



For Immediate Release: Thursday, July 17, 2014

Contact:

Laura Magee (ESD) | Imagee@esd.ny.gov | (716) 846-8239 | (800) 260-7313

Michelle Cometa (RIT) | macuns@rit.edu | 585-475-4954

ESD Press Office | esdpressoffice@esd.ny.gov | (800) 260-7313

**FLREDC Announces New Mobile App to Highlight Historic Tourism Attractions in
New York's Finger Lakes Region**

*Finger Lakes Interactive Play app designed at RIT in collaboration with the FLREDC's Finger
Lakes Path Through History Workgroup*

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC) today announced the launch of a mobile tourism app called [FLIP: Finger Lakes Interactive Play](#). FLIP, which was funded in part by a grant from New York State and featured in the Governor's Path Through History initiative, is a mobile scavenger hunt individuals can play on their iPhone or iOS device when they visit 12 select historic sites in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. A formal launch of the app, a demonstration and reception took place today at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). The FLIP app, developed by RIT, is free and available on the New York State [Path Through History.com](#) website and <http://www.FlipForHistory.com>.

"Tourism is one of the Finger Lakes Regional Council's sector strategies and we are striving to invest in the development, promotion and preservation of cultural, artistic and historical assets across the region," said Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chairs, University of Rochester President Joel Seligman and Wegmans Food Markets CEO Danny Wegman. "While the Finger Lakes region is rich with attractions that draw visitors from around the world, this new mobile app developed by RIT will personalize visits to the region and encourage longer stays."

"We applaud Governor Cuomo's focus on Path through History as a way to draw attention to the many important and educational historic assets in our communities," said Rochester

Institute of Technology President Bill Destler. “With this Finger Lakes Interactive Play app, academia, state government and local community organizations have found a way to collaborate, using technology in an entertaining way to encourage people to learn more about our state’s rich history.”

FLIP highlights multiple historical sites in the nine FLREDC counties as a way to enhance visitor experiences to well-known landmarks including the Arcade and Attica Railroad, Clara Barton House, Ganondagan State Historic Site, The George Eastman House, Historic Palmyra, the Jell-o Gallery and Museum, Medina Railroad Museum, the National Susan B. Anthony House, the Rochester Museum and Science Center, Seneca Falls Museum of Waterways and Industry, Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion State Historic Site and the Women’s Rights National Historical Park.

FLIP is the Finger Lakes region’s contribution to Path Through History, which is one of several state initiatives, along with the New York Outdoors, Taste NY and I LOVE NEW YORK campaigns, that promote tourism across the state. The Path Through History initiative includes an online site that features background information about New York’s historical and cultural sites. Now that the initiative is part of the I LOVE NEW YORK campaign, it can be seen promoted at various events in the state. Driving visitation and awareness to the sites and providing enhanced informational resources is a means to spur tourism, one of the key economic development areas highlighted by Governor Cuomo.

“Governor Cuomo launched the Path Through History initiative to boost tourism by highlighting the rich cultural history of New York State,” said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Kenneth Adams. “Through our partnership with RIT and funding from the FLREDC, this new Finger Lakes mobile app highlights exciting opportunities to discover the region’s historical sites. I encourage all visitors to download the Finger Lakes Interactive Play app and start exploring.”

“FLIP will be a great way for kids and adults to interact while at the site or even before they get there for a tour,” said Rick Lagiewski, senior lecturer in RIT’s College of Applied Science and Technology, School of International Hospitality and Service Innovation, and principal investigator for the grant.

The app was developed over the past year through collaboration between the FLREDC’s Finger Lakes Path Through History Workgroup and RIT’s Center for Media, Arts, Games, Interaction and Creativity, the MAGIC Center. The Finger Lakes Path Through History Workgroup was tasked with developing a tourism marketing concept for the region’s historical attributes, of which there are more than 50, utilizing a \$100,000 grant from New York State. The workgroup determined an innovative approach, utilizing RIT as a partner, as the best marketing tool for the region. The RIT team includes Lagiewski and Shaun Foster, assistant professor in RIT’s College of Imaging Arts and Sciences, School of Design; and Stephen Jacobs, associate professor, and Joe Pietruch, lecturer, both faculty in RIT’s Golisano College of Computing and Information

Sciences, Interactive Games and Media department. The latter two are also part of the MAGIC Center.

“We’re excited about this project as we wanted to do a non-traditional type of marketing in support of the governor’s initiative,” said Finger Lakes Path Through History Workgroup Co-Chairs, Livingston County Tourism Director Lisa Burns and New York State Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation Genesee State Park Regional Director Richard Parker. “We believe this is a very unique and engaging way to encourage people of all ages to explore the wonderfully diverse historic attractions in our region.”

Assembly Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle said, “Tourism continues to be a critical economic driver for our region and with the launch of this new interactive media application we can enhance the visitor experience and spotlight the many incredible assets and attractions of the Finger Lakes. Our region boasts some of the most beautiful and historic tourist destinations in the world and I am pleased that together we are taking exciting steps to further strengthen this vibrant industry.”

Senator Joe Robach said, “Upstate New York has always had a variety of outdoor entertainment and recreation options for residents and visitors, from our beautiful State Parks to the scenic Finger Lakes, Upstate New York has so much to offer. FLIP is a fun, interactive app that will improve the visitor experience and aid Upstate New York tourism, which is an important contributor to our state’s economy.”

About Path Through History

Path Through History highlights historically and culturally significant sites and events throughout New York State. The program, introduced by Governor Cuomo, builds on New York’s already robust heritage tourism attractions. It is now part of the I LOVE NEW YORK campaign. The initiative is currently focused on 13 themes including: Arts & Culture, Natural History, U.S. Presidents, Women’s Rights, Canals & Transportation, Civil Rights, Colonial History, Immigration, Innovation & Commerce, The Revolutionary War, Native American Heritage, Sports History and the War of 1812. Important heritage sites and events across the state were selected with input from leading historians. For more information, visit <http://paththroughhistory.ny.gov/>.

About the Regional Economic Development Councils

The Regional Economic Development Council initiative (REDC) is a key component of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's transformative approach to State investment and economic development. In 2011, Governor Cuomo established 10 Regional Councils to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. The Councils are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The Regional Councils have redefined the way New York invests in jobs and economic growth by putting in place a community-based, bottom up approach and establishing a competitive process for State resources. After three rounds of the REDC process, more than \$2 billion has been awarded to job creation and community development projects

consistent with each region's strategic plans, supporting the creation or retention of more than 100,000 jobs. For more information on the Regional Councils, visit www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov.

###