

ANNUAL MESSAGE 2008

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to present the 2008 Annual Message from the Town of Clayton. As the newly-elected Town Supervisor, it is my honor and privilege to highlight the Town's accomplishments in the past year and our goals for 2008-2009.

It is necessary to reflect on how fortunate we are to live in this vibrant and growing community that we call home. We have beautiful landscapes, generous citizenry, superb volunteers, superior schools, excellent not-for-profits and locally owned and operated businesses. The quality of our local government is demonstrated through our professional staff and dedication in providing excellence of services to the community. The 2007-2008 year brought many changes to the composition of our Town Board and Administration. After twelve years of tireless devotion to the Town of Clayton, Robert Cantwell, Jr. retired from his post as Town Supervisor—leaving the Town in a strong fiscal position. The Town suffered the untimely passing of former Town Clerk and Town Board member, Bonnie Rose. Despite all of these transitions, the Town Board and the Administration of the Town of Clayton has remained cohesive, proactive, and open-minded. Together, all of these factors move to strengthen our community identity and sense of place through preserving and building upon Clayton's heritage.

The 2007-2008 year saw the completion of several ongoing projects. Beginning with an agreement in 2003 with the Thousand Islands Performing Arts Fund (TIPAF), the Clayton Opera House began a \$3.2 million dollar renovation project. As of December 2007, renovations at the Opera House are substantially complete—rendering a revived cultural center for the Town of Clayton. The Town of Clayton also finalized a grant application through the State Archives and Records Administration (SARA) to purchase Geographical Information System (GIS) hardware. GIS is a collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data such as maps, blue prints, and related data for capturing, managing, analyzing and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information. With this grant, the Town purchased a handheld tool for maintaining our GIS which provides reliable, high-accuracy location data. In addition, the Clayton Map Viewer (CMV) was built and enabled. This tool, which is available on our town website, allows the public to view parcels in the Town of Clayton and access zoning and assessment information, among other things.

Numerous projects were started and saw completion in 2007. The Town of Clayton completely renovated their town website thanks to webmaster Matthew Turcotte, a student at Thousand Islands Central School, among others. The website is found at www.townofclayton.com. The Highway Department was also busy during the past year. They contracted with the Village of Clayton to complete the reconstruction of Brooks Drive/Strawberry Lane in the Village. It is estimated that the utilization of our municipal workforces to complete this project, the Village of Clayton taxpayers were saved several hundreds of thousands of dollars. Also, Lover's Lane was repaved and a portion of Pelo Road was paved.

This past year also saw the continuation of a very important project. The FRINK project has two parts—Remediation and Redevelopment. The remediation aspect of the FRINK

project began in 2005 after contracting with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to clean-up the parcel of land formerly occupied by the FRINK Snowplow Factory. In 2006, asbestos, three buildings, and concrete floors were removed from the location. In 2007, the Town of Clayton began the in-ground clean-up of the property. As of December, 2007, roughly 30% of that clean-up is complete. It is estimated that the final 70% of the clean-up should be finished by mid-2008. As far as the FRINK redevelopment, 2007 was an imperative year. After having the parcel and the 25' public access for the Riverwalk surveyed in 2006, 2007 saw the FRINK Redevelopment Committee hiring a professional land planner, EDR, to provide a Development Master Plan for the site. This Master Plan should be completed in 2008 and work with the Developer should begin thereafter.

Other projects are still ongoing into the 2008-2009 year. The Town and Village of Clayton are continuing to work toward a joint Municipal Building at the current Village of Clayton site. In December 2007, the Town and Village, with the help of their Engineering Firm, submitted a Shared Municipal Services Incentive (SMSI) Grant to the Department of State (DOS) in an attempt to help fund the project. The two municipalities are also investigating the option of bringing Code Enforcement back to Clayton—with a joint Town/Village Code Enforcement Office. The Town is currently surveying geographically adjacent homeowners to identify whether the Town should work with the Village of Clayton and hook into the Village West Side Sewer—offering these adjacent Town residents sewer service. The Depauville Library is beginning a new round of renovations after suffering a fire on September 21, 2007. The Highway Department is presently working with other municipalities in Jefferson County such as the Jefferson County Highway Department, the New York State Department of Transportation, and New York State Department of Rural Resources toward developing a single shared services agreement to be used by all entities.

Even more, there are many new projects that are beginning this year. The Town of Clayton plans on constructing a salt storage shed for the Highway Department. The Highway Department plans on reconstructing both Kehoe Tract and Wood Road. The Town has begun working with its Town Engineer and the Department of Transportation toward the goal of constructing a Bike Trail on NYS Route 12E. There are plans to meet with officials from Fort Drum to discuss how to better market the Town of Clayton to our military families. In addition, the Town of Clayton plans on submitting a grant application to the Department of State for funds that would help with the revitalization of the hamlet of Depauville.

The 2008-2009 year is sure to bring many challenges, as well as many opportunities. As we have witnessed in the past, the only way to successfully rise to the challenges and reach our goals is to work together and to build our sense of community identity.

The Town of Clayton will also continue our aggressive efforts to secure outside funding for projects and initiatives to enable us to do more without additional cost to the taxpayer. In this area we have been extremely successful in the past thanks to the help of federal, state, and county officials. Federal assistance came from officials such as Congressman John McHugh, who was beneficial in his support and financing on both the Opera House Renovation Project and the FRINK Project. Also, U. S. Senators Charles E. Schumer and

Hillary Clinton both supported the Opera House Renovation Project. State officials such as NYS Senator James Wright and NYS Assemblyman Darrel J. Aubertine were valuable in securing funding on many projects in the past. In addition, County officials such as Jefferson County Legislator Michael Docteur have always given their support to projects in Clayton.

I am sure it is evident; we are a very busy, yet innovative and effective, local government. We consider it a privilege to both develop and accomplish the various projects that we undertake. We are committed to the Town of Clayton and the heritage that is Clayton's underpinning. We are also committed to providing a high quality of services to the community. Neither of these objectives can be accomplished without the continued support of this community. As Theodore Roosevelt stated in his First Annual Message to Congress on December 3, 1901, "To be permanently effective, aid must always take the form of helping a man to help himself; and we can all best help ourselves by joining together in the work that is of common interest to all." By continuing to work together, we can further build upon the Town of Clayton's legacy.