



A number of positive projects occurring within Town of Islip

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The Town of Islip, like most towns throughout the country, is dealing with a rough economic climate. Our activity levels are not what we would hope for in terms of economic development; inquiries about available office and industrial space are reduced, and there simply aren't as many companies seeking out expansion opportunities. The number of office vacancies is higher than it was a year ago, though industrial vacancies have remained the same, compared to 2008.

However, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Thankfully, there are a number of positive projects occurring within the town that will help see us through these dire economic times. The largest of these projects is the Heartland Development proposal at the Pilgrim State site in Brentwood. This is the biggest development ever proposed on Long Island, and could potentially provide an enormous long-term boost for the town's economy.

As it stands, Islip Town is entertaining the Heartland developer's proposal for more than 15 million s/f of new construction, including approximately 4 million s/f of new office and industrial space, together with the workforce housing and downtown retail to support it. We in Islip are fortunate that our problem is to decide on how much growth is practical. Potentially, Heartland could mean new capital investments of more than \$4 billion over a period of 20 years.

Due to the scope of the project, our town planning department has been working with the developer for years, to ensure that all of the public's concerns are addressed. We are currently accepting written comments about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement from the public, which can be submitted until July 28.

On the more immediate front, the Sunrise Business Center in Great River, which historically contained 340,000 s/f of office space, has been a key project for us. When the developer first bought the property in 2006, it was only 50% occupied. In June, we were pleased to announce that the center is now 90% occupied. Additionally, the owner has converted an old warehouse on-site into 136,000 s/f of new class A office space, which he is looking to lease.

Another major development for the Town has been Blackman Plumbing Supplies' recent investment of \$25 million in the conversion of an old industrial building in Bayport into modern warehouse space. This is clearly a much-needed investment into the local economy.

Meanwhile, in Ronkonkoma, The Perfume Center of America is in the design stage of constructing a 165,000 s/f warehouse. Not only will this bring in jobs for our residents, but it is a testament to the company's commitment to Islip Town.

Although projects like these are all very promising, I think it is important to stress that in these difficult financial times, we need economic development programs like the Empire Zone and the Industrial Development Agency now, more than ever. It is because of incentives like these that local businesses are able to stay afloat, and even thrive, and it is my sincere hope that the state continues to fund these programs. Our businesses and our residents depend on it.

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