

Chemung County Democratic Committee

Chairperson's Corner



Welcome to the occasional newsletter of the Chemung County Democratic Committee.

Democrats are alive and well in Chemung County. Although some of our local races did not work out the way we would have liked them to, we did have some local successes. The entire Town Board of Erin, including Town

Clerk, is Democratic. Those Erin Dems up for reelection this year ran unopposed. George Kerteri remains Van Etten Town Supervisor. A big thank-you to all those Dems who ran for office.

2010 will be a banner election year. Not only are all the state-wide elected officials and both US Senators Gillibrand and Schumer are up for reelection, but Eric Massa will be running for Congress, and as important the entire County Legislator and Counter Executive are up for reelection. We are currently in the

process of identifying candidates, so if you are interested in running or know of someone who would be interested, please contact me.

Finally, I want to wish everyone all the best during this holiday season and a fantastic new year as well as a big thanks to Sue Skidmore and her daughter, Emily Coletta, for putting this newsletter together.

Elmira College Democrats News

Thanks to the leadership of Professor Jim Twombly and EC Dems Chair Abby Zeigler, we have a great working relationship. EC Dems assisted in getting their fellow students out to vote. In addition, they

continued their time-honored tradition of delivering literature to 3rd Council District voters at 4:30AM on Election Day.

Many thanks for their hard work!

Fundraising News

The County Committee is in the process of planning a fundraiser for early spring. We hope to get AG Andrew Cuomo as our special guest. We will need extra funds for a store front to help our many candidates in 2010.

Contributions to CCDC are always welcomed.

Checks can be written to:

Chemung County Democratic
Committee and mailed to our Treasurer
Marie Butcher,
1208 W. Water Street,
Elmira, N.Y. 14905

or visit our website at:
www.chemungdems.com to contribute.

City Tackling 2010 Budget, Neighborhoods



By John Tonello

Despite a national economy that continues to wreak havoc on business, jobs and government revenue, the City of Elmira remains in strong fiscal health as we enter a challenging 2010 budget cycle. Fortunately, changes we implemented over the past four years – including tighter controls on spending – continue to pay dividends to city taxpayers. The City Manager’s proposed budget keeps spending flat and recommends an average tax increase of just \$1.33 per month, or 1.7 percent, for the average homeowner despite the fact that sales tax revenue is down, property tax revenue is flat, pension costs are soaring, and state and federal aid are far from guaranteed.

City Council, city staff and I will go over the proposed budget in detail at public budget workshops planned for shortly after the first of the year. Our priorities remain focused on fully staffing our police and fire departments, ensuring ongoing investment

in roads and public works, and as always doing more with less. Over the past year, internal changes have enabled the City to cut staff without cutting services. Shared services with Chemung County have enabled us to save money on highway and information technology, while a two-year-old agreement with the Town of Southport has enabled us to combine assessing services. Though sharing of services often don’t save money outright, these efforts slow the rate of growth in city costs and, when appropriate, they’re worth pursuing.

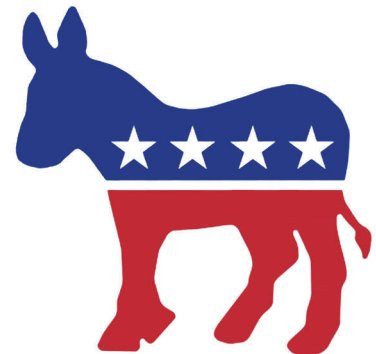
In addition to our work on the 2010 budget, City Council continues to aggressively pursue efforts to improve city neighborhoods. Over the past two years, we have approved a number of ordinance changes aimed at this goal. Most recently, Council approved two ordinances that require all rental properties to be registered and certified. The changes apply to multi-unit apartments, not single-family homes or hospitals or hotels. The ordinances require landlords to complete a simple form that provides the city with basic contact information. This registration is free and designed to be simple. It will allow us to work with landlords so we can more easily contact them in case of problems.

Any rental property that is registered in a timely fashion (90 days from the Dec. 4 implementation date) is deemed “certified” and the owner need do nothing more for as long as he or she owns the property. However, if the property owner does not register a property or the property is the site of chronic police or code problems, the property can be shut down. We want to discourage chronic irresponsible behavior that degrades neighborhoods, and we

believe this approach – which is the culmination of more than a year’s work – is part of solution. We’re also working with the district attorney on reviving the appearance-ticket program that enables the DA’s office to successfully prosecute tenants who damage or destroy property.

In addition to these broad efforts, the city is working with several teams of Cornell students to develop plans for Brand Park, Riverfront Park, City Hall interior space and a downtown parking lot. The Design Connect students are meeting with neighbors, gathering input and providing us with plans we can put to use right away. With Brand Park, our hope is to rejuvenate the space and preserve the Brand Park Pool structure as part of an adaptive reuse. With Riverfront Park, our aim is to make the space more usable, pedestrian-friendly and a better transition to the river. At City Hall, we’re hoping to reclaim unused space to better meet the needs of staff and visitors.

In 2010, look for work to begin on the Promenade Project downtown, roadwork on Washington Avenue, Broadway and other priority streets, and other improvements. As always, our goal is to keep Elmira fiscally healthy and a great place to live and work.



A Letter from Congressman Eric Massa



As winter begins, Congress is planning to stay in session until December 23rd as we continue working to address the issues facing our nation and our region.

Obviously healthcare has dominated the headlines, and all eyes are now on the Senate to see what they do. In the House we are continuing to work toward improving our economy and it is expected that we will start wrestling with a financial services bill which I hope will address several of the problems that caused this recession in the first place. We are now starting to hear that the Stimulus, while not an overnight solution, is having positive long-term results and we can expect to see more in the new year.

I look forward to seeing all of you at a town hall meeting or one of several other venues in the coming weeks.

Happy Holidays

Democratic Committee Member Spotlight: Keith Osborne

A life-time resident of Chemung County, Keith Osborne cut his political teeth when he first became UAW President at Schweitzer Aircraft. Upon becoming UAW President, Keith learned how political and union involvement went hand in hand. He became active in the union's political action program and later in local politics. Keith joined the Democratic Committee in 1976 and served as Chemung County Democratic Committee Chair for several years. He has been Democratic Elections Commissioner for nine years. As Elections Commissioner, Keith has been very involved in the transition to the new type of voting machine, mandated by HAVA.

Keith is very devoted to his family. He and his wife Ann are the proud great-grandparents of Aubrie, born in 2008, in addition to having 4 grandchildren.

We thank Keith for all of his years of service to the Democratic Party and Board of Elections.

Always Looking for Articles & News of Interest for Chemung County Democrats

Send your articles, story ideas or a brief story outline and/or non-copyrighted photos to me, Susan Skidmore, at:

sjskidmore1@msn.com

or 518 W. Third Street, Elmira, N.Y. 14901.

Don't forget to include YOUR name and contact information.