

Calabrese gives upbeat 'State of Town' speech

by PATRICK KEYES

Stressing government innovations and discussing plans for an employee incentive program, the supervisor of the Town of Tonawanda gave a very upbeat State of the Town message last week to the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Chamber of Commerce.

At a special breakfast meeting of the chamber, Supervisor Carl J. Calabrese addressed a wide variety of issues dealing with the current status of the town and plans for the future.

Saying that the town continues to be "a solid example of a community that works," Calabrese pointed to the town's "A" credit rating and steady rate of taxes and services as proof of that. He also mentioned the average tax bill of \$2.05 per day, which gets the total menu of services offered in the town, including police and paramedic protection, garbage and recyclable pickup, street care, water and sewer line maintenance, parks and recreation facility upkeep and other services.

After briefly detailing each town department and its operations, Calabrese went on to discuss what he feels lies ahead for the town.

The idea of bringing all town employees into the "Creative Management Team" through an employee incentive program was again discussed, as it was in last year's address. Calling the employees "town government's most valuable asset," Calabrese said the plan in Tonawanda will encourage workers to share ideas that save money for the town by offering to share some of the savings directly with the person who came up with the idea. Final plans for the program are expected to be in front of the town board within the next few months, he added.

He mentioned the planned conversion of methane gas from the BFI landfill into electrical power to run the wastewater treatment plant, which will save an estimated \$15 million to \$20 million over the first 10 years of operation.

Harking back to the Community Policing program in the Parkside Village area, Calabrese said the program is being closely followed and said another satellite office could open in 1995 in another neighborhood.

He also touched on the negotiations for a

new cable contract for the town, which town officials have been saying all along will be a model for municipalities across the area. And the idea of redevelopment in the waterfront region was also discussed, with mention of the relocation of River Road, addition of new housing, cleanup of the Cherry Farm property and the upcoming demolition of the former refinery stacks along the waterfront, which Calabrese said is the first step in eliminating the eyesores from the area's landscape.

All was not rosy in the speech. The supervisor pointed to unfunded state and federal mandates, such as the proposed Great Lakes Initiative, the state's pension funding system and the idea of having the radioactive waste from the four Tonawanda sites stored in a new containment cell along the waterfront as serious issues which must be dealt with in an efficient manner.

However, none of the perceived negatives were considered to be too daunting. "Whatever problems or opportunities town government may face, we face as a team," Calabrese said.