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## **NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNOUNCES PUBLIC FORUMS**

*Public is invited to three community sessions across the region intended to share ideas for an economic development strategy*

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council today announced details of three public forums designed for residents to provide suggestions on initiatives and strategies and aid in the creation of the council's five-year strategic economic development plan for the North Country, which includes Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties.

Council Co-Chairs Dr. Tony Collins and Garry Douglas said the forums will provide the public with details concerning the process for developing a strategic plan for the North Country and seek input.

"The council believes it is imperative to let North Country residents know how we will be drafting a strategic plan for economic development in our part of the state, and how important their participation is to the process from the very beginning," said Collins, president of Clarkson University and North Country Regional Economic Development Council co-chair.

Douglas, president of the North Country Chamber of Commerce and North Country Regional Economic Development Council co-chair, said the first set of meetings will be held in Plattsburgh, Tupper Lake and Watertown. "Our plan is to hold public sessions to gather input in each of the seven counties as we move toward our Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> deadline. We want and need as much input as possible, and these three forums will get the ball rolling."

The public forums are scheduled as follows:

**Plattsburgh: Monday, Sept. 12, 2011, 6 - 8 p.m.**

SUNY Plattsburgh  
George K. Hawkins Hall  
Hyman and Frances Krinovitz Recital Hall  
47 Beekman Street, Plattsburgh

**Tupper Lake: Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2011, 6 - 8 p.m.**

The Wild Center  
Flammer Theatre  
45 Museum Drive, Tupper Lake

**Watertown: Monday, Sept. 19, 2011, 6 - 8 p.m.**

Jefferson Community College  
James McVean College Center Building  
Robert R. and Jean S. Sturtz Theater  
1220 Coffeen Street, Watertown

Each of these first public meetings will begin with an overview of the purpose of the regional council and the strategic planning process. There will be a brief question and answer period relating to the process before moving into an open forum for public comment, offering an opportunity for community members to provide ideas and suggestions on initiatives and projects, as well as the issues and opportunities facing the region.

To register for the forums, please visit [www.northcountryopenforbusiness.com](http://www.northcountryopenforbusiness.com) or email [nys-northcountry@empire.state.ny.us](mailto:nys-northcountry@empire.state.ny.us). Please call 518-561-5642 or 315-785-7907 if unable to RSVP online. Seating may be limited so please register early.

In addition to these public forums, the North Country Regional Economic Development Council continues to encourage all residents from the region to submit suggestions and comments at <http://www.northcountryopenforbusiness.com> to maximize public input on this important initiative.

Please note, the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council has been moved to **Monday, September 12**, at SUNY Potsdam. Please visit the website to register for the public portion of the meeting.

Created by Governor Cuomo, the Regional Economic Development Councils represent a fundamental shift in the state's approach to economic development—from a top-down development model to a community-based approach that emphasizes regions' unique assets, harnesses local expertise, and empowers each region to set plans and priorities.

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council is one of 10 regional councils across New York that will serve as a single point of contact for economic activity in the region. Through their strategic planning process, the councils will identify and expedite priority projects that demonstrate the greatest potential for job growth. As part of the initiative, up to \$1 billion

in state resources will be accessible to eligible economic development projects through existing program grants and tax credits.

Each regional council will draft a strategic plan for the development of their region, which will provide a regional vision for economic development, address critical issues and opportunities, and lay out an implementation roadmap for future growth. The state will work with the regional councils to align state resources and policies, eliminate unnecessary barriers to growth and prosperity, and streamline the delivery of government services and programs to help the Regional Councils carry out their plans for development.

To learn more about each regional council and their economic development plans, visit [www.nyworks.ny.gov](http://www.nyworks.ny.gov).

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