



## **Pioneer Companies to build/develop 125,000 s/f office bldg. - \$25m project**

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According to governor David Paterson, O'Brien & Gere, an engineering and project delivery firm, will relocate its corporate headquarters from the suburb of Dewitt to a targeted investment district in the downtown area of the city. The project, with the help of the Empire State Development, will bring 300 O'Brien & Gere employees to the downtown area and anchor a major revitalization strategy for the city.

O'Brien & Gere will partner with the Pioneer Companies, a vertically-integrated real estate operating company, to build and develop a six-story, 125,000 s/f class A multi-tenant office building and parking garage located at the corner of West Washington and South Franklin Streets in Armory Sq. Called Washington Station, the project is being guided, rated and will be certified by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). It will use far less energy and water than comparable buildings, through the use of advanced engineering and energy management technologies. The total project investment, including land, building, furniture, fixtures, equipment and parking will cost \$25 million.

"This project provides the missing component of a larger, comprehensive revitalization plan for downtown Syracuse," said Paterson. "Upstate's urban cores are experiencing a renewal, and distinguished companies like O'Brien & Gere are recognizing the quality of life benefits associated with being located in these appealing city centers. My administration will continue to support bold projects like this, which will encourage even more people to live and work in downtown communities."

The project site, one of the last remaining undeveloped parcels within the Armory Sq. district of the downtown area, is directly between two key city projects, both of which have been supported through the state's Upstate City-by-City investments and Round II Restore New York funding.

Empire State Development is investing \$3 million toward the Washington Station project, including a \$1 million grant and a \$2 million low interest loan, both of which will be disbursed upon project completion. The city and the Syracuse Industrial Development Agency have also committed \$3.5 million in grant funding to the project, including \$1 million through Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative funding.

While O'Brien & Gere will be the major tenant of the building, other tenants will be secured for the project, including Pioneer Companies' own headquarters.

Terry Brown, CEO of O'Brien & Gere, said, "One of the biggest keys to attracting and keeping businesses and talented employees in our region is an attractive, vibrant, and active downtown region. We see our move as a piece of this puzzle to help support and promote a "new" downtown. O'Brien & Gere's move downtown and by others in the region who may relocate as well to our downtown community will have a profound impact on the Metropolitan Development Association's Essential New York initiative and Syracuse University's Connective Corridor project and will drive a

re-birth throughout the city of Syracuse."

Michael Falcone, chairman and CEO of Pioneer Companies, said: "We at Pioneer remain committed to our proud history of investing in upstate downtown city centers. Washington Station is proof that once again we are setting the standard for new building development that has a significant economic impact to Syracuse's urban core."

Mayor Matthew Driscoll said, "Governor Paterson recognizes the strength of economic development in the environmental sector in Syracuse. That is why he has chosen to invest in our growing green technology market that is producing high paying "green-collar" jobs. Central N.Y. firms and research institutions are known world wide for supplying a variety of environmental products and services. The need to grow is the reason behind O'Brien and Gere's announcement to move downtown. They need to attract young engineers, scientists, and construction personnel to continue their 60 years of success. By moving downtown, O'Brien and Gere believe they will be even more competitive in recruiting young talented employees who will want to work and live in the youthful atmosphere of Armory Sq."

Other revitalization efforts in the immediate area include the City Center Core Revitalization project and the Near Westside initiative. City Center involves the redevelopment of twelve key historic and commercial properties located in the city's urban core. Upon completion, this project will produce an investment of \$54 million and more than 580,000 s/f of renovated space. The Near Westside initiative is a cohesive multi-property project that will revitalize 28-acres of blighted buildings on the edge of downtown.

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