



ADVANCE PHOTO/TONY CARANNANTE

Listening to the good news are, left to right, Richard Buegler, president of the Protectors of the Pine Oak Woods; Marilyn Mammano, director of the Staten Island office of the Department of City Planning; Mary Ellen Bennett, parkway study project director, and Thomas A. Paulo, Greenbelt administrator.

It's good news

DEC opening field office on Island

By **CARL CAMPANILE**
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Staten Islanders will no longer be frustrated with having to call state officials outside the borough to discuss environmental problems.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation is opening a field office at the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook to streamline wet-

Office

(From Page 1)

lands administration and improve monitoring of air pollution and landfill problems, the DEC's regional director said last night.

Carol Ash, DEC director for Region II, which covers the city, said the environmental agency could open a borough office field as early as next month.

"The Staten Island office will be a boon to all of us," Ash told a cheering crowd of more than 100 people gathered for the annual business meeting of the Protectors of Pine Oak Woods at the Staten Island Zoo last night.

Members of the outspoken environmental group, which began lobbying the DEC to provide a field office with an enlarged staff six months ago, hailed the decision.

The field office will include a full-time secretary and a part-time permit inspector and biologist, Ash said. The DEC already monitors air and water quality and regulates waste disposal, she added: An air technician and sanitarian are in the borough daily to monitor pollutants and conditions at the Fresh Kills landfill.

"The new office enables us to respond more quickly to environmental problems," Ash said. "It's going to be an incredibly busy year for all of us."

The announcement of an Island field office coincides with the DEC regional headquarters moving from 2 World Trade Center to an office in Long Island City, Queens.

Hints of a borough field office were publicized in January when DEC Commissioner Henry Williams wrote a letter to the Protectors stating that the environmental agency was searching for a

Staten Island facility.

"We're positively delighted," said Richard P. Buegler, president of the Protectors. His colleague, secretary Ellen Pratt, agreed. "The state is doing a superb job here on Staten Island," she said. "I have to give credit where its due."

"I'm elated by the news," said Gene Langelle, a representative of Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano, D-Dongan Hills. "It's been a long-time coming."

Mrs. Pratt said the Protectors will now prod the DEC to provide an expanded staff of at least five officials to adequately meet the borough's environmental needs.

Representatives of the Staten Island Citizens for Clean Air said they believe citizens will now be able to prove their case of air pollution emanating from New Jersey. "The complaints we've been airing all along will be looked into and witnessed by state officials," said president Helen Bialer.

Bialer said she believes many

more citizens will call the DEC when its Island field office opens. Some residents were skeptical of complaints being addressed in Manhattan, she said.

"The DEC will now be bombarded with complaints," Bialer said.

Ash said residents can call the field office "to get another nose out there" regarding air pollution complaints, along with the Interstate Sanitation Commission.

Moreover, she said the state environmental agency can better serve the Island's 1,300 acres of wetlands and property owners with a field office. "Our goal is to establish a comprehensive urban wetland management perspective that gives protection to the wetlands while recognizing the needs of landowners in an urban environment," she said.

Other topics discussed were continued funding for the Greenbelt and the Richmond Parkway Alternatives Study to ease traffic congestion in the borough.

Page 2 of 2