

Clarence Welcomes Towne Mini.

If you have picked up a newspaper or turned on the TV during the past few weeks, the name Towne Mini certainly stands out. The Downing family has decided to move across the street to 8320 Main and to grow out their Towne Mini dealership. They didn't have too...David Downing is a resident of Orchard Park, and he could have located his dealership there. Or, he could have gone to the Town of Lockport, where the local IDA rolls out the red carpet for small businesses, offering incentives that we simply cannot match. But, he didn't. The new dealership will have 11 full time jobs paying between \$25,000-\$60,000 per year. An IMPLAN economic analysis (copies available-just email me) shows that the Towne Mini project will cost under \$85,000 in one-time tax exemptions (the majority paid for by all the residents of Erie County) and provides over \$1,789,829 in benefits-every year-to the taxpayers of the Town of Clarence. The 2015 Master Plan of the Town of Clarence clearly identifies the need for new business to offset the rising number of residential homes. When a business pays local taxes, all of the revenue falls to the bottom line. Businesses don't use the schools and can be counted on to contribute to the tax base for the next 20+ years. There are only two ways that a municipality can raise money: by upping taxes or by bringing in new business. The more revenue that a business brings in, the lower the taxes have to be for Clarence residents. In the words of my friend Brian Poliner, that's a beautiful thing!

You would think that this deal would be a no brainer, and for members of the Board of Directors of the Clarence Industrial Development agency, it was. They voted unanimously to embrace Towne Mini and to welcome them to Clarence.

The only wrinkle was grandstanding Buffalo Assemblyman Sean Ryan, who took it upon himself to try to kill the deal. Fortunately, he was as successful at killing the project as he has been in representing his 144th Assembly(Buffalo) district, where his record of being a sponsor, co-sponsor or multi sponsor of legislation for the years 2009,2010 and 2011 reads like the glazed donuts on display at Paula's Donuts: 0-0-0. Although Ryan was quick to criticize the Towne Mini deal, he was positively giddy about the early Christmas gift of five million, four hundred thousand dollars (\$500,400, 000) that was given to Rich Foods to create a 'special kitchen' earlier this month. For those of you keeping track, the 19 new jobs were created at a cost of \$318,000 per job."It's actually true economic development" Ryan said, presumably with a straight face.

Throughout this process, I was truly impressed with the all-volunteer Board of Directors of the Clarence Industrial Development Agency. In spite of all the outside static, they simply did not bat an eyelash in doing exactly the right thing for taxpayers in the Town of Clarence. Merry Christmas!

Should you have any questions, please feel free to email dhartzell@clarence.ny.us or come by for a visit. My door is always open!