



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Winter Olympic's Heritage and Future Discussed in Albany

BETTY LITTLE May 16, 2011

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Olympians and USOC Visit Capitol to Tout Heritage and Future

Congressman Gibson Joins the Board of Lake Placid Regional Winter Sports Commission

Albany, New York A group of Olympians from New York State and the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) Chief of Sport Performance Alan Ashley joined Congressman Chris Gibson (R-Kinderhook) , Senator Betty Little, Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward and Assemblywoman Jan Duprey at the State Capitol today to meet with state leaders to tout the need for continued support of the Lake Placid facilities, the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), and the tax check-off and license plate program, which could enhance Team USA's medal opportunities for the next Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia in 2014.

They were joined by a group of Olympians from New York State including:

Billy Demong - Vermontville, New York native who is the first U.S. athlete in Nordic Combined to earn an Olympic gold medal, when he won Gold and Silver at the Vancouver Olympic Winter Games in 2010

Tim Burke – The Saranac Lake High School graduate is a two time Olympian ('06 and '10) in the Biathlon

Lowell Bailey – The Lake Placid High School graduate is a two time Olympian ('06 and '10) in the Biathlon

Olympic hopeful Joe Mortensen, a Huntington, NY native and member of the United States Army was also in attendance. He is a rising star in the world of luge and is attempting to qualify for the 2014 games in Sochi.

“The Empire State plays a vital role in the world-wide Olympic Movement and the development of Team USA. Lake Placid hosted two Olympic Winter Games in 1932 and 1980, and the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), in partnership with the USOC, continues to provide critical support in maintaining and operating the great Olympic legacy venues in Lake Placid,” said Ashley.

Ashley continued, “Events like the miracle on ice triumph over the Soviets and Eric Heiden’s historic five gold medals in speed skating have inspired countless young people to pursue their Olympic dreams, and today New York State and Lake Placid are recognized around the globe as great stewards of sport and for hosting world class training and competition.”

At the press conference, Congressman Gibson was selected as the newest member of the Lake Placid Regional Winter Sports Committee (LPRSWC) Board of Directors. LPRWSC was founded in 2006 and is focused on supporting and developing Upstate New York as a sport destination for international and national winter sport events.

“I am fortunate to have the privilege of representing a region that has such a rich history of winter sports. I believe that our continued efforts to support the Lake Placid region will not only benefit our country’s athletes, but also economic development and tourism in the North Country. I am honored to be the newest member of the Lake Placid Regional Winter Sports Committee Board of Directors,” said Congressman Gibson.

“The 1980 Olympic Winter Games hold a very special place in the hearts of Americans,” said Senator Betty Little. “Lake Placid is more than a place; it’s a moment in time for those of us who remember those incredible games. As we know, the success story didn’t end there. ORDA has done a tremendous job not only in preserving that place in history, but building upon it, ensuring today’s athletes are trained and prepared for future games and developing an economic driver important not only to the Adirondack Region, but all of New York State.”

“The impact of ORDA on the region is profound. But It’s more than the athletes, the facilities and it’s even more than the sparkling new conference center that is set to open, it’s about the values. The Olympic spirit is synonymous with our community and the can-do attitude that makes the Adirondacks so special in the world. It’s essential that we continue to lend our strong support to keep those values alive and well,” said Assemblywoman Sayward.

Assemblywoman Janet Duprey said, “As we approach the 30th anniversary of ORDA, I’m pleased to welcome our Olympic athletes who are the pride of the North Country. Congratulations to ORDA officials on their many contributions to the economic success and preservation of the Olympic Village of Lake Placid.”

This year also marks the 30 year anniversary of the establishment of ORDA, one of the most successful reuses of an Olympic venue, signed into law by Governor Hugh Carey in 1981 (Chapter 401 of 1981). ORDA Chairman Ted Blazer and Jeff Byrne, Senior Vice President of ORDA joined the group of Olympians throughout the day at the press conference and in meetings with State Officials.

Ted Blazer, President & CEO of ORDA said, “ORDA is proud to be a partner with the USOC in providing training opportunities for America’s Athletes. We take great satisfaction in the operation of our facilities that showcases these athletes as they strive for excellence.”

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