



**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Terry Martino  
**FROM:** Stephen M. Erman  
**DATE:** December 31, 2009  
**RE:** 2009 Economic Services Unit Activities

Each month, activity reports for the Economic Services Unit are organized to report on work conducted through the Economic Services Program, which was approved by the Agency in 1986, and on staff support of all other programs of the Agency. This summary report for 2009 is similarly organized.

Specific Unit activities during the year 2009 were as follows:

**I. ECONOMIC SERVICES PROGRAM**

Answers to regulatory and other questions regarding industrial, commercial or other business/economic development projects

Early staff involvement with project sponsors and involved economic developers results in better understandings of Agency permitting processes, increased predictability of regulatory outcomes and improved quality of permit applications.

Economic staff held pre-application discussions with project sponsors for an estimated 30 projects in 2009. Staff explained Agency regulatory procedures and project permitting timetables and discussed potential project review issues that could be addressed in the early stages of project planning. Pre-application discussions included guidance on site location and site design, as needed.

Examples of projects that were assisted in the pre-application stage included:

- Relocation of a concrete batch plant, Tupper Lake, Franklin County;

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- Wood chip production (industrial use) in Clifton, St. Lawrence County;
- Boiler replacement for process heat, Newton Falls Fine Papers, Clifton, St. Lawrence County;
- Fruit slicing and packing (industrial use), Chesterfield, Essex County;
- Wood pellet mills (industrial uses), Chesterfield, Essex County and Tupper Lake, Franklin County;
- Senior citizens housing, Westport, Essex County;
- Tourist accommodation, Schroon, Essex County;
- Broadband infrastructure, Essex, Clinton and Franklin Counties.

Economic staff continued to assist local economic developers seeking to locate projects in business parks permitted by the Agency. These include two business parks, both in Essex County, which include sites certified shovel-ready by Empire State Development (ESD) and the Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform (GORR). The above mentioned fruit slicing and distribution facility, for instance, is being proposed for the shovel-ready Chesterfield Business Park.

Most recently, economic and regulatory programs staff provided pre-application assistance to the Essex County Industrial Development Agency for a proposed extension of a rail spur into Section 2 of the Willsboro Commerce Park. Available freight service will allow the development of buildings for rail-dependent warehousing and distribution. Economic staff has also worked on an ongoing basis with the Town of Harrietstown as it considers whether to complete its plans for expansion of the Harrietstown Business Park to include 19 new development sites, seven of which were initially proposed to be shovel-ready.

### Support of organizations, activities and facilities which aid economic improvement

In accordance with the Economic Services Program, economic staff provides economic planning assistance, strategic planning assistance, program contacts, and other support to regional and local organizations working to improve the economy of the Adirondack Park and its communities. During the year,

assistance was provided to the Adirondack North Country Association, Adirondack Economic Development Corporation, Clifton-Fine Economic Development Corporation, Clinton Area Development Corporation, Warren County Economic Development Corporation, Franklin County IDA, Essex County IDA, St. Lawrence County IDA, CBN Connect, Inc., Clarkson University, individual regional and local chambers of commerce and local governments.

The Special Assistance for Economic Affairs also provided ongoing support to the State's lead economic developer, Empire State Development (Department of Economic Development/Empire State Development Corporation). Support included feedback on specific economic development opportunities and program initiatives, information on available economic development sites, and information on the regulatory status of active projects before the Agency.

Examples of assistance provided to regional and local economic development initiatives include:

- Participation on a Town of Saranac advisory committee which is seeking to establish a new business park which includes shovel-ready sites at the edge of the Adirondack "Blue Line." The advisory committee also includes Empire State Development and the Clinton Area Development Corporation staff and is being led by the Town's community development consultant. The site being proposed for the business park was classified Industrial Use by the Adirondack Park Agency in the mid-1980s.
- Participation on the advisory committee for CBN Connect, Inc. which is planning a broadband fiber optic "backbone" along major highway corridors throughout Clinton, Franklin and Essex Counties. CBN is also in the initial stages of planning similar infrastructure in Warren, Washington and Hamilton counties. In August 2009, the Agency provided a letter of support for an ARRA stimulus funding request for the CBN's Phase I work in Clinton, Essex and Franklin counties.
- Participation in the New York Steering Committee for the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative (SEI). The Steering Committee provided input for the development of a resource-based economic development strategy for the four-state Northern Forest Region. It remains a significant voice in plan implementation including program support to

be available through the Northern Border Commission which is currently being formed.

- Participation in steering committees for corridor management planning and marketing for Scenic Byways within the Adirondack Park and the broader North Country region. Scenic Byways planning initiatives are being managed by the Adirondack North Country Association with federal funding through the NYS Department of Transportation.
- Support to the Clifton-Fine Economic Development Corporation and the Towns of Clifton and Fine regarding the environmental remediation of the former Jones and Laughlin Steel (J&L) site in Star Lake. Support included active participation in a meeting of the St. Lawrence County Legislature as it was considering whether the County should take ownership of the site to advance its remediation and reuse for economic development purposes.
- Presentation on land use regulation at an entrepreneurial training session sponsored by the Adirondack Economic Development Corporation in Saranac Lake. In later follow-up to this, the Special Assistant for Economic Affairs served on a panel which evaluated the final business plans as presented by all participants in the AEDC course.
- The Special Assistant and other Agency staff provided assistance, as needed, to the project steering committee for the Adirondack Park Regional Assessment Project (APRAP) which was completed and released in early Summer 2009. APRAP was a joint project of the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (AATV) and the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA). With majority funding through the NYS Department of State, APRAP has stimulated substantial discussion of regional community development issues and potential follow-up analyses and strategic initiatives.

#### Support of the Agency's Economic Affairs Committee

The Special Assistant for Economic Affairs provides staff support to the Agency's Economic Affairs Committee including organizing Committee agendas in close coordination with the Committee's Chairman. In 2009, the Economic Affairs Committee continued to discuss the region's economy, including small business development issues and opportunities. Web-casting of Committee meetings has provided an important opportunity to inform the public about the nature of the region's economy, its

mix of tourism and non-tourism based enterprises and the increasing economic significance of new business development based on the quality-of-life goals of entrepreneurs.

The Economic Affairs Committee met five times during the 11 monthly Agency meetings in 2009. In February there were two discussion topics: tourism development planning in Essex County, and a just-completed, EDA-funded economic development strategy (Sustainable Economy Initiative) for the four-state Northern Forest which in New York includes the Adirondack Park, the Tug Hill Region, and surrounding areas of the Adirondack North Country.

In April, the Committee turned its focus to profiling three manufacturing businesses, all of which are based largely on the lifestyle objectives of the involved entrepreneurs. These businesses included: Old Adirondack, Inc., a Willsboro-based manufacturer of cedar furniture; General Composites, Inc., also of Willsboro, which makes a diverse set of sports, medical and defense-related products from carbon-based composite materials; and, Placid Boatworks, a Lake Placid-based manufacturer of super-light kayaks. A key point of the combined presentations was that there is potential in the Adirondack Park for nurturing a diverse set of small to medium sized manufacturing businesses which build on regional image and cater to the lifestyle goals of entrepreneurs. The presentations also reinforced the relationship between exposure to the Adirondack Park through tourism and recreation and new enterprise development by visitors who become year-round residents.

In follow-up to the April meeting, the June Committee meeting focused on available assistance to support the needs of fledgling entrepreneurs. The meeting featured presentations by the Adirondack Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Plattsburgh State.

The August Committee meeting focused on small business assistance available through the State's lead economic developer, Empire State Development (Department of Economic Development/Empire State Development Corporation).

Finally, in September, the Committee heard from Rick Wilt of Wilt Industries, Inc. of Lake Pleasant, Hamilton County. Wilt manufactures annealing ovens and other heavy production machinery for the glass and emerging solar products industries. Important points of the discussion were that there are unexpected types of businesses operating successfully in the

Adirondack Park and that key location factors include the ability of Adirondack Park communities to meet the personal lifestyle objectives of entrepreneurs.

## **II. SUPPORT OF OTHER AGENCY PROGRAMS**

### Administration

During the year, the Special Assistant provided support as needed to the Executive Director and to the Director of Public Information. This included participation, as a member of the Agency's management team, in drafting the Agency's budget narrative and other reports, as well as outreach to stakeholder groups within the Park.

### Regulatory Programs Division

Economic staff provides support in the review of large-scale projects of all types and in the review of economic development projects, including all such projects presented to the Board of Commissioners for its consideration. Project review assistance is provided on issues of market and financial feasibility, project sponsorship, and economic and fiscal impacts, including the capacity of State and local government to provide any required public services.

In 2009, the Agency permitted 69 economic development projects including industrial, commercial, group camp, wood using and other activities as separately listed in Sections 805 and 810 of the APA Act. These included 32 projects for economic activities that are likely to create or retain employment in the Adirondack Park. The other 37 projects involved placement or expansion of community or regional infrastructure (water and sewer systems and telecommunications infrastructure) which will be important in stimulating new economic activity, including employment, over time.

Among the projects reviewed in 2009 with the involvement of the Special Assistant for Economic Affairs were:

- Two-lot subdivision of former Finch-Pruyn lands by the Nature Conservancy in Benson (Hamilton County), Bleeker and Mayfield (Fulton County);
- Wood pellet fuel manufacturing operation (industrial use) in Chesterfield, Essex County;

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- New commercial use (retail store) in Ticonderoga, Essex County;
- Relocation of a concrete batch plant to the Tupper Lake Commerce Park, Tupper Lake, Franklin County;
- New 500,000 gallon municipal water tank and associated distribution system in Long Lake, Hamilton County;
- Expansion of Camp Chateaugay (Adventure Bound Camps) in Chateaugay and Ellenburg, Clinton County;
- Expansion of a beverage distribution operation in St. Armand, Essex County;
- Hospital expansion in Fine, St. Lawrence County;
- Proposed project by the NYS Department of Transportation for reconstruction and resurfacing of Route 28 in Forestport, Oneida County.

The Special Assistant also provided ongoing assistance to regulatory staff on the Adirondack Club and Resort project as a member of the Agency's adjudicatory hearing staff.

### Regional Planning and Local Government Services

The Special Assistant for Economic Affairs closely coordinated his efforts in Adirondack communities with Agency planning staff. Similarly, planning staff consulted with the Special Assistant on local planning issues with economic implications.

Planning Division activities supported in 2009 by the Special Assistant include the following:

- Development of a "Policy on Community Housing in the Adirondack Park." A draft policy was presented to Agency's Park Policy and Planning Committee for its consideration in October 2008. With input from the Committee and regional housing, community development and planning officials, the draft was subsequently revised before being adopted by the full Agency in April 2009.
- Definition of appropriate socio-economic indicators of the health and welfare of Adirondack Park communities. This topic was discussed by the Park Policy and Planning Committee in 2008. Further discussions by Agency members

and staff followed the Spring 2009 release of the final report of the Adirondack Park Regional Assessment Project by the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (AATV) and the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA). This input supplemented by information gathered from other State and regional agencies and universities is allowing Agency staff to determine what specific data sets can be easily updated and best serve the interests of regional and local planning.

- Analytical support on State land issues. Economic staff assisted the State Lands Team on matters involving economic or business development issues. This included the review of the draft amendment/SEIS and supporting documents for the Bog River Complex Unit Management Plan/EIS as presented by the Department of Environmental Conservation.
- Proposals to amend the Official Land Use and Development Plan Map including the Agency-initiated map amendment which was approved by the Board for the Town of Fine.
- Economic and community development planning. During the year there was discussion of the need for economic and community development planning in the Adirondack Park by the Adirondack Planning Initiative Steering Committee, chaired by Bill Farber, and the subsidiary Economic Development Work Group, chaired by JR Risley. Steve Erman participated in Steering Committee discussions on this topic along with the Agency's lead representative, Planning Director Jim Connolly. Erman also discussed economic development planning requirements in greater depth with the Economic Development Work Group on which he serves.
- Addition of new "Business/Economy" section to the Agency's website. Economic staff drafted materials on economic development and business location for presentation on the expanded website.

#### Resource Analysis and Scientific Services

The Special Assistant participated in the effort to draft revisions to Development in the Adirondack Park, a guidance document for the planning and review of development projects in the Adirondack Park.

Legal Services / Enforcement

The Special Assistant provided support, as needed, to enforcement staff in addressing potential violations by commercial and other businesses in the Park.

Interpretive Programs

Since 2007, the Special Assistant has provided administrative support and program assistance to the Agency's Visitor Interpretive Centers in an effort to increase coordination between the Agency's Ray Brook operations and the VIC staff in Paul Smiths and Newcomb. Other Ray Brook staff closely involved in VIC operations include Administrative Officer Elaine Caldwell, Director of Public Information Keith McKeever and Director of Research, Analysis and Scientific Services Dan Spada.

Park interpretation centered beyond the Agency's VICs included, for the second year in a row, a May 2009 visit by a delegation of Chinese nature preserve managers who were touring the United States as part of the China Protected Areas Leadership Alliance Project. This educational effort was sponsored in part by the Nature Conservancy - China and was organized and managed by the East-West Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii. In 2009, the Adirondack Park was the only natural area in the United States visited for a second consecutive year. Another delegation will visit in May 2010. The Agency's inter-disciplinary staff team included managers from the following divisions and units: Interpretive Programs, Planning, RASS, Legal, Public Information and Economic Affairs.

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