

# Leaving office, but not the fight

## Outgoing mayor says drug industry tactics can't go unchallenged

By Christopher Rowland

LOCAL STAFF

Mayor Michael Albano cleaned out his desk at Springfield City Hall yesterday in preparation for giving up his office on Monday, but even as he loaded boxes with memorabilia and accepted calls from well-wishers, he made it clear he will remain a thorn in the side of big US drug companies.

Albano burst onto the national media stage in July with his one-of-a-kind program to import prescription drugs from Canada for city employees and retirees, launching the money-saving plan even though the Food and Drug Administration said it was illegal.

Now, having ridden a wave of publicity for six months, he is stepping down after deciding not to seek election to a fifth term. He is opening his own political consulting and lobbying firm in Springfield, a block from City Hall. He also plans to establish a nonprofit organization to help low-income people get free medications through little-known programs already offered by drug companies. And he said he will testify around the country against the pricing tactics of the US pharmaceutical industry.

"Someone has to take the industry on," Albano said. "It's clear they have gotten away



GARRETT HILL PHOTO

Michael Albano, stepping down Monday, says drug firms need to be reined in.

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