

THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

Bulletin #21

February 2014

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Member,

I was, of course, disappointed that bad weather diminished our attendance of our Public Education Forum in Syracuse on January 18th and that so many who had planned on attending were unable to. The forum was very interesting and informative. We did send out a press release after the event in our efforts to increase visibility. If you have other potential sponsors for such an event, I strongly endorse and encourage your inviting Dr. Rick Timbs on the School Funding Formula as well as Regents' Vice-Chair Anthony Bottar and NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira on the Common Core. We will be moving forward on our commitment to revise the school funding formula when we meet with the relevant officials in Albany this month.

Again, let us know your issues and concerns as we move into 2014. With our increased focus on getting information out via press releases, Facebook, meetings with legislators and others, we strive to be helpful to you, our membership, and, ultimately our constituents.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our 2014 Conference on April 25th and 26th. We will work to re-elect our State officials, and we can take back the House and the State Senate Majority if we unite and use all our energy and talent.

The DRC motto is Unity and Victory. Let's give it our all!

Irene



SAVE THE DATE

2014 DRC CONFERENCE

April 25th and 26th

HILTON ALBANY

Formerly Crowne Plaza



40 Lodge St

Albany, NY 12207

BULLETIN # 21

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WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO.....

2014 Spring Conference News and Updates

Jane Dodds is happy to report that the basics are set for the April 25th -26th convention in Albany and it is sure to be exciting. Networking sessions for the State Senate races (Friday afternoon) and Congressional districts (Saturday morning) will be held. Governor Cuomo will sponsor the Welcome Reception, the Dessert Reception will be hosted by Attorney General Schneiderman and Comptroller DiNapoli will sponsor the breakfast on Saturday. The State Committee has agreed to again sponsor the Friday evening Youth Event. It is anticipated that the young Mayor of Ithaca, Svante Myrick, will speak at this function. The DRC will again subsidize the registration costs for a limited number of Young Dems attending the conference. We look forward to seeing all of you at this year's Conference!

Program Book

Joyce Melfi, Chairwoman of the Program Book, and her team of Lorie Longhany and Jeanne Crane are encouraging each County to submit their ad changes early. Please watch for an email from Phil with the revised 2014 ad rate page and letter to Chairs. The goal from the Program Book Committee is to secure one outside ad at competitive rates from each county, up and above the committee ads that are given at the \$50 for 1/2 page and \$100 for full page discounted rate. Joyce is also asking for help by bringing in Union ads. Please reach out to your Local's and ask them to support the DRC with an ad in our program book.

January 18th Education Forum and Board Meeting

Speakers attending the Education Forum sponsored by the DRC were Dr. Richard Timbs, Executive Director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium, Anthony Bottar, Vice-Chair, NYS Board of Regents and Ms. Maria Neira, Vice-President, NYSUT (NYS United Teachers). Dr. Timbs analyzed the School funding formula, presenting data documenting that it lacked equity, sufficiency and timeliness. Additional monies that have been awarded in recent years do not change the basic problems and in some cases, even acerbate the unfair fiscal situation of many school districts. The DRC will work with our legislators on Lobby Day with a goal of changing problematic elements of the funding formula.

Vice-Chancellor of the NYS Regents, Anthony Bottar, and Vice President Neira of NYSUT then presented their points of view about Common Core. Both agreed with the goals of the program. However, NYSUT is calling for a three year moratorium to address a number of problems that have been identified to date.

Dr. Bottar pointed out that a number of these issues have been or are being addressed. There were definite disagreements between the two, generating a spirited Q&A period with the very involved and sometimes passionate audience.

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Old Business

Irene reported on her conversation with Rodney Capell concerning some elements that raised concerns to our DRC membership including the inconvenient date of the State meeting last fall and not allowing the DRC to give a brief report to the body. Irene said that she did feel that her concerns were listened to and that assurances were given to improve the degree to which the State Committee was helping county committees financially. When asked why the State Committee had not provided funds to counties to assist in the 2013 elections, the answer was that money was given if the counties had asked for it. In the future, counties will be informed that these monies are available and it is advised that counties request funding to help offset local election year expenses.

New Business

After the State-of-the-State Address, Irene sent a note to the Governor thanking him for including the I-98 Project in his comments. Subsequently, Irene received a letter from Michael Wojnar (DOT) providing the information "included in the book on the Governor's State of the State Address regarding North Country Access". This is perceived to be a positive step toward the eventual construction of this much needed transportation project.

Ruth Same has been able to secure the Holiday Inn in Syracuse as the venue for the 2015 meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit / Finance - Cindy Emmer

Cindy Emmer presented the Treasurer's report. The cash on hand total is \$14,132.81. The 2014 Budget was presented by Cindy for 2014 and was passed and approved. **Dues are due for 2014! Checks are payable to the DRC c/o Cindy Emmer, 858 Davis St., Elmira, NY 14901.**

Issues Committee - Dawn Rivers

Dawn Rivers has been in discussion with J. Testani concerning the scheduling and topics for Lobby Day. Irene is organizing the sessions in February along the following topics:

- I-98 - A meeting with a Governor's transportation policy representative - Volunteering to attend this session were Mark Bellardini, Jane Dodds, Jason Clark, Ted Young

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- Educational Funding - A meeting with the Chairs of the Assembly and Senate Education Committees - Irene Stein, Don Ackerman, Lorie Longhany and Phil Jones, will be the DRC representatives.
- A POSSIBLE third session dealing with Economic Development will be considered

Communications - Don Ackerman

In Don Ackerman's absence Lorie Longhany reported that the committee has met via conference call. The main focus of the committee is to make the DRC more visible, primarily through Facebook, an active, up-to-date website and press releases to County Chairs (intent that they will put these into the local press). A DRC press release was sent to DRC County Chairs following the Education Forum. The committee will continue to take steps to raise visibility.

Please 'like' our Facebook page under the name; **Democratic Rural Conference of New York State**, if you have not done so already. Be sure and invite your Democratic Committee membership to do the same. Link; www.facebook.com/pages/Democratic-Rural-Conference-of-New-York-State/162050418621

We also look forward to a new and updated DRC website that promises to be current and user friendly.

Youth Recruitment and Retainment Committee – Jason Clark

Jason Clark reported that a new Young Democrat from Wyoming County has been added to the Advisory Board. A conference call was held on January 23rd. The committee is in the process of developing a Mission Statement and a general agreement of how the Young Dems and DRC can be of assistance to each other. A proposed Career Fair to be held in conjunction with the April convention is still under consideration. The goal of this Career Fair is to recruit interested young people for political jobs.

Political Committee – Jim Testani

Jim will continue to prepare for 'Lobby Day', working closely with the Issue's Committee to insure that our voices are heard in Albany.

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CONTACT INFORMATION AND MEMBER SERVICES

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DRC Board Services

Speakers Bureau

The following DRC members are available as speakers at DRC County Events

Irene Stein, Cindy Emmer, Bill Wood and Phil Jones.

Mentoring Services

The DRC Executive Committee has many experienced County Chairs. We are available to mentor and provide support to new County Chairs.

PREPARED AND FORMATTED BY: Lorie Longhany

EDITOR: Irene Stein and Doris Kirsch