



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Cooking Up New Opportunities in St. Lawrence County: Ritchie Helps Cut Ribbon on Cornell Cooperative Extension Commercial Kitchen

John Friot

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State Senator Patty Ritchie helped cut the ribbon on a new commercial kitchen in St. Lawrence County that will help expand markets for local farm families and bring greater value to the vegetables and fruit they grow.

The new state of the art kitchen—which is located at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Learning Farm in Canton—features specialized processing equipment such as vacuum sealers and flash freezers.

“I really believe that what we are seeing here is an important part of the future of agriculture, not just in St. Lawrence County and the North Country, but as an economic development pilot project that could be replicated in other communities across the state,” Senator Ritchie said.

“As the chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I have worked with a lot of farm families who have looked for ways to add value to the fruits and vegetables they produce, but can’t afford the initial investment to create a commercial kitchen with specialized processing equipment. This new facility represents a major step toward new opportunities for our growers and others who want to create new businesses and new jobs in the agriculture industry.”

During the event, the kitchen was dedicated to retired Cornell Cooperative Extension bookkeeper Anita Figueras of Russell.

As the chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Ritchie has played a key role in helping farm families find new and innovative ways to add value to their products and supported Cooperative Extension’s grant application for the kitchen’s construction.

The new kitchen is seen as an important part of the new North Country Agricultural Studies Academy, which is located at the Learning Farm. The Academy—which is seen as a way to help introduce and train a new generation of young farmers—began this school year with its first class of 10 students and was made possible through \$200,000 in funding secured by Senator Ritchie.

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, Senator Ritchie met with North Country Agricultural Studies Academy students to thank them for enrolling in the inaugural program.

