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CAPITAL REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

The Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) today announced the appointment of eight new members: Andrew Meader, Six Flags/The Great Escape Corporate Alliances Director; Dr. Laura Sweitzer, Union Graduate College President; Thomas O'Connor, Mohawk Fine Papers Chairman and CEO; Linda MacFarlane, Capital District Community Loan Fund Executive Director; Philip Morris, Proctor's Theatre Chief Executive Officer; David Brown, Capital District YMCA President and CEO; Debabrata Mukherjee, Finch Paper President and CEO; and Drew Matonak, Hudson Valley Community College President.

The new members will fill vacant seats on the Council and work together, under the leadership of co-chairs Jim Barba and Dr. Robert Jones, to build on the region's recent success in New York State's Regional Council competition and advance the council's strategies for economic growth and job creation.

"The Capital Region Economic Development Council, under the leadership of co-chairs Dr. Robert Jones and Jim Barba, have continued to steadily work toward the region's economic vision for growth and job creation," said Lieutenant Governor Robert J. Duffy, Chair of the Regional Economic Development Councils. "These new appointees bring with them a wealth of knowledge and combined experience in economic development, business and education in the Capital Region, and will ensure the Council maintains its energy and direction as we move forward in this fourth round."

The members were officially announced at today's CREDC meeting at Columbia-Greene Community College.

"We are pleased this diverse and gifted group of community leaders will bring their formidable talents to the CREDC," said CREDC Co-chairs Robert J. Jones, University at Albany president, and James J. Barba, president of Albany Medical Center. "They will sustain the momentum of the Council as it strategizes to support Governor Cuomo's vision for promoting regional economic growth through business and job creation."

Andrew Meader is the Corporate Alliances Director for Six Flags/The Great Escape. He has over 15 years of business development experience. Previously he has served as the President of the Honolulu Box Office and Theatre Manager for Hawaii Pacific University. He has an extensive background in marketing, event planning and public relations.

Dr. Laura Schweitzer became president of Union Graduate College in January 2009. A native of Westchester, N.Y., she earned a Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Duke University. After serving in a succession of administrative roles at the University of Louisville, Dr. Schweitzer became the first female Ph.D. believed to ever lead a U.S. medical school. During her tenure, Union Graduate College has seen a seven-fold increase in funding.

Thomas O'Connor has held the role of Chief Executive Officer of Mohawk Fine Papers Inc. since 2003 and also serves as Chairman of the Board. He has been the Chairman of Mohawk Fine Papers Inc. since December 2004 and its Director since 2001. Mr. O'Connor has also served as Director of American Forest & Paper Association Inc. since February 2011. He graduated from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts and has participated in executive management programs at Harvard Business School, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Duke University's Fuqua School of Management.

Linda MacFarlane is the Executive Director of the Capital District Community Loan Fund, and most recently served as President/CEO of Columbia-Greene Federal Credit Union. In addition to her professional experience, she serves on the boards of ClearView Center/Equinox, the Mental Health Housing Project and St. Anne Institute. She was honored with the Outstanding Professional Award from the Credit Union Association of New York in 2012 and completed the Disney Institute Business Program in 2007.

Philip Morris currently serves as the CEO of Proctor's Theater in Schenectady. At 22 he became Arts Council Director of Jamestown, NY, where he discovered firsthand how art and community co-evolve. He launched his first capital campaign to save the local Reg Lenna Civic Center, a 1,200-seat theatre on the cusp of ruin. Today, patrons attending Proctor's generate over \$45 million each year for local businesses, and the theater has become the most densely programmed arts space for a hundred and fifty miles in any direction.

David Brown is currently the president and CEO of the Capital District YMCA, overseeing the day-to-day administration and operation of 11 YMCA branches, four satellite branches and 59 childcare sites. Prior to being named CEO, Mr. Brown was the chief operating officer and senior vice president. Mr. Brown was a founding member of the committee to establish the Capital District YMCA Black and Latino Achievers Program. He served as a member of the Shared Decision Making Committee at Albany School of Humanities and is associated with the National Black Child Development Institute and the Association of YMCA Professionals.

Dr. Mukherjee joined Finch Paper as President in 2013 after a 15-year career with paper manufacturer P.H. Glatfelter in York, PA. At P.H. Glatfelter, he earned a steady series of promotions including specialty products manager in 2000; North American general sales manager, engineered products in 2002; director, engineered products in 2004; division vice president, engineered and converting products in 2006; and vice president and general manager, specialty papers in 2008. In his most recent role, Dr. Mukherjee led a business unit with more than \$900 million in worldwide sales and six North American locations.

Andrew or “Drew” Matonak has served as President of Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) since 2005. President Matonak’s tenure is marked by steady progress in completing a \$200 million Facilities Master Plan for the college and unprecedented enrollment growth. Prior to his role at HVCC, President Matonak served three years as president of Northwest Iowa Community College. President Matonak is also president of the New York Community College Association of Presidents (2013-2014), past chairman of the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors and president of Troy 2020. In addition, he serves on the boards of the Albany-based Center for Economic Growth, Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar, and First Niagara Bank’s Regional Advisory Board. He also is a member of the Capital Region Workforce Investment Board, the Green Jobs-Green New York Advisory Committee and the Economic and Workforce Commission of the American Association of Community Colleges. Mr. Matonak also co-leads the Capital Region Economic Development Council’s Workforce & Education Workgroup.

About the Regional Economic Development Councils

The Regional Economic Development Council initiative (REDC) is a key component of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s transformative approach to State investment and economic development. In 2011, Governor Cuomo established 10 Regional Councils to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. The Councils are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The Regional Councils have redefined the way New York invests in jobs and economic growth by putting in place a community-based, bottom up approach and establishing a competitive process for State resources. After three rounds of the REDC process, more than \$2 billion has been awarded to job creation and community development projects consistent with each region’s strategic plans, resulting in creation or retention of more than 100,000 jobs. For more information on the Regional Councils, visit www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov.

To learn more about the CFA process and Capital Region Economic Development Council, please visit <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/capital-region>.

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