



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Say Hello to Niagara County's New Airport!

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ September 9, 2009

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It's time for take-off!

The new terminal at the Niagara Falls International Airport, located right next door to the old one on Niagara Falls Boulevard, is on its way to serving as a premier gateway to our region. Now that we cut the ribbon to open the new facility on September 2, 2009, the sky is the limit for the possibilities we have to attract businesses and visitors to our region.

This new airport is an airport for the people, as the hundreds of families who came to the open house will attest. It is a destination in and of itself.

Three times larger than the old terminal at nearly 70,000 square feet, the new airport is equipped to meet 21st century needs. Features include a jet bridge, curbside check-in, wireless internet access, air conditioning, and the very latest post 9/11 security enhancements—all things lacking at the old terminal. Furthermore, the architectural beauty of the man-made building captures the natural beauty of Niagara Falls and the entire region.

The history of this project extends much further back than the groundbreaking in May 2008. I was there from the beginning, back in the 1990s, when the task appeared daunting. It took years and years to get people to believe that this project was important to our future. It took much time and effort to get the financing in place. But now we can all be proud of this accomplishment.

I fought hard to make sure that \$1 million in casino revenues was earmarked for this project every year. Over 15 years, casino revenues will pump \$15 million into the facility. Without that funding, this airport would never have been built. Indeed, the new Niagara Falls International Airport may be the one and only lasting example of how the local share of casino revenues can be used to rejuvenate our economy.

Now the challenge is to market the airport to the outside world to get more people interested in what we have to offer. Myrtle Beach Direct Air is already successfully operating to Myrtle Beach, and we're in close talks with Kenny Tours to operate direct flights in and out of Ireland. We can and will achieve more. This is the start of a new chapter the long and proud history of aviation in Western New York.