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GOVERNMENT ALERT

Seymour eyed to run Port Authority

NYPA chairman's appointment part of package deal between governors

THE FRONT-RUNNER TO BE *executive director of the* Port Authority of New York & New Jersey is Joseph Seymour, chairman of the New York Power Authority.

Mr. Seymour, a former state general services commissioner, was mentioned for the position last winter. But when C.D. "Rapp" Rappleyea stepped down as NYPA chairman last December, Gov. George Pataki tapped Mr. Seymour to replace him.

Insiders say that the Port Authority appointment is part of a *package deal between Mr. Pataki* and acting New Jersey Gov. Donald DiFrancesco.

The other elements in the plan include naming outgoing Port Authority Chairman Lewis Eisenberg to the board of the new Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Corp., and selecting Jack Sinagra, a former Republican New Jersey state senator, as the new Port Authority chairman.

CAMPAIGN BOSS

▼ Insiders say Adam Stoll, a veteran GOP political operative, *is expected* to run Mr. Pataki's re-election campaign next year. Mr. Stoll was deputy director of the governor's 1998 re-election campaign and was hired as a consultant last spring to Mr. Pataki's political committee, Friends of Pataki.

FREE LIQUOR

▼ New York liquor stores are legally offering free samples of hard liquor under a new state law that went into effect last week. The legislation quietly passed in early September.

The law permits consumers to sample up to three quarter-ounce servings of distilled spirits at preplanned tasting events at liquor stores. New York, which posted $3.6 billion in sales of distilled spirits last year, is the 22nd state to pass such legislation.

The sampling events are the result of a successful battle by a national trade group, the Distilled Spirits Council, to allow the practice. The group argued that its constituents—sellers of vodka, whiskey, cognacs and other spirits—should be allowed to stage tastings like those staged by the wine industry.

MINORITY LEADER

▼ The battle for speaker isn't the only leadership fight under way in the new City Council. There is also a dispute over who will lead the four-seat Republican minority.

After a few weeks of skirmishing, it appears that James Oddo of Staten Island has an edge over Marty Golden of Brooklyn. Sources say Mr. Golden, who can't seek re-election in 2003 because of term limits, had proposed serving as minority leader for just one year. That could have given him some help in his expected run next year for the state Senate seat held by Vincent Gentile, D-Brooklyn.

But Mr. Oddo, who is not term-limited, is said to feel that the party leader should come from Staten Island, since two of the GOP's four seats are from that borough. Initial indications are that he has the support of the other two Republicans, both freshmen. They are Andrew Lanza of Staten Island and Dennis Gallagher of Queens, who served with Mr. Oddo on the staff of the outgoing minority leader, Tom Ognibene of Queens.

RAIL FREIGHT TUNNEL

▼ The federal transportation spending bill approved by Congress includes $5 million to help fund preliminary planning for a $2 billion cross-harbor rail freight tunnel long championed by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-Manhattan. Mr. Nadler says the appropriation *demonstrates continued congressional* support for the project.

However, the project's future is up in the air with the election of Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg. Mr. Bloomberg scoffed at the project during the mayoral campaign, saying it was too costly and would increase, rather than decrease, city truck traffic.

The tunnel plan has had strong support from Mayor Rudy Giuliani. His administration completed a study last year endorsing the project, saying it would reduce truck traffic into the city by 6%.

JANUARY STATE BUDGET

▼ It's looking more likely that Mr. Pataki will wait until next month to present his 2002-03 budget. The governor had considered unveiling his plan this month, in what would have been seen as an election-year strategy to blame the Legislature in the event that a final budget was late for the 18th straight year.

But the governor said last week that he needed to study receipts from the holiday shopping season and look at estimated year end tax payments. In addition, aides indicated that *uncertainty about federal* aid likely will push the budget presentation into the new year, possibly the week after the governor delivers his Jan. 9 State of the State message. ■

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