



Reaffirming Commitment to Veterans



Legislators Take a Tour of Proposed Soldier On Site

Members of the Albany County Legislature toured the former Ann Lee Nursing Home, above, with representatives from Soldier On and Beacon Communities on November 10 to discuss plans for the future housing project for area veterans. Legislators included Chair Andrew Joyce, Majority Leader Dennis Feeney, Deputy Majority Leader Lynne Lekakis, Minority Leader Frank Mauriello, Joseph O'Brien, Richard Touchette, Patrice Lockhart, Mark Grimm, and Peter Crouse.

[See more Veterans Day Activities on Page 3](#)



Legislature Requests Analysis of County 911 Infrastructure

The Albany County Legislature is partnering with the Albany County Sheriff to undertake an analysis of the telecommunications infrastructure throughout the county to identify areas that need to be improved.

The study is a result of discussions between Chair Andrew Joyce, Deputy Minority Leader and District 23 Legislator Paul Burgdorf, District 25 Legislator

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Infrastructure from page 1

Joseph O'Brien and Sheriff Craig Apple about cell phone connectivity issues in areas like Colonie and Bethlehem and the potential public safety issue it presents.

"A while back I met with the sheriff, Mr. Burgdorf, and Mr. O'Brien from Colonie, and they identified cell phone reception connectivity issues that have been long standing in Colonie. I also shared my own experiences in the town of Bethlehem where cell phone coverage needs to be improved," Joyce said. "To us, this is a huge public safety issue, especially if people are trying to contact 911. We are fortunate to have a strong partnership with the sheriff who can bring vital resources to address this issue."

According to the resolution, the purpose of the study is to identify weak coverage areas, collect and analyze call data, solicit public input and make recommendations. The sheriff will hold public hearings, meeting with cellular carriers and their respective regulatory agencies, partnering with public and private entities which may have existing cellular infrastructure or technology and identifying remediation techniques to improve and enhance the existing cellular system.

"This is another example of bipartisanship. We collectively have concerns with our constituents in Albany County," O'Brien said. "The infrastructure has not kept up with the technology. The use of the cell phone has changed. It is no longer just a phone. We use it with apps, social media, email, texting and



Chair Andrew Joyce, center, is joined by Sheriff Craig Apple, Fire Chief Patrick O'Connor, Minority Leader Frank Mauriello, District 25 Legislator Joseph O'Brien, Deputy Minority Leader Paul Burgdorf and Colonie Police Chief Jonathan Teale during a press conference on November 13.

all that has affected the infrastructure. Now the towers that were put up in the early 2000s are overwhelmed by this additional activity. As a result, many of our phones have been lost in space."

"Cellular service in much of Colonie is terrible, with dropped calls and poor reception a threat to public safety. With many residents dropping land lines and relying exclusively on cell phones, we need reliable cell phone service to contact fire, police and emergency medical services," Burgdorf said. "The sheriff's review of Albany County telecommunications infrastructure and potential improvements should help all stakeholders improve cell service, and the day-to-day reliability of all our phones, with the goal of less failed calls."

Albany County Provides Funding in Support of Immigrant Legal Services

Albany County Legislature Chair Andrew Joyce and District 6 Legislator Samuel Fein joined Sheriff Craig Apple on November 14 to announce a new initiative to provide legal services to assist the immigration population currently housed at the Albany County Correctional Facility.

The Albany County Legislature has been working with Sheriff Apple to allocate \$170,000 from revenue received by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for boarding detainees at the facility and provide full-time legal assistance to those immigrants.

Albany County has received nearly \$4 million in revenue since June 27, 2018 when ICE began boarding detainees at the Albany County Correctional Facility. The facility provides access to health and human services to assist the detainees with their medical, nutritional, and religious issues. In addition, the sheriff and his staff have been

working with hundreds of lawyers, who provide their services free of charge.

"These folks are here and we have a choice. We can be the example that they need right now," Joyce said. "People are going to look back at this time 50 years from now and they are going to ask what we did with this opportunity. It is up to the local government to push back on this nationwide issue. I hope people can look at this endeavor, at this initiative, and realize that we are doing the right thing."

"We must do whatever we can to help those fleeing oppression who come to our country. The immigrants detained at the Albany County jail already have a much higher rate of being granted asylum than the national average, and this additional funding will provide additional assistance. In the Albany County Legislature, we are pushing to ensure that Albany County is a leader in being a welcoming place for all," said Fein.

Veterans Day Dedication Ceremony

Fire Pit for Proper Retirement, Disposal of American Flags



Our Lady of Angels Cemetery, 1389 Central Avenue, Colonie, hosted the dedication of a fire pit for the respectful retirement of American flags on November 12. Major Andrew Joyce, NY Army National Guard and Chair of the Albany County Legislature was special guest. The fire pit was the Eagle Scout Project of Sam Biskup of Troop 1279, chartered by Latham Community Baptist Church. Designing and planning a project that benefits an organization or community is a requirement to reach the rank of Eagle Scout.

The fire pit will be used to retire flags collected at Catholic Cemeteries through the Capital Region and will be made available to veterans' organizations for flag disposal ceremonies.



Please join the Albany County Legislature and spread some holiday cheer this season!

Each year the Albany County Legislature's Democratic Majority holds its annual Adopt-A-Family Program which provides essential items to deserving families. With your support and with the help of the Albany County Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Albany County Nursing Home, we will be providing gifts to over 20 families with children ranging in age from newborn to 15 years old as well as residents at our Nursing Home. With your generosity, you'll be making a contribution that will make life better for individuals in need right here in our community.

Please consider donating to the Albany County Legislature's Democratic Majority's annual Adopt-A-Family Program.



**Checks should be made payable to:
Albany County Legislative Event**

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Albany County Legislature Black Caucus

Members of the Legislature Black Caucus: Legislators Samuel Fein, Norma Chapman, Lucille McKnight, Wanda Willingham and William Clay, (Chair), stand in front of the new sign outside the LBC office on the 7th floor of the Harold L. Joyce Albany County Office Building, 112 State Street, Albany. Not pictured is Legislator Merton Simpson.

Albany County Legislators

District 1 – Lucille M. McKnight	District 21 – Brian Hogan
District 2 – Merton D. Simpson	District 22 – Peter B. Tunny
District 3 – Wanda F. Willingham	District 23 – Paul J. Burgdorf
District 4 – Norma J. Chapman	District 24 – Peter R. Crouse
District 5 – Christopher T. Higgins	District 25 – Joseph E. O’Brien
District 6 – Samuel L. Fein	District 26 – Patrice Lockart
District 7 – Douglas A. Bullock	District 27 – Frank A. Mauriello
District 8 – Lynne Lekakis	District 28 – Dennis A. Feeny
District 9 – Andrew Joyce	District 29 – Mark E. Grimm
District 10 – Gary W. Domalewicz	District 30 – Bryan M. Clenahan
District 11 – Frank J. Commisso	District 31 – Travis Stevens
District 12 – William M. Clay	District 32 – Paul Miller
District 13 – Raymond F. Joyce	District 33 – William Reinhardt
District 14 – Alison McLean Lane	District 34 – Joanne Cunningham
District 15 – Robert J. Beston	District 35 – Charles S. Dawson, Jr.
District 16 – Sean E. Ward	District 36 – Richard M. Mendick
District 17 – Ralph V. Signoracci	District 37 – Richard N. Touchette
District 18 – Gilbert F. Ethier	District 38 – Victoria Plotsky
District 19 – Todd A. Drake	District 39 – Christopher H. Smith
District 20 – David B. Mayo	

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