

THE ACCORD

January 2009

Tightening the Belt on a New Year

It was an atypical holiday season in Albany. On December 16, 2008, Governor Paterson delivered a balanced Executive Budget, more than one month prior to the State constitutional deadline. His proposed budget would eliminate the largest budget deficit in State history - a \$1.7 billion current-year shortfall and a \$13.7 billion 2009-10 deficit. This proposal includes a series of difficult decisions across every area of State spending, as well as targeted increases in revenue, to address an unprecedented fiscal and economic crisis. The Budget also includes several reforms that will increase government efficiency and lower taxpayer costs in the future.

Governor Paterson stated, "Today, we too cannot shrink from the challenges ahead. We must address our new fiscal reality with a seriousness of purpose and candor that will allow us to emerge from this crisis even stronger than before. More than ever, we must have the courage to put politics aside and work together in a frank, honest, and nonpartisan manner for the common good." The desire for such principles in our society means that now is the time for the State to partner with the YMCA.

The Executive's proposal includes: Universal Pre-Kindergarten maintaining funds of approximately \$450 million. Advantage After School will be funded at \$19,172,500. This is \$7 million cut, which may represent savings from an expiring round of funding in 2009. Extended Day Afterschool will be funded at \$27,800,000, a sustained amount after August's cuts.

The SRO Support Services program is proposed for a reduction of 18% from the current year appropriation. The program has already taken a 6% reduction in the current year – the 18% reduction is in addition to the 6% taken in the August round of cuts. SRO Support Services originally received \$21 million in the 2008-2009 budget. If the proposed cut is enacted by the State Legislature, it will very likely result in cuts to existing SRO contracts, for the first time in recent memory.



Governor David A. Paterson announces his 2009-2010 Executive Budget Proposal

The Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP) will also be funded at a lower level, \$30 million, a reduction of \$6.5 million from last year's allocation of \$36.5 million.

Governor Paterson's proposed budget also includes over 100 new or increased taxes and fees. This includes a \$1 million increase from the non-diet soda tax, which will provide fund-

ing to the Department of Health's Obesity Prevention programs.

Additionally, one of the new tax proposals is a 4% sales tax on "gym memberships". The proposal does not single out YMCAs and other nonprofits, but it does not specifically exempt us either. However, the proposed changes do NOT include amendments to the section of law that exempts nonprofits (ie. YMCAs, JCCs, YWCAs, etc) from the Sales Tax, which is a good sign. We will be seeking an official determination from the Governor's legal counsel, which specifically states that the 4% "gym membership" sales tax does NOT apply to YMCAs. This is essential to ensure the continuation of our tax exempt status.

**A
Note
from
the
Director
Kyle Stewart**



The inevitable has happened once again as we embark on a new year and new challenges. As you know and read in our cover story, the State's financial situation is dire, to say the least. The realities are beginning to set in on the Albany scene and the public policy world is buzzing and working hard to minimize the

potentially devastating cuts and loss of programs. As we move through this unprecedented time, we will continue to remind State leaders of the important role that local YMCAs can play to deliver necessary services. Now, more than ever, the State needs their YMCA partners' expertise to fill the void.

Advocacy

Helping The YMCA
Help Others



Running into 2009

60 New York soldiers in Afghanistan were part of the 11th Annual First Night Saratoga 5k, which started locally at 5:30 p.m. Because Afghanistan is 8 1/2 hours ahead of New York time, the service members had already marked the start of 2009 when their run began at the same time as 1,000 local runners took off at Skidmore College. The 5K race started there at 5:30 p.m. on December 31, 2008, which was 3 a.m. on January 1, 2009 in Afghanistan. It was a bitterly cold night in Saratoga, but that did not stop the runners.

A satellite simulcast broadcast both sets of participants on a large split screen. The soldiers were mailed running bibs, T-shirts and trophies to participate. The run in Afghanistan was organized by Matt Armstrong, who had participated in the Saratoga Springs run with his father in years past.

Key Advocates Dinner

February 9th

The Albany Marriott

Wolf Road, Albany, NY

5:30-6:30PM

Registration and Cocktail Reception

6:30PM

Neil Nicoll, President and CEO, YMCA of the USA

7:00PM

Statewide Community Benefits of the YMCA

How to Communicate your local YMCA's impact

7:30PM

YMCAs of NYS Annual Meeting

Advocacy Day 2009

February 10th

Meeting Room 1, Empire State Plaza

8:00AM

Informal Continental Breakfast & Pick Up Meeting Materials

10:00AM-2:00PM

Meeting Room 1 will be your "Home Base". Come by for coffee if you have time between your meetings.

Dinner and Democracy

Due to the success and popularity of last year's event, we will be holding a *Key Advocates Dinner* again this year.

Joining us will be **YMCA of the USA President/CEO, Neil Nicoll**. Mr.

Nicoll has been part of the YMCA movement for 40 years and will address our group about the importance of public policy, as well as the necessity to communicate the YMCA's mission impact information within our communities.

Neil Nicoll was hired as president and CEO of YMCA of the USA in May 2006 and is the 13th person to lead the YMCA movement in the United States. A nationally recognized leader, Mr. Nicoll was the first chair of the YMCA Activate America Steering Committee. He served two terms on the Y-USA board (1988-92 and 2004-06). Neil Nicoll earned a bachelor's degree in

history from Eastern Nazarene College (Quincy, Mass.) and a master's degree in education from Springfield College. He also holds an Executive Management Certificate from Clark

University (Worcester, Mass.)

Discussions will focus on the Statewide YMCA Mission Impact initiative that highlights the community benefits of each YMCA by quantitatively promoting its charitable work.

Tuesday morning will provide us with an informal Continental

Breakfast, networking and time to individually discuss important issues and strategies for the days' legislative visits. Come to Albany for this great opportunity to tell our government leaders about the achievements of your YMCA.

REGISTER TODAY!

