



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William T. Stachowski

## Senate Majority Conference Leaders Hold Upstate Summit on Economic Development

WILLIAM T. STACHOWSKI November 4, 2009

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SYRACUSE (October 26, 2009)—The Senate Majority Upstate Caucus today hosted Senate leadership for the first day of a two day summit to address the economic development needs of Upstate New York. Senate President Malcolm A. Smith and Conference Leader John Sampson joined the Upstate Caucus to meet with economic development officials and businesses throughout the day.

The lawmakers attended an agribusiness forum at Wegman's regional offices in Liverpool and a roundtable discussion with businesses and officials at the Metropolitan Development Association offices in Syracuse.

"In these difficult economic times, it is critical that we remain focused on economic development as a means to grow the economy and truly emerge from this fiscal crisis," said Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine, chair of the Senate Majority's Upstate Caucus. "Upstate New York must play a central role, be it through agriculture, energy, the new green economy, tourism or any of the many industries we have here with the potential to grow. Through these discussions, we are keeping Upstate New York at the top of our priorities in the Senate."

"In order for all parts of the state to thrive, we must ensure that businesses across the state are provided with the necessary resources so that New York can revitalize and strengthen its economy," said Senate President Malcolm A. Smith. "The conversations taking place today and tomorrow in Syracuse will allow us to obtain a firsthand perspective on the issues impacting agriculture, small businesses, travel and tourism upstate, so that we can take this information back to Albany and begin to make real changes for the people of New York. We expect the Upstate Caucus to help drive the agenda for the New York State Senate in 2009-10 and it is critical to us because of the challenges we face."

"The agriculture sector has been the source of billions of dollars in revenue to the state and these roundtable discussions will begin the much needed dialogue to create new jobs and boost the state's economy," said Senate Majority Conference Leader John L. Sampson. "In light of the crisis on Wall Street and one of the largest budget deficits since the Great

Depression, it is essential to identify alternative sources of income to ensure New York remains the financial capital of the world.”

“We are working to develop new strategies to help improve the profitability of our local agricultural community,” said Senator William T. Stachowski, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business. “The Upstate Caucus has brought farmers and expert business counselors together in a way that will create more successful opportunities for farmers and area agriculture-based businesses and help broaden the economic base of Upstate in general. We must do everything possible to make it easier for our farming communities to thrive in New York. They are truly the key to the health of our economy.”

Senator Neil Breslin said, "New York State is blessed with land to be used for agribusiness and wind energy and some of the best colleges and universities in the country. We have attracted biotech companies and 'green' businesses alike. The ideas and suggestions discussed at the roundtable meetings were invaluable and the future of Upstate economic development encouraging."

“Upstate New York's strengths in agriculture, green technology, higher education and manufacturing will play a large role in moving the entire state out of recession,” said Senator David J. Valesky. “The meetings we are conducting this week underscore the Senate's commitment to continued investment in economic development and job creation in the region.”

"I am confident that today's meetings continue to reaffirm our commitment to Upstate New York's economic development," said Senator Antoine Thompson. “Partnership with and input from the private sector is critical to comprehensively streamlining and reforming existing economic development

programs that we hope will yield benefits upstate."

"I am pleased to work with my colleagues in the Senate Majority to place upstate and suburban communities as a top priority on our agenda," said Senator Brian X. Foley of Blue Point on Long Island. "From legislative action to economic development programs, we are fully committed to helping working-families throughout the state prosper, with a sharp focus on boosting commerce and investment in upstate and suburban portions of the state," said Foley, who participated in the Upstate Caucus Summit, in light of his work on issues affecting residents outside New York City. At the Agribusiness in Upstate Roundtable, lawmakers discussed the strengths and successes of the Upstate Region in the agribusiness sector, opportunities to grow and build on innovative practices and programs in the region.

"Agriculture is our number one industry in New York State and must be at the forefront of our conversations on economic development," said Sen. Aubertine, who is also chair of the Senate Agriculture and the Senate Energy and Telecommunications committees. "As we work to help our dairy farmers in the current crisis and protect the infrastructure that supports all agricultural businesses, it is important we work to build for the future in a variety of agricultural industries."

The roundtable featured Jim Bedient, a Yates County grape grower, Tim Harner, general counsel for the Upstate Niagara Cooperative, David McClurg, vice president of marketing for the New York Apple Association, Paul Speranza, vice president and general counsel of Wegman's, Julie Suarez, director of public policy for the New York Farm Bureau, and Jim Trezise, president of the New York Wine and Grape Foundation.

At the Economic Growth and Development In Upstate Roundtable lawmakers

discussed innovative economic development efforts and methods New York can use to improve new York's economic development programming.

The roundtable featured Steve Dimeo, president Mohawk Valley EDGE, Garry Douglas, president of the North Country Chamber of Commerce in Plattsburgh, David Griggs, director of business development for Buffalo Niagara Enterprise, Matt Hurlbutt, managing director of business development for Greater Rochester Enterprise, Brian McMahon, president of New York Economic Development Council, Ken Pokalsky, senior director of government affairs for the Business Council of New York State, Robert Simpson, president of the Metropolitan Development Association, Michael Tucker, president of the Center for Economic Growth, Craig Turner, senior director of public policy of the Buffalo-Niagara Partnership, and Ben Walsh, executive director of the New York State Urban Council and director of urban initiatives for the Metropolitan Development Association.

The two day summit will include events tomorrow centered on Tourism and Economic Activity in Upstate, at Dinosaur BBQ and Tourism and Economic Activity in Upstate, as well as a tour of the Carmello K. Anthony Basketball Center at the Manley Field House.