

Legislative Update: October 2007

So what's been happening this September so far in Orange County? As the Legislator for the 7th District I would like to update you to events of the past few weeks.

1. **Fiscal Year Budget for 2008** was submitted to the Orange County Legislature by County Executive Ed Diana. This budget was on time, balanced and provided for a modest reduction in the County tax rate. This tax relief while maintaining essential services is critical for the residents of this County. The budget will now be reviewed by the statutory committees of the Orange County Legislature and will then be presented to the full legislature for adoption by November 15, 2007.
2. **Carbon Monoxide Warnings** – Consumer Affairs Commissioner is urging Orange County residents to be cautious this winter season if they need to use portable generators. Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless and odorless gas, it cannot be smelled or seen but the effects can be devastating. If the area is not properly ventilated the fumes can cause illness or even death. For a safe winter season always practice SAFETY FIRST. For more information contact OC Department of Consumer Affairs at 845-291-2400 or the website at <http://www.orangecountygov.com>.
3. **Homeowners seeking House Deeds** – If you need a certified copy of your deed the fastest and least expensive way to obtain this document is your local County Clerk urges the Orange County Executive, County Clerk Donna Benson and Commissioner of Consumer Affairs. Many residents have received solicitations in the mail urging them to pay 50 to 60 dollars to obtain this document. This is not a necessary expense since you can contact the County Clerks office and pay a modest \$5.20 and receive a certified copy of your deed. Before contacting outside sources check the County website at www.orangecountygov.com for the many services provided for your convenience.
4. **Cell Phones for Soldiers** - Orange County will participate in the "Cell Phones for Soldiers Program" by placing collection boxes in all County Departments of Motor Vehicles Offices for residents who want to donate their old phones to this program. This program collects over 15,000 cell phones a month across the nation. The phones are then sent to ReCellular which, in turns, donates a one hour pre-paid calling card to a soldier or sailor overseas. Cell Phones for Soldiers was founded by teenagers Robbie & Brittany Berquist from Norwell, Massachusetts with \$21.00 for their own money. Now, this registered 501c3 non-profit

organization has raised almost \$1 million dollars and distributed more than 400,00 prepaid calling cards to soldiers serving overseas and Orange County is proud to join the efforts.

5. **Commuter Advisory Council** – Due to recent service disruption and lack of property safety regulations by Coach USA/Shortline Bus Company, I am forming a Commuter Advisory Council encouraging resident to join to work toward improving service for bus passengers and train services. This will give commuters a place to lodge their complaints other than just the bus company. Commuters are busy and do not have the time to chase service issues with corporate bureaucrats. This Council will receive the complaints and act to resolve them on behalf of the commuters. Individuals interested in joining the Commuter Advisory Council should contact Legislator Greg Townsend at 845-291-4800 or by email at legislature@co.orange.ny.us.

It continues to be a busy time here in Orange County. Many issues concerning the safety and well being of the residents continue to be the priority of the Orange County Legislature and I will continue to keep you informed. Also, make note, **November 6 is election day** – so exercise your right to vote for the best person for the people of your community and Orange County.