

Legislative Update: September 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. **Orange County Sewer District** – A question from a resident prompted a review of the billing procedures, which corrected and recouped over \$15,000.00. Raising the issue with the County Executive and a complete review of the Sewer District contracts began. One customer was not in compliance but this one commercial customer will now reimburse the Sewer. The users agreement had expired and this had lead to a cessation of payments to the Orange County Sewer District over the past 3 years. Continued monitoring of all aspects of this critically important facility will be continued while at the same time being sure the agreement is renewed.
2. **Orange County Dog Park** opened Sept. 18 at Thomas Bull Memorial Park. The Dog Park is completely fenced with two divided sections, one for small dogs and another for all dogs. The Park is free and open to the public. All dogs using the Park are required to be licensed and fully vaccinated. The Dog Park is open daily from 7 AM to dusk.
3. **Along with the Dog Park, Guiding Eyes for the Blind** is expanding into Orange County with their guide pup-training program at SUNY Orange. The program has been training guide dogs with the assistance of volunteer puppy raisers since 1954. The extension into Orange County will give them 38 puppy raising programs.
4. Orange County will be awarded \$399,175.00 as part of the **US Department of Justice's Safe Havens:** Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program. This program is a great partnership between the County of Orange and Orange County Safe Homes assisting victims of domestic violence, saving the taxpayers from added expenses. The Safe Havens Grant will provide safe locations to hold visitation for the non-custodial parent and allow for safe monitored exchanges that are child-sensitive and victim-focused.
5. **Orange County Probation receives Million Plus Grant** – The department will receive \$200,000 each year for the next five years to implement "Strengthening Families" and "Aggression Replacement Training" programs, both national models that involve youth and their families and have been shown to reduce recidivism. The department is now able to run new programs that they know work but did not have the resources to provide. And the best part of these two initiatives – they engage families.
6. **The County welcomed 61 new citizens** as Donna Benson administrated the oath and Supreme Court Justice William Sherwood officiated. I was the speaker giving a stirring speech on the responsibilities of new citizens while sharing their excitement over their accomplishments.

It has been a busy time here in Orange County and much is happening. I'd also like to thank the organizers of the Cheese Festival held in Monroe – it was a great day to be out enjoying the activities within our community.