

Rensselaer County Legislature

OFFICE of the MINORITY

March 14, 2008

Flora Fasoldt

District 4

466-1703

Dear Editor,

Republican legislators in Rensselaer County have been writing a lot about increasing the bed tax. Raising taxes is something the GOP has done very well since it took over complete control of Rensselaer County fourteen years ago.

Under Republican leadership, the tax levy has increased over 46% and residents have seen a 58% increase in their tax bills. Republicans have also imposed a new cell phone tax, increases in the mortgage tax, motor vehicle tax, and sewer tax as well as an increase in the sales tax to 4%.

Democrats in the County Legislature believe that the taxes imposed by this GOP stranglehold of Rensselaer County government have placed an unacceptable burden on our citizens. Republican solutions are based on increased spending, property tax increases and new taxes --- a fact conveniently omitted from any of their press releases.

My Democratic colleagues proposed that the county dedicate a portion of the "bed tax" to a Tourism Development Fund. This fund would promote tourism as a means of fostering economic development and the much needed private sector jobs which come with such growth.

By setting aside a portion of an existing tax to economic development and tourism, we can create jobs in the private sector and improve the economic climate of our county. This is a far better alternative than using this revenue to fund post-election pay raises for county legislators and other elected officials.

A Tourism Development Fund is a more sensible direction than spending another \$20,000 for a GOP-paid consultant to study tourism and write a report as proposed by our County Executive. Rensselaer County already contracts with a tourism consultant for \$18,000 annually, has an Economic Planning and Development Office with full staff and a budget of more than \$669,000, and a Tourism Advisory Committee that meets monthly.

Rather than waste taxpayers' money on more consultants and more reports, let's invest that money in growing the tourism industry in Rensselaer County.

Sincerely,

Flora Fasoldt

Rensselaer County Legislature