

Area business leaders to keep on election winners

Matthew Daneman • Staff writer • November 4, 2010

Throughout the campaign, most candidates angling for jobs in Albany and Washington claimed to be tough on taxes and focused on bettering the economy.

Whether they follow through now that the voters have spoken is anyone's guess.

"Andrew (Cuomo) is saying the right things," Rochester Business Alliance CEO Sandy Parker said Wednesday of the governor-elect. She pointed out that Cuomo's pledges of a state spending cap and no additional taxes reflect the agenda of Unshackle Upstate, the pro-business lobbying organization she helped form. "We'll see."

"I think we're very encouraged by what's going to happen in 2011," said Brian Sampson, executive director of Unshackle. "Everyone ran on a pro-jobs, pro-economy platform."

Wegmans Food Markets CEO Danny Wegman said he was pleased with the Republican Party's gains in the elections — not for partisan reasons but because it helps restore balance in Albany and Washington.

The Wegmans chain has been a big backer in recent years of unsuccessful efforts to change state laws banning the sale of wine in grocery stores. Whether Albany will be more amenable to the idea in 2011 remains to be seen, Wegman said.

The state's business community played a sizable role in this week's elections. This year marked the first time in the Business Council of New York State's 30-year history that it made political endorsements.

Kenneth Adams, president of the statewide business lobbying group, said that Cuomo — whom the group endorsed — needs to take a hard line on state spending and taxes as his first priority.

"Putting together a budget that responds to the deficit but leads to private-sector job growth is

going to be the challenge. The urgency of the economic crisis facing New York state demands immediate preparation," Adams said.

With Cuomo's lieutenant governor being Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy, the region might get more attention from Albany that it has in the past, said Kenton Fiske, president and chairman of Perinton electronics manufacturer SenDEC Corp. shortly after accepting a Top 100 business award Wednesday.

Candidates with especially strong ties to business had mixed results. U.S. Rep. Chris Lee, R-Clarence, Erie County, who held a variety of positions with his family's manufacturing company before going into politics, was easily re-elected. But in the North Country, Republican congressional candidate Matt Doheny, who had been a turnaround specialist at Deutsche Bank, lost, as did Republican state comptroller candidate Harry Wilson, a former hedge fund manager who worked for the Obama administration on the General Motors restructuring.

State Sen. Michael Nozzolio, R-Fayette, Seneca County, said the state's current fiscal woes may prompt legislators in both parties to follow through on their rhetoric.

"We've seen legislator upon legislator, be it Democrat or Republican, take a very strident stance about changing the economic climate in New York," said Nozzolio, who also was endorsed by the Business Council and was an easy winner Tuesday.

"I hope the crisis will require everyone to work together," he said. "The most business- and job-



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friendly states are the ones that will succeed in the next decade."

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