

## Empire State Development News

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### FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

5/27/2009

## ESD PARTNERS WITH THE YOUNG LEADERS CONGRESS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN NEW YORK STATE

Empire State Development (ESD) will be partnering with the Young Leaders Congress to launch three new initiatives aimed at addressing the "brain drain" in New York. Over the last two decades, the rate of population decline in some parts of the State was as high as 22 percent among 20-34 year-olds and 29 percent among 25-29 year-olds. Further findings show this rate continues to accelerate. The Governor realizes one of the best ways to revitalize our Upstate and suburban communities are not only to attract young professionals to these regions, but to also provide reasons for them to stay.

"The 'brain drain' issue is one which has been of serious concern for New York State, and particularly Upstate, for decades," said Governor David A. Paterson. "Young people are the backbone to any community, as the future of that community's businesses, workforce, education and societal well-being lie with them. It is absolutely essential that we begin addressing this issue immediately and aggressively to end this declining movement in our State's population."

New York's workforce represents a unique and vibrant asset for our State, and we are committed to providing the broadest set of opportunities for our young people now and for generations to come."

ESD will be working with the Young Leaders Congress to:

**Support Regional Marketing with a Jobs and Internship Portal.** The web-based portal will help attract talented young professionals to opportunities across New York State. The portal will not only allow businesses to reach new audiences, but it will also serve as a tool to market the region by simultaneously advertising job openings while promoting social networks, social and cultural activities and transplant support services.

**Implement a YPO Start-Up Program.** The *YPO Start-Up Program* will help establish and grow young professional organizations in their local areas by promoting idea and information sharing, as well as build upon community support. The *YPO Start-Up Program* will strengthen the young professional community in New York State by encouraging young professional organizations from across Upstate and Downstate to leverage each others' strengths and assets. The goals of this program are to serve as a catalyst for the creation of YPOs across the State, to enhance existing organizations and to foster new initiatives building on collaboration and best practices.

**Implement a Livable Communities Capacity Grant Program.** Young professionals are not only looking for a job with great potential, but also places to live that provide opportunities to engage in the growth and vitality of the community. Through the Capacity Grant Program, members of the Young Leaders Congress will work with regional community partners and young professional groups to provide financial support for programs that will have a significant impact on the quality of life and the revitalization of the State's downtown cores. Programs could include entrepreneurship, regional marketing, adaptive re-use, expansion of green space, public arts and culture programs, civic engagement and volunteerism.

ESD President & CEO Marisa Lago said: "The Young Leaders Congress addresses one of the greatest challenges that our State's economy faces: the exodus of our young New Yorkers. Working with Governor Paterson, and the Young Leaders Congress we will continue to examine the obstacles to the revitalization of Upstate New York with the goal of providing all our young New Yorkers with not only

solid job opportunities, but also thriving social opportunities. It is my hope that by reversing this troubling trend Upstate and suburban New York can better compete in the world economy through retaining and creating jobs, and strengthening our communities' quality of life."

ESD Upstate President Dennis Mullen said: "Connecting our young people to each other, to local businesses and professional organizations and to their communities is a critical component for retaining and attracting young professionals to New York State, and particularly to our Upstate regions. Establishing a solid network for students and residents alike will only enhance a sense of pride and commitment to one's community. The State looks forward to working with the private sector to ensure strong networks are available for young professionals and students to utilize for their professional and social well-being."

Binghamton University Director of Federal Relations and Young Leaders Congress Chairman Michael Frame said: "The Young Leaders Congress appreciates the Governor and Empire State Development renewing their focus on the important issue of attracting and retaining talent. The under-40 demographic is vital to the future economic development of New York and these three new initiatives will be part of a comprehensive, statewide approach to address this issue."

The Young Leaders Congress was formed as a result of the I Live New York Summit, which convened more than 600 key stakeholders at the State University of New York at Cortland in the Fall of 2007. This group is comprised of State-appointed young leaders from across New York who are dedicated and passionate about finding creative solutions to address the State's net loss of young people and to make New York State a more attractive place to live, work, raise a family and start a business.

#### **Members of the Young Leaders Congress:**

- Michael Frame, Binghamton University, Chairman of the Young Leaders Congress
- Jeremy Cooney, Albany College of Law, Capital Region
- Catherine Hedgeman, The Stakeholders, Capital Region
- Dominic Robinson, 40 Below, Central New York Region
- Merike Treier, Adapt CNY, Central New York Region
- Jessica Wood, ROC City, Rochester, Finger Lakes Region
- Gwen O'Shea, Health & Welfare Council of Long Island, Long Island Region
- Akilah Thompson, Deloitte, Long Island Region
- Michelle McCarrick Truett, Genesis Young Professionals, Utica, Mohawk Valley Region
- Johnita Mizelle, Progress Investment Management Company, New York City Region
- Michelle Capone, Greater Watertown Jaycees, North Country Region
- Michael Cashman, Adirondack Young Professionals/SUNY Plattsburgh, North Country Region
- Leslie O'Hara, Emerge NNY, Watertown, North Country Region
- Kathryn Fletcher, Catalysts for Intellectual Capital 2020/H2 Innovations, Southern Tier Region
- Michael Fuller, Pipeline4Progress/ Fuller Group, Southern Tier Region
- Maclain Berhaupt, Southwestern NY, Western New York Region
- Michael Pietkiewicz, University of Buffalo, Western New York Region

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](http://www.nylovesbiz.com).

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