

Infrastructure is needed for development

By
Barry E. Snyder, Sr.

Buffalo's Inner Harbor is poised to see a level of economic development unlike any other in its recent history.

Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino, the redevelopment of the Perry housing development and the proposed Bass Pro store are all projects which are designated to take shape in an area of the City which has gone largely ignored for decades. Each project will be a step in the right direction to bring excitement and vitality to the Inner Harbor.

What these projects also have in common is the need for an adequate infrastructure system to support their operations.

In order to realize the maximum benefits from these projects, the current infrastructure system needs to be updated.

The Seneca Nation of Indians and Seneca Erie Gaming Corporation are ready to invest \$125 million to create Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino, including \$4 million to \$5 million in infrastructure improvements on our 9-acre territory itself. We are also willing to commit \$1 million to \$1.5 million to assist the City in improving its system, which simply cannot support the development projects targeted for the Inner Harbor. The influx of new jobs and visitors, additional economic development activity and affordable housing will place too great a strain on the system.

Our traffic consultants and engineers have created a very specific infrastructure improvement plan which they reviewed with the City's Public Works department last fall, and which meets the objectives for providing an

adequate system for supporting development and improving service for the people who live in the surrounding community.

While the projected cost of these improvements has been widely reported at more than \$6 million, the actual cost to the City will be far less.

The first phase of improvements to City-owned lands, which are the most critical, carries a price tag of \$3.2 million - \$3.9 million.

For our part, Seneca Erie Gaming Corporation has stepped forward and offered to pay for all of the design work associated with the various improvements, as well as the work associated with Fulton Street should it officially become part of our 9-acre casino site. In short, we will shoulder more than \$1 million of the costs.

The city is then left with a price tag in the mid-\$2 million range for improving its own system on its own land. The City stands to realize great benefits in return for making these critical infrastructure improvements.

Not only will the casino project alone create 1,000 new jobs, but the City will also receive revenue share payments totaling approximately \$100 million over the next 15 years.

The second phase of improvements are not critical to moving our project forward, but we believe are necessary for future development and housing. We are willing to assist the City with \$300,000 of the overall \$2.3 million - \$2.7 million cost.

The Seneca Nation of Indians wants to be a part of the economic development puzzle in Buffalo and a good corporate partner with the City to

help spur further economic development and job creation in and around the Inner Harbor area.

Our track record for positive development speaks for itself. Although nobody believed we could do it, we have invested more than \$500 million and created 4,000 new jobs in Western New York in just the past three years. We want to continue our success in Buffalo and to be a part of the City's renaissance.

Barry E. Snyder, Sr. is President of the Seneca Nation of Indians