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IDA Selects Winning Bid for Former Seneca Army Depot

Earl Martin's proposal selected for economic, environmental and financial viability

Waterloo, NY, Thursday, June 16, 2016 - The Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) today announced its selection of business owner Earl Martin as the winning bidder for the approximately 7,000 remaining acres of the former Seneca Army Depot. The IDA voted to select Martin unanimously at its board meeting yesterday.

The Depot, a former World War II ordnance depot and one of the largest developable properties in the Finger Lakes Region of Upstate New York, has been for sale since the formal Invitation to Bids was released Dec. 15. The IDA received a total of 16 bids for the property by the submission deadline of Feb. 29.

Seneca County IDA Executive Director Bob Aronson said the IDA selected Earl Martin's bid for its economic impact and environmental considerations. Martin's proposal calls for the following:

- \$13 million projected investment in the expansion of his existing company, Seneca Iron Works, and other developments with a potential to create more than 200 new jobs over a 10-year period.
- Less reliance on Chinese suppliers, with the expectation of bringing many of those opportunities to Seneca County.
- Taxable land use, making it an economic asset to Seneca County, the towns of Varick and Romulus, and the Romulus and South Seneca school districts.
- Development of approximately 20 Amish homesteads to live on and farm the land
- Willingness to have a much-desired east-west road through the Depot
- Plans to dedicate Depot land for wildlife preservation, specifically for the white deer, and a willingness to work with Seneca White Deer, Inc., and/or other organizations.

- Emphasis on local tourism, including eco-tourism and Amish/Mennonite-related tourism.
- Retention of current land uses, including existing business leases and the conveyance of the police and fire training facilities to Seneca County.

As part of the process in selecting Martin, a work group comprised of members of the Seneca County IDA and the Seneca County Board of Supervisors thoroughly reviewed all 16 submitted bids and narrowed them down to the most viable. The work group then conducted in-person interviews with those bidders and reviewed their financials.

After the interviews, the work group engaged the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) to conduct an independent economic impact study of those bids. Once completed, the study confirmed the financial strength of Martin's proposal.

"After giving all 16 bids due consideration, the IDA is confident that Earl Martin's business plan will provide the greatest benefit to the local and regional economy," said Tom Macinski, chairman of the Seneca County IDA board of directors. "As the owner of Seneca Ironworks, he has proven himself to be a successful businessman. His purchase of the former Army Depot will have long-term benefits for the County, ranging from industrial and agricultural development, to job creation and tourism."

Gary Westfall, chairman of the Seneca County Board of Supervisors and Waterloo Town Supervisor, said Martin's proposal will transform the Depot property into an economic asset for the entire region.

"This is a historic day in Seneca County," Westfall said. "For more than 50 years, the Seneca Army Depot was a thriving military base serving our country through World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Cold War. For the last 20 years, the Depot has been vastly underutilized and county leaders have worked hard to make it an economic asset again. With Earl Martin, we're confident it will be."

Earl Martin, owner of Seneca Iron Works and Deer Haven Park LLC, said he was pleased to be named the winning bidder.

"I'm honored that the IDA has selected our proposal," Martin said. "Our plans will enable Seneca Iron Works to continue growing, and will pave the way for additional industrial, agricultural and tourism development over the next 10 years. With support from the community, our plans could have far-reaching effects that will strengthen the County's economy as a whole, as well as the entire Finger Lakes Region."

Seneca County IDA Executive Director Bob Aronson said the IDA will work with Martin to finalize the contract and hopes to close on the sale by the end of the year.

"This is the best chance in a long time to revitalize the Depot property," Aronson said. "We look forward to working with Martin and helping him to create a brighter future for Seneca County."