



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Spherical Block Gets a Boost With Support From The Workforce Development Institute

CATHARINE YOUNG June 23, 2015

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Funding will promote business growth, likely create eight new jobs in the next three years

ALBANY – Spherical Block, LLC, an Allegany County manufacturer, expects to see job growth and expanded operations as a result of funding assistance provided through the Workforce Development Institute (WDI), a program championed by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean).

As part of the 2015-16 State Budget, Senator Young personally advocated for the restoration of funding that supports the mission of the Workforce Development Institute following Governor Cuomo's proposal to eliminate the program. The enacted budget restored \$5 million in funding for the program.

“The Workforce Development Institute has been an outstanding partner for area businesses, ensuring they, and their employees, have the skills and training needed to meet the demands

of a competitive global marketplace. The partnership between WDI and Spherical Block not only helps get their new blocks into production, but also goes a long way toward building a new manufacturing sector with roots here in Allegany County,” said Senator Young.

“I was pleased to advocate for WDI’s funding during the budget process, because I know they provide tremendous service and support for our local employment base. By providing residents with the training and skills needed to meet the demands of employers in fields with immediate openings, they are helping us grow jobs and the economy in the Southern Tier,” Senator Young said.

Spherical Block, LLC, based in Alfred, is developing a revolutionary concrete block design for masonry construction. Their innovative design will be able to be used to make entire buildings, including roofs.

WDI has provided Spherical Block with funding for their initial product run of 8,500 blocks at Southern Tier Concrete Products in Alfred. The blocks made from the initial trial run will be used to document, test, and practice assembly of various masonry structures and configurations. Information gathered from the product run will be incorporated into the company’s marketing effort. Spherical Block expects to create eight jobs over three years as a result of WDI’s support.

Michael LaBerta, WDI's Western New York Regional Director said, "Spherical Block is a masonry company whose unique product could have a tremendous impact on the industry and masonry product applications on a large scale. WDI identified a need with producing a batch of blocks to be submitted for testing to help move the product to market and help the company grow. Without the support of Senators like Catharine Young, WDI would not be able to assist companies like Spherical, whose product could impact countless people in New York State and beyond."

Peter Roberts of Spherical Block, LLC, said, "WDI's assistance allowed my company to perform a critical trial run of a new block mold, producing these innovative blocks and allowing us to have them tested in assemblies and to showcase this patent pending transformative technology. WDI has been instrumental in taking this technology from an idea to a concrete result. We expect job creation to follow from the development of this innovation as it is put into practice."

WDI works to promote job growth and address skills shortages for existing manufacturers as well as providing targeted assistance to workers affected by layoffs to transition to new jobs.

Along with the funding for WDI, this year's budget also includes critical support for further development of New York's manufacturing sectors. The 2015-16 State Budget includes \$5 million for the Next Generation Job Linkage Program that works with employers to identify jobs; define the needed skills; and provide the appropriate training.

For more information on the Workforce Development Institute, or to learn about funding and support available through the program, please visit: www.wdiny.org.