

BEEP HAILS BIZ SPIKE

BY DANIEL BEEKMAN
DAILY NEWS WRITER

A YEAR AFTER hosting the first Bronx economic summit, Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. said yesterday that he and the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp. have delivered on boosting business.

"The proof is in the pudding," Diaz told local movers and shakers at a luncheon. "With me, you have a friend. With the BOEDC, you have an advocate. The best is yet to come."

About 12.5% of Bronx residents are unemployed, the highest rate of any borough. But the Business Initiative Corp. of New York, sponsored by the BOEDC, has made 41 loans to Bronx busi-

Says econ panel aiding firms

nesses since October 2009, totaling more than \$24 million.

The BOEDC has also arranged \$2.3 million in federal Empowerment Zone loans this year.

Diaz called them "great numbers, especially in a down economy."

He and BOEDC President Marlene Cintron applauded Bronx firms that have not only weathered the economic storm, but forged ahead.

Thanks partly to the BOEDC, Jetro Cash & Carry, a major wholesaler to bodegas around the city and country, recently

landed millions of dollars in federal new markets tax credits to move to a larger base in Hunts Point.

"We have been providing important financial support . . . and the results are already showing," said Cintron.

The tax credits helped dissuade Jetro from moving its operations to New Jersey, said CEO Stanley Fleishman. Its new facility is slated to open in 2012 and create as many as 60 new jobs.

"BOEDC helped put the deal together," said Fleishman. "We operate in other boroughs, but the Bronx has been terrific."

Diaz also singled out CTG Athletics, a small Bronx baseball equipment maker that sells to Major League Baseball and Modell's Sporting Goods.

CTG had plenty of buyers but no inventory and no willing lenders. Then BOEDC approved the company for a \$187,000 loan.

"The BOEDC really came through for my business," said CTG owner Jorge Medina.

Some critics have blasted Diaz for blocking the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory as a big-box shopping mall, over wage issues there.

"But those of you in this room know better," said Diaz. "If you do business correctly and hire Bronxites, the Bronx is open for business."

AT A GLANCE

CITYWIDE — The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council wants to keep track of how New Yorkers get around.

It is randomly surveying more than 18,000 households in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area to help transportation providers develop plans to improve transit systems, reduce traffic congestion and address air quality issues.

For more information, visit RegionalTravelSurvey.org or contact (212) 383-7241.

MANHATTAN — Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer (photo) and the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board want to make

New York more compost-friendly.

In an effort to provide healthier local food, Stringer and the citizen advisory board are launching a new program with grants up to \$750 awarded next year to community groups to start, expand and grow neighborhood composting programs.

For more information and application materials, please visit www.mbp.org/composting or call (212) 669-7664.

Bureau Staff

BOROWIDE — Calling all musicians: Public radio station WNYC's Jerome L. Greene Performance Space is in search of contestants for its second annual Battle of the Boroughs.

The winner will be featured in a concert at the Green Space and be the opening act at a City Parks Foundation SummerStage concert.

Contestants can submit samples through Dec. 31 to take part in the April 1 preliminary competition for Bronx contestants. To enter, log on to thegreenspace.org/battle.

Leigh Remizowski

SEND US YOUR NEWS TIPS

Bronx Bureau (718) 822-1174
bronxboronews@NYDailyNews.com

Brooklyn (718) 875-4455
brooklynnews@NYDailyNews.com

Queens (718) 793-3328
queensnews@NYDailyNews.com

W'chester denies delay in bias case

BY ABBY LUBY
DAILY NEWS WRITER

WESTCHESTER COUNTY Executive Rob Astorino found himself on the defensive yesterday after the feds again accused him of dragging his feet on integrating tonier white enclaves.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said Tuesday that Westchester missed several deadlines, and filed incomplete documents when it finally did get around to turning things in.

HUD said that "after a careful and exhaustive review," the agency found Westchester's most recent filing — something called an analysis of impediments — was "substantially incomplete and therefore unacceptable."

It set a new deadline of April 1.

Astorino spokesman Ned McCormack said yesterday that "in terms of the hard goals, namely assisting in the development of 750 units in 31 'eligible' communities over the next seven years, the county is ahead of schedule."

The county promised in 2009 to spend \$52 million on the 750 affordable housing units as part of a legal settlement with the U.S. government after the not-for-profit Anti-Discrimination Center sued Westchester, accusing it of failing to build affordable housing and reduce segregation in some of its more affluent communities.

Westchester board of legislators has been after Astorino since he vetoed a bill that would prohibit housing discrimination based on source of income. The veto, which prompted a stern warning from HUD, set the stage for political in-fighting between legislators and Astorino. Tuesday's condemnation from the feds added to the embattled legislators.

"The administration has to get off the dime and stop with the half measures," said Legislator Pete Harckham whose district is Bedford and Mount Kisco. "The county's actions speak loudly that they are not taking their obligations for this settlement seriously."

With Mike Jaccarino

SANTA SLEDS IN EARLY



Santa Claus and his helper, nurse Katrina Napisa, brighten spirits at St. Barnabas Hospital, where beaming 6-year-old Carl Hughes shows off a special gift. Photo by Victor Chu