



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Rural Resources Commission unveils second edition of 'Rural Futures'

[THOMAS F. O'MARA](#) December 19, 2011



Albany, N.Y., December 19—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R-C, Big Flats), who earlier this year was appointed to serve as one of 10 state legislators on the joint, bipartisan Legislative Commission on the Development of Rural Resources, announced today that the commission's second edition of "Rural Futures" is [currently available on his Senate website](#).

O'Mara said that "Rural Futures" offers an informative roundup of rural affairs in New York and nationally, including updates on legislative efforts and initiatives in rural communities, as well as summaries for rural leaders and officials on grants, publications, useful Web sites, and upcoming events. "Rural Futures" is full of rural affairs news and information," said O'Mara. "The commission is hopeful that it will become must-reading for our community leaders and concerned citizens across rural New York."

O'Mara's appointment to the commission was made earlier this year by Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos.

"The commission has long been noted as a voice of rural New York within the state Legislature. I'm excited to take part in its work and to help focus attention on the needs of our rural communities and economies here in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions and statewide," said O'Mara, whose 53rd Senate District is comprised of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.

O'Mara noted that area Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R-C, Corning) and Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton (D-Ithaca) are also members of the commission, which is currently chaired by western New York Senator Catharine Young (R-Olean).

The commission, commonly known as the Rural Resources Commission, was established by the Legislature nearly three decades ago. It was created in 1982 to examine the impact of rural communities and industries on the state economy; review existing state laws and regulations impacting rural regions; assess the effectiveness of state programs and services affecting the needs and problems of rural areas; and develop recommendations for the Legislature to enhance and protect New York's rural resources. It's comprised of 10 members – five from the Assembly, and five senators.

Approximately 44 of New York's 62 counties are designated as rural, including all of the counties O'Mara represents, and the Commission has worked on a range of issues including agriculture, economic development, universal broadband, education, land use, transportation, local government structure and functions, volunteer recruitment and retention, and health care.

"How these issues are addressed at the state level has an enormous impact on many local communities," O'Mara said.

He noted that his legislative district encompasses Cornell University in Ithaca, which he praised for its leadership on rural issues through Cooperative Extension and many other Cornell-sponsored initiatives. Legislation developed by the Commission in 2008, which became law, made Cornell home to the nation's first legislatively established "Center for Rural Schools."

[see attached copy below of Summer 2011 issue of "Rural Futures"]