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Contact:

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

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

NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL TO MAKE PUBLIC DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN NEXT WEEK, ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL MEETING

Council discusses draft strategy, seeks comment on plan

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council announced today at its meeting at SUNY Potsdam that a draft of the key elements of the strategic plan will be available for public review and comment by Wednesday, October 26. The meeting was attended by Lt. Governor Robert Duffy and led by North Country Regional Economic Development Council co-chairs Garry Douglas, President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, and Anthony Collins, President of Clarkson University. The council is continuing its work to create a five year strategic plan for economic development in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

During today's session, the council's Planning Committee presented and discussed the draft strategy that has been developed to date. The Committee, charged with writing the strategic plan, is using the vision statement and public input to guide in the plan creation. The Committee chairs and co-chairs reviewed the plan outline, identified its tasks moving forward and discussed the long-term implementation of these strategies.

Douglas said the public will find a lot of valuable information such as the draft strategies, SWOT analysis and final committee reports on the Regional Council's website next week. "By next Wednesday (Oct. 26), we will have sections of the strategic plan that are pretty much completed available on line at the council's website", Douglas said. "We are aggressively working to post to the website significant portions of the proposed plan as possible. It will include a summary outline of the draft strategies that will be very helpful to applicants as they finalize their CFAs."

The co-chairs urged the public to review the draft plan and information and then submit comment to council members, the website or by email at nys-northcountry@empire.state.ny.us. “We want input on the plan as soon as possible so, if necessary, we can make adjustments to it before finalizing it,” said Douglas.

Collins said the North Country Regional Economic Development Council encourages the public to continue to provide comment and suggestions. “Garry Douglas and I, along with the council and working group members, have been actively listening to the input given in the community based forums and in written comments submitted through the website and other avenues. While the North Country covers more miles than any other region, our communities share a common appreciation of quality of life opportunities and stewardship of the environment, and hold a ‘roll-up the sleeves’ attitude for growing the number of jobs for the people in their community. These attributes are reflective in the documents coming in to create the final strategic plan.”

Additional Forum, Meeting Planned

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council seeks public input on the process. Three community forums were held this week and one additional forum will be held next week in Lowville. Details are as follows:

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

In addition to the next regular scheduled meeting on Friday, **November 4, at SUNY Potsdam**, the North Country Regional Economic Development Council has scheduled a final meeting of the Council on Friday, **November 11 at Clarkson University in Potsdam**, to approve and adopt the strategic plan before the submission deadline of November 14.

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council continues to encourage the public to participate and provide feedback through future forums, community meetings, and online at www.northcountryopenforbusiness.com and on the council’s Facebook page, “North Country Open For Business” at <http://www.facebook.com/NCOpen4Business>.

The North Country Regional Council, which is comprised of a diverse group of 30 area leaders from the private and public sectors, labor, chambers of commerce, higher education, and community-based organizations, is working to create a five year strategic plan for economic development in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

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 ten 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 develop a 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.

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