



Economic Development At A Local Level



By Darrel J. Aubertine

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"With the launch of the Regional Councils, we are transforming the state's approach to economic development." Governor Cuomo couldn't



ture, ten Regional Economic Development Councils apply for state funding to support projects that *they* – not state government – decide are a priority for their region. Governor Cuomo believes that competition brings out the best in people and this competition for economic development dollars has proved him right.

I'm pleased to say that nine out of 10 of the Councils have identified agriculture as a priority economic sector in their Regional Strategic plans. Farmers and other industry members sit right next to Ag and Markets staff on various Regional Councils. The voice agriculture has on the Councils resulted in more than \$56 million for food and agriculture sectors in last year's round of funding. This included some funding related to dairy and yogurt production, which are huge priorities for this Administration.

This year, the Governor has dedicated \$3 million for agricultural development in

the "Consolidated Funding Application." We've already received over 60 applications and awards will be announced soon.

I've been traveling the state with the Governor over the past few weeks to visit priority projects funded by the Councils. We kicked off our first trip in Central New York, home of the Great New York State Fair, which Ag and Markets proudly oversees. What I saw on this first trip gave me a whole new perspective on the importance of the Councils as local economic engines. Among the projects we visited were the Syracuse Inner Harbor, SUNY Upstate Medical University and the Syracuse Center of Excellence. I saw firsthand that these dollars are being put to work on projects that will most benefit the region. Right now, the funding is fueling thousands of construction jobs, not just in Central New York but across the state. This construction will

lead to thousands more permanent jobs in all ten regions. You've heard the term "ripple effect," I'm sure. These economic development dollars are causing an economic ripple across the state.

I've since traveled with the Governor to Long Island, my home region of the North Country and the Mid-Hudson Region. I saw renovation projects, new construction projects and projects that are helping existing businesses become more competitive. Of note to the agriculture community, North Country Pastured received \$130,000 to purchase, construct, and operate a mobile poultry processing facility. This project will help expand the diversity and value-added production of agriculture in the North Country.

Under this Governor, it's clear that the *New* New York is working for business and it's also working for agriculture. You can read about these projects in the local

paper, but nothing puts them looking forward to continuing these visits in the weeks and months ahead.



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