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THE CRAIN'S INSIDER

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A daily newsletter on government action of importance to business

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TODAY'S NEWS

MONEY FOR MAFFEI

Democratic congressional challenger Dan Maffei will be in New York City raising money on Monday at an event hosted by his former boss, Rep. Charlie Rangel. Maffei came within 3,400 votes of unseating Syracuse-area Republican Jim Walsh last year, who outspent him 2 to 1. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee is helping Maffei level the financial playing field for another run in 2008. DCCC Chairman Chris Van Hollen hosted a fund-raiser for Maffei last month in New York.

PATRONAGE DEN

Brooklyn Surrogate Margarita López Torres could take advantage of last month's resignation of the borough's other surrogate, Frank Seddio, to rid the courthouse of political hacks, an insider says. As the only surrogate, Torres "can staff that place up the wazoo, and by the time the next surrogate comes in, the county Democratic machine will be lucky to find an assistant janitor position," says a source. Three candidates are seeking the Democratic nomination to replace Seddio.

PRICING SURVEY

State Sen. Carl Marcellino—one of the group of Long Island Republican senators expected to oppose Mayor Mike Bloomberg's congestion pricing plan—is surveying his constituents about the idea. His district spans northern Suffolk and Nassau

New brownfields bill may have better chance

With Gov. Eliot Spitzer's brownfields bill drawing fire from environmentalists and business groups, some in Albany are hopeful that a bill introduced this week by the Senate Democrats will create a consensus and be passed next week.

The governor's bill would have redirected tax credits so that they were based not on the cost of the development but on the cost of the cleanup, which would save money and create a more rational incentive. The bill also would have capped the credits.

Environmentalists objected that the governor's plan would siphon money from

brownfields cleanup for other budget needs. Upstate business interests felt the new caps were not high enough, according to the Environmental Business Association of New York State.

The Senate minority bill would put the Empire State Development Corp. in charge of administering the brownfields program, double tax credits in some cases, retain current funding levels and provide extra incentives for developers of affordable housing. Mathy Stanislaus of New Partners for Community Revitalization says the bill provides a framework for agreement. EBA/NYS has not had a chance to review it.

counties. In a tip-off about how the Long Island delegation will combat congestion pricing, Marcellino's questionnaire asks whether constituents see it as "just another commuter tax." The Senate GOP was instrumental in repealing the commuter tax in 1999.

BUS EXEMPTION

The Bus Association of New York State is asking Mayor Mike Bloomberg to exempt private commercial buses from his congestion pricing plan. Taxis and livery cars would be exempt, and BANY argues that its sightseeing, charter and tour buses can't pay the \$21 daily fee and stay in business. Several

commercial carriers—such as Academy Bus, Hampton Jitney, Hudson Transit Lines and Shortline—also bring commuters to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. BANY claims that each bus removes 35 cars from roadways each day.

AT A GLANCE

CROWLEY HIRES CHIEF OF STAFF: Kate Winkler has been named Washington chief of staff for Rep. Joe Crowley. She replaces Chris McCannell, who went to work for public affairs firm Quinn Gillespie & Associates.

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