



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

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BROOKS ANNOUNCES LOCAL MAJOR COMIDA REFORMS TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

Proposal will bring greater accountability and transparency to IDA, all while protecting jobs and working with local labor

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks today announced three new reforms that will help ensure accountability in decisions made by the County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency (COMIDA).

“Growing our local economy and creating jobs has been and continues to be my top priority as County Executive, and COMIDA is a valuable resource for local employers in this effort,” said **Brooks**. *“With the numerous programs and incentives offered through COMIDA, it is absolutely critical that the business community, and our local trades, have complete faith in this very important process. That is why I am here today to announce these important reform measures in order to ensure accountability related to local jobs with the partnership of skilled trades here in Monroe County.”*

County Executive Brooks was joined today by: Theresa Mazzullo, Chair of the COMIDA Board; Judy Seil, Monroe County Director of Planning and Development and Executive Director of COMIDA; Wayne Zyra, President of the Monroe County Legislature; Ken Warner, UNICON Director; Eugene Caccamise, Business Manager for Bricklayers Local 3; and Frank Wirt, President of the Rochester Building Trades Association.

“With Statewide focus on local IDA reform, we would like to thank Maggie Brooks for her continuing support in making our IDA better than any other IDA in upstate New York,” said Frank Wirt. *“We are guaranteeing local jobs for local people. We are supporting local apprenticeship programs and training local craftworkers.”*

County Executive Brooks announced the following reform measures to be adopted by the COMIDA board:

1. **Verifiable Exemptions**

The COMIDA Board will institute a new policy to designate a third party to independently review requests for local labor exemptions. Qualifying submissions will be designated as a “Verified Exemption” by the third party reviewer and each month will be reported to the Board of Directors.

2. **Reporting of “1099 Abuses”**

Reports generated by an independent monitoring group will detail the number of workers on each job and the counties in which the laborers reside. With rising concerns that workers on some jobs may be misclassified as independent contractors, the monitoring group will report any suspicions of “1099 Abuses” to the New York State Attorney General’s Office for further investigation.

3. **COMIDA To Commit \$75,000 Annually to Apprenticeship Programs**

This commitment will be subject to the COMIDA Board's determination that it is fiscally prudent and responsible and has available funds for such expenditures. Additionally, COMIDA will work with Rochester Works or any other appropriate entity to leverage additional funding for this effort.

County and COMIDA officials have met with representatives of Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's Office and will work with both the Attorney General's Office and the New York State Department of Labor to identify any "1099 abuses" on COMIDA job sites. Attorney General Cuomo has initiated a statewide enforcement effort of these abuses.

"1099 abuse is a felony in New York State and this inappropriate activity is an affront to every hardworking taxpayer in Monroe County and our entire state," said Brooks. *"I want to thank Attorney General Cuomo for his efforts in this area and his office's cooperation with us in working to end that practice in Monroe County."*

"We are behind hard working men and women in the construction trades, and we want them to have fair, ethical wages and job opportunities," Wirt added. *"That is why we are not going to tolerate misclassification of workers and illegal 1099s."*

County Executive Maggie Brooks also announced the addition of a member of a local trade union to the COMIDA Board in order to further ensure the accountability of the Board's decisions. Eugene Caccamise, Business Manager for Bricklayers Local 3, has been selected by County Executive Brooks as a qualified union representative to serve on the COMIDA Board. The County Executive has recommended Caccamise be appointed to the COMIDA Board by Monroe County Legislature President Wayne Zyra. This appointment requires approval by the entire Monroe County Legislature during the July 8, 2008 meeting.

"It is absolutely crucial to ensure accountability in all COMIDA decisions," said **Brooks**. *"Gene Caccamise is not only a qualified union representative, but someone who I know will add value to the decision making process."*

"I would like to thank Maggie Brooks for paying close attention to our community and recognizing the importance of construction industry jobs," said Gene Caccamise. *"With all the potential for great economic development, it is important that organized labor be recognized in the County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency. Local expansion will bring us a wealth of development opportunities and our unions are looking forward to growing with our community."*

The next meeting of the COMIDA Board is scheduled to take place at noon today where they are expected to fully adopt the reform package set forth by County Executive Brooks.

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