

Amsterdam IDA Director Recruited By Otsego Now

By LIBBY CUDMORE

For Jody Zakrevsky, working with a company on economic development isn't just a one-time deal. "In Amsterdam, we've done three projects with Mohawk Fabrics, helping them expand their business," he said. "An IDA should not just help a company once, but try to help them on an ongoing basis."

Zakrevsky, the former director of the Amsterdam IDA, was announced Friday morning as Otsego Now's first full-time CEO, pending a board vote on Thursday, Sept. 7. Previously, Sandy Mathes had held the Otsego Now CEO position in a part-time capacity. He resigned in May and was released from his contract at the end of June.

Born in Long Island, Zakrevsky moved to Chenango Bridge as a child and graduated from Chenango Valley High School. He went to Wilkes University, where he took an internship with the Regional Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, doing water quality planning. "I fell in love with it," he said.

From there, he got his masters in city and regional planning from Pratt, and was the Community Development Director in Norwich. From April 1995-January 2000, he was director of planning and economic development for Delaware County, where he helped negotiate the watershed protection act in 1997.

He served as Schoharie County's economic development director from January 2000 until December 2010, when he joined the AIDA. "The business community in Amsterdam

was a pleasure to work with," he said. "I'm, sure I'll find the same in Otsego County."

While there, secured a \$12 million bond for an assisted living facility and a \$15 million expansion to AGT Services, a turbine repair plant. "They employ 70 people already, and this expansion will add 20 jobs," he said.

He also oversaw the city's micro-enterprise grant program and worked with The Edson Street Industrial Park, which includes tenants such as Losurdo Foods, Washburns Ice Cream/Refrigerated Lines, Mohawk Signs, Town & County Bridge and Rail, Bush Carpentry & Millwork and Northeast Riggers to maintain infrastructure and keep the businesses happy. "Much of that was built out before I arrived," he said. "My job was to maintain the existing businesses and meet with them to make sure they had what they needed."

When the CEO position opened in Oneonta, he jumped at the chance. "I was very interested in the uniqueness of the businesses here," he said. "There's a lot of variety, and the opportunities perked my interest."

Looking ahead, he plans to start working with the businesses already in the county. "I want to see what they need," he said.

"The most important plan is the development of the Oneonta Railyards," said Mayor Gary Herzig. "We want to continue the plans put forward by Sandy Mathes and make sure we don't lose momentum."

And with the Downtown Revitalization Initiative in place, Herzig hopes to soon include Zakrevsky in the plans. "We hope we'll be able to refer developers to Otsego Now so that they can look for ways to support these developers."

Zakrevsky plans to remain in Chenango Bridge, where he lives with his wife, Alice. The couple has four grown children. "Oneonta is a much shorter commute!" he said.

Jeff Katz, Mayor of Cooperstown, is ready to chat. "One of the things we tried to do with Sandy was put together a public/private partnership for Doubleday," he said. "We wanted to fix the public side - the field, the parking - but also entice developers into working on the private side. Otsego Now can reach out to those developers, they have the contacts."