



FORGING A FRIENDSHIP... Sergey B. Ivanovsky from the YMCA "Sunrise" in Moscow, center, and Stan Kaslusk, Executive Director of the Westfield Y, recently signed a Friendship Agreement. The two Y's have formed a friendship and partnership to help start a community YMCA in Moscow.

WCT-TV 36 Announces New Procedures for Bulletin Board

WESTFIELD — TV 36, the Westfield Community Television cable channel, has announced new guidelines for community groups seeking to air their messages on the Community Bulletin Board. Effective immediately, announcements intended for posting on the new Bulletin Board may be sent by fax or email to the Broadcast Center in the Municipal Building. The fax number is (908) 233-3077, and the email address is tv36calendar@westfieldnj.net. All announcements should include the name of the event, the time, day and date, as well as the

sponsor and purpose, and a telephone number for further information. Photographs, logos or other artwork may also be submitted to be considered for airing with the announcement. Photographs cannot be returned at this time. Items for the Bulletin Board should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event's date. A Westfield non-profit organization or school must sponsor the event. Only special events will be cablecast, not schedules. For further details, including a form on which to send photographs, please go online at <http://westfieldnj.net/tv36>.

Scotch Plains Recreation Events

The Scotch Plains Recreation Commission is sponsoring the following programs. All have June registrations. Please call (908) 322-6700 for specific dates:

Summer Park Program, Brookside, Farley and Green Forest Parks, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., beginning Monday, July 2, and concluding Friday, August 10.

The program, for children ages 6 to 13, costs \$10 per child and includes a T-shirt. It consists of arts and crafts, games, contests, special events and trips.

Small Fry Summer Program, Monday, July 9, through Thursday, August 2.

This program, for 4- and 5-year-olds, includes arts and crafts and games. It is available on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon. The cost of the program is \$25 for residents and \$30 for non-residents.

Youth Tennis Lessons, Monday, July 9, through Friday, July 20, Green Forest Park Courts.

Tennis lessons are for children aged 10 to 15 years old. The cost is \$5 for residents and \$10 for non-residents.

Summer Basketball Clinic, Monday, July 9, through Wednesday, August 22, at Kramer Manor Basketball Courts.

This clinic, open to boys and girls from third to eighth grades, will be held Mondays and Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. The clinic is an instructional league geared to teaching basketball fundamentals. The cost is \$5 per child.

Announcements:

The senior medical appointments are doing well. For further information, please call (908) 322-6700.

The Recreation Department is still looking for a few good employees for summer positions. Counselors for the park program (18 and older) and aides for the Small Fry program are needed. For more information, please call (908) 322-6700, extension no. 222.



REVIEWING PLANS... Union County Manager Michael J. Lapolla, left, shows off the county's artist rendering of the proposed \$13 million new Union County Police Headquarters to State Assemblyman Richard H. Bagger, center, and Westfield Mayor Gregory S. McDermott, right.

Chamber Members Get Update On Local, County and State Issues

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Members of Westfield's business community last week had the opportunity to hear about the many projects in the hopper at various levels of government during a Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce-sponsored legislative breakfast meeting.

The April 24 event, held at the Westfield Y, featured various elected officials as speakers. Among them was Westfield Mayor Gregory S. McDermott, who told chamber members that the town has been aggressively pursuing options to address the downtown parking capacity issue.

He said that, by September, he anticipates the town will have another 150 to 175 parking spaces to reduce waiting lists for commuter parking permits.

Of that number, 125 spaces will be generated by initiating a valet service in the South Avenue train station lot, a program that will utilize the aisles for added parking capacity. Another 13 spaces will be added by

eliminating one of three exits to the parking lot, while 30 more will come from the leasing of a privately-owned lot being constructed at Central Avenue and Cacciola Place.

In addition, the Mayor acknowledged that the town is moving ahead with implementation of a commuter jitney service to be operated by a private firm. Two routes — one on each side of town — would be established at the start of the program, serving over 100 persons.

On a related issue, the Mayor noted that police are strictly enforcing two-hour maximum parking restrictions and a non-meter feeding policy, resulting in parking spaces opening up in the downtown for shoppers.

"I know it's a little bit of a burden for some of the employees that are downtown, but we've got to be able to give people a place to park," he explained.

The town is looking to hire a full-time parking manager, "someone who will be able to oversee all of the parking issues in town," said Mr. McDermott. These include allocating parking spaces in municipal parking lots and enhancing the parking permit system.

On another front, the town will soon begin testing a new Internet-based customer service system aimed at addressing road repairs and other requests. The system tracks the problems called in, along with how quick the town responded to the calls.

On the issue of streetscape, the town is moving ahead with improvements to the area under the Central Avenue train overpass; the creation of a park-like setting on the Central Avenue side of the Rialto Theatre, and an improved walkway between the theater and the Windmill restaurant leading to municipal lot no. 5.

Also included is Bank Square, a project aimed at enhancing the intersection of East Broad and Elm Streets. A similar project is planned for Boulevard and South Avenue as well.

Prior to Mr. McDermott's remarks, County Manager Michael J. Lapolla, a Westfield resident, explained that the county also plans to improve the Springfield Avenue-East Broad Street intersection. The traffic signal will be redesigned, along with changes in traffic flow.

He said plans are in the works to signalize the intersection of Central Avenue, East Broad Street and Mountain Avenue. In addition, a signal is earmarked for the intersection of Chestnut and East Broad Streets.

The signal at Central, East Broad and Mountain will not only assist in

traffic flow but enhance pedestrian safety at the busy corner intersection where The Presbyterian Church in Westfield and the Rialto Theatre are located.

In addition, the lighted pedestrian crosswalk in front of Temple Emanuel will be upgraded so that when activated, the lights will proceed up two poles, so as to be viewed better by approaching motorists.

Mr. Lapolla noted the county's efforts to preserve undeveloped land through a new open space and historic preservation fund. The 20-year fund will assess county property owners at 1.5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The fund will raise \$105 million over the course of the program for open space acquisition and park upgrades.

He said the county's Board of Chosen Freeholders will soon be unveiling a program to provide direct assistance to municipalities in Union County to help them upgrade playgrounds and parks, as well as assistance with open space acquisitions.

Mr. Lapolla explained that construction on a new, \$13 million county police headquarters on North Avenue will begin in the fall. The new facility will house the county police, the Union County Emergency Management Team, the county Prosecutor's office and a crime laboratory.

"We think it will be a dramatic improvement compared to what's there now," he stated.

The County Manager also noted that plans are moving ahead on the Cross County Rail Line that will connect Midtown Elizabeth with Newark International Airport in its first phase and, in the second phase, proceed west to Plainfield. He said Westfielders, when the project is completed, will be able to take the line to the airport in 26 minutes.

Assemblyman Richard H. Bagger of Westfield, who chairs the Assembly Appropriations Committee, told Chamber members that New Jersey relies on the income tax as its chief source of revenue, followed by the sales tax.

"In the last five or six years, the economy of New Jersey has grown at an enormous rate, and state revenues in New Jersey, most particularly the income tax, have just exploded," he said, noting that income tax revenue has doubled over the past seven years. Income tax revenues have grown 15 percent over the past year.

On the downside, the Assemblyman said, there is a concern that this revenue source may "trail off in the future." He said the state is "more dependent than ever" on the income tax and, most importantly, on revenue generated from high income taxpayers.

Mr. Bagger called the sales tax "an accurate barometer of retail sales activity" in the state. He said the sales tax is experiencing a slow down in growth.

The Assemblyman noted that he has sponsored two pieces of legislation aimed at enhancing business districts. The first bill makes Main Street a permanent program in the state and, subsequently, appropriates funding for the program.

Mr. Bagger's bill would appropriate \$1 million annually to the Main Street program, which could be applied to assist communities who participate in Main Street programs. A provision in the bill would provide tax credits to any business in a Main Street community that adds employees.

The bill has passed the full Assembly and is pending in the State Senate, where Mr. Bagger expects it will be approved and become state law this spring.

The second piece of legislation appropriates \$5 million in zero interest loans for special improvement districts. The funding follows previous legislation that provided \$5 million in matching dollars as a private-public partnership — funds that quickly became depleted.

"I think Westfield made two terrific decisions. First to participate in the Main Street program, and second, to become a special improvement district," Mr. Bagger said.

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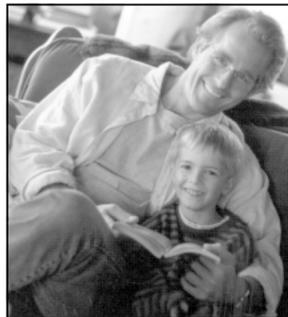
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