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LONG ISLAND BUSINESS NEWS: Skelos: LI will thrive, thanks to technology

DEAN G. SKELOS September 19, 2011



Skelos: LI will thrive, thanks to technology

By Dean Skelos

For decades, Long Island's economy was dependent on the aerospace industry until it crumbled and our economy recessed. Rather than bemoan the loss of jobs and people, many of us envisioned a stronger economy built on high-tech and biotech industries using Long Island's wealth of scientific and entrepreneurial talent. Now, Nassau and Suffolk counties

are home to many growing companies and thousands of new jobs.

Many regions across the country have had tremendous economic success by becoming hubs for specific industries that have created numerous jobs. They have attracted entrepreneurs that support and depend on each other. This “cluster” model works because businesses are attracted to certain locations so they can work among peers in their industry.

Over a decade ago, Long Island’s Senate delegation laid the foundation to develop high-tech and biotech clusters here. We worked together to secure more than \$100 million in investments to build the infrastructure necessary to attract companies in these fields. Those investments are paying off in the form of new jobs.

This year, we enacted legislation to expand the Broad Hollow Bioscience Park at SUNY Farmingdale, a commitment that cleared the way for OSI Pharmaceuticals/ Astellas to create about 800 direct and indirect jobs with an annual payroll of approximately \$50 million.

Senate Republicans helped create the Broad Hollow business incubator in 2002 as part of a total state investment of more than \$70 million for biotechnology businesses and jobs on Long Island. This bioscience cluster is one of the most successful in the nation.

The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory is one of the nation’s first and finest research institutions. Senate Republicans secured \$20 million in 2005 to create the Center For Bioinformatics at Cold Spring Harbor. Scientists and biologists working at the center are conducting the next generation of research into the human genome to help cure diseases. About 1,000 people work at the lab.

The Advanced Energy Research and Technology Center at Stony Brook University was established in 2006 with a \$35 million economic investment secured by Senate Republicans. The center has earned national recognition for its groundbreaking work in developing new,

cleaner sources of energy. Working together, the AERTC, the Center for Excellence in Wireless and Information Technology and nearby businesses tied to these facilities employ almost 1,300 people.

We also secured \$25 million for the creation of the Morrelly Homeland Security Center, which is a great example of how a vacated property can be turned into a vibrant facility that now employs more than 200 people. The center focuses on products and systems that can protect us from terrorist events and disasters, and was instrumental to the regional preparations and response to Hurricane Irene. There is no other facility of its kind in the United States.

In addition, we secured state investments that resulted in successful programs and new jobs:

- The Institute for the Development of Education in the Advanced Sciences at Hofstra University that educates teachers and the public about cutting-edge issues in science and technology
- The creation of the Long Island Center for K-12 Science and Biology Education at Molloy College, which has already trained 60 new science teachers for local schools, as well as many nurses for local hospitals
- The new medical school at Hofstra in partnership with the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System was funded by a \$25 million state investment.

More good economic news is on the way. Soon the Long Island Forum for Technology will announce a location for the Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Technology Innovation Center, as well as new partnerships with SUNY Farmingdale and Stony Brook University. We have been working on this facility for five years and have obtained a \$15 million state

investment.

In 1927, Charles Lindbergh made a courageous decision to take off from Roosevelt Field and fly across the Atlantic Ocean, later spawning the aviation industry here. Senate Republicans also made an important decision: to make Long Island a high-tech and biotech hub. And we continue to see our efforts take off. However, our economy is still hurting and we cannot rest on our laurels.

We will continue to work with the governor, community and industry leaders to ensure that these industries continue to create more jobs and a brighter future for Long Island.

Skelos is the New York Senate majority leader.

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