

Rotter Named Director of NJ Turnpike Authority

WOODBRIDGE — Kenneth Westfield Neighborhood Council and Rotter of Westfield was named as Westfield's Insurance Advisory Board. Acting Executive Director of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority (NJTA) on July 22 by the NJTA Board of Commissioners. He succeeds Michael Lapolla, also of Westfield, who has left the Turnpike Authority to join a private transportation company.



Kenneth Rotter

A Westfield resident since 1995, Mr. Rotter graduated magna cum laude from Drew University with a bachelor's degree in Russia area studies. He is also a graduate of Georgetown Law School. Mr. Rotter is the chairman of the Westfield Democrat Committee, serving since 2000. He has been active in the community in the past with the Raritan Valley Line Commuter Commission, the



Michael Lapolla

He and his wife, Bethany, have two sons, Maxwell and Benjamin. During Mr. Lapolla's tenure with NJTA since 2002, the Turnpike Authority and the Garden State Parkway Authority were merged, express EZPass was implemented, alternate tollbooths were added to decrease traffic congestion and the highways were widened. Speaking about his new position with the Turnpike Authority, Mr. Rotter told *The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, "Being appointed to this position gives me lots of opportunity to effectuate change and do positive things for many people."

Estrada: Moderate Driving Improves Fuel Efficiency

ELIZABETH — Union County residents can get big savings on gasoline by practicing safe driving habits, according to the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

"You may have heard that moderate driving is more fuel-efficient, but the actual results can surprise you," Freeholder Chairman Angel Estrada said. "Moderate driving uses much less gas and reduces global warming emissions. It helps to make our roads safer, too."

The savings from moderate driving can go over 30 percent, depending on a driver's current habits. Four of the most effective strategies are also the easiest to do:

Observe the posted speed limit. Fuel efficiency drops greatly at higher speeds.

Keep a safe following distance. Passing, weaving and tailgating all involve needless accelerating and braking, which wastes gas.

At intersections, avoid jackrabbit

Festival Seeks Colonial Native American Crafts

MOUNTAINSIDE — Union County is looking for artisans, crafts people and food vendors to demonstrate colonial or Native American work and craft skills and to sell their handcrafted wares at Union County's 27th Annual Harvest Festival on Sunday, September 28, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call the Department of Parks and Community Renewal at (908) 527-4900.

starts. Accelerating gradually is more fuel-efficient.

When waiting in line for school pick-ups and drive-through services, turn off the engine. Excessive idling is illegal in New Jersey. It also wastes gas and puts more wear and tear on the engine. After just 15 seconds, an idling car uses more gas than it would take to shut off and restart.

For even more savings, keep up with routine maintenance, and keep tires inflated properly. Removing unused roof racks and keeping the trunk free of excess weight can also help.

Avoid additives or devices that make extravagant claims for improving gas mileage. According to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), these products are scams that do not work, and some may cause engine damage.

A helpful FTC fact sheet, "Gasoline Saving Products: Fact or Fictitiousness," is available at ftc.gov. The fact sheet also provides more tips on cost-effective ways to save gas.

Contact the county's Office of Consumer Affairs with questions about consumer products and services at (908) 654-9840.

"Walking, biking, carpooling, and taking mass transportation are of course the best gas-savers, but when you need to use a car, driving safely and moderately is the 'green' way to go," Mr. Estrada said.

For more budget-friendly "green" tips, visit the Union County Green Connection at ucnj.org/greenconnect.

Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of *The Leader/Times*

Stender Gives Back Cohen Campaign Contributions

Asw. Linda Stender's Congressional Campaign has returned some \$6,000 in donations from the election fund of former Asm. Neil Cohen following revelations that Mr. Cohen was being investigated by the state attorney general for having child pornography images on his legislative office computer.

"Whatever he's given total, it's all given back," said Ed Oatman, chief of staff for Ms. Stender's legislative office.

Think Tank Launches Website To Track New York Spending

The Empire Center for New York State Policy, part of the Manhattan Institute think tank, has launched seethroughny.net, a website that tracks New York spending, the Associated Press has reported.

E.J. McMahon, director of the center, said the site offers databases for the payroll of more than 200,000 state government employees. Teacher's salaries and superintendent contracts are also available. State spending is also tracked.

Sen. Cardinale Critical of Sentence Given to Sharp James

State Senator Gerald Cardinale (LD-39, Demarest) said state and federal judges "must fully appreciate the impact" corruption is "having on [people's] lives." He made his comments in a letter to daily newspaper editors in denouncing Judge William Martini's 27-month sentence to former Newark Mayor Sharp James for corruption, politickecnj.com reported.

"(Judge) Martini noted that he was 'shocked and disappointed' that prosecutors did not recognize that their jobs were to seek justice, as well as prosecutions. The real shock and disappointment, however, is with public officials that fail to recognize the seriousness and harm that public corruption has inflicted on the lives of New Jersey residents," Mr. Cardinale said in his letter.

Ex-AC Mayor Given Probation For Defrauding Vets Admin.

Former Atlantic City Mayor Robert W. Levy Sr. was sentenced to three years of probation July 24 for defrauding the United States Department of Veterans Affairs of approximately \$25,000 in benefits, U.S. Attorney Chris Christie announced in a press release.

Levy was ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine and restitution in the amount of \$25,198 to the Department of Veterans Affairs. He resigned as mayor in 2007 and pleaded guilty to making false and fraudulent statements and representations concerning his mili-

tary service during the application process for veteran's benefits to the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Alaska Senator Indicted For Lying About Gifts

Republican Senator Ted Stevens, 84, of Alaska was indicted last month on charges he lied about receiving gifts of over \$250,000 from an Alaska-based energy company on whose behalf he intervened in Washington. Stevens is charged with "knowingly and willfully engaged in a scheme to conceal ... his continuing receipt of hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of things of value" by failing to report them on his annual financial disclosure forms.

Belmar Mayor Visits SI Following Ethnic Slurs

Belmar Mayor Ken Pingle visited Staten Island last Friday to try to make amends after ethnic slurs and stereotypes from him appeared in a Summer Belmar town newsletter and in the press. The comments were aimed at summer renters in Belmar. "I'm thrilled that I visited," Mr. Pingle told reporters. "It was an eye opening experience."

Advance Publications To Sell Star Ledger Unless 200 Take Buyout

According to the Associated Press, Advance Publications Inc. will sell *The Star-Ledger* of Newark unless 26 percent or 200 members of the 750-person staff accept buyouts by October 1. Advance will also sell the sister paper, *The Times of Trenton*, if 25 percent of its staff does not accept buyouts. *The Star-Ledger* has posted a loss for three consecutive years, and is set to lose between \$30 to \$40 million.

"Although we have implemented a variety of plans to reduce expenses and create new sources of revenue, our financial picture continues to deteriorate. We simply have been unable to offset the unprecedented and continuing steep decline in advertising revenue," *The Star-Ledger* Publisher George Arwady said.

The Star-Ledger will not look into laying-off employees due to a pledge in the employee handbook, which states no non-union employee will be fired for fiscal reasons. Currently, the paper has approximately 300 non-represented staffers.

Advance, controlled by the Newhouse family, also owns 26 daily newspapers including *The Oregonian*, *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, *The Times-Picayune* in New Orleans.

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Stender: Big Oil Reaps Profits As Families Struggle

FANWOOD — The Congressional campaign of Asw. Linda Stender said this week in a press release that at the same time consumers are paying almost \$4 a gallon for gas, "Exxon Mobil recently reported the highest quarterly profit ever for any American company. The world's largest publicly traded oil company reported income growth of 14 percent for the second quarter, to \$11.68 billion [*The New York Times*, July 31, 2008].

Exxon Mobil made nearly \$90,000 per minute from April through June of this year, according to the oil company's report.

"While New Jersey families are struggling to pay record gas prices, Big Oil continues to reap in record profits at our expense," said Ms. Stender, candidate for Congress in New Jersey's 7th District, said. "Our economy is in shambles, and families are forced to pay the rising costs of everything from gas to food to

healthcare. We are in an energy crisis, and must develop a real national energy policy that brings down gas prices and invests in renewable energy sources.

"Instead of tax breaks for Big Oil, we must end our dependence on foreign oil and invest in conservation, energy efficiency and 'green' technologies. Renewable fuels will help revitalize our economy and create good, new jobs. We need real change in Washington, not more of the same failed policies of the last seven years.

"The Bush Administration has led our country in the wrong direction, and I'm running for Congress to get us back on the right track," Ms. Stender said.

Ms. Stender is from Fanwood, where she and her husband, Richard, raised their three children and still reside today. She currently represents the 22nd Legislative District in the New Jersey Assembly.

Merkt: Corzine Should Fix NJ's Economy, Not DC's

TRENTON — Governor Jon Corzine traveled to a meeting with presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Barack Obama, during which the Governor called for another "stimulus plan" to pull the Nation out of its economic doldrums.

Republican Assemblyman Richard Merkt (LD-25, Brookside) questioned how the chief executive of New Jersey could be offering advice on fixing the national economy, "when he can't solve economic problems in his own state."

"The governor should solve the fiscal and budgetary challenges in New Jersey before presuming to offer advice on how to fix the national economy," Mr. Merkt said. "Corzine would be more credible as a prospective economic advisor if he reversed New Jersey's job and business losses, reduced property taxes, fixed the Transportation Trust Fund, and made New Jersey a more affordable place to live."

At a July 28 meeting with Mr. Corzine, who is described as being a "core economic advisor" to Mr. Obama, also suggested creating a "board of financial gurus" to oversee infrastructure construction projects, such as roads, tunnels and schools.

"There is particular irony in the governor suggesting a national board to give advice on infrastructure challenges," Mr. Merkt said. "That certainly isn't the approach he himself has followed in New Jersey on the very same issue."

He said Mr. Corzine has similarly dismissed many "common sense"

ideas to get New Jersey back on track economically, "simply because they did not originate in his office." Mr. Merkt suggested the governor should prepare to deal with eroding state revenues as Wall Street salaries and year-end bonuses shrink, due to the current bear market.

Mr. Merkt referred to a recent *New York Times* report that New York City's largest financial companies will pay \$18 billion less in salaries and benefits in 2008 than in 2007 and slash year-end bonuses by an estimated \$10 billion.

In addition, Mr. Merkt said far fewer New Jersey state employees are accepting early retirement than predicted by the Corzine administration.

"Clearly, the governor's economic crystal ball needs some fixing," observed Mr. Merkt. "It is already obvious that, while state revenues erode due to weakness on Wall Street, state expenses will run higher than expected, because far more employees than projected will remain on the state's payroll."

Lance: Stender Should Return Rangel Money

The campaign Republican 7th District candidate Leonard Lance released the following statements concerning his Democrat opponent Linda Stender's campaign funds:

"It took Linda Stender five days to give back the \$6,000 donated to her by Assemblyman Neil Cohen. But it has been 21 days since Stender fundraiser and supporter Rep. Charlie Rangel was reported to be under investigation for sweetheart housing deals and unethical fundraising practices.

"Linda Stender should continue to cleanse herself of all of her questionable campaign contributions and return the more than \$20,000 she received from Rangel and cancel her fundraiser with him," said Lance Campaign Manager Amanda Woloshen.

Adler Wants Windmill Project to Proceed

TRENTON — Senator John Adler (LD-6, Cherry Hill) said the State's Board of Public Utilities (BPU) should stop imposing "paralysis by analysis" and expedite approval of a windmill project off the coast of New Jersey.

"It's time to expedite approvals for the offshore windmill project. Other countries have had offshore windmill farms for years..." It seems as though there's too much wind in the Newark offices of the BPU and not enough determination to get offshore windmills tested promptly."

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