



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

The New Year Brings New Opportunity for Our Community's Economy

Senator Fred Akshar

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The New Year brings our community new opportunities and a fresh start on the challenges we face. To be successful, we must pursue these opportunities, and face these challenges, together.

Thanks to the hard work of the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) our community recently got some very good news - \$500 million in economic investment.

The REDC Co-Chairs, Binghamton University President Harvey Stenger and President & CEO of Corning Enterprises Tom Tranter, worked with a talented and passionate group of local leaders to put forth the best plan in the State.

I applaud all of the REDC members for their hard work and dedication. It really paid off and it's a good example of how we can work together for success.

But this \$500 million will only take us so far in meeting our Region's needs for jobs, opportunity and economic growth. We need to continue partnering with the private sector, invest in our current workforce and get out of the way of small businesses.

Binghamton University's Downtown Campus has brought new life to the City of Binghamton's downtown area because the private sector stepped up. And as I toured Johnson City with Mayor Deemie in November, we talked about how eager we are to see how the new Pharmacy School may trigger similar private investment in the Village.

While our Region prepares for the return on the REDC's hard work along with private investments, it will be critically important that job seekers gain the skills they need for today's evolving job market. During a recent tour of SUNY Broome's campus, President Kevin Drumm and I talked about the college's plans to meet this need with its highly qualified educators and modern facilities. This capacity for exceptional workforce training will be vital to our economic success and growth.

I've said before that I don't believe that it's government's responsibility to create jobs. I've visited Tioga Hardwoods in Berkshire, Harris Diner in Owego, Whitney Point Pre-School, Raymond Corp. in Greene, Johnston and Rhodes Bluestone in Hancock and many other business in between. They're on the same page. They know how to grow their business far better than government.

What they want is for government to stop stunting their growth with cumbersome regulations and outrageous taxes so they can thrive on their own. As your State Senator, that's where I'm focused. A whopping 91 percent of our local employers are small businesses. The State needs to make owning a business or doing business here just as easy as it is in our neighboring state 15 or 20 miles down the road.

I've already started working with the New York State Business Council to put together a very practical package of small business tax relief and regulatory reform. When we return to Albany for Session I'll introduce my first legislation ever and it'll be this package of bills.

Being elected to the Senate by the people of the Southern Tier is a humbling and very exciting experience—and one that I take very seriously. I'll be an independent and energetic voice to cut through the congestion that gets in the way of progress for Upstate. What I've heard and seen while spending time in each of the 40 cities and towns in the 52nd District is going to be most useful as I work to make sure that we're not forgotten by the Governor and his administration.

And I've learned that I'm only going to be a great representative for you if I continue to keep my ears--and feet--to the ground as much as possible.

I'm looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting to work for our future.