



**For Immediate Release:** Monday, December 7, 2015

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## **Empire State Development Announces New Southern Tier Regional Director**

### ***Donna Howell To Serve As ESD's Regional Director For The Southern Tier And Executive Director Of The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council***

Empire State Development (ESD) today announced the appointment of Donna Howell as Regional Director of the Southern Tier. In her new position, Ms. Howell, who previously served as Region Manager in the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, will work under the leadership of ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky, managing daily operations of the Southern Tier office in Binghamton and promoting economic development policies that will attract and retain businesses and create jobs in the region. Additionally, Ms. Howell will serve as Executive Director of the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC), where she will assist in coordinating the Council's activities and implementing the region's strategic plan.

"With her impressive business and economic development background and ample experience promoting and implementing strategic plans and programs, Donna Howell is a perfect fit to lead ESD's efforts in the Southern Tier," Commissioner Zemsky said. "Donna's previous service in a region of Illinois with many similarities to the Southern Tier, makes her uniquely qualified to advance our goals of nurturing private sector growth, fostering job creation and improving quality of life for residents of the Southern Tier. Donna will also be a major asset to the Southern Tier Regional Council as she helps to realize the Council's vision and implement its strategic plan to grow the regional economy."

In her former role as Region Manager for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Ms. Howell led the State of Illinois' business outreach and economic development efforts for an eleven-county region in East Central Illinois. Prior to her role as Region Manager, Ms. Howell served as the Director of Constituent Affairs for former Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, and a Performance Analyst for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Ms. Howell has recently moved from Illinois to the Southern Tier due to her passion for the region.

“I am both honored and excited to begin my role as ESD’s Southern Tier Regional Director and lead the State’s economic efforts in this unique region,” said Howell. “All the way from Illinois, I saw that New York has truly become the state of economic opportunity under Governor Cuomo’s leadership and decided that I wanted to be a part of it. After falling in love with the Southern Tier from a distance, I will now work tirelessly within the region to help businesses thrive, create jobs, and strengthen the economy. I look forward to working with the talented and experienced staff at the regional office and the dedicated co-chairs and members of the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council.”

STREDC Co-chairs Harvey Stenger, President of Binghamton University and Tom Tranter, President & CEO of Corning Enterprises said, “Donna Howell is both highly qualified and passionate about our region, which makes her the right choice to lead New York State’s business efforts in the Southern Tier. On behalf of the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council, we are proud to welcome Donna to the team and are excited to have an experienced economic development professional serving as our new Executive Director.”

### **About Empire State Development**

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York’s chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo’s Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of “I Love NY,” the State’s iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit [www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov](http://www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov) and [www.esd.ny.gov](http://www.esd.ny.gov).

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