

January 2008 Political Update
By Nina Albano Vidmer

The Italian American Political Coalition held a dinner honoring Italian American Judges on November 7, 2007 at . Victoria's Beaujolise Banquets, Schiller Park. "The election or appointment to judicial office is achieved only through exemplary professionalism, integrity, knowledge of the law, compassion for our fellow man, and sincere faithfulness to the rule of law," says President Thomas M. Battista. Almost all of the 49 Italian-American (appellate, Cook, DuPage and Lake County) attended, along with 200 other members of the community. Italian-American judges in those jurisdictions include:

Hon. Edward A. Antonietti, Hon. Mark J. Ballard, Hon. Robert W. Bertucci, Hon. Joseph Bongiorno, Hon. Anthony John Calabrese, Hon. Frank Castiglione, Hon. Jill Cerone-Marisie, Hon. Cheryl D. Cesario, Hon. Thomas R. Chiola, Hon. Joseph Michael Claps, Hon. Gloria G. Coco, Hon. Lisa R. Curcio, Hon. Paula M. Daleo, Hon. Frank Deboni, Hon. Rodney W. Equi, Hon. James P. Etchingham, Hon. Thomas P. Fecarotta, Hon. Peter A. Felice, Hon. Bettina M. Gembala, Hon. Barbara Gilleran-Johnson, Hon. Gregory R. Ginex, Hon. Gilbert J. Grossi, Hon. Susan Ruscitti Grussel, Hon. Kay M. Hanlon, Hon. Thomas Hoffman, Hon. Anthony A. Iosco, Hon. Paul A. Karkula, Hon. Kerry Kennedy, Hon. Daniel M. Locallo, Hon. Mary R. Minella, Hon. Joseph Panarese, Hon. Donald D. Panarese Jr., Hon. Thomas Paul Panichi, Hon. Luciano Panici, Hon. Kathleen Ann Panozzo, Hon. Sebastian T. Patti, Hon. Angela Munari Petrone, Hon. William G. Pileggi, Hon. Victoria A. Rosetti, Hon. Thomas David Roti, Hon. Joseph M. Sconza, Hon. John J. Scotillo, Hon. Mary Seminara-Schostok, Hon. Darryl B. Simko, Hon. Domenica A. Stephenson, Hon. Donald J. Suriano, Hon. Joseph J. Urso, and Hon. John Ward

We congratulate all of you and are proud of the civic and public accomplishments

Meanwhile on the political front, Congressman Don Manzullo announced that a small technology start-up business in Rockford has received a \$2 million federal grant to conduct research and develop a new machining process that could dramatically improve efficiencies for manufacturing products made with titanium and other advanced materials.

To date, Congressman Manzullo has helped secure more than \$17 million in federal investments in the *EIGERlab*, created in 2002 when Congressman Manzullo, area educators, manufacturers, and community leaders joined together to establish a research center with best-in-the-world research tools to drive Illinois' manufacturing renewal and future prosperity.

The Small Business Exporters Association, a subsidiary of the National Small Business Association, recently honored Congressman Don Manzullo for his efforts to help create American jobs by encouraging U.S. small businesses to broaden their customer base by selling their goods overseas.

Stressing the need for the state to release promised education dollars to local school districts, State Representative Dennis Reboletti co-sponsored legislation that would secure the release of education funding. Reboletti, along with his House Republican colleagues, demanded action on legislation that is needed to release the education dollars approved in the new state budget.

Reboletti and others filed an education budget implementation bill (HB4151), which would authorize the release of budgeted education dollars. The \$600 million increase for education in the budget included a \$400 per pupil increase in general state aid, \$136.8 million for mandated categoricals, \$20 million increase in the Early Childhood Block Grant and an increase in special education personnel reimbursement. It also includes provisions to ensure that no school district will receive less in state aid dollars than they received last year.

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.