

Warren County Watch extra – State of the State edition

A column by Maury Thompson about economic development, business and quality of life in Warren County

“Rural communities will be a priority in the upcoming third round of Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s initiative to cover all of New York with broadband,” Theresa Egan, a Cuomo cabinet member, said at a regional State of the State presentation at Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls on Monday.

Egan, executive deputy commissioner of the state Department of Motor Vehicles, said the state will reach 98 percent coverage this year, but that is a statewide figure and much of the territory left to cover is in rural areas such as northern Warren County.

“You get to that point where that small percentage is the most difficult,” she said, speaking to an audience of more than 90 people at the event that EDC Warren County organized.

She said regional economic development councils, too, will remain a priority.

“Looking at things from a regional perspective has been very helpful, and the governor intends to continue that,” she said.

Egan said optimism is the theme of Cuomo’s 2018 legislative agenda, which he laid out in his State of the State speech in Albany on Wednesday.

“The sky is the limit. ... We have all sorts of opportunities ahead of us in 2018,” she said.

Cabinet members have been traveling the state since Wednesday to make regional presentations.

Egan said Cuomo's legislative agenda includes a \$250 state tax cut for the "average New Yorker," a "women's agenda," and an expansion of the state's Excelsior scholarship program for free tuition at state universities and community colleges.

"That's what a lot of the State of the State this year was geared to – making a difference in people's lives," she said.

New Glens Falls Mayor Dan Hall, state Assemblyman Dan Stec, R-Queensbury, and state Sen. Elizabeth Little, R-Queensbury, also spoke.

"A pair of Dans – How cool is that?" Stec quipped, referring to himself and Hall.

Stec said the State of the State is the beginning of the legislative process.

“We got an earful of where he (Cuomo) wants to go. ... Certainly the R’s and D’s have different ideas about how we work that knot out.”

Details of Cuomo’s legislative agenda will be learned when he presents his state budget proposal on Jan. 16, Little said.

“It’s the beginning of a long discussion that’s going to take place,” she said. “The final product isn’t always like the beginning.”

History note –

Theresa Egan, executive deputy commissioner of the state Department of Motor Vehicles, speaking at Crandall Public Library on Monday, showed a power point presentation of recent state economic development initiatives, including the new exposition center at the state fairgrounds in Syracuse.

More than a century ago, Gov. Charles Evans Hughes, a Glens Falls native, spearheaded construction of the first permanent buildings at the fairgrounds.

In other Warren County economic development, quality of life and business news:

When Flomatic Corp. located its valve manufacturing operation on Pruyn's Island in Glens Falls in 1996, the building had plenty of surplus space for business volume to grow.

“When we first moved in the building, it was more space than we needed,” said company President Bo Andersson. “Now it is just the opposite.”

To meet increased demand for product, Flomatic will construct an approximately

20,000-square-foot addition in 2018, costing between \$2.5 million and \$3 million.

“We’ll start when the frost gets out of the ground in April,” and construction will be completed around mid-October, Andersson said.

Flomatic Corp. will receive \$650,000 in state funding for the expansion project.

The grant is part of just over \$6 million in Regional Economic Development Council grants that Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Dec. 13 for projects in Warren County.

Flomatic manufactures a variety of valves for use at industrial plants and water and sewer infrastructure projects.

The Glens Falls plant ships products throughout the United States and to about 40 foreign countries in Central America, South America and Europe.

“Within the United States, California has the company’s largest customer base,” Andersson said.

The company employs 48 people, and expects to hire at least 12 more as a result of the expansion, which will increase space for the plant’s epoxy coating process that coats valves with a hard, chemical and solvent resistant finish.

The expansion also will provide space to relocate cold storage from an old shed, that will be demolished, and provide space for a “state-of-the-art” research and development lab.

“That’s important to us,” Andersson said, referring to research and development.

Also on Pruyn’s Island, the city of Glens Falls will receive \$363,750 to develop a pedestrian and bicycle trail from downtown Glens Falls along the Feeder Canal and Pruyn’s Island, and

construct a bicycle and pedestrian bridge across a narrow stretch of the Feeder Canal, connecting Pruyn's Island and Haviland's Cove Park.

The trail was one of the recommendations in a Pruyn's Island plan the city completed in 2013.

In Chester, the owners of O. P. Frederick's Restaurant will receive \$90,000 to diversify into the craft beverage industry.

EDC Warren County President Edward Bartholomew said that, "to the best of his knowledge, this is the first Regional Economic Development Council grant for a private venture in Chester."

Hudson Hollow Hops, the new venture, will include a micro brewery, tasting room, special events and education space and a hops farm.

"It's huge," said Bruce Hodgson, co-owner with George Stannard, referring to the impact of the

state grant. “It’s going to allow us to enter that craft beer market in a big way.”

Hodgson said he has been a hobbyist home brewer for about 25 years.

They expect to break ground in the spring and have the brewery up and running this summer.

The village of Lake George will receive \$2.5 million to upgrade its waste water treatment plant.

Bartholomew said Mayor Robert Blais had been persistent in putting together grants for the estimated \$17 million project.

“He may not get this all in one bundle, but he is pushing along,” Bartholomew said.

EDC Warren County will receive \$25,000 to develop a combined economic development strategy for brownfield areas along Warren Street in Glens Falls, in South Queensbury and around Warren County airport.

“I think this is a great opportunity for the city and Queensbury to collaborate,” Bartholomew said.

Other projects in Warren County receiving Regional Economic Development Council funding are as follows:

- \$43,237 to Warren County for a building study of the county--owned Countryside Adult Home in Warrensburg;
- \$600,000 to Warren County and Lake George for eradication of invasive species;
- \$114,398 to Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District for five storm water retention projects in Queensbury and Lake George;
- \$166,410 to Lake George Regional Convention Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce for recruiting and promoting special events;

- \$40,000 to Lake George Land Conservancy for Pilot Knob trail reconstruction project;
- \$25,000 to town of Lake George to evaluate the feasibility of and develop a plan to consolidate town and village departments of public works;
- \$100,000 to town of Lake George for Caldwell Sewer District engineering report;
- \$125,000 to town of Lake George for four roadside and five streambank stabilization projects;
- \$120,000 to town of Lake George for relining sewer lines;
- \$200,000 to village of Lake George for regional road salt reduction project;
- \$405,000 to Stored Tech of Queensbury to relocate to a new, larger headquarters building in the Glens Falls area;

- \$400,000 to West Mountain Ski Center in Queensbury for facility and snowmaking improvements.

Maury Thompson covered the region for The Post-Star for 21 years before retiring in September. He keeps his finger on the pulse of economic development, business and quality of life in Warren County by writing a column for EDC Warren County.