



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

## Sen. Aubertine, Senate President Secure \$2.5 million to Replace Lake Street Bridge in City of Ogdensburg

DARREL J. AUBERTINE October 5, 2009

ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



Sen. Malcolm Smith at Dobisky Visitor Center to announce capital funding for city's top priority

OGDENSBURG—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine and Senate President Malcolm A. Smith announced today that they have directed \$2.5 million in Regional Economic Development program funds to the City of Ogdensburg for the replacement of the Lake Street Bridge, which is in imminent danger of collapse.

Without this funding, further erosion to the bridge's condition could also result in damage to the city's water and waste infrastructure. The lawmakers made the announcement after Sen. Aubertine and city officials gave the Senate President a tour of the city.

“This project was identified as the city’s top priority because of the potential environmental catastrophe that would occur if the bridge were to collapse,” Sen. Aubertine said. “Recognizing the imminent need, I worked with Sen. Smith to secure this funding which will allow the city to move forward with the Lake Street Bridge project. Replacing this bridge will protect the critical infrastructure that supports a large portion of this city and sustains jobs. I want to thank President Smith for his efforts to make this possible and city of Ogdensburg officials who have been working diligently to address this critical need.”

Senate President Malcolm A. Smith said, “The rebuilding of this bridge—as well as other projects throughout the North Country—are a big part of the Senate’s economic development and revitalization efforts. Senator Aubertine and city officials made this project a priority for St. Lawrence County, and I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to partner with them to secure these funds. For decades our state’s infrastructure needs were ignored, leading to the condition of this bridge. But now, there is rebuilding taking place throughout the 48th District and across the state, putting people back to work and enhancing our ability to attract new businesses and jobs to the region.”

The closed vehicular bridge carries water and sewer infrastructure across the Oswegatchie River to the west side of the city. The funding would enable the city to relocate that infrastructure and install a pedestrian bridge. The project can be put out to bid in a matter of months.

“Senator Aubertine is a great friend to Ogdensburg,” said City Manager Arthur J. Sciorra. “Not only will these funds replace aged deteriorated infrastructure, but perhaps just as important, this allows us to increase the capacity of our systems to handle potential growth, particularly on the river and in the Marina District.”

Ogdensburg City Mayor William D. Nelson said: “I want to thank Senator Aubertine for partnering with us and working on our behalf in securing the RED funding for this important project. The replacement of this bridge and the water and sewer infrastructure attached to it are vital to the City of Ogdensburg ensuring we maintain adequate utility connections between the east and west sides of the city. The pedestrian bridge is a valuable link in connecting the maple city trail, the city’s west side, and the marina district to our downtown and greenbelt park. The upgrading of the water and wastewater infrastructure will facilitate our redevelopment priorities for important sites such as the former Diamond and Shade Roller properties.”

Ogdensburg City Councilor Matthew J. Flynn said: “It is exciting to see this project able to move forward because Senator Aubertine listened and convinced Albany that prioritized infrastructure investments will be the foundation for economic progress for Ogdensburg and the surrounding area. I applaud the hard work of Senator Aubertine, Senator Smith, City Manager Sciorra and all of the other dedicated individuals that made this investment in Ogdensburg’s quality of life a reality.”

“Time and again Darrel has been there for the City of Ogdensburg. His help with the Cheese Plant was priceless, and now the funding for the Lake Street Bridge replacement is just unbelievable. We cannot thank him enough,” said Ogdensburg City Councilor Michael D. Morley.

“I am pleased to have successfully worked along with state officials to secure funding for essential infrastructure for the citizens of Ogdensburg and the North Country,” said Ogdensburg City Councilor Nicholas J. Vaughn.

Ogdensburg City Councilor Thomas A. Hannan added: “I am extremely grateful for the support from Senators Aubertine and Smith and the diligent work of city staff on behalf of city residents. The removal and replacement of the bridge is a critical component for the economic revitalization of that area and our ongoing efforts to develop the city’s waterfront.”

City officials have said that underwater dive studies confirmed that the bridge is in imminent danger because the center pier and abutments are crumbling. If the bridge were to collapse, it would cut off water and sewer service to half the city, including Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center, and release raw sewage into the Oswegatchie and St. Lawrence rivers.

Prior to the funding announcement, the senators attended a luncheon at St. Lawrence University where they met with students, faculty and administrators from the areas four colleges to discuss the importance of affordable higher education, and the state's opportunity programs.

Later in the day, Sen. Aubertine will hold a Community Conversation with a gathering of constituents at 5:30 p.m. in the Canton Town Municipal Building. The informal gathering enabled Sen. Aubertine to discuss economic development, agriculture, energy and other topics related to best serving constituents in St. Lawrence County.

"It's important that constituents have the opportunity to share their opinions, thoughts and ideas," Sen. Aubertine said. "This is how our democracy works. The people of St. Lawrence County elected me to represent them in Albany and these gatherings are a great opportunity to hear what is on their minds so that they have a voice in the state capitol."