



Assemblyman

**JOSEPH D. MORELLE**

Reports to the People

**SUMMER 2011**

## At a crossroads, New York moving in the right direction

Dear Neighbor,

A year ago, many of you were rightly questioning whether the will existed in Albany to make the difficult and long-overdue changes necessary to head off fiscal disaster, restore credibility to state government and begin a new era of prosperity that would once again earn New York the right to call itself the Empire State.

Since the inauguration of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the record speaks for itself: An on-time budget that cut spending, closed a \$10 billion deficit, and did not raise taxes; a historic property tax cap agreement that includes mandate relief for local governments; approval of a bill holding lawmakers and state officials to a new code of ethics; marriage equality for New Yorkers; and continued progress toward independent redistricting.

It has been a long time since it was possible to say "Albany had a productive year," but in 2011 we can say it, even as we acknowledge that the momentum must be sustained so we eliminate future deficits, rebuild our economy and reestablish public trust in our institutions.

I hope you will find this newsletter an informative recap of the changes taking place in Albany. I also want to take this opportunity to update you about my own legislative agenda, which continues to focus on job creation through innovation and improved access to health care for all our citizens.

As always, feel free to contact my office with any thoughts or concerns you have about the issues facing our state. Please accept my best wishes to you and your family for a great summer season.

Warmest personal regards,

1945 East Ridge Road, Rochester, NY 14622 • 585-467-0410  
716 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5373  
morellj@assembly.state.ny.us

## Morelle Senior Health Fair Aug. 18

As I do each year, I will host a senior health fair this summer offering free cholesterol, blood pressure, hearing and eye tests with representatives from dozens of local agencies on hand to help seniors live healthier lives.

Call my office at 585-467-0410 for more information. Hope to see you there!

**What: Morelle Senior Health Fair**

**When: 9 a.m. to Noon,  
Thursday, Aug. 18, 2011**

**Where: Temple B'rith Kodesh  
2131 Elmwood Avenue  
Brighton (near Brighton Town Hall)**



Joe joins University of Rochester CEO Bradford Berk, Rochester Assemblyman David Gantt and Rochester philanthropist E. Philip Saunders at the April opening of the Saunders Clinical and Translational Science Building, named in honor of Mr. Saunders in recognition of his invaluable assistance in making this new facility a reality. State funding also contributed to the opening of this latest addition to the U of R.

### A breakthrough State budget

On Feb. 1, Gov. Cuomo broke 15 years of rising spending with a budget proposal that reduced year-to-year expenditures by \$3.6 billion, closed a projected FY 2011-12 deficit of \$10 billion and significantly reduced out-year deficits as well, all of this without raising taxes. The legislature approved the budget by the April 1 deadline, making this the first on-time budget since 2006.

A single responsible budget cannot resolve all of New York's long-standing economic and fiscal woes, but this was a clear step in the right direction. That is why, for the first time in years, I cast a "yes" vote on a state spending plan.

The budget also calls for consolidation of agencies, a plan to cut the cost of Medicaid by more than \$2 billion in the coming year and the formation of regional economic councils headed by Lt. Gov. Robert Duffy for the purpose of retooling our economy for the 21st Century. This last point is crucial, since job growth and the expansion of the private sector will be the single most important element of any effort to achieve long-term fiscal stability.

I applaud Gov. Cuomo for his leadership and for making the hard decisions necessary to put New York on the path to a new era of accountability and prosperity.



### Protecting our hardworking taxpayers

There may be no issue more pressing for hardworking families than their ever-rising property taxes. New York has the highest property taxes per home value in the nation, a distinction we simply can't afford.

That's why I'm pleased that the Assembly and Senate approved Gov. Cuomo's proposal for a property tax cap that limits increases to 2 percent or the rate of inflation, depending on which is lower, a restriction that may be lifted only through popular referendum. Importantly,

the plan includes a mandate relief council under which municipalities can appeal state mandates or regulations they feel are onerous, costly and unnecessary.

A property tax cap is only an interim measure for providing relief, but an important one that sends the right message to current and prospective residents and employers: We will no longer tolerate the excessive taxation that has slowed our population growth to a crawl and driven jobs and people away from New York.

### New standards for ethics in New York

This session saw approval of a sweeping ethics reform proposal establishing a new independent investigatory commission, requiring lawmakers to reveal outside sources of income and ultimately reducing the power of party influence and the impact of partisanship within state government.

Rebuilding public trust in state institutions is essential if we are to make all the other changes needed in Albany.

While ultimately each member of the executive and legislative branches must make personal choices with respect to ethics, we have now established a system that forces them to be accountable for those choices.

As one who has consistently supported major governmental reforms in the past, I view this as a major victory for the citizens and taxpayers of New York.

### Hydrogen fuel cell initiative for the future

In December 2010, I convened a consortium of leading car makers, energy producers and business advocates to determine how New York could take the lead in the research and development of a new generation of vehicles powered by hydrogen fuel cells.

Recently, the group held a two-day conference in Albany that included demonstrations of fuel cell cars and the release of a proposal for a R&D partnership between New York and the private sector, a partnership that could mean tens of thousands of jobs and a reduction of our dependence on costly foreign oil.

The Assembly later passed a resolution authored by me urging our congressional delegates to commit to a similar course at the federal level.

I am grateful to the members of the consortium for their great contributions and commitment to helping build New York's "hydrogen highway" to the future.



*Joe checks out the engine of a hydrogen fuel cell car.*

### Hi-tech jobs for the Rochester region

Last year, I announced the impending arrival of three new companies and more than 250 high-paying, hi-tech jobs at the former Eastman Kodak facilities in Greece and Rochester. This was the result of more than a year of negotiations between me, Greater Rochester Enterprise and Empire State Development Corporation. Together, we ensured that jobs that might have gone overseas or to other states were promised to our region.

I'm pleased to report that under the management of Perinton-based Trillium Group, all three companies have

begun operations at Eastman Business Park, with ramping up of hiring to begin next year. Ultimately, it's expected that this deal will bring more than \$100 million in private investment to the local economy.

Private and public sector leaders must continue to aggressively market our region and our state in order to write more success stories like this one. I look forward to playing an ongoing role in that critical effort.

### Fighting for families touched by autism

In 2010, parents with children diagnosed with autism were given hope when both houses of the legislature unanimously approved my legislation calling for insurance coverage of clinically proven autism treatments and therapies. This year, and with the support of many autism advocacy groups, I introduced an updated version of the autism bill that was once again unanimously adopted.

I am hopeful Governor Cuomo will sign this bill into law, because this will mean peace of mind for parents who in the past have had to balance their child's medical needs with their ability to pay for them.

As chairman of the Assembly's Committee on Insurance, I will continue to fight for health care parity on behalf of the nearly 1 in 100 children on the autism spectrum.



*East Irondequoit Middle School students ask Joe about his autism health insurance bill.*



*Joe celebrates the opening of Linear Garden with Marilyn Parchus, Karen Olyslager and Marilyn Schutte of the North Winton Village Association.*

### Dedicating linear garden space for city's North Winton Village

Last year, I secured an agreement with JP Morgan Chase Bank for the donation of a parcel of land near the intersection of Main Street and N. Winton Road to the City of Rochester for use as a garden and green space.

On July 1, Mayor Tom Richards, Chase Bank and the residents of the North Winton Village planted a ceremonial tree marking the dedication of the Linear Garden.

Many thanks to the Mayor, Chase Bank, City Council and Marilyn Schutte and Marilyn Parchus of the North Winton Village Association for their efforts in bringing this project to a successful conclusion.

### Supporting our local growers and agricultural economy

In a successful effort to avoid the abolishment of the Genesee Regional Valley Market Authority (GRVMA), I helped broker an agreement in 2010 reforming the Authority's management structure and distributing a portion of its surplus fund balance to other agricultural institutions in the Rochester region.

In June, the legislature approved a bill affirming that the Authority's surplus may be used to support a broad range of agricultural organizations. To date, the Rochester Public Market has received \$2 million, with another \$250,000 going to the Town of Brighton for the creation of a winter farm market and another \$250,000 granted to the New York Wine and Culinary Center in Canandaigua.

The agreement we reached preserves the GRVMA and its original mission while supporting the vitally important agricultural economy of the Genesee Valley, which remains the bread basket of upstate New York.

### More progress on Sea Breeze Drive, Interstate 590 improvement project

After complaints from citizens and a community forum I hosted last year, the state Department of Transportation agreed to correct the new lane striping on Interstate 590 by adding a lane on 590 North between East Ridge Road and Titus Avenue and extending the merge lane from Sea Breeze Drive onto 590 South.

Improvements include restoration of the second lane on 590 South from Titus Avenue to East Ridge Road, the third lane on 590 North from the 104 West ramp to the 104 East ramp and pavement and drainage improvements on 104 from Culver Road to the Bay Bridge. All work should be completed by summer's end.

I greatly appreciate the local state transportation representatives for their cooperation in making Sea Breeze Drive a safer, better gateway to our community.

### Remembering the sacrifice of our World War II veterans

In May, I was fortunate enough to greet local World War II veterans returning from one of the "Honor Flight" sojourns dedicated to commemorating the great and lasting contributions of the "Greatest Generation."

Surrounded by family and friends, these brave men and exemplary citizens were given proper honors by their fellow service men and women. It was a privilege to witness and be a part of a ceremony dedicated to individuals who fought to preserve freedom and liberty for the generations who have followed in their footsteps.

I am deeply grateful to the sponsors of the Honor Flight program and, most of all, to the veterans whose sacrifice must never be forgotten.



*A World War II veteran shares his thoughts with Joe at a recent Honor Flight ceremony.*