



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

New Coworking Space, FLX Works, Opens in the heart of Downtown Watkins Glen: Project Funded through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 17, 2024

| ISSUE: **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**



Senator O'Mara joined state and local colleagues in Watkins Glen for a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of FLX Works.

Watkins Glen, N.Y., July 17--The Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development, the Watkins Glen Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Local Planning Committee, and the FLX Gateway Community Development Corporation held a ribbon cutting earlier today,

celebrating the completion of FLX Works, a coworking space located in the heart of Watkins Glen with an official address of 216 N Franklin Street. Representatives from New York State, the State Senate, Assembly, U.S. Congress, and Village of Watkins Glen officials attended this highly anticipated ribbon cutting.

“Downtown Watkins Glen is being reimagined and reinvigorated through key strategic DRI investments like the FLX Works project, which will offer a unique blend of permanent office space and shared workspace for remote and freelance workers,” said Secretary of State Walter T. Mosley. “This innovative project accommodates a new generation of entrepreneurs and area workforce that are looking for space to operate, while in a vibrant downtown setting, with access to myriad other nearby amenities. Once again, Watkins Glen is fulfilling the vision of the DRI and the community by bringing the Village into the 21st century and creating a prosperous, year-round economy, while enhancing and expanding its small-town assets and charm.”

Senator Tom O'Mara said, "FLX Works is a fantastic addition to downtown Watkins Glen. This exciting new and innovative workspace continues the important revitalization efforts that have been ongoing over the past several years through the state's DRI investment and the incredible leadership and support of SCOPED and other local agencies and partners."

Assemblyman Phil Palmesano said, "Thank you to the ongoing efforts of SCOPED and all of our local leaders, agencies, and partners who have worked long and hard over the past several years to fully and effectively utilize and build on the state's Downtown Revitalization Initiative investment. The arrival of FLX Works represents the latest exciting addition to this comprehensive revitalization strategy. It has been an amazing cooperative effort and, together, we have helped make Watkins Glen stronger for the future."

Village of Watkins Glen Mayor, Laurie DeNardo, who served as Co-chair for the Watkins Glen Local Planning Committee commented, "The addition of this coworking space to downtown Watkins Glen is a fabulous addition to Watkins Glen. This space will be used by locals, tourists, visitors, and companies throughout Schuyler County and beyond our borders. FLX Works will complement the other businesses along Franklin Street as their members will naturally utilize the stores, shops, and restaurants in its proximity. This last private investment project of the DRI truly completes the story of what we set out to accomplish with the DRI and I am proud to be here for the official opening."

New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said, "The opening of FLX Works marks the completion of the private investment projects in Downtown Watkins Glen. Since 2017, DRI funds have created new 8 new apartments and increased vibrancy with the rehabilitation of a long-disused building that has been transformed into a brewery in the heart of the village, for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. These achievements are a testament to Governor Hochul's commitment to revitalizing communities in all parts of New York, and I congratulate all those involved in creating these new economic opportunities in Watkins Glen."

Judy McKinney Cherry, Executive Director of the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development and co-chair of the Southern Tier Regional Council noted, "This project is the result of persistence, creativity, overcoming odds, and grit. The management of the build-out, financial creativity, administration, and literally heavy lifting, is nothing short of amazing. On behalf of the professionals who live and visit here, thank you to every person who had a hand in this effort since 2016."

Building owner, Jim Guild is pleased with the transformation of the space and appreciates the care and attention given to this 3-story historic building. "This space has undergone a lot of change and it's wonderful to see the second floor transformed in this way. It was once an

active building, supporting small businesses, and now, with the funding received through the DRI and ESD, I am pleased that it will once again be a beacon for small businesses to learn, work, and flourish.”

This construction of this space took nearly two years to complete but, with funding from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (Homes & Community Renewal -HCR) program, Empire State Development (ESD) Non-Profit Capital Grant, the Schuyler County Legislature, the Schuyler County IDA, Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development, the Cargill Foundation, and a number of private investors, this project, totaling just over \$375,000, is finally completed and open for business. The 5,000 sq ft space underwent a massive transformation, which included installation of heating and air conditioning for the second floor; new office space in the back 1/3 of the space; new office space in the front 2/3 to create FLX Works including open workspace, three private phone booths, a conference room, three private offices, a start-up business mailroom, and storage; two bathrooms and a kitchen; updates to the front entrance, door, and stairs; and electrical upgrades including lighting, a security system and badge system for 24/7 access.

Ben Stamp, Chair of the FLX Gateway Community Development Corporation and the local non-profit that has overseen the project commented, “FLX Gateway Community Development Corporation is proud and excited to welcome the community to FLX Works, a modern downtown coworking space with a unique rural flavor. Thanks to continued community support for this DRI project, FLX Works will provide a community anchor for our freelance and remote workers and home base for our small business entrepreneurs.”

A Networking Open House, sponsored by FLX Gateway Community Development Corporation, is being held this evening from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

For more information about FLX Works please visit: flxworks.org or email: flxworks216@gmail.com.

The Village of Watkins Glen was awarded the Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant in 2017. Funds for the Downtown Revitalization Fund Program come from the NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative, headed by NYS Department of State and administered by NYS Homes & Community Renewal. For more information on the Watkins Glen Downtown Revitalization Initiative projects, go to: flxgateway.com or contact The Partnership at (607) 535-4341.