

For Your Information
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The following are highlights from Legislative Committee Meetings and the May 8, 2007 meeting of the Rensselaer County Legislature (RCL):

Improvements to Legislative Website - "The Public's Right to Know" - A resolution I sponsored calling for the Legislature's Committee on Open Government to explore and suggest improvements to the County's Legislative website was tabled again this month by Legislator Martin Reid. This resolution called for the expansion of the website to provide more complete documentation as well as a comprehensive voting record for each Legislator. An improved website would provide greater openness, accessibility and accountability that would increase public participation and engage residents in the governmental process. Legislator Martin Reid argued that it would be too costly to improve the website. I believe his argument is just an excuse to stonewall much needed and simple improvements that would allow the public to know what their elected officials are doing.

Local Law – Imposing a New Local Mortgage Recording Tax - A local law to re-impose a county mortgage recording tax was approved by the Republican Majority in a 13 to 6 vote. Democratic Minority legislators opposed this tax.

Local Action Plan on Global Warming – Along with Troy Legislator Peter Grimm, I co-sponsored an environmental resolution that was approved with bi-partisan support. The resolution advises the County Environmental Management Director and Council to create a local action plan that would implement best environmental practices as a result of evaluating the effectiveness of current county, city, town and village policies and programs that impact global warming and make recommendations that can be taken by local governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of global warming.

Snowmobile Trail Grants – The Legislature unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the County Executive to execute snowmobile trail grant agreements with the Rensselaer County Snoriders, Black River Raiders Snowmobile Club, Grafton Trail Blazers, Hoosick Trail Masters, and the Stephentown Trail Riders.

County Medical Reserve Corps - A resolution was approved by the Legislature to receive \$10,000 in funding from the National Association of County and City Health Officials to support a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) in Rensselaer County. The MRC is a board of volunteer nurses and physicians that will use their professional workplace experiences to help ensure public health and safety during an emergency situation.

Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) – Parking Garage Project – The Legislature authorized HVCC to seek funding for the project entitled, "Parking Garage" for the years 2009-2013. It is anticipated that the \$15.6 million for this project will be funded equally from the State of New York and the Faculty Student Association of HVCC.

1% Sales and Compensating Use Tax - The Republican Majority approved a resolution requesting the NYS Legislature to extend the additional 1% sales and compensating use tax in Rensselaer County until November 30, 2009. The Democratic Minority voted against this tax as it was originally intended to be a "temporary tax".

Please feel free to contact me at 674-0223 or e-mail at electflora@aol.com with any questions or concerns. The public may address the Legislature at the Public Forum on June 6, 2007 beginning at 6 PM . The next meeting of the RCL is June 12, 2007 at 6:00 PM; members of the public have an opportunity to speak prior to the opening of the meeting.

