SFCRTA: HOLIDAY LUNCHEON HIGHLIGHTS

Bob Duff, Ct State Senate majority leader was the speaker at SFCRTA's Holiday Luncheon on December 9, 2014.

Bob is serving his sixth two year term representing the people of the 25th Senatorial District which includes Norwalk and Darien.

He has served as Chair of the Energy Committee, Vice Chair of the Children's Committee and is a member of the Appropriations and Regulations Review Committees, as well as Chair of the Banks Committee.

Bob is bullish about Connecticut and espouses a bipartisan jobs bill that has created 60,000 private sector jobs and a lower unemployment rate.  We are growing jobs at the fastest rate since the l990's.  Connecticut is a leader in research and development and ranks third in the country in advanced degrees as well as leading in patent developments.  Among Connecticut's leading industries is Sikorsky which is in the process of developing an emission less helicopter.  Connecticut is also home to Johnson Labs which studies DNA innovations.

Senator Duff responded to questions about energy problems in CT noting that the legislature is working with industry to grow jobs in conservation with a goal of getting 300,000 families to use natural gas.   Ct has only a 30% gas penetration rate.  There were also questions about CL&P rate increases which the legislature was able to moderate and prevent a considerable rise in rates.

Regarding teacher retirement issues, Senator Duff has been in our corner in continuing the retirement system as it is. He has urged the governor to lower the state income tax on our pensions and in 2015 the rate will be reduced by 10%.  (CT is only one of five states which taxes teachers' pensions).

The senator believes CT is technically in recovery economically but that people are still very cautious about spending.  He believes that CT's sweet spot is education and we continue to compete nationally and globally.  We certainly hope his optimism is well founded.

Anita Lanese