

The Bristol Press

BUSINESS SCENE: 'Talking Seriously' with Dannel Malloy

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By Scott Whipple

Watching Felix Viera in the studio of WPRX 1120 AM on Monday, I thought about Peter Thomas. Viera hosts "Hablando En Serio [Talking Seriously]" a Spanish-speaking program Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to noon. Viera was recently named "Citizen of the Year" by the state Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. The award is well-deserved.

Thomas, a professional voiceover, could sell anything from Cool Whip to U.S. senators to the training dramas I used to write for Fortune 500 clients. Advice he imparted to me was about "show prep." Always know, especially when interviewing someone on air, where you will lead your guest and how.

Whenever Gov. Dannel Malloy appears on WPRX — at least four times a year — Viera is the official host. He affords the governor respect he's not likely to receive from, say, the Cato Institute. Before the interview Viera confided to me that he hoped to induce Malloy to announce that he was running again.

With Lourdes Montalvo, a staffer for Secretary of the State Denise Merrill, handling the translation, Malloy hit speaking points that scored well with his audience, such as the minimum wage raise which, he said, sets the bar higher for everyone. (In previous columns I have argued against this. But, on this occasion, I was more intrigued with the friendly chess match between Viera and Malloy.)

Viera asked him about professional hockey. The governor said he has been contacted by two professional groups, and a major league franchise for Hartford is not out of the question. "It will mean jobs, and a great shot in the arm to the state, as will the Busway."

The governor made the point that CTfastrak will be a boon to families with only one or no cars. About building a new XL Center, he said, "Soon we'll decide on the kind of facility we'll build. A major league hockey franchise will help determine that."

Malloy said he also plans to go after more soccer events at Rensselaer Field.

At least three times, in different ways, Viera tried to coax the governor to announce he was running for

re-election. Malloy was coy, saying he would decide next year.

“I am hoping when you make the announcement you will make it here,” Viera said. “I don’t think about you in another position.”

“I didn’t ask you to think about me as anything other than governor,” Malloy said.

“What percentage would you give me as to whether you’re going to run or not?” Viera asked.

Malloy laughed.

“More than one [percent] and less than 100 [percent].”

Would the announcement come on WPRX?

“You can count on me to be back at your station any time for your great food,” Malloy said.

The governor said groups have stopped him while shopping, wanting to know if he will run again.

Some listeners may have thought Viera failed in his quest. Not I. Viera showed why he is such a respected radio host.