

Elections:

Jim Russell: “We Are Here To Honor Workers Who Made Our Country Great”

Jim Russell, Republican congressional candidate running in the 18th district against incumbent Democrat Nita Lowey, held a press conference this Labor Day at the site of the old GM plant in Sleepy Hollow, New York.

By Robert Rennie

Congressional candidate, Jim Russell, spoke to a crowd of supporters at the site of what used to be a bustling, center of manufacturing right here in New York.

The plant used to employ approximately 3,500 workers at its height, but was shut down in 1996. The plant has since been abandoned and is now an empty lot alongside the Hudson River.

“This old GM plant is a symbol of the death of American manufacturing,” Russell said.

Russell high-lighted the fact that the plant closed at the same time the North-American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was passed. He noted that his opponent, 22 year incumbent, Nita Lowey, voted in favor of NAFTA.

Russell also pointed out that since GM received federal bail-out money, the company hasn't reinvested in the U.S., instead opting to build a plant in Ramos Arizpe, Mexico. The company is even considering rehabilitating an old plant in Indonesia that has been closed for five years.

According to Dow Jones Newswire, GM has invested \$4.1 billion in Mexico over the past four years and the company may spend upwards of \$150 million on re-starting a former plant in



Indonesia, none of which will help to provide Americans with jobs.

“I thought bail-out funds were supposed to be used to stimulate the American economy, not the economies of foreign countries,” Russell said.

Russell compared GM to four large companies in Westchester who have now left the district, or New York State altogether: Stewart Stamping, Precision Valve, Taylor Care Center, and Teva Pharmaceuticals. Altogether, the four companies, who've all left as of 2008, provided 660 jobs for Westchester and Rockland residents.

Russell said New York and Westchester County may continue to lose jobs if we don't support policies that encourage businesses to locate in New York.

“We already have 35,000 Westchester residents unemployed, in addition to the 11,000 Rockland residents who are out of a job. This needs to stop. We need to encourage companies to want to locate here,” Russell said.

Russell supporters stood against the backdrop of the desolate lot while holding signs that read, “Stop Outsourcing American Jobs.” Many were energized

by the speech and the irony of the event.

One supporter, Jim Faulkner, said, “Jim Russell understands that the outsourcing of American jobs is the result onerous tax legislation and compliance costs.”

A former Lowey-supporter, Lu Caldera, was also at the event. Caldera is disillusioned with economic policies that send jobs overseas, while everyday Americans suffer from lack of work. Caldera is now a Russell supporter.

“Nita used to represent the area, but now she's become an echo of the DNC,” Caldera said.

Long-time Russell supporter, Vincent Malfetano, said Jim Russell would be a welcome change to Westchester. He notes something unique that distinguishes Russell from his opponent, Nita Lowey—his humble, self-effacing nature.

“Russell has his heart set on helping the American people. He's not enamored with self-aggrandizement. He's results-oriented and has an intellect of a higher-order,” Malfetano said.