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## Long Island Advancement of Business

Posted on September 20, 2012 at 12:44 pm

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Some of the most powerful political figures on Long Island gathered Monday morning to discuss the Island's multiple problems - taxes and energy costs, for example - but came up with more questions than answers during a session at Adelphi University in Garden City.

"One of the major problems is the real estate tax here," said State Assem. Michael Montesano (R-Glen Head) as the session opened. "Until we can reign in control of the tax structure we have a very expensive cost of business here." The state, Montesano said, can provide the incentives, but taxes are still strangling small businesses.

There was no disagreement from the panel on that one. State Assem. Charles LaVine (D-Garden City), suggested "taking the bull by the horns." The legislature, LaVine suggested, must take more responsibility for protecting small businesses in the state. Does that mean more legislation during next year's legislative session? LaVine did not offer any specifics.

Phil Boyle, a Republican assemblyman from Bay Shore, raised two thorny issues: the \$5 billion Long Island rate payers are still paying for the never-opened Shoreham nuclear power plant, which is a drain on consumers' pocketbooks, and the fact that other states, mostly from the South, are sending representatives to Long Island to try and woo companies here to re-locate to Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and other states.

"We have to take the offense," Boyle said. "We have lots to offer here."

The Long Island Association, the Island's largest business and civic organization, has established a program called Accelerate Long Island, which seeks to carve small businesses out of the research conducted at Brookhaven National Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Lab. That could help keep companies looking for research projects to remain here, Boyle said.

Energy costs are also a major factor for Assem. Al Graf (R-Holbrook), who said maintaining a home here for his family - a wife and three kids - has become burdensome. "We have to play offense but we also have to play defense," Graf said.

State Sen. Lee Zelden (R,C,I-Shirley), said there must be more help for businesses owned by veterans of the armed forces. "We want to add incentives," said Zelden. "We should be allocating for expansion of these programs."

Unless some drastic measures are taken, businesses will wind up leaving Long Island, warned the event's moderator, Andrew Raia, (R-East Northport). "The businesses will move and say it's cheaper" elsewhere, Raia said.

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**1:07 am on Friday, September 21, 2012**  
Assemblyman LaVine has received a 0% rating for job growth from the Business Council and sponsored the MTA tax. How's that for "taking the bull by the horns"? Stop taxing us out of our homes Chuck.

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