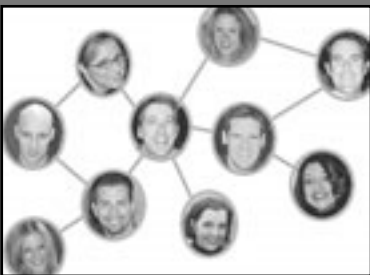
organization is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations and provides appropriate high-quality care services to all eligible residents of Rockland County in a manner which assures the dignity and safety of both staff and clients.

“We thank the Provident Bank Charitable Foundation for its contribution in support of our Reduced Rate Home Care Program,” said Celia Juris, Executive Director of Home Aides of Rockland, Inc. “The rapid increase in the aging population of our country, which is projected to double over the next decade as baby-boomers reach retirement age, has increased the demand for affordable, high-quality homecare. As we strive to meet the challenge of providing home care services for all individuals in need in Rockland County, we greatly appreciate the financial support of community organizations like the Provident Bank Charitable Foundation that enable us to continue fulfilling our mission.”

Inside story



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SLCH starts new
ambassador club
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Hudson Valley

BUSINESS JOURNAL

As we begin this quadricentennial year of celebrating Henry Hudson's exploration of the Hudson River, Samuel de Champlain's exploration of Lake Champlain and the bicentennial of Robert Fulton's successful steamboat run on the Hudson, we thought it might be fun to take a look at the economic history behind these events. The series is a synopsis of a forthcoming book I'm working on on the subject.

PART SEVEN

Railroads and the growth of New York

BY DEBBIE KWIATOSKI

According to the 1820 census, there were 1.4 million people living in New York State. By 1900, there were 11 million. The biggest contributing factor to the state's phenomenal growth spurt in the 19th century was, perhaps, a similar growth spurt in the role played by an invention that was a mere curiosity in 1830: The steam locomotive.

Corning, a wealthy Albany industrialist built the who first line.. In 1831, his company had the first regularly scheduled rail service, running 11 miles between Albany and Schenectady on the Mohawk and Hudson Rail Road. The line linked the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, making it convenient and even more cost-effective to move goods between the Midwest and New York City.

In the 1860s, Vanderbilt gained control of the New York Central Railroad and completed the network.

The lines made it possible to link the smallest town with the big city, making it easy to grow food and get it to market within days; to travel unimaginable distances effortlessly (if you didn't mind the occasional coal ember landing on your traveling costume) and to build a metropolis (New York City) at the foot of the state, which by now was well on its way to becoming the "Capital of the World."

Next week – How the railroads developed into faster and better ways of shipping goods, people and ideas to even the most remote sections of New York.



Robert Fulton and the company of investors he built had a monopoly on steam-powered water transportation in the state. Robert Livingston, his main investor, had early on successfully used his influence in the Albany Legislature to keep any other steam-powered traffic, save that owned by their company, off the Hudson River for nearly two decades via one of the state's more ethically checkered regulations known as "The Hot Water Bill." That legislation gave the sole right to navigate the river via steam power to the Fulton Steamship Company, blocking all competitors for over 20 years.

Other entrepreneurs, including Erastus Corning, Ezra Cornell, Andrew Carnegie and the Vanderbilt family had a different idea, however. Why not harness the power of steam to create on land transportation. The concept was not a new one: steam locomotion had been developed and was being actively experimented with in Great Britain and in France at the time.

Key Dates for Railroad Development in New York State

1831 – First successful railroad line begins regular service between Albany and Schenectady

1850 – First Telegraph line set along railroad

1885 – First use of "piggy-backing" to haul freight; they would load the farm wagons right onto flatbeds.

1903 – After a series of horrible accidents, involving steam and smoke, NYS Legislature outlaws steam locomotives on Manhattan Island, south of the Harlem River.

1904 – First electric underground subway constructed in NYC.

1905 – Long Island Railroad begins using all-steel passenger cars and install overhead electrification to the lines.

1906 – World's largest Roundhouse is constructed in Oneonta for the Delaware and Hudson Railroad.

1908 – Opening of what is known today as the PATH system, an interstate underground heavy rail between NYC and New Jersey.

1932 – The first publically-owned heavy rail line opens (The Independent Subway System) in NYC.

1940 – State purchases the two privately held systems (the BMT and the IRT) to form the first integrated subway system.

1966 – The first public take-over of a commuter railroad (the LIRR). It was purchased by the state from the Pennsylvania Railroad. (which explains why it runs in and out of Penn Station, rather than Grand Central...)



Real Estate

Tenants begin moving into Kohl Industrial Park in Rockland Empire Zone

Kohl Solutions, the Teaneck, NJ-based property development and management firm, announces the signing of six tenants to its latest commercial property, the 252,000 square foot Kohl Industrial Park, 225 North Route 303 in Congers, NY, marking a significant addition to Rockland County's designated Empire Zone. The newly completed building features office, warehouse and distribution space, flexibly sized from 2,500 to 40,000 square feet and ample parking.

"Rockland County officials see the attraction of new businesses to the area as Job One," according to Kohl Solutions President Alan Litt. "The county has

made the climate for business so enticing through generous Empire Zone allowances that we are already ahead of plan in terms of tenancy."

Signed to date, and scheduled to move between March and May are:

- Kohl Partners, LLC
- Wynnstarr

A leading full-service construction company in New Jersey, Kohl Partners has 80 years of combined experience in general contracting, construction management, site planning and permit acquisition.

Established in 1988, Wynnstarr has become the leading provider of creative,

savory flavor and food products.

- Casabella

Designs cleaning tools, kitchen and bath accessories and organizing products in house and manufactures and distributes them worldwide.

- NAEVA Geophysics Inc.

Established in 1996, NAEVA offers over 34 years of experience in providing geophysical and geological services to over 200 government and private industry clients.

- Stoffel Seals Corporation

Since 1941, Stoffel has been a leading Manufacturer of Security Seals and Brand Identification. Their comprehensive

approach is to Promote, Identify and Secure your product and brand from the factory to the consumer.

- All Points Moving & Storage, Inc.

All Points Moving and Storage is a fully licensed and insured independent agent for Allied Van Lines, serving residential and commercial long distance and local moving and storage needs.

Kohl Solutions is continuing an assertive effort to draw people to the new Rockland commercial space, noting its convenient location to highways and bridges, affordable housing and tax benefits to business. For more information visit www.kohlindustrialpark.com/.

Auctions offer property owners alternative options for selling in today's market

It's no secret that home prices have fallen in many parts of the nation or that foreclosures have increased; however, there is more to the real estate story. Sellers can still find success in this market with the right information.

On Sunday, March 22, United Country – Absolute Auctions & Realty will bring qualified buyers and motivated sellers together at a multi-property auction in Pleasant Valley, N.Y.

"We've all read the headlines declaring the demise of the real estate market, but the truth is that we're not getting the full story," said Rob Doyle, owner/auctioneer of Absolute Auctions & Realty. "The auction method of marketing is the ideal solution for today's sellers, offering an efficient way to attract buyers, creating competition for your property, and establishing a floor and eliminating a ceiling on pricing. Auctions create excitement in the marketplace and a sense of urgency that cannot be duplicated by any other method of marketing."

The March 22 auction will take place at the Absolute Auction Center in Pleasant Valley and will begin at 1:11 p.m.

Despite the challenges posed by the depressed real estate market, sellers can also find success with the right options.

According to Doyle, it takes more than a sign in the yard to move properties these days. Properties require maximum exposure to grab the attention of buyers today. It's also important to have options that will increase the likelihood of getting a fair market offer in a timeframe that works for the seller.

"We are helping the homeowner sell their property now," said Doyle. "The seller pays no commission, making this an affordable means to participate in a large event promoted through a substantial advertising campaign, a worldwide e-mail blast and a multi-property Web site. In addition, United Country Home Warranty is available on most properties offered for sale, increasing buyer confidence and resulting in seller success."

United Country is the largest integrated network of real estate and auction professional in the U.S. and the only national franchise specializing in non-urban properties. The company's web site, www.unitedcountry.com, attracts more than 1 million visitors each month, drawing nationwide attention to local listings. This is in addition to United Country's advertising of listings in newspapers and magazines nationwide, reaching 90 million readers every week. The company's

strategic partnerships give brokers, such as Doyle, the ability to offer buyers and sellers the best products and services available in the industry, such as premier home warranties and offers from leading organizations such as John Deere and Ducks Unlimited.

About United Country

United Country Real Estate is the largest integrated real estate and auction company in the U.S. Based in Kansas City, Mo., the company has been an innovator in real estate marketing since 1925. United Country is the only national franchise specializing in country properties.

The company supports nearly 675 offices nationwide with a unique, comprehensive marketing program that includes one of the largest portfolios of property marketing web sites (more than 750 separate sites), publishes seven proprietary real estate catalogs with a cumulative distribution of 1.5 million, an extensive, current buyer database and national advertising of properties to more than 90 million potential buyer prospects a week. United Country has been recognized as a Top 25 Franchise by the Wall Street Journal and among Entrepreneur Magazine's Franchise 500®.

Pine Bush Library gets a new roof

A state member item from assemblywoman Nancy Calhoun will allow the Pine Bush Area Library will be receiving a state grant of \$16,034 for the replacement of the roof of their facility. The grant monies Pine Bush received from the state are being matched by the Ramapo-Catskill Library System, and will allow the library to put a roof over the heads of those doing research, checking out books

or holding community meetings.

Additionally, the Ramapo-Catskill Library System for their foresight and advocacy for this project on behalf of the people in the 96th Assembly District. This \$16,034 grant is necessary because more than ninety percent of New York's libraries are over three decades old and lack modern necessities, such as internet and handicapped access.

Watch out for mold

The task of cleaning can be therapeutic for some people, but for others it's another chore that has to be added to their long list of things to do around the house. During National Cleaning Week, March 23 – 29, one local business is easing the stress and helping area residents get down to business. But they're not referring to the typical surface cleaning you might be imagining.

"We address cleaning and restoration for fire, mold, or water-damaged buildings and its contents," said Daniel Allen, owner of the local SERVPRO of NW and SE Dutchess County. "After fire or water damage, it is vital that people hire a trained professional to come in to do a thorough cleaning of their home. If a professional is not hired, homeowners can be left with odor issues and other problems that could affect the visual appearance of their property," Allen said.

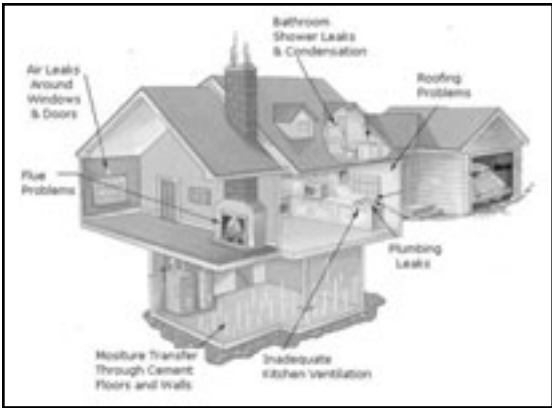
Allen said the National Cleaning Week

campaign is a perfect opportunity to bring the attention of professional cleaning and restoration services to light. If residents notice any signs of mold while doing their spring cleaning during this awareness week, they are urged to heed the advice of the Environmental Protection Agency on the subject:

- * Fix leaky plumbing and leaks in the building envelope as soon as possible.
- * Watch for condensation and wet spots.

Fix source(s) of moisture problems as soon as possible.

- * Prevent moisture due to condensation by increasing surface temperature or reducing the moisture in the air (humidity).
- * Keep heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) drip pans clean, flowing properly and unobstructed.
- * Vent moisture-generating appliances, such as dryers, to the outside where possible.



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Work Life

Using Web 2.0 technologies to your advantage

**BY ADRIENNE BUSKARD
PRESIDENT,
MERCURY WEB SOLUTIONS**

In planning a strategy to market yourself, your business or your organization on the Web, the use of technologies considered Web 2.0 can be very helpful in providing improved Web visibility. Along with a professional website, exposure on appropriate social networking sites, strong use of bookmarking and tagging, and, if appropriate, syndicated distribution of information, all considered Web 2.0 technologies, can work collaboratively to give your business optimized exposure online. The newer Google algorithms for search engine ranking take all these channels into consideration.

The most widely recognized Web 2.0 application is the Social Networking websites. In a social networking website, the

users, in effect, create the content and the internal links. A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. The most famous of these sites in this country are MySpace, Facebook and LinkedIn. These and many other social networks are expanding to include business communities which can serve as a network service for a business or organization. Social network services generally provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail, instant messaging and blogging.

Blogging is a Web2.0 technology whose popularity is continuing to grow exponentially. A blog works such that the primary contributor, the owner of the blog, contributes regular entries. These entries can be like a personal diary in nature, or used

as a platform for the contributor's thoughts on a particular subject or subjects, or, as is often the case in business logs, as a means of communicating information on a company or industry. Blog readers are encouraged to respond to the entries with thoughts or information of their own. In social networking websites, blogs are used as the main vehicle for communication among members.

Web indexing using tags, or more technically, metadata, is a way in which users can supply a human search engine function. Also considered a Web 2.0 application, users or website owners apply tags to Web entities such as Web pages, digital images, maps, blog entries, and social applications, for the purpose of categorizing information and making associations between related objects or concepts.

An excellent example of tagging is social bookmarking. In social bookmarking, users bookmark Web pages on a shared website and then tag them with many descriptive words, allowing subsequent users to search by those terms and find pages that were found to be helpful and/or related. An example of a social bookmarking website is del.icio.us. If a "bookmark this page" link for del.icio.us and/or other social bookmarking sites is included on a Web page, it encourages social bookmarking of the page which then contributes to the Web page's visibility to further users as well as to search engines. This same type of tagging can

also be used for sharing and grouping images online.

Web feeds are considered a feature of Web 2.0. Web feeds use specialized protocols to create Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works—such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video—in a standardized format. Web feeds generally include full or summarized text, plus metadata such as publishing dates and authorship. They benefit publishers by letting them syndicate content automatically. They allow readers to subscribe to timely updates from favored websites or to aggregate feeds from many sites into one place. Podcasts are a series of audio or video digital media files distributed over the Internet by syndicated download, through Web feeds, to portable media players, personal computers and cell phones.

The term Web 2.0 is somewhat debated in the Web industry. Some feel that the types of technologies normally classified as Web 2.0 are, more accurately, logical extensions of Web 1.0. The terminology is secondary to what these applications mean for businesses, for Web users and as an indicator for the direction in which the Web is going. Whereas, for awhile now, a professional website has been a vital aspect in promoting your business, it's now even more important as a central ingredient in an expanded and integrated Web strategy.

New law makes COBRA more affordable for terminated employees

The stimulus package that President Obama signed on February 17, 2009 significantly changes employers' obligations to offer extended medical coverage (often referred to as "COBRA"). The new changes apply to any company covered under the federal COBRA law and/or state "mini-COBRA" laws, which apply to most employers. The new changes apply only to employees "involuntarily terminated" between September 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009 (called "qualified beneficiaries"). The changes do not apply to employees who voluntarily resign their employment.

Generally, COBRA laws allow covered individuals to elect to continue their health insurance coverage for a limited time at their own expense following a "qualifying event," such as termination of employment. The new law imposes additional COBRA obligations on employers, by requiring them to:

Beginning with premiums for March of 2009, pay 65 percent of a qualified beneficiary's monthly COBRA premium for up to nine months of coverage, and then claim a credit toward payroll taxes for the

up front payment

Offer qualified beneficiaries who previously declined COBRA coverage another opportunity to elect COBRA, with the new subsidized premium

Give a refund or credit, based on the new subsidized premium, to qualified beneficiaries who previously elected COBRA coverage

Prepare new notices, by April 18th, reflecting the new subsidized COBRA premium and extended notice period described above, and send such notices to all qualified beneficiaries that have lost their employment since September 1, 2008, including those who:

- have previously declined coverage
- have elected, but later terminated, COBRA coverage
- are terminated during the remainder of 2009

There are many aspects of the new law that may or may not be applicable, depending on your company and the relevant employee. If you have any questions regarding COBRA, and how the new changes might affect your company, contact us at firm@greenwaldlp.com.

Senior Net announces new classes

SeniorNet@Rockland, a computer learning center sponsored by Meals on Wheels Programs and Services of Rockland is accepting registrations for a new session of 8-week classes beginning the week of March 30. Course fees are \$65.00, including a one-time \$10 fee to join SeniorNet National. Course offerings include Introduction to Computers, Quicken, Word Processing, Internet, Digital Imaging and Genealogy. All new computers will be available for the upcoming session.

SeniorNet is an international organization of volunteers who bring computer skills to adults. From the complete novice to students looking to broaden their computing horizons, all are welcome to sign up for classes. Classes are tailored to students preferring a slower-paced and less intense approach. Each class has a maximum of eight students and an instructor who is assisted by two coaches. The classes are given at 121 West Nyack Rd., Nanuet. For further information call 845-623-5467.

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Technology

Start-up helps professionals generate business from Social Media

"The key to leveraging social media for business is to use it as a platform to provide your network with valuable, timely and relevant information," said Gibran Nicholas, Chairman of Published Daily, a new startup tech company whose aim is to help professionals generate more referral business. "In this age of social media and information overload, people are constantly being bombarded with an overwhelming flow of information and noise. This means that people don't need more information – they need relevant information. If you are the one providing it to them, it elevates your value and transforms your network of friends, clients, and prospects into a referral-generating sales force."

Published Daily is a customizable online magazine, newsletter, and market-

ing service that helps professionals communicate relevant and timely information to their clients and prospects via email and social networking platforms. Users can insert plug-and-play content specific to their industry and select their own lineup of Published Daily writers. The drag-and-drop functions are easy-to-use, and allow users to design their newsletter from scratch or utilize the templates provided by Published Daily.

"The most unique element of Published Daily is that it provides both newsletter templates and valuable content from various industries," Nicholas said. "Every other service we've seen is focused on just content, or just newsletter templates, and the users are forced to spend more time and money in order to get their desired result."

After the initial set-up, users can put the program on auto-pilot because the content is automatically updated whenever a Published Daily writer posts a new article. "Most people don't have the time or patience to recreate the wheel every time they want to send out a newsletter or marketing message," Nicholas said. "The key is to put your marketing on auto-pilot so that you can spend your time doing the things that you do best."

The newsletter can be sent out via email to your list of clients or posted on your website, blog, Facebook, LinkedIn or any other social networking profile. "Up until now, there have been two major hurdles with blogging and social networking for business," Nicholas said. "First of all, it takes too much time; and secondly, how are people getting your message? For less

than \$1 per day, Published Daily solves these problems and helps professionals in any industry transform their clients into a referral-generating sales force."

About Published Daily

Published Daily is a customizable online magazine, newsletter, and marketing service that helps professionals communicate relevant and timely information to their clients and prospects via email and social networking platforms. The service costs less than \$1 a day and is designed to transform your network of friends, clients, and prospects into a referral-generating sales force. The content and articles are provided by industry leading experts, and the drag-and-drop design functionality is easy-to-use. For more information or to view a demo, please visit www.PublishedDaily.com

Labor coalition warns that not re-licensing Indian Point would lead to widespread job loss

Labor leaders joined by scores of workers reaffirmed their support for the renewal of the operating licenses for Indian Point at a recent news conference prior to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) public meetings on the license renewal.

The Coalition of Labor for Energy & Jobs, comprised of labor leaders, who represent a wide variety of skilled trades, pointed out Indian Point's energy and economic benefits to the state and the New York's pressing need for reliable, economical and environmentally friendly energy sources.

"Indian Point has proven to be an integral part of the economic well being of the state," said Jerry Connolly, spokesman for the Coalition of Labor for Energy & Jobs. "It provides hundreds of well paying jobs, contributes almost three quarters of a billion dollars annually to the downstate economy and the electricity produced by Indian Point enables tens of thousands of jobs."

Connolly also pointed out the plant's important role in providing the area with

clean electricity. "Indian Point is a reliable and economical source for clean electricity," said Connolly. "While New York needs more power and should build more renewable energy sources, they cannot reasonably serve as a substitute for Indian Point. To replace the clean energy provided by Indian Point it would take thousands of windmills lined up all along the banks of the Hudson River and Storm King Mountain."

In terms of safety and security, Connolly pointed out that having worked at the facility himself, he knows it to be among the most scrutinized nuclear facilities in the country. The facility is in the midst of a more than 2 ½ year review from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, receiving nearly twice as many annual inspection hours approximately 14,000-more than any other nuclear plant in the country.

A 2008 study sponsored by the Construction Industry Council of Westchester and the Hudson Valley and Westchester County Business Council found that there would be a loss of 11,000

service jobs without Indian Point. That same study found that there would be a 150 percent increase in electric rates, which would have a devastating effect on working households.

Bob Seeger, Business Manager for the Millwright & Machinery Erectors Local 740 called the continued operation of Indian Point a necessity if New York hopes to remain economically competitive. "If we do not address the energy challenges we face now, employers could pack up and move somewhere with cheaper energy. Indian Point provides a reliable, safe and economic source of energy. How are you going to replace 30 percent of the downstate region's power source at a reasonable cost? It's impossible."

Edward J. Malloy, President of the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council cited Indian Point's critical economic importance to the Hudson Valley region. "Indian Point is critical to the economic well being of the Hudson Valley region. It provides hundreds of good paying jobs and the Nuclear Energy Institute has estimated that it is responsible for infusing the region with \$700 million in annual economic activity," said Malloy. "In these tough economic times, it is more important than ever to ensure that Indian Point remains open. We also cannot overlook the fact that Indian Point produces 2,000 megawatts of clean, low-cost electricity to downstate New York."

"Closing the Indian Point Energy Center would offer disastrous implications for New York's working families," said Robert A. Ledwith, Business Manager, Financial Secretary/Treasurer of Metallic Lathers Union and reinforcing Ironworkers Local 46. "The result would be higher electricity costs, rolling brownouts and service interruptions and diminished living standards for all New Yorkers."

"While the AFL-CIO strongly supports Governor Paterson's calls to invest in alternative energy and promote greater efficiencies, we also know that these measures alone will not secure New York's long-term energy future," said Denis M. Hughes, president of the 2.3 million member New York State AFL-CIO. "We need a diverse energy portfolio and must support affordable, reliable and clean base load power. This is one of the many reasons why we support the re-licensing of the Indian Point Energy

Center."

"Indian Point is a safe facility. If we had any reason it was not, we would not let our members work here," said James Slevin, Senior Business Agent, Utility Workers Union of America, Local 1-2. "Indian Point produces 2,000 megawatts of electricity. This represents 20% to 40% of the needs of this region. Cutting off this substantial and vital supply of power would be a body blow to the economic health and personal well being of every single resident."

George Miranda, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16 stressed Indian Point's importance in the midst of the current recession. "Indian Point provides hundreds of well paying middle class jobs that are especially important now," said Miranda. "New York will also need reliable energy sources to be competitive both now and when we come out of this recession. Indian Point provides much of the energy that keeps New York City's commercial engine going."

"Losing Indian Point would be an economic disaster for my hometown of Buchanan, in addition to the working people of New York State," said Joseph Karas, a Buchanan resident and Council Representative for Empire State Regional Council of Carpenters Local 11. "How would you replace an energy source that supplies 75 percent of the electricity consumed in the Hudson Valley and 30 percent of New York City's power? Electric rates for businesses and consumers would skyrocket. It would be next to impossible to attract new businesses and it would kill growth plans for existing businesses."

"Indian Point has proven to be an environmentally safe and reliable energy source," said James Melius, of the New York State Laborers Union. "To comply with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions environmentally friendly energy sources such as Indian Point are a necessity."

"A union's main purpose is to negotiate both good wages and safe working environment for its members. Indian Point has consistently shown a rigorous commitment to safety of not only our workers, but members of the surrounding community," said Tom Klein, Business Manager of Boilermakers-New York. "The importance of this facility is not just limited to

continued on page 29

Attention Wedding-Related Business Owner

A Recent Survey by The Wedding Report says:
Slower economy is impacting the wedding market
 ... 62% of couples cut budgets by an average 32%
 ... 16% of couples delaying weddings by 10 months

Chief Economist, National Federation Independent Businesses says:
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Education

Law scholarship in elder law established

The Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association has contributed a gift of \$10,000 to The New York Bar Foundation to establish scholarships for law students. Between 2009 and 2012, a \$2,500 scholarship will be awarded each year to a second- or third-year student who is enrolled in a law school in the State of New York and is actively participating in an elder law clinic at the school.

Through the scholarship, the Elder Law Section aspires to advance opportunities for students who are disabled by implementing a preference for awarding the scholarship to a student who demonstrates a present and permanent physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the individual. A preference also will be given to a student who demonstrates financial need.

Timothy E. Casserly (Burke & Casserly, P.C., Albany), chair of the section said, "The Elder Law Section is pleased to make this contribution to The New York Bar Foundation to establish a scholarship in its name. The section considers it imperative that practicing elder law attorneys continue to bring the legal issues facing the elderly to the forefront, while at the same time encouraging students to pursue a career in the practice of elder law."

The Elder Law Section encourages law students, through an elder law clinic experience, to learn about important legislative developments, regulations, and case laws impacting the elderly and to provide representation to elderly clients struggling with a variety of legal issues and problems related to aging and incapacity. The ultimate goal of the scholarship is to create a network and cultivate relationships among lawyers practicing elder law and law students planning to practice elder law and to encourage the practice of elder law among lawyers throughout the State of New York.

John R. Horan, president of The New York Bar Foundation said, "We are gratified to accept this four-year scholarship commitment from the Elder Law Section. This gift demonstrates the on-going collaborative efforts between The Foundation and the New York State Bar Association as we continue to serve New York's legal profession, the justice system and the community."

The 2009 scholarship, valued at \$2,500, will be awarded to one student enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis in the 2009 fall semester in a law school in the State of New York. The scholarship will be applied to the student's 2009-2010 academic year tuition with payment expected in January 2010. The scholarship recipient will be

invited to be a guest member of the Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association and to attend meetings of the section's executive committee during 2010.

A completed application form and supporting documentation must be submitted to The New York Bar Foundation by October 15, 2009 to apply for this year's scholarship. Go to <http://www.tnybf.org> for additional information about the scholarship and to access the application form.

Founded in 1950, The New York Bar Foundation is dedicated to aiding educa-

tional, direct legal services, and charitable projects aimed at meeting the law-related needs of the public and the legal profession. The Foundation solicits charitable contributions and provides funding for the following purposes: increasing public understanding of the law; improving the justice system and the law; facilitating the delivery of legal services; and enhancing professional competence and ethics. For more information about The New York Bar Foundation, go to <http://www.tnybf.org>, call 518/487-5651 or send e-mail to foundation@tnybf.org.

SUNY Ulster professor lectures at Millersville University

SUNY Ulster Chairman of the Visual Arts, Music & Theatre Department Iain Machell has been selected as a visiting artist and lecturer at Millersville University, near Philadelphia, where nearly 60 of his drawings and sculptures are now being featured in a solo exhibit that runs through March 16 at the college's Sykes Gallery.

Machell also presented an artist's lecture "Iain Does Ian," examining British sculptor Ian Hamilton Finlay, at Millersville. "This show and lecture give me a great opportunity to review the current direction of my art work and to explore the persistent influence of another

artist," Machell said about his exhibition.

Machell has eight years of formal art training from Portsmouth College of Art in England and Grays School of Art in Scotland and holds a master's degree in fine arts from SUNY Albany.

Machell has been on the faculty at SUNY Ulster for more than five years. His drawings, book projects and sculptures have been exhibited nationally and internationally, and he created an outdoor permanent sculpture for SUNY Ulster. His outdoor sculpture "Twist On Turner" is currently installed outside the Dorsky Museum at SUNY New Paltz.

Small Business Resources

Doing well by doing good

Whether in tough economic times, or in more prosperous ones, small businesses can and do give big to their communities. Maggie F. Keenan, Ed.D., a nationally recognized expert on strategic philanthropy, knows that charitable giving can make a significant difference to communities and to businesses alike. It is why she wrote "Small Businesses Give Big: Why Charitable Giving is a Great Business Strategy"

(January 2009, Alma Publishing, paperback). In her book, Keenan illustrates how charitable giving is good for communities and businesses. It strengthens communities by providing much-needed money, volunteer hours, and know-how; and it strengthens small businesses by spurring growth, raising their profile, and boosting employee morale. She also explains how and why even a new start-up business can adopt a program of charitable giving that reflects their values. "I am here to tell you that it doesn't matter if you've been in business six months or six years, or if you make \$50,000 or \$500,000; the defining moment is now. All it takes is the heart to help, passion to fuel your purpose, and the decision to make giving an integral part of your business."

In the book, Keenan profiles fifteen small businesses who regularly donate part of their profit, resources, and time to causes that benefit their communities and the larger world. From the chocolate company that raises thousands of dollars for breast cancer research to the real estate business that helps to fight environmental degradation to the high-tech group whose "culture of giving" has fed the hungry and funded educational programs, these businesses are proving that they can be a force for positive change. And in today's eco-

nommic climate, that change is needed more than ever.

ABOUT MAGGIE F. KEENAN, ED.D.

Maggie F. Keenan, Ed.D., is a nationally recognized expert in strategic philanthropy for businesses and entrepreneurs.

New guidebook helps New York businesses, organizations access Stimulus money

A Guide to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for New York community leaders and organizations has been compiled and released by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's office, offers the most up-to-date details on how communities and organizations can access federal stimulus funding.

The guide is part of Gillibrand's efforts to create jobs and ensure New York gets its fair share of federal dollars. Currently, New York only receives 79 cents back from the Treasury for every tax dollar sent to Washington, D.C. One of the ways to bring this money back and create jobs is to help New York communities, organizations, and businesses secure federal funding from the stimulus legislation.

In a letter accompanying the guide book, Gillibrand explained, "As I travel across New York and meet with community leaders such as you, one thing is clear - information about how funds will be dispersed under the Recovery Plan has been difficult to access and decipher. As your Senator, I am working to provide you with as much information as possible to put your community in a position to compete for these funds."

Experts estimate that the recovery package will save or create 215,000 new jobs in New York in the areas of construction, technology, and energy production. The

Her programs and services are sought after by business owners who want to make a difference in the world. Keenan has been interviewed on numerous radio shows and teleseminars, is frequently interviewed by the media and has been featured in More Magazine, the Atlanta

Journal Constitution, and the Washington Business Journal. A percentage of the proceeds from her book go to support the Little Red Wagon Foundation, a nonprofit that helps kids in distresses situations.

Visit her at: www.givingadvice.com.

Recovery Act will invest \$27.5 billion to improve the nation's roads and bridges - nearly \$1.1 billion of which will go to New York State. In total, the recovery plan includes over \$60 billion for modernizing traditional infrastructure such as sewers and drinking water projects, in addition to roads, bridges and airports. The plan goes further, by providing almost \$160 billion for non-traditional infrastructure, such as health care information technology and renewable sources of energy, which is critical to New York's long-term economic development.

Closing Indian Point could kill jobs continued from page 28

the direct jobs it produces, but also the significant amounts of its electricity that powers two million homes and businesses and New York's suburban railroad and city subway, transporting millions of commuters safely and efficiently each day. Without Indian Point our region would suffer greatly."

"By providing up to 30 percent of its energy needs, Indian Point is an integral part of the machine that drives New York City's economic engine and the Hudson Valley Region," said Mike Tracey, Business Manager for Local 91 of the International Association of Heat & Frost Insulators & Allied Workers. "Indian

Point is vital to keep our region economically competitive."

The Coalition of Labor for Energy works to ensure that the working people of New York, from Buffalo to Montauk Point, have the power and energy to build schools, hospitals, houses of worship shopping plazas, offices and homes to keep our economy vibrant and safe. Union labor is the backbone of New York State and its economy. The Empire State's highly skilled and trained labor force is the safest and most productive in the nation.

For additional information, visit www.coalition4energyandjobs.org

Healthcare

Health Quest selects MedAllies for electronic medical records implementation

Health Quest has selected MedAllies Management Systems (PMSs) for to implement over 300 Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and Practice Information Service Provider (HSP)

St. Luke’s Cornwall Hospital unveils Community Ambassador Program



Shown here: SLCH Community Ambassadors Kara Dorsey (front) and Rose Jurik.

St. Luke’s Cornwall Hospital (SLCH) has launched a new Community Ambassador Program to reflect the enhanced involvement of volunteers in areas of patient care, advocacy and community outreach. Community Ambassadors include working professionals, retirees and students. They share a strong desire to help their friends, neighbors and community hospital.

These volunteers serve in many capacities and areas, including:

- Patient and family liaisons
- Greeters
- Pediatric and neonatal liaisons
- Orthopedic program liaisons

- Event committee members
- Special project liaisons
- Administrative liaisons
- Special Task Force members
- Hospital advocates

With the impending opening of the hospital’s Cancer Treatment Center and growth of cardiac and other programs, SLCH is enhancing its 200-member Community Ambassador program. Opportunities are being developed and tailored for persons with diverse talents and interests. To learn more, call 568-2391 or e-mail lbaldwin@slchospital.org.

DiNapoli audit claims health department wasting millions on out-of-state Medicaid payments

The State Department of Health (DOH) made \$28.4 million in Medicaid payments for people who were enrolled in New York and another state’s Medicaid program, according to an audit released recently by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

“Medicaid is the single most costly program administered by New York State,” DiNapoli said. “The state is facing the worst fiscal crisis of our lifetime. We can’t afford to waste millions of dollars on people who don’t live here. DOH has to cut Medicaid waste and abuse, and

it can start by tracking down and stopping payments for out-of-state residents.”

DiNapoli’s auditors found that from April 1, 2004 through May 31, 2008, DOH paid about \$14.1 million in Medicaid managed care premiums and about \$14.3 million in fee-for-service payments for people who were also enrolled in another state’s Medicaid program.

DiNapoli’s auditors found that DOH had not effectively ensured local social service districts and the HRA acted in a timely manner to either investigate the

serving New York’s Hudson Valley.

Health Quest, the largest health system in the Mid-Hudson Valley, is currently undertaking a multi-million dollar technology initiative including implementation of comprehensive EMR systems in both our inpatient and outpatient environments for exceptional patient safety and quality outcomes while ensuring that the HIPAA compliant (secured) passage of necessary information between sites occurs. This project will ensure timely access to pertinent health information in a timely fashion and to the appropriate providers involved in the care of the patient. The end result is better the better provision of healthcare and increase patient satisfaction. To accomplish these far-reaching goals, the healthcare system purchased the eClinicalWorks Electronic Health Record application from MedAllies which implements the software.

The eClinicalWorks product is a CCHIT (Certified Commission for Healthcare Information Technology) ambulatory physician (Physician Practice) EMR. As part of this we possess the following functionality

- Comprehensive physician Office EMR (Electronic Medical Records)
- Document Scanning
- Digital Faxing
- Physician office billing
- E-Prescribing - Ability to send prescriptions electronically direct to pharmacies
- Chronic disease management
- Electronic patient registration
- Computerized laboratory order entry
- Ability to send orders direct to area reference laboratories
- Integrated business intelligence software use to report out of the electronic system

MedAllies will implement eClinicalWorks Electronic Medical Record/Practice Management System throughout the ambulatory clinics and urgent care centers in the Health Quest system. Practices will be utilizing the latest health information technology to easily monitor and better manage patient care, promote patient safety while reducing costs, and improve overall patient health through coordination and continuity by connecting healthcare providers.

“Health Quest has selected this eClinicalWorks and MedAllies for many reasons. In short, however, eClinical Works has a very good reputation in the industry and MedAllies as a local implementation organization support our community of providers. In addition, though their relationship with the community via

THINC RHIO, we feel strongly that eClinical Works will quickly become the physician office EMR system throughout the region,” according to Robert Diamond, Chief Information Officer for Health Quest.” From the patient’s perspective, we are looking to create an environment which supports the secure transfer of health information, in a HIPAA compliant fashion, so physicians truly possess all of the patient’s important health information both from the inpatient and outpatient treatment settings. Having this information will significantly enhance the care provided to patients. Ultimately, it’s all about the patient.”

Health Quest is the Mid-Hudson Valley’s largest healthcare system providing the care across a broad spectrum of services. Offering the full range of hospital services, pre-hospital emergency care, homecare and nursing home care, the Health Quest system provides immediate and caring service to the one million people who reside in the New York counties of Columbia, Dutchess, Ulster, Orange, Putnam and northern Westchester.

Health Quest Affiliates include Northern Dutchess Hospital in Rhinebeck, Putnam Hospital Center in Brewster and Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie.

About MedAlles

MedAllies leverages Electronic Health Record implementations to facilitate physician office redesign to improve office practice efficiencies and disease management. In today’s healthcare environment, delivery of quality health care requires access to pertinent clinical information at the point of care. The evolution of Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems allows providers the ability to utilize comprehensive and powerful technology applications at the point of care. These applications facilitate collection, secure delivery, and reporting of critical clinical information. MedAllies provides solutions, implementation support, and pricing models to address the major barriers for physicians in acquiring and effectively utilizing EHRs and other forms of health information technology. Also, MedAllies is building and operating a Health Information Exchange (HIE) to increase the completeness of information at the point of care, increase care coordination between health care stakeholders and standardize quality and public health reporting. Our ultimate goal is to bring enjoyment back to providers practicing medicine and to improve the health of all citizens in our community.

enrollees identified on the reports or to remove them from New York’s Medicaid program. Auditors found 27 districts spent, on average, more than 60 days to complete investigations.

DOH had not worked with the local social service districts and HRA to establish policies, procedures and time frames for completing investigations. Additionally, DOH had not set up monitoring mechanisms to track the completion of investigations.

DiNapoli’s auditors also found that while district investigators outside of

New York City confirmed that \$3 million in managed care premiums was paid for out-of-state residents, DOH had not tried to recover any of the money from managed care plans. New York City’s HRA had not even completed investigations of the remaining \$11.1 million in inappropriate managed care premium payments.

DOH officials generally agreed with the audit’s recommendations and planned to take action. For a full copy of the audit and the DOH’s full response, or visit www.osc.state.ny.us

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