



## US 'Know-How' Shared In Belfast

March 7, 2011

**American business experts are in Belfast for two important seminars focusing on the economic development and regeneration of the city.**

John Palmieri, Director of Boston Redevelopment Authority, was guest speaker at Belfast City Council's 'State of the City Development Debate' in the City Hall today, which looked at sustainable development in these uncertain economic times.

While Rob Walsh, Commissioner of New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS), will be the keynote speaker at a Business Improvements Districts (BIDS) Seminar in Belfast Waterfront on Thursday (10 March). The State of the City Initiative was set up in Belfast in 2004 to enable business development organisations from across the public and private sector to work together on the development and regeneration issues that face the city.

Facilitated by the Irish Institute at Boston College, Mr Palmieri led the 'State of the City Breakfast Seminar' today which was attended by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Pat Convery; Councillor Conor Maskey, Chairman of Belfast City Council's Development Committee and the US Consul General, Kamala Lakshmir, as well as senior figures from the private, community, statutory sectors and academia.

Mr Palmieri has over 25 years experience in planning and economic development and is currently spearheading a number of major initiatives in Boston.

These include the development of the South Boston Waterfront as an innovation centre, the revitalisation of Boston's historic shopping district and the growth of the city's core economic sectors.

He has also played an active role in many professional organisations including the Urban Design Institute, the International Economic Development Council and the American Society for Public Administration.

New York Commissioner Rob Walsh has responsibility for New York's 64 Business Improvement Districts - the largest network of BIDS in the country - which deliver nearly \$80 million dollars in supplementary services for the direct benefit of more than 64,000 businesses.

The BIDS Seminar in Belfast Waterfront Hall on Thursday aims to raise awareness of the potential of Business Improvement Districts as a means of harnessing the collective commitment of the private sector to the development of an area, in collaboration with other partners.

The seminar will also offer an opportunity to debate some of the challenges presented to the city administration in working with BIDS.