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EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES NEW WESTERN NEW YORK REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Christopher Schoepflin will serve as ESD's Director for Western New York and Executive Director of the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council

Empire State Development today announced that Christopher J. Schoepflin, who currently serves as president of USA Niagara Development Corporation (USAN), will oversee the Western New York regional office. As the new Western New York Regional Director, Mr. Schoepflin will work under the leadership of President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky, managing daily operations of the Western New York office in Buffalo and promoting economic development practices that both retain and attract businesses and create jobs in the region. In addition, Mr. Schoepflin will lead the Buffalo Billion initiative and serve as Executive Director of the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council, where he will assist in coordinating the Council's activities and implementing the region's Strategic Plan. He will replace Christina Orsi, who previously held the position and has taken a position at the University at Buffalo as associate vice president for economic development.

"Chris Schoepflin is well qualified to lead the Western New York Regional Office and will provide a regional perspective on economic development," said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky. "With his experience leading the USA Niagara Development Corporation and familiarity with the regional council process and Buffalo Billion implementation, I am confident in Chris' abilities to advance our goals of fostering private sector growth, creating jobs and strengthening the economy."

"It is a privilege to continue to serve the Governor in this expanded and important role and I am thankful for Howard Zemsky's tremendous support," said Schoepflin. "I look forward to working with our REDC co-chairs and all those who are doing great work in advancing our economic development agenda throughout the region."

Mr. Schoepflin will also continue overseeing USAN. He's held this role since 2005, serving as the Governor's economic development representative in downtown Niagara Falls, New York during a period of \$500 million of planned, funded, ongoing and

completed projects, such as the Conference Center Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, Wonder Falls and the Robert Moses Parkway reconstruction. He has had direct management responsibility for more than 40 initiatives, including a current development pipeline of 750 hotel rooms; 200,000 square feet of entertainment space; 100,000 square feet of food and beverage space; major waterfront infrastructure; and the creation of an outdoor recreation economy. Prior to joining ESD and USAN, Mr. Schoepflin held senior management positions with the Buffalo Sabres.

Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chair and SolEpoxy Inc. President Jeff Belt said, "The work that Chris has done in Niagara Falls is commendable. His experience in business, real estate and economic development will certainly be a benefit to the Western New York Regional Council and region as a whole as we move forward and advance our strategies."

Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chair and University at Buffalo President Satish Tripathi said, "Chris Schoepflin has been involved in our Buffalo Billion and Western New York REDC efforts from day one and I can't think of a more qualified individual to take the reins. The projects, initiatives and investments he has catalyzed in Niagara Falls have been impressive and I look forward to working with Chris as he brings his knowledge and experience throughout our region."

Mr. Schoepflin is a graduate of the State University of New York at Fredonia with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration. He grew up in Niagara Falls, New York and now lives in Buffalo with his wife and two children.

Mayor Byron Brown said, "Christopher Schoepflin is coming in at a time of great momentum. I look forward to working with Chris, as the new Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Director, to continue the tremendous progress we are making in the city and region."

Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster said, "I have worked with Chris Schoepflin for years and share his vision for a more vibrant Niagara Falls. I look forward to seeing him expand his leadership skills and economic development strategies as Western New York's Regional Director. Chris's passion for attracting and growing businesses in our area will be a tremendous asset to the region."

Jamestown Mayor Sam Teresi said, "This is an exciting time for Western New York as the Regional Economic Development Council works to build on the successful investment strategies that have been put to work. Chris Schoepflin's understanding of both the needs and strengths of each area in the region makes him an excellent choice for Regional Director. I look forward to working with Chris to continue to bring new ideas, businesses and jobs to our region. "

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