

Infrastructure Upgrades Vital to Local Economy



By Larry Davis

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, our nation's real unemployment rate is now surpassing 15.6 percent. The Capital District Regional Planning Commission is also reporting as much as 13 percent unemployment upstate. In this staggering economy, it is crucial that New York's elected officials take the necessary steps to get New Yorkers working again.

Recently, the state was allocated \$31 million for energy efficiency and conservation from Washington, DC through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, but Upstate New York alone needs much more than that. And while energy efficiency and conservation will create some green jobs, this alone will not help us weather this severe economic storm.

One sure-fire way to bolster the economy and help stabilize electricity delivery and costs is rebuild New York's aging energy infrastructure. This means replacing or upgrading the numerous old power plants throughout the state. It also means investing in non-polluting renewable energy like hydro-power, and promoting more nuclear energy projects that yield low-cost and clean energy, as well as a multitude of high-paying jobs.

New York needs these infrastructure investments to bolster our workforce. A renewed Article X power plant siting law, a new reactor at Nine Mile Point and the construction of new electricity transmission infrastructure will prepare our state for future growth while putting thousands of hard-working men and women to work. For Upstate's working families, this is a true jobs plan.

The over 100 thousand families of the 15 trades represented by the New York State Building & Construction Trades Council have earned their bread and butter by building and maintaining New York's infrastructure for over a century. For the sake of these families, elected officials need to prime the pump to begin getting New Yorkers back to work.

Larry Davis is an International Representative for the IBEW and serves as the Secretary-Treasurer for the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council.

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