



**For Immediate Release:** Wednesday, September 28, 2011

**Contact:**

Austin Shafran (ESD) | [ashafran@empire.state.ny.us](mailto:ashafran@empire.state.ny.us) | (800) 260-7313

Jola Szubielski (ESD) | [jszubielski@empire.state.ny.us](mailto:jszubielski@empire.state.ny.us) | (800) 260-7313

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

*Public is invited to four additional 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 four additional 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.

This second series of public forums will update residents on the council's progress and the strategic planning process.

"The first three forums provided excellent input and I know these next four will be helpful and productive as well," said President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce and North Country Regional Economic Development Council co-chair Garry Douglas. "When these upcoming forums are completed, we will have been to all seven counties in the North Country, which is very important given our region's size and diversity. We will then be working diligently to draft our strategic plan by the end of October, and we continue to welcome information and suggestions on all aspects of what will be a very multi-faceted roadmap for the next five years."

"Establishment of strategies that are right for the North Country region extends well beyond maximizing funding streams from the state's new economic development model," said

President of Clarkson University and North Country Regional Economic Development Council co-chair Tony Collins. “A community-based approach creates consensus on priorities that will help our communities succeed together and bring opportunities for a sustainable transformation.”

The public forums are scheduled as follows:

**Potsdam: Monday, October 17, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

Clarkson University  
Cheel Campus Center – Barben Room (Large Multi-Purpose Room)  
8 Clarkson Avenue  
Potsdam, NY 13699

**Elizabethtown: Tuesday, October 18, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

Elizabethtown-Lewis Central School  
School Auditorium  
7530 Court Street  
Elizabethtown, NY 12932

**Indian Lake: Wednesday, October 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

Indian Lake Theatre  
13 East Main Street  
Indian Lake, NY 12842

**Lowville: Wednesday, October 26, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

Lowville Academy and Central School  
Large Group Instructional Auditorium  
7668 State Street  
Lowville, NY 13367

Each of these 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 [www.northcountryopenforbusiness.com](http://www.northcountryopenforbusiness.com) to maximize public input on this important initiative. They can also visit the council’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/NCOpen4Business](http://www.facebook.com/NCOpen4Business).

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the council will be **Friday, September 30**, at SUNY Potsdam. Please visit the website above to register for 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, each of which will serve as a single point of contact for economic activity in its respective 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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