Eighth-graders get to test new high school technical option

By Suzanne Daycock

STAFF WRITER

While public high school seniors impatiently wait for news on their college applications, a special group of eighth graders are sitting down with their middle school guidance counselors for the second year in a row to determine whether a new, alternative high school might change their lives. It federal and state educators are right, it just may.

The New York State Pathways in Technology Early College High School initiative, which is commonly referred to as P-TECH, is now accepting applications from the parents of Rockland County eighth graders interested in pursuing the rigorous requirements of a program aimed at producing the kind of highly-skilled technician that can manage the demands of a 21st century industry. Those who successfully embrace that challenge will be rewarded with a first-class high school education, a free associate degree in applied sciences and a first shot at a high-paying job in one of a growing number of high-tech fields.

P-TECH OPTION

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Our Town

Our 42nd year as News Leader for Orangetown, Clarkstown and N. Bergen

Wednesday, January 7, 2015
Vol. 42, No. 11

Medicaid only itemized tax on bills

By Anne Phyllis Pizzo

STAFF WRITER

Property tax checks paid into the Rockland County coffers accounts for only $187,978,376 of a $772 million budget with the balance coming from sales tax, state and federal funding, other taxes, licenses, permits, fines, forfeitures and other sources.

Yet at a meeting with reporters held Dec. 15 last year, County Executive Ed Day said that on the county portion of the tax bill appearing in residents’ mailboxes this week, only the Medicaid “tax” will appear regardless that many tax payers last year thought this amount was being directly charged against their tax levy, what they paid in the county.

When questioned about this, Steve Grogan, Deputy Commissioner of Finance also attending that meeting said that this was proper because it was a mandated expense.

However, the District Attorney, the Sheriff’s Department, the County Clerk, the Department of Social Services and most of the county departments all have unfunded mandated costs which combined are much more than the tax levy. In fact about 75 to 80 percent of the $772 million budget is used to pay mandated services. While only $3.6 million of that goes to Medicaid it is the only cost which Day has decided will go on the bill.

“We could have said about the fine tuning of this but it would be disingenuous not to say that a significant amount of money is spent on Medicaid in this county, over 70,000 people of 320,000 are receiving Medicaid and other assistance.”

Day said he knows there’s been some concern about doing it another way and that he is open to it. “We have asked the chairman of the County Legislature more than once if there’s something he wishes to see differently to get a consensus of the body, send it over by resolution and we will weigh it like we weigh any other resolution.

We’re looking to be as clear as possible.”

However, according to the original legislation, it’s the County Executive’s office that makes the decision of what is to go on the bill, not the Legislature.

The original resolution allowing the itemization of expenses does not affect the actual tax levy but does allow for additional information to be printed on the bill.

The appearance of this amount on the tax bill is the result of two local laws passed on December 4 of 2012, entitled “Rockland County Mandate and Taxation Information Act” and the “Rockland County Taxation Transparency Act.”

These local laws state that complete information on the bill should describe major programs funded by the county as well as a summary of the impact that the State mandates have on property tax.

What the local states should be included:

MEDICAID BILL: Page 6, please

Wonder waste: Anellotech shows how non-food material becomes useful industrial products

By Maxime Gay

STAFF WRITER

During a recent presentation to visitors representing Orangetown government, neighboring residents and the media at the Anellotech facility on theelper Pearl River campus, corn stover (the plant material left after kernel removal) pine chips, wood chips, sawdust, switch grass and other non-food agricultural by-products were displayed on a conference table.

The otherwise wasted material can be converted into usable industrial chemicals through a process now in the research and development stages at the company’s R&D facility in Pearl River.

The actual large-scale commercialized conversion process could be carried out in plants throughout the world.

Story on Page 4

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SHOW AND TELL: Anellotech invites public to preview biomass project at Pfizer

By Anne Phyllis Pinnow

Two recent presentations to visitors representing Orange Town government, neighboring residents and the media at the Anellotech facility on the Pfizer Pearl River campus, corn stover (the plant material left after kernel removal) pine chips, wood chips, straw, switchgrass and other non-food agricultural waste were displayed on a conference table.

These are samples of the biomass that could be used in different parts of the country and the world to produce the industrial chemicals benzene, toluene and xylene (BTX).

Anellotech's efforts to take its primary research to the next step has also unintentionally produced biodegradable materials instead to extend its Pearl River building into a larger research facility.

Residents feel they have been fooled by a lack of understanding what Anellotech is doing, a reason of governmental regulatory agencies suffering budgets.

The use of a new technology, an opponent's Facebook page and a rumor causing catastrophic scenarios that the firm's efforts might wipe out.

Housewarming in both Orange Town and Clarksburg have petitioned their elected officials to disallow the extension of the building despite the fact that the decision of whether or not to allow the project is up to the Orange Town Planning Board.

Boards autonomous

According to the laws of the State of New York, under Town Law, planning and zoning boards are autonomous bodies, their decision not to b influenced by elected officials or boards.

Such attempted influence as residents are asking for regarding Anellotech can and has resulted in lawsuits in the past.

Minimum guidelines of 0.04 ppm (parts per billion).

Model shows proposed building extension that Anellotech seeks to add at its Pfizer space.

It would house the research and development equipment to test small quantitie of biomass material that would be converted into useful industrial chemicals.


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