



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Growing Jobs in the Finger Lakes

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By: Senator Mike Nozzolio

The Finger Lakes wine and tourism industry has become a driving force in our local economy. According to a study by Oxford Economics, in addition to creating over 50,000 jobs in the Finger Lakes, the industry has a \$ 2.7 billion dollar economic impact on our region.

Recently, I had the opportunity to join with members of the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail to celebrate their organization's 30th anniversary and the continued success of our local, job-producing wine and tourism industry. We can take great pride in the fact the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario region is now the center of New York's booming wine industry and home to more than 150 wineries. As State Senator, I have worked aggressively with local entrepreneurs, farmers, educators and businesses to create jobs here in our region and to promote the continued development of the Finger Lakes wine and tourism sector. This collective effort to grow and support this

industry was recently recognized by the "Wine Spectator" magazine, which awarded top marks to a number of local wineries and noted that the Finger Lakes is "quickly becoming an excellent source for quality and value." Undoubtedly, this important recognition will spur continued tourism, investment and job creation in our area.

Assemblyman Brian Kolb and I were successful in our efforts to secure \$8 million in New York State funding for a reconstruction of research facilities at the New York State Experiment Station and the construction of the Finger Lakes Viticulture Center. The Viticulture Center will be constructed in the Cornell Ag Tech Park, adjacent to the Cornell Experiment station in Geneva, where world class agricultural research has played a significant role in the growth and development of the New York wine industry.

After years of planning and hard work, I am pleased to announce that construction of the Finger Lakes Viticulture Center will begin this summer. This new, state-of-the-art Viticulture Center will serve as a permanent location for Finger Lakes Community College's new Viticulture and Wine Technology program - the only program of its kind in the Northeast. The Center will include a world-class winemaking lab, grape crushing pad and rooms for storing and aging wine, classroom space and a small teaching vineyard. The Ag-Tech Park location provides significant potential for the expansion of the Viticulture program in the future through its direct partnership and affiliation with Cornell University. Finger Lakes Community College's Viticulture and Wine Technology curriculum will offer students a unique opportunity to be trained for employment opportunities for a variety of jobs in New York's wineries. If they so desire, these students can also in the future accept a guaranteed transfer to Cornell University's undergraduate and graduate viticulture programs.

As the art of winemaking continues to gain in popularity, we are witnessing an unprecedented growth in the number of wineries in the Finger Lakes Region. As one of the fastest growing job-producers in New York, the need for individuals with the specialized knowledge and skills to pursue a career in the wine and grape industry, continues to increase. The new Finger Lakes Viticulture Center will enable our State's future winemakers, grape growers, vineyard workers, winery managers and all associated with the wine industry to study at the same location where some of the most innovative agricultural research in the world is taking place, thereby supporting our local economy and creating well paying jobs.

We extend our special thanks to President Barbara Risser and the faculty, staff and students of Finger Lakes Community College for their support as we fought to secure this important State investment. We also thank Cornell University President David Skorton, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Dean Kathryn Boor and New York State Experiment Station Director Tom Burr for their support and strong commitment to the growth and expansion of the Experiment Station and the Ag Tech Park.

For more information on Finger Lakes Community College's Viticulture and Wine Technology Program, please visit www.flcc.edu/academics/viticulture or call (585) 785-1000.