

Remarks by Senator Charles Schumer
Metropolitan Development Association Annual Meeting
OnCenter, Syracuse, New York
March 23, 2005

The noon luncheon, with over 1,300 MDA members in attendance, was called to order at 12:15 pm by MDA President Irwin Davis. Senator Schumer was introduced by MDA Chairman Buzz Shaw, the former chancellor of Syracuse University.

The following is an excerpt from Senator's Schumer's remarks:

“...this is the first time here since my re-election. I'm now your re-elected senator. I want to thank all of you for the support you have shown me. As you may have read, I received a record 71 percent of the vote. I carried every county in Central New York; and in fact, I carried every county in New York State, but one. That was Hamilton County. It is the smallest county. There are only 4,000 people. I lost by about 1,000 to 950, but my staff explained to me why I lost it...it was the only county where I had met every single voter.

Anyway, I thank you for that; and I look forward to another great six years...working together for Central New York.

Now first, I want to thank the MDA...for the incredible job that you all do. Chairman Shaw; Irwin Davis, he's a dynamo who never stops fighting for this community; Steve Rogers...

Thanks to all of you for the great job that you have done. The Essential New York Initiative, for which I was proud to get some money from Washington a couple of years back, is really bearing fruit. And in fact, Central New York is one of the places in our state where we have actually seen good job growth numbers for the last two years, and we hope that is just the beginning of more to come...

I would like to mention two little subjects that I think are important. As I mentioned, our area has started to grow again in term of jobs. People are recognizing that Central New York has a great labor force, and they are starting to come. And let me propose two things that we can begin to work on, or continue working on together...

One is actually new. The federal law has changed in regards to additives to gasoline. MTBEs are out, and ethanol is in. Ethanol is very, very expensive to bring in from the Middle West. It adds about 15 to 20 cents per gallon, if you have to do that. But there's no reason why we can't make it here in Central New York.

There's already a proposal to turn the old Miller brewing plant in Fulton to become an ethanol plant. But that should be the first of many. It will do three things. It will create jobs. It will create great markets for our farmers who grow corn. And at the same time, it will greatly lower our gas prices...

So I am going to be pursuing some initiatives, and I look forward to working with all of you and the MDA, to explore making Central New York a place where ethanol manufacturing will grow and help continue our prosperity.

A second issue I would like to mention is this. One of the places where we have found an opportunity for job growth is white collar financial services jobs. Just on Monday, the Bank of New York announced that it is leasing additional space in the Dey Centennial Plaza, and is going to expand its work force here by 350 people...