

Looking at Webster 2015 from the Supervisor's Eyes

As I sit down to write about Webster and 2015, I am optimistic about the town's future and delighted with what we accomplished in 2014. First off nothing gets accomplished here in Webster without the work of the finest work staff I know of in Monroe County. Our employees are hard working and dedicated to providing first class service to our Webster residents.

Whether it be the Highway Department plowing or paving roads, the Sewer Department keeping the sewage flowing, the Town Clerk's office providing needed services, the Library with their 40,000 square feet of information, our outstanding Police Department that service and protects, Parks and Recreation that provides families and kids outstanding programs all year, the Public Works Department that keeps the town construction moving forward, or the Assessing Office that oversees the STAR and other assessment programs – the Town of Webster and its employees are here to serve you, the Webster resident.

In 2014 we finally got Route 404 repaved and the road surface is a lot better now but we are not completely finished yet with that project. This year New York State will continue to work on Route 404 from the Village line to Phillips Road this summer. Also, the bridge over passes on Route 104 will get refurbished and repaved. In 2017 the State will return to Webster and do the intersections of Holt Road, Hard Road and Five Mile Line Road with new turn arrows (left and right) plus extending the turning lanes after land is acquired in the future.

We continue to encourage slow, steady growth of the Town of Webster. Many say, or have said, that they do not want Webster to turn into a Greece or Henrietta and I could not agree more when it comes to their commercial businesses. We built a new Dairy Queen in 2014 and not very much more in the way of commercial development. In 2015, Wendy's will be built and Buffalo Wild Wings will open in Town Center. L.A. Fitness opened in December and the remaining store fronts should open sometime this summer. Housing development continues on a steady pace with 91 new housing permits in 2014 compared to 66 in 2013. A lot can still be said that people want to move to Webster because this community is a great place to live, invest, work, and raise a family along with our great shopping opportunities, open space and parks.

The Town Board also added a Spray Park at the First Responders Park last summer which proved to be a very successful addition. We cannot wait till this summer when the spray park will be able to serve Webster residents for the complete summer. Come spring time we hope to have constructed a restroom on site for use of all using the playground and spray park at this fun and family friendly spot in our town.

The 2015 Town and Village tax rate did increase by six point five cents per thousand to allow us to maintain the same level of services that Webster residents have come to expect from town government. This was under the New York State tax cap and will allow Webster residents in October of 2015 to receive yet another tax freeze check from New York State. Now the check will be larger if the Webster School district stays under the tax cap this May and if the town,

school, and village can document our shared services in past years. If all of that is met this year, the check you receive in October will be larger than the one from last October.

I just heard again that the Governor wants to put forth another tax gimmick to the tune of \$1.66 billion to refund more tax checks back to New Yorkers. Just in postage for this past October to send out those \$30-\$75.00 checks, the cost to the taxpayer was \$1.6 million. Here is a crazy idea ... how about lowering state taxes, sales taxes, gas taxes, health care taxes and any new fees and let the New York State taxpayer keep their own money instead of sending it to Albany just to have them send it back as a rebate. Albany is not surprising anyone with these gimmicks they keep proposing as evident in the millions of people who have left New York in the past ten years to rid themselves of the high taxes in New York State.

The Town of Webster does not believe in borrowing money to fund the day-to-day operations of town government. Putting it on a charge card for our future children and grandchildren to pay for is not something this Town Board believes in. We believe in paying for our debts and that is why the Town of Webster has very little debt and our Standard & Poor's town credit rating stands at Double AA.

As I look forward into 2015 I see some of the same old problems still facing our financial situation. We just participated in a health care summit last week for next year and rates are still expected to raise around 10% for the 2016 budget year and 12.5 % for 2017. Pension costs for employees are still at 20% and higher for some employees and this percentage is based on gross salary.

With the retirement of Chief Jerry Pickering, the Webster Police Department has a new acting Chief in Lt. Joe Reiger. We are in the process of interviewing for a new officer to take Chief Pickering's vacancy on the roster. The Webster Police continues to serve Webster residents in an outstanding fashion in what has turned in to trying times with different situations occurring on a daily basis.

As of February 13, 2015 the Town of Webster will see another retirement in the Commissioner of Public Works, Gary Kleist. I am pleased to announce that the Town Board has selected Mr. Geoffrey Benway as his replacement. Geoffrey comes to the town with 17-years of experience and we feel he can continue to move the town forward and provide the services our residents expect.

The Highway Department continues to amaze the Webster residents with their concern for road maintenance and their winter time plowing so we can navigate the roads safely. We have 40 highway employees that understand that hard work, dedication to job, and doing the job right is the Webster way of doing things.

Our Parks and Recreation continues to provide instrumental programs for the young and old at the Webster Recreation Center. From senior programs with hot meals every day, to the youngest

of the youngest for special programs fitting their needs, the Webster Recreation Center is a center of activities for all in Webster. If you have not been to the new center, please stop in and take a tour at your leisure.

The Webster Public Library is still second in Monroe County in circulation and continues to provide many opportunities for Webster residents to take out a book, a video, a tape, or work at one of their many computers. This customer service, along with the Town Clerk's Office or the Assessing Office, still amazes me with the attention to detail for our Webster consumers all the time.

The Sewer Department continues to provide a much needed service to the town, along with the yearly pharmaceutical drop offs where Webster residents can dispose of outdated prescriptions.

I do not often get to our Justice Courts, but from what I understand, our two judges are fair in their sentences and have an outstanding staff that serve them well during court time and the helping them during any administrative duties.

As we move into 2015 I must remind Webster residents that this year is an election year for the Town of Webster. The County Executive position is up this year along with the District Attorney's position and all County Legislative posts. On the local election scene there are two Town Board member seats up for re-election, one judge seat, and the Supervisor's seat is up which I intend to run for another two year term.

As we move forward I am confident that the Town Board understands your local concerns and we will do all in your power to serve you, the Webster residents, with all the great services you have come to expect and enjoy while living in the town, "Where Life is Worth Living".