

The Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce would like to include a very important regional project to be considered in allocating funds for Economic Development in the State of New York as the Governor is planning the 2008-2009 Executive Budget. The On-track Partnership, spearheaded by the Chamber with the Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce, and the Tupper Lake Chamber of Commerce, as well as key businesses and local governmental entities, have been working hard on getting \$5 million to rehabilitate the railroad in a first phase between Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake, then in a second one to Thendara.

Already, thanks to the hard work of the Adirondack Scenic Railway, service between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid has been not only re-established but the non-profit organization has also seen a sharp rise in rider ship during these past few years. We estimate that by continuing the service to Tupper Lake, we will be able to bring an economic impact of approximately \$20 million to the region. This is significant to the Tri-Lakes area and the North Country as some of our counties, notably Franklin County, was cited with an "F" for economic development earlier this year by the Business Council of New York State.

This grade was given to Franklin County (which part of Saranac Lake and all of Tupper Lake are within its boundary) because our region does not meet federal level of economic activity. Yet, we have this great project that has been endorsed by community and business leaders and which was slated for funding through the \$2 billion Transportation Bond voted in 2005 and committed in 2006 by the last Administration. Moreover, our community and region has identified this project as crucial to the continuation of our main industry, tourism.

The infrastructure is in – something that we could not achieve today because of the regulations of the Adirondack Park Agency - and before we lose it, we urge you to fund this project. A \$5 million project will bring the state a return of investment of \$20 million.

Sincerely,
Sylvie D. Nelson

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