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Congressman Reynolds hangs up his political career to spend time with family

By MITCHELL LAW
Journal Reporter

After 34 years in office, Congressman Thomas Reynolds who is a Springville native, has decided to retire his political career and focus his attention on getting to know his grandchildren.

"I've spent an enormous amount of time and energy in my career," he said. Congressman Reynolds explained over the years, he has not really had a chance to spend time getting to know his four grandchildren.

"I hardly had a chance to really enjoy them and get to know them as a grandfather probably can and should," Reynolds admitted.

Over the years, Reynolds has focused his energy on helping people. He told the Journal in an interview on April 3, his reason to begin a career in government was helping others.

Serving on different levels of government, Reynolds said he learned that, "no problem is too big and no problem is too small in helping people."

Reynolds began his career in his hometown of Springville. He served as a councilman on the Concord Town Board in 1974 until he rose to the position of Deputy Supervisor.

"I've had a good, long run starting right in the town board of Concord," Reynolds said, adding, "I always had an interest in both government and politics."

From Springville, Reynolds became the Republican leader of the Erie County Legislature, later raising his position to State Legislator where he remained a leader.

Reynolds and his wife Donna moved from their home on Woodhaven Drive in Springville to Clarence when he was elected to U.S. Congress' 26th district.

There have been many challenges facing the country for which Reynolds came across.

Currently Reynolds said he and other members of congress are fighting to keep tax cuts which were enacted in 2001 and 2003.

"I think that people have an opportunity where they know better what to do with their money than having Washington bureaucrats spend it for them," Reynolds said. Second, Reynolds said he is fighting to remove the AMT tax. AMT (Alternative Minimum Tax) is part of the federal income tax system.

According to www.irs.gov, AMT targets upper middle class Americans. The AMT was introduced with the Tax Reform Act of 1969. Its purpose was to target a small number of high-income taxpayers who could claim so many deductions they owed little or no income tax. A growing number of middle-income taxpayers are discovering they are subject to the AMT.

"I've been able to lead efforts in both 2006 and 2007 on legislation that protected the middle class from getting caught, and having to pay AMT."

Congressman Reynolds has fought to keep tax dollars close to home. For instance, he is proud of the money that is spent on area universities, hospitals, Roswell and other colleges and infrastructure.

Another area of funding that has been kept in the area has been for the U.S. Route 219.

Reynolds said when he was a state legislator he worked with Governor George Pataki and Congressman Jack Quinn in an effort to make sure funds were in place for the continued effort to extend the Route 219 south, beyond Springville. "Building roads today isn't an easy task," he said, adding, "I'm glad to see that every level of government involved was able to continue that."

The S-GI graduate also said he has fought to make federal funding available for the West Valley cleanup.

Reynolds said that it's important to have the federal money to cleanup low level waste not only in the Town of Ashford for West Valley Demonstration Project but for the whole country.

"I'm pleased to work very hard on that," Reynolds said.

For now, Reynolds will continue his term in office, which expires at the end of this year.

The former Concord deputy supervisor said he has no future plans following the end of his term in office.

"I'll get a chance over the next several months to reflect on what I'd like to do for the next several years," the congressman said.

His success in office won't be forgotten and neither will his memories.

"I've enjoyed almost every minute of my elected terms in office at every level of government and they have all afforded me tremendous memories and great opportunities," he concluded.



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Concord encourages WVES to continue off-site radiation monitoring

By MITCHELL LAW
Journal Reporter

Safety and peace of mind was a concern to the Concord Town Board as West Valley Demonstration Project continues their decommissioning and cleanup process, led by West Valley Environmental Services (WVES).

At a recent board meeting, Councilman and liaison for the West Valley Task Force meetings, Bill Snyder, led the town in a proclamation encouraging WVES to continue monitoring radioactive levels at two sites, one in Springville and one in West Valley.

Monitoring of the air and soil at the corner of Route 240 and Route 39 in Springville and also on Route 240 in West Valley was discontinued recently by a decision from WVES.

When Snyder found out about WVES' decision to discontinue readings at those sites he brought it to the board's attention at a recent board meeting.

"We understand there have been no recorded dangerous levels of radioactive waste at the sites, but these sites provide peace of mind," Snyder said.

He added the sites have been in place for many years.

The board's proclamation was made in an effort to note the concern of the removal of these monitoring sites and to encourage WVES to put them back up.

"Environmental monitoring has been established to insure that the public health and safety continues to be protected," Snyder added.

According to John Chamberlain who is the spokesperson for WVES, Chamberlain explained that the monitoring sites at those locations have been in place since 1982 for air monitoring and soil samples and aren't the only places for monitoring.

There are several sites for monitoring which are located around the 200 acre West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) property and also around the 3,300 acres, on which is the New York State site that the WVDP sits on.

"Those two areas were taken down this year because they were deemed not to be necessary at this time," Chamberlain added.

The sites were established when environmental monitoring had been "ramped up."

Chamberlain believes that the stations were in place in the 1970s and 1980s to answer questions of the local population at the time.

"Readings at both those stations had been at the background level, in other words indistinguishable from which you get from anywhere else in Western New York," he said.

In other news, the board:

- Passed a referendum to expend \$25,000 from the reserve fund to help purchase a pickup truck,
- Awarded mowing bids, spring trash pickup bid, and approved 2008 Zylinski Clay mining permits,
- Announced May 1 as Paint the Town Purple Day to raise awareness for the second annual Relay For Life cancer fundraiser which will be held on June 20-21,
- Recognized Colden student Patrick O'Brien for his "compassion and selflessness in saving the life of his 88 year old neighbor,
- Heard Town of Concord Supervisor Gary Eppolito talk about his attendance at the Six Sigma meeting. Six Sigma is a new initiative by County Executive Chris Collins for Erie County Government. Eppolito explained how Six Sigma improves efficiency in government by being customer friendly, anticipating things that will happen and cutting unnecessary expenses.

One example of unnecessary expenses which were cut in county government were 300 cell phones which were supplied to county employees.

The next Town of Concord board meeting will be held on May 8 at 7 p.m. in the Concord Town Hall on Franklin Street, Springville.