



# Cole's Clipboard

STATE REPRESENTATIVE SANDY COLE

## Community News & Legislative Update

*On February 20, the Governor delivered his annual Budget Address before a joint session of the Illinois General Assembly. Unfortunately, Illinois' budget situation remains very troubled and we simply cannot afford new programs. With skyrocketing energy prices, rising unemployment, utility rate increases and a nationwide mortgage crisis, it is more important than ever that we invest in jobs and infrastructure here in Illinois.*

*Our response should not be to raise taxes. We all know that raising taxes on families does not help a struggling economy – raising taxes on employers who create the vast majority of jobs in Illinois does not help a struggling economy. I believe our priority should be to invest in education, jobs, and infrastructure.*

*The Illinois General Assembly does not have a revenue problem—we have a spending problem. The State of Illinois currently owes an astounding \$1.7 billion dollars in unpaid bills, a record backlog that threatens our ability to pay our health care providers, fund our schools, and provide other vital State services.*

*I am committed to working in a bipartisan manner to pass a budget that requires the state to live within its means.*

*Sandy Cole*

### JOINT TOWN HALL MEETING

Please join Representative JoAnn Osmond (R-Antioch) and me for a Town Hall meeting at Lakes Community High School Auditorium on **Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:30pm**. The forum is open to the public, and residents of all local communities are invited to attend and discuss issues relating to the state budget; including education funding, local transportation, public safety, and quality of life issues. The high school is located at 1600 Eagles Way in Lake Villa.

### NEW LEGISLATION

#### Elimination of Additional RTA Tax on Food and Drugs – House Bill 4638

One of the first steps I have taken to help lower your tax burden is to co-sponsor legislation that proposes to eliminate the additional ½ cent sales tax added to food and medicine as a result of the RTA's mass transit funding bill approved by Governor Blagojevich in January.

#### TIF Public Hearing – House Bill 4279

I am continuing to require that public hearings for Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts be conducted in a fair and respectful manner for the taxpayers who are directly impacted by such developments. This legislation provides that a TIF's joint review board shall appoint one of its members to preside over certain public hearings. This legislation serves to prevent those with vested interests, such as a developer, from dominating a public hearing where it is the taxpayers right to speak.

#### Text Message Blocking – House Bill 4721 & Cell Phone Cramming—House Bill 4594

HB4721 would require that wireless carriers offer their customers the ability to opt out of all text message services on wireless service agreements. HB4594 would ensure that wireless carriers only bill customers for authorized charges. The bill also provides numerous protections for wireless customers in the event that they dispute a charge on their bill.

*(Special thanks goes to District 62 constituents Steve and Mary for bringing fraudulent wireless practices to my attention).*

\*\*\*NOTE: Be sure to list your cell phone numbers with the *Do Not Call Registry* by going to <http://www.donotcall.gov/> or calling toll-free 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236).

#### Income Tax Alternate Energy Credit – HB4280

As the trend to “go green” continues around the country, I think the State of Illinois should set an example by adopting increased energy standards. This legislation would provide a credit for taxpayers who, during the taxable year, install, on a building or property that is owned by the taxpayer and that is located in the State, a geothermal, solar, wind, or fuel cell energy device.

#### Energy Efficient LED Lighting—HB5930

This bill amends the Government Buildings Energy Cost Reduction Act by providing that LED (light emitting diodes) lighting may be used in addition to Energy Star lights (typically compact fluorescents) in state owned or leased buildings of 1,000 square feet or larger. Generally, LED lights last about 10 times longer than compact fluorescents. Furthermore, LEDs offer an environmentally-safe alternative to fluorescent bulbs that contain mercury and require proper disposal to minimize exposure to the elements

### DID YOU KNOW?

\*District 62 has a *Youth Advisory Committee* that meets the 4th Saturday of each month to discuss the issues and challenges facing the youth of our communities today. If you are a high school student residing in my District, and are interested in participating, please call my district office at 847-543-0062 or email me at [RepresentativeSandyCole@comcast.net](mailto:RepresentativeSandyCole@comcast.net) for more information.

\*As of January 1, 2008 all vehicles must pass an emissions test or otherwise comply with the Illinois Inspection Law before the vehicle's license plates can be renewed. Previously, this program was enforced through the suspension of drivers' licenses and vehicle registration.

\*That gift card you received for Christmas or your birthday might be worthless. If a retailer files for bankruptcy or goes out of business, your gift card is at risk of becoming just a piece of plastic. This is typical of businesses that reorganize under Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which treats gift cards as a loan to the company, not as cash! So don't wait...use your gift cards now, while they still have value.