

League hosts health care forum

ROCHESTER — The League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metropolitan Area Committee on Health Care Reform will host a discussion on the Affordable Care Act from 4 to 6 p.m. Oct. 17 at Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Ave.

The panel will include Lynne Scalzo, vice president of business strategy at Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield; Michelle Casey, Finger Lakes Health Systems

Agency; Dr. Joseph Vasile, CEO of Greater Rochester Independent Practice Association; and Kim Wynn, program manager at Coordinated Care Services Inc.

Sarah F. Liebschutz, distinguished service professor emerita at State University College at Brockport, will be the moderator.

For details or to register, visit <http://lww-rma.org/signup2.php>.

911 Augustine: Keep politics out of analysis

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Councilor-at-Large Jackie Augustine agreed with the need for the analysis but said it should be done by an independent, impartial consultant without involvement of an oversight committee that includes a Council member.

Horn said the committee would be able to provide important information to the consultant on the city's dispatch operation and the county's new 700 megahertz dispatch system that went online Wednesday.

"I don't want this to be political. An election year is coming and this could be a very political issue," Augustine said. "I'd rather see an expert in operations and finance, answering the questions of what can be done to convert and how to do it, without politics."

"I agree, we just need to get the information," Horn said.

"I'd like an expert with no stake in the outcome," Augustine said.

"I agree it should not be political," said Councilor-at-Large Tony DiCostanzo. "But there's no way an issue of this magnitude can stay non-political. There will be forces vying for votes in the end."

He said it's a \$1 million question over a five-year period if the city continues its own dispatch system.

"I see no harm in a committee, especially with a Council member. We would have to make the decision and that person could keep Council informed of the progress of the study," DiCostanzo said.

Second Ward Councilor Paul D'Amico acknowledged he's running for county supervisor and said Augustine may be afraid that he would be the Council representative on

the committee.

"If we spend money on an outside consultant, it makes sense to have this committee to give them the best information on costs, operations and safety. I'm not saying whatever the Fire Department says we should run with, but this is the best source of information," D'Amico said.

Horn said the new county 911 system that went online Wednesday needs to be examined in terms of cost to the city and the service it can provide.

"The county acknowledged they couldn't serve the city a year ago. Now they may be able to. We need to investigate that and this committee can help. It's the right time to do this analysis," said Mayor Ron Alcock.

First Ward Councilor Ron Martino said the current city-operated dispatch service offers an important, quality service, and he would be reluctant to give that up, even if it saves money to go to a county system.

Ontario County dispatches for all municipalities in the county except the city of Geneva.

Fourth Ward Councilor Ken Camera agreed with the importance of keeping politics out.

"We need expertise and independence to do this analysis," he said.

"My point is that the 911 service has taken on a life of its own and is part of the political debate," Augustine said.

"We should make sure this analysis is of the system operations, technical issues and cost. It needs to be objective."

Sixth Ward Councilor John Greco said the current city-run system works well and the only reason to consider alternatives is to save money.

"It's a great system. Ask those who've used it. We don't need a consultant to

tell us that," Greco said.

"We are here to save the city money. If we can provide the same level of service another way at less cost, why not do it?" DiCostanzo said.

Augustine also questioned the budget inclusion of \$10,000 for the Geneva 2020 program, an initiative of the Geneva City School District. She said the program's goals are laudable but questioned if the city could come up with a contract for the use of taxpayer money that meets city objectives.

Horn said the school district will suggest programs for the city money, and if they don't fit into the city's objectives, "they don't get the money."

D'Amico said it could be viewed as an economic development initiative, with the goals of improving graduation rates, preparing graduates for college or careers and improving literacy.

Other questions asked by Augustine related to an allocation to the Business Improvement District for downtown maintenance efforts, an allocation to the Geneva Night Out program and inclusionary program funding.

"I am pleasantly surprised at no tax increase for seven years. This budget is based on Council directives and we seem to be getting more for our money and not cutting services," D'Amico said.

Martino said he'd like to find a way to reduce taxes, saying they are keeping the city from drawing more residents. He was told it would take \$65,000 in reduced expenditures to reduce the tax levy by 1 percent.

"I'm impressed. This is one of the best budgets in the six years I've been on Council," Alcock said. "But keeping taxes stable is not sustainable for the future. Costs go up. But I'm happy with this budget."

The second and final budget work session will be 6 p.m. Wednesday. Adoption is scheduled for Oct. 23.

Refuge closed; some programs at Montezuma continue

The Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in Seneca Falls has closed until further notice as a result of the federal government shut down.

While access to refuge property and programs offered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have discontinued, state Department of Environmental Conservation lands and the Montezuma Audubon Center, 2295 Route 89, Savannah, remain open.

The Audubon Center is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday.

Programs this month include:

- Oct. 11 and 12: Sixth annual Robert F. DeRoo Youth Conservation Dinner and Hunt.

- From 9 a.m. to noon Oct. 18: Montezuma Birding Van Tour.

- From 9 a.m. to noon Oct. 19: Onondaga Lake Conservation Corps volunteer habitat restoration event on Onondaga Lake.

- From 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Oct. 19: Happy Owl-ween! Features a live owl program and evening hike.

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POLICE

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GENEVA — Jesus M. Garcia, 27, of 49 William St., was charged Oct. 3 by city police with third-degree criminal sale of a controlled substance.

YATES COUNTY

BENTON — One person was hurt Wednesday when two cars collided at the intersection of Route 14A and North Main Street.

County deputies said a vehicle driven by Hilda Ingram, 93, of 1674 Route 14A, Penn Yan, attempted to merge into traffic off North Main Street. Deputies said she failed to yield the right of way and collided with a car driven by Cynthia Jepsen, 52, of 3311 Adams Road, Penn Yan.

Thomas Jensen, 32, of 1679 Jacob St., Hall, a passenger in Jepsen's vehicle, was taken to Soldiers and Sailors Hospital in Penn Yan with head and stomach pain.

Ingram was ticketed for failure to yield the right of way.

DWI ARRESTS

The following individuals were charged with driving while intoxicated:

- Jason P. Dibble, 52, of 1533 Meadowbrook Lane, Farmington, by Ontario County deputies about 7 p.m. Wednesday after his vehicle hit a utility pole on Route 21 in Canandaigua.

- Jennifer L. Natalello, 23, of 70 Page Ave., Rochester, by Ontario County deputies about 3 a.m. Wednesday after a collision on Route 332 in Farmington; also charged with failure to keep right.

- Kristin P. Stiner, 30, of 6529 County Road 17, Springwater, by Ontario County deputies about 3:30 a.m. Saturday on County Road 37 in Richmond.

- Lynn D. Harrison, 55, of 10 Goodman St., Apt. 112, Geneva, by city police about 7:30 p.m. Saturday; also charged with driving while ability impaired by drugs, driving while ability impaired by a combination of alcohol and drugs and first-degree aggravated unlicensed operation.

AUO Arrests

The following individuals were charged with aggravated unlicensed operation:

- Juan R. Gonzalez-Galan, 29, of 65 Cherry St., Apt. 1, Geneva, by city police about 1:45 p.m. Wednesday; also charged with operating with a suspended registration.

- Karianne Mitchell, 32, of Canandaigua, by city police about 8:30 a.m. Wednesday; also charged with unreasonable noise and operating a vehicle without an interlock device.

- Heather M. Ochs, 27, of 1735 Route 14, Phelps, by city police Oct. 3; also charged with unlicensed operator.