



Date: January 23, 2024

Dear EDC Members and Stakeholders:

As we begin a new year, I wanted to let you know what we at EDC are doing in response to the news of the past week – indeed, of the past several months. We are dealing with recent announced closures and transitions at AngioDynamics, QuadGraphics, Essity and Lehigh Cement. While it may seem as though there is a common, underlying issue, each of these companies and organizations has made decisions in response to the competitive pressures in their own sectors and as part of their larger strategies to adapt to an ever-accelerating business cycle and arc. We have been engaged with all these entities, as we are with other area large employers, and it is clear no single action would have altered their decisions, which were often many years in the making. But we can glean some of the actionable areas we can pursue to help those large employers in the region remain competitive. Two specific areas that would help secure local jobs is (1) to reduce energy costs here (our area’s energy costs are among the highest) and (2) to create and sustain a low-cost operating environment within a community that is clearly pro-business.

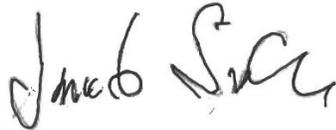
We are addressing energy and operating cost issues at the state level, working with our regional partners in neighboring counties and communities. We will continue to share the progress on this front as we go deeper in 2024. We also must also continue our assertive, engaged stewardship of small businesses which have a greater tendency to stay and prosper where they are established. This, of course, includes entrepreneurs and small consultancies created here or moved here by people seeking to enjoy our extraordinary quality of life. We should all welcome new investment and want to be known as a community that makes it easy for people to build (in the right place), create, invest, expand, and grow. We will, and must, continue to bring voice to the needs of tomorrow’s community and economy as well as today’s.

Our economy has a healthy mix of employers in tourism/hospitality employment, health care, not profit/public services, manufacturing, and a variety of smaller sectors. We are essentially at full employment, with as many as 1,000 job openings locally. While full employment is an important goal, it brings its own challenges. Our workforce, a function of our overall median population age, is approaching 50. We need to attract young people to assure future employers that we can meet their staffing needs now and, in the years ahead. We need to connect with jobs those who live here now and would work but can’t because of a lack of transportation or childcare. We need to help those trying to rebuild their lives after some type of adversity find meaningful opportunities here. All these areas are part of the EDC’s portfolio of resources and advocacy. Ample opportunities are all around us to bring this perspective to bear such as the County’s recent Housing Study and Comprehensive Planning processes in Warren County, Queensbury and Glens Falls.

Our immediate focus is on helping the employees of the companies that have announced closures. We want to keep those people and their families here and make sure they know about job and business opportunities. We are meeting with the companies themselves to get any advice they can offer about what we can do to help other employers facing similar challenges. The leaders of the economic development organizations and I are also organizing together to maximize our regional business recruitment outreach and to be sure we have the State of New York's full attention. If you own or lead a business that is facing challenges, please let us know. If you know of people who need work, or have openings we can help fill, please contact the Warren County Employment and Training Office.

While communities always will face cyclical disruptions, we remain optimistic about the long-term prospects of our economy. We have what people want: Lake George, the Adirondacks, abundant fresh water, safe and vibrant small communities, excellent health care, schools, and cultural amenities. We will capitalize on all our strengths as we remain focused on making our area more economically competitive. And we will be alert to every opportunity, always strong, creative, thoughtful, and disciplined. We welcome your feedback and your help.

With a view to the horizon,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Siplon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

Jim Siplon, President & CEO
EDC Warren County