

Much has been reported and written about the sales tax revenue deal that has been announced between Onondaga County and the towns, school districts, villages and city. The questions I get asked the most are... What does it mean for Manlius? What kind of impact will a 50% reduction in sales tax have on the services and safety we deliver to our village residents every day?

The Village of Manlius just approved it's 2010/2011 Budget. After much discussion with several mayors and county legislators, I anticipated a 40% reduction in sales tax revenue for January 2011 and adjusted our projected revenue figures accordingly. Going into our next fiscal year beginning June 1st, I have directed all my department heads to spend conservatively where possible and begin immediately to take an even harder look where we can continue to right-size our budget for 2011-2012. It is in that budget where we will feel the full impact of the 50% reduction in sales tax revenue.

Fortunately for the Village of Manlius, we have a fund balance that will help close the gap for the 2011/2012 budget cycle. That, coupled with our continued efforts to share services, purchases and equipment with our neighboring villages, town and county, should help us weather these uncertain economic times.

What was once appropriated from sales tax revenue will now be a special inter-municipal agreement between the county and villages called the "Village Improvement Program" that will pay villages directly a fixed amount (50% less than what we are currently receiving) for the next ten years. Being an eternal optimist, I am able to see the glass as half full. We could have just as easily had our sales tax revenue completely cut in January 2011... Zip. Zero. Zilch.

I also found great opportunities in the sales tax deal uncertainties... One of the best things to come out of this entire experience for me has been the privilege to work collaboratively with mayors from all around the county in our efforts to lobby the Legislatures. We stood shoulder to shoulder in solidarity on behalf of our villages, residents and each other. We also worked closely with our representative Town Supervisors and School District Superintendents. Each was able to recognize the value of the other when it came to the quality of life issues that were at stake. The very essence of why people choose to live in a village.

The Village of Manlius is about to celebrate it's Bicentennial in 2013. As the oldest village in Onondaga County, I am convinced Manlius has survived and thrived for nearly 200 years because of our willingness to work together. I am mindful of all the losses and sacrifices our village has endured since 1813. As mayor, it is an honor to stand up and fight on behalf this great village and it's residents no matter the need or the challenge. You inspire me and fill my heart with pride every single day.

Mark-Paul Serafin

Mayor