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ERIE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT HELD BY WESTERN NEW YORK REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Event Facilitates Discussion of Strategies and Programs that Encourage the Success of Erie County Development Projects

Buffalo, NY (March 31, 2014) - The Western New York Regional Economic Development Council (WNYREDC) recently held a roundtable summit in Buffalo to discuss strategies and programs to assist Erie County with regional economic development priorities. Participants were joined by members of the WNYREDC, elected officials, industry leaders, economic development partners and other invited members of the county communities for the participatory roundtable discussions. The summit focused on learning more about the role of the WNYREDC, the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process, the components of a successful funding application, and ultimately how to cultivate an increase in Erie County projects that successfully receive state resources and support through the next round of the CFA funding process.

The events allowed Erie County stakeholders to identify priorities, including workforce, smart growth, advanced manufacturing, entrepreneurship, agriculture, tourism, energy, infrastructure, and keeping and attracting young professionals.

“Governor Cuomo’s strategic plan for stimulating the economy and creating more jobs is dependent, in part, on a successful CFA process that encourages and attracts high impact projects that are ready for implementation by giving them the tools they need submit a viable application,” said Howard A. Zemsky, Western New York Regional Economic Development

Council Co-chair and Managing Partner at Larkin Development Group. “We hope this summit will help us cultivate the types of high quality projects that align with our regional strategies, resulting in jobs for the residents, prosperity for our communities, and financial success for funding applicants.”

Dottie Gallagher-Cohen, Western New York Regional Economic Council Member, President & CEO- Buffalo Niagara Partnership said, “The Consolidated Funding Application can be a challenge for applicants who are new to the process. The REDC designed these summits to give applicants the tools, direction and assistance they need to be successful in that process. Applicants with projects that are aligned with the REDC’s strategies for economic success will be able to take the information and assistance received at today’s summit and use it meet their goals.”

Participants in the recent sessions learned of a new early step in the CFA process being offered by the WNYREDC. The WNYREDC will now accept an optional Letter of Interest (LOI) from applicants interested in being considered as priority projects for the next round of the CFA. The purpose of the Letter of Interest is to begin the process of identifying priority projects earlier in the year while also allowing for more time to offer technical assistance to applicants before the CFA deadline in the summer. Anyone interested in submitting a Letter of Interest must complete a brief online form at: <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov>.

Christina Orsi, Empire State Development Western New York Regional Director, who also serves as WNYREDC Executive Director, emphasized, “These summits have benefits for both all of the participants. Attendees are helping us understand what their needs are with regards to the application process. Summit participants have given us positive feedback regarding the new Letter of Interest, now available on our WNYREDC website. The letter allows the process of applying for funding to begin with a simple optional letter of interest, which will trigger a sequence of steps that will allow applicants to work with state economic development professionals to receive technical assistance and encourage positive results.”

“The success of these summits will be measured in the number of people who feel newly empowered to properly tackle the application process,” said Colleen DiPirro, Western New York Regional Economic Council Member, President & CEO- Amherst Chamber of Commerce.”By breaking the process down into manageable steps and providing the guidance needed along the way, we hope to see a greater number of projects get the stamp of approval down the line.”

About the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA):

As part of Governor Cuomo's efforts to improve the state's economic development model, the NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) was created in 2011 to streamline and expedite the grant application process. The CFA serves as the single entry point for access to NYS economic development funding, ensuring applicants no longer have to navigate multiple agencies and sources without any mechanism for coordination. For information on the NYS CFA process, please go to:

<https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>

About the WNY Regional Economic Development Council (WNYREDC):

In 2011, Governor Cuomo created 10 Regional Councils to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. A key component of Governor Cuomo's transformative approach to economic development, these councils is public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The initiative empowers community, business, and academic leaders, as well as members of the public in each region of the state, to develop and implement strategic plans specifically tailored to their region's unique strengths and resources in order to create jobs and support economic growth. For more information on the WNY Regional Council, visit <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/western-new-york> .

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