

*As seen in...*



# Advance

138th Year, No. 24

January 28, 2010

\$1

## Editorial

# Downtown revival

In a heated tent with catered snacks waiting, officials from across Brookhaven, Suffolk and even New York state gathered in Patchogue Village last week to praise the renaissance of Patchogue. Artspace is officially here, as evidenced by the groundbreaking ceremony Friday morning, and with it comes Patchogue Village's resurgence as a Long Island destination.

As economists continue to toll the death knell of Long Island downtowns, Patchogue defies the odds and critics. The village is the center of millions of dollars of renovation and several enormous developments that will change the face of Patchogue and force critics to rethink downtown revitalization in the worst economy in two generations. Artspace is the latest piece of that revitalization puzzle in Patchogue.

Artspace is a national organization that provides living and studio space for working artists. The goal is to create an apartment complex for artists to live and work. The apartments are affordable (even by artists' standards) and large enough to

allow artists to work in whatever milieu is their forte. The idea is that by keeping artists centralized in a downtown, you create a hip art scene that will attract shoppers and investors and spur economic development.

Patchogue proved the skeptics wrong by making Artspace work. People who said Patchogue is a dead downtown are wrong; those who decried Artspace as a fad are misinformed; and those who said Long Island downtowns will cease to exist are disingenuous. It takes an incredible amount of work, collaboration and cooperation (and sometimes manipulation) but it can be done, as Patchogue proved.

Patchogue must continue to push the arts. Mayor Paul Pontieri said the village is making just the latest transition in a series of changes in its history, this time to a thriving arts community. By bringing the performing arts and visual arts to Patchogue, along with several other key development projects like the Four Corners revitalization, Patchogue will continue to defy the odds and remain a vibrant downtown. ■