



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## Flood Damage Relief, Help with Heat Bills, and F.O.C.U.S. Survey

DAVID J. VALESKY January 31, 2014

Last summer's floods taught us what we did well and what needed improvement. This week, the Senate passed a package of four bills, which I was pleased to sponsor with Senators Griffo and Seward, that will provide assistance to those who were affected by last summer's floods, ensure expeditious relief in case of another event, and study best practices to put together a plan to mitigate damage in the future. The bills are in response to multiple floods and storm events throughout last summer that caused an estimated \$80 million in damage between June 26 and July 3 in the Mohawk Valley alone. All now await Assembly action. Details about the bills are available on my [website](#).

### **Vote for America's Coolest Small Town - Cazenovia**

Cazenovia is one of 15 villages nominated for the designation of America's Coolest Small Town by the website [budgettravelcom](#). Cazenovia is currently in third place, behind Buckhannon, WV, and Berlin, MD. Support Cazenovia by voting once each day until the contest closes at 12:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 25.

### **Help for National Grid Customers**

In recent months, demand for electricity and natural gas, which is used to generate electricity and provide heat, has been unprecedented due to the extremely cold weather. The State Public Service Commission has authorized National Grid to provide its customers with

a \$32 million temporary credit to offset the increase in electric supply costs. The surges, expected in February, would result in bill spikes for upstate residential and small business customers. The credit will allow the expected increase in February prices to be spread out over a longer period of time. This one-time customer credit allow total rates, which includes delivery plus commodity charges, to be billed in February at the same rates as those that were in effect in January.

### **F.O.C.U.S. Needs Your Help**

F.O.C.U.S. and SUNY Oswego Active Aging Community Engagement Center are conducting a community-wide survey that seeks to understand why people leave or stay in Central New York as they grow older. The organizations are asking for your help with reaching people who have moved away. The final results will be shared with governments, businesses, academia, nonprofit, philanthropic, and citizen engagement organizations.

Please fill out the online survey yourself and forward the link to your contacts, co-workers, family, friends, neighbors: [www.focussyracuse.org/age-friendly-cny/](http://www.focussyracuse.org/age-friendly-cny/). If you need paper copies and for more information, contact F.O.C.U.S. at [focus@syrgov.net](mailto:focus@syrgov.net) or 315-448-8732 or visit [www.focussyracuse.org](http://www.focussyracuse.org).

### **Crop Insurance Deadline**

Crop insurance can help protect farmers from vulnerabilities such as unpredictable weather and pest outbreaks. I urge producers interested in purchasing crop insurance or changing their coverage to contact a crop insurance agent as soon as possible. March 15 is the insurance deadline. Crop insurance is made available by county. A list of crop insurance agents who sell crop insurance in your county is available [online](#) or at your local USDA Farm Service Agency office. Or call the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at 1-800-554-4501 and ask for crop insurance information.

## **Put Safety First When Ice Fishing**

Ice thickness can be difficult to predict, so please enjoy the ice responsibly. A minimum of three to four inches of solid ice is usually safe for anglers on foot. Anglers looking for a good place to ice fish can check out the [DEC's Public Lakes and Ponds map](#). This interactive map provides recommendations on waters open to ice fishing provided by DEC staff.