

Senate plan would invest \$3.7 billion in Upstate economy

Upstate's economy would receive a \$3.7 billion boost through tax relief and incentives under the Senate Majority's Upstate economic revival plan.

The plan, unveiled May 15 by Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, seeks to revitalize the Upstate economy by reducing taxes, updating infrastructure and strengthening business, a release from the Majority said. The plan would provide businesses more than \$3.7 billion in tax relief, investment and economic incentives over three years.

"Revitalizing the upstate economy and creating new economic opportunities for young New Yorkers is a top priority for the Senate Majority," Senator Bruno said. "With the launch of our Upstate Now agenda, we are advancing a comprehensive, strategic plan that will strengthen the state's economy, particularly Upstate, create thousands of new jobs and generate tremendous new investments in communities all across our State."

The Senate plan promises to provide tax relief to some New York businesses; update and improve Upstate's infrastructure; encourage growth in innovation and technology; promote energy independence and clean alternative energy; reduce health-care costs; revitalize Upstate communities; attract new manufacturers; invest in workforce training and preparation program; simplify red tape surround business creation; and promote Upstate recreational and cultural opportunities.

More on the Senate Majority's Upstate Now plan is available at www.senate.state.ny.us.

Analysis: New York's per-capita tax burden highest in the nation

New York State's per capita state and local tax burden in 2005 was the highest in the nation, according to a new analysis by the Public Policy Institute.

The Institute analyzed state and local finance data provided by the Census Bureau. The numbers, which covered the 2004-2005 fiscal year, showed that New York's per-capita state and local tax burden was the highest in the nation at \$5,770 – 56 percent above the national average of \$3,699 and 7 percent above the next highest per capita burden in Connecticut.

The state's per-capita property tax burden was the fourth highest in the nation at \$1,774 – 57 percent above the national average. The highest per-capita property tax burden belonged to New Jersey.

New York's per-capita debt burden was third highest in the nation at \$12,107, an increase of 6 percent over the 2003-2004 per-capita total and 74 percent above the 2004-2005 national average.

The Institute also found that New York's per-capita spending was the second highest in the nation at \$11,841. That amount was 48 percent above the national average of \$8,003.

The Census data analyzed by the Institute are available at www.census.gov/govs/www/estimate05.html.

Governor creates commission to study government consolidation

G. Thomas Tranter, president of Corning Enterprises and chairman of The Business Council's government affairs council, has been appointed to a newly-created commission studying local government consolidation.

The Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness was created by Governor Spitzer through an executive order on April 23. The commission is charged with "reviewing ways that New York State's over 4,200 local governments can save taxpayer dollars and become more efficient by sharing services and undertaking regional collaboration," the Governor's office said.

The Commission, which will be chaired by former New York Lieutenant Governor Stan Lundine, is composed of 15 members, including four recommended by the legislative leaders of each house and one by the state Comptroller.

The Governor has announced that he will ask counties to participate in the effort by asking counties to "identify at least one major initiative that is already underway or can be initiated this year, which could be a test case for the Commission's one-year regional efficiency study."

The commission will receive support from appropriate state agencies, and day-to-day operations will be overseen by the project will be overseen by Lloyd Constantine, Senior Advisor to the Governor. The Commission is to carry out its preliminary analysis within one year, reporting its recommendations by April 15, 2008.

More information is available at www.nyslocalgov.org.

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