
The Rosenberg Report

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Hello!

As you probably know by now, the Massachusetts Senate made history recently by electing its first woman Senate President, Therese Murray of Plymouth. It shouldn't have taken the oldest deliberative body on the planet more than 200 years to recognize the leadership qualities of a woman, but when it finally got around to doing so, it made an outstanding choice. Senator Murray is smart, tough, fair, compassionate -- everything you'd want in a leader, male or female. Plus, she knows that western Massachusetts is not southern Vermont, not that there's anything wrong with Vermont. After serving as Senate Ways and Means Chairwoman for the past few years she is well prepared to deal with this year's budget situation. Senator Murray and I joined the Senate in the same year, I consider her a friend, and although our financial condition is challenging, I'm looking forward to working with her. I hope you will join me in congratulating her on her historic achievement.

Here are some links that will help you get to know our new Senate President.

http://www.mass.gov/legis/member/t_m0.htm

<http://www.theresemurray.com/home.html>

And before I forget . . . Happy Earth Day! Maybe spring will finally get here so we can get out and enjoy it.

Yours,



[April Focus](#)

E-Waste

Here is an article I have submitted to The Springfield Sunday Republican regarding a bill I am sponsoring on electronic waste:

One of our key environmental challenges in this electronic age is how to safely dispose of products that no longer work or are outmoded technologically. We all know the problem of deciding what to do with old cell phones, computer monitors, and televisions. If these items don't find a new home in the back of a closet, they often end up in landfills or incinerators where their toxic components harm the environment.

This form of trash is known as e-waste. Around the world and across the United States, a variety of programs to encourage recycling are being implemented. A key difference among the programs is how they are funded and operated. Massachusetts does not have an e-waste program, so the legislature is considering how to best protect our environment from these toxic end-of-life electronic products.

I believe each of us should be responsible for the safe disposal of the electronic products we use. I am the lead sponsor in the Massachusetts Senate of a bill, modeled on California law, that would require consumers to pay a fee at the time of purchase (\$6 - \$10, set forth as a separate line on the receipt) that would be used to pay for recycling programs. When you want to dispose of the product, the recycling programs accept it at no additional cost.

Although this kind of personal responsibility for recycling appears to be a common sense notion, some disagree with it. They believe manufacturers should be responsible for disposing of the products they sell, even if a consumer has used it for 17 years (the average life of a television). Under these so-called "producer responsibility" laws, local governments also share in the cost. This, of course, translates into higher property taxes for all of us.

Several practical difficulties also arise, including that some manufacturers will have gone out of business by the time their products are at the end of their useful life. The cost of recycling these "orphan" products would be shifted onto manufacturers still in business. I think it is unfair to shift this cost onto manufacturers simply because they happen to be more successful than their out-of-business competitors.

The best outcome for the environment would be new product designs using smaller amounts of toxins, or, ideally, none at all. Many U.S. based manufacturers are already designing safer products, in large measure because of consumer demand. These companies believe they gain a competitive advantage by selling products that environmentally sensitive consumers want to buy.

The reality of our global economy means that products manufactured in China will be less expensive when sold in the U.S. compared to products made at home. Because American companies cannot compete on price, they are trying to compete based on their reputations for innovation, energy efficiency, and environmentally friendly products.

Some environmental advocates assert that recycling laws will prompt companies to design better products. While that has superficial appeal, in reality, worldwide market pressures, not state recycling laws, are creating incentives for companies to design safer products.

The legislature and Governor Patrick will be working together in the coming months to craft a solution to our e-waste problem. The future of our environment depends upon our success.

Biodiesel

On March 19th, I joined Greenfield Mayor Christine Forgey, State Representative Chris Donelan and Larry Union and Lynn Benander of Northeast Biodiesel Co. in announcing a \$702,785 Community Development Block Grant for Greenfield to help Northeast Biodiesel build facilities at the Greenfield Industrial Park. The plan is for Northeast Biodiesel to manufacture clean biodiesel fuel for diesel vehicles and oil-heat systems

This is an exciting project, one that holds the promise of helping make our planet cleaner and safer by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

For more information about Northeast Biodiesel, click here . . .

<http://www.northeastbiodiesel.com/>

If you'd like to read the Greenfield *Recorder* article, click here . . .

http://www.recorder.com/story.cfm?id_no=4136306/

Noteworthy

Municipal Conference Wrap-Up

This year's Municipal Conference was one of the best we've had since I started holding them nine years ago. More than 200 local officials from Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire counties took part, as well as many members of the governor's cabinet, legislators, commissioners, US Representative John Olver and Governor Patrick himself. I like to think of the conference as the day state government comes to western Massachusetts. On Saturday April 7th it did, and I appreciate the Franklin and Hampshire Councils of Governments for their help in organizing it, and I appreciate everyone who spent some time with us that day.

If you'd like to read the article that appeared in the Springfield Sunday Republican, click here:

<http://www.masslive.com/republican/stories/index.ssf?/base/news-8/1176018195214770.xml&coll=1>

Roundup

Mass. Cultural Council Grants

On April 6th I had the good fortune to join the Massachusetts Cultural Council in announcing the release of more than \$270,000 in grants for the creative economy in the Pioneer Valley. These grants were from the MCC's Adams Arts Program for cultural and economic development, part of a \$1.35 million infusion of creative economy funding statewide.

The Pioneer Valley grants included:

RiverCulture, Turners Falls

Lead Partner: Town of Montague

Building on physical redevelopment and revitalization efforts in Turners Falls, RiverCulture is a series of cultural events designed to attract visitors and build capacity of local artists and creative businesses. Programming revolves around the elements that make Turners Falls special, including the region's natural landscape and its creative individuals.

Grant: \$35,000

South Holyoke Community Arts Initiative, Holyoke

Lead Partner: Nuestras Raices, Inc.

South Holyoke Community Arts Initiative will support the growth of Holyoke's vibrant local arts and culture, food and retail economy. The project partners will implement a series of music and cultural activities to take place at the Nuestras Raices Farm site and at downtown venues along Main Street in Holyoke.

Grant: \$60,000

Culture Leads the Economy, Springfield

City of Springfield

The City of Springfield will develop a model for bringing new cultural audiences, patrons and participants into downtown Springfield.

Grant: \$7,500

Museums10: Building a Bigger Engine for Cultural Tourism, Amherst

Lead Partner: Five Colleges, Inc.

The Museums10 brand was created in 2005 with funding from the MCC. The partnership is building on its cooperative marketing campaign to brand the region as a cultural destination, and increase visitation at the partnering museum's and the region's retail and restaurant businesses.

Grant: \$75,000

The Somali Women's Project, Amherst

Lead Partner: New World Theater

Drawing on the Somali refugee community's cultural assets, the project seeks to create income for the community with the goal of creating sustainable micro-business enterprises. The project focuses on building the skills of the women in the community through business, crafts, and language training.

Grant: \$45,000

I think it's important to remember that Massachusetts is home to more than 14,000 creative businesses that employ 78, 204 people and play a significant role in building and sustaining economic vibrancy, according to a report published by the Americans for the Arts. I'm certainly pleased to see this money being invested in western Mass.

A full list of Adams grants can be found at http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/adamsarts_funding.html

Also, the Mass. Cultural Council gave a Gold Star Project recognition to The Equinox, which receives funding from the Amherst Cultural Council. *The Equinox* is a poetry journal published by Shelburne Falls resident Maureen Moore. The journal features the writings of local poets and is a welcome forum for new poets. In addition, Equinox hosts an open mic event called Write On! Open Mike for Wordsmiths, where writers can meet one another, sample their work, and get ideas for the future. The journal and open mike event are important opportunities for burgeoning writers to gain exposure, publications experience, and encouragement from their peers.

Library Grants

Late last month, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners made the following matching fund awards to local libraries from its new Public Libraries Fund, established in the fiscal '07 budget.

Amherst -- \$3,651.33
Belchertown -- \$1,236.85
Colrain -- \$298.99
Deerfield -- \$359.18
Greenfield -- \$1,455.85
Hadley -- \$322.21
Hatfield -- \$2,002.26
Leyden -- \$104.40
Northampton -- \$1,354.63
Northfield -- \$102.75
Pelham -- \$399.61
Shutesbury -- \$700.22
South Hadley -- \$661.80
Sunderland -- \$349.59

Links

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

Join TeamRosenberg! <http://www.stanrosenberg.com/teamrosenberg.php>

Click here tumitch@sprynet.com if you want to be removed from our list.

Click here for our on-line feedback form www.stanrosenberg.com/form.html

Forward this link to a friend www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/rosenreportreg.html

Guide to Lawmaking -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/lawmkng.htm>

Massachusetts State Government Home Page -- <http://mass.gov/>

The Legislature's web page -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/>

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 (January, 2007, edition) --
<http://www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/jan2007.html>