



# NEWS

February 2015

## From Bill Magnarelli

**District:** 333 East Washington St., Syracuse, NY 13202 (315) 428-9651 **Albany:** LOB 837, Albany, 12248 (518) 455-4826

129<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Magnarw@assembly.state.ny.us

### A Lifeline in Syracuse and Onondaga County and Surrounding Counties is being threatened

The recent announcement by CENTRO of the potential cuts in transportation services due to financial losses is devastating news. I have recently written to Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and the Assembly Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, Herman Farrell, Jr., along with our Democratic Assembly delegation from Onondaga County, regarding the urgent need for increased state transit operating aid and related capital projects to Upstate transit systems. Our total requested funding for this budget is \$25 million.

Upstate transit systems, including Syracuse-based CENTRO, continue to struggle financially. State funding to Upstate systems has been flat since 2009 while costs to provide services and transit ridership continue to grow. CENTRO officials have cut services and staff, raised fares, reduced employee benefits, and kept annual budget increases to an average of 2.2% over the last six years. At the same time, there has been no change in the amount of revenue received from the State.

Despite their efforts, they must continue to look at further cuts. These potentially include: eliminating bus service after 9 pm on weekdays, 7 pm on Saturdays, and all service on Sundays and holidays; eliminating more services for persons with disabilities; eliminating bus trips to Utica; and, eliminating other services in Oswego and Cayuga Counties.

If CENTRO is forced to take these steps, it will impact the lives of many citizens who rely on this service to get to work, to go to medical appointments to receive life-saving medical treatment such as dialysis, and due to age or disabilities, use this service to maintain an independent life-style. If these cuts were to happen, we will add another untenable challenge to our working poor.

I will do everything I can to include this vital funding in the NYS 2015-16 budget.



**People pack City Hall hearing about CENTRO proposed cuts on Thursday, Feb. 9th. Assemblyman Magnarelli's staff attended.**

### Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli Appointed to Ethics Search Committee

On Friday, February 6, 2015, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie appointed a bi-partisan search committee for an Executive Director of the new Assembly Office of Ethics and Compliance.

Following his commitment to ensure the highest ethical standards in the State Assembly, Speaker Carl Heastie said, "The door is wide open for real change in the State Assembly to make this institution more open, transparent and accountable to the citizens of this State. In order to accomplish this, I have appointed a diverse group of members from this body to conduct a comprehensive search to identify national experts in the area of ethics and governance. Residents of this great State rightly expect government that is honest and beyond reproach, and this new office will work to ensure that their elected representatives are living up to the highest ethical standards."

Speaker Heastie said the search committee will be comprised of the following six members who have extensive experience in the practice of law and ethics:

- *Assemblyman Todd D. Kaminsky* – spent a decade in public service as a federal prosecutor (Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York) and assistant district attorney.
- *Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli* – a graduate of the Syracuse University College of Law, *Cum Laude*, and former Captain in the Army Reserves who has previously served as Chair of the Assembly Ethics Committee.
- *Assemblywoman Janet L. Duprey* – a dedicated public servant and currently serves as a member of the Assembly Ethics and Guidance Committee.
- *Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer* – a graduate of the Buffalo School of Law, served as an assistant attorney general in the office of the New York State Attorney General.
- *Assemblyman Philip Ramos* – served 20 years in the Suffolk County Police Department, retiring as a detective.
- *Assemblywoman Michele R. Titus* – served as an attorney for the New York City Board of Education, the Consumer Frauds Bureau of the New York State Attorney General's Office and the Integrity Bureau at the Queens County District Attorney's Office.

Assemblyman Magnarelli said upon his appointment, "The vast majority of the men and women with whom I have served in the Assembly are ethical stewards of the public trust, but the reality is that in a few cases that trust is misplaced. I am committed to working with Speaker Heastie and with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to move the People's house out from under the dark shadows that envelop us and into the bright light that public service was always meant to be. I am proud to be a member of his search committee and grateful to the Speaker for putting his faith in us."

# It's 5 O'Clock Somewhere



Assemblyman Magnarelli was on hand to “toast” the opening of the Margaritaville dining and retail facility in Destiny USA. The beautiful new dining facility is on the 3rd floor in the Canyon section of the mall, and is a slice of “Key West” brought to Syracuse. This is Margaritaville’s first location in New York State, and the restaurant has provided at least 200 new jobs for CNY. Margaritaville’s management has already become a part of our community by raising funds for *Say Yes to Education* so that our children in the Syracuse City School District can go on to college. So get on your flip flops, grab your shaker of salt and enjoy the laid-back atmosphere and ‘5’ o’clock somewhere’ attitude of Syracuse’s newest attraction.

## Income Tax Time:

### Tax credits available to help you save money

Too often, hardworking families miss the opportunity to save hundreds or even thousands of dollars in federal and state tax credits. These tax credits are in place to help families make their hard-earned dollars stretch just a little farther.

To help make sure you and your family don’t miss out on these tax credits, here are programs you may qualify for:

- The Empire State Child Credit, a refundable tax credit worth up to \$330 per child for ages 4-16;
- The Child and Dependent Care Credit, a tax credit based on a sliding income scale for working parents who pay for child care or those who live with a spouse or dependent who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care;
- The Federal Child Tax Credit, a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$1,000 per child under the age of 17, or the refundable Additional Child Tax Credit; and
- The Real Property Tax Credit, a refundable tax credit worth up to \$375 for eligible homeowners and renters.

Additionally, if eligible, you may be able to recoup portions of the income taxes that were withheld from your paycheck throughout the year. In fact, through an often overlooked tax break called the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), eligible taxpayers can get extra cash back from the IRS or New York State. These savings help many families cover their monthly bills and allow them to put some money away for the future.

Tax season doesn’t need to be a stressful time of year, and assistance is available to help you prepare your taxes. The IRS-certified volunteers with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provide free tax preparation services to individuals with families with annual incomes of \$53,000 or less.

For those 60 years of age and older, the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program can also provide assistance at no cost to you. To find the nearest VITA or TCE site, visit [www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep](http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep) or call 800-9069887.

I encourage you to set aside some time and check what tax credits you’re eligible for. These tax credits exist for our benefit; if you’re eligible, they can help you lower your taxes and even put money back in your pocket.

And, as always, please feel free to contact me about this or any other community issue at [www.magnarw@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:www.magnarw@assembly.state.ny.us) or call my office at 428-9651.

## Annual Labor Breakfast



Assemblyman Magnarelli hosted his annual Labor Breakfast on January 29<sup>th</sup> at the State Office Building. 27 Union Leaders attended the round-table discussion. Topics discussed by Assemblyman Magnarelli and local labor leaders included: investing in the State’s infrastructure, funding for public transportation, public education, funding for local hospitals, enforcement of “prevailing wage” laws, the Women’s Equality Agenda, worker’s compensation reform, and unemployment insurance reform”.

# Changes on the Northside



Assemblyman Magnarelli helped cut the ribbon for the grand opening of the new Kinney Drugs, at the corner of Butternut and Lodi Streets in Syracuse. Kinney Drugs is the anchor tenant in the Butternut Commons redevelopment project which has transformed that section of Butternut Street. The first phase of the project is the opening of Kinney Drugs with several other ground level establishments opening soon. The next phase will be the completion of 12 market rate apartments on the upper floors.

## Inter-faith Works Holds Ribbon Cutting



Assemblyman Magnarelli and staff attended the opening celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony for Inter-Faith Works' new headquarters located at 1010 James Street in Syracuse. Conveniently located on a bus route with ample off-street parking and warm and welcoming offices, InterFaith Works' provides programs which address the needs of and empower people who are vulnerable, low-income and targets of oppression, including refugees, the elderly and the institutionalized, through direct service and educational programs. InterFaith Works is committed to the belief that all people are deserving of dignity and respect regardless of ethnicity, faith tradition or social circumstances. Their new headquarters reflect that mission.

# Save the Date:

## Blood Drive

With Solvay Fire Department

At Solvay-Geddes Community Youth Center

1010 Woods Road, Solvay, New York 13209  
Thursday, June 4 Noon - 6 p.m.



### Plan to Attend:

#### COMMUNITY INFORMATION NIGHTS

Each year Assemblyman Magnarelli schedules Community Information Nights throughout the 129<sup>th</sup> District so that residents have the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns directly with the Assemblyman regarding matters of the State. This year, the sessions are scheduled for:

- Van Buren Town Hall, Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm
- Cecile Center, Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm

\*A meeting in Geddes was held Feb. 5.

CNY VOLUNTEER FAIR



Tuesday, Sept. 22  
at DestinyUSA

Non-profit organizations seeking volunteers to help operate their organization.



Saturday, Nov. 7  
At NYS Fairgrounds

Parade at Noon

Expo 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

[www.cnyveteransparade.org](http://www.cnyveteransparade.org)

For more information on any of these events, email [abdellad@assemblystate.ny.us](mailto:abdellad@assemblystate.ny.us)

### About New York State Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli

Assemblyman William Magnarelli represents the 129<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, which includes the Northside, Westside, Eastwood and Valley areas of the City of Syracuse, as well as the towns of Geddes and Van Buren. He first won election in 1998 for an open Assembly seat and was reelected in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014. During his previous six terms in office, Assemblyman Magnarelli has focused his efforts on bringing more jobs to Central New York, lowering taxes, providing our children a better education at every level, improving our healthcare and keeping our families safe. For more information, contact Assemblyman Magnarelli's District Office at (315) 428-9651 or visit <http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/magnarelli>.