
The Rosenberg Report

Vol. XLV
November 3, 2006

Hello!

Four days from now, and about three hours after the polls close, we should be well on our way to knowing if our state, and our nation, has made a political course correction. Once the votes are counted, we will know the names of the people who will occupy the various seats of government. But our votes will tell something more. The way we vote on Nov. 7th will tell us whether we are hopeful or fearful, whether we are working toward a common future or hiding from it, whether we are all in this together or content to follow disparate paths. And maybe, just maybe, the way we vote on Nov. 7th will, once and for all, put an end to the kind of destructive, hateful campaigning that has plagued American politics for far too many years.

That may be a lot to ask from one election, but I, for one, am hopeful.

I'd be grateful for your vote on Nov. 7th.

Yours,



November Focus

Bridge visibility

Area Democrats will congregate for a visibility for Democratic races at the Coolidge Bridge on Monday, November 6th from 8-9:30 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. until dark. Everyone is welcome to come hold a sign. Come if you can, stay as long as you can, leave when you have to.

Election night parties

In Greenfield, local Democrats will be watching the returns come in at the Greenfield Elks Lodge and at Famous Bill's Restaurant. In Amherst, John Olver, Ellen Story and I will be hosting the party at Hickory Ridge Country Club, and in Northampton, local Democrats will gather informally at Smokin' Lil's. Everyone is welcome to stop by, say hi, and watch the returns.

County Roads

The governor has signed my bill that clarifies legal ownership and control of the state's county roads. This new law was more than five years in the making and I deeply appreciate all the help I received along the way, especially from State Representative Steve Kulik (D-Worthington), the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Hampshire Council of Governments.

The issue surrounding county roads has been essentially this: Some of the roads in question were laid out by current and former counties and were transferred to the state when some counties were abolished several years ago. This has left a question about the legal status of these roads.

This legislation clarifies who owns the roads. It also clarifies who has responsibility for performing the traditional functions of the County Commissioners with regard to the discontinuance and alteration of these roads in the seven counties which no longer exist because they were abolished in the late 1990s.

In Hampshire and Franklin counties the Councils of Government will continue to serve these functions. This will ensure that local people are involved in any decision making about these roads. In areas with no county government and no successor organization, a regional board made up of representatives from the regional planning agency advisory boards and the district highway director will perform these functions.

The original model for controlling county roads worked well for more than 100 years. We've now built on that foundation and adapted it to the new reality.

Special Help for Local Schools

Late last month, the state Department of Education announced the fiscal '07 awards from its Foundation Reserve Program. This program, popularly known as the "pothole" program because it fills in gaps, helps school districts meet extraordinary and/or unanticipated expenses. This year I worked to amend this program, establishing criteria that would give an advantage to some of the most financially stressed school systems in my district. This strategy worked, and resulted in several towns from my district receiving awards. I consider this one of my major accomplishments during the last term and I am pleased that these grants are coming to schools in my district.

Mohawk Trail Regional School District -- \$400,000
Wendell -- \$57,000
Whately -- \$45,000
Sunderland -- \$35,000
Erving -- \$10,000
Pelham -- \$10,000
Leverett -- \$7,000

State Grants

Millions upon millions of additional dollars in state grants were returned to western Mass. the last few weeks. These represent major investments in the economic prosperity of our region.

* The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's John Adams Innovation Institute, a state economic development organization, invested \$3 million in the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute, a partnership between UMass-Amherst and Baystate Medical Center, to create a cell research center.

* The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's John Adams Innovation Institute also awarded a \$300,000 grant to Berkshire County Connect Inc. and Pioneer Valley Connect to help them bring broadband internet service to western Massachusetts' underserved communities.

* The Massachusetts Board of Education awarded Northampton and Gateway Regional school districts \$15,000 and the Amherst-Pelham school district \$10,000 in Expanded Learning Time grants to study the idea of longer school days.

* The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs made the following Self-Help and Urban Self-Help grants awards:

Northampton -- \$452,100 for the Turkey Hill Road project.

Belchertown -- \$367,200 for the Scarborough Brook Conservation Area.

Erving -- \$145,600 for the Giniusz Property project.

Greenfield -- \$300,000 for the Wedgewood Gardens project.

* The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs made the following Smart Growth Technical Assistance grants:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission -- \$7,493 for low-impact development by-law in Belchertown

Franklin Regional Council of Governments -- \$12,750 for agricultural preservation zoning in Buckland

Pelham -- \$20,000 for forest conservation by-law

Wendell -- \$20,000 for forest conservation by-law

* The Massachusetts Historical Commission made an emergency grant of \$15,000 to Pelham for repairs to the roof of the Pelham Hill Church after State Representative Steve Kulik (D-Worthington) and I impressed upon the commission the urgency of the situation.

Trivia

Now for the answer to our previous question:

The signs along the Massachusetts Turnpike reading "x miles to Boston" refer to the distance from that point to where?

The answer is: The Golden Dome of the State House is the precise answer, but we also accepted the State House and the Senate Chamber.

And our winner is Robert J. from somewhere in cyberspace. We'll send Robert information on who to contact in my Boston office and we'll look forward to seeing him at the State House. Congratulations! And thanks to everybody who played along!

Now to this month's question and another chance to win lunch and a State House tour:

George Washington was in command of the American forces that drove the British from Boston on March 17, 1776, the day we now recognize in Suffolk County as Evacuation Day. But General Washington allowed another American general to be the first to enter the city after the siege had ended. Who was that general?

Submit your answer to tumitch@sprynet.com and watch this space for the correct answer and the prize winner.

[Links](#)

Here are a few links. Until next time . . .

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Senate's Bill Text System -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/billsrch.htm>

Legislative Tracking System -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/ltsform.htm>

My personal website -- <http://www.stanrosenberg.com/>

The Rosenberg Report (October, 2006, edition) --
<http://www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/oct2006.html>