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Essex County IDA new location has benefits

Agency focusing on creating infrastructure to support economic growth

By Whitney Jackson

ELIZABETHTOWN - The agency that moved into the former Evelyn's Bakery on Court Street isn't serving up sandwiches, but instead hopes to serve up economic growth for the county.

"We're on Court Street and have the exposure we wanted, but the confidentiality level is still high," said Essex County Industrial Agency (IDA) Co-Executive Director Jody Olcott.

The IDA moved into the building on June 16, and renovations are still underway. Most of the major changes have been completed. The building was purchased for \$150,000, with \$50,000 of renovations being performed.

Co-Executive director Carol Calabrese said the agency preferred the new site since the IDA works with other county agencies, and the location is centrally located. The new location provides better storage facilities, which lends to more space for projects. The agency located from Port Henry, where it was housed with the Essex County Empire Zone Program.

The new location is also used by the Small



Business Development Center, located in Plattsburgh, for meetings with Essex County businesses and residents.

Calabrese said the year has been busy for the IDA, including work on the Moriah Health Center, attracting tenants to shovel-ready sites. A shovel-ready site has its permitting and services in place, saving companies a long, drawn out process.

The IDA has been focusing its efforts on preparing towns and communities to receive new businesses.

"We took a real hard look at the assets and needs of Essex County. The towns weren't ready for additional business - we've been working on a lot of project for infrastructure," said Olcott. "We're building the foundation. Once the foundation is built, the community is going to welcome businesses."

Calabrese said another tool the IDA was getting into place was a county revolving loan fund. In the past five years, the fund has grown to about \$1.5 million, which will be available to help businesses with their start up costs.

An open house for the IDA office will take place sometime mid-autumn.

Olcott joked that people still talked in looking for sandwiches – and the IDA staff does its best to help local restaurants by directing them where to dine.