

The Post-Star

New APA director receives high marks

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Local government officials and environmental groups say they're pleased with the selection of Terry deFranco Martino as executive director of the Adirondack Park Agency.

Martino, of Franklin County, has headed up the Adirondack North Country Association for the past 18 years and has more than two decades of experience in economic development and community planning. That experience will serve her well as she takes the reins of the APA, the controversial state agency that regulates land use in the Adirondack Park.

"We're very pleased with her selection. She's worked well with local government," said Fred Monroe, executive director of the Adirondack Park Agency Local Government Review Board, a state-appointed panel that monitors the APA.

John Sheehan, a spokesman for the Adirondack Council, an environmental organization, said Martino's background in community planning will be beneficial as the APA works with towns and villages to develop APA-approved land use plans.

"We think she brings a really good knowledge of local politics and very good rapport with local government to a job that is very much in need of her skills as a planner," he said.

With an APA-approved plan in place, review of matters such as two- and three-lot subdivisions can be handled at the local level. That would leave more time for the APA board to focus on development that is regional in scope or potentially could set a precedent, Sheehan said.

Martino, of Onchiota, will take the \$90,800-a-year post on Aug. 12. She will take over from James Connolly, who has been serving as acting executive director in addition to other staff duties.

Martino is wrapping up her duties as executive director of ANCA, a regional economic development and community planning organization. She has headed the organization since 1991 and was program director from 1986-1991.

The organization, under Martino's leadership, did much to promote and expand markets for forest products and developed regional community plans through the federal Scenic Byways program, said state Sen. Elizabeth Little, R-Queensbury.

Scenic Byways focuses on tourism and economic development along scenic roadways.

Martino has been instrumental in the Common Ground Alliance, a regional initiative to build consensus between environmentalists, local government officials and business interests in the Adirondack Park, Little said.

"What I think is really good about Terry is she has been involved in the economic issues of the Adirondacks, working with small businesses and knowing the struggles they have, and will really be a person who, as executive director there (at the APA), knows the need for the balance between the environment and the economics of the Adirondack Park," Little said.

Martino was busy with meetings on Wednesday and Thursday and was not available to discuss her appointment, said a receptionist at the Adirondack North Country Association.

Martino said in a press release she is thankful for the opportunity to work with Gov. David Paterson and APA commissioners to address the future of the Adirondack Park.

"Throughout my career, I have recognized the tremendous value of balancing economic and community development with environmental stewardship inside the park," she said.