

Andres says warehouse proposal should be approved

Niagara County Economic Development chairman: 'Shovel-ready has to mean shovel-ready if we want to attract business'

Niagara County Legislator Rich Andres, chairman of the county's Economic Development Committee, on Tuesday said the proposed site for the new warehouse project (of which Amazon is the potential tenant) was deemed shovel-ready by Empire State Development a decade ago and, as such, the project absolutely needs to be approved if the county wants to maintain credibility with national and international site selectors.

"Shovel-ready has to mean shovel-ready if we want to attract business," Andres said. "We can't

market a site and say it has gone through the approval process, and then start backtracking. No serious site selector would ever give Niagara County a second look again if we do not stand behind the shovel-ready certification."

According to Andres, more than 10 years ago, the Niagara County Center for Economic Development and its local partners, including the Town of Niagara, submitted a shovel-ready application to ESD for what was then referred to as Airport Commercial Park on Lockport Road. The application was thoroughly vetted

by numerous agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and the New York state departments of Environmental Conservation; Agriculture and Markets; and Transportation. Following that rigorous process, which included public hearings, the site was designated a Build-Now NY Shovel Ready Certified Site in August of 2012.

"Communities across New York state had a reputation for too much bureaucratic red tape that took too long to work

through, so potential projects went elsewhere," Andres said. "In response to that, New York state created the shovel-ready designation so communities could do a lot of the leg work upfront on a potential development site. We have marketed the site that way ever since, and it was a main part of the pitch to the developer that wants to build the warehouse."

Andres said he fully appreciates that there are necessary approval processes that must be worked through, and that people should certainly attend the public meetings to raise whatever issues are

important to them.

"We should always make a good-faith effort to mitigate any legitimate issues that are raised, but the old adage that you cannot please everyone is especially true when it comes to large development projects," Andres said. "I'm proud of our collective efforts to have attracted a potential tenant like Amazon, and the hundreds of millions of investment and a thousand-plus jobs that could come with it. It's the culmination of a process that began 10 years ago with the shovel-ready designation."

New building at NCCC to house Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy

A new training facility for the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy will be built on the Sanborn campus of Niagara County Community College. An estimated \$2.27 million for the building was appropriated in the SUNY building fund adopted by the state budget passage a few weeks ago.

Last fall, the Niagara County Legislature voted to allocate up to \$3 million from the county's American Rescue Plan funds for the construction project. The total anticipated project cost is approximately \$4.54 million.

After a decade at Niagara University, the NCLEA relocated to NCCC in August. The academy, jointly operated by the Niagara County Sheriff's Office and the Niagara Falls Police Department, was located at NCCC from 1974 to 2011. The academy trains newly hired officers, or those hoping to be hired by police agencies, throughout Western New York. The Niagara County Corrections Academy is also held at NCCC.

Niagara County Legislature Chairwoman Becky Wydysh said, "The Niagara County Legislature

is proud to support law enforcement across the county, and we are very excited that all the funding is now in place to move forward with the new law enforcement academy. Having a state-of-the-art academy on the NCCC campus will provide the very best training for our future law enforcement officials while offering some unique learning opportunities to students in the NCCC criminal justice program."

NCCC President William J. Murabito said having this new facility on the NCCC campus brings the program into the 21st century.

"The new learning environment will translate directly to more opportunities for NCLEA and NCCC criminal justice students and their ability to remain competitive. The students will be better-trained and more prepared because they will be more comfortable with the technology," he said.

Niagara County Sheriff Michael Filicetti said, "I want to thank NCCC and the County Legislature for being partners with the Sheriff's Office in our vision for a new law enforcement academy. The training requirements for those

going into law enforcement are extensive and continue to evolve. Our new academy will allow us to use state-of-the-art technology to meet these training needs and better prepare future law enforcement officers for their careers."

Plans for the new 15,000 square-foot building call for four classrooms with movable walls, men's and women's locker rooms, a reality-based training room, and the use of force simulator. It is anticipated that construction will start in the spring 2023, and the facility will open in 2024.

Niagara County Dems to honor North Tonawanda Mayor Tylec

The Niagara County Democratic Party will honor Austin J. Tylec, mayor of the City of North Tonawanda, as its 2022 Democrat of the Year. The program will take

place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, June 11, at the Grattwick Hose fire hall in North Tonawanda.

"Mayor Tylec's hard work and phenomenal campaign propelled

him to victory last fall," Niagara County Democratic Party Chair Chris Borgatti said. "His commitment to open and transparent government, embracing of new

ideas, support for organized labor, addressing the needs of working families, and strengthening our party, have made him a clear choice for this year's honor."

In addition, Borgatti said the county Democratic Party will recognize four other Democratic leaders at the event "for their efforts in moving Niagara County forward." They include Michelle Roman, mayor of the City of Lockport, who was honored as 2020 Niagara County Democrat of the Year; Adam Dickey, president of Ironworkers Local 9 and North Tonawanda committee chair, as Labor Democrat of the Year; Mike Lee, deputy superintendent of police and Town of Niagara Committee member, as First responder of the Year; and Lora Allen, Democratic elections commissioner and the City of Niagara Falls Demo-

cratic Committee with the Chairman's Award.

The program will also feature Daniel S. Goldman, former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, as guest of honor and keynote speaker. Goldman currently serves as an MSNBC legal analyst, serving the congressional staff for the U.S. House of Representatives. In addition, he served as majority counsel to the House Managers in the first impeachment inquiry against former President Donald Trump, and was a former Democratic candidate for New York state attorney general this past year.

Tickets are priced at \$55 each for single tickets, or \$40 for Democratic committee members. Cost includes a brunch buffet and beverages. For more information, visit www.niagaradems.com.

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