

Mayors Continue Efforts For Regional Flood Control

REGIONAL — Progress continued at the Mayor's Council on Rahway River Watershed Flood Control meeting Thursday night in Rahway.

Mayor Rick Proctor hosted the regional meeting and stated, "The continued regional engagement of the mayors in this effort to identify and implement flood control efforts on a regional basis will yield dividends."

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)/U.S. Army Corps study of the various Rahway River flood control alternatives remains in progress and on track. The Mayors Council provided numerous storage and control structure projects to the study team and the results of that review are expected in next few months, officials said.

The panel agreed that key priorities remain. They include better utilization of the Orange Reservoir for flood storage as well as other South Mountain ponds, changes to channels and control structures at Lenape Park, improvements to Nomehegan Park in Cranford and Echo Lake Park

Lance Wants C-Span to Air High Court Hearings

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th) is calling on his colleagues in the U.S. House to join him in a letter supporting C-SPAN's recent request to provide live televised coverage of the upcoming U.S. Supreme Court oral argument pertaining to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

"The constitutionality of the 2010 health care reform law is among the most important issues to come before the High Court in many years and the Court's decision will have significant consequences for the American people," Rep. Lance said. "It would be a fitting case for the Court's first televised argument. And I hope my colleagues will join me in support of C-SPAN's request and urge the Supreme Court to allow live televised broadcasting of the landmark case."

On November 15, 2011 C-SPAN Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Brian Lamb wrote to Chief Justice John Roberts requesting that C-SPAN be permitted to televise all five-and-one-half hours of oral argument live. A broad coalition of news organizations has also requested that the Court permit televising the proceedings.

in Mountainside/Westfield and improvements to county and state bridges.

On Thursday night the Mayor's Council decided to urge the Union County Freeholders to implement provisions of state legislation A-4267, legislation that would permit county open space funds to be used for acquisition of flood-prone properties. Both Cranford and Rahway have numerous properties that could be eligible.

Union Mayor Florio urged that the East Branch of the Rahway River be looked at for storage areas and be incorporated into the U.S. Army Corps study, a recommendation agreed to by the mayors.

In addition, Springfield Deputy Mayor Fernandez proposed, and the Council agreed, to review state legislation that would make it easier for town engineers to implement river maintenance projects.

A meeting of the engineers from the Rahway River communities will be scheduled in next month to review a plan for better river maintenance with the county, the proposed state legislation, and the Army Corps-DEP assessment of alternatives.

The Mayor's Council agreed to a master plan for the bridges along the Rahway River to ensure current and replacement bridges take into consideration impacts on flooding. As part of the DEP-Army Corps scope of services study, it was agreed that the Morris Avenue bridge, Milltown Road bridge, Route 22 bridge and Hazelwood Avenue bridge be included in the study.

Millburn Mayor Sandra Haimoff and Cranford Mayor David Robinson will host a meeting of Rahway River communities on February 15 at the Cranford Community Center to discuss best practices for stormwater management and development of a model ordinance that goes beyond state requirements.

Thursday's meeting concluded with an agreement that each community provide more details on the damage that Hurricane Irene caused so that state and federal legislators will better understand the need to implement or fund as many of the Mayor's Council requests as possible.

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Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of *The Leader/Times*

Mrs. DeCroce to Replace Husband, Alex, in Assembly
Betty Lou DeCroce has been picked by Republicans to take the state Assembly seat of her late husband, Alex DeCroce. Mr. DeCroce, the Assembly Republican leader since 2003, died at the Statehouse after collapsing following the end of the 2010-2011 Legislative session.

Mrs. DeCroce, the deputy commission of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, received nearly twice as many votes as her opponent, Larry Casha, a former Kinnelon councilman, nj.com reported.

Mrs. DeCroce is also a former Mine Hill Township councilwoman, and former Roxbury town clerk.

The new assemblywoman will represent the 26th district, which includes parts of Morris, Essex and Passaic counties.

Bryant On Trial Again for Second Corruption Case

A nonjury trial for former state Sen. Wayne Bryant was scheduled to begin this week. Bryant is serving a four-year prison term from another corruption case, nj.com has reported.

In the latest charges, Bryant is accused of taking \$192,000 in phony legal fees between 2004 and 2006 in exchange for exerting political influence to try to obtain billion-dollar redevelopment projects for Camden, Pennsauken and the New Jersey

Meadowlands. Bryant was convicted in 2008 on 12 corruption charges for taking a "low-show" job at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMNJ) in exchange for obtaining state money to the institution.

Shelley Adler to Run for House Seat Of Late Husband John Adler

Shelley Adler, the widow of former Democratic U.S. Rep. John Adler, has announced that she will run for his old seat currently occupied by Rep. Jon Runyan (R-3), the ex-Philadelphia Eagle who defeated the one-term Rep. Adler in 2010.

"For several months, I weighed running for the seat formerly held by my late husband to continue his legacy of public service. When I speak to people, they share their struggles with me and are frustrated by politicians playing games in Washington. They want a new direction," Mrs. Adler, a Democrat, was quoted as saying by *The Star-Ledger*.

Shelley Adler lives in Cherry Hill, which was removed from Rep. Runyan's district after district lines were redrawn. For federal elections, however, candidates don't have to live in the district they want to run in. The report did not say if Mrs. Adler plans to move.

Cherry Hill has been redistricted into the neighboring district of Rep. Rob Andrews (D-1st).

Pelletiere Named New Clerk of Freeholder Board

COUNTY — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders have appointed James Pelletiere as clerk of the freeholder board. Mr. Pelletiere began his new duties February 1. He will be paid \$80,000.

As Clerk of the Board, Mr. Pelletiere will be responsible for preparing and coordinating the activities of the freeholder meetings, acting as the depository of vital county documents, acting as the custodian of the official county seal, and providing administrative services for the board. He will succeed Nicole DiRado, who becomes the deputy clerk of Union County under County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi on February 1.

Mr. Pelletiere has worked for the county for 12 years, most recently as deputy director of the Office of Public Information.

He also served as a primary county spokesperson during Hurricane Irene in August 2011, coordinating the dissemination of information to the general public, municipal governments and the media.

Mr. Pelletiere holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in pre-law and public administration from Montclair State University and completed his certificate for the Masters of Public Administration from Kean University in May 2011.

'Cures' Act Breaks Down Barriers for Meds Research

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

WESTFIELD — Advocates, patients of chronic diseases as well of rare diseases including ALS, Alzheimer's and Osteoporosis, turned out at a press conference last Thursday in support of the MODERN Cures Act being sponsored by Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th).

The Congressman said his legislation is aimed at breaking down existing barriers on scientific research and to enhance the availability of medicines by speeding up the time in which they become available to patients.

"My bill would get the right medicines to the right people," Rep. Lance said. "The bill would establish a modern regulatory system benefiting patients for a range of conditions by encouraging the discovery and development of treatments for the many diseases that have few or no options."

He said the MODERN Cures Act, introduced in Congress in November, would "create a system that puts science first, rewarding efficiency and effectiveness to the benefit of all people."

Rep. Lance called the issue of finding cures and/or treatments for the thousands of rare diseases in the United States "not only a bipartisan issue" but a "non-partisan issue."

Among those attending Thursday's press conference at Rep. Lance's Westfield office was John Crowley, whose kids, Megan and Patrick, were diagnosed with a severe neuromuscular disorder, Glycogen storage disease type II, also called Pompe disease, in 1998. Mr. Crowley described Pompe as a "rare form of Muscular Dystrophy."

Mr. Crowley's story was the inspiration for the motion picture, *Extraordinary Measures* starring Harrison Ford, which was released January 2010. Mr. Crowley raised \$100 million to find a cure for Pompe.

Mr. Crowley is chairman and chief executive officer of Amicus Therapeutics, a biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of orally administered drugs used in the treatment of human genetic diseases.

He said there are 7,000 rare diseases in the United States affecting 30 million people on top of well-known illness like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and MS.

Mr. Crowley said the nature of clinical development of medicines is "about taking risks in science labs." He said the problem today is that "regulatory science has just not kept up" with medical science.

"I think what this bill will do is bridge that gap to change the paradigm," Mr. Crowley said. "And we're not doing this with billions of dollars in government money. What this bill does is provide a venue and the means so academic researchers from small companies like ours and larger companies... can have an entirely reduced regulatory environment."

Eric Gascho, director of government Affairs for the Washington-based National Health Council, said that while National Institutes of Health (NIH), the pharmaceutical industry and non-profits have doubled the amount of spending available on drug research over the last few years, "the number of treatments (on the market) has remained about stag-

nant."

"The MODERN Cures Act addresses many of these barriers," Mr. Gascho said. "The way that the system is set up, companies are incented to produce the products that they get to the market as fast as possible. These aren't necessarily the ones that are the most important."

"With The MODERN Cures Act we allow the science and not the law to dictate which products get through," Mr. Gascho said.

He said on average a drug will work on a patient about 60 percent of the time. However, in some fields such as oncology, drugs may work less than 10 percent of the time.

"We feel that by combining all the provisions that are in this bill it will really help us improve the amount of drugs that make it to market and the ways to predict which ones will work for which people," Mr. Gascho said.

Debbie Schlossberg, patient services coordinator for Greater New York Chapter of the ALS Association, said that ALS patients are often told their life expectancy is between two and five years. She said military veterans "are more than twice as likely to develop ALS."

She said there are 415 New Jersey ALS victims currently and that 700 New Jerseyans have died of the disease since 2002, including 50 from Union County.

"There is no known cause, no effective treatment and no cure," Ms. Schlossberg said. "But we at ALS are highly encouraged by the MODERN Cures Act. We know it's going to break down barriers for research. It will enable innovations in the lab."

Bonnie Anderson of Berkeley Heights, a survivor of mesothelioma, a disease resulting from exposure to asbestos, said most victims are told they will survive only 18 months. She is a 10-year survivor.

She Rep. Lance's bill would enable treatments for mesothelioma "to come through the pipeline faster" through the clinical trials. "They wouldn't have to wait 10 years of all this other type of testing before they are available to them, (and that) maybe people could survive mesothelioma."

The MODERN Cures Act was introduced by Rep. Lance in Congress on November 18. It has been referred to the Subcommittee on Intellectual Property, Competition and the Internet.

Kean Thanks Considine For His Efforts

TRENTON — Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, Jr. (R-21, Westfield) issued the following statement upon learning that Department of Banking and Insurance Commissioner Thomas Considine will be departing the Christie Administration to return to the private sector:

"Commissioner Considine was a tireless advocate for business who worked hard to streamline a regulatory process that had become overly burdensome and adversarial for job creators in New Jersey. Tom was an integral part of the Christie Administration's pro-growth, pro-jobs agenda. His expertise in the complexities of the insurance industry and commitment to protecting consumers will be missed."

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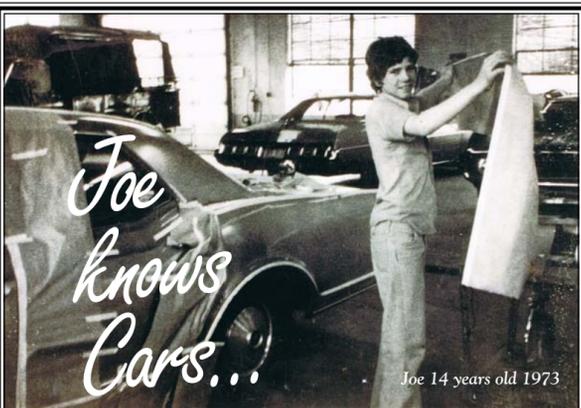
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