

Erie County Taxpayer Newsletter



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From County Executive Chris Collins

Late last week, I delivered my second State of the County Address. The speech provided a great opportunity to look back and highlight my administration's reform efforts during the past year, and look forward and focus on our community's future.



As Erie County's Chief Executive, I am working every day to make sure we run Erie County like the billion dollar business it is, with a focus on the future. That's what the taxpayers elected me to do, and I am proud to report back that is exactly what we are doing. You hear politicians talk a lot about the future; what they hope to accomplish and what they want to achieve. Unfortunately, for most politicians, their future is defined as the next two-to-four years. I define our future as the next 20 to 50 years with a focus on our children, grandchildren, and generations not yet born.

I outlined my focus as I campaigned to become County Executive. Simple and straight-forward, it became known as my three R's: reform county government, rebuild the economy and ultimately, reduce taxes. The three R's are interconnected and dependent on one another. The result will be the bright future we all want for our children and grandchildren right here in Erie County. This past year, the vast majority of my time was spent on that first R - reforming county government, with an emphasis on Lean Six Sigma.

Now my administration is shifting its focus to the rebuilding of our economy. In order to fully revitalize our economy, Erie County needs a vision and a plan, just we like we do in the private sector. Our vision is simple: Erie County will become a world-class community that benefits its citizens by fostering a place where people want to live and work, businesses want to invest and locate, and tourists want to visit. And, just as importantly, my administration has developed a plan to make that vision a reality – called the Road to a Bright Future.

Erie County's Road to a Bright Future begins with ten key agenda items that will serve as guidelines for the actions that County government will take over the next three years to help our community grow and prosper. Our ten agenda items are: make our community a global gateway; focus on entrepreneurship, innovation and small business; take advantage of our waterfront and greenway; promote our community's arts, culture and heritage; make our community a tourist destination; promote our region's agriculture industry; use our higher education institutions as a gateway; become the back office capital of America; advance high and low tech manufacturing; and position our area as a medical powerhouse.

We will be tracking our progress on our website, so the public can hold us accountable for our promises, just like in the private sector. To read my State of the County Address in its entirety and download a copy of our detailed Road to a Bright Future plan, please visit www.erie.gov.

Contact the County Executive

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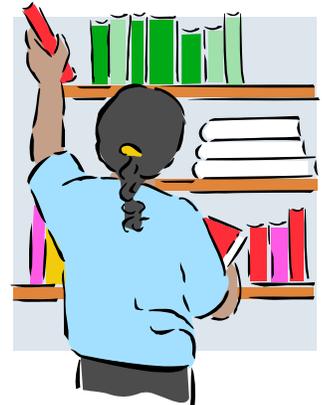
Six Sigma “Goes Green”

Green Belt candidate and Environment and Planning employee, Paul Kranz, is leading the effort to reduce waste and increase recycling revenue in the Rath Building. This “Green” opportunity will be achieved by increasing awareness of the amount of paper used in the building, and the need for employee participation to meet recycling goals. Representatives from Purchasing, Budget, Social Services, Buildings and Grounds, and Environmental Compliance are working with paper recycling companies to further this effort, and optimize potential revenue streams through increased recycling efficiency. A weekly survey of the number of recycling totes and paper weight by floor within the Rath Building will establish the baseline data for the project. The results of the initial project will then be used to establish recycling efficiency throughout other county buildings.

The Six Sigma Program is also finalizing Wave Three Green Belt project opportunities and candidates. The classroom training for this wave will be conducted in March, May and June. The completion of this wave of training will add nine more Green Belts to the County’s Lean Six Sigma team, totaling 27 Green Belts trained during 2008-2009.

Library Receives Incentive Grant

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) has been awarded a more than \$1.7 million incentive grant from the County to install a Radio Frequency Identification System (RFID) at its Central and City Branch libraries, as well as the four libraries in Amherst. This will be Phase 1 of a multi-year plan that would see the technology installed at all 37 libraries in Erie County.



RFID is an identification technology that uses “smart tags” to store digital data. RFID is similar to barcode technology but uses radio waves to capture the data from tags, rather than optically scanning the bar codes on a label. RFID technology has been in place for many years in various industries, and is used in common devices such as the EZ Pass. The tags are only readable within a few feet of the data reader and they do not contain any patron information. The B&ECPL expects to see significant cost savings from the use of this technology.



Erie County & City of Buffalo Join Together in Stimulus Package Proposal

Erie County Executive Chris Collins and Buffalo Mayor Bryon W. Brown have joined together in announcing a regional submission for the federal stimulus package totaling more than \$1.9 billion. The collaborative submission highlights hundreds of local infrastructure projects in both the City and local municipalities. Many of these projects are shovel ready, but currently lack the necessary capital investment.

The proposal includes funding for:



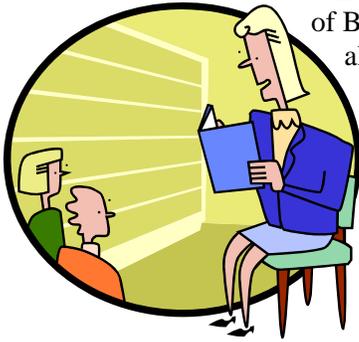
- Vital economic development projects, including the clean-up of several brownfields;
- Road, highway, bridge and streetscape construction;
- Repair and restoration of local parklands and recreation areas;
- Expansion and replacement of environmental and wastewater infrastructure;
- Upgrades and repairs to public buildings;
- Public safety and security projects;
- Green initiatives;

The City and County proposals have been forwarded to the Western New York federal delegation for review, and consideration for the into the final stimulus package proposed by Congress. The proposals will also be shared with the Western New York state delegation, as many of these projects will need environmental clearances from New York State.



***Branched Out* Continues at City Branch Libraries**

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is continuing its popular *Branched Out* Science Series with the Buffalo Museum of Science this winter. The programs give young people, ages 6-10, the opportunity to enhance their science and literacy skills through a free, fun-filled series of programs at seven libraries in the City of Buffalo. Addition-



ally, a preschool component has been added for children ages 3-5 at the Crane, East Delavan and Niagara Branches. The current session, which focuses on snow and winter fun, runs through the end of February. Visit the Library's website at www.buffalolib.org, to learn more about specific program offerings.

Want to improve your test-taking ability? Come to the "How to Take a Civil Service Exam" class and learn how to increase your score!

When: Thursday, February 26, 2009 or Tuesday, March 24, 2009

**Where: Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library
1324 Jefferson Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14208**

Time: 5 PM – 7 PM

The classes are offered through the Erie County Department of Personnel, the Erie County Sheriff's Department and Erie Community College. For more information please contact the Department of Personnel at (716) 858-8484.

One Stop Centers Provide Training in Tough Economy

Erie County Executive Chris Collins, Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown and Erie Community College President Jack Quinn Jr. recently announced free training opportunities for local residents impacted by recent layoffs through local One-Stop Career Centers. The national recession is affecting the Western New York economy and several local companies have announced layoffs, including American Axle, Arcelor Mittal, Delphi and Yellow Transportation.

The One-Stop Career Centers - located in Buffalo and Orchard Park - offer a wide range of free employment and training services to individuals who are unemployed, looking to change careers, or seeking advancement in their current field. The two local One-Stop Career Centers allow people to access a multitude of agencies and services all under one roof.

Center Locations:

Buffalo Employment & Training Center
77 Goodell Street
Buffalo, New York 14203
Phone: (716) 856-5627

ECC Employment & Training Center
3176 Abbott Road
Orchard Park, New York 14127
Phone: (716) 270-444

Website: <http://www.ecc.edu/paths/onestop.asp>

Summary of Available Services:

- Job Referral and Placement
- Counseling and Career Exploration
- Resume Preparation and Letter Writing Services
- Job Search Planning and Preparation
- Career Training
- Math and Reading Assistance
- GED Preparation
- State of the Art Resource Center
- Supportive Services
- Financial Aid



ME's Office Working to Educate Community

Dr. Mark LeVaughn, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner with the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH), recently presented a lecture for Upstate NY Transplant Services (UNYTS). The presentation was about the proper handling of pulmonary emboli when recovering organs for donation. By working together, the ECDOH and UNYTS are improving the success rate of organ donation.



Office of Child Support Enforcement Complimented by State

The New York State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance, Division of Child Support Enforcement, recently recognized the Erie County Office of Child Support Enforcement on its increase in child support collections from 2007 to 2008.

Statewide, 2008 child support collections increased by 6.45% over 2007's results. Erie County achieved a 7.45% increase over 2007, earning 6th place among 15 local districts by exceeding the statewide average.



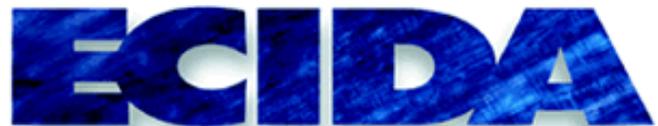
ECIDA Board Selects Harris Beach as Counsel

This past January, the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) approved the selection of law firm Harris Beach LLP, as its new general counsel. The agency's governance committee made the recommendation on a 4-1 vote that was taken January 5, 2009.

Harris Beach represents 26 other New York IDAs and committee members felt their experience in economic development issues and initiatives will help the ECIDA reach its goals. Harris Beach will be handling two legal responsibilities, as general counsel and "conflict" tax-exempt bond counsel, for the ECIDA. Harter Secrest of Buffalo will be "conflict" general counsel and Hiscock & Barclay in Buffalo will be tax-exempt bond counsel. The "conflict" coun-

sel works on a project if the primary firm has a conflict of interest with any of the parties involved.

In September, the ECIDA board accepted a resolution requiring the agency to put its legal, accounting and other professional services up for bid every seven years with annual performance reviews.



Pond Hockey Heats up Buffalo

The Second Annual Labatt Blue Buffalo Pond Hockey Tournament was held at the Erie Basin Marina on February 7, 2009. This year's event doubled in size from last year's inaugural game. More teams playing meant more rinks would be needed for this year's tournament. The Erie County Parks Department, in conjunction with the City of Buffalo, created a total of eight rinks on the marina surface.



Work on the rinks began two weeks before game day, with crews plowing snow and spraying water to form a high-quality ice surface. Due to a surprisingly warm day, the ice began to melt early in the day. Although games were shortened, players skated through the slush to put on a show for the many fans in attendance. Despite the weather, Erie County Parks Commissioner Jim Hornung believes the event was a success, and is already looking forward to next year's tournament.

