



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10, 2023

CONTACT: Mark Behan
(518) 792-3856
Mark.Behan@behancom.com

EDC of Warren County to Initiate Community Conversation On Making Lake George Region a National Center for Freshwater Research and Technology

*IBM's Dr. John Kelly, III, and RPI President Martin A. Schmidt
will Join Local Leaders at October 24th Luncheon*

GLENS FALLS, N.Y. – [EDC Warren County](#) President Jim Siplon announced today that EDC's Annual Luncheon, long recognized as a forum spotlighting major economic development trends and priorities in the Warren County region, this year will be the setting for a community conversation around a new vision to harness the Lake George region's dedication to freshwater protection.

The vision would leverage the groundbreaking work of the [Jefferson Project](#), created by IBM, RPI's [Darrin Fresh Water Institute \(DFWI\)](#) and the [Lake George Association](#), and supported by business, educational and governmental organizations. The envisioned effort would be aimed both at continuing to advance water quality protection at Lake George while conveying the lessons learned locally to scientists, technologists, policymakers, property owners and community leaders nationwide. Joining Mr. Siplon will be Jefferson Project co-founder Dr. John Kelly, III, the father of IBM's Watson project, and RPI President Martin A. Schmidt.

"The abundance of clean water in the Adirondack region is the envy of the world. The knowledge of freshwater protection that has been amassed here should be shared with the world, with the Lake George/Warren County region and our neighboring regions deriving economic development benefits in the process," said Mr. Siplon. "We have the asset, knowledge, and opportunity to attract researchers, scientists and entrepreneurs as well as engineering and technology companies and their employees to advance these lessons beyond our communities. We hope this will be the beginning of a conversation about how Warren County and our entire region might work together to pursue this opportunity."

The EDC luncheon [will take place on Tuesday, October 24th](#), at the newly restored Carriage House at the Fort William Henry Hotel in Lake George.

Mr. Siplon added: "We live in a world in which 2 billion to 3 billion people experience water shortages for at least one month per year and 700 million lack access to clean water altogether. Locally, we are blessed with an abundance of clean freshwater. This makes freshwater quality a foundational asset of our local environment and our local economy, with stakeholders including our governments, nonprofits, academic

institutions like SUNY, and private sector partners having demonstrated for many years that they truly appreciate the importance of careful stewardship of our water bodies.”

EDC Warren County, the official economic development arm of Warren County, works to attract new businesses to the area, stimulate private sector business investment and help existing businesses grow and succeed. EDC offers assistance to businesses seeking introduction to the county, resources for finance, real estate, workforce and development, and related assistance. To do its work, EDC relies on a public-private partnership with local government, member investor fees and sponsorships from private sector companies and organizations.

Dr. John Kelly, III, considered to be the father of IBM’s Watson computer, played numerous significant technical and business roles driving IBM’s leadership in semiconductors, supercomputers and artificial intelligence (AI). Dr. Kelly retired in 2020 as an executive vice-president of IBM after 40 years with the company. Among his many accomplishments were advances in AI and cognitive computing with Watson, which made its public debut on the game show Jeopardy! in 2011. Dr. Kelly led the expansion of this system into a platform for health, security, analytics, IoT and financial services. Dr. Kelly is credited with maintaining IBM’s status as the leader in U.S. patents for decades. He previously led the development of the company’s microelectronics and storage technologies, products and services. Dr. Kelly serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of RPI and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Lake George Association.

Dr. Martin A. Schmidt is the 19th president of RPI. Prior to assuming his current role in 2022, Dr. Schmidt served as the provost of MIT beginning in 2014 and was also MIT's senior academic and budget officer. He was responsible for the Institute’s educational programs, as well as for the recruitment, promotion, and tenuring of faculty. As provost, Dr. Schmidt worked closely with MIT’s deans to establish academic priorities and with other members of the Institute’s senior team to manage financial planning and research support. He helped lead the redevelopment of [Kendall Square](#) in Cambridge, MA, into an internationally recognized innovation district featuring a dynamic blend of uses including housing, lab and research space, retail, innovation space, open space, and a dedicated facility for the MIT Museum. The neighborhood has been called “the most innovative square mile on the planet” and is home to a high concentration of entrepreneurial start-ups. Dr. Schmidt also had oversight responsibilities over MIT’s international engagements.

Jim Siplon is the former Chief Operating Officer of JUST Water and former managing director of FIJI Water. At JUST, he spearheaded the effort to bring the company to the City of Glens Falls, to draw mountainside spring water from a well in the Glens Falls watershed, and sell it globally in environmentally friendly packaging. His leadership led to an agreement that will produce long-term economic benefits for Glens Falls while delivering a responsible product to consumers around the world. At FIJI, Mr. Siplon was the managing director who helped create one of the most popular global brands of bottled water. Prior to these roles, he was a senior executive at MCI Communications and founder of Rethinkh20, a consulting firm that aims to help large-scale water users reduce their water consumption. Mr. Siplon served in the U.S. Air Force for eight years and earned an undergraduate degree in astrophysics from Utah State University and a Master’s in business administration from Boston University.

###