

Sandy, taxes focus of 9th District Senate, Assembly debates

By DONNA WEAVER Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, October 23, 2013 10:30 pm

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — Property taxes, minimum wage, rebuilding after Hurricane Sandy and economic growth were all issues in the 9th Legislative District Senate and Assembly debates Wednesday evening at Richard Stockton College.

In his opening statement, incumbent state Sen. Chris Connors R-Ocean, Burlington, Atlantic, said during the next four years, economic growth, reducing taxes and cutting the red tape in business development will be the issues he will focus on.

“Clearly, I think individuals are concerned about escalating property taxes in New Jersey. One of the things that has really taken center stage a year ago was Super-storm Sandy,” said Connors, who first ran for his first term in the Assembly in 1989.

The debates were sponsored by Richard Stockton College and the Press of Atlantic City.

Democratic Senate candidate Anthony Mazzella offered a quote by Henry David Thoreau that “it is the greatest of all advantages to enjoy no advantage at all.”

Mazzella said he has dedicated his life to being a public servant.

“This Senate seat has been in the Connors family for over 30 years and it is time for a change,” Mazzella said.

The seat was previously held by Leonard T. Connors, Chris Connors father, who left the legislature in 2008. Mazzella said he is also concerned about the number of double dippers serving in the legislature.

Connors accused Mazzella of trying to turn his more than two decades of public service into a negative.

“I served 18 years in Assembly and four years as a mayor in my community. Somehow or another he can say he’s dedicated his life to public service but no one else can. This district is my home these people are my family and friends and that is why I work so hard,” said Connors.

Mazzella said he has worked on redevelopment projects throughout the state, was a member of his local Land Use Board.

Mazzella said job growth is essential to the area and also a mechanism for reducing property taxes, which he said have increased 80 percent over the last three years.