



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Economic Revitalization Tool for Livingston County Meets Approval in State Senate

CATHARINE YOUNG June 24, 2011

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**ALBANY** – A highly anticipated economic revitalization program that would encourage private investment and job growth in Livingston County has received overwhelming approval in both the State Senate and Assembly, according to the bill's prime sponsor Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean).

The initiative would allow local governments and schools to opt into a tax abatement program, incentivizing developers to invest in communities.

The bill, also heavily supported by Senator Patrick Gallivan (R,C,I – Elma), provides for a property tax exemption with a 12-year phase-in for properties located in designated benefit areas that are converted, created, modernized, rehabilitated or expanded.

"We can replicate the outstanding success of Mt. Morris. Many of our communities need help in restoring historic buildings, locating small business in vacant storefronts, and growing jobs, especially in their downtowns. This tax abatement is another tool in the economic development toolbox," said Senator Young.

"It's no secret that high property taxes continue to stifle economic development in Western New York. While I continue seek property tax relief for every taxpayer, this bill provides for immediate and targeted property tax abatements that will spur the types of economic development projects across Livingston County that have already proven

successful in Mt. Morris," said Senator Gallivan.

The idea for the initiative came from Greg O'Connell, a successful community developer from Brooklyn, who has transformed downtown Mt. Morris by rehabilitating 20 buildings. Tax abatement incentives have been successful in New York City where Mr. O'Connell has restored over a million square feet of previously vacant and forgotten properties.

Mr. O'Connell and Livingston County IDA Director Patrick Rountree approached Senator Young for assistance because state law didn't allow for tax abatements outside of New York City.

"This legislation will enable the work that is currently underway in the Village of Mt. Morris to spread to other communities in Livingston County. We are tremendously appreciative of Senator Young's and Senator Gallivan's success in pushing this bill through very difficult waters," said Mr. Rountree.

The bill is sponsored in the State Assembly by Assemblyman Daniel Burling (R,C-Warsaw).