

County GOP aide opposes civic center sites

By ANDY DANZO

Knickerbocker News Reporter

The Albany County Legislature's new deputy minority leader says he does not favor any of the proposed county civic center sites, including one at the State University at Albany that is partially in his district.

Republican Peter D. Ryan was elected to the post last week to replace Paul C. Cardamone, another Colonie Republican, who lost his 26th Legislative District seat in a November upset to Democrat Robert P. Reilly.

Ryan, who represents parts of Colonie and Guilderland, said he was concerned about traffic problems that could be created if the center were built on the SUNYA campus near Fuller Road and

Washington Avenue Extension. Ryan said part of the proposed site was in his 30th Legislative District.

"I'm not happy with that site," he said Tuesday, adding he was speaking as an individual legislator, not on behalf of the Legislature's Republicans. Concerns about the proposed SUNYA site have been raised by neighbors.

Ryan said a traffic study should be conducted to see what effects building the civic center at SUNYA would have on area streets. The site is near the Crossgates shopping mall, now being constructed, and Ryan said he was concerned traffic from both projects might overwhelm the area.

"I'd like to see a civic center, but I don't think we've seen the right proposal yet," Ryan said.

He said he did not support developer Joseph N.

Futia's proposal to build a 6,000- to 10,000-seat center in Latham because he did not think the county should take the financial risk of buying the center after construction. And a center in downtown Albany would have problems with adequate space, parking and crowd control, he said.

Albany Mayor Thomas Whalen III supports the campus proposal. A more detailed proposal is due from the university later this month.

Ryan, who has been a county legislator since 1976, is assuming the deputy leader post at a time when Republicans have increased their number in the 39-seat legislature from 12 to 14. The new party balance means a solid Democratic vote no longer can produce the two-thirds majority needed to approve bond issues or override executive vetoes.

Ryan said one of his priorities for the coming year would be redirecting more county services from the city of Albany to the county's suburban and rural regions.

When the Legislature's Republican members elected Ryan last week, they re-elected W. Gordon Morris of Bethlehem minority leader, a post he has held three years.

The Republican caucus also re-elected were Anne T. Rose of Guilderland its treasurer and elected Robert W. Hoffmeister of Bethlehem secretary, Morris said.

Ms. Rose has been treasurer three years, while Hoffmeister is starting his first term in the Legislature.