

Advice might not be good for company

Sen. Charles Schumer had a little advice for Corning Inc. last week. He recommended the company build its new heavy-duty diesel plant in the Southern Tier and not overseas.

We had to chuckle when we read Corning Inc.'s response, given to *The Leader* by Corporate Communications Vice President Dan Collins. "Clearly, here at Corning we hold Sen. Schumer in high regard. He's done a lot for New York state and the Southern Tier. We also appreciate his leadership and advice he's given us on this issue and other issues. As far as the location (for the planned plant), we continue to evaluate and consider a number of locations. The Southern Tier is one of those locations."

You don't have to read very closely between the lines to understand what Collins was really saying was this:

"Thank you for your (unsolicited) advice, Senator, but we'll build our plant where we please."

Clearly, Corning Inc. would like Schumer to mind his own business.

Now, we understand where Schumer is coming from. We'd like the new plant to be built here, too. It would create jobs, attract families and bring in tax dollars.

However, Corning Inc. is right to consider several locations before making a decision. What Schumer wants them to do might not be best for the company. Maybe building the plant overseas – where the demand for diesel products is skyrocketing and where it's easier to do business – makes the most sense. Maybe expanding in Erwin is the best decision.

We don't know and neither does the senator. What we do know is Corning Inc. has a pretty good track record when it comes to making the big decisions.

And while some of those decisions haven't been popular with local residents, Corning Inc. is thriving while other companies are struggling and failing. The company has not been afraid to shed struggling sectors – including Steubens Glass – and look to the future with Gorilla Glass and environment-friendly technology. Sure, there have been times Corning Inc. has struggled – most recently after the economic downturn of 2001 – but the company has always rebounded.

Truth is, even if the plant is built elsewhere, the Southern Tier will still reap the rewards. As Collins reminded the senator Thursday, Corning Inc. takes care of its own. That includes bringing 800 new jobs to the Corning area since 2009, adding 50 more research positions to the Erwin diesel plant this year and making \$1 billion in new facility investments locally since 2001.

There's also a host of community projects, most recently plans for a new park off Tioga Avenue and a \$64 million donation to the Corning Museum of Glass.

Corning Inc. is smart to explore all the possibilities. It's good business to be open-minded, make the tough choices, adapt and grow. The alternative is to stand still and die – like Kodak, which filed for Chapter 11 last week. Now that's a company that could use a little advice.

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ARTIST'S VIEW



POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

The new Cuomo budget

The headline says the "new" Cuomo budget, but plenty of what we heard from Governor Andrew Cuomo during his 2012-2013 state budget presentation in Albany last week sure sounded a lot like last year – and that's a great sheet of music to keep reading from. No new or higher state taxes or fees.

None of the fiscal gimmicky and gamesmanship that's been included in so many executive budget proposals in the past. Another year-to-year decrease in overall spending. The continuing overhaul of the state bureaucracy.

In short, the Governor handed us another straightforward budget strategy that led me to remark, in my initial reaction, that the "core proposals underpinning this fiscal strategy remain true to last year's building blocks for getting state and local taxpayers out from under America's highest tax burden, creating more cost-effective government across the board, and encouraging sustained private-sector job growth."

But (and there has to be at least one but? in a \$132-billion proposal) in this column last week I had also previewed the governor's plan by expressing the hope that it would include a bold move on mandate relief.

We didn't get a bold move, but we did get the beginnings of one by way of a proposal for a three-year state takeover of

future local Medicaid growth increases. This specific initiative mirrors legislation I introduced last year (S.5787) with local Assemblymen Phil Palmesano and Chris Friend, although we called for an immediate takeover of these local Medicaid cost increases as opposed to the governor's three-year phase-in.

So it wasn't a bold move, but it was a steady step. Beginning a total state takeover of local Medicaid costs would mark a true turnaround in the state-local partnership and a true victory for local property taxpayers.

It would keep building a new system of Medicaid that's going to be more cost effective for taxpayers, less abused and wasteful, and more efficient for patients. It took decades for this system to spiral out of control and it's going to take some time to fix it, but we're going to fix it. The governor's proposal moves in the right direction on this front, but I think we should find a way to do even more this year. Stay tuned.

Overall, Governor Cuomo's plan, and his call for continued bipartisan cooperation to achieve it, bodes well for one more repeat from last year – the enactment of an on-time budget.

The annual unveiling of the proposed executive budget marks the traditional first move in New York's budget making process. What's next? It remains the Legis-

ature's responsibility to pull apart the fabric of the Cuomo plan and more fully assess how it would impact our local communities.

This nuts-and-bolts analysis is already underway. The Legislature's fiscal committees will also begin a series of public hearings this week, starting Monday, with testimony from state agency heads and others on the proposals for elementary and secondary education.

I'll do my best to keep you updated on important developments.

Currently on my website, www.omara.nysenate.gov, you can visit a "Get the Facts" page (click on the "Get the Facts" icon in the left-hand column of the home page). Here you'll find, for example, a link to the State Division of the Budget website where there's a comprehensive range of detailed information on the Cuomo plan, including the budget books themselves. You can also find a schedule for the Legislature's budget hearings and a link to live Senate webcasts of each one. There's also a link to the Cuomo administration's new, interactive website – www.NYGetInvolved.com – to "bring New Yorkers together to learn about the Governor's agenda and to help inform the public about the latest on key initiatives."

■ **State Sen. Tom O'Mara is a Republican from Big Flats.**

OTHER VIEW | DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Perry exposed by harsh spotlight

As the clock ticked toward closing time to enter the 2012 presidential race, Rick Perry had to appear attractive to Republicans unwilling to commit to Mitt Romney and overwhelmed by everyone else.

Then there was the harsh light of day. Perry might have looked good in theory, but bringing him home for Sunday dinner was something else entirely.

Perry has time ahead to post-mortem his first failure as a candidate. His policies and power-driven politics as Texas governor have left much to be desired. Ending his presidential campaign Thursday, two days before a crucial vote in South Carolina, certainly was the prudent move.

It couldn't have been easy for a man cocksure he had the answers for what ails America. A dismal finish in Iowa and brutal polling in South Carolina, where he launched in August to great anticipation, left him little choice.

In the end, he did what was best for his party and probably himself by stepping aside and freeing his supporters. It remains to be seen whether his endorsement of Newt Gingrich will prove pivotal.

Perry's unbeaten streak began in a 1984 Texas House race and extended to terms as agriculture commissioner, lieutenant governor and governor. What did the rest of America see that we Texans didn't?

Perry won, by and large, in binary contests. He may not have been a beloved favorite son, but he usually only had to draw more votes than one someone else of significance, like the two guys being chased by the bear.

A crowded presidential primary was the antithesis – not Perry vs. Romney but Perry vs. Romney, Gingrich, Santorum and many others, along with super-PACs and interest groups.

And those debates. What this national stage and its hyper-intense coverage exposed was how unprepared Perry was to carry the details of his conservative message. He could minimize debating in Texas, but this GOP campaign has been driven to an unusual degree by how well the candidates could thrust and parry face to face.

Perry's oops moment in Rochester, Mich., was a telling gaffe but not his first. It was just the one that scared off the remaining voters – and donors – who might have been willing to listen. In truth, his campaign already was drifting toward the rocks, with previous stumbles and flubs making his once-lofty polling a distant memory.

Perry, the candidate, bears that responsibility, but while he ponders what went wrong, he should ask himself if he surrounded himself with the right people. Clearly, he didn't.

He has three years left on his current term and has left open the possibility of running again. Texas has far too many significant issues to resolve under a vindictive Gov. Rick Perry. What Texas needs now is his best leadership, a pragmatism and wisdom born of lessons learned in defeat.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Don't expose kids to tobacco

TO THE EDITOR | Recently, I visited a high school for a Tobacco Awareness and Prevention Program. The sad truth is that each day thousands of U.S. teens smoke their first cigarette. Unfortunately, for many of those youth, that first cigarette or "dip" of chew tobacco leads to a lifetime of nicotine addiction and then leading to a long list of complicated health conditions as a result. In fact, they say tobacco users usually start during adolescence. More than 80 percent

of adult smokers begin smoking before 18 years of age and about 70 percent of adult smokers want to quit completely.

Many of the students at the high school had some interesting thoughts and feelings regarding tobacco marketing they see.

Some direct quotes from students, "I hate walking into gas stations and seeing the huge displays of tobacco. I know what's inside chew containers and what cigarettes look like and smell like. It just makes you want to leave and get out fast."

Another student wrote, "Tobacco displays should-

n't be the first thing kids see when they walk into a store."

The fact is, youth visit tobacco retail stores frequently and are enticed by all the advertising they see. Everyone can play a role in making tobacco-related death and disease part of America's past, not its future. If you know someone that is ready to quit using tobacco products contact: The New York State Smokers Quit Line at (877) NY-QUITS or (866) 697-8487 or visit www.nyssmokefree.com.

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