



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Marnie LaVigne elected NYSEDC chair at 2018 annual meeting

Albany, N.Y. – Marnie LaVigne, Ph.D., president and CEO of Launch NY, a nonprofit venture development organization and Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) serving 27 counties in Upstate New York, was elected to serve a two-year term as chair of the New York State Economic Development Council (NYSEDC) at its 2018 annual meeting in Cooperstown last week.

For more than 40 years, NYSEDC has been the state's principal organization representing economic development professionals, colleges and universities, and public-sector enterprises. LaVigne served as chair-elect for the previous two years.

"Marnie brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role as the new board chair. Her unique background is exactly what the NYSEDC needs as we grow our membership and move the organization into the future," said NYSEDC Executive Director Ryan Silva.

LaVigne has spent more than 25 years in both the private and public sectors creating new products and start-up businesses, driving innovation and economic growth in high-tech industries, such as life sciences, informatics, and advanced manufacturing. In 2014, she became president and CEO of Launch NY, which has provided pro bono mentoring to more than 750 startup companies employing more than 2,500 people and built the most active seed in Upstate New York, while catalyzing the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Previously, she introduced the new Office of Economic Development and led efforts involving work in business attraction, retention, and startups with hundreds of companies at the University at Buffalo as associate vice president for economic development from 2012 to 2014 and as director of business development at the New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics & Life Sciences and the UB Center for Advanced Biomedical and Bioengineering Technology from 2005 until 2012. Her passion for working with start-ups took root from her experience launching health informatics businesses with colleagues in the 1990s as she finished her doctoral degree at the University of Rochester, which resulted in growing two different firms with more than 100 employees and two initial public offerings.

"Economic development today is synonymous with creating an innovation economy that engages everyone in our community," said LaVigne. "I look forward to facilitating our work with all stakeholders given our pivotal role as the only private-sector, statewide organization dedicated to economic transformation throughout New York."

Other officers elected to two-year terms include:

- Chair-Elect: Patrick Kelly, chief executive officer, St. Lawrence County IDA
- Vice Chair: Tom Kucharski, president and chief executive officer, Invest Buffalo Niagara
- Vice Chair: Jamie Johnson, executive director, Steuben County IDA
- Vice Chair: Laurie Villasuso, chief operating officer and executive vice president, Orange County IDA/The Accelerator
- Treasurer: Kipp Hicks, executive director, Madison County IDA
- Secretary: Art Hamlin, director, Upstate NY Economic Development and Corporate Citizenship, National Grid
- Immediate Past Chair: Steve Hyde, president and chief executive officer, Genesee County Economic Development Center

Additionally, three new board members were appointed:

- Melinda Mack, executive director, New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP)
- Rochelle Powell, managing director, New York, Prager and Co. LLC
- Sarah Reginelli, president, Capitalize Albany Corporation

About New York State Economic Development Council (NYSEDC):

NYSEDC is the state's principal organization representing economic development professionals. Its 900 members include the leadership of Industrial Development Agencies, Local Development Corporations, commercial and investment banks, underwriters, bond counsels, utilities, chambers of commerce and private corporations. The purpose of NYSEDC is to promote the economic development of the state and its communities, encourage sound practices in the conduct of regional and statewide development programs, and develop education programs that enhance the professional development skills of NYSEDC members.

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