

Empire State Development News

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EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$1 MILLION IN UPSTATE REGIONAL BLUEPRINT FUNDING FOR FINGER LAKES REGION

Diamond Packaging awarded \$700,000; project will retain 90 jobs and create 100 new jobs

Empire State Development today announced that Diamond Packaging has been awarded \$700,000 in Round I of the Upstate Regional Blueprint Funding. Diamond Packaging will retain 90 existing jobs and create 100 new jobs with this investment. The announcement of \$17.5 million in Round I of Upstate Regional Blueprint funding was made today by Governor David A. Paterson. More than \$1 million in funding was awarded to the Finger Lakes Region.

The Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund was designed to finance business investment, infrastructure upgrades and downtown redevelopment that will advance New York's economic vitality. The \$120 million Fund, announced by Governor David A. Paterson in May, supports projects that help provide a framework for future growth in regions with stymied development.

Diamond Packaging is a high-end printing and packaging company that will invest \$5 million in a new printing press machine to service new and existing customers. This investment will ensure that the company retains its largest customers, as well as assist in attracting new business. In addition to the Blueprint funds the Company will be receiving SBA 504 funds approved through the Monroe County Industrial Development Corporation, bank financing, and cash equity from the Company.

"The Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund is another brick in our foundation as we strive towards sustainable growth of our Upstate New York communities," said Empire State Development Chairman and CEO designate, Dennis M. Mullen. "This strategic investment directly responds to the unique challenges we face in the Upstate economy. Not only will the Blueprint Fund help the small businesses and developing communities that need it most, but it will have a resounding effect on all of New York by creating and retaining jobs, spurring economic development and building stronger urban cores that will position our economy for future generations."

"Blueprint Fund announcements like this mean that a dynamic and innovative company like Diamond Packaging, can continue to create jobs and attract business for the Finger Lakes region," said ESD Regional Director Robert McNary. "We are excited about this project and anticipate assisting more businesses with future rounds of Upstate Regional Blueprint funding."

"Packaging is a very capital intensive business. Our customers are continually demanding new technology, faster turn-around, increased service and greater flexibility and capability," said Diamond Packaging CEO, Karla Fichter. "Investing in new technology continues a long standing tradition at Diamond and allows us to satisfy the demands of our customers and grow the Company. Empire State Development, the Monroe County Industrial Development Corporation and our lender all play large roles in our ability to maintain and improve our competitive position in the industry."

"This project entails the acquisition of a multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art eight color printing press with the latest in coating capabilities," said Diamond Packaging President, Kirsten Werner. "In addition

to helping retain and solidify our customer base, the press provides for increased decorative capabilities and capacity, allowing us to penetrate additional markets, generate new customers, and to grow revenues and employment.”

The Blueprint Fund invests in projects that advance local development and small businesses, including providing financing for the purchase of equipment, real estate or other needs. Eligible applicants include municipalities, businesses, academic institutions and non-profits. Awards range from \$100,000 to \$5 million. The program will give a preference to requests for loans, with principal repayments able to be recycled for future projects.

In addition to Diamond Packaging, SIGMA/Baxter International LLC was the other Finger Lakes company awarded Upstate Regional Blueprint Funding. SIGMA LLC manufactures medication delivery intravenous infusion pumps at its plant in Medina. The company will invest \$1.76 million in new machinery and associated leasehold improvement costs to increase manufacturing production capacity. SIGMA will receive \$350,000 in Blueprint Funds to assist with this project and will add 60 new jobs to the region. This investment will solidify their continued operation in Medina.

To ensure that each project meets the specific needs of its region, all applications undergo a competitive review process by ESD’s Regional and Central Offices. Requests for business investment assistance are reviewed on a rolling basis, whereas requests for infrastructure and downtown redevelopment assistance follow a quarterly calendar.

This is the first of four rounds of funding to be awarded, applicants who were not awarded funding in this round may be considered for future rounds. More information about the Upstate Regional Blueprint Funds and application forms can be found at www.nylovesbiz.com. Applications for round II funding will be accepted until October 15, 2009.

Empire State Development is New York’s chief economic development agency. ESD also oversees the marketing of “I LOVE NY,” the State’s iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit www.nylovesbiz.com.

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