

Rockland Economic
Development Corporation

County of Rockland
Industrial
Development Agency

Winter 2006



"The Phifer" Archtop – the newest edition to Phifer Designs & Concepts line of finely crafted instruments, manufactured in Garnerville.

in this issue

- 2 The ED & IDA Report**
Sustaining Solid Growth in '06
- 3 Quality of Life**
Culture Moves Commerce
- 4 REDC Stock Index**
Top Stock Performers
- 5 Q&A with
Jon Kupperman**
• Update: Rockland County
Transportation Planning
- 6 Agency News**
• Real Estate Briefs
• Board Moves
• Trouble Still Ahead
• Revolving Loan Fund Program

Made in Rockland

Manufacturing has been an important part of the Rockland economy for almost two centuries. Today, with creative assistance from municipalities, the County and the State, Rockland continues to support a strong manufacturing sector that serves many markets regionally, nationally and internationally. Within the wide spectrum of Rockland manufacturing are found some unusual, unique or specialty products. "Made in Rockland," means many different products clearly representing the diversity of Rockland's existing and growing business sector.

Caribbean Food Delights has been in the County for 11 years. Manufacturers of Jamaican-style patties and other specialty foods, Tappan has proved to be an ideal location for their facility, says Tim Conway, Director of Sales and Marketing. "With access to major highways and fine, qualified candidates for employment, we have enjoyed significant growth." The company is undergoing a major expansion, with a new building currently under construction. "We were able to expand our capacity with cooperation from the Town and the County," said Tim. "But it took longer for permitting than we would have liked." The new facility will accommodate additional manufacturing and freezer space. The new freezer will be able to house 30 tractor-trailers of frozen food. The new production building should be up and running by late spring, with the new freezer scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

Aalborg Instruments and Controls, Inc. produces precision instrumentation for flow measurement and control. They have been manufacturing flowmeters and controllers since 1972. "We have a highly trained workforce," said Michael Muir, Technical Representative. "The machinists who make our products make them in-house and they are trained in-house." Aalborg participated in the "Made in Rockland" showcase that was held as part of the Connections 2005 event. "That day, I spoke with reps from a company that moved into a building

near us," recounts Muir. "They needed our products and they didn't realize that we were right around the corner."

Signature Accessories, Inc. manufactures custom badges and accessories for police, fire, emergency services and security organizations from their facility on Middletown Road in Nanuet. Signature has enjoyed exceptional growth over the last few years. "Rockland has a lot of employment opportunities," said Frank Favia, a principal in this family-owned business. "We are lucky that we live in a County and a State that supports manufacturing. New York is big on keeping manufacturing in the State and REDC does a lot to support companies like ours. We have been in our current building for two years. We renewed our option for a third year and we're talking to Steve (Steve Porath, REDC's director of economic development) about buying the building.

Phifer Designs & Concepts has been producing high-end, handmade guitars in Rockland for 13 years. Sherwood "Woody" Phifer manufactures the custom instruments in the Garnerville Arts and Industrial Center. "The Garnerville complex works for me because of the zoning. There are so many things you can do in an industrial area." Overseas competition is not a problem for this Rockland manufacturer. "Sure, I can go into a store and see a complete guitar from Korea for \$200. To be a U.S. manufacturer today, you have to make the best of the best." Phifer's handmade guitars start at \$16,000 and are favorites of musicians such as jazz great George Benson. One of Phifer's archtop jazz guitars is featured in a "Classic Guitars" calendar now on sale nationally. "Industry has to remain important in the County," Sherwood concluded. "Otherwise, where will the jobs come from?"

Inertia Switch, Inc., located in Orangeburg, is a full-service engineering and manufacturing firm that develops acceleration switches and other products with exacting requirements for critical applications in often harsh environments.

Continued from page 1

Clients include many OEM aerospace companies as well as military, space, marine, medical and other clients. "Rockland is great for us," said owner Brian DiGirolamo. "It's close to New York City and major airports. A third of our market may be international in 2006. A current project? "We have been pitching Airbus to produce crash detectors for military aircraft," Brian said. "In the case of a crash, all the secret data in the plane is erased. It's an exciting project." His current challenge? "We are desperately looking for an engineer. Most of the engineers in our field are found in Albany or Schenectady."

Whether they are producing custom products or mass-market items, Rockland's manufacturers face similar business issues – taxes, labor, and the overall cost of doing business. However, when asked, Rockland's manufacturers uniformly say that the high quality of life strongly offsets the challenges of remaining in the County. REDC views manufacturing as a critical part of Rockland's economy and it will continue to look for ways to support the growth and expansion of industrial business in the County.

Did You Know?

- Manufacturing employment in Rockland has increased by 278 employees and 2.5% between 2000 and 2004, which is contrary to the 2.3% decline seen in New York State.
- Manufacturing employment represents over 10% of overall employment and more than 16% of total wages within Rockland County, while manufacturing represents only 7% of overall employment and 7% of total wages within New York State.
- The 2004 average annual wage of \$66,396 for manufacturing employees in Rockland is 32% higher than the average annual wage of \$50,247 for manufacturing employees in New York State.

Source: New York State Department of Labor

Sustaining Solid Growth in '06

It is with great pleasure that I take on my new role as Chairman of the REDC Board. Many of you are familiar with me from my five years on the Board of Directors and you know that I will work hard to bring new business to Rockland and retain the businesses we have and help them to expand.



PHOTOS BY BOB VERGARA, APS

William F. Helmer
Chairman,
Rockland Economic
Development Corporation



Eric Dranoff
Chairman,
County of Rockland Industrial
Development Agency

Promoting business in Rockland is a challenge. Taxes are high and New Jersey and Connecticut are anxious to pick up any companies who move into the area. North Carolina and Pennsylvania offer higher benefits to companies who relocate there. Transportation in and out of the County can be a problem.

That said, Rockland is still a prime place to do business. Being employed in Rockland and living here has terrific advantages. Companies can find a good supply of well-educated workers. Labor is not a negative for Rockland, unless you compare costs with Georgia or North Carolina. Our quality of life is a big plus and the County is a great place to raise a family. I see the Chairman's job as promoting these plusses while working to reduce the obstacles to doing business in Rockland.

One roadblock to business expansion in the County is that it takes a long time to get approval to expand an existing facility. We have to do everything we can to support the goals of businesses that are already located here. With my background in construction, I believe I can find ways to make the process easier. Part of this is educating the elected officials and the public on the benefits of having a business in their area. Look

at what we did to retain **Avon** in Suffern. We can do the same for other businesses.

The IDA had a very successful year in 2005. The members approved financing benefits for several diverse projects, including a nearly \$10 million project with **Dominican College**, the third time we have worked with them. We have found that some Rockland not-for-profits are still unaware that the IDA can provide financing assistance under the "civic facility" section of the law. The IDA also has completed projects with **Jawonio**, the **Nyack Hospital Cancer Center**, and two assisted living centers over the years.

Three of the five projects completed in 2005 attracted companies to the County from other areas. **Portables Unlimited Inc.**, a distributor of wireless phones and accessories for T-Mobile, relocated to Rockland from Westchester, purchasing an 11,300 sq. ft. facility in Nanuet, which will employ 27 immediately and a total of 50 within seven years. **Sentry Industries, Inc.**, a distributor of consumer electronic products to various retailers, also relocated from Westchester and purchased an existing 65,000 sq. ft. facility in Ramapo. Their current staff of 15 is expected to grow to 26 over seven years. **IVAX Pharmaceuticals**, a Florida-based company, purchased a 40,000 sq. ft. facility in Congers (and leased another 18,000 sq. ft. facility nearby). They will generate 50 jobs in the first year of operation and an additional 40 in the second. The IDA was also involved in an important retention project with **Piccini Industries**. This \$5.050 million tax-exempt bond transaction project will keep 59 existing jobs in Rockland and create 30 new ones.

The first project of 2006 closed in February. The IDA has worked to attract **Euromed, Inc.**, a manufacturer of medical devices for wound care, from Bergen County NJ, to a 36,000 sq. ft. facility in Orangetown. The company projects that its initial staff of 20 will grow to 200 in seven years.

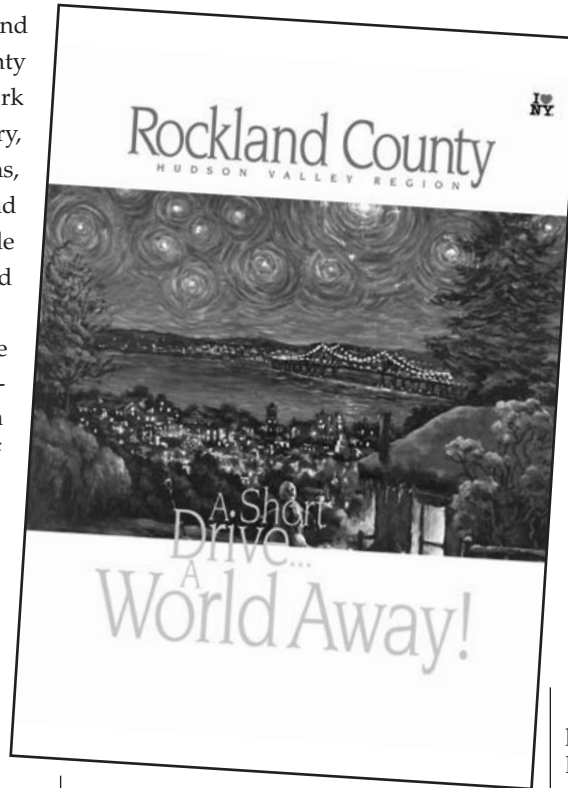
On an organizational note, REDC and the IDA look forward to another year of working cooperatively to expand the business base for the benefit of all Rockland County residents.

Culture Moves Commerce

Ask any resident of Rockland and they'll tell you that the County is a superior place to live, work and relax. With natural beauty, rich history, broad cultural and entertainment options, extensive shopping opportunities and dining choices, Rockland offers a wide variety of activities for every season and every taste.

But Rockland residents aren't the only ones who enjoy all that the County has to offer. Rockland County is a destination of choice for millions of visitors who travel from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut and New York counties to the North and East each year. The numbers are staggering – over 25 million visits to Rockland last year by non-residents. And these visitors to Rockland County pour money into the local economy. According to New York State Department of Labor statistics, tourist visits to Rockland resulted in more than \$285 million in direct spending in 2004. This included food, shopping, entertainment, transportation, and hotels. The County's share of the sales tax revenue generated from this spending was \$8.5 million. In addition to direct spending, tourist dollars contribute to the economy through indirect spending. Indirect spending includes all the "recycling" of tourist dollars within the County by businesses and employees and is estimated to be 2.5 times the amount of direct spending. Based on that formula, indirect spending from tourist visits generated another \$700+ million in local economic activity.

Where are the dollars spent? In every corner of the County, although the stores, restaurants and attractions at the **Palisades Center Mall** top the list with a combined total of over 15 million visitors. Outdoor recreation forms the second largest category, with over six million out-of-county



visitors to the 33,000 acres of County and State parks within Rockland. The popular skating rink at Bear Mountain State Park attracted over three million of these recreation visitors alone.

Other major draws include the many antiques, fine arts, crafts and collectibles fairs held across the County, as well as trade shows and expos held at **Rockland Community College**. Visitors also throng to the numerous seasonal parades and cultural festivals such as the Halloween parade in Nyack, the Bear Mountain Powwow, the Greek Festival or the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Pearl River. The **Lafayette Theater** in Suffern and the RCC Cultural Arts Center also draw significant crowds, as do the art galleries of Haverstraw, Garnerville, Nyack and Piermont.

"Culture moves commerce," says Heather Duke, director of the Rockland County Department of Tourism in New

City. "People move their businesses to places with a good quality of life, where there are sights, attractions and not-for-profit cultural groups."

Ms. Duke's office would like to see more visitors stay longer in Rockland. Research performed for the Department of Tourism found that day trips make up the majority of non-resident visits to the County. Promoting overnight stays is a major goal of the bureau. "More and more, we are working to package overnight visits," she said. "We have a representative going to trade shows and we have been very active in the region. The **Rockland Business Association** has just set up a Tourism Coalition that will help in the trade show area and we welcome that."

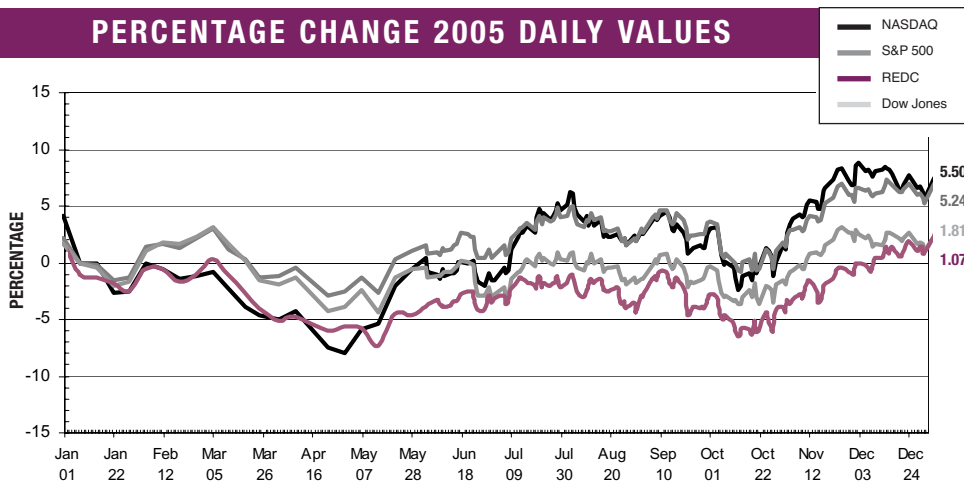
A new initiative of the Office of Tourism promotes the history and heritage of Rockland County. They recently released "Driving History," a map and guide to Rockland County Historic sites. "There is so much history in Rockland that we can share," said Duke. "This guide lists every historic marker in the County and helps people plan their visit. There are so many great places, like Camp Shanks Museum and the Stony Point Battlefield. We need to encourage the "Heritage" tourist. They stay longer and they spend more."

Rockland residents have an important role to play in promoting travel to the County. "About a third of our visitors come to the County because of what a resident has told them about Rockland. That is why we work so hard to educate the local public. The more residents know about the attractions we have, the better they can spread the word."

To obtain a copy of "Driving History," or to learn more about Rockland County Tourism, contact Heather Duke, Director, at 845-708-7300 or 800-295-5723, or visit their website at www.rockland.org.

Beating the Dow in '05

PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2005 DAILY VALUES



January 1, 2005 -December 30, 2005 - The REDC Stock Index decreased since it hit its 2004 peak and ended the year with a 1.81% gain since January 1. This annual gain exceeded the Dow Jones' 2005 gain of 1.07%, but is below the NASDAQ gain of 5.59% and the S&P 500 increase of 5.24%.

Top Stock Performers

Dress Barn of Suffern and General Bearing of West Nyack, both registering stock gains in excess of 100%.

Dress Barn Inc. (NASDAQ: DBRN), a leading national specialty apparel retailer offers quality career and casual fashion apparel through its Dress Barn and maurices brands. As of December 31, 2005, the company operated 786 Dress Barn stores in 45 states and 510 maurices stores in 39 states. The company's success began in 1962, when Roslyn Jaffe, opened the first Dress Barn store in Stamford, CT. At a time when women were underrepresented in the workplace, Roslyn dared not only to work, but also to launch a new era in women's fashion. Roslyn offered her customer's the very latest in women's designer styles. A year later, a second store was opened. Soon after the inception of the business, her husband Elliot joined Roslyn and together, they built the business as well as a reputation for quality, style, value and customer service. In 1983, Dress Barn's stock was introduced on the NASDAQ. Today, Dress Barn remains customer centric and focused on needs and desires of women in the 21st century. While society and its priorities continually change, Dress Barn is poised to respond to these evolutionary trends. For

more information, visit www.dressbarn.com and www.maurices.com.

General Bearing Corporation (NASDAQ: GNRL) was founded in 1958 by Seymour Gussack, currently the Chairman of the Board of Directors, as an engineering-oriented supplier, which designed bearings for a variety of special industrial applications. Today, General Bearing sources, assembles and distributes a variety of bearing components and bearing products, including ball bearings, tapered roller bearings, spherical roller bearings and cylindrical roller bearings under the Hyatt and the General trademarks. It supplies original equipment manufacturers (OEM's) and the industrial aftermarket principally in the U.S. and Canada. General Bearing's products are used in a broad range of applications, including automobiles, railroad cars, locomotives, trucks, office equipment, machinery and appliances. Through flexibility in manufacturing and sourcing, as well as attentive customer service, it strives to be a reliable, innovative and cost effective provider of bearing components and products to the approximately \$5 billion per year U.S. bearing market.



Dr. Karim A. Abood
HDR | LMS



Bruce Mason,
Senior Vice President &
Chief Economist,
Union State Bank

PHOTOS BY BOB VERGARA, AFS

REDC Stock Index Member List

Avon Products Inc.	(NYSE:AVP)
Bank of New York	(NYSE:BK)
Barr Laboratories Inc.	(NYSE:BRL)
Citigroup Inc.	(NYSE:C)
Mack-Cali Realty Corporation	(NYSE:CLI)
Cablevision Systems Corporation	(NYSE:CVC)
Dress Barn Inc.	(NasdaqNM:DBRN)
Consolidated Edison Inc.	(NYSE:ED)
Gannett Co. Inc.	(NYSE:GCI)
General Bearing Corporation	(NasdaqSC:GNRL)
Hudson Technologies Inc.	(NasdaqSC:HDSN)
JP Morgan Chase	(NYSE:JPM)
LeCroy Corporation	(NasdaqNM:LCRY)
M&T Bank Corporation	(NYSE:MTB)
Micros-to-Mainframes Inc.	(NasdaqSC:MTMC)
Novartis AG	(NYSE:NVS)
Provident New York Bancorp	(NasdaqNM:PBNY)
Parker Hannifin Corporation	(NYSE:PH)
Presidential Life Corporation	(NasdaqNM:PLFE)
Par Pharmaceutical Cos Inc.	(NYSE:PRX)
Praxair Inc.	(NYSE:PX)
Paxar Corporation	(NYSE:PXR)
Sound Federal Bancorp Inc.	(NasdaqNM:SFFS)
Suez	(NYSE:SZE)
AT&T Corp.	(NYSE:T)
Traffix Inc.	(NasdaqNM:TRFX)
USB Holding Co. Inc.	(NYSE:UBH)
Vision-Sciences Inc.	(NasdaqSC:VSCI)
Verizon Communications Inc.	(NYSE:VZ)
Wyeth	(NYSE:WYE)

Q&A with Jon Kupperman, Nice-Pak Products, Inc.

Nice-Pak Products, Inc. is a Rockland-based manufacturer of wet wipe and moist towelettes. With its worldwide headquarters in Orangeburg, this privately held company delivers high-quality products to consumers, food service and healthcare industries. Products encompass three broad categories: baby wipes, moist towelettes for personal hygiene, cosmetic and stain removal and medical and infection-control products such as alcohol prep pads, swabsticks, sanitizers and disinfectants. Nice-Pak employs more than 600 people in Rockland County alone. Worldwide, Nice-Pak employs over 1,700 people and operates nearly 1 million square feet of manufacturing and distribution facilities. Recently, we spoke with **Jonathan Kupperman**, Nice-Pak's senior vice president of corporate development.

Q: What are the major issues facing manufacturers in Rockland?

A: Rockland has unique benefits and challenges. Rockland has a great labor pool of skilled workers and technical people, plus it is a great place to live. It is beautiful, with great schools and it is convenient to New York City. But labor is a factor. We use unskilled labor and most of our workers commute from the Bronx and Northern Manhattan so transportation is a real issue. The County's Transportation Planning staff met with a group of businesses along the 303 corridor and coordinated a new bus route from the **Palisades Center Mall** to 303. But our workers still need to get to the mall. It's not easy. One of our temp agencies provides their own transportation, but that only covers the temp workers. When we moved our operations from Mount Vernon many of our workers came with us. Van pools were organized with pick up points, but it's a private solution.

Q: Where is your major competition – local regional, national or worldwide?

A: What competition? Seriously, Nice-Pak is a broad-based wet wipe manufacturer. Because we cover many market sectors from medical to retail, our competition is fragmented. We do have some national competition and some competitors are starting to spread their wings internationally. There are

only two other companies in New York State that duplicate any of our products.

Q: Is Nice-Pak expanding? If so where and when will expansions continue?

A: Nice-Pak is a growth engine and we have had many years of growth. As far as expansion, we have bought a small company in Green Bay, WI to support our retail business. We are also looking to expand into Asia. We are setting our future growth patterns by looking at markets in China and India. The potential is vast. We are setting forth to become global wet-wipe specialists. We have acquired a company in China and are decomplexing some operations there. Within six months, we will be manufacturing in China and concurrently building a world-class facility there. Acquisition then expansion is our strategy. However, it will never replace our local manufacturing. There are weight issues with baby wipes that make them unprofitable to ship from Asia.

Q: Where do you see Nice-Pak and other manufacturers in Rockland County and the U.S. in the next 15-20 years?

A: If you look at a cross section of companies successful here, such as pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, you see that it is not commodity manufacturing. Our companies need to produce products that produce margins – niche products, higher end or value-added.

Q: Any advice to Rocklanders who will be joining the workforce in the next five years?

A: I would tell them what I tell my own kids – you need math skills, English and computer skills. Beyond education, you need to develop what you will bring to the party. Volunteer to find out what motivates you. Having a job means working with others and having others want to work with you. You have to be self-motivated.



Jon Kupperman
Senior vice president of
corporate development

PHOTO BY BOB VERGARA, AFS

Rockland County Transportation Planning

New TOR route - #97

A new Transport of Rockland (TOR) route began service in October 2005 and is already having an impact on travel within and to the Route 303 corridor. The new route – TOR #97 – provides bus service from the Town of Stony Point, the Village of West Haverstraw and the Town of Haverstraw along Route 9W, and from within the Village of Haverstraw. The service then merges from Route 9W to Route 303, and operates along Route 303 through Congers and Valley Cottage to the **Palisades Center** in West Nyack and then further along the corridor to the New Jersey border in Tappan.

TOR #97 is now operating 12 trips each weekday. It connects with other TOR bus routes and Tappan Zee Express buses that serve Nyack, Spring Valley and Suffern at Palisades Center. TOR #97 buses run from 5:30AM to 8:00AM and from 3:40PM to 6:55PM weekdays.

Riders should be aware that the TOR bus service operates as a flag-down system, and passengers may flag down the bus at any safe location along the route to board the bus. They should also signal or advise the driver when they would like to get off. Again, this can be at any safe location (at the driver's discretion) along the route. An example of a safe location could be the far side of an intersection or after driveways and walkways, so vehicular and passenger traffic is not blocked.

TOR #97 was designed in cooperation with the Rockland County Travel Demand Management Unit, **MetroPool**, the Rockland Economic Development Corporation and businesses along Route 303 to provide reliable bus service for employees who work along the Route 303 corridor and live in North Rockland, Nyack, Spring Valley and Suffern.

For additional information and schedules call Rockland County Transit Help Line at 845-364-3333. To have a County Transportation professional work with your management to better utilize the new route for your operations call George Persico at 845-364-2142.

Real Estate Briefs

■ **Howard Dean PC** reported that **Xtreme Fitness Inc.** relocated from Northvale, NJ to an 8,500-square-foot facility at One Rockland Park Avenue in Tappan. Operated under the name **Basixx Fitness Center**, they currently employ five people.

■ **Koenig Management Limited** announced the following: Several lease deals at 170 North Main Street in New City. The new tenants at the recently constructed 25,000-square-foot shopping center include: Citibank, Cold Stone Creamery, Vanderbuilt True Value Hardware, Dahn Yoga Center, New York Karate and a national real estate office. The shopping center has approximately 1,950 square feet of space available for lease.

Two lease deals at 50 Ramland Road in Orangeburg. **Digital Printing Systems, LLC**, a provider of digital and printing solutions for home and commercial furnishings, signed a lease for approximately 18,000 square feet of space. The company employs more than 12 people. In addition, **Hudson Technologies, Inc.**, a leading provider of innovative solutions to recurring problems within the refrigeration industry, signed a lease for 18,000 square feet of space at the building. Hudson will maintain its administrative office at its current facility in Pearl River.

■ **Kwilecki Development** reported that **Smart Money Mortgage** recently signed a lease for 5,300 square feet of custom space at its Palisades Professional Center in West Nyack. Smart Money Mortgage provides mortgage financing for residential and commercial mortgages and home equity lines of credit and refinance. Smart Money relocated from Spring Valley and employs more than 15 people.

■ **Rockland Realty** reported the following: *The Journal News* signed leases to relocate its Route 303 operations in West Nyack to two distinct properties including: its classified and editorial offices to 8,500 square feet of space at One Crosfield



Avenue in West Nyack, and its distribution facility for carriers to 11,000 square feet of space at Clarkstown Executive Park in Valley Cottage. Collectively, *The Journal News* employs more than 100 people in Rockland County.

With **NAI Friedland Realty, Inc.**, co-brokered the sale of 37 Ramland Road in Orangeburg to **Piccini Industries**. Piccini Industries, a manufacturer of kitchen cabinets, is relocating to the 56,500-square-foot facility from

Spook Rock Industrial Park in Suffern. Formerly occupied by Bendix Mouldings, the facility consists of 5,000 square feet of nicely furnished office space, 22-foot ceilings and parking for 60 cars. Currently, Piccinni employs 59 people with plans to create 30 new jobs.

Brokered the sale of 6.2 acres of land at 45 Hemlock Drive in Congers. Zoned for light industrial office space, the parcel was sold from **Goosetown Communications, Inc.** to **Rathmagurry Realty, Inc.**

Toywiz.com purchased an existing facility at 363 Spook Rock Road in Suffern. Toywiz.com, an online source of collectible toys and gaming cards, especially hard to find items, will relocate its operations from Nanuet to the 15,600-square-foot facility at Spook Rock Industrial Park.

Environmental Products & Services of Vermont, Inc. (EPSVT) leased 10,000 square feet of office/warehouse space on Route 303 in Orangeburg. EPSVT is a multi-functional service organization that provides a wide range of products and services to its customers for the identification, monitoring, correction, and prevention of environmental problems. EPSVT relocated to Orangeburg from Clarkstown Executive Park in Valley Cottage. It currently has nine employees.

To include your Real Estate Briefs in the next issue of *Rockland Economic Focus*, please send them to Liz Cranston, Director of Communications, at fax: 845-735-5736 or e-mail: lizc@redc.org.

BOARD MOVES

Featuring the promotions, awards and other items of significance about REDC's board of directors, IDA members and their companies.

2006 Officers of REDC's board of directors:

William F. Helmer
Chairman
President, Helmer-Cronin Construction, Inc.

Dr. Donald T. McNelis
Vice Chair/Treasurer
President Emeritus
St. Thomas Aquinas College

Dr. Karim A. Abood
Vice Chair/Secretary
HDR | LMS

Jack F. Holt
Vice Chair
CEO, Holt Construction Corp.

Hon. Thomas P. Zugibe, Esq.
Vice Chair
Partner, Ferraro Zugibe

New members of REDC's board of directors, effective January 1, 2006:

Sandra D. Grannum, Esq.
Attorney, Davidson & Grannum, LLP

Quinton C. Van Wynen, Jr., Director of Business, Pearl River Union Free School District

Dr. Karim A. Abood reported that **HDR | LMS** has announced management changes in the New York region. Peter M. McGroddy, PE, the former COO of LMS, will be the Department Manager covering HDR | LMS operations in the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania area, and Richard Splete, who formerly held this position, will focus on strategic market development activities for the merged entity. HDR | LMS has approximately 250 employees in eight offices in the region. HDR has 120 offices across the U.S. providing environmental, transportation, and water engineering consulting services and architectural services for healthcare and high-tech research facilities.

The Girl Scout Council of Rockland County recently honored **Bruce Mason**, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist, Union State Bank, with the 2005 Trefoil Businessman of the Year Award at its 17th Annual Trefoil Dinner Dance.

Trouble Still Ahead

A year ago in this column I wrote that “a distinguished New York State advisory panel to the Department of Transportation had found that the transportation systems in the State are in worsening conditions as resources available lag behind inexorably growing demand for auto and truck travel and soaring transit ridership; and the State must find sustainable, stable, flexible, predictable and adequate funds to secure a growing economy and quality of life in the State.”

I concluded with “it remains to be seen if the State Legislature and the Governor will address the funding problems for our vital transportation systems.”

A year has passed with little done and the day of reckoning is one year closer.

Sure, the voters did pass a bond issue for \$2.9 billion, but that is a drop in the bucket relative to the needs, and it comes with interest that will have to be paid from sources that are not yet clear. Some of you reading this over a certain age may remember the Tennessee Ernie hit, “Sixteen Tons” with the line from its verse “one year older and deeper in debt.” That is where we are – a system one year older and deeper in debt.

Moreover, our need for additional transportation capacity continues to grow. A new Tappan Zee Bridge replacement is looking more and more likely and the cost of the bridge and accompanying transit could be as much as \$14.5 billion (yes, billion with a “b”).

This is not a problem confined to New York. In New Jersey, their Transportation

Trust Fund worked very well for many years by pooling transportation-related state revenues in one fund for highway and transit. Now it’s facing a June 30th day of reckoning when all their funds will be going to pay interest on old debt, rather

than investing in new transportation infrastructure. The mess is a result of recent diversions to cover State budget deficits and other questionable fiscal practices. In two recent reports on the Trust Fund, the Regional Plan Association documented the problem and laid out the reforms and possible revenue sources to fix it. Governor Corzine’s administration will have to face up to the issue in its first few months. To read the reports, go to www.rpa.org.

In Connecticut, the transportation bottom line is painted a bright red, in part because of the loss of revenues when tolls were removed from the Connecticut Turnpike in the 1980s. Funding is nowhere to be found to fix a congealed I-95; highway expansion and new rail lines remain just lines on a map. Hopefully, it will become a matter of discussion during their upcoming gubernatorial campaign. Speaking of gubernatorial campaigns, New York has one coming this year too. Will transportation funding become part of the dialogue?



*Jeffrey M. Zupan
Senior Fellow, Regional
Plan Association*

PHOTO BY BOB VERGARA, APIS

Westchester/Rockland Revolving Loan Fund Program

The Westchester/Rockland Revolving Loan Fund Program was established and funded by New York State’s Empire State Development in 1997. It is administered by REDC to support businesses that would not otherwise qualify for traditional bank financing. Businesses can receive loans of up to \$30,000 for a broad variety of purposes such as working capital, inventory and equipment.

In 2005, the Westchester/Rockland Revolving Loan Program funded 15 new loans for Rockland businesses – five retail, eight service and two manufacturers, totaling \$354,500, including:

ANP Reporting, a Suffern-based transcription business, will be able to purchase new equipment to allow it to successfully bid on larger institutional and government contract opportunities. ANP retained three jobs with plans to add five more.

Eisenhauer Electric, an electrical contract company for commercial and industrial customers will use the funds to purchase equipment to increase its technical capabilities. Located in Haverstraw, Eisenhauer retained one employee with plans to add two more.

New Design Decorating Service, an interior design and decorating service company located in Thiells, will use the funds to create a showroom and catalogues, as well as expand its product offerings. New Design employs two people.

Sueno of Rockland, doing business as Planet Wings, a franchise owned fast food restaurant in Haverstraw, will use the funds to upgrade its facility to accommodate its growing number of customers. Sueno retained eight jobs.

Urban Landscapes is a Suffern-based company specializing in interior and exterior landscaping for commercial and residential customers. The loan enabled Urban to purchase inventory, storage space and landscaping equipment. Urban retained three jobs and plans to add one more employee.

To learn more about the Westchester/Rockland Revolving Loan Fund Program, contact REDC at (845) 735-7040 or visit its website at www.redc.org.

Announcement

The Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority is proud to announce its 2nd Annual “Rockland Recycles” Awards

Awards are targeted for those entities that have made a contribution to recycling and/or environmentally sound waste management in Rockland County. Last year’s recipients were among the County’s largest employers and include **SUNY Rockland Community College, Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc., and Wyeth.**

On June 15th, the Solid Waste Management Authority will host an awards luncheon, attended by County Executive, C. Scott Vanderhoef and Chairman, Christopher P.

St. Lawrence, to recognize this year’s recipients.

The awards are part of the WasteWise program, an Authority initiative that helps various institutions develop recycling programs, which can then be used as models for other like agencies.

To receive an application or to learn more about the WasteWise program, contact: Kerri Scales, Solid Waste Educator, at 845-753-2200 x22 or kscales@rocklandrecycles.com.

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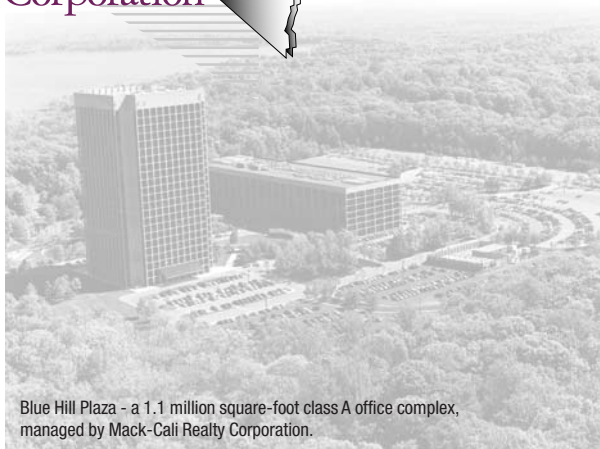
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