

Economic Outlook 2017

BY DENNIS BROBSTON

It's hard to recall a year with as many twists, turns and unexpected news as 2016. Amid the turmoil, Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) remained a steady hand delivering tangible job creation and economic growth results. In the four years through 2016, SEDC efforts have stimulated over \$2.4 billion of new investment generating nearly 2,000 new and retained jobs and \$71 million in employee payroll. 2016 alone produced \$51 million of new investment leading to 627 jobs. These jobs will add over \$23 million of annual household income in area communities.

Promoting Saratoga county, retaining, and growing jobs and wages are SEDC's mission. We are pleased to report our progress in 2016 because it previews expectations for success in 2017. SEDC helped homegrown advanced manufacturers like AgroChem stay and expand in Saratoga Springs even as they could have been recruited across the country. SEDC attracted key semiconductor supply chain investment through PeroxyChem's new plant. We realized job retention supporting local small and mid-sized business expansions and landed corporate headquarters with operations of Arnoff & SKS moving to Saratoga county. JW Danforth expanded into Halfmoon with SEDC's help, adding good jobs and diversifying its tax base.

Our investor members and the incentives granted by our longtime community partners at the Saratoga County IDA remain key ingredients to past and future successes. With our partners, we have set a goal to Advance Saratoga through 2020 by generating \$15 billion of new investment and over 10,000 new and retained jobs. To reach it, we must build needed capacity for targeted business sectors to invest and expand here, such as:

- Taking steps to understand growing demand for electricity and thermal energy needs to help area businesses with competitive options. Identifying attractive sites to develop distribution and advanced manufacturing.

- Sustaining confidence with premier site selectors to attract supply chain investment and to realize more corporate headquarters in Saratoga county.



Dennis Brobston, president, Saratoga Economic Development Corp.

- Diversifying areas for workforce households to live and inspiring more entrepreneurs to innovate, collaborate and build their businesses here.

Saratoga is really a special place. "World-class" is not a stretch given the significant foreign direct investment it has attracted. It is a label we hear repeatedly from reputable business, investment, site development and academic leaders. This moniker makes us the envy of upstate New York. With it comes an expectation for continued success to sustain our quality of life. It also comes with challenges to rise to the global competitive level and generate dynamic investment that creates better jobs for those falling through the cracks.

Workforce skills and capacity for truly shovel-ready industrial sites are other challenges to be met. As is investing in innovators through supportive services, experienced mentor networks and collaborative spaces that will retain and attract talent.

To attain dynamic job growth, attract capital and executive leadership, we must become more proactive in enticing entrepreneurs with promising early-stage companies to drive business expansion here. SEDC has been listening to entrepreneurs' requests and

is ready to support their taking on the risk of building their own business.

In 2017, we are excited to launch a business incubator that will inspire, mentor and accelerate emerging company development. By leveraging our investor members and the region's world-class expertise, we will facilitate a deep network of mentors to bolster talented entrepreneurs. Qualified innovators will be eligible to receive supportive services from Clarkson University's prestigious Shipley Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Emboldening a culture of innovators to collaborate with proven multidisciplinary professionals will help solidify our area's competitive appeal. SEDC is excited to itself collaborate with other Capital Region entrepreneur centers supporting a broader regional startup culture. And SEDC is seizing this leadership role in Saratoga because, as our friends at Upstate Venture Connect demonstrated in recent research, emerging companies offer the most dynamic job and wage generation potential.

While advisory services and mentorship from SEDC members will boost our region's appeal to innovators and could deliver enticing enterprises for capital investors, this mindset will also enhance other Advance Saratoga initiatives. Entrepreneurs' vision to imagine and zeal to pursue new and disruptive business also add depth to the leadership skills for a dynamic workforce. These skills will empower innovators to stay or relocate here, and develop a talent pool for new and legacy companies to grow, remain headquartered and hire people here. Talent attracts talent.

With SEDC being investor led, our member's investments PLUS meaningful engagement enable us to move at the speed of business. That's how we sustain success promoting our region, retaining businesses and jobs, and growing dynamic new opportunities year after year. SEDC remains energized to drive value to our partners and Saratoga's communities.

We can't wait to engage with our investors and always welcome new input to boost Saratoga's world-class standing to compete in 2017 and beyond. □

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