

Restored Wadsworth Mansion is one key to our county's continued economic growth

MIDDLETOWN — Last week, I had the opportunity to attend the long-awaited ribbon cutting ceremony and dedication for the Wadsworth Mansion at Long Hill Estates.

I was so honored to be among the more than 500 officials and guests who were invited to attend this truly outstanding event. I watched as Mayor Dominique Thornton, as well as former mayors, Sebastian Garofalo, Paul Gionfriddo, Thomas Serra and Maria Madsen Holzberg and the Wadsworth Mansion Building Committee cut the ribbon to open this historic mansion once again to the city of Middletown. I must say, it was a terrific way to begin the new millennium.

As I toured the mansion, I was amazed and impressed on how Kronenberger & Sons Restorations Inc. was able to restore this building that seemed to be damaged beyond repair by fire, water and vandalism to its orig-



ON THE MOVE

inal splendor. We are very fortunate to have a first-rate construction company like this headquartered right here in Middletown. Kronenberger is known up and down the East Coast for its restoration projects.

Wadsworth Mansion can now be counted among our area's

premier facilities, and I would like to praise Mayor Thornton, all of the past mayors and members of the City Council who had a hand in bringing this historic mansion back to life. I would also like to recognize and thank the members of the Building Committee, especially its chair, Joyce Kirkpatrick, for their devotion to this massive undertaking. Many volunteers contributed much time and talent to see that this project came to fruition.

The citizens of Middletown should also be applauded for their support of the two referenda that were held to fund the Wadsworth Mansion's restoration effort worth more than \$5 million. The city's new banquet facility and conference center is again a viable part of our community and is undoubtedly a key piece to Middletown's economic growth.

It didn't take long for the Wadsworth Mansion at Long Hill

Estates to get into full swing since its grand opening on Jan. 1, 2000, which more than 4,000 people attended. The mansion hosted a wedding reception on New Year's Eve and many other weddings as well as other private functions are already booked for the coming months.

I encourage our Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce members to take advantage of our Business After Work function, catered by Tom McDowell of The Pavilion Inc., to be held tomorrow at the restored mansion from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The Chamber is very excited to give all of our members who attend the opportunity to take a tour of this truly outstanding facility.

In addition, the mayor has reserved the mansion for a July concert that will be open to the public. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this event and take a tour of this magnificent building.

The Chamber is extremely proud of the city of Middletown's efforts and determination in the completion of Wadsworth Mansion's long renovation process.

I am confident that The Long Hill Estate Authority, under the outstanding leadership of Lee Osborne and Deborah Moore, will do a terrific job in overseeing the mansion.

Wadsworth Mansion at Long Hill Estates is once again a valuable community resource. The years of dreaming, planning and execution have become a reality and the Wadsworth has been given a new life on the heels of a new millennium.

The timing of this project is a terrific way to show that Middletown is definitely "On The Move" in the 21st century.

Larry McHugh is the president of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. His column appears Mondays