

RURAL FUTURES

SPRING ISSUE 2009



News of Interest about Rural New York



Senator Aubertine – New Chair of the Rural Resources Commission

On February 25, 2009, Senator Darrel J. Aubertine (D-Cape Vincent) was appointed as Chairman of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources by Senate Majority Leader Malcolm A. Smith (D-St. Albans).

“As the new Chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, I am looking forward to helping address the challenges facing rural New York,” Senator Aubertine said. “It is important for the Legislature to focus its efforts on the protection of our

irreplaceable rural character, essential agriculture and environmental assets while fostering policies that promote and improve our economic viability.”

New industries need to be made aware that Upstate New York is a good place to locate, and existing industry must be encouraged to stay and keep the jobs here. The federal stimulus package (the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) was signed into law in February and will provide over \$24 Billion to New York State. These funds will provide much needed financial support throughout New York State as well as creating new job opportunities and helping to maintain critical services.

As the only farmer in the NYS Legislature, Senator Aubertine is ideally suited to his role as Chair of the Rural Resources Commission as well as the Senate Agriculture Committee. “It is important that we use this opportunity to promote our State’s agriculture industry and advocate for the needs of our rural communities,” Senator Aubertine said. “This Commission can play a tremendous role in creating policy and legislation to get our green economy,

the industries of the future, up and running.” Assemblyman David Koon, Vice-Chair of the Rural Resources Commission added: “Senator Aubertine recognizes that rural New York is too big, too widely dispersed and too diverse to be singularly defined; and that this Commission can play an important role in addressing the myriad social and economic issues that affect rural New York. Now that Senator Aubertine has taken over the Commission’s leadership role, I look forward to partnering with him in ensuring that our rural communities have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.”

In this Issue...April 2009

Meet the New Executive Director.....	02
Commission Agenda	03
Federal Stimulus.....	04
Broadband.....	06
Economic Development.....	07
Farm To Market.....	09
Local Government Efficiency.....	10
Rural Health Care.....	12
Environmental Initiatives	13
Grants.....	14

RURAL FUTURES

The NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources is a joint bipartisan commission of the state legislature. Senate and Assembly members include:

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**Meet the New Executive Director:
Erica Heintz**

With more than 20 years of public sector experience, Erica Heintz joined the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources in late March to replace the retiring Ron Brach. She is excited about this new opportunity and wishes Ron the very best in his retirement.

Erica is a native of Columbia County and is well acquainted with the issues facing our rural communities, both from a personal and professional perspective. For the last decade, she has served as principal analyst for the New York State Assembly's Legislative Commission on Water Resource Needs/Program Development Group, which has brought her to every region of the State to examine water and other environmental issues. Her diverse education and work experiences have given her an understanding of a wide range of issues, including criminal justice; healthcare; Great Lakes Watershed Management; municipal water and waste water infrastructure needs; non-point source pollution and stormwater run-off; Brownfield redevelopment; solid waste management; and, importantly, economic development.

"Rural life presents its own rewards and challenges, which are far different from those faced by urban dwellers—it's a life that I love," Erica said. "In my past experience, I've had the ability to work on many rural issues, and I'm excited by this new opportunity to dedicate my public service experience to further promote and protect rural New York."

Erica is a graduate of Columbia-Greene Community College with an A.A. in Criminal Justice, a B.A. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Albany, and a Masters Degree in Public Policy from the Rockefeller College of SUNY Albany. Erica is married with a 10-year-old daughter, and still lives in rural Columbia County.

She began her career in public service with the State Department of Economic Development before moving on to spend seven years as a senior policy analyst for the Assembly's Legislative Commission on Solid Waste Management. She joined the State Division of Budget in 1996 to focus on healthcare before joining the Commission on Water Resource Needs.

"Rural life is tremendously important to me, and it is where as an adult I chose to stay with my family," Erica said. "It provides strength, stability and enrichment. People with ties to rural communities understand the value of hard work, how it builds character and that persistence pays off. I chose a career in public policy because I wanted to make a difference, and throughout my career I have worked diligently to instill change for the good. I look forward to continuing my efforts with the Rural Resources Commission."

RURAL FUTURES

RURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION AGENDA

ECONOMIC GROWTH IN UPSTATE NEW YORK IS A PRIORITY OF THE NEW SENATE LEADERSHIP AS WELL AS THE ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP AND WILL BE A KEY FOCUS OF THE COMMISSION. THE EFFORTS OF THE COMMISSION WILL FOCUS ON FIVE KEY AREAS, WITH THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ACHIEVING A MORE SUSTAINABLE, STABLE AND PROSPEROUS UPSTATE ECONOMY.



1) **Farm to Fork:** Promote programs that build bridges between our State's farmers and organizations, such as schools, colleges, nursing homes and correctional facilities. This will open new markets for our State's agriculture industry and provide healthy, local food to these markets.



2) **Green Energy:** Energy costs, recently at historic highs, global warming and international conflict are forcing our nation to look beyond foreign oil and other fossil fuels, creating an opportunity for Upstate New York to focus on the development of alternative energy technologies to help protect our environment, strengthen our national security and create new long-term, well paying "green jobs." The development of alternative energy technologies, manufacturing and production of renewable energy sources can provide important opportunities for agriculture and rural New York.



3) **Green Jobs/Green Partnerships:** In addition to green energy, Upstate has a growing role in encouraging and developing new industries for environmentally sustainable products. Encouraging new industries to locate here in New York, working with local small businesses, and developing and strengthening partnerships with SUNY and private universities to advance these innovations creates opportunities to bring manufacturing jobs back to Upstate NY.



4) **Re-thinking Rural Infrastructure:** Infrastructure is critical to any region's economic viability. To grow rural New York's economy, we need to ensure that a greater emphasis is focused on maintaining and improving the infrastructure of rural New York – including drinking water facilities, wastewater treatment plants and lines, roads, and mass transit, as well as broadband Internet access and use.



5) **Rural Healthcare:** A key component for improving the quality of life for rural New Yorkers and enticing business investment is improving access to healthcare. This includes increasing the number of healthcare professionals in rural areas and the use of telemedicine, and helping to enhance the effectiveness of existing programs.

RURAL FUTURES

RON BRACH RETIRES AFTER ALMOST 27 YEARS OF SERVICE

From 1982 until March of 2009, Ron Brach served as the Executive Director of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. He was hired by the Commission's first chair, Sen. Charles D. Cook.

Ron retired this year after devoting more than a quarter century of work to improving the lives of some three million rural New Yorkers. Throughout his career, his goal was to create a better rural New York for residents, businesses and local governments. Over the years, he built a reputation as a respected, reliable, concerned and knowledgeable public servant.

The new leadership of the Rural Resources Commission is thankful for Ron's commitment and wishes him the best in his retirement.

FEDERAL STIMULUS

THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provides \$787 billion in federal funding to stimulate the United States economy. New York State will receive more than \$24 billion of this over the next two years, easing the burden of our current budget crisis on residents, businesses, municipalities and school districts.

ARRA will provide fiscal relief to New York by providing billions in federal Medicaid subsidies to offset State and local shares, and providing federal dollars to restore State education funding cuts from previous years. Another significant portion will go directly to individuals or households through increased or extended unemployment benefits, increased food stamps, additional social security payments, and tax relief. Most of the funding will come in the form of categorical spending, which is generally an increase in funding for existing programs such as special education, senior services, water and wastewater infrastructure, highway and bridge projects, and weatherization. Funding is also available through competitive grants to expand broadband coverage in underserved rural areas, increase police presence, provide teacher incentives, invest in high speed rail, increase public housing retrofit programs, and for various environmental programs. Funding for ARRA is being moved as quickly as possible, and in some cases grant applications are already available. More ARRA information can be found at www.recovery.gov.

INVESTMENT IN RURAL AMERICA

A portion of the funding in ARRA is directed toward rural areas. Funding specifically directed towards rural areas includes a portion of the \$7 billion broadband funding; \$130 million in grants and direct loans for rural community facilities; \$150 million for rural business program loans and grants; and \$1.38 billion for rural water and waste disposal programs. http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/?navid=USDA_ARRA. Rural states and rural areas are also eligible for state and local law enforcement assistance, rural water projects funded by the Department of the Interior will receive \$60 million, and a portion of the highway and transit funds are dedicated to rural areas.

The new administration in Washington has also developed a plan to reinvest in rural America. In Real Leadership in Rural America, the President calls for providing support for family farmers, supporting rural economic development, promoting rural America's role in developing renewable energy, and improving the quality of rural life in general. To read the entire plan, go to www.mybarackobama.com/page/content/ruralplan.

RURAL FUTURES

FEDERAL STIMULUS

INVESTMENT IN HEALTH TECHNOLOGY IN ARRA

ARRA includes approximately \$2 billion for health information technology infrastructure and \$17 billion in incentives for Medicare and Medicaid providers. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology in the Department of Health and Human Services is charged with developing standards, coordinating Health Information policy across agencies and programs, and across other federal agencies. The law requires that the federal Health Information Technology strategic plan be updated and address utilization of electronic health records by 2014. States will be eligible to apply for grants to promote Health Information Technology. States are also authorized to reimburse eligible Medicaid providers for the cost of qualified electronic health reimbursement purchases, implementation and some operational costs. Numerous other health-related initiatives in the Law were designed to increase access to and quality of health care services for people around the U.S.

www.hhs.gov/recovery/.

NEW FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BROADBAND

ARRA includes more than \$7 billion for broadband initiatives nationally. These initiatives include \$4.7 billion to establish a Broadband Technology Opportunities program with grants to develop and expand broadband services to rural and underserved areas and improve access to broadband by public safety agencies. Innovative programs that encourage sustainable adoption of broadband services will receive \$250 million, and \$200 million will be available to upgrade technology and capacity at public computing centers including community colleges and libraries. In addition, up to \$350 million will fund development and maintenance of statewide broadband inventory maps. Additional information on this funding is available from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and online at <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/>.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service will distribute an additional \$2.5 billion in stimulus funds for broadband, telemedicine and distance learning. This funding is in the form of competitive grants, loans and loan guarantees – 75% of the broadband funding must go to rural areas that lack sufficient broadband access. More information on this program is being developed, and can be accessed online at the above link.

ADDITIONAL BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

OTHER BROADBAND INVESTMENT



In March 2008, the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Utilities Program approved a \$267 million loan for Open Range Communications to provide broadband service to 518 rural communities in 17 states. In January 2009, Open Range announced \$100 million in financing from One Equity Partners, the private equity arm of JP Morgan Chase & Co.

Open Range, headquartered near Denver, Colo., plans to use Wi-Max technology to offer affordable, wireless broadband service within five years to six million customers in 546 underserved and rural communities.

Open Range plans to offer satellite services enabling rural residents to connect to the internet almost anywhere in the country, including rural communities in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Wisconsin. USDA's Rural Development programs are designed to help create and save jobs. For further information visit USDA's Web site at www.rurdev.usda.gov.

RURAL FUTURES



ADDITIONAL BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

BROADBAND IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries are valuable resources in rural communities, and during hard economic times, visits to public libraries increase. Many libraries in New York and across the country are reporting that online services are in high demand. Users

include job seekers, students, and people without Internet access elsewhere. A recent American Library Association report, *Libraries Connect Communities*, found that 73% of public libraries are the only source of free public internet access in their communities.

In December 2008, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a pilot initiative to help public libraries in seven states secure faster Internet connections so more people can access a full range of online applications and opportunities. The foundation has awarded \$6,959,771 in combined grant funding to Connected Nation, a non-profit broadband Internet advocacy group, and the American Library Association's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) to support improved Internet connections for public libraries in Arkansas, California, Kansas, Massachusetts, **New York**, Texas, and Virginia. Connected Nation will help each state organize and host a broadband summit to motivate public library leaders, state and local officials, and others who support broadband Internet in libraries. OITP will provide research and expertise to help state libraries develop and implement strategies to ensure broadband connections are sustainable. They will work with libraries so that Internet connections in all public libraries within these seven states are at least 1.5 Mbps, or faster, where feasible. If the pilot broadband grant program yields positive results, the foundation may expand its support to additional states.

ADDITIONAL BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

FIBER OPTIC LOOP IN CLAYTON

The Town and Village of Clayton, NY and the Local Development Corporation (CLDC) in rural Jefferson County are partnering with Westelcom to create a 20,000 foot fiber-optic loop as soon as next summer. The fiber-optic ring will help schools, hospitals, businesses and nonprofit organizations to communicate better with each other. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$112,000, which will be shared by Westelcom, CLDC, the Town and the Village.



RURAL FUTURES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ALCOA POWER DEAL SAVES 900 JOBS IN MASSENA

SIGNING OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN ALCOA AND NEW YORK POWER AUTHORITY WILL ENSURE MASSENA PLANT PRESERVES 900 JOBS FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS DESPITE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

In January, Senator Darrel Aubertine welcomed the signing of an agreement between Alcoa and the New York Power Authority to provide low cost power to the manufacturer in exchange for preserving more than 900 jobs in Northern New York.

Alcoa has been operating in the North Country since 1902 and its Massena operation is the largest private employer north of Syracuse. The economic downturn has taken its toll on Alcoa, which announced layoffs recently and reported significant losses with the price of aluminum down more than 40 percent.



“ALCOA is not immune to the worldwide economic downturn but it demonstrates why we worked so hard to make sure we had a power agreement that would allow reinvestment in Massena and preserve these good jobs for the next 30 years,” Senator Aubertine said. “Our hope is that the price for aluminum will rebound along with the economy as a whole, and Alcoa will once again employ hundreds more than what this agreement guarantees.”

Under the terms of the contract, Alcoa will invest about \$600 million to modernize its operations to ensure the company’s long term viability. The modernization project will increase the

smelting capacity in Massena and provide significant environmental benefits, including a 70% overall reduction in greenhouse gases associated with global warming.

“In tough economic times, we cannot say enough good things about a deal like this that will protect the jobs of close to 1,000 hard working New Yorkers,”

This agreement was a long time in the making, with Senator Aubertine working closely with the Governor’s office to ensure that attention was continuously focused on the

importance of keeping Alcoa in Upstate New York.

“In tough economic times, we cannot say enough good things about a deal like this that will protect the jobs of close to 1,000 hard working New Yorkers,” said Senator Aubertine. “Our job is not done. We must maintain our efforts to retain jobs and attract new industry to New York State, and particularly to rural areas like the North Country.”

RURAL FUTURES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

G. W. LISK SOLENOIDS

SMALL MANUFACTURING COMPANY IN CLIFTON SPRINGS MAKES ELECTRO-MECHANICAL PRODUCTS AT ITS 300,000 SQUARE FOOT FACILITY FOR USE IN AIRPLANES

G.W. Lisk Company, Inc. is a small manufacturing company in rural Clifton Springs (Ontario County) that manufactures electro-mechanical products. The company opened in 1910 as a small sheet metal shop and gradually expanded its facilities, now exceeding 300,000 square feet of manufacturing, offices, and warehouse area. Through the years, its products have grown to include solenoid valves, LVDT's, and electronic accessories to operate these products. Lisk solenoids are used in aerospace, aviation and much more. The solenoids used in aviation allow pilots to activate the controls used to fly planes after losing engine power--the solenoid kicks in automatically when power is lost and makes connection with an auxiliary power unit to allow the plane to still be controlled by the pilot/autopilot. The company recently rose to fame with the successful use of its solenoids in the US Airbus A320/Flight 1549 that

landed on the frigid Hudson River in early January with no loss of life. The solenoids allowed the pilot to guide the plane into the river after losing engine power after a bird strike. Learn more about this small manufacturing success story at <http://www.gwlisk.com/>.



MEETINGS:

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 • 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.



Senator Aubertine to host Veteran friendly Campus Information Session

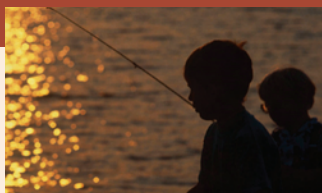
Senator Aubertine and the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs have partnered to provide College and University administrators, counselors, admission, and financial aid officers with a general understanding of relevant state and federal education benefits and a sense of what actions institutions of higher learning can take to help assure that their campus is "Veteran-Friendly." By "Veteran-Friendly Campuses" we mean those which recognize, administratively or otherwise, that the needs of our Veterans may be different than civilian students. These campuses are inclusive, respectful and equitable for Veterans.

This event will take place at Jefferson Community College in Watertown:

Wednesday, July 1st, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Room 6-218, Jules Building

August 13 – 15, 2009



St. Lawrence County International Junior Carp Tournament - Open to youth age 11-18 and parent/guardian. - Cost: \$100 USD per contestant through July 17, 2009. July 18-August 11, 2009 - (as space permits) - \$125 per contestant. For more information, or to register online, go to <http://northcountryguide.com/tourism/events/carptournament/>.

RURAL FUTURES

FARM TO MARKET

KEEPING THE MILK IN DAIRY



A new measure has been introduced in the NYS Senate this year (S.2365, Aubertine) that would prohibit products from being labeled as dairy if they are made with milk protein concentrates (MPC) instead of milk. While small amounts of milk protein concentrates are produced domestically, the vast majority are imported from countries like China, Ukraine, New Zealand and India. MPCs are not regulated as food products but as compounds used to make glue. There has been no study from the FDA to determine if these products are safe to be used in food products. In addition to being of questionable value as healthy food products, these MPCs displace a farmer's raw milk and undermine the value of dairy products. This measure highlights the importance of all products being held to the same standards that we follow here in New York. If successfully implemented, this measure will help maintain a farmer's bottom-line while also ensuring that consumers are offered the highest quality of dairy products.

OPENING NEW MARKETS TO FARMERS



As part of Senator Aubertine's efforts to open more markets to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables, he and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand reached out to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requesting that it change the rules to allow more fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to be purchased for use by school meal programs.

For years, advocates of Farm-to-School programs have worked to make it easier for schools to buy food from local farms. New York has been a national leader in these efforts, enacting a Farm-to-School program in 2002, but schools and farmers have faced hurdles from federal procurement rules when trying to make deals. For example, New York schools were required to buy the lowest priced apples, regardless of how far they traveled, rather than give preference to those grown in New York.

Last year's Farm Bill finally included a provision allowing schools to give geographic purchasing preference to locally-grown farm products but only if

they are "fresh." Unfortunately, a USDA interpretation of the provision considers pre-cut fruits and vegetables, or those that come bagged or washed, "processed" and not fresh, even though no other alterations have been made to them. This interpretation makes them ineligible for the purchasing preference.

In the letter, the Senators stress the importance of agriculture and produce in New York, noting that the produce grown on New York's farms could have a tremendous impact on the healthier lifestyles that we want our young people to adopt. Schools have started to introduce healthier foods on daily menus and pre-cut, or washed and bagged, fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables as snacks could be a big part of that effort. Until the current provision is amended, or USDA's interpretation changes, those fruits and vegetables are not available, to the detriment of the children who need them to prevent obesity and the farmers who need local markets for their produce.

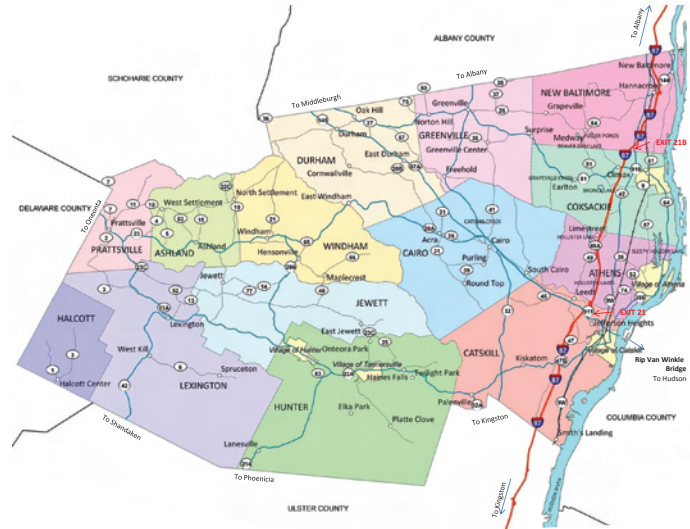
RURAL FUTURES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY MEASURES

NEW LAWS DEVELOPED BY THE RURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION WERE ENACTED IN 2008, HELPING MUNICIPALITIES SHARE SERVICES. CHAPTER 87 OF THE LAWS OF 2008 AUTHORIZES ADJACENT TOWNS TO ELECT A SINGLE TOWN JUSTICE TO PRESIDE OVER THEIR TOWN COURTS. ANOTHER COMMISSION LAW, CHAPTER 165 OF THE LAWS OF 2008, PROMOTES STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHARED HIGHWAY SERVICES WITH MUNICIPALITIES.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES

Municipal consolidation and shared services are receiving considerable attention in these trying economic times. Greene County, NY began efforts late last year to consolidate its Tourism Department with its Planning and Economic Development Department. The consolidation is expected to save the County \$100,000 in the first year through greater efficiency, better deployment of staff, and elimination of redundancies. The new department will be known as the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning and will be overseen by the current director of the Planning and Economic Development Department. The departments have worked together in the past to establish a Tourism Enhancement Program to assist the County's resorts, lodging, restaurants, and other tourist attractions with enhancement of their properties. The new Department's first order of business will be to develop a rebranding of the County's image that capitalizes on its location in the Catskills and Hudson Valley, while conveying its unique attributes. Learn more about Greene County's efforts at <http://www.greenegovernment.com/discovergreene/index.htm>.



SHARED HIGHWAY SERVICES

The University at Buffalo Regional Institute has partnered with the Laberge Group, an Albany-based engineering firm, to review local and countywide highway service delivery for rural Chemung County and its 17 municipalities. The effort will identify opportunities for cost savings, quality improvement, and increased efficiencies in highway maintenance services across the county. Service sharing, service expansion, and consolidation will be considered. Learn more at <http://www.regional-institute.buffalo.edu/>.



RURAL FUTURES

COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER



A Village, Town and School District in rural Oswego County have been sharing services for several years. The Village of Central Square contracts with the Town of Hastings for snowplowing, saving the Village “tens of thousands” of dollars. The Town and Village also share a code enforcement officer. In addition, the Central Square School District entered into an agreement with the Village and Town to provide part-time constables to help with traffic control. The School District, which can purchase fuel for less, also sells diesel fuel and gasoline to the Town and Village. Seeing these savings, the Town of Hastings has offered to share court space with West Monroe, whose courthouse was demolished in 2007 after heavy snows caused much structural damage, and the Towns have created a team to investigate more shared services projects. One of the largest consolidation projects might be joint sewage treatment. Hastings has a new sewage treatment operation on the Oneida River that’s running under capacity and West Monroe has an aging plant in Big Bay that needs to be replaced.

Similarly, the Town of Waterford and the Waterford-Halfmoon School District in Saratoga County have entered into a fuel buying agreement that will save the school district thousands of dollars each year. In January 2009 the School District began buying diesel fuel from the Town of Waterford Highway Department which has its own diesel fuel tanks and buys its fuel at bulk rate through a State contract. The savings to the School District are as much as 60 cents per gallon. The School District and the Town are now discussing sharing snow plowing.

PARTIAL-PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT SYSTEM

Franklin County is experimenting with partial payment of property taxes in two towns. The Towns of Westville and Franklin will be the first pilot communities where residents can pay a minimum of \$100 toward their 2009 tax bills, then making additional payments until the balance is paid off. The County is also accepting credit-card payment for taxes for the first time this year. The County Treasurer’s office now offers property owners payment options including full payment, installment payments, payment by year and partial payments to pay their taxes. If the pilot is a success, the program will be opened to the entire county in the 2010 tax year. Partial payments apply to the county, all towns in the county and all villages where the county enforces the collection of delinquent or back

taxes. The partial-payment collection also allows use of a credit card for installments.

Partial payments were successfully tested in the Brushton-Moira Central School District, Franklin County and the Town of Ulysses in Tompkins County began accepting payments January 1, 2009 for property taxes and utility bills via the Internet at www.municipalpayments.com. Other municipalities that offer this service are also listed on this site.

RURAL FUTURES

RURAL HEALTH CARE

RURAL VETERANS

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has provided \$21.7 million to its regional health care systems to improve services specifically designed for veterans in rural areas. In the last year, the VA has created a 13-member committee to advise the VA Secretary on issues affecting rural veterans. They have opened three rural health resource centers to better understand rural health issues, rolled out four new mobile health clinics to serve 24 predominately rural counties, announced the opening of 10 new rural outreach clinics in 2009 and launched a fleet of 50 new mobile counseling centers. The new funds will be used to increase the number of mobile clinics, establish new outpatient clinics, expand fee-based care, explore collaborations with federal and community partners, accelerate the use of telemedicine deployment, and fund innovative pilot programs.



ADIRONDACK REGION MEDICAL HOME PILOT PROGRAM



Through the years, the North Country, like many rural areas, has struggled to recruit and retain physicians. To address this problem, local medical professionals, State healthcare officials and lawmakers began collaborating on a patient-centered medical home pilot program to bolster recruitment and retention of doctors while improving patient care. Participating primary care providers in the Adirondack Region Medical Home Pilot Program will receive increased reimbursement in exchange for expanded responsibility for coordinating care, managing chronic diseases and providing preventive services. The extra reimbursement to primary care providers will be offset by decreased costs from fewer referrals to specialists, fewer hospital admissions, lower prescription costs and overall improved health of area residents. Across the Adirondack region, more than three dozen medical practices and a number of hospitals are participating in the primary-care program. Public and private insurers are also participating in the pilot. The program covers all or parts of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, St. Lawrence, Herkimer, Lewis, Fulton, Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties. The program is slated to start in July 2009. The New York State Department of Health will provide supervision and arrange for ongoing evaluation of the program.

RURAL FUTURES

RURAL HEALTH CARE

NEW NURSING PROGRAM AT JEFFERSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE



therapy program and medical technology program. The grant also will provide tuition assistance for students who want to pursue a Master of Science nursing degree at the Higher Education Center. Visit <http://www.sunyjefferson.edu/>.

Jefferson Community College was awarded nearly \$2 million recently by the U.S. Department of Labor as part of the Community-Based Job Training Grants Initiative. College officials applied for the grant in the fall in an effort to secure funding for health care programs. The college will use the money to create a part-time night and weekend associate degree nursing program, establish a program mentor for registered nursing students, and increase faculty capacity for all nursing programs. The money will help support the Jefferson Higher Education Center, which will house a family and psychiatric nurse practitioner program, respiratory

Other higher education funding is also available through the Senator Patricia K. McGee Nursing Faculty Scholarships, which were developed by the Rural Resources Commission. These scholarships are available to increase the number of educators and adjunct clinical faculty teaching nursing education in New York State. Awards are made on a competitive basis to registered professional nurses enrolling in graduate programs that will qualify them as nursing faculty or adjunct clinical faculty. In addition to nurse shortages, especially in rural areas, there is a shortage of nursing faculty which limits the number of nursing students. To learn more, call 1-888-697-4372, or visit online at http://www.hesc.com/Content.nsf/SFC/2/Senator_Patricia_K_McGee_Nursing_Faculty_Scholarship_Program

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

WOOD CHIPS TO HEAT SCHOOLS



The Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) is conducting a feasibility study to evaluate heating with wood-chips. Five regional facilities in three counties, including three public schools, will participate. Through a matching grant from the U.S. Forest Service's Economic Action Program, the WAC Forestry Program will contract with Vermont-based Richmond Energy Associates, LLC (REA) to conduct site visits at Cairo/Durham Middle/High School in Greene County; Catskill Craftsmen, Inc.; O'Connor Hospital and South Kortright Central School in Delaware County; and Onteora Middle/High School in Ulster County.

The main purpose of heating with wood-chips is to conserve energy and resources, but school administrators are excited at the prospect of teaching students about renewable energy with the installation of a carbon-neutral heating plant. In addition to cost savings, the benefits of woody biomass energy include reduced carbon emissions, improved utilization of wood waste, healthier forests and energy dollars remaining local. A similar study recently completed for a North Country school showed preliminary cost savings of \$170,000 in the first year after converting 85% of heating needs to wood-chips. More information is available from Collin Miller at (607) 865-7790, ext. 112 or at www.nycwatershed.org/news_press_biomassfacilities.

RURAL FUTURES



NYS EFC MAKES IT EASIER TO FIND PUMPOUT LOCATIONS

The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) Clean Vessel Assistance Program (CVAP) recently made it easier for boaters to find pumpout facilities. New user-friendly maps are available on EFC's website at www.nysefc.org.

Each regional map lists the available marinas with pumpout facilities. The CVAP helps boaters protect and improve water quality in the State's navigable waterways by offering grants for the construction, maintenance and promotion of recreational boater pumpout facilities. There are currently 287 CVAP-funded facilities on the program web page. Boaters also can look for bright orange flags that fly over pumpout facilities that have received CVAP funding. For more information about the program or to apply for a grant, call (800) 882-9721, email staff at CVAP@nysefc.org, or visit EFC's Web site, www.nysefc.org/CVAP.



GRANTS



RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Rural Energy for America will provide funds to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis and can be up to 25% of total eligible project costs. Grants are limited to \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. Grants as small as \$2,500 and \$1,500 respectively will be considered. More information or application materials may be obtained by downloading through www.grants.gov or by contacting one of Rural Development's Rural Energy Coordinators.

- **Deadline for application is July 31, 2009**
- **New York's USDA Rural Development contact Thomas Hauryski (607) 776-7398 Ext. 132 email: Thomas.Hauryski@ny.usda.gov**



UPSTATE REGIONAL BLUEPRINT FUND PROGRAM

Created by the Legislature in 2008 to help revitalize the Upstate economy, New York's Upstate Revitalization Fund will invest \$120 million in projects that advance local development and small businesses. Potential projects include improvements to industrial parks or loans for businesses to purchase equipment, real estate, as well as other needs. Eligible applicants include municipalities, businesses, academic institutions, and non-profits, and awards will range from \$100,000 to \$5 million. The program will give preference to requests for loans so that principal repayments can be reused for future projects.

- **Additional information can be found on the Empire State Development website at www.empire.state.ny.us/UpstateDownstateFund/**
- **Applications for the first round are due on June 15, 2009**
- **Subsequent round applications will be due on September 15, 2009, December 15, 2009, and March 15, 2010**

RURAL FUTURES



GRANTS



FARMERS MARKET GRANT PROGRAM

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is soliciting proposals for the construction, reconstruction, improvement, expansion or rehabilitation of farmers markets in New York State. A total of \$150,000 is available state-wide with individual grants not to exceed \$25,000 or 50% of the project cost, whichever is less. **More information is available on the Department's website at: www.agmkt.state.ny.us/RFPS.html or from Steve McGrattan at (518) 457-7076. Proposal's must be received by July 27, 2009.**



SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The United States Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program provides funding to State Departments of Agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. New York State produces a wide range of specialty crops (fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, herbs and spices) that rank highly in the nation both in terms of production and economic value. A detailed list of commonly recognized specialty crops is provided at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp.

The NYS Department of Agriculture is currently developing a competitive grant program for the 2009 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. An RFP is expected to be released in mid-June. The Department expects that applications will be due sometime mid-July. More information will be available online at www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/slide/SpecialtyCrop.html.

Information on other funding opportunities from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets is available online at www.agmkt.state.ny.us/RFPS.html or from Steve McGrattan at (518) 457-7076.



\$10 MILLION - HEALTHY FOODS/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE 2009

In May, Governor Paterson announced a new initiative to expand and encourage the growth of new grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods. The Healthy Foods/Healthy Communities initiative is designed to increase the number of food markets in underserved communities throughout New York State. The initiative is funded with a new \$10 million state revolving loan fund to help finance the building of markets to increase access to fresh foods in underserved communities. This program will be a joint collaboration between the Empire State Development Corporation and the Department of Agriculture and Markets who will contract with a Community Development Financing Institution (CDFI) to administer the loan fund.

More information is available from Steve McGratten, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (518) 457-7076 or Bob McNary, Empire State Development Corporation Finger Lakes Office (585)325-1944 x223.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AMERICAN RECOVERY PROGRAM GRANTS

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the Department of Commerce has requested applications for the EDA American Recovery Program. This program will promote economic development to enhance the competitiveness of regions. Projects will increase private investment and result in higher skill and higher-wage jobs in regions that have experienced sudden and severe economic dislocation and job loss due to corporate restructuring. Applications are accepted on a continuing basis and will be processed as received. Call the EDA's Administration office in Philadelphia at (215) 597-4603 for information about projects in New York or go to www.grants.gov.

Rural Resources Commission Introduces Legislation

ALBANY (May 12, 2009)—The bipartisan Legislative Commission on Rural Resources has introduced its legislation for the 2009 session, with 13 bills sponsored in the Senate and Assembly intended to benefit the State’s rural communities.

“This Commission has a long track record of promoting the interests of rural New York and that’s what these bills are designed to do,” said State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine, Chair of the Commission. “These bills address needs for farmers, landowners and municipalities looking to lower costs through consolidation or shared services. This Commission remains committed to working across party lines to help our rural communities. This legislation is an important part of the process as this Commission works to build the economy of our rural regions and create jobs.”

“The legislation we are advancing through the Commission on Rural Resources reflects the wide ranging issues – land use, our environment, the economy and workforce, governmental efficiency, health care – that every rural community in New York State confronts on a regular basis,” said Assemblyman David Koon, Vice Chair of the Commission. “As a bi-cameral Commission in the State Legislature, I am proud of the way we bring both sides of the aisle in both Houses together to address these many issues.”

“We’ve broken some important ground for the Rural Resources Commission over the past several years. Now we need to keep working, on a bipartisan basis, to address the key short- and long-term challenges facing rural communities. I’m glad for this opportunity to stay focused on rural job creation, broadband development, local property tax relief, and so many other priorities,” said State Senator George Winner, Commission member.

The bills address a wide range of rural issues, from consolidation of government and shared services, to rural healthcare, agriculture and economic development. Concerns and ideas for new initiatives should be forwarded to Commission staff at (518) 455-2544 or ruralres@senate.state.ny.us.