

## **State of the Town of Tonawanda, March 23, 2012**

Thank you Tracey Lukasik, your staff, President Gary Link and the Board of Directors of the Chamber for helping to put this event together and once again providing this opportunity for me, as Supervisor, to address the residents of the town.

I also want to thank the Chamber and all the members for your continued efforts to help promote businesses and industries in our Town and for helping to make this a better community by providing increased services and employment for our residents.

Finally, I want to thank our Town Board Members, John Bargnesi, Lisa Chimera, Dan Crangle and Joe Emminger and other town elected officials who have done and continue to do, an outstanding job in support of our community and me, and especially our Town Department Heads, their staffs and all of our town employees who do a tremendous job 24 hours a day, 7 days a week everyday of the year.

(Please stand) Recognize and thank: (Rachelle DiCarlo, Donna Anderson and Jim Jones)

Next month marks the end of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year of the Town of Tonawanda. Thanks to the Ken-Ton Chamber, local businesses, and our Youth, Parks and Recreation Department and who organized the gala dinner last April.

Our Parks Department also supported the Chamber in our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by incorporating the anniversary into a number of their events this calendar year.

Over the years, careful, foresighted planning helped our Town developed into a complete well-rounded community where industry, commerce, and residential neighborhoods interact for the benefit of all. Author Jim Seybert once said, "God gives us a memory of the past - so we can learn from it, not live in it." We want to learn from our past and not make some of the same mistakes, but we also want to improve upon what we have accomplished. And we intend to continue to change and improve despite great challenges we encounter.

We are still one of the only true full service communities in Western New York. We provide many municipal services that surrounding communities do not or cannot offer. One service which sets us apart from every other community is our paramedics unit and the James V. Ryan Paramedic Foundation, named after former Town Supervisor Jim Ryan, who was instrumental in its formation and its continuation. In addition to this vital service, our town also provides excellent public safety, sanitation, snow plowing, water treatment and distribution, water and sewer maintenance, street cleaning, fire protection, parks and recreation facilities, senior and youth activities, and much more.

Over 175 years, as our Town has grown and now aged, the requirements to maintain her have greatly increased as well. Still of major concern, is our aging infrastructure; our sewer, water lines and our roads.

Water supply and treatment, public safety, roads, trash pickup, recycling, emergency services, attention to landfills, pollution of air, water and land cleanup, chemical dumps, nuclear wastes, brown field cleanup, and other environmental concerns, are continuously confronting us. The continued international turmoil in

the Middle East is sending petroleum and its products' costs to new levels. The costs of diesel and gas have spiked even more than previous years and are still rising as I speak. National, state and local economic climate is still challenging for town government, businesses and industries, schools, and our local residents.

Our Town Board continues to address all these issues as we look towards a brighter future.

Despite the economy, there are encouraging aspects as well. Conservative budgeting, cutting of spending and operating costs, with some increased revenues, reducing overtime costs and more efficiently delivering services and eliminating waste, and receiving grant monies made 2011 a better year than anticipated for our Town overall. We planned well, and we ended another year with another positive fund balance which will be used to help reduce expenses in 2012. We are fortunate that the milder snow-free weather has provided significant savings in salting, plowing, maintenance, and overtime costs.

For 3 years now, I have been predicting that 2012 would present one of the greatest challenges yet to our Town's financial situation.

I still believe, however, that these greater challenges will also be met head on through our on-going fiscally conservative approach, prudent management of resources, the restructuring work as needed and continuing the financial measures as we have in the past 4 years including shared service agreements. This isn't the 1960's any longer - we need to refocus and reprioritize and move forward; and we are.

Today I will discuss some of our departments' highlights for 2011 and what we hope to achieve in 2012 and beyond.

Today as I highlight each department, I will skim over some briefly for time's sake, but please remember they are all critical to our Town's successful operations and I don't mean to downplay their importance at all. But I do want to key in on some major projects and events.

This is the State of the Town of Tonawanda. 2011 was a good year and the town is in solid financial shape considering the challenges we faced.

**As we plan, we always follow our mission:**

- To provide the highest quality of services, programs and facilities at the lowest, most reasonable cost.
- To promote stable, safe, peaceful and environmentally friendly and attractive neighborhoods.
- To promote opportunities for businesses to invest and to locate.
- Develop and maintain the Comprehensive Plan.

**We also aim for these goals and visions:**

- Strive to maintain a high quality of life and high level of services for its residents
- Work to ensure the continued vitality of our neighborhoods
- Strive to maintain a safe community
- Retain a well-maintained, diverse stock of neighborhood residential properties that meet the needs of all residents
- Promote attractive and well-planned economic development opportunities

- Promote a safe and efficient transportation system for all modes of transportation
- Support increased inter-municipal cooperation where appropriate
- Support the preservation of environmental features and address the continued mitigation of environmental concerns
- Supply a well-maintained, cost-effective infrastructure system that provides good roads, ample safe public water, proper wastewater treatment and effective storm water management together with other utility service to support sustainable land use and economic development.

**POLICE** - Chief Anthony J. Palombo

As I continually maintain, there is no greater responsibility of government than to do everything in its power to keep its citizens safe. It is our #1 priority. The Town of Tonawanda Police Department's mission is to preserve the rights of the citizens and reduce fear in the community through the prevention of crime, protection of persons and property, and the maintenance of order. The Town of Tonawanda Police Department makes tremendous strides each year to meet the demands of today and prepare for the future.

From January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, the Town of Tonawanda Police Department answered 54,484 calls for assistance down about 1,800 calls from 2010 and about 3,800 less from 2009. Calls were for all police, fire, and medical emergencies in the Town, to include 6,979 paramedic calls and 2,430 fire calls, as well as all calls for general assistance. A total of 1,370 arrests were made by patrol officers, including 932 felonies and misdemeanors.

The Department continues its efforts to provide community oriented policing services through the Parkside Community Satellite Office and the Lincoln Park/ Kenilworth Satellite Office. Between the two offices, police officers recorded over 19,000 resident contacts with 1,167 of these contacts resulting in reports and police follow-up. Each of these cases represents a Town resident who was able to access police assistance or provide the police with information which resulted in an overall increase in the quality of life in the community.

In 2011, the Town of Tonawanda Police Department's Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) investigated 382 cases resulting in misdemeanor, felony arrests, and violation arrests. They recovered stolen property and caused restitution for crime victims at over \$78,000.00.

The Town of Tonawanda Police Department's K – 9 unit has proven to be as successful as last year. Every month, Tank assists with countless narcotics arrests and is an expert at locating controlled substances, stolen property, firearms, drug money, and the apprehension of criminal suspects. While his primary duty is to serve the people of the Town of Tonawanda, Tank is often called to assist the DEA, FBI, and several local police agencies on narcotics cases.

- In the last year alone, Tank was responsible for the seizure of thousands of dollars worth of narcotics and over \$100,000 of U.S. currency used in narcotics trafficking. Some of this money comes back to our Police Department. Tank has also been instrumental in assisting in the peaceful

surrender of numerous felony suspects who would have otherwise fled various crime scenes if not for his mere presence.

He also helps law enforcement agencies to sniff out drugs in middle and high schools throughout Erie County.

The Town of Tonawanda Paramedics responded to 6,979 emergency medical calls in 2011. This is a 5.5% increase in call volume from 2010.

They also added new medical equipment. The cost of the many new upgrades to the Paramedics was underwritten by the James V. Ryan Foundation through the generous donations of our citizens for which we are greatly indebted.

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

- Ready to award contracts for construction of a \$1.6 million, waterside surveillance system. Funding was obtained through a DHS grant.
- Completion of the Emergency Operations Center, was also funded through a DHS Grant.
- Currently working on a total revamping of the Town's Emergency Operations Plan.
- Completed a major risk analysis of the Town's petroleum storage and distribution facilities with DHS and the NYS Office of Homeland Security.
- Expanded the Emergency Services website and added an online registration for the Special Needs Registry.
- Currently working with our neighboring communities to develop a regional emergency response plan for our area in order to improve multi – jurisdiction coordination in major events.

### **COMPTROLLER**

Our Town Comptroller is Ed Mongold who assists in the day-to-day operations of the Town.

Over the past four years, the Town Board and I, with the cooperation of our Department Heads, have worked diligently to significantly improve the Town's financial position. This has earned the Town our high bond rating of Aa2, the highest ever to our knowledge. This was specifically noted by Moody's Investors Service when the town sold \$10 million in serial bonds in September 2010 at a very low interest rate of 2.18%. This rate is the lowest in at least 30 years and will provide a great savings to the town over the next 13 years in interest expense for this bond. This will also help us as we bond for future infrastructure improvements.

For 2011, the town's financial position continued to improve due to a slight increase to our fund balance. The result was that the estimated unreserved fund balance at the end of 2011 is approximately \$19.5 million, which represents about 21% of the 2012 operating budget. Because of this, we were able to appropriate an additional \$1.2 million in the 2012 budget.

During 2011, the New York State legislature approved a property tax cap of the lesser of the rate of inflation or 2%. Due to our efforts, the actual property tax levy increase for 2012 was .8% (8 tenths of 1 percent), substantially less than the mandated property tax cap for the Town and the lowest increase in 11 years.

Probably the greatest fiscal challenge facing the town continues to be meeting the costly unfunded mandates of reducing the town's sanitary sewer

overflows (SSO's). The town began to address this issue in 2010 with the construction of the first phase of the Parker/Fries sanitary sewer interceptor project, which is now substantially completed. The Town will begin the second phase of this project in the near future. The most recent cost estimate to comply with this mandate is hundreds of millions of dollars, and it will take many years to complete. Because of the magnitude of this mandate, we look to the state and federal government to help provide financial assistance as did occur in the late 1970's when our wastewater treatment plant was constructed. We need this to happen. As an older community, improvements to our existing buildings and other infrastructures such as town roads and storm sewer lines are becoming more and more critical. Although within the last few years, the town has completed the DuPont/ Despond drainage project and the Two Mile Creek bank stabilization project, there is much more that needs to be done to our aging long neglected infrastructure.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Our Community Development Department is headed by James Hartz who continually provides excellent leadership and expertise in working relations with our residents as he continues to implement the objectives of our Town's Comprehensive Plan.

#### Investing for future economic development

- The State, County, and Town have teamed up to re-purpose vacant land at 5335 River Road for future waterfront development. The project involved the removal of a long-standing vacant office building, a 5,000,000 gallon storage tank, and the remediation of 25 acres of land. This property will be a key development site for future Town jobs.

#### Maintaining quality housing in our neighborhoods

- This last year the CD office assisted 40 low-income homeowners (mainly seniors on fixed incomes) with needed housing repairs. All structural components of a home are eligible for the program from the foundation to the roof and all interior mechanicals including energy-efficient furnaces. This program continues to be in very high demand with the current waiting list at over 380 families long. Due to cuts in federal funding, we are just now able to assist families that first applied to the program in 2005.
- 41 Homes were assisted with weatherization services
- 81 Homeowners in jeopardy of foreclosure or having other housing issues were given financial counseling thru this office.

- 7 First time homebuyers received closing cost assistance to buy their 1<sup>st</sup> home in Town.
- 50 units of vacant, substandard housing were cleared in the Old Town and Sheridan Parkside Neighborhoods. The land is then banked for future redevelopment, greatly improving these areas.
- Installed a new sidewalk along the north side of Ensminger Road linking Tonawanda Manor Senior Residence to the Senior Center.
- Provided funding to the Highway Department to resurface Sheridan Parkside Drive and plant 81 new trees along several Town streets.
- Completed a window replacement job at the Town Boys & Girls Club – the project involved the replacement of over 110 original windows from 1930.

The Town also recently completed a national program known as the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) to combat homelessness during the recent housing crisis and economic downturn. Over the last 2 years, this program helped **672 people including 134 children** from the Town and Village remain permanently housed. These residents would have otherwise become homeless without this federal assistance.

In 2012 we will continue implementing the comprehensive plan including:

- Building a new single-family home in the Old Town Neighborhood under the HOME First-Time Homebuyer Program.
- Building 2 new single-family homes in the Sheridan-Parkside Neighborhood under HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program.
- Assisting at least 30 homeowners with residential rehabilitation needs, and continuing to acquire and demolish substandard vacant housing units in our low-moderate income neighborhoods.

All of these objectives will be accomplished with the lowest federal funding amount from HUD in the 34-year history of the Town's Community Development Block Grant program.

### **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT** – Superintendent Bill Swanson

The Highway Department can point to many accomplishments during 2011. They are very much in public eye. The staff works hard to keep the town clean

and neat with trash, recycling, and leaf pickup – plowing and street sweeping and more.

Last year 22 streets were milled to re-establish curb reveal and overlaid, resulting in 11.43 lane miles of roads being resurfaced. (four more than 2010) 26,420 square feet of sidewalks were replaced in front of homes.

1,620 square feet of driveway aprons were replaced;

7,010.96 tons of materials were recycled through our curbside collection program. This was approximately 40% less of our waste stream.

The National Arbor Day Foundation awarded the Town the prestigious “Tree City USA” designation for the fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) consecutive year. This award recognizes the town’s commitment to the preservation of the environment and the beautification of the Town of Tonawanda. We also received our 4<sup>th</sup> “Growth Award” since 2004.

Our forestry crews planted 370 trees in 2011 as we continue our partnership with Re-Tree WNY and Re-Tree Tonawanda. Through this partnership, we established the 1<sup>st</sup> suburban tree farm in Western New York in 2010. This tree farm is located on the grounds of the Boys & Girls Club of the Northtowns in the Old Town area of the Town. This tree farm allows kids from the neighborhood to learn forestry procedures and the trees grown here are planted in the neighborhood and establish a long-lasting sense of community.

#### **JUSTICE COURT**

The Town Justice Court is headed by Justice J. Mark Gruber and Judge Daniel Cavarelo, and is administered by Denise Doxbeck.

The Court collected \$2,325,524 in 2011 with \$1,577,488 of these funds remitted directly to the Town of Tonawanda and increase in town revenues of over \$60,000. The department closed 24,260 criminal and vehicle and traffic matters, 541 small claims and civil cases and 4,607 parking tags.

#### **BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

Our Building Department is headed by Carl Heimiller.

Residential and Commercial activity remained constant which kept the department extremely busy.

In 2011 - 397 Commercial Building Permits were issued with an estimated value of construction of \$16,305,000; and 1108 Residential Building Permits with an estimated value of construction of \$9,771,440.

There were 1086 electrical, 831 plumbing, and 688 sump pump permits. This permit activity produced \$406,499 in revenues:

- Commercial Building permits \$116,054.00
- Residential Building permits \$73,150.00
- Electrical permits \$110,465.00
- Plumbing permits \$58,670.00
- Sump pump permits \$48,160.00

This permit activity also required nearly 13,000 inspections.

- Building permits approx 8,109
- Electric permits 2,242
- Plumbing permits 1,568
- Sump pump permits 1,073

These statistics don't reflect all the hours each Inspector spends reviewing plans or dealing with constituent matters each day. They also use part-time inspectors on an as needed basis to help keep up with the great demands.

The Building Department this year will require permits and inspections for all foundation wall stabilization systems to ensure that they are being installed correctly. They will soon be requiring permits for all gas-fired appliances to ensure compliance with the New York State Building Code and the requirements of "Amanda's Law" for carbon monoxide detectors that the State recently passed. These requirements will help to prevent deaths and injuries due to inadequately vented fuel burning devices, and will ensure that systems are installed to the applicable Codes for the homeowners' benefit, BUT; these will also add to the work load of all Building Department staff to enforce the requirements of the Codes. These are unfunded NYS mandates that cost town tax payers dollars.

**TOWN OF TONAWANDA PLANNING BOARD** is chaired by Ken Swanekamp.

The Town of Tonawanda Planning Board meets on a monthly basis to perform approvals and carry out additional planning activities and works closely with our Building and Technical Support Departments. Site plan reviews are performed and Special Use Permits are evaluated. The Planning Board had retained a consulting firm to conduct a planning and zoning study of Delaware Avenue to make the street more pedestrian friendly, create landscaping requirements and insure high quality building construction. The Town Board approved the recommended changes to the Zoning Ordinance and they are now part of our Town Code.

The Planning Board also retained a consultant to perform similar work on other commercial corridors in the Town. This work is underway and should result in recommendations to the Town Board later this year.

The Planning Board has also been participating in local projects such as the Kenmore Avenue reconstruction, the Town and City of Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area studies and the Healthy Niagara Waterfront Master Plan Update.

### **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

Michael Kaiser is the head of our very active and busy Technical Support Department which interacts with every Town department.

This department is responsible for all public works and handles innumerable other matters for the town. They provide a wide array of services including consulting, liaison, design, bidding, surveying, mapping, and contract administration. Additionally, Information Technology (IT) duties and responsibilities require a considerable amount of time and effort from this department, and they deal directly with all of our town departments.

**2011 Highlights** include:

- Finished and maintain the Town's new Data Center
- Completed technical work on the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Police Headquarters
- Administration of a \$938,000 grant from the New York Department of State in conjunction with Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and Erie County to begin planning for the region's degraded waterways by developing a Niagara River Atlas, State of the Niagara River Watershed Report, Niagara River Watershed Management Plan - Phase I and a Land Use Plan for the Town of Tonawanda.
- Continued to work with the Erie County Department of Public Works on the upgrade of traffic signals on Elmwood Avenue & Colvin Boulevard.
- Completed five buildings to provide solar power to the administration areas of the Highway Department, Senior Center, Water/Sewer and Building Departments, Wastewater Facility and Water Plant. \$544,700 of Federal "Stimulus" money was received under the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.

**In 2012 they will** work with the NFTA, our Youth, Parks and Recreation Department, and Erie County on the Rails-To-Trails Project.

## **WATER RESOURCES**

Ken Maving heads the three divisions of the Water Resources Department, which is a utility.

Customers depend on it to provide fresh water, wastewater collection and treatment and many other services every day, without interruption. Our employees work around-the-clock, regardless of weather, to provide these critical services.

The Department continues to provide the highest quality water and sewers services, at one of the lowest costs to residents in Western New York. It is extremely rare for a Town to own and operate its own Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants, and we continue to look for new and more efficient ways to provide these vital services.

**Water Treatment Division** – Robert J. O’Keeffe, Division Head

Over 4.5 billion gallons of water were drawn from the Niagara River, treated and distributed to residents and businesses in the Town of Tonawanda and the Village of Kenmore. This is enough fresh water to fill the huge Aquatic Center pool over 5000 times or fill over 375,000 average backyard pools.

**Water & Sewer Maintenance Division** – J. Kirk Rowland, Division Head

Approximately 93.8 miles of sanitary and storm sewer lines were cleaned in 2011. The televising crew inspected (21.2 miles) of sanitary and storm sewer lines.

In addition, our Water & Sewer crews repaired 345 water leaks, made 37 sewer repairs, 53 water hydrant repairs, 61 water valve repairs and responded to numerous sewer complaints and grinder pump service calls 24/7 – 365 days regardless of weather conditions.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Division – Joseph P. Cordaro, newly hired Division Head

The Town of Tonawanda Wastewater Treatment Plant processed over 8.35 billion gallons of domestic and industrial sewage generated in the Town of Tonawanda, the City of Tonawanda and the Village of Kenmore. Our sewage sludge incinerators burned over 23.5 million pounds of solids removed in the treatment process.

#### Department Projects

##### **Sewer District**

In January of 2010, the Town of Tonawanda Board authorized bonding of up to \$30 million for Phase I of the Parker-Fries Interceptor Replacement Project. The construction began in July of 2010 and will be completed within the next several months. Phase II construction, which was estimated to cost up to \$17 million, will commence immediately following the completion of Phase I. This four-phase project will be the largest and most expensive project in the Town of Tonawanda since the construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant in 1978.

In addition to the Parker-Fries Interceptor Project, the Water Resources Department also began an Infiltration / Inflow Demonstration Project, which the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation is requiring as part of a soon-to-be-signed Order on Consent Agreement. This project will take four (4) years to complete and cost an estimated \$4 million, including construction costs.

##### Water District

As part of the Parker-Fries Interceptor Project, a new 12 inch water line was installed on Parker Boulevard from Eggert Road north to Brompton Road.

In addition, a new 12 inch water line was installed on Kenmore Avenue from South Irving Terrace to Pickford Avenue and on Chelsea Street from Parker Boulevard to Parkhurst Boulevard.

We continue to look to the Federal and State Government to help fund these necessary water and sewer infrastructure improvements in the Town of Tonawanda.

#### **YOUTH, PARKS & RECREATION**

Dan Wiles is the director of our Youth, Parks and Recreation, Senior Citizen's, and Building Maintenance Departments.

This department maintains many facilities:

1. The Paddock Chevrolet Golf Dome
2. Aquatic and Fitness Center
3. Outdoor golf driving range in Brighton Park
4. Sheridan and Brighton golf courses
5. Brighton Park Batting Cages
6. Concessions
7. Memorial Hall

8. Senior Citizens Center
9. Veterans Monument
10. Ice Rinks and pools

They are also responsible for all the parkland, playgrounds and picnic groves in the Town of Tonawanda.

Over \$8, 000.00 in mature trees were planted.

Our Youth division continued their Challenger series of programs for children with special needs and many other youth programs in the Village and Town.

The ninth annual Winterfest was held in January of 2011.

Our seventh Summerfest was held in Lincoln Park and at local playgrounds and pools in the Town of Tonawanda. They kicked off the summer celebrations with wading pool and swimming pool parties and the Town hosted a 50TH Anniversary Year Synchronized Swimming Show for the award-winning Aquettes.

Our Senior Citizen Center has approximately 2,500 members with total attendance for programs and events at the main center and branches coming to approximately 75,000. The van service accounted for approximately 4600 rides and the nutrition program served just over 10,000 meals. The Senior Citizen Center hosted a dinner dance for residents celebrating their fiftieth anniversary or higher this past fall with 216 people attending.

Kenney Field hosted high school soccer and rugby games along with hundreds of youth soccer and football games, clinics and camps.

Our baseball and softball youth leagues aligned with Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken.

New spray features were added to our popular spray park in Sheridan Parkside.

Replacement of the island gardens on Sheridan Drive began

A liner was installed in Lincoln Pool

New lights and ceiling fans were installed at the NOCO pavilion

The Village Green area in front of the Municipal Building was redesigned

In 2012 plan to install a rest room at Expressway Field.

Also completed work at Kenmore and Kenilworth Libraries.

Kenmore and Kenilworth libraries are having interior remodeling work done including lighting, painting and at Kenmore carpeting and a new children's area created. (completed last week)

### **ASSESSOR -**

Dave Marrano is the Town's new Assessor whose office is responsible for the fair and equitable assessment of all properties within the Town of Tonawanda including the Village of Kenmore. It also handles all filing of new, renewals and changes to the various exemptions property owners may be entitled to.

This year we undertook a joint shared assessor agreement with the City of Tonawanda which should save the town alone tens of thousands of dollars.

This past year the Assessor's Office prepared the Assessment Roll containing 28,813 tax parcels. The staff inspected and reviewed the assessments of more than 1,500 parcels in regard to new construction, additions and other physical or economic changes. They reviewed and/or processed applications for 32,307 property tax exemptions, including 6,765 Senior STAR, 16,026 Basic STAR (including approximately 500 new applications) and 6029 Veterans Exemptions, of which approximately 500 were new to the system. They also processed over 2,000 property title transfers.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Robert Dimmig is the Executive Director of the Town of Tonawanda Development Corporation.

One of the hallmarks of our community is vision – to understand where we are and where we want to be – and a resolve to translate that vision into reality. This continues to be true for our commitment to economic development.

We remind ourselves each year that the Town of Tonawanda is fortunate to host a strong and diverse base of industry and commerce that provides job opportunities for our residents, tax revenues for public services and leadership in our community affairs. We are mindful that continued success of our private sector requires careful planning and deliberate action.

- We remain a major center of business and industry for Western New York with a broad base of leading companies. We have infrastructure sought by many companies, including excellent highway access. And, we have a supply of shovel-ready land in quality business parks like the TM Montante Riverview Solar Technology Park and Colvin Woods.
- We have embarked on a series of exciting new initiatives to stimulate the growth of existing and new businesses, while focusing our sights on a 'greener' future.

### **E3 Program'**

One of those new initiatives is the 'E3 Program'. E3 stands for 'Economy, Energy and Environment'. It is a federal program that provides a framework to help companies study their operations, find ways to reduce waste and save money.

Unlike traditional economic development programs, E3 is not limited to companies with 'bricks and mortar' projects. It appeals to a broad range of companies, using technical expertise to make operations more cost-efficient.

We launched the program in 2011, prepared a 'statement of principles,' and began reaching out to companies. Along with our partners at Insyte Consulting and the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute, we met with several companies to evaluate opportunities.

Most striking is that most large corporations in the Town have already made great strides in reducing waste and inefficiencies throughout their operations. Many have saved money by installing new lighting, variable speed drives and other measures. Several have installed new boilers or adopted new procedures to reduce air emissions. We will help them identify new projects,

while we start to explore similar opportunities with small and medium size companies.

E3 has helped us develop new relationships with county, state and federal agencies that will lead to even more opportunities for our community in the months and years ahead.

We see E3 as part of a broader effort to bring business, government, education and residents together under the banner of 'sustainable development'.

#### **'Tonawanda Opportunity Area'**

While E3 focuses on business operations, the 'Tonawanda Opportunity Area' focuses on our physical environment.

The Tonawanda Opportunity Area covers most of our Waterfront region and includes studies to assess environmental conditions, the demolition of vacant buildings or the construction of access roads.

We have already started to move forward on a series of projects in the 'Tonawanda Opportunity Area'. The projects include:

#### **North Youngmann Commerce Center**

Design work is expected to begin as early as May on a \$3.0 million project to open up access to 90-acres of land in the 'North Youngmann Commerce Center'. The town-owned site lies on the north side of the Youngmann Highway between Military Road and Two Mile Creek Road.

Thanks to a \$2 million grant from the 'Regional Redevelopment Fund' and a \$500,000 grant from the Empire State Development Corporation, we can increase our supply of sites without significant cost to taxpayers.

#### **Niagara River World**

With the help of the ECIDA, Erie County and National Grid, we completed a re-use study of 60-acres site known as 'Niagara River World'.

The study gives us a range of options to put before potential developers. Our goal is to transform an old industrial site into a center of activity on our waterfront.

### **Industrial and Commercial Projects**

While we are working to set the stage for our next generation of growth, we continue to work project-by-project as opportunities arise. In the past year, we are pleased to note the following:

- **Unifrax.** Unifrax announced that it is relocating their world headquarters to the Riverview Solar Technology Park in the Town. The project, which will bring 90 jobs, includes major R&D activities.
- **HDM.** HDM has started a major expansion of their facility on Fire Tower Drive, where they make hydraulic equipment. The project will retain more than 100 jobs and create 20 new jobs.
- **GM.** GM has been busy installing new investments that were announced last year. In June, the site will start production of a new Ecotec 2-liter/ 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine for the Chevrolet Malibu and the Cadillac ATS.

Additionally, production will start in March 2013 of a “Generation V” small-block V-8 for pickup trucks. Once the new engine lines are fully active, employment at the plant could surpass 1,300.

## Retail Projects

- Paddock Chevrolet. Paddock purchased the former Jim Doyle Ford facility on Delaware Avenue and invested significant funds to bring it back to life as a used car center.
- Sinatra Real Estate. We were also thrilled that Nick Sinatra has made a major investment in his hometown, buying key properties and advancing plans for renovations that will bring new life to our community.
- We have new places to eat (Chipotle Chili; Buffalo Wild Wings and Romeo and Juliet’s) and new places to shop (Rite Aid and Stanton Optical).

## Community Assets

[Kenmore Mercy Hospital](#) officials announced details this past November about a \$14 million Emergency Department to be built on the south end of the hospital near Westchester Boulevard. Groundbreaking begins next week and construction is to be completed by the Fall of next year.

## EMPIRE ZONE – THE LEGACY

Although the state will no longer accept NEW companies in to the Empire Zone program, there are more than 60 companies still enrolled in the program, generating jobs and investment for our community.

The most recent annual reports submitted for 2010 reflect broader conditions in the state and national economies:

- There was a net increase of 526 jobs in 2010, compared to a decrease 109 jobs in 2009.
  - The largest increases still come from the GEICO group of companies, which added 313 jobs.
  - Six other companies added more than 25 employees to their companies: J.W. Danforth, FedEx Trade Networks, Praxair, Unifrax, Great Lakes Orthodontics and DKP Buffalo.

Companies invested about \$17 million in new construction, renovation and equipment.

- Praxair alone invested more than \$7 million in R&D equipment.

The impact over the lifetime of the program has been staggering. It will continue to generate benefits for our community as long as companies stay enrolled, giving us an opportunity to leverage even more jobs and investment.

### **TOWN CLERK**

Marguerite Greco is our new Town Clerk.

She comes to us with 28 years experience with the Empire State Development Corporation where most recently she was responsible for consolidating programs and forms across ten New York State regions. Her goals

for 2012 are to create greater efficiencies within the clerk's office and improved customer service to the town residents.

In 2011, the clerk's office collected over \$106,000,000 (\$106,034,615.93) in taxes and \$879,350.15 in various fees. The newly instituted Passport Processing Center accounted for \$11,706 of those fees. Passports have proven to be a well received and successful service for the Town, in fact just recently, on March 10th, they had special Saturday hours to accommodate those who can't make it during the week, and over 80 passports were submitted.

### **PERSONNEL**

The Town of Tonawanda Personnel Department headed by Charles Naughton administers benefits and employment matters affecting 513 full time employees, approximately 550 part-time and seasonal employees and 495 retirees and their dependants.

**COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT** is chaired by Tom Hersey. He and his committee have been very active this year.

- Hosted the Third Annual Environmental Speaker Series of four speakers to educate town residents about current and important environmental issues
- Annual Energy Smart Holiday Lighting Contest
  
- Partnered with the Town Parks Department and Stormwater Management Program to better educate Residents regarding their role in Protecting Stormwater Quality
- Purchased and Installed an Environmental Bulletin Board in Town Hall to assist in educating residents about current environmental issues and events.
- Includes brochure holders to make information available for residents to take home and utilize.
- Assisted the Town, the Western New York Clean Air Coalition, Federal, State and County officials in the Development of the E3 Program.
- Assisted the WNY Clean Air Coalition in providing citizens pollution prevention training to help them understand proactive strategies to assist in reducing and eliminating toxic chemicals from their lives.
- Sponsored the annual Ken-Ton Garden Tour.
- Works with our Kenmore Garden Club which has provided our town with many volunteer services including;
  1. Maintaining the flower planter boxes throughout the town and providing beautification to strip mall and public streets.
  2. Donating money for the purchase of a tree every year and in turn Praxair donates a tree to our town in their name.

### **Grantmakers Advantage, Inc.**

The Town of Tonawanda is blessed to have Sue Barnes as our very talented grant writer. Through her great efforts and in working with our Town Board and Department Heads, she has helped pursue and obtain state and federal dollars for our community.

**2011 saw the implementation of several major initiatives due to an influx of grant funds.**

## **Use of Solar Technology to Improve the Environment and Save Utility Costs**

Grant monies were used to purchase 582 solar panels for installation on five Town owned buildings including the Senior Citizen Center, Highway Department, Wastewater Facility, Sewer Maintenance Building and Water Treatment Plant. The Town received **\$544,700** in grant monies from the United States Department of Energy to purchase the panels, and anticipates saving \$663,092 in utility costs over the 25 year life span of the system.

## **Public Safety Enhancements**

The Town completed work on a **\$176,000** grant from the U. S. Department of Homeland Security to create an Emergency Operations Center. The EOC provides Town officials with state of the art necessary equipment to facilitate coordinated responses to emergencies, thereby improving the safety of our residents.

The Town is currently in the process of implementing two grants totaling **\$1,600,000** from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to install a system which will further increase resident safety.

The Police Department completed work on a program to improve responses to Domestic Violence incidents with a **\$25,000** grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. The grant paid for Police overtime to respond and investigate incidences of domestic violence.

The Police Department also received **\$13,153** from the United States Department of Justice to help pay for police overtime.

## **Economic Development**

The Empire State Development Corporation awarded the Town **\$500,000** to construct infrastructure needed to advance the development of the North Youngmann Commerce Center. This money will leverage **\$2,000,000** already available to the Town through a prior commitment.

The Town completed work on a **\$60,000** grant from the New York State Department of State to study a former brownfield area, now known as the Tonawanda Opportunity Area. The Town is now in the process of applying for additional grant funds to advance redevelopment of this area.

## **Quality of Life Improvement Projects**

Improvements were made to the Kenmore Library – creating expanded and enhanced areas for children, public computer usage, and a new circulation desk. Grant funds also paid to re-carpet the second floor and install new doors.

The project was partially funded with a **\$155,000** grant from the New York State Education Department.

Work to construct restrooms at Expressway Diamonds will begin soon, thanks the efforts of Assemblyman Robin Schimminger and the award of a **\$60,000** from NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

The Brighton Arena will be repainted this year with a **\$25,000** grant from the New York State Department of State, also acquired with the assistance of Assemblyman Schimminger.

The Town was awarded **\$25,000** from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to purchase and plant street trees. The Town will provide additional monies for the project, resulting in the planting of 400 street trees throughout the Town.

## **Improved Government Efficiency**

The Town secured **\$228,000** in grant funds from the New York State Department of State to help offset costs associated with construction to the Town's new Youth, Parks, and Recreation office building. This, in addition to a prior grant for **\$500,000** secured with the assistance of Assemblyman Robin Schimminger, greatly reduced the total cost of the building and enabled the Town to save over \$77,000 annually in rent.

The Building Inspection Department completed work on a **\$45,397** grant from the State Archives to scan paper records thereby increasing accessibility to the records and freeing up critical storage space.

The Town completed a major upgrade of its computer and data storage capabilities with a **\$500,000** grant from the Dormitory Authority of New York State secured through the efforts of Assemblyman Robin Schimminger. This significant investment in technology will allow the Town to take advantage of the latest advances in technology, improving employee efficiency and enhancing public access to government.

## **CONCLUSION**

As you can see – great things are happening in our town and many more to come. As stated earlier, 2011 turned out to be a good year for our town despite the challenges presented. 2012 and 2013 will continue to present challenges, and as we will enact more efforts to keep spending down, taxes low and maintain our quality of services.

In closing, our success these recent years has not been the result of chance. Careful planning and deliberate actions have continued to put us in a position to take advantage of opportunities that have come along. We pledge to continue on this proven course.

With our prime location on the Niagara River, with easy access to Canadian markets, with state and federal highways, rail transportation, low cost energy, an abundant high quality working base, we are poised to reclaim business and industrial development as we clean up areas and we open and expand new business and industrial parks.

Together, these efforts and those described earlier demonstrate the town's continued commitment to protecting our air, land and water resources.

The Town Board will continue to look at ways to restructure and reorganize our town departments to become more efficient. We will continue to seek additional federal and state assistance to help pay for costly mandates, to improve our aging infrastructure, continue our inter-municipal cooperation and expand shared- service agreements to reduce the cost of providing services to our residents and businesses.

In 2009 Business Week Magazine rated our Town as the number one place in New York State to raise children; a great honor. With new business and industries, come increased jobs, revenues and opportunities for even better things. In the years ahead, we look for our economy to improve, for employment returns and flourish, so that we become a stronger and better Town in which to live, work, and play. The Town Board and I will strive to do just that by continuing conservative budgeting, looking for ways to save, share, and cut costs, while providing the great services our residents and businesses expect.

I am truly honored and blessed to be able to serve this Town of Tonawanda as Supervisor and to continue to address each challenge facing us. Thank you for your patience and attention during this discussion of these important Town matters. May God continue to bless the Town of Tonawanda as He has done for our 175 years. God bless you all as well.

Thank you.