



# Local reps picked to lead

## Phinizy, Franklin, Donovan to head Concord committees

By **MATTHEW McCORMICK**  
Staff Writer

Three local legislators have been tapped for leadership positions in the state House of Representatives, now in Democratic hands for the first time in 84 years.

House Speaker Terie Norellie, D-Portsmouth, has appointed Rep. Jay Phinizy, D-Acworth, chairman of the Environment and Agriculture Committee; Rep. Peter Franklin, D-Newport, chairman of Division 1 of the Finance Committee; and Rep. Tom Donovan, D-Claremont, vice chairman of the Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee.

Phinizy said Friday that the appointments would help ensure that Sullivan County's voice is heard in Concord.

"Any time the area has people in a pretty concentrated role of responsibility, it helps a lot," he said.

Phinizy hopes his appointment in particular will be a boon to dairy farmers working locally and statewide. He said that the factor of dropping milk prices has made it difficult for smaller farms to stay in business, threatening one of New Hampshire's most important resources: open space.



**Phinizy**



**Franklin**



**Donovan**

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"One of the major reasons people come to New Hampshire is to hunt and fish and do recreation activities," Phinizy said. "What they're coming up here to do depends on having a lot of open space ... as we lose our open space and lose our farms, we lose potential for tourist revenue."

The Acworth representative hopes to push through legislation that will provide price supports for dairy farmers that would kick in whenever the cost of milk drops below a certain level.

Phinizy said one way to raise money for the support would be to add a small milk surcharge consumers would pay at the checkout counter, but added that the matter will be up for discussion.

"I'm open to any kind of formula," he said.

What he said he is not open to is putting the issue of relief for dairy farmers off to another legislative session.

"We have very few dairy farmers left," he said. "They're getting edged out by milk producers in other parts of the country."

Phinizy said he also will have

his hands full with issues pertaining to the environmental side of his committee, which he said will be looking at a host of matters surrounding solid waste in the state.

"We have to look at sensible landfill policies and strengthening recycling and reuse policies," he said.

Donovan said one of his priorities will be working to provide services to New Hampshire's growing elderly population and helping them stay at home longer.

"We're going to try to reduce or eliminate some of the barriers that keep people from staying home so they don't have to go into nursing care," he said.

Donovan said part of the solution may lie in making assistance to the elderly more flexible, perhaps by allowing them to use state

money to pay a friend or family member to care for them where home care agencies do not exist.

In areas where those agencies do exist, Donovan said the state needs to work with the organizations to ensure that they are fully staffed with qualified employees.

"We've got to make sure we're supporting those agencies," he said.

The same is true of state departments, Donovan said.

The Department of Health and Human Services "hasn't had the staff to do all the things they wanted to do," he said. "A full staff would allow quicker assessments of people's condition and turnaround of paperwork."

But finding solutions to some of the challenges facing the state's elderly may be easier than funding them, Donovan said.

"It's going to be an exciting year for some of us who feel we're behind in the needs of people but it's going to be a real challenging year to meet those needs with the money we're going to have," he said.

Watching over those funds will be Franklin's charge. As chairman of Division 1 of the Finance Committee, budgets for the judiciary, Attorney General's Office, Liquor Commission and Lottery all will cross his desk.

As the recently elected chairman of the county delegation, Franklin said he also will be watching over the finances of Sullivan County.

"I believe the financial condition of the county is deteriorating and getting a handle on that is my primary concern for this biennium," he said.