Budget update 2013: Since last week’s column, I have received several questions about the term “unfunded mandates.” People have asked what they are and how they affect the Town of Penfield. The largest unfunded mandate is the growing cost of pensions; for 2013 the state is telling municipalities to plan for a 21% increase. Even though the New York State legislature added a “Tier VI” pension plan, the current system cannot sustain itself over the long term without capping expenses or making changes to current plans. So how does this happen? Well, beginning in 2012 all town, village and school district budgets were required to comply with a 2% CAP on spending. However, this did not apply to the state budget. Many municipal leaders believe that if New York State followed the same CAP that this effort would bring true tax reform to our taxpayers and help better manage overall costs so we would not be faced with 21% increases. Therefore, in early 2012, the Monroe County Council of Governments unanimously passed a resolution calling for the state to enact a CAP on all state mandated expenses at the lesser of 2% of costs or the rate of inflation. If the state legislature does not step up and address pension costs, it has the potential to bankrupt many cities, counties and towns! Over the next several weeks I will highlight a number of other mandates that local governments are faced with as we prepare annual budgets and attempt to keep taxes flat.

I was notified this week by the staff at Legacy Willow Pond that they began working with DeConinck Farms to host a “Traveling Market” which is open to the public for fresh seasonal fruits, vegetables and baked goods. The market will run every Monday in August from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. in their front parking lot. The residents and staff of Legacy invite everyone to stop by and pick up some of your favorite garden items for your next meal.

The Town’s Employee Wellness Committee asked me to remind you that self-care is simple and smart. “Self-care smart” means knowing when to see the doctor or when easy at-home care works well. Managing your health can be easier and less expensive if you practice good self-care. The two major health care providers in the Rochester region provide free, easy and quick links to help you get the information you need to make well-informed decisions about your health, so you can take on life and live well.

Several weeks ago I noted in this column that we would be starting the Baird Road re-construction from Atlantic Ave. to Whalen Road and it would be done over a two-year period. The project has been delayed waiting for materials to install the drainage system for the road; manufacturers are behind due to a heavy demand this construction season. We hope to get started the week of August 27 and we apologize for the delay.

Mark your calendars for the Penfield Library Annual Used Book Sale presented by the Friends of Penfield Public Library to be held September 12 to 15. For more details, please log on at www.penfieldlibrary.org.

The Penfield Players theatre company will be holding auditions for its fall production, “Dearly Departed,” by David Bottrell and Jesse Jones. Director Wyatt Doremus will conduct auditions on Tuesday, September 4 and Wednesday, September 5 at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center on Baird Road. For more information or to get a copy of the script, contact Mr. Doremus at (315) 524-2368 or go to www.penfieldplayers.org.

Until next week, be well and be safe!

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