



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

News From NYS Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith

MALCOLM A. SMITH July 18, 2007

Remarks were delivered today during Faith-Based Economic Development Conference at Allen AME Church in Queens addressing church and community leaders as well business leaders from around the country during today's Faith-Based Economic Development Conference at the Allen AME Church in Queens, State Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith (D-St. Albans) said communities of faith must play a pivotal role in New York's economic revitalization efforts.

"Religious institutions have long carried the torch to help raise individual standards of living through grass-roots involvement in the stabilization of our communities," said Smith. "The mission of doing good work that we derive from our faith can certainly lend new spirit and energy to the larger discussion about economic development in New York where helping people overcome social and economic barriers is essential."

"Clearly, non-government organizations must play a more active role in our economic development efforts, particularly institutions of faith that are already well-equipped for such a monumental task, none more so than Allen AME Church," he added.

Smith thanked the Rev. Floyd Flake for his leadership in advancing the cause of faith-based economic development through such endeavors as the Allen Neighborhood Preservation

Corp., the Allen Federal Credit Union and The Allen Housing & Development Fund Corporation, all based out of the Allen AME Church.

Reverend Dr. Floyd Flake said: "Communities of faith have an obligation and this conference is designed to help them understand that the greatest evangelistic tool a church has is its ability to respond to the needs of people and that people would come to worship at the places where those needs are met."

Smith said the institutions developed at Allen AME Church under Reverend Flake's guidance and leadership are models he'd like to see duplicated by other communities of faith across the state so that New York can realize its goal of a sustainable, thriving and growing economy that helps lift the ambitions and livelihood of the less fortunate.

He referred to the Senate Democratic Conference goal of producing 50,000 good-paying jobs by the year 2020 and ensuring that New York's labor force is among the highest-skilled in the world. Smith said new incentives for skills development, education and training can encourage the spread of new faith-based economic development models at religious institutions throughout the state, providing critical community-based support for complementary initiatives.