

Town Topics

by Supervisor Richard Craft

One of the benefits of being a pro-active, pro-industrial, pro-growth town like **Wawarsing** is the opportunity to be a member of the Kingston-Ulster Empire Zone. In the last three years, our town has achieved full-voting status on the Board of Directors. The two existing firms -- *Imperial Schrade* and *Hydro Aluminum (VAW)* -- have been joined by *JM Originals*, *Optimum Windows*, *Gillette Creamery*, *Ellenville Vending*, the *Napanoch Day Care Center*, and the new *Industrial Park* off **Clinton Avenue** in the Village.

Once certified, these firms are in line for a host of benefits, including wage tax credit incentives, real property tax incentives, investment tax credits, sales tax incentives, utility rate reduction, economic development zone capital tax credit, and local incentives. This amounts to thousands of dollars in savings that can be used for additional hiring, expansion, etc.

This is welcome news to our businesses. With the new water district coming on line in January, Empire Zone classifications, plus REAP Zone designation, and Catskill Watershed membership, the town is finally ready for expansion in 2003. You need all this prior to marketing your area for growth. The final link is having available land, and you can be assured that the **Town of Wawarsing** will be pursuing this objective during the coming year.

We are finally ready to make our move. I don't call it lack of action; I call it good planning. Any firms wishing to apply for EZ (Empire Zone) inclusion need only call the Supervisor's office at **647-6570** or the EZ office in Kingston at 845-331-0080 ext. 334.

Probably the most important economic news to hit this area in decades is the announcement that the Modoc Indian Nation has taken an option to purchase the former *Kelly Farm* in **Leurenkill**. The purpose of this acquisition is to construct a \$250-\$280 million, Class-3 Casino... identical in style and quality to the ones in Las Vegas.

Studies are now being conducted which, when completed by the end of 2002, will be presented to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington. Within a year or less, their report and approval could be forwarded to the Governor for his approval to enter into a compact with the Modoc Tribe, holding this land in trust. Once all the details are worked out between the County, Town, and State, construction can commence.

Plans for that site include a 650-room hotel, two grand ballrooms, three large restaurants and coffee shop, 25,000-sq. ft. retail space, a health club, and conference center. To handle the traffic, a 3000-car parking lot and 100-bus staging area would also be built.

The impact, both direct and indirect, will have a tremendous effect on our Town. The **Route 209** corridor would undergo massive changes, but not before the Town has scrutinized each and every detail. Without our approval, the project cannot, and will not, proceed.

Input from the general public is encouraged. Your thoughts are welcomed at **Town Hall** as we begin to formulate our needs. Please submit them in writing, and address them to: **Supervisor, Town of Wawarsing, 108 Canal Street, Ellenville, New York 12428.**

Hopefully, a balance can be struck that will preserve most of our rural "laid-back style." With a new comprehensive plan in place, we hope to protect our natural resources and, at the same time, provide for the greatest economic expansion our Town has ever known.

Should this project specifically, or casino gambling in general, be in our future, we have an opportunity to control its impact on our lives. By working together, we can avoid needless delays and address any obstacles. We can realize a win-win solution for all parties involved.

(Contact: **Supervisor Craft, Town Hall, 108 Canal Street, P.O. Box 671 · Ellenville NY 12428**
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