

\*\*\* ELECTION 2020 \*\*\*

## Conti running for District 1 seat

Teacher Joseph S. Conti III announced he is seeking to represent the constituents of District 1 in the Niagara County Legislature.

Conti was raised in Youngstown by his parents, Joseph and Irene (Boniello) Conti, and now resides in Lewiston with his wife and two children who attend Lew-Port. He and his family are parishioners of St. Peter's Church in Lewiston. Conti is a graduate of Lewiston-Porter High School. He received his undergraduate degree from SUNY Fredonia and his master's degree from Niagara University.

Conti has worked at Lewiston-Porter High School for 19 years as



Conti

a social studies teacher specializing in world history, economics, A.P. European history, and government. He coached boys and girls soccer at Lew-Port and Niagara Pioneer, is co-adviser of the Key Club, served as the "Voice of the Lancers" basketball program for 15 years, and represented his colleagues as vice president of the Lewiston Porter United Teachers union and as a

union representative.

A registered independent and political newcomer, Conti has been endorsed by the Niagara County Democratic Committee. He said he is running to bring a fresh voice of change to county government.

"I am not a Democrat or a Republican, or support any political labels for that matter. I vote for the issues and quality of the person running for office," Conti said.

He pointed to what he called "deep institutional incompetence, nontransparent hiring practices, and a toxic political culture that has taken root in county government."

"I read the news, I teach govern-

ment, I talk to community members, and I know that Niagara County needs better oversight and ethics within its governmental structure," Conti said.

He suggested the legislature has "lost sight of addressing the quality-of-life issues that truly matter to the residents."

"We have a continuous problem with population loss, declining civic involvement, and increased unemployment rates (higher than national average). Yet, we never hear about new projects or ideas," Conti said.

He added, "Just drive around District 1 and you will notice vacant buildings, considerable poverty in

other parts, while at the same time see a tremendous opportunity for growth. The resources and sense of community we have here are like no place else. However, as a teacher, I see many of my former students leaving the area for better opportunities, and those who stay settle for low-paying jobs with few alternatives – it is time to turn this trend the other direction."

Conti said he believes the residents of District 1 deserve stronger representation, a more successful business climate, and that it is his plan to meet with as many residents as possible through the next nine months – on-line or in person.

## Dan set to primary 9th District Legislature seat

Former Rich Products Corp. labor relations executive Sil Dan Jr. will seek the Republican line to represent the people of North Tonawanda's 9th Legislative District in county government, saying, "Our city's residents are no longer being represented by the people they elected to work for them."

Dan, a semiretired business consultant who also volunteers and works part-time at First United Methodist Church, where he is a communicant, said he was distraught to see government "become a revolving door of connected names, appointed and re-appointed without any accountability for results." He pointed to a series of what he called controversial hires by county government as evidence current legislative leaders are "out of touch and out of their minds."

Dan said our county and city can't go on like this.

He noted the city had been forced to borrow \$4.2 million last month after what he called mismanagement of city finances by the former city trea-



Dan

sure, who resigned his post after a scathing audit by New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli. Parish then was hired into the No. 2 post in the county clerk's office despite the state audit.

"The state comptroller said that, for eight months straight, our city treasurer didn't bother to check the balances of our city's accounts, how much money was coming in and going out," Dan said. "The audit hits, he resigns, and the county government hires him the next week for \$20,000 more than he was making here."

Dan said he would push for a closer working relationship between county and city government, but would also demand county government revamp its hiring practices.

Dan noted his opponent, who currently leads the Legislature's Republican majority caucus and sits on several key committees, was in a position

to stop the county's hires.

"That Republican caucus meets before and during Legislature meetings," he said. "They have a room right outside the legislative chambers that they all file into and discuss the county's business behind closed doors. They knew exactly who they were hiring. It's time we restore some standards to our hiring, before they decide to put serial killers and bank robbers on the payroll, too."

Dan, who grew up in North Tonawanda, said he will work to help North Tonawanda businesses recover from government-imposed COVID-19 shutdowns.

"Clearly, county government is going to need to work closely with our businesses, and some of the people in City Hall, to make sure all of our businesses get the resources they need to return to normal operation, not just the connected few," Dan said. "Helping our businesses and taking care of our seniors will be my top priorities, in addition to fixing the county's very broken, very shameful hiring practices."

Dan, who was the Rich Products Corp. manager of workers compensation for a decade and a half, operates Superior Comp Management, a consultancy that address workers compensation issues.

"In those roles, I played a critical part in businesses' success, and a lot of what I did was made sure that the right decisions were made up-front," Dan said. "Right now, our county government is constantly having to address bad decisions after they've already damaged the interests of the taxpayers. That's got to stop."

Dan said his platform would be abbreviated "ACT."

"Accountability. Credibility. Transparency. Without those three things, government isn't serving the taxpayers, it's not serving the people that voted it in. It's not serving anyone but its own interests, and that's go to change," he said.

In addition to his corporate roles at Rich Products, Dan worked both as a dockman and a teamster for Consolidated Freightways, and was a union

business representative for SEIU. He also holds a paralegal certificate from the University at Buffalo.

"I've worked both sides, labor and management, and I'm a proud union member who also sat on the opposite side of the table," Dan said. "I think I have a strong case to make for helping to fix our county's broken hiring system."

Dan has also been active in youth athletics. The former Cardinal O'Hara, Nichols School and Park School boys basketball coach is an active member of the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials (IAABO) Board 15 and has more than a decade and a half as a high school basketball referee. He also has been both an official and a coach for the Buffalo Police Athletic League for the past 25 years and is involved in Amherst Youth Basketball.

Dan and his wife, Chi Chi, raised four children in North Tonawanda.

He is a registered Republican and will contest the Republican line in the June primary.

## Foti announces run for County Legislature

Republican Shawn Foti announced he would seek election to the Niagara County Legislature this November to the seat currently held by Legislator John Syracuse. Syracuse announced he would not seek reelection in order to run for Newfane town supervisor. Foti currently serves on the Newfane Planning Board.

"I am a lifelong resident of Newfane. My wife and I are raising our family here. I am fully invested in our community for the long haul," Foti said. "John Syracuse has been a leader we can all admire, and I hope

to follow his footsteps in representing Somerset and Newfane."

Foti is a project manager with Clark Rigging and Rental, working there for 11 years. He is a graduate of Newfane High School, holds an associate degree in mechanical technology from NCCC and a bachelor's degree from Buffalo State in tech mechanical engineering.

Foti and his wife, Kim, have been married for nine years. They have a 3-year-old son. He has been active with Miller Hose Fire Co. since 2005, where he has held positions of head

trustee and secretary interior firefighter and equipment operator. Foti is also a past president of the Newfane Lions Club and has been active in the Wilson Conservation Club.

"Preserving our great outdoors and protecting our natural resources are very important to me," Foti said. "I am concerned about outsiders trying to force the siting of power projects on farmland that our community is opposed to. These need to be local decisions."

"I am a very active outdoorsman and I love to hunt and fish," he added. "I remain concerned about efforts to continually chip away at our Second Amendment rights. It's easy for some to claim to be pro

2A, but unless you are a gun owner and understand all the responsibility and care that entails, I don't know how hard you actually fight for those rights."

Foti said his message to voters is simple: "Our community has tremendous assets, but also faces tremendous challenges. We want families moving here. We want the Barker and Newfane school districts growing. We want jobs and economic growth. The fact that I would be new to elective office and bring a fresh perspective, am fully invested in our community and have a stake in our long-term future, hopefully resonates with voters."

## Voccio seeks District 6 seat

Niagara Falls City Councilman Chris Voccio is running for the Niagara County Legislature seat for District 6.

He had announced earlier that he was running for reelection to the Niagara Falls City Council, but decided to instead run for the county seat held by Dennis Virtuoso, who recently announced his retirement.

"While I love being a council member, I look forward to continuing to serve Niagara Falls in a new capacity," Voccio said. "The residents of legislative District 6 need a choice of candidates and they need someone with a strong history of standing up for taxpayers."

He added, "As a councilman, I stood up for taxpayers by voting against the garbage fee; I voted against bad budgets; I voted against bad contracts; and I gave myself a pay cut on day one. And I'll bring that brand of self-sacrifice and concern for taxpayers to the county legislature."

Voccio issued a longer statement at <http://chrishvoccio.com/2021/02/24/why-im-running-for-the-county-legislature/>.



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