



## **Effective collaboration for economic growth in Broome County - by Amy Williamson**

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The backbone of any strong community starts with effective collaboration. Government agencies, private businesses, and elected officials all work to answer the same questions and champion challenges within their communities, however, too often it seems they are not effectively taking advantage of the natural partnerships found within their shared objectives. The Broome County IDA/LDC and the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce are confronting the traditional way of doing business and engaging in a new form of collaborative process for the benefit of the region.

Leadership of the two organizations has officially been aligned under Stacey Duncan, now both the executive director of The Agency and the president and CEO of the Chamber, while keeping the two entities separate to both pursue their individual missions and accomplish their shared goals towards economic growth and development in Broome County. Under single leadership it will be easier to develop a synergetic partnership that allows the Chamber and the Agency to leverage each other's resources to more successfully incentivize businesses to find their home in Broome County. Approaching workforce and community development from both sides, through use of a variety of tools for business attraction and growth between the two organizations, will only serve to generate a higher skilled workforce and an even stronger Broome County to experience. Together, The Agency and the Chamber will work to turn the challenges within the community into opportunities for businesses and residents alike, thus improving quality of life across the board.

### **Opportunities in Broome County**

Broome County, at the crossroads of several major transportation networks such as Interstates 81, 88, and Rte. 17, has the chance to expand its economic reach beyond its own borders and become a true hub for major northeast markets like those in Canada, New York City, Washington D.C., and more. Through the close collaboration of the county's leading economic and business development agencies, this opportunity is more viable now than ever before. With nearly 5,000 employers and over 70,000 employed, Broome County is already home to one of the largest economies in Upstate New York, attracting some of the best thinkers and biggest names such as IBM, Universal Instruments, BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin, the Raymond Corp., and more.

Now it is time to work together to close the remaining employment gap. Currently, in Broome County there are roughly 5,000 open positions and growing and approximately 5,000 employable people without a job. Key industries such as healthcare and manufacturing dictate the hiring process and requirements, yet an issue many employers are faced with, however, is the lack of training steered

towards industry specific skill sets.

Workforce development has always been a priority for the Agency. The Broome-Tioga Talent Task Force, established in 2017, and the Strategic Plan for Broome County are daily reminders of the work that the Agency strives to achieve. Now, through streamlined leadership, The Agency and the Chamber will utilize their resources in tandem to tackle the needs of the workforce. Through initiatives such as the Task Force, and the Chamber's Greater Binghamton Education Outreach Program (GBEOP), career pipelines can be formed and better aligned to match business development starting as early as K-12, connecting employers with education systems to give each student the tools and industry-driven education, training and credentials needed for a good life here in Broome County.

“Visit Bing” for a “Good Life”

As businesses and professionals are attracted to the region through programs such as the Agency's good life, or the Chamber's Visit Bing, they will be entering a community dedicated to growth. Through the partnership between the Agency and the Chamber, businesses will receive stronger and better direction for how to improve, grow the workforce, and make an impact on the good life found in Broome County. Business expansion through the Agency's competitive incentives, such as the small business sales and mortgage recording tax exemption programs and Payment In Lieu of Tax Programs (PILOT), in conjunction with the Chamber's advocacy work for more business-friendly policies to foster economic growth allows companies who have taken root in Broome County to truly expand. With top employers, accredited universities, and unique and lively villages, towns, and the flourishing city of Binghamton, we encourage professionals and businesses to come partake in the good life. Only through the expansion of long-lasting and well-made partnerships will the economy truly thrive; only through the alliances we make between businesses, agencies, and the people of Broome County, can we all have access to a good life.

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