I want to begin this week’s column by recognizing Pat Morris, our Penfield Fire Marshal for more than 30 years, who retired this past week. Pat has spent more than 40 years in Fire Service working for Xerox, the West Webster Fire Department (where he is currently a commissioner), and the Town of Penfield. This was never a job for Pat; it has been a life-long passion for a profession that requires leaders and responders to take charge of critical situations to aid those in immediate danger, and also excellence in emergency preparedness planning to ensure public safety. On behalf of the entire Town of Penfield, I would like to say thank you to Pat for all his years of service, we wish you all the best for the future!

My office was recently notified that Constellation Energy, operator of the Ginna Nuclear Facility, will be holding a notification system test on Thursday, May 5 at 9:45 AM. Monroe County 911 and Wayne County 911 will coordinate the activation of sirens. WHAM/WDVI/WHEC-TV will air the standard test message. We have a number of sirens located in East Penfield that will activate at 9:45AM and last for several minutes. THIS IS A TEST only!

Well, “Egg Hunt 2011” was interrupted by rainy weather on April 15, which caused the event to be postponed until the following day. It was indeed a cold and windy Sunday at Rothfuss Park; however, that did not deter several hundred of our young residents to comb the fields searching for more than 4,000 eggs! The children did not seem to mind the weather but all of us adults left the event in search of hot beverages. I’m sure Dunkin Donuts and Starbucks benefited from this year’s event.

I had the honor and pleasure of being invited to Legacy of Penfield to be a celebrity chef last week. Chef Tony Moringello regularly brings his kitchen to the dining room to prepare dishes and desserts for the residents and share recipes. I helped him prepare crème brulee for approximately thirty eager residents and staff members. I must say I have always been intimidated preparing this dessert, yet Chef Tony made it look easy. Chef Tony has been with Legacy since it opened more than ten years ago and is recognized for his creative menus and very contagious smile.

At the last Supervisors Association meeting our guest speaker was Dr. Bob King, Senior Agriculture Specialist for Monroe Community College, who talked about “Grow Monroe.” He informed us that a combination of the economy and increasing interest by many to become more self-sustaining has given a boost to this program. Dr. Bob also shared a lot of history and materials for the supervisors to bring back to their respective communities. Two items caught my eye: the “Home Vegetable Garden Guide” and the “Agriculture Summer Camp for Kids.” For more information on these two handouts and much more on “Grow Monroe” please log on to www.growmonroe.org.

It seems strange and somewhat comical that I share with you the fact that we met with a number of engineering specialists this past week to discuss snow and ice salting, as I had been hoping winter would have been over months ago! The fact of the matter is that snow and ice control costs the Town of Penfield more than $300,000 annually for salt and about 5,000 hours in overtime. Our interest is to reduce these costs by taking advantage of training, technology, and applications. The treatment of salt before application to roads provides for better longevity and reduced use. The Town Board continues to challenge all of our department heads to look for ways to control and cut spending. Managing and controlling salt applications is another way to contain costs and help the environment. While I am not anxious for next winter to come, I am excited about some new options available to us next season that will provide the same safe roadways at a reduced cost to taxpayers and less impact to our environment.

Over the next several weeks you will see our Highway crews working on the Ruoff Park on Empire Blvd. We have a plan approved by DEC to complete the clean up of materials on the site and to establish the proper ground cover with grass and buffer for the water’s edge. Additionally, we will be relocating the current driveway to allow for improved sight distance and we are adding parking to allow expanded use of this beautiful area on Irondequoit Bay. This project has been around for many years, and I am delighted we are bringing it to a point that it can be enjoyed by our residents for many years to come. I will keep you posted on the progress over the next several months!

Until next week, be well and be safe!

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