



Empire State Development

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HOWE CAVERNS AND EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT HOLD CEREMONIAL GROUNDBREAKING FOR FIRST PHASE OF EXPANSION PROJECT

Construction of new gemstone mining building is underway; project expected to create 48 new jobs and provide a boost to local tourism

Ceremony being held on the eve of Howe Caverns' "Discovery Days," celebrating the 82nd anniversary of its reopening and 169th anniversary of discovery by local farmer Lester Howe

Howe Caverns and Empire State Development (ESD) today held a ceremonial groundbreaking on the first phase of a multi-phase expansion project at the historic cavern tourism destination in Schoharie County. Howe Caves Development, LLC, and Howe Caverns, Inc. are investing \$3 million to expand its attractions with the addition of a new gemstone mining building, as well as construction of an outdoor pavilion for events, a new concession facility, training and infrastructure. Empire State Development has committed \$100,000 for this project, which will create at least 48 new seasonal jobs and provide a boost to local tourism.

"We are pleased and grateful for Empire State Development's confidence in our project to the extent that it is willing to invest \$100,000 in the development," said President of Howe Caves Development, LLC John Lemery. "It is a testament to New York State's willingness to invest with the private sector to enhance the economic opportunities of the people of Schoharie County."

"ESD is pleased to be a partner in this vitally important project for Howe Caverns," said Empire State Development Mohawk Valley Regional Director Kenneth Tompkins. "The development project taking shape has not only created jobs, but will greatly enhance the experience for visitors at what is already one of Upstate's best attractions. It will boost tourism in the region and encourage visitors to enjoy longer stays in Schoharie County. We congratulate Howe Caves Development for getting this project off the ground and look forward to seeing the completion of this exciting first phase."

The initial development phase is expected to lay the groundwork for future expansion at Howe Caverns, which includes plans for a prehistoric “Dinosaur Canyon,” an attraction which will feature life-size animatronic dinosaurs, a special-effects theater and related visitor support facilities. Also on the property, Howe Caves Development is constructing a four-tower aerial zip line and an outdoor ropes course, slated to open this summer.

“We who live and work in Schoharie County look forward to the new jobs and new adventures here at Howe Caverns,” said Schoharie County Planning & Development Agency Director Alicia Terry. “We thank Empire State Development for their assistance with the buildings being constructed on this site.”

Fittingly, the groundbreaking ceremony was held on the eve of Howe Caverns’ “Discovery Days,” which celebrates the 82nd anniversary of Howe Caverns’ reopening to the public and the 169th anniversary of its discovery by local farmer Lester Howe.

Howe Caverns, the largest cave open to the public in the Northeast, has been thrilling visitors to its underground world for 169 years. Howe Caverns is located on a 400-acre estate where Howe Caves Development is launching the first phase of new attractions above ground. The new development is called Howe High Adventure and features the new buildings as well as the zip lines and ropes course.

The mission of Empire State Development is to promote business investment and growth that leads to job creation and prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is intent on paving the way for New York State to become the leader of the innovation economy and one of the most business-friendly, productive and competitive economic development climates in the world. ESD also oversees the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. Visit New York First at www.NYfirst.NY.gov for information on doing business in New York, and for more information about Empire State Development, please see www.esd.ny.gov.

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