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FUNNY MONEY? SEMINAR MIGHT HELP YOU TELL

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Albany County DA David Soares has partnered with local businesses to battle an onslaught of counterfeit money flowing into the Capital Region, a problem that has risen significantly over the last six months.

Counterfeiters use the easy access to highways to go to local malls, big box stores and even smaller stores where they exchange phony dollars for merchandise and gift cards and then skip town, Soares said.

His staff and the Secret Service are working with the Retail Council of New York State and local chambers of commerce to get the word out to businesses. Organizers have planned a seminar this fall on how to train employees to spot counterfeit money and credit cards and will include information on counterfeiters' tactics. No date has been set for the seminar, DA spokeswoman Heather Orth said.

Last month, Ted Potrikus, vice president of the Retail Council, Ken Huger, general manager at Colonie Center, Joe Castaldo, Crossgates Mall's general manager, and chamber officials joined Soares at a news conference at Crossgates.

Funds restored

Congress has restored funding to support a network that supplies intelligence on drug trafficking at the Canadian border to authorities in several counties, including Albany.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer said in April he would fight "tooth and nail" to get up to \$1.5 million back in the federal budget for **High Intensity Drug Trafficking** Areas in New York. The program had been slashed by 12 percent nationwide in President Barack Obama's proposed 2011 budget. The program seeks to curb drug sales and violence in regions throughout the nation.

Last month, the senator announced the funding was back in -- the full \$239 million. District attorneys from across the state had joined Schumer in his efforts to keep the program financially intact.

"Fully funding the **HIDTA** program will benefit families and law enforcement across New York," Schumer said. "Upstate is one of the greatest places to raise a family, not just in the country, but on earth. To keep the quality of life so high, we've got to use every resource we have to combat those who would do our families harm, and we need to push back hard against the recent rise in drug smuggling across the Canadian border."

DA David Soares had said the Northway is referred to by drug dealers as the "yellow brick road." The county is a crossroads, with "Thruway exits 23 and 24 connecting to the largest market, Canada to New York City," the DA said. From Albany County, connections can be made from Boston to Buffalo. "Having

that intelligence (supplied by the program) enables us to pick off these traffickers here in Albany County," the DA said.

In the Capital Region, 3,100 adults were arrested on drug-related charges last year, the senator said.

Seminars

The 16th annual Track Day at the Rail, sponsored by the Albany County Bar Association, is set for Aug. 20. At a continuing legal education program before the races at the Marriott Courtyard in Saratoga Springs, federal Magistrate Judge Randolph Treece will discuss "'Motions to Withdraw in Federal Court'" and state Supreme Court Justice William McCarthy will talk on "'Attorney Discipline Process.'"

Glen Doherty of McNamee, Lochner is moderator of the program that starts at 11 a.m. For more information, call Barbara Davis at 445-7510.

By the way, the bar association has a dress code for the track event -- "No jeans or shorts permitted. Gentlemen must wear jackets and a collared shirt. Ladies must wear dresses, skirts or pants suits."

Leandra's Law

The Schenectady County Bar Association is sponsoring a continuing legal education seminar entitled "DWI: An Update on the Ignition Interlock Device and Leandra's Law" from noon to 2:30 p.m. on Aug. 18 at the Glen Sanders Mansion in Scotia.

Speakers include Schenectady City Court Judge Christine Clark, attorney Eric Sills of Gerstenzang, O'Hern, Hickey, Sills & Gerstenzang, and Michael Shultis, New York program manager for National Interlock Co.

For information or to register, call 393-4115 or go to schenectadycountybar.org.

Benefit

The law enforcement community has come together to support Albany County Sheriff's Deputy Denis Kelly, 41, who recently underwent the first of two surgeries due to complications with Crohn's disease, at a benefit Saturday at the Hibernian Hall on Ontario Street in Albany.

Kelly, a father of two young children, recently moved back to Albany, transferring to the sheriff's office from the Mount Vernon Police Department. Because he has not been with Albany County long enough, he is without health insurance, according to his supporters.

The benefit begins at 2 p.m. with the Andy Cooney Band, followed by several other bands. A \$20 donation includes a barbecue by Otis and Oliver's restaurant in Latham.

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