

St. Lawrence County
Board of Legislators
Planning and Economic Development Committee Meeting
March 27, 2008

Present: Brad Mintener, Mark Bellardini, Wade Davis, Ron Frank, Ray Fountain, Karen St. Hilaire, Fred Morrill, Sam Burns

Guests: Jerry Hebda, VP Vermont Rail System

Jerry Hebda from the Vermont rail system gave a presentation. He discussed the rail business as it currently exists and the opportunity for growth. They are poised and ready to serve and grow their service.

Seaway bulk services – rail head receiver – can serve industry that needs commodity delivery. Norfolk grain unloading station is a new facility. Vermont rail is trying to work with CSX to operate on the main CSX line between Norwood and Massena. On trucks there is a 120,000 pound weight limit in Canada, 80,000 pound weight limit in NYS with a waiver to 90,000 pounds. This makes it difficult to get goods to or from the port in Ogdensburg into/out of Canada.

Four Lane Highway NYSDOT five year transportation capital plan was briefly discussed. Ray and Karen will advocate to include SL County and our need for a highway in this plan.

Essential Air Service (EAS) – Cape Air awarded the contract to serve Watertown, Ogdensburg, Massena – will not start service until September 16, 2008. All direct flights to Albany from all 3 airports and they will be 50 minute flights. We were fortunate that Cape Air was awarded the contract because if not, it may have been difficult to attract a carrier for Ogdensburg and Massena only. Thanks to all who worked on this, including Karen and Senator Shumer. Ed Kaneb is still interested in a charter service from Massena to NYC and/or Florida. This may require a runway expansion at Massena airport.

BION – next meeting of the Bion task force will be April 8, 2008 at 6 p.m. IDA has been FOILED for information. OBPA is looking at BION business proposal.

CEDS – Sent a copy – Fred and Sam need to talk to Rich Deddario.

Tribal Compact Money – Chief Ransom – looking for a fund to loan money for projects on the reservation – loans on reservation are equal to an unsecured loan.

Fiber Optics – IDA resolution in support of DANC's plan to wire the industrial parks that are not now currently wired. DANC has had discussion with the private sector – will not build over private company lines – will wire Ogdensburg Industrial Park and Gouverneur Park.

DEC – J & L clean up – Judy Drabicki and Commissioner Grannis – pledge that St. Lawrence County will be repaid. Our DEC meeting shared information on requirements at new sites, and the meeting was extremely productive.

Capital Corridor – representative will come to an IDA meeting.

Action: Assembly bill A00733 and Senate bill S01284A, to support Youth mentored Hunting Program – allows individuals age 14 and older to hunt with a licensed mentor, age 21 and older: allows only one weapon between and the youth and the mentor and a one to one ratio. If this bill is enacted, it should lead to increased interest in hunting. Hunting contributes significantly to the economy of St. Lawrence County and is a major tourist activity. Ron Frank made a motion to support this bill, and for the committee to present a resolution to the County Legislature in support, seconded by Brad Mintener. Carried unanimously.

Next committee meeting is scheduled for 6 P.M. on Thursday, April 24th, in the Board Room.

The meeting concluded at 8:45 P.M.