

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Joseph Strasburg

New York is both vast and intimate.

Subways slide through neighborhoods with their own unique character. Metro North and LIRR shuttle millions back and forth from eastern and northern suburbs. The Staten Island Ferry connects families and workers with the city's four other boroughs. 87 takes us to Albany, the Northway up to Saratoga and beyond, 17 to the Catskills and then west to Binghamton. Western New York has major cities and suburbs, Syracuse is the center of that universe. The Hudson Valley is filled with local residents and weekenders, the Hamptons and North Fork remain steadily popular.

Private and public colleges and universities dot the state map. Businesses are everywhere, Chambers of Commerce are active in every town and county and region. Soccer and Little League and High School Football fill up weekends.

The people that make up these communities – children, parents, grandparents, aunts & uncles – are family and neighbors. When we're speaking about the concerns of residential real estate, we need to connect with people on both levels.

I've said it before and I'll say it again because it's important – New York is a state of diverse regions. The old "upstate / downstate" divide is artificial and outdated; a nonsensical boundary designed to oversimplify and separate those who should be working together.

To tell our stories - to make our case in Albany - we need to continue our work in coalition with other industry groups. Working with others isn't a sign of weakness. It's a sign of

strength. Finding likeminded groups and advocates in every region of New York requires tamping down ego without misplacing our priorities. It requires listening instead of waiting to talk. It requires finding aligned interests instead of disagreeing or being disagreeable.

Explaining how policies regulating apartment buildings also impact single family homes depends on having connections with civic associations. Discussing how Good Cause Eviction, for example, would wreck off-campus housing options for colleges around New York depends on being able to connect with all of those colleges. Being heard depends on encouraging people to listen.

Coalitions also have limits, it's true, but their strengths far outweigh them. Transparency and accountability define healthy coalitions.

As we approach another state legislative session, I am pleased to report that RSA is in a strong position to responsibly advance industry priorities as we push back on reckless proposals targeting housing providers. We are again leaders in a statewide coalition of regional industry organizations that meet weekly, stay in constant communication and are mature in airing our disagreements. We draft to-do lists, follow up with each other, compare notes on what public officials are saying and we plan events to connect with local community activists.

In other words, our hard work is based on genuine connections with neighbors from throughout the state with whom we agree on most things. Work as vast and intimate as New York. ■

RSA and REBNY are working with a team from HR&A Advisors, Inc. (HR&A) to analyze the impact of the Housing Stability Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA) on rent regulated housing to develop a clear fact-based understanding of its effects. We will need your participation.

Stay tuned for future email blasts on this important survey.

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