

Ontario Town Supervisor's Column:

By Frank Robusto

A Supervisor people can buy on:

If there's one thing that I've learned from real estate, it's that you have to know what the buyer wants. Back in November, the buyers of Ontario went to the ballot box, and by a mere 13 absentee votes, Joe Molino was elected. Sadly, after only a few days into his term, Joe resigned due to extenuating circumstances. Though I cannot go into detail why, I encourage everyone to keep him and his family in their thoughts.

When I was selected to be Ontario's Interim Supervisor, I knew I had to be the kind of Supervisor that Joe would've been: somebody the people could buy on. Ontario has a tremendous legacy of supervisors, and I'm privileged to hold the title that great leaders like Joe Molino, John Smith, Bob Kelsch, Roy Hermann, Bob Mोगray and Bob Pinkey, all held before me. I have a lot of work to do to get to the level of excellence they had, but with the help of Ontario's great department heads and the Town Board, I know I can do great things for our people.

This year at the Republican caucus, I plan on running for the Town Supervisor position, although I'm more focused on what I can do in 2018. Here are some of the things I've already been up to my first couple of months:

New Confidential Clerk: In January, I hired Josh Faulks to be my Confidential Clerk. On top of his typical clerical duties, Josh is updating the town website, developing our social media presence, and taking pictures of town functions. He's also working with our telephone provider, NFP Telecom, to create a brand-new website, one that is modernized and easy to navigate. I'm happy to have him on board, as are the department heads and residents of Ontario.

Improvements to Town Facilities: Our Code Officer Brian Smith has been coordinating with Casco Security and NFP Telecom to improve the faculties of our town hall and department offices. NFP has provided all staff with brand new Allworx phones, and connected every Ontario dept. under one phone line. In addition, they've fixed several broken fax machines and, as mentioned, are developing a brand-new website for the town. Casco has rewired our security systems and replaced some of our outdated cameras. We're also inviting a telecommunications firm to visit our town hall, and I am hoping they can improve the sound and projection systems in the meeting room.

Meeting with Businesses: Ontario has a rich tradition of business, and I've had the privilege of meeting with several different businesses this winter, including Optimax, Shadow Hill Syrup Farms, and Sue's Little Pizza Shop. Sadly, many of these great businesses don't get the publicity they deserve, which is something I want to change. We will be adding a section to the new website that profiles these businesses, with links to their contact information, social media accounts, and websites.

Coordinating with FEMA: Ontario Parks Director Bill Riddell, Deputy Supervisor Joe Catalano, Josh, various dept. heads, and I have been working with FEMA to obtain grants for damages to our town infrastructure suffered last summer from the rising water levels. Including in our reimbursement package would be the costs of sandbagging and damages to one of our main culverts and our town boat launch. We're hoping we can use this money to get everything back in working shape.

Settlement with Justice Paul Sucher: From new faces to old friends, the Town Board has finally reached a settlement with Town Justice Paul Sucher, after three years of proceedings. The settlement is \$60,000, with an additional \$15,000 going towards Selective Insurance Company. It feels good to bury the hatchet, and I'm sure Paul feels the same way.

Potential Town Improvements: So, what's next? In Ontario, there's always a new project, and I've had some great ideas for where we could make improvements. The Board has reached out to our Highway Supt. Marilee Stollery to organize town-wide cleanup, so residents have a centralized location in which to recycle their garbage. Ontario has many great farms, and a farmers market has been in the works for the coming summer, so they have a place to show the literal fruits of their labor. Most importantly, Joe and I have spoken with several residents regarding our town's sign codes at our recent Town Board Meetings, in order to build a better understanding of them.