



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

As Opening Day of deer season approaches, O'Mara issues reminder on Venison Donation Coalition: Bath-based coalition has provided over 4 million meals for those in need

THOMAS F. O'MARA November 16, 2016

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For nearly two decades now, the Venison Donation Coalition has helped put a good, highly nutritious meal on millions of needy tables throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and across New York State. It's a homegrown foundation supported by sportsmen's organizations, of course, but also by corporations, local farm bureaus, government agencies, civic and religious groups, and individual citizens.

Elmira, N.Y., November 16—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today said that the opening of this year's regular deer hunting season on Saturday, November 19, 2016, means that it's also time for the annual reminder on one of this region's most effective charitable organizations: the **Venison Donation Coalition**.

This year's regular deer hunting season in the **Southern Zone runs from November 19 to December 11**.

"For nearly two decades now, the Venison Donation Coalition has helped put a good, highly nutritious meal on millions of needy tables throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and across New York State. It's a homegrown foundation supported by sportsmen's organizations, of course, but also by corporations, local farm bureaus, government agencies, civic and religious groups, and individual citizens," said O'Mara, chairman of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. "I'm always grateful for this annual chance to call attention to its work. In government, particularly in an era like the current one defined by limited resources to address seemingly infinite demands, we're always searching for ways to encourage individual citizens to contribute to the overall quality of our communities, in this case by helping to feed the hungry. Hunters have certainly answered the call and their generosity has been overwhelming."

Since 1999, the Bath-based Coalition has coordinated the processing of an average of 39 tons of venison annually and provided over 4 million highly nutritious, low-fat, high-protein servings to individuals and children in need. Today the Venison Donation Coalition has 85 processors in 52 counties and is always looking for additional processors to participate. The venison donation program is now a broad-based partnership which includes a range of area supporters. It's facilitated the donation of venison to food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and additional not-for-profit organizations and charities.

O'Mara noted that deer hunting is a mainstay of the regional and statewide recreational economy, by some estimates accounting for \$2 billion of economic activity and nearly 30,000 jobs statewide. Steuben County, for example, remains one of the Northeast's premiere deer hunting destinations.

As the Coalition highlights on its website, the donation of just \$1 can help provide four meals. For every dollar donated, in fact, the Coalition dedicates 90 cents towards processing donated venison.

For more information on donating deer, becoming a participating processor, and other ways to help the Coalition, visit the Venison Donation Coalition website at

<http://www.venisondonation.com>, or call toll-free (1-866-862-3337).