

Combating 'hate rhetoric' in a big way

KEARNY –

A local industrialist is responsible for a billboard erected along Truck Rt. 1&9 in Kearny that decries anti-immigrant sentiment, as expressed in the recent Republican presidential debates.

The billboard reads: “Thank you Mayor Fulop for Fighting the Hate #MakeJerseyGreat.”

Wendy Neu, chairwoman and CEO of Hugh Neu Corp., owner of Kearny Point Industrial Park in south Kearny, told The Observer that it was her company that conceived and executed the billboard venture.

“I was very concerned about the hate rhetoric occurring in the public domain,” Neu said. “It is dangerous and can be inciteful and should not be tolerated.”



Photo courtesy Hugo Neu Corp.

Billboard offers 'anti-hate' message.

Among his pronouncements as a GOP hopeful, Donald Trump has called for Mexico to build a wall along the border to keep illegal immigrants from crossing into the U.S., blocking Muslims from entering the U.S. and monitoring

mosques in the U.S.

In that context, Trump has said he recalled “thousands” of Jersey City Muslims cheering the World Trade Center’s destruction on 9/11 – a claim that Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop – and others -- have

sought to debunk.

Asked if the billboard was a direct response to the latter issue, Neu said: “It did come up because of Trump’s remarks about Jersey City but we condemn all hate rhetoric, hate speech, and we had the opportunity with the billboard to go public with that.”

Neu added that as an immigrant herself – [she immigrated at an early age, with her parents, from their native England to the U.S.] – “I know that what makes a country great is diversity and we should encourage it.”

Asked whether her public message could be interpreted as an endorsement of Fulop as a prospective candidate for governor of New Jersey in 2017, Neu said she was “not making a political statement” of any kind. “It could have been anyone as saying this

[hate speech] is wrong,” she added.

As for her 200,000 square foot Kearny Point industrial park development, Neu said the project is “evolving,” with “six or seven” prospective tenants interested in occupying the “flex-space,” four-story building and annex, where the Neu Co. will be operating a recycling business.

“A good percentage of the building is leased already and several leases are being drawn up,” Neu said. Among those expected to rent space, she said, are a gourmet cookie retailer, clothing concierge storage facility, media company, photography studio and fine art restoration service.

“We expect to hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony in January,” she said.

– Ron Leir