

**Statement by Assemblyman Robin Schimminger
on the Completion of the Spaulding Fibre Demolition and Remediation Project
August 25, 2010**

Historic moments are few and far between, but today is one such moment. Through the efforts of an extraordinary team exhibiting intergovernmental cooperation at its finest coupled with private sector involvement, the Spaulding Fibre site is ready for redevelopment. The old, abandoned buildings have been demolished and environmental remediation substantially completed clearing the way for this 46-acre parcel to return to productive use. Thanks to the efforts of those gathered here today, the muddy field behind us will lose its brownfield status and be ready for redevelopment.

This transformation did not happen overnight. A lot has been accomplished as access to the site and money – \$18.9 million – became available. But the secret to this project's success was a solid project design, simultaneous planning and implementation and a spirit of intergovernmental and private partnerships.

For those unfamiliar with the history of this site, it was the home of the Spaulding Fibre plant for almost a century. It was a sprawling complex with many buildings, underground structures and areas of contamination that were related to its manufacturing processes. After a series of financial setbacks, Spaulding closed the plant in 1992 and nine years later filed for bankruptcy. By then, the buildings had already begun to deteriorate and early efforts at remediation came to a halt.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) through the state's superfund program took over the water treatment system. Later, DEC began the cleanup of highly contaminated PCBs in buildings, soils and sewer lines. DEC's role in the clean up process did not end here. DEC awarded the City of Tonawanda an Environmental Restoration Program grant to complete the remediation on the site. Both the Superfund and ERP work have now been completed at a cost of \$6.7 million.

Today, DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis is here with us and I want to thank him and his team for their participation and substantial financial contribution to this project.

Also with us today is Ray Witzleben from Empire State Development (ESD). ESD's Restore New York program, an Assembly initiative I helped shape with this project in mind, was a key factor in bringing down Spaulding's abandoned and dilapidated buildings and removing miles of concrete that comprised an underground network of basements and sub-basements. Restore NY monies totaled more than \$5.6 million, bringing the state's contribution to \$12.3 million.

Erie County was also an important partner and brought \$2.1 million to the project for asbestos assessment and demolition work. Ken Swanenkamp is here representing the County Executive along with Legislator Kevin Hardwick. Kevin and his predecessors – Michele Iannello and Chuck Swanick – were also part of the team over the years. Our congressional representatives – Senator Schumer and Congresswoman Slaughter – secured a \$1.1 million appropriation for demolition and remedial activities. National Grid, represented by Brian Anderson, provided a \$300,000 grant that was used to cover various project costs.

And last, but not least, the City of Tonawanda had a pivotal role in this project. Mayor Ron Pilozzi made this project a priority as did his predecessors, Jack Gallagher and Alice Roth. Over the course of the project, the city contributed \$80,000.

The project could not have been complete without hands-on leadership, beginning with Ken Swanenkamp. Ken's expertise, planning ability and attention to detail not only moved the project along but kept everyone on task. His right-hand man, Paul Kranz, and Mark Roundtree certainly represent the talent at Erie County Environment and Planning. Jo Nassof Finton, ECIDA's representative, used her financial acumen and planning skills to critically review contracts and track grant monies. Jason Lamonaco, the City of Tonawanda's engineer, attended to countless details and mounds of paperwork to get this job done. Greg Sutton and Glen May of our local DEC office provided invaluable expertise and oversight on both the Superfund and remediation project. Jean Bly kept the paperwork moving at ESD.

We also owe our thanks to our consulting engineers, Liro Engineers, Mark Smith now with the Erie Canal Corporation, Kevin Rank, Ron Trabucco, Sam Iracci and his predecessor Don Witkowski and members of the City Council.

Without the efforts of all of these individuals, we would not be here today. Needless to say, I am pleased that I was able to secure \$75,000 in special legislative funding for this project and to have worked with all of these dedicated individuals.

Now, we can step back for a minute, savor the joy of this moment and prepare for the work that lies ahead – redevelopment of the property.

Without further ado, I would like to bring up the Spaulding team for their comments.

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