

## #58 A Third Way - the Green, Sustainable Economy

The papers are full of stories now about two new ways of possible economic development for Sullivan County. One way is represented by the developer who owns all three of the major resort sites, Concord, Grossingers and Kutshers. The second way is represented by the contagion around gas drilling leases. The first way has already captured the support of the major political state level players who offer statements that the developer's plans will save the Catskill economy and therefore is deserving perhaps of as much as 50% subsidy from public funds, (\$350,000,00 to start with). The economic value of gas drilling leases and possible royalties if gas is actually extracted is unknown at this time but the estimate is that the gas deposits are huge. Strongly opposed groups have already formed around the issue of gas drilling and local community factionalism may spread and deepen.

Formation of local finance and entrepreneurial public/private partnerships dedicated to bringing the green industrial revolution to Sullivan County could be a third way. It could, and should, of course, be a major part of any and all resort development. It could, and should, substitute for gas drilling and its divisive community impacts as well as its potential for a travesty of negative impacts on environmental, wild life and human health. But, to date, the sustainable economy - the managed, controlled, healthy, next step in US historical development, has not received the strategic support of top political or business leaders at the local or national level.

At least three barriers seem to be in the way of this third way of arranging our future. The first barrier is the failure to see that climate change, which is brought about by such activities as gas drilling and very intensive use of oil-based energy economic activity that is not vital to a sustainable future, threatens our personal, regional and national security. In 2007, several million additional people joined the lines who receive food stamps and still went hungry in expensive gas guzzlers or taxis to homes that were never warm enough this winter. Substantial new ice sheets are collapsing, ocean levels and temperatures are changing, and CO2 emissions have passed the 350 ppm tipping point. Radical, life altering events are happening and continue at ever increasing speed and danger.

The second barrier is the failure to see that we have all the energy we need in our back yards. Sun, wind and hydro energy are inexhaustible, clean, promise many good paying jobs, and preserve remaining carbon resources for the transition period of the new industrial age that must be our future.

The third barrier is the failure to simply act with self-confidence, responsibility and cooperation. Very substantial local financial resources are available but remain unengaged in the urgent task of sustainable economic development despite proven high rates of profitability and the necessity for such investment.

These barriers, these failures melt into streams of renewable energy in the light of local opportunities and resources that come from the natural world and human talent. It is a matter of choice and what choice we make right now is a matter of life and death for our children. After all is said and done by everyone, the fact remains that we live in the age of massive earthly danger to all that is. We must realize that what appeared to make us strong in the past has in reality made us weak now and placed us in great danger.

For the sake of our children and all other living things, for better jobs and health for ourselves, for our honor and the beauty of our home place that nourishes us every day, we need to turn quickly, with strong resolve, to forge those partnerships that will lead Sullivan County to develop the clean, natural energy sources that arrive every day. This is the center piece of all successful economic development in the future. Greening Sullivan is really not a choice, it is a necessity.