

## SP Mayor, Council Make Appointments for 2012

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Township Council held its annual reorganization meeting Tuesday. The following are appointments made by Mayor Nancy Malool and the township council:

Municipal Manager Christopher Marion was appointed as the qualified purchasing agent; Tax Collector Lori Majeski was named tax search officer; Mr. Marion was appointed commissioner, Chief Financial Officer Lori Majeski was named alternate commissioner with Parks and Recreation Director Ray Poerio listed as the safety delegate to the Suburban Municipal Joint Insurance Fund.

Mr. Marion was appointed municipal housing liaison with Construction Official/Zoning Officer Robert LaCosta as the alternate housing liaison; Joseph Duff was named Union County Community Development representative with Jerry Illanovsky and Mr. Marion as alternate representatives. In addition, Mr. Marion was named affirmative action officer with Mr. Majeski as the alternate; Mr. Marion was appointed Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator with Public Property Director Kevin Ward and Mr. Poerio named alternates.

Fire Chief Jonathan Ellis was approved as the Right to Know Coordinator with Mr. Ward and Mr. Poerio as alternates.

Councilwoman Mary DePaola was appointed as council representative to

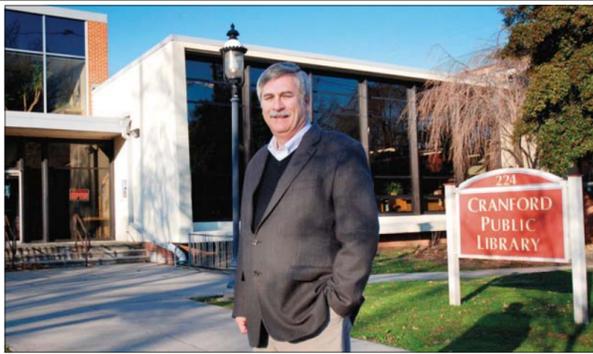
the planning board with Thomas Russo named an alternate no. 2 to the board.

Chris Abeel was reappointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment with Dan Sullivan reappointed as alternate no. 2. Bruce Bond was reappointed to the Construction Board of Appeals with Ralph Checchio named as an alternate.

The township council reappointed Suplee Clooney & Co. as the township auditor and the law firm of DiFrancesco, Bateman, Coly, Yospin, Kunzman, Davis and Lehrer as township attorney and appointed the firm of Florio, Perucci, Steinhardt and Fader LLC, of Rochelle Park and New York City, as the township's conflict counsel.

The firm of Rogut McCarthy LLC of Cranford was reappointed as township bond counsel with Cleary, Jacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs named as labor counsel. The Morristown firm of Finazzo, Cossolini, O'Leary, Meola & Hager LLC were reappointed as township prosecutor. The Scotch Plains law firm of Bramnick, Rodriguez, Mitterhoff, Grabas and Woodruff was appointed as the township's public defender.

Connor Strong of Marlton, N.J. was named health insurance broker/consultant while Pinnacle Risk Solutions of Pennsylvania was appointed as risk management consultant.



SOLAR POWERED...Outgoing Cranford Mayor Daniel Aschenbach stands before the Cranford Public Library where new rooftop solar panels were installed earlier this month.

## First Solar Panels Installed In Cranford, Linden Blds.

COUNTY — The Union County Renewable Energy Program kicked off earlier this year bringing solar power to more than two dozen public buildings throughout the county, and the first three projects are now in operation.

As of December 1, rooftop installations at the Cranford library, Cranford Community Center, and Linden library began generating electricity from photovoltaic panels.

"Union County has demonstrated its strong commitment to clean energy programs and Cranford appreciates the efficient execution of the solar project," outgoing Cranford Mayor Daniel Aschenbach said. "We would welcome the opportunity to participate in further solar installations."

"These new solar installations began saving money the minute they started running and they will help reduce the use of fuels that pollute our air," Freeholder Chairman Deborah Scanlon said.

The Renewable Energy Program was arranged by the Union County Improvement Authority through power purchase agreements. In these agreements the property owners do not own the solar equipment. Instead, they pay for the electricity generated by the photovoltaic panels at a rate lower than the price of conventional electricity.

"By participating in this program, our local governments and other public entities have taken Union County on the first steps toward a clean, renewable energy future," said Charlotte DeFilippo, executive director of the Improvement Authority and chairwoman of the Union County Democratic Committee. "Union County residents can be proud to claim this historic transition as a generational accomplishment."

The contractor for the Renewable Energy Program, Tioga Energy, Inc., installs, maintains and operates the solar installations. Each solar panel measures approximately three feet by five feet. The Cranford Community Center is the largest installation, consisting of 292 panels. It is capable of generating about 67,000 kilowatt hours per year, at a savings of about 8 cents per kilowatt hour, according

to a county press release.

The installation at the Cranford Public Library consists of 186 panels and is expected to save about eight cents per kilowatt hour. The Linden Public library installation consists of 86 panels and will save about 6.6 cents per kilowatt hour, according to the release.

Along with Cranford and Linden, the participating governments and public entities are Garwood, Hillside, the Hillside Board of Education, Morris-Union Jointure, the New Providence Board of Education, the Plainfield, Roselle, the Roselle Board of Education, Roselle Park, Springfield, Union County College, Union County Vo-Tech Schools, and the Winfield Board of Education.

Union County is also participating, with solar installations for the Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway and the county administration building in downtown Elizabeth. The total comes to 27 solar installations, all of which are expected to be completed within the next year.

## Codey Seeks Stiff Penalties for Driving While Using Cell Phone

TRENTON — Senator Richard Codey (D-27, Roseland) has called for action on legislation he has sponsored that would increase penalties for using a cell phone while driving.

The bill, S-2181, would put in place a graduated penalty structure for repeat offenders who violate the state's hands-free cell phone law more than once in a 10-year period — a motor vehicle violation that, under current law, carries a \$100 fine for first and subsequent offenses.

Under the bill as amended, first-time offenders would have to pay a fine of \$200. Drivers convicted of a second offense within 10 years of the first offense would have to pay a fine of \$400, and drivers convicted of a third and subsequent offenses within 10 years of the first would have to pay a fine of \$600 and face driver's license suspension of up to 90 days.

## Lenape Park Deer Hunt to Start Monday, January 9

COUNTY — The Union County Department of Parks and Community Renewal has released details of its annual Deer Management Program, which for the first time will tackle the problem of deer overpopulation in Lenape Park.

Since 1995, marksmen in the County of Union's state-approved deer management program have reduced the population of white-tailed deer in the Watchung Reservation substantially, according to a press release from the county's public information office. Last year, that effort was expanded to remove deer from portions of Passaic River Park in Summit.

"Union County has received complaints about deer-related impacts from residents around Lenape Park for several years. The Cranford Environmental Commission, the Cranford Tree Advisory Board and the Hanson Park Conservancy have all expressed concern for damage to and loss of landscape vegetation and a fear of Lyme disease. Browsing for food by large numbers of deer has caused a loss of forest understorey, especially in Lenape Park and Nomahegan Park, and threatens the survival of the plant and animal communities that are important to the ecology of these parks," according to the release.

In 2009, the Township of Cranford asked that the county investigate the extent of deer overpopulation in Lenape Park and take the appropriate steps to reduce the deer herd. Forest ecologists recommend a density of 20 deer per square mile in a healthy hardwood forest and as low as five per square mile in a forest that has been heavily damaged by browsing. Spotlight counts conducted by the county in April 2010 and April 2011 showed deer densities in excess of 300 per square mile, according to the press release. An analysis completed by the county recently showed that roads bordering Lenape and Nomahegan Parks had some of the highest numbers of deer-car collisions in the county over the past year.

Lenape Park covers 403 acres, or about 0.63 square mile, in the Township of Cranford. The hunt will begin on Monday, January 9, at 5 a.m. and will continue through the day. Hunters will be in the park from 5 a.m. until after dark, but shooting may only occur during daylight hours.

ships of Cranford, Springfield and Union, the Borough of Kenilworth and the Town of Westfield. During this initial effort, it is hoped that 125 deer will be removed from Lenape Park, according to the release.

Hunting in Lenape Park will occur on the five Mondays from January 9 to February 6. In the event of inclement weather on a Monday, the hunting activity may be moved to Wednesday of that week. Hunters will be in the park from 5 a.m. until after dark, but shooting may only occur during daylight hours.

Ten volunteer marksmen have already been chosen by the county from among the most experienced participants in past years of the Watchung Reservation deer management program. The licensed hunters will be wearing orange hats or vests and will hunt the deer from elevated positions, at least 20 feet up in the trees, over baited sites.

The hunters may keep any deer carcasses that they harvest. All other deer will be processed at a USDA-approved butcher. Venison will be distributed to the needy and homeless through the Community FoodBank of New Jersey in Hillside.

"Anyone found hunting on any Union County park property outside the terms of this program will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," according to the release. Citizens observing any such illegal activity are urged to immediately contact the Union County Police at (908) 654-9800.

The public should note that Lenape Park will not be closed during the deer management program. However, park patrons are urged to stay on the paved paths and to keep pets restrained on a leash.

The Union County Department of Parks and Community Renewal will distribute information about this deer management program to households surrounding Lenape Park. For further information, contact the Union County Department of Parks and Community Renewal at (908) 789-3682, or visit the Union County website at ucnj.org.

## Sweeney, Oliver Seek to Extend Unemployment Benefits in NJ

TRENTON — Senate President Stephen Sweeney (D-3, Gloucester) and Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver (D-34, East Orange) last Thursday announced plans to help laid-off New Jersey workers take advantage of extended federal unemployment benefits, vowing to pass new legislation authorizing the benefits before the current legislative session ends this Monday, January 9.

"With thousands of New Jerseyans still desperately seeking work, ensuring they can take full advantage of the extended federal benefit is the right thing to do," Senator Sweeney said. "Not only will these benefits keep the unemployed and their families afloat during this difficult period, but they are also the best form of economic stimulus. This is money that goes right back into the economy."

Asw. Oliver added that, "With the economy only showing intermittent signs of recovery, the federal extension of unemployment benefits is a life-saver for many New Jersey families. Businesses, while signaling that they intend to start hiring in the new year, have yet to do so in a healthy enough dose to make a considerable dent in our statewide unemployment rate, making the extension of these benefits all the more imperative."

With New Jersey's unemployment rate still hovering around 9 percent and 15,000 more individuals applying for benefits last week, the leaders say they welcome the federal extension to help beleaguered New Jersey residents desperately trying to find work.

The legislation, which is being drafted, would implement the option provided under legislation signed by

President Barack Obama, which would extend federal unemployment insurance (UI) benefits until February 29, two months after they were set to expire. The legislature unanimously passed similar legislation (S-2680/A-3795) in 2011 after the federal government extended UI benefits until January 3, 2012.

The legislation was signed by Governor Christie in April. Sen. Sweeney and Asw. Oliver said the new legislation to be introduced would include a trigger that would automatically extend the benefits at the state level should the federal government extend them again at any future date. The continuation of benefits will incur no costs to New Jersey's unemployment fund or employers in the state because the federal act provides 100 percent federal funding of the benefits throughout the extension.

"We've seen our unemployment rate improve in fits and starts, but have yet to see a sizeable and sustained improvement, as evidenced by the jump in applicants for unemployment benefits last week," Asw. Oliver added. "The lack of available work for our residents makes the extension of these benefits all the more crucial while we work towards creating long-term employment opportunities."

"We hope our colleagues across the aisle will work with us on these efforts and that Governor Christie will sign the benefits extension into law the second the bill hits his desk," Senator Sweeney said.

The legislative leaders hope to have the legislation ready for introduction when both houses reconvene on January 5.

## Kean: Dems Stalling Bill to End Unused Sick Day Payouts

TRENTON — New Jersey taxpayers can now view the cost to their individual communities of accumulated unused sick leave by public workers on the Senate Republicans'

### Interns Honored for Work In Kean's Office

WESTFIELD — Twelve interns were recently honored for their service to the 21st Legislative District office of Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (R-Westfield). Interns were awarded citations commending their work and dedication at the conclusion of the program.

Olivia Dunham of Westfield, Greg Gagliardi and Thomas Carannante of Mountainside and Raj Merchant of Scotch Plains were honored for their work in the legislative office. The 2011 summer intern group was comprised of both high school and college students who sought to serve their community as well as experience the inner workings of New Jersey's governmental process.

"Our program engages students in a way the classroom cannot, providing them the opportunity to play an active role in state government," Mr. Kean said.

The deadline to apply for the 2012 program is Thursday, March 15. Resumes and cover letters should be e-mailed to senkean@njleg.org.

website. The "Sick Leave Reform Calculator" demonstrates the financial liabilities incurred by local governments to date as a result of a special perk that has yet to be banned by lawmakers, according to the GOP.

Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, Jr. (R-21, Westfield) encouraged residents to visit seanatenj.com to view their own community's unused sick leave liability, and pressure Democratic lawmakers to pass the Republican bill to make sick time a "use it or lose it" proposition for public workers.

"Apparently, the value of preserving this perk to the Democrats' special interest allies trumps the value of doing the right thing for property taxpayers, which is truly unfortunate considering even the Senate President (Stephen Sweeney) admits sick leave should no longer carry cash value. This wrongheaded policy has already racked up an \$825 million liability to local budgets, and left to the (Democratic) Majority that policy will be allowed to continue in perpetuity," Senator Kean said.

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