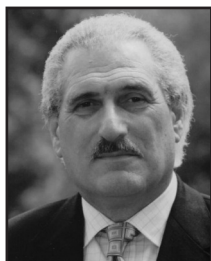


Our Difficult Border War to Retain Business



By Al Samuels

While the economy may be pulling out of the recession for some New York State communities, those of us at ground level fighting the war to retain and attract jobs are experiencing an awful lot of friendly fire in addition to a barrage from other states trying to woo our businesses away.

A challenge for Rockland County economic developers is that we are often pitted against New Jersey to our south. One distinct disadvantage and often a key deciding factor for a business when it seeks to expand or relocate, is the cost of energy. New York has the nation's third highest energy costs. New Jersey which shares Rockland's border ranks eighth.

In 2009, New York's average retail price of electricity to customers per kilowatt hour was 16.24 cents, while it was 13.9 cents in New Jersey. The commercial rate difference is 15.68 cents per hour in New York as opposed to 13.64 cents in the Garden State. For significant energy users the difference adds up quickly.

While Governor Cuomo is off to a good start in transforming our business climate, there is still much work to be done.

A 2010 report from the Public Policy Institute of New York State ("Short Circuiting New York's Recovery") recommends that Albany reject any new taxes or fees on the energy industry, roll back 2009's 18-A increases which had a negative impact on manufacturing, adopt a property tax cap and use off-budget alternative fees to develop the alternative energy industry and minimize greenhouse gas generation.

For far too long, Albany has pushed the business community off to the sidelines on this issue, while prices have climbed and costly energy regulation and mandates have been heaped upon those who still want to produce electricity within New York.

A prime example is Indian Point, which for decades has provided our region with the affordable, reliable and clean electricity we need to be competitive. Another quick step needed is passage of a new power plant siting law so energy investors might be encouraged to stay in New York and not continue to be chased away by red tape and regulatory hurdles.

Let's keep the jobs and tax base in New York. To do so, Albany must make a dedicated effort to reduce energy costs and both maintain and expand our current sources of power.

Al Samuels is the President and CEO of the Rockland Business Association as well as an Advisory Board Member of the New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance.

SPECIAL SPONSORED SECTION

NY

A * R * E * A

AFFORDABLE RELIABLE
ELECTRICITY ALLIANCE

New York AREA's membership includes some of the state's most vital business, labor and community organizations including the New York State AFL-CIO, Business Council of New York State, Partnership for New York City, New York Building Congress, National Federation of Independent Business and many more.

WWW.AREA-ALLIANCE.ORG