



Inclusion Through Diversity

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April 6, 2010
TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **April 6, 2010** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Work Continues to Finalize Health Insurance Consortium

County Administrator Joe Mareane, just returned from a day in Albany, reported to the Legislature on discussions with representatives of the State Insurance Department regarding financial aspects of the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium, specifically the matter of reserve requirements—how much money should be accumulated to reserves and the timing to accumulate these reserves. The administrator said he is hopeful that the dialogue will begin to bring to closure the financing issues related to the consortium and hopes that the issue of union representation also will be finalized soon. The local health insurance consortium, formed under Article 47 of state insurance law, will be the first of its kind in New York State. The Legislature had been scheduled to act on a resolution reaffirming the County's commitment to participate in the consortium in view of changed agreement language, but decided to delay consideration until its next meeting, since specific provisions are still pending.

Contact: County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551; Michael Lane, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 844-8313

Legislature Accepts State Airport Fund Agreement

The Legislature, by unanimous vote after little discussion, accepted, through a supplemental grant agreement, a nearly \$32,000 grant from the New York State Department of Transportation, as half of the non-federal contribution toward six projects at Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. (Legislator Jim Dennis was excused.) The Federal Aviation Administration supports 95% of the total project costs, with the other half of the non-federal share funded through airlines fees. Funded projects include preparation of the airport's "Green" Master Plan, purchase of three pieces of equipment, obstruction removal, and engineering design for a sand storage building.

Contact: Robert Nicholas, Manager, Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, 257-0456, Dooley Kiefer, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 257-7453.

Meredith Lawhead Honored as Distinguished Youth

Meredith Lawhead, age 14 of Ithaca, was honored as the latest Tompkins County Distinguished Youth, nominated by her mother, Heather Swift, for her "profound love for her community through her perpetual and continual volunteer service...using her time and talents in numerous ways." Highlights from Meredith's formal community service in 2009 include the following: Learning Web summer volunteer program; DeWitt Middle School mentor to incoming sixth graders; DeWitt Middle School food pantry collection; Alternative Gift Fair volunteer; ongoing service with the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes; Greenstar Cooperative Market; Ithaca Dragon Boat Club; Finger Lakes International Dragon Boat Festival; Salvation Army bell ringer; member of the National Junior Honor Society and DeWitt Middle School honor roll. Beyond her formal community service, Meredith is also praised for loving care of her mother, family, and home after her mother's recent spinal surgery and "countless acts of service that are never recognized." The Distinguished Youth Award is cosponsored by A&B Awards and Engraving, Bangs Ambulance Service, Purity Ice Cream, and Cayuga Radio Group.

Contact: Legislature Office

Other business:

- The Legislature heard an overview on the Department of Emergency Response from Director Lee Shurtleff. Shurtleff noted that the department has achieved many accomplishments over the past seven years—including the County’s new Public Safety Communications System and centralized dispatch through a new emergency response center. Annual telephone volume last year was nearly 194,000, an average of 531 calls per day, with 911 call volume more than triple the volume received in 2000, with a vast increase in wireless calls and development of new systems to adapt to changing communications technology.
- Complete Count Census Committee chair Pam Mackesey reported on the county’s census campaign, which included activities in towns and villages throughout the county on April 1st, National Census Day. The county’s overall response rate to date stands at 65%, higher than both New York State and national participation rates. The village of Freeville has the highest rate, at 77%. The Collegetown area of the City stands at 33%, and there will be a special event on Saturday, April 10. The Census will send enumerators to Collegetown early, beginning April 24.

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