

## Cuomo taps Old Forge woman to lead Park Agency

By Jordan Lipschik

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has tapped Leilani "Lani" Crafts Ulrich to be the new chairwoman of the Adirondack Park Agency and nominated Sherman Craig to be a new commissioner of the agency that oversees land use and building regulations inside the park's 6 million acres.

"The Adirondack Park is one of this nation's greatest natural resources, and I am confident that it will thrive under Lani and Sherman's leadership," Cuomo said.

"Both Lani and Sherman have dedicated their lives to the preservation and development of the park. They recognize the need to balance economic development within the Adirondacks with constant environmental protections. I look forward to working with them to further the development and preservation of this extraordinary park," Cuomo added.

The Adirondack Park Agency was created in 1971 by the New York Legislature to develop land-use plans for both public and private lands within the park.

Ulrich, who has served as a commissioner on the agency's board since November of 2004, is looking forward to using her experiences as the chair.

"As a resident of Old Forge in the Adirondack Park, I know firsthand the great potential of the park. Each summer, I have worked with over 100 government agencies, town and villages across the park, listening to their concerns and working toward common ground on land-use issues," Ulrich said.

"As chairwoman, I look forward to using this and other community development experience to develop planning opportunities, as well as to fine-tune the regulatory process in ways that will empower communities and maximize the potential of the park's land use while continuing to protect its world class natural resources. I thank Governor Cuomo for this exciting opportunity," she added.

Ulrich moved to Old Forge in 1994, where she still resides with her husband today. In 1997, she began a coordination of community discussions, which eventually became the Central Adirondack Partnership for the 21st Century, a regional nonprofit community development organization dedicated to finding a balance between nature and commerce in hamlets on the Western side of the park.

Additionally, Ulrich sits on the Board of Directors of the Central Adirondack Business Association and is a member of the Architectural Preservation Committee of the town of Webb Historical Association. She also sits on the Board of the Adirondack Community Housing Trust

and serves as a member of the New York state delegation to the Northern Forest Center's Sustainable Economies Initiative. She has been awarded the Adirondack North County Citizen of the Year Award for her work with Communities 2000.

Craig, a retired school teacher and administrator, is currently operating his own business, Wanakena Woodworks, which makes furniture by using resources within the Adirondack Park. An active outdoor traveler, he is a member of several organizations including the Clifton-Fine Economic Corp, Adirondack Mountain Club and the Waterfront Revitalization Project. He too is looking forward to working in the agency.

"It would be a privilege to serve as a commissioner on the APA Board and I thank Governor Cuomo for this nomination. I am pleased to be able to return to public service in New York, especially a position involving the Adirondack Park where I call home," Craig said.

He adds, "The park offers an abundance of unique resources, many of which I use in my business and can be leveraged to develop the local economy. I look forward to working with the agency to help Governor Cuomo rebuild New York."

Craig worked in Pittsfield schools as a principal, teacher, building administrator and district administrator. As principal of a middle school, his building and district won several honors, including a National School of Recognition award and the New York State Governor's Excelsior Award for quality and efficiency. From 1973 to 1975, Craig served as director and headmaster of the International School of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. He retired in 1999 as the assistant to the superintendent for technology.

Several legislators support both the governor's nomination and appointment.

"I applaud Governor Andrew Cuomo's selection of Lani Ulrich to lead the Adirondack Park Agency. I've known Lani for many years and am fully confident she will provide high-quality leadership for this agency whose decisions impact the lives and livelihoods of many I represent," said Sen. Betty Little, R-Queensbury.

"Sherman Craig ... will be St. Lawrence County's first 'in-park' commissioner. It is critical that we have all the park seats filled as this agency moves forward with a new chair and with many important projects to consider. As a small business owner, Sherman brings an important perspective to the board and is another smart choice by Governor Cuomo," Little added.

Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward, Willsboro, agrees with Little.

"I commend the governor for once again listening to the local residents and taking their thoughts into consideration before making his decision. I am very pleased with his appointments and I am looking forward to working closely with both Lani Ulrich and Sherman Craig on issues that are important to the North Country and those living in the Adirondack Park."

Brian Houseal, the executive director of the Adirondack Council, congratulates Cuomo on his choices and feels that Ulrich and Craig's experiences will help them as leaders of the Adirondack Park Agency.

"As a co-founder of the Adirondack Common Ground Alliance, Lani has demonstrated the leadership skills needed for the park today, as we seek solutions that will benefit the park's communities and the economy, while also protecting the environment. Sherman Craig also brings balance to the APA, with experience in both economic development and environmental stewardship," Houseal said.

Ulrich is the first woman to head this agency since it was established. Craig will need to be confirmed by the Senate before he may assume his new role. If confirmed, he will take the seat vacated by Curtis Stiles, who stepped down from the board last August.