



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

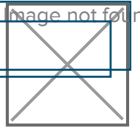
Senator Young Presents Plans for Upstate "Now."

CATHARINE YOUNG November 5, 2007

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BY JESSICA WASMUND

Jamestown Post-Journal

Maintaining jobs and a healthy economy in Chautauqua County is something state Sen. Cathy Young, R-Olean, is pushing as a member of Upstate Now, the Senate Republican plan for job growth.

"You are the people who are on the front lines working everyday to revitalize Chautauqua County," Young told a room full of business leaders Friday at the Robert H. Jackson Center. "We need action — we need results. (Making changes) is critical because we've lost so many young people who have been institutionalized to leave New York state after graduation."

On a recent trip to Falconer Central School district, Sen. Young said only three out of a class of 80 students planned to stay in the area upon graduation. Upstate Now presents a 10-step program to create job opportunities in the area using a \$3.7 billion budget over three years. "We know in Chautauqua County that manufacturing has been a driving force behind the

economy,” Sen. Young said. Which is why the first step of Upstate Now is to provide tax relief for businesses of all sizes, including property tax rebates for small businesses.

“I can’t stress enough how imperative it is to have small businesses — 92 percent of businesses created begin small and we need to nurture them so they grow.’ As any banker knows, investment is the key to a large return, which is why Sen. Young and her colleagues believe and investment in the state is so important to its success. She said she strongly believes more money and support for the Board of Public Utilities was needed. Some agenda items included a highspeed railroad to connect cities across the state, and upgrade of New York’s bridges and highways and an expansion of broadband access.

“Agriculture is still the number one industry in New York and our county has historically been built around the industry,” Sen. Young said. Tax incentives for research, investments in regional partnerships, converting homegrown research to New York jobs and support for emerging technology centers are all agenda items.

According to Sen. Young, a major concern of residents is the ever-increasing cost of health care. Businesses are forced to make decisions concerning health care that could have dramatic effects on employees. Costs of health care would be reduced and an exemption of “Freedom Policies” from state mandates.

Rejuvenation of main street is also an agenda issue, which includes downtown areas, the reuse of abandoned factories and a faster cleanup of Brownfield areas. “Here in Chautauqua County we have so much to offer and we have to work closely to promote that as a point of the economic development package,” Sen. Young said.

To compete globally, Sen. Young recommends targeting global manufacturers to locate in

New York, the creation of regional incentives to lure new jobs and to set ambitious targets for new job creation. More access is also needed to make things more accessible — including the creation of a “511” small-business hotline, an online services for businesses and 24-hour support to help small businesses grow.

“Tourism is critically important to us in Chautauqua County and we need to market it — behind agriculture, tourism is the number two industry in the state and for that reason I think more emphasis should be placed on it,” Sen. Young said.

Lily Kelly, a representative from the New York state finance committee, spoke about the Explore New York program and its correlation to Upstate Now. “It was designed to provide grants for thematic tourism programs,” Ms. Kelly said. “They were put in initially by the Senate but last year were picked up by the governor.”

Upstate Now looks to highlight New York’s history and heritage, enhance regional promotion and promote agritourism. Lastly, a large emphasis of the presentation was placed on education of local students. The plan called for an expansion of online learning opportunities, the creation of regional tech high schools, the inclusion of workforce training in schools and an investment in employers who invest in people.

“If we had student debt relief it would be a great incentive,” Sen. Young said. She discussed a program that would give back money to students who made use of the SUNY system and opted to find a career in New York state upon graduation for a minimum of five years.

Bill Daly, director of the Industrial Development Agency, brought up an interesting point with his own daughter, who was educated in Ohio but chose to come back to Rochester for employment.

Greg Lindquist, zone coordinator for the Greater Jamestown Empire Zone commented how the plan positively made strides to include rural areas because Chautauqua County is not only often over-shadowed by Upstate New York but other metropolitans such as Buffalo.

“I think this plan addresses a lot of issues discussed at the kitchen table,” Sen. Young said.

“Taxes, where do I send my kids to school, where can they find jobs after they graduate, where can I find work? They’re talking about downsizing SUNY and I think we need to go in the opposite direction. We’ve passed this plan but that doesn’t mean there can’t be tweaking — I will continue to fight in the Senate to keep things moving. Today just isn’t a one-time event.”