



OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR  
TOWN OF RAMAPO  
237 Route 59  
Suffern, New York 10901  
(845) 357-5100 Fax: (845) 357-3877

Christopher P. St. Lawrence  
SUPERVISOR

**UPDATE: GIANTS, TAX CREDIT FOR VOLUNTEERS AND  
CONGESTION PRICING**

February 4, 2008

Sunday's victory by the New York Giants over the undefeated New England Patriots was one of the best Superbowls I have ever watched. The ebb and flow of the action was something to behold, with the twelve point underdog Giants going toe to toe with the undefeated Patriots. When the final seconds ticked off the clock, Eli Manning had escaped the shadow of Tom Brady, third string receiver David Tyree made a catch for the ages, rookies Steve Smith, Ahmad Bradshaw and Kevin Boss became household names, and last but not least, Coach Tom Coughlin will no longer be known as the "King of Scowl". In sports, like many other occupations, Coughlin discovered that a little humanity and a little tempering goes a long way. Just like many leaders who use carrots as well as sticks, Coach Tom Coughlin found a new mix. Perhaps his willingness to change is a lesson for us all.

Volunteer firefighters and ambulance corps workers as you get ready to prepare your tax return for the 2007 tax year, please remember that active volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers are now eligible for a \$200 Personal Income Tax Credit (\$400 for taxpayers who file a joint return and who each qualify for the credit). The \$200 Personal Income Tax Credit is available to active volunteers for the 2007 tax year even if you received a volunteer firefighter Real Property Tax Exemption in 2007. In other words, for the 2007 tax year, you can get both the Personal Income Tax Credit and the Real Property Tax Exemption.

Please note that for the 2008 tax year, a new State Law prohibits an active volunteer from receiving a Personal Income Tax Credit if the volunteer also receives a Real Property Tax Exemption. **I plan to actively lobby in Albany to have this blatantly unfair law overturned.** There is no reason why our dedicated volunteers should not receive both the Personal Income Tax Credit and a Real Property Tax Exemption!

Please call the Town of Ramapo Assessor's office immediately at 357-5100 for information on the status of your exemptions.

Last week, a New York State Commission approved a Congestion Pricing Plan for New York City, calling for rapid approval of the proposal by the New York City Council and the New York State Legislature. The Plan includes the following elements:

- A Congestion Pricing System from 60<sup>th</sup> Street to the southern tip of Manhattan during peak traffic times, 8:00 AM until 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday – drivers would be charged \$8.00.
- There will be no fees for trips within the zone as recommended by Mayor Michael Bloomberg.
- The Plan calls for money raised through Congestion Pricing Fees, estimated at \$491 million dollars annually to be dedicated to improvements in mass transit.
- Changes in the Tax Law to aid low income drivers was also recommended.
- The Plan recommends reducing the Congestion Pricing by the amount a driver pays in bridge tolls – meaning those drivers who pay the \$8.00 fee to cross the Hudson River would pay nothing in the Congestion Zone.

As I have stated in past commentaries, Mayor Bloomberg is to be commended for his pro-active visionary proposals to improve the New York City environment. However, the first step in improving New York's air quality should be the rehabilitation and expansion of the mass transit system in the City and the suburbs. Rockland County sends millions in tax dollars annually to the MTA, with little enhancement of Rockland transit in return. The new congestion charge would amount to a new tax of \$3,500 per year for the average Rockland commuter. This is nothing more than an additional regressive tax that will have the greatest negative impact on small businesses and middle class workers.

The residents of Rockland pay the sixth highest property taxes in the United States, outrageous utility bills, 62 cents tax on every gallon of gasoline purchased, and we receive the least amount of aid from the State and Federal Government compared to the revenue Rockland generates. Enough is enough!