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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Picente: Oneida County Taking Applications For Summer Youth Employment Program

Work sites sought for community service projects

Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. today announced that Oneida County is taking applications for its 2009 Summer Youth Employment Program. Pre-applications are available on line at the Workforce Development page of the Oneida County Government Web site (www.ocgov.net)

Although funding for the program has not yet been approved by the state, Gov. David Paterson included the money in his 2009-2010 state budget. "New York State has annually supported these high-quality programs by including money for them in the state budget, but until a final budget is passed, we won't know how many youth we can serve," Picente said. "While we wait for a final budget, we want our Oneida County young people to apply now so that once funding arrives to operate a Summer Youth Employment Program, we will have their applications on file."

Picente said that the success of programs last summer that combined career education and community service work will mean that Community Renewal programming will be a major effort in 2009. "Young people benefit from working in teams to benefit the community by tackling important jobs," Picente said. "Projects youth built last summer at the Utica Zoo are a source of pride, and helped the facility. We want to replicate that success, and we are hoping that in the coming weeks, we will hear from communities and organizations that want to partner with the Office of Workforce Development to provide challenging, rewarding, community renewal opportunities for our youth."

Picente said communities and organizations with ideas for Community Renewal projects that could be undertaken by Summer Youth Employment Program workers should contact David Mathis, Director of Workforce Development, either by e-mail at dmathis@ocgov.net or by writing him at: Oneida County Workforce Development, 209 Elizabeth St., Utica, NY 13501.

"Teamwork is one of the great lessons that needs to be learned, and we want youth to learn it as they give back to the community and take pride in their own efforts," Picente said.

Most youths in the program work about 20 hours per week over four to six weeks, depending upon the level of funding. Youths earn minimum wage (\$7.15 per hour). Youth workers are placed in well-supervised community worksites or assigned to special projects. To be eligible, youths must be between the ages of 14 and 18 and meet certain income criteria.

“The Summer Youth Employment Program provides young people with meaningful work experience and also helps them earn money that they and their families can use,” said Mathis. “What we have found is that when we combine career guidance, applied academics, and meaningful community service, the programs help our youth and help our communities.”

Mathis said because the funding level is not yet certain, Workforce Development is currently only accepting pre-applications. Youth who have applied will be contacted in early June. The Summer Youth Employment Program is expected to start in July. The program usually operates in Utica, Rome and other Oneida County communities.