

Slicing the sales-tax pie

Suffolk's 10 towns seek a portion of internet proceeds

BY RACHEL O'BRIEN
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Suffolk County's 10 towns are seeking a portion of a proposed internet sales tax, pointing to similar revenue-sharing agreements in Nassau and other counties.

Rich Schaffer, the supervisor for the Town of Babylon and chairman of the Suffolk County Supervisors Association, is leading the effort to get a share of the anticipated sales tax on online purchases that Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo estimates could bring the state as much

as \$390 million annually.

While the three towns and two cities in Nassau County have long had a sales-tax sharing agreement with the county, Schaffer and his nine colleagues are asking only that a portion of the future revenue from the internet sales go to the towns.

He noted that 46 of the 57 counties outside New York City have revenue-sharing agreements with towns and villages.

"We want to mimic other counties that have agreements with their municipalities," he said. But only for the internet sales tax, "which is new money," he said.

Chad Lupinacci, the Huntington Town supervisor, went to Albany with Schaffer recently to speak with state lawmakers about their request.

"If this new internet sales tax

would go into effect, we just want to make sure it would not only go directly to the county, the county would be able to share it with the 10 towns," he said.

But the agreement would ultimately be decided locally, according to Morris Peters, spokesman for the state Division of the Budget.

The office of State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli occasionally gets involved in these agreements, according to spokeswoman Tania Lopez.

Schaffer and the other supervisors haven't met with County Executive Steve Bellone, but it will have to happen, Lupinacci said.

Asked about the supervisors' request, Bellone spokesman Jason Elan said, "The county supports the Senate and Assembly

one-house proposals." Those proposals would establish the internet sales tax to be split between the state and its counties.

While Suffolk doesn't have an agreement with its municipalities like Nassau does, the five eastern towns of East Hampton, Southampton, Shelter Island, Southold and Riverhead get a portion of the county sales tax for their police forces, as do a handful of villages with police forces.

Cuomo has proposed that a portion of the internet sales tax revenue go to the state's Aid and Incentives to Municipalities program — AIM — to make it whole after he announced cuts in his proposed budget in January.

Schaffer says the supervisors association wants the cuts restored without taking from the internet sales tax.

Girlz Talk honors its late founder

BY JOAN GRALLA
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Women who believe success is a communal goal came together on Saturday to raise money to help girls blaze their own trails — and to honor Girlz Talk's founder Cynthia Perkins-Roberts, who died Jan. 1.

"Lifting as We Climb — A Benefit for Girlz" at Syosset's North Ritz Club will defray the program's expenses, including the seventh annual gathering at Hofstra University, set for March 30, which 400 are expected to attend. The day will be filled with keynote speeches, interactive sessions and conversations that focus on academic and social issues.

Girlz Talk, one of several initiatives by The Cedarmore Corp., a Freeport-based nonprofit, has given much to many girls through the years.

"It meant so much; it helped me build my confidence," said Brianna Flythe, 18, of Huntington, who began attending Girlz Talk workshops, conversations and training sessions in sixth grade. "They helped me get ready for college."

"Just having older people tell you what they went through

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when they were younger — to see how successful they are motivates me," said Sage Thomas, 17, of Huntington.

The registration fee for the Hofstra program is \$25, but that is beyond the reach of some of those who wish to come, said Jacqueline Harris, program director at Cedarmore.

"We don't want to say 'No,'" she said.

So last year, Perkins-Roberts, who was vice president of multicultural marketing and sales development for the Video Advertising Bureau, came up with the idea of the group's first fundraiser. Her heirs hoped to match its success on Saturday.

Real-life role models

All too often, success can seem abstract and impossible to realize.

"They have to see role models; you have to see it so you can believe it can happen to you," Harris said.

"Self-esteem is really what we focus a lot of our energy



Jacqueline Harris, center, of The Cedarmore Corp., with Girlz Talk alumnae Sage Thomas, 17, and Brianna Flythe, 18, at the fundraiser.

on," said Norma Davis of Freeport, adding that book-learning alone is not always enough to launch a career.

Not everyone grows up in a perfect home, and Girlz Talk aims to make up for any shortfalls.

"Sometimes, what they get at home breaks that self-esteem," said Davis. Her dazzling crystal necklace, set off by her elegant black attire, identified her as a member of the organizing committee — and paid tribute to the founder's love of bling.

So did the trumpet, glittering with Swarovski crystals, on which Syreeta Thompson, of New Jersey, played her composition, "Blow Yo Horn."

"She never wanted to sit on the sidelines; she wanted to be the drum major for the underserved," said Perkins-Roberts'

widower, Jeffery Roberts, 60, of Westbury. Referring to his wife's high-powered career, he continued: "She understood what it took to get there — and she wanted to give back." He added "And for boys, too."

Gifts from the founder

The founder's daughters, Alexis, 19, and Jessica, 21, noted their mother would have turned 55 on March 11. "It's a great way to celebrate her birthday, her life and the work to be done," said Jessica.

Directed to reach into their gift bags, attendees pulled out white oblong scarves, decorated with butterflies, which the presenter said were gifts from Perkins-Roberts. She quoted the founder, saying: "This is a hug from me to you. . . . Thank you. . . . I love you all."

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CORRECTION

A Monday story about an apartment complex fire in Ronkonkoma was reported by David M. Schwartz and Rachel O'Brien. Schwartz's byline was omitted.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1918 Congress passed the first law establishing daylight saving time in the United States, with clocks to be moved forward one hour from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October. (This law was repealed in August 1919.)
1920 The Senate rejected, for a second time, the Treaty of Versailles.

1931 Nevada Gov. Fred B. Balzar signed a measure legalizing casino gambling.
1945 During World War II, 724 people were killed when a Japanese dive bomber attacked the carrier USS Franklin off Japan (the ship was saved). Adolf Hitler ordered the destruction of German facilities that could fall into Allied hands in his so-called "Nero Decree," which was largely disregarded.

1979 The U.S. House of Representatives began televising its floor proceedings; the live feed was carried by C-SPAN (Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network), which was making its debut.
1987 Televangelist Jim Bakker resigned as chairman of his PTL ministry organization amid a sex and money scandal involving Jessica Hahn, a former church secretary.