

COUNTY OF ERIE,  
NEW YORK

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- Grant will improve Air-I operations
- Cyber-bullying Local Law to be voted on
- 2012 Legislative Schedule

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE:

Grant for Air-I	2
Yellow Dot	2
Internship Opportunities	3
2012 Budget	3
HEAP Outreach	3
Contact Information	4
Proclamations	4

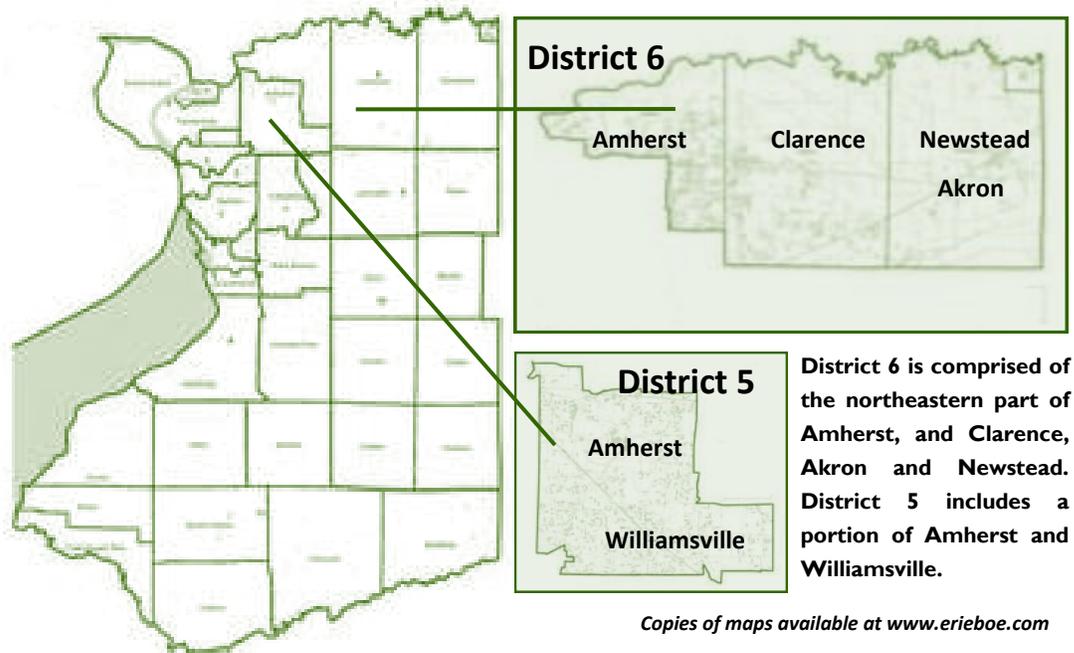
# News from Legislator

## Edward A. Rath III



WINTER 2011 - 2012

### New Legislative Districts take effect



**B**eginning Jan. 1, 2012, the new Erie County Legislature districts will go into effect and 11 members will be charged with handling the people's business.

In November 2010, 83% of voters approved a referendum calling for the downsizing of the Legislature from 15 to 11 members, and as a result, four fewer districts had to be drawn in the new map, which is based on 2010 census numbers.

"Giving residents the opportunity to decide on the size of County government had been a priority of mine since taking office. We were able to get bipartisan

support for this measure and ensure that it appeared on the ballot," Legislator Rath said.

With the new, larger districts, the 11 members will each represent approximately 83,000 residents. Legislator Rath, whose former district (No. 15) was encompassed in Amherst, is excited to represent District 6 - Clarence, Akron and Newstead, as well as northeastern Amherst.

"These are great communities with hard-working residents and families," said Legislator Rath. "I look forward to meeting their needs by providing quality services, while not increasing taxes."

Anyone with questions about the new Legislature map or general legislative issues can contact Legislator Rath at 858-8676 or by email at [edward.rath@erie.gov](mailto:edward.rath@erie.gov).

"Smaller government will bring a renewed sense of efficiency and transparency to the county legislature," Legislator Rath added. "The residents absolutely made the right decision to reduce the legislature and as a result, also reduce bureaucracy."

Legislator Rath thanks the voters for their overwhelming support.

Legislator Thomas Loughran will represent District 5, which includes a portion of Amherst and Williamsville.

# Legislator Rath announces funding approved for critical public safety improvement

Legislator Rath announces that the necessary funding for a new state-of-the-art landing pad for the Erie County Sheriff's helicopter was approved during a recent Legislative session.

The new \$31,000 landing pad will provide a safe takeoff and landing surface for the Sheriff's "Air-1" helicopter, which is piloted by Captain Kevin Caffery and Tactical Flight Officer Arthur Litzinger and located in the Town of Evans. The new "HELIWAGON" is a remote controlled takeoff and landing dolly that will replace the 40-year-old dolly currently being used.

"By expending these funds we are ensuring that Captain



**The new landing pad will be installed in late January and will make take off and landing safer for the operators of Air-1.**

Caffery and the Sheriff's Office are best equipped to handle any emergency situation that arises. The safety of our first responders is a number one priority," Legislator Rath said. "The County is also being extremely cost conscious. Estimates to refurbish the current landing pad were twice as much as replacing it."

Captain Caffery commented that this new equipment will dramatically decrease the amount of time it takes him to get airborne and respond to the various requests that are continuously made for AIR-1. Captain Caffery said "seconds count" in search and rescue operations and sometimes are the difference in saving victims lives.



*Legislator Rath, joined by Assemblywoman Jane Corwin and former Legislator Ray Walter, discuss a local law addressing cyber-bullying.*

## Cyber-bullying local law approval expected

Legislator Rath, along with his former colleague Ray Walter, introduced a local law to deter students from engaging in harassment and bullying online. He fully expects the Legislature to unanimously approve the item in January.

"As public officials we have a responsibility to our citizenry to ensure that bullying, ignorance and intolerance is not occurring. We cannot wait for New York State to make cyber-bullying illegal, as county legislators we need to take

immediate action to protect targeted youth," Legislator Rath said.

A press conference was held in October 2011, announcing that the proposed local law had been submitted for consideration. The required public hearings have been held and the Legislature is now in a position to take action. If approved, the local law is designed to act as a deterrent but also holds youths accountable for their actions. Youthful offenders would be

handled by Family Court.

Legislator Rath recently spoke to a large group of students at a forum hosted by the National Federation of Just Communities about the seriousness of the issue and why offenders need to be held accountable.

Legislator Rath said once the local law is approved he wants to create a task force charged with spreading awareness about the local law and its purpose.

# Opportunity in County Government

Legislator Rath's first experience with public office was working as a congressional intern. Years later, he is looking forward to beginning his third term as a County Legislator.

He discussed the path his public service has taken during Williamsville School's Career Night.

He invited those who attended to contact him if they were interested in interning with his Legislative Office. He extends that offer to any of the students residing in his district. There are several

opportunities available, including helping at constituent outreaches, covering community events, and assisting in the Legislative Office located in downtown Buffalo.

Anyone interested is asked to send a cover letter and resume to Legislator Rath at 92 Franklin Street, Fourth Floor, Buffalo, NY 14202 or email [edward.rath@erie.gov](mailto:edward.rath@erie.gov).

Hours may be accepted for community service hours required by some school districts.



**Legislator Rath discusses working in government during Williamsville School's Career Night held Dec. 6.**

*The Erie County Legislature has adopted the 2012 budget without a tax increase.*

## 2012 budget does not include tax increase

The Erie County Legislature has adopted the 2012 budget without a tax increase. The \$1 billion budget was approved on Dec. 6.

Legislator Rath said the budget addresses many of the concerns related to such issues as rodent control and infrastructure maintenance, but he has some misgivings about the budget that he will address in 2012.

The Legislature will hold its first session of 2012 on Thursday, Jan. 5, which is the annual reorganizational meeting. A new chairperson of the Legislature will be named at that time. The Legislature's 2012 schedule is as follows: Jan. 26; Feb. 16 and 23; March 15 and 29; April 5 and 19; May 10 and 24; June 7 and 21; July 12 and 19; Sept. 13 and 27; Oct. 11 and 25; Nov. 8 and 29; and

Dec. 6 and 20. The Legislature is in recess during August. Sessions are held in the Legislative Chambers, 92 Franklin St., Fourth Floor, Buffalo.

Session agendas are always available on the Legislature's Website, found at [www.erie.gov/legislature](http://www.erie.gov/legislature). The Website also includes minutes from previous meetings, district maps, and committee reports.

### Winter Activities Guide Available

The Erie County Parks System features a variety of free activities for visitors during the winter months.

To learn more about the parks and what activities each has to offer, please request your free copy of the Winter Activities Guide by emailing Legislator Rath at [edward.rath@erie.gov](mailto:edward.rath@erie.gov) or call 858-8676.

The County Parks are great for downhill skiing in Emery Park, ice skating in Akron Falls Park, and sledding and tobogganing in Chestnut Ridge Park.

### HEAP Outreach Jan. 31

Legislator Rath has scheduled a HEAP Outreach from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 31 at the Amherst Center for Senior Services, 370 John James Audubon Parkway.

For additional information, please call the HEAP Hotline, (716) 858-7644 or visit [www.erie.gov](http://www.erie.gov).



## Contact Erie County Legislator Edward Rath III

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Erie County's vision: Erie County will be a world-class community where People want to live, Businesses want to locate and Tourists want to visit.

Happy Holidays! I hope you had a healthy and prosperous year and are looking forward to 2012. As discussed in this newsletter, the Legislature has been downsized to 11 members and the new districts take effect Jan. 1. I look forward to representing the residents of the new 6th District and working with many of you on various issues.

We begin 2012 with some great economic news. The Wall Street rating agency Standard and Poor's Financial Services LCC raised the county's bond rating from BBB+ to A- for general obligation bonds. Some of the reasons behind this upgrade include, the county's creating an unreserved general fund balance of more than \$27 million; the approval of a four-year fiscal plan; and a stable economic base along with less than average unemployment rates. We must continue to deliver successes such as these to ensure the future of Erie County is bright. My efforts will include continued focus on improving the financial standing of the county and lessening the tax burden.

Best wishes for a happy new year and thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

## Residents honored at Legislative Sessions

Members of the community are honored during each Legislative session. The following individuals or groups were recently honored:

2011 Amherst Chamber of Commerce honorees - **GEICO**, Business of the Year; **Stuart Angert**, Frank Ciminelli Lifetime Inspiration Award, **Northtown Lexus**, Revitalization Award; **Sabres Alumni Association**, Community Service Award; **Christina Orsi & the WNY Regional Office of Empire State Development**, Stewardship Award; **Weinberg Campus**, Health & Health Services Award; **First Niagara Financial Group**, Commitment to Excellence Award; and **Kitchen World/Candlelight Cabinetry**, Manufacturing Award.

**Joseph and Evelyn Cassidy** on their 60th wedding anniversary.



Legislator Rath presented a proclamation to Sallyann Ieraci, VP of Community Relations, and Rahwa Ghirmatzion, Community Engagement Specialist, to mark UNYTS' 30th anniversary.



The Minority Caucus presented a proclamation to Krista Goldsmith of the American Red Cross in recognition of the organization's 90 Days of Remembrance that marked the solemn 10th anniversary of the attacks on 9/11.