



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway Set to Expand into Cattaraugus County

CATHARINE YOUNG June 18, 2015

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ARTS AND CULTURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM, TRANSPORTATION, HISTORICAL PRESERVATION**

*Expansion of the byway will promote economic development and community pride*

ALBANY – The Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway (WNYSSB), which currently runs through the Towns of Aurora, Boston, Colden, Concord, East Aurora, Orchard Park and Springville, will soon be expanding into Cattaraugus County. Another 37 miles of roadway will be added to the existing byway corridor, bring added attention to northern Cattaraugus County’s resources, thus increasing community pride and boosting the local economy by promoting cultural, historic, and recreational tourism.

**Legislation**, sponsored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I– Olean) and Assemblyman Joseph Giglio (R,C,I-Gowanda), expanding the byway into the county passed the state legislature this week. The expanded roadway would incorporate portions of Route 219, State Route 240, and State Route 242 within the Towns of Ashford and Ellicottville, and the Village of Ellicottville, into the existing byway.

“Expansion of the Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway into Cattaraugus County will help showcase the communities’ wonderful history, natural beauty, cultural and recreational opportunities, and boost our local economy through increased tourism. The new section of the byway will soon offer another positive way to highlight our region to residents across the state and beyond, showcasing the wonderful towns and villages along the route. I thank the DOT Scenic Byway Advisory Board, WNYSSB President Robert Lennartz, and everyone involved with the WNYSSB for their dedicated work to secure the expansion of the scenic byway,” said Senator Young.

“Any step, small or large, that we can take to enhance and promote the tourism and travel industry in Cattaraugus County and Western New York is certain a welcomed opportunity,” said Assemblyman Joseph Giglio. “I’m proud to have worked with Senator Young, the Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway Coalition and the Department of Transportation’s Scenic Byway Advisory Board to develop legislation and extend the byway into my district. The magnificent foothills of the Allegheny Mountains along the byway route in Cattaraugus County will attract additional visitors and help create economic opportunities.”

“The Western New York Southtowns are graced with a series of highways which now have been brought together under the banner of the Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byway. The purpose is to unite Erie and Cattaraugus Counties, and numerous towns and villages, into a regional attraction for tourists and the citizens of the area. The Byway forms a

108 mile scenic loop that runs from the towns of Orchard Park and Aurora south through Boston, Colden, and Concord. The recent New York State legislation approves its extension through Ashford and Ellicottville, terminating at the southern Ellicottville town line. The byway now has the honor of encompassing “The Heart of the Southtowns,” said Western New York Southtown Scenic Byway President Robert Lennartz.

Municipalities along the route will use public-private partnerships between citizens, businesses, and public officials to promote sporting competitions, artistic festivals, and other events and attractions in the area. The Scenic Byway has already been successful in promoting these events across Southern Erie County, boosting tourism in the region.

Tourism plays a vital role in New York State’s economy. In 2013, the most recent year data is available for, travelers’ spending generated \$95.4 billion in total business sales and \$7.5 billion in state and local taxes. Tourism is also the state’s fifth largest employment sector, supporting over 726,700 jobs and generating \$17.39 billion in wages. In Cattaraugus County, travelers spent \$208,678,000 in 2013 and tourism generated \$14,077,000 in taxes, supporting approximately 5,000 local jobs.

The WNYSSB has worked hard in recent years to secure Resolutions in Support from Cattaraugus County, and each of the towns and villages the byway will now pass through. The expansion proposal was then sent to the DOT’s Scenic Byway Advisory Board for consideration. After being approved by the board, it was able to come before the state Legislature.

More information on the byway can be found at <http://wnyssb.org/>.