



Assemblywoman **MARGARET MARKEY** *Reports to the People*

SEPTEMBER 2013

A message from Assemblywoman Margaret Markey...

Dear Neighbor:

I hope you had a pleasant summer as we all look forward to a busy fall season, with back-to-school challenges for many families and renewed civic activity.

This report on the recent legislative session will give you a picture of the important progress we have made in Albany over the past few years, with on-time budgets and the enactment of important legislation to make our communities safer, improve our economy and the job market, and provide support for working New Yorkers and middle-class families.

The Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committee which I chair, led re-enactment by the Legislature of the regulations that provide important consumer protections in the sale of e-tickets for entertainment and sports events. With tourism as such an important and growing element of our economy, I participated in Governor Cuomo's first-ever NY State Tourism Summit which was followed by the largest tourism promotion campaign in decades for New York State.

You will see in this newsletter how we have brought the benefits of this "I Love NY" campaign to Queens. Look for new Queens initiatives next year as civic, business and government come together to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park World's Fair.

There is still unfinished business to address in Albany in the year to come. One of the most important issues to me is my commitment to enact my Child Victims Act, to stop childhood sexual abuse and provide justice for older victims. It has been adopted by the Assembly four times, but has never been brought to a vote in the State Senate. I am working to change that next year.

As we begin the busy fall season, I want to thank you for the opportunity to represent you in the New York State Legislature and look forward to hearing from you about important State and local issues in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Margaret M. Markey

Our 2013 session in Albany: tax relief, more school funding, minimum wage increase will benefit families in Queens

The 2013 state legislative session demonstrated once again that New York State has turned the corner toward building a brighter future for all our citizens. Working together with Governor Cuomo, we passed legislation that will boost our economy, create jobs, cut taxes and make our communities safer.

We also fought for equal rights, successfully restored funding to protect our most vulnerable citizens and raised the minimum wage.

This year marked the state's third consecutive on-time budget. The fiscal plan for the current year makes a commitment to putting more money in the pockets of working families by extending a middle-class personal income tax reduction for three more years, locking in the lowest rate in 60 years. Reduced energy taxes will save customers \$500 million by fiscal year 2017-18 and the statewide minimum wage will grow to \$9 per hour by 2016, promising workers and their families a better quality of life.

I fought for new funding we need to provide a quality education for our children. This year's budget gives our schools nearly a billion dollars in education funding,

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Doe Fund clean-up services welcomed back to our Grand Avenue shopping area

Leaders of the Maspeth Chamber of Commerce and I gathered on Grand Avenue with executives and workers from the Doe Fund to celebrate the return of extra street cleaning and maintenance service on Maspeth's shopping corridor. The program is made possible by a state grant I provided that also includes funding for installation and maintenance of flower baskets along the streets. I am pleased to work with the Chamber to support its work to improve the business climate in Maspeth. The beautification and extra sanitation services provided by the Doe Fund workers is an important benefit that both our residents and businesses can enjoy. Doe Fund workers will direct their attention, three days a week through the end of the year, to Grand Avenue from 64th St. to 73rd St., Flushing Avenue, 64th St. to 65th St., and 69th St. from Grand to 55th St.



ASSEMBLYWOMAN MARGARET MARKEY

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NEWS BRIEFS

Local hearing for Sunnyside Gardens plan

A development proposal for a one-time playground in Sunnyside Gardens Historic District has drawn the ire of many neighbors who believe the plan for a modernistic all-metal prefabricated building is ill-suited for the landmark community. Any proposed building for the site, at 39th Avenue and 50th Street, must be reviewed and approved by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, which had originally scheduled a public hearing even before our Community Board Two had the opportunity to hold its own local hearing. That LPC hearing was postponed at the urging of Board Two and activists from the Sunnyside Gardens Preservation Alliance. I have already written to the Community Board to express my opposition to the proposal and will submit testimony when the board holds its public hearing this fall.

Fully realizing Truck Bypass benefits

Concern that the benefits of the Maspeth Truck Bypass are not being fully realized were recently raised by the COMET civic organization. While signage and enforcement of the ban on through-truck traffic on Grand and Flushing Avenues went into effect more than a year ago, there is concern that the hard-fought reduction in truck traffic is not as significant as it should be. I recently brought together police, transportation and civic leaders to discuss progress in reducing illegal truck traffic through the heart of Maspeth and some of the issues encountered by the police and Department of Transportation (DOT) in fully implementing the bypass and we now all look forward to a formal one-year report from the City's Department of Transportation this fall.

Deadline for re-opened 9/11 Compensation Fund

Those who are 9/11 survivors or first responders and have discovered they have an injury or become sick as a result of the September 11, 2001 attacks are facing an October 3 deadline to register with the newly-reopened September 11 Victim Compensation Fund. The Fund, which also may be available to family members, was reopened when the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010 was signed into law. For information about the Victim Compensation Fund or to apply call 1-855-885-1555 or visit the www.vcf.gov website.

Look for STAR Benefits mailing

New legislation requires that all homeowners who receive Basic STAR property tax exemptions will need to re-register to continue receiving the benefit in 2014 and future years. The basic STAR is available for owner-occupied primary residents where the resident owner and spouse have an income of \$500,000 or less and exempts the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home. Information about the change, which was made to reduce fraud in the old program, will be mailed this fall to all who already receive the exemption. Seniors already signed up for the Enhanced STAR Program, which provides additional benefits to those homeowners over the age of 65, do not need to re-register since they must provide an annual income verification.

WOODSIDE SUMMER SENIOR FAIR

The members of the Woodside Senior Center celebrated the summer by taking their fine crafts to the outdoors for their annual summer fair and sale. I was pleased to join Director Matthew Accona and see some of the outstanding work of the creative members.



COMMEMORATE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

New York women were trailblazers in securing the right to vote for women in America. We commemorated the centennial of one of their initiatives when the Legislative Women's Caucus and Votes for Women 2020 honored the "Spirit of 1776" suffrage campaign wagon in Albany recently. Edna Buckman Kearns was one of the riders who crossed the Queensborough Bridge in 1913 to travel across Long Island to speak out at public forums and meetings in a campaign that eventually resulted in bringing all American women the right to vote.



INDUCT NEW CHAMBER OFFICERS

It was an honor for me to formally induct the new leaders of the Maspeth Chamber of Commerce at a recent meeting and learn about their interest in bringing a business improvement district to the commercial heart of our community. From left are: Jim O'Kane, past President; Maryanna Zero, Corresponding Secretary; Michael Terry, Recording Secretary and past President; Nick Bamonte, Vice President; Joseph A. Papavero; Treasurer; and David Daraio, Senior VP of Maspeth Federal Savings, the new President.



2013 session in Albany - Continued from page 1

including \$25 million for full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten grants and additional half-day pre-K slots.

We know that providing financial relief to hardworking families is important, but that alone is not enough to get New York moving in the right direction. We moved aggressively to invest in programs to get our economy back on track including creating START-UP NY, which will foster job creation by creating tax-free zones for eligible businesses near CUNY and SUNY campuses as well as private colleges and universities. We created a tax credit for businesses that hire veterans; reduced the tax on manufacturing companies; and reformed the Workers' Compensation program and Unemployment Insurance systems to immediately save New York businesses \$446.5 million annually.

During the session we also passed the most comprehensive gun safety law in the country in order to save lives, increased penalties for repeat child abusers, assisted New Yorkers as they rebuild from the devastating effects of Superstorm Sandy and created a \$1 billion affordable housing program to preserve and create 14,300 affordable housing units.

Some other important accomplishments during our session this year include:

- Legislation I sponsored to protect children from careless drivers by authorizing high-tech cameras to enforce school zone speed limits.
- Establishment of the Freelancers Health Plan in legislation I sponsored to extend affordable health insurance coverage to independent contractors who are members of the Freelancers Union.
- Creation of a Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to expand health food choices for seniors by providing coupons that can be used to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets across the state.
- Creation of a \$350 tax credit per child for families with incomes between \$40,000 and \$300,000 to provide relief for parents and guardians struggling to meet the costs of raising children.

WE HONOR OUR HEROES ON MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is a time when we celebrate country and community as we honor those who have sacrificed to ensure our freedoms and thank the men and women who serve in our armed forces. This year I was proud to participate in several ceremonies in Woodside and Maspeth to mark this sacred day.

In Maspeth, Grand Marshals for our annual parade were Maryanna Zero and Joseph B. Papavero. Maspeth Veteran Awards were also presented to Joseph Romano, U.S. Navy; and Donald Steinkmaker, U.S. Army. Maryann Todzia received a Maspeth Citizen Award; and Robert Rodriguez was remembered on the tenth anniversary of his ultimate sacrifice.

Memorial Day ceremonies at Doughboy Park in Woodside celebrated the park's 90th anniversary. The commemoration also paid tribute to individuals and organizations who work throughout the year to look after the park. They included the Woodside Civic Association and Ed Bergendahl, its president and an honored Korean War veteran, and Edward Cartagena, superintendent of a nearby residential building.

Ceremonies at Boulevard Gardens honored more than 30 members of the Boulevard Gardens American Legion Post 1836 and the Post's Women's Auxiliary for their service and for their outstanding work in keeping alive the sacred memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Special tribute was also paid to the late Albert J. Matousek, a past Commander of the Post.



Long-time members of Boulevard Gardens American Legion Post 1836 and its Women's Auxiliary were honored.



Woodside on the Move marked Memorial Day with a concert. Before it started, I presented an Assembly Proclamation to its organizers, including Commander Gerald Olt, Woodside Civic Association's Ed Bergendahl, Witold Rak, Adrian Bordonni, Jeffrey Swansen and Pat Gualtieri of the United War Veterans Council.



We honored Woodside Parade Grand Marshal Gary Jacobson, past Post Commander of St. Sebastian Catholic War Veterans Post.



Maspeth Grand Marshals Maryanna Zero and Joseph B. Papavero with me on Grand Avenue.



The 90th anniversary of Doughboy Park was commemorated and Congressman Joseph Crowley, Assemblyman Michael DenDekker and I were there to thank those who volunteer throughout the year to keep its spirit strong.

State economic development grants boost tourism in Queens

With 52 million visitors to New York City last year, Queens is already the city's second most important borough for the tourist and travel industry. This year, thanks to economic development funding from New York State, the Queens Chamber of Commerce and the Queens Tourism Council are cooperating to reap even more of the tremendous potential of this economic sector for our borough.

There are currently more than 43,000 tourism-related jobs in Queens, nearly 100 hotels and a host of museums, cultural organizations, restaurants and such major venues as Citi Field, the U.S. Tennis Association, and Resorts World Casino.

Unlocking the enormous economic potential of the tourism industry in Queens has long been an important goal for me. Earlier this year I provided a grant of \$70,000 to the Queens Tourism Council to help spread the word about this array of attractions and services in what must be the most diverse county in America.

Another exciting tourism program that has debuted this year is the "This is Queens" smartphone app, developed with \$100,000 in funding from the New York State Department of Economic Development. The free service tells users where they can stay and eat and also suggests additional activities for them at locations throughout the borough. It also provides photos and information on the borough's cultural and entertainment attractions and provides directions by train, bus or walking. Get this free app by going to the ThisisQueens.com website.

As we see the continuing enhancement of Queens cultural facilities and historic sites and the expansion of tourism and entertainment opportunities in locales as diverse as Long Island City and Flushing, we can expect the travel industry to continue to produce new jobs and economic vitality for our borough and I am delighted that the State of New York State is helping.



MUSEUM WEEK IN QUEENS

I joined the Queens Tourism Council at the New York Hall of Science to kick off the second annual New York State Museum Week, sponsored by the NYS Economic Development Department's "I Love NY" program. This program is a wonderful way to put the spotlight on the terrific array of attractions that are available here and across the state, but every resident of Queens may enjoy one of the many museums, historic and cultural sites in our exciting borough throughout the year.

Assemblywoman

MARGARET MARKEY

invites you to enjoy a night of music with...

PHIL COSTA

and the **“SOMETHING SPECIAL”** Orchestra



Performing

Big Band Era

and

Patriotic Songs

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

JUNIPER VALLEY PARK
(Juniper Blvd. North & 80th Street)

7 to 9 p.m.

Please Bring Your Own Lawn Chair

(Rain Date: Thursday, September 5 • 7 to 9 p.m.)

co-sponsored by:

**NYC Department of
Parks and Recreation**

NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME IN 104TH

Community leaders and residents turned out in full force to mark the commemoration of the 2013 National Night Out Against Crime as the NYPD and the 104th Precinct Community Council presented the annual event at Mafera Park. I was pleased to join with my colleagues in government, including Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan, and Assemblyman Mike Miller in saluting the work of the 104th Precinct commander, Captain Christopher M. Manson, and his fine community affairs and patrol officers.

