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Envisioning a better Aurora

Town, village of East Aurora debating concept of consolidation

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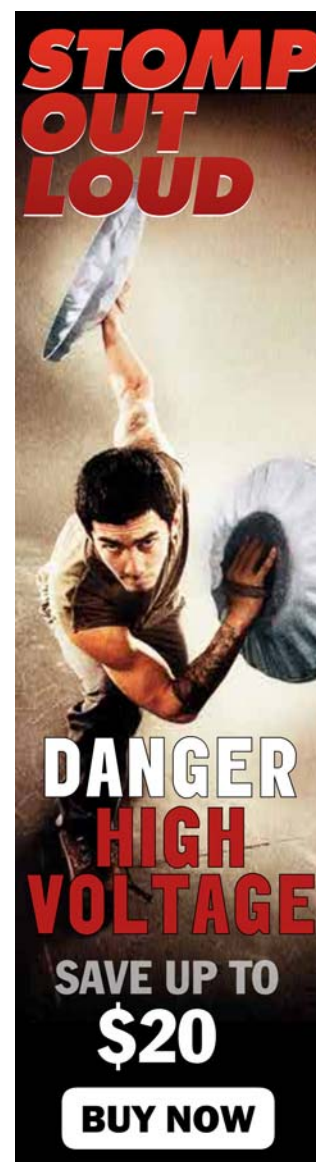
Town of Aurora Supervisor-elect Dwight D. Krieger is a realist. It's impractical, he said the other day, that a place with 15,000 to 16,000 residents should have two governments, and it is inevitable that the village government eventually will not exist as it does today.

That pits him against the traditional Western New York practice of fiefdoms. While consolidating governments could be done in ways that preserve the feel and sense of place that make East Aurora and other villages special, many balk at the prospect — even though practical consolidations, either of services or entire governments, could cut costs and often improve efficiency.

Right now, anyone behind the idea of consolidation in Aurora's town and village faces an uphill climb. Although two newly elected council members joined Krieger in practical talk of consolidation, quotes from Village Administrator Kimberly D. LaMarche were along the lines of business as usual. She pointed out that wherever residents eventually find themselves, "it'll be driven by the village people. The town has no power in that regard."

There's little doubt that change has to be driven by the people, but it also must be championed by elected leaders. Unless towns, villages or cities in Western New York have no use for improved efficiencies and moneysaving strategies, room remains for practical, wellthought-out change. Otherwise, people convinced that they

need to keep things the same, retain duplicative governmental departments and save their home turf will have to pay for it. If that's not a problem, as taxes continue to rise along with the cost of living, then perhaps there indeed is no need for discussion.



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