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Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce and MDA Members Approve Formation of New Partnership

Member Vote Overwhelmingly Supports Historic Merger and Creation of a Unified, Regional Business Services and Economic Development Leadership Organization

SYRACUSE, NY – The memberships of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Development Association have voted to form a new, regional organization that will serve as the region’s primary economic, community and business development catalyst. The members’ vote follows the unanimous endorsement of the proposal by both organizations’ boards of directors earlier this month.

“By partnering the strengths of each organization, this new organization allows us to improve the effectiveness of our economic development agenda and deliver exceptional business support services to benefit more than 2,000 members from a diverse array of industry sectors,” said Susan Crossett, vice president, National Grid and chairperson of the MDA Board of Directors. “Through their support, Chamber and MDA members - from small businesses to larger corporations – have taken an important step in championing not only the needs of the business community, but the economic well being of the region as a whole.”

“With its breadth of resources, this organization will better enable us to meet the needs of innovative businesses in today’s evolving economy,” said Mary Ann Tyszko, president and CEO, SRCTec Inc. and chair of the Chamber Board of Directors. “We will be positioned to support businesses in our region’s high growth sectors through superior services, broadened expertise, and focused advocacy.”

The new entity will offer opportunities for improved effectiveness and programmatic innovations to better serve the region and its members through a unified mission and seven core lines of business:

- Business Development
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- Infrastructure Initiatives
- Workforce Alignment
- Government Relations & Business Advocacy
- Comprehensive Business Services
- Regional Marketing to Promote Business, Tourism & Lifestyle

Dual membership levels will feature “Partner” memberships for businesses seeking access to traditional Chamber services, and “Investor” memberships to provide leadership, resources and strategic implementation support for a regional economic development agenda. The new organization will have a single board of directors, drawn from the boards of both existing organizations, and will be lead by MDA president and CEO, Robert M. Simpson.

“By aligning our resources and strengths, we can modernize economic development and strengthen the business environment of the region,” said Simpson. “In the coming months, we will work to quickly integrate the two organizations to create New York’s most effective business leadership organization.”

“The support of our members is an encouraging vote of confidence for our goal to create a strengthened organization that provides enhanced services, benefits, and growth opportunities for its members,” said Darlene Kerr, president of the Chamber.

The recommendation for the Chamber and MDA to form a new organization was issued on January 7 by a Strategic Partnership Committee. The committee, formed by the organizations’ Boards in July 2009, examined the mission, programs and services, structure, membership, and staffing of both organizations to determine whether a formal partnership would better serve their respective members and the region. The boards of directors of the Chamber and MDA voted unanimously to support the merger on January 25 and February 4, respectively.

Pending final approval by the State of New York, formal integration of the Chamber and MDA will occur in the second quarter of this year.

Further information about the Chamber-MDA partnership and the can be found at www.chambemda.com.

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