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## **Stringer to NYBC: “I’ll Work With You”**

By Rayna Katz



NEW YORK CITY—Two months into his tenure as New York City Comptroller, Scott Stringer addressed a packed house Thursday morning in Midtown at the New York Building Congress’ construction industry breakfast forum.

In his prepared remarks, he made clear the city’s intention to invest in the technology field and higher education, two prospective growth industries while—during the question and answer period—Stringer emphasized his willingness to work with the construction industry to improve the city’s procurement process and other broken systems.

“We need to make investments that promote New York City’s future as a hub of industry and innovation,” he said. “Over the past five years,

New York City’s institutions of higher education invested \$4.2 billion to maintain and expand their campuses. This will create more than 49,000 construction and permanent jobs. Beyond that, these universities get hundreds of millions of dollars a year in research and development grants; the benefits of this investment and job creation will be felt for decades.

“But they’re even more important at a time when our financial service sector remains 30,000 jobs short of where it was before the recession. We must find new industries to power our next chapter growth,” he said.

That includes the high-tech sector as well as educational, medical, and cultural institutions, Stringer asserted, which would create jobs in all five boroughs.

Strength also would come from enabling small businesses to take advantage of all that the city has to offer, he said. “We need to empower businesses, especially those that have historically faced discrimination and barriers to entry.

“Many of these small businesses still lack the tools and training to navigate our byzantine procurement process and the city does far too little to help them,” he continued, garnering applause.

Stringer continued with another comment that must have been music to the industry’s ears. “We also must modernize New York City’s office space. We need to re-imagine the kind of future work environments that will be conducive to growth. A younger generation has created work environments that are open, collaborative and shared. All they need is a fast, reliable Internet connection and an innovative idea.”

He went on to note that the city isn’t at—or perhaps not even close to—maximum efficiency when it comes to broadband access. Chattanooga, TN is more effective on this front than NYC, Stringer claimed.

NYBC president Richard Anderson asked the Comptroller about reforming the city’s complex procurement system, as well as “damages for delay” and labor laws.

Said Stringer, “This is the time to talk about how we go forward—together. Internally we’re already talking about ways we can work more collaboratively on these issues. We need ideas from all of you and we’ll be calling on you.”