



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

# **Seward Introduces Otsego County's New Economic Development Leadership Team**

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**ONEONTA, 01/10/14** - State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) and Chairman of the County of Otsego Industrial Development Agency Sharon Oberriter today jointly announced a new leadership team has been established to carry out Otsego County's economic development strategy with an eye toward greater economic growth.

Alexander "Sandy" Mathes, Jr., past executive director of the Greene County IDA, has been retained as a consultant to lead Otsego County's effort and will team with Elizabeth Horvath of Cooperstown who will serve as the IDA's chief operating officer.

Chairman Oberriter said, "These two individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and dynamic personalities to the table. Their energy, along with our new unified approach toward economic development, will mean a bright future for Otsego County."

Senator Seward said, "After hosting the recent economic development summit, I have been meeting with key elected officials and business leaders to capitalize on what we learned and take the next step. One of the chief takeaways from the summit was the need for a single point of entry to facilitate economic development. The economic development leadership team for Otsego County is now in place and I believe we are set to embark on a new era of expansion and career opportunities - drawing in new ventures, while strengthening and growing our existing employers."

In his role as consultant, Mathes will facilitate the preparation of a strategic economic development action plan which will include greenfield site preparation, re-development opportunities, and the re-use of vacant buildings. The "shovel ready" sites and "building ready" structures will be able to accommodate both the expansion and growth of existing local businesses, as well as new business attracted to the area. Other areas of focus will be to establish a "single point of entry" for all development opportunities and to connect the county economic development goals regionally to organizations such as the Mohawk Valley EDGE, Southern Tier Partnership and the Center for Economic Growth.

Sandy Mathes said, "Otsego County and the surrounding region has strong highway and rail access, higher education assets, and significant water and wastewater infrastructure with surplus capacity. This combination of strengths can enable the county to compete for new jobs and private investment while balancing a strong commitment to environmental quality and protection."

As IDA chief operating officer, Horvath will assume responsibility for the administration of current IDA contracts and new ones as they are developed.

Elizabeth Horvath said, "My experience with a small local business, Redpoint Builders, and in Washington with the Corporate Executive Board in research administration and strategy, uniquely qualify me to help lead this innovative public-private partnership."

Otsego County Board of Representatives Chairman Kathy Clark said, "We at the county applaud the IDA's commitment to an enhanced economic development initiative as well as Senator Seward's leadership. We are eager to partner with Mr. Mathes and other key stakeholders to deploy a viable economic plan for retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses and to secure the attendant growth of our private sector economy."

City of Oneonta Mayor Dick Miller said, ""This is exactly the outcome that Senator Seward's November 14 summit indicated was critical. The fact that the community has come together to take this next step, in less than two months, is remarkable and speaks to the shared understanding of the necessity of accelerating sustainable private sector economic growth in our region."

The IDA will fund the positions initially with future support coming from public government and private sector partners who have assisted in developing this unified

economic development approach.

Both Mathes and Horvath will work from the Otsego County Office Building at 242 Main Street in Oneonta which also houses the Otsego County Economic Development Corporation (OCDC), Main Street Oneonta, and the recently formed Oneonta Conference and Events Coalition.

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Photo, from left: Senator James L. Seward, Sandy Mathes, Elizabeth Horvath, Chairman of the County of Otsego Industrial Development Agency Sharon Oberriter.