

Be sure to mark your calendars for some upcoming events sponsored by the Italian American Political Coalition. A Municipal Reception will be held in April/May; the annual Bocce Tournament will be held on June 12; a Mayoral Brunch will be held in August, the Endorsement Session is planned for fall; and the Togetherness Reception will be held on October 8. Candidates seeking endorsement for the General Election are encouraged to contact the IAPC as early in the process as possible.

U.S. Congressman Don Manzullo cosponsored legislation to stimulate the economy by accelerating an existing tax incentive to help manufacturers create and keep jobs in America. The American Jobs Creation and Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 (HR 5101) would speed up a domestic manufacturing tax deduction to give large and small manufacturers a larger tax break on the goods they produce in the United States. The tax deduction – which Manzullo helped create in 2004 – currently provides a six percent tax rate reduction for manufacturers on the goods and services they produce in the United States. The tax rate reduction is scheduled to increase to 9 percent by 2010, but the bill Manzullo would accelerate the phase-in to 9 percent retroactively to Jan. 1, 2008. Manzullo says the extra 3 percent cut legislation gives manufacturers immediate stimulus in expanding and creating jobs in America. It also provides a greater incentive for our manufacturers to keep jobs in the US because they would pay a 9 percent tax penalty on any work they send offshore

In the wake of ongoing budget woes, Cook County Commissioner Peter Silvestri proposes the following: a new tough ethics ordinance; a revamping of the Juvenile detention center, including a governing board of specialists; consolidation of finance and personnel offices at the health bureau and central administration; an ordinance requiring a 3/5 vote for tax increases proposed after a certain date in the budget process, making it more difficult for taxes to be proposed or increased; adoption of a County Legislative Policy to better work with state and federal legislators on issues effecting taxpayers; and intergovernmental agreements with municipalities and townships to assist in code enforcement in unincorporated areas. In his hometown where he also wears the hat of mayor of Elwood Park, Silvestri announces upcoming summer concerts - save these dates and plan ahead. Dates are: June 12, June 26, July 17, July 31, August 14, and August 28. All concerts start at 7 p.m.

Mayor Anthony De Luca announces upcoming improvements for the City of Chicago Heights, including street and curb improvements in Ward 2; as well as in-place sanitary pipelining and sewer manholes. The Chicago Heights City also agreed to resurface Ashland Avenue between Dixie Highway and U.S. 30. The project is set to begin this fall. De Luca also notes that some residents have been targeted in a telephone scam, and city police are warning residents that it may pose a security risk to victims' personal information. The scam begins with a call from a person who indicates that he or she is a police officer and says someone the resident knows has been involved in a serious accident but can't be identified. The reason for the call, the perpetrator says, is that the call answerer's phone number was taken from the injured party's cell phone. The police aren't sure exactly how the scam works but speculate that a person's phone number may be being sold to a third party or used in a fraudulent way. Police are advising residents to simply hang up.

Since beginning his four-year term as Chicago 2nd Ward aldermanic in 2007, Robert Fioretti has been working to fulfill his campaign promises, including increased communication with residents, environmentally-friendly development and not raising taxes. Although the Chicago City Council voted to increase taxes for the 2008 budget, Fioretti voted against the increase. Fioretti and his vision for environmentally-friendly and efficient construction seems to be moving forward. Fioretti promised to have a green building specialist meet with developers in order to assure sustainability and has an expert who sits on the citizen's advisory board.

This column is written by Nina Albano Vidmer, executive director of the Italian American Political Coalition. To submit information, please fax to 708-401-0360 by the first of each month for consideration in the following month's issue.