



## Governor's Office of Storm Recovery

### **Governor's Office of Storm Recovery Announces Opening of \$2.9 Million Mixed-Use Affordable Housing Development in Owego**

*Eight new apartments, as well as retail space, will aid in recovery from Tropical Storm Lee*

*Investment complements "Southern Tier Soaring" — the Region's Comprehensive Strategy to Revitalize Communities and Grow the Economy*

December 6, 2018 - The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery today announced the opening of the \$2.9 million Gateway Owego, a mixed-use affordable housing development with eight apartments, four storefront retail spaces and two retail/ office spaces. Brought to fruition through the state's Small Project Affordable Rental Construction Program, the complex is located in the Village of Owego's main commercial area and will aid the continued recovery from Hurricane Irene, which stalled over the region in August 2011. During the storm, the rapidly rising waters of the Susquehanna River, Owego Creek and Huntington Creek caused extensive flash flooding that damaged 85 percent of the community's homes, businesses and municipal structures.

The project will additionally support the revitalization of the central business district by reconstructing an anchor building at 200-204 Front Street, which was destroyed by an early morning fire nearly two decades ago on July 1, 2000.

**Executive Director of Housing, Buyout and Acquisition Programs at the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery Thehbia Hiwot** said, "We know that safe and resilient housing is the foundation of strong communities. Through the state's Small Project Affordable Rental Construction Program, we can increase the number of affordable units in storm-impacted areas, while reinvigorating the surrounding neighborhoods. The opening of the Gateway Apartments turns over a new leaf for downtown Owego, and will help the economy soar."

The three-story building, just east of Lake Street, features eight one-bedroom apartments on its upper floors and approximately 3,500-feet of commercial space below.

The Small Project Affordable Rental Construction Program was launched in 2015 to restore and create housing options and economic opportunity for low-to-moderate income New Yorkers in communities impacted by Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. It targets

small rental projects with eight-to-20 units in low-density areas throughout the state that may not be reached by other housing programs.

In Owego, the program has served as a catalyst for the transformation of this long-vacant site into a new mixed-use building that will present new housing and retail opportunities. All of the apartments will be affordable to residents at 80 percent of the area median income. The project is being developed by Nelson Development Group LLC, a local company with more than 30 years of experience, along with the assistance of New York State Homes and Community Renewal, Empire State Development, the Village of Owego, the Community Preservation Corporation and Tioga County Department of Economic Planning and Development.

GOSR provides funding for the program out of its \$4.5 billion federal allotment from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program. Qualified developers and projects were chosen via a competitive Request for Proposals issued by CPC, which administers the program under HCR's guidelines.

The project was also financed by a Restore New York Grant. CPC is providing a \$524,000 permanent loan through its funding agreement with the New York State Common Retirement Fund. CPC is also providing a \$2.6 million private construction loan, and the developer is contributing equity towards the construction of the project.

Support for projects like Gateway Owego comes on top of the more than \$1 billion GOSR has already put directly into the hands of New Yorkers to repair and reconstruct their storm-damaged homes.

**New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas** said, "Gateway Owego has literally and figuratively filled a void on historic Front Street and will help to rejuvenate it into the vibrant commercial center that it once was. By bringing both affordable housing resources and retail space to the corridor, the development will attract visitors and residents alike and will help the Southern Tier continue to soar."

**New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli** said, "The state's pension fund is supporting this project to rehabilitate the Village of Owego because it is a smart investment that will provide a solid return. We are pleased to partner with the Community Preservation Corporation on this shared mission to help support this important project that will contribute to revitalizing the central business district."

**Tioga County Legislative Chair Martha Sauerbrey** said, "We are very excited and pleased to see the opening of Gateway Owego. For many years, this property remained an empty hole after a fire destroyed a local business. Now, this building is breathing new life into the community."

**Village of Owego Mayor Mike Baratta** said, “The opening of Gateway Owego is special because this building doesn’t just fill a gap between buildings, it offers something new to the village. The small storefronts on the ground floor will help small shops that normally couldn’t fill a storefront downtown be located right in the heart of our village. This is a very modern concept blended into our historic district. This building also represents a large investment in our community and proof that Owego is the place to be. On behalf of the Village of Owego board, I would like to congratulate the Nelson Development Group and our state partners on the accomplishment, where cutting a ribbon today represents so much more of a continued investment in our community.”

**Senior Vice President and Regional Director of Community Preservation Corporation, Michael Skrebutenas** said, “At CPC, we’re committed to investing in housing projects that help to revitalize and stabilize communities. The damage caused by Hurricane Irene impacted the area’s housing stock and upended the lives of many here. We’re proud to not only administer the state’s recovery program, but to have the opportunity to work with Nelson Development to help bring this resource of affordable housing to the Owego community. My sincere thanks to HCR and GOSR, our funding partners at the Comptroller’s Office, the Village of Owego, and the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning for their dedication to this project.”

**Founder and CEO of Nelson Development Group LLC, Bruce Nelson,** said, “At Nelson Development, we primarily focus on retaining the historic buildings that tell the stories of our communities. However, due to the July 2000 fire, the Gateway Owego Project is very unique. The result is an in-fill building to complete the storefronts along Front Street. We appreciate the assistance and support we have received from the various agencies in seeing this project through to completion.”

### **Accelerating Southern Tier Soaring**

Today's announcement complements “Southern Tier Soaring,” the region’s comprehensive blueprint to generate robust economic growth and community development. The state has already invested more than \$6.2 billion in the region since 2012 to lay the groundwork for the plan — attracting a talented workforce, growing business and driving innovation. Today, unemployment is down to the lowest levels since before the Great Recession; personal and corporate income taxes are down; and businesses are choosing places like Binghamton, Johnson City and Corning as a destination in which to grow and invest. Now, the region is accelerating Southern Tier Soaring with a \$500 million State investment through the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, announced by Governor Cuomo in December 2015. The state’s \$500 million investment will incentivize private business to invest well over \$2.5 billion — and the region’s plan, as submitted, projects up to 10,200 new jobs. More information is available [here](#).

###

Established in June 2013, the **Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery** coordinates Statewide recovery efforts for Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NY

Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business, Community Reconstruction, Infrastructure and Rebuild By Design programs — GOSR invests \$4.5 billion in federal Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery funding to better prepare New York for extreme weather events. More information about GOSR and its programs is available online at: <http://stormrecovery.ny.gov/>.

Located in Vestal, NY, **Nelson Development Group LLC** understands that the Northeast is an area filled with the history of our nation, with that story often retained in buildings. These buildings can't always remain as monuments to what was, but require imaginative restoration for a new life. That's where Nelson Development Group enters the picture. Founded by Bruce Nelson in 2008 for the express purpose of restoring historical buildings and adapting them for a new life, Nelson Development Group has 30 years' experience in the construction field and is now focusing on this vital aspect of preserving our history with an eye to the future. <http://www.nelsondevelopmentgroupllc.com/>.

The **Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning** facilitates and supports activities which increase job opportunities, maximize the quality of life, and foster a vibrant rural economy within Tioga County. [Click here](#) to visit TC ED&P online, and on Facebook.

Established in 1974, the **Community Preservation Corporation** is a nonprofit affordable housing and community revitalization finance company that believes housing is central to transforming underserved neighborhoods into thriving and vibrant communities. The company provides a full suite of capital products through its construction lending, permanent lending, and equity investing platforms. Since inception, CPC has leveraged approximately \$10 billion in private and public investment to finance more than 193,000 units of multifamily housing. CPC's work with its partners has helped revitalize countless neighborhoods and provided quality housing for families, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities. Visit CPC at Visit CPC at [communitycp.com](http://communitycp.com), and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

###