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Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council Approves 2014 Progress Report and Endorses Priority Projects for Round IV

Progress report and priority projects maximize region's growth potential and strategic goals

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC) has approved its 2014 progress report and endorsed the Council's list of priority projects for Round IV of Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) process. The progress report, including the list of priority projects for the nine-county region, composed of Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties, will now be finalized and submitted to New York State ahead of the August 15 deadline.

"The support and leadership of New York State, as well as the strategic framework created by the Council and the renewed optimism for our economic future, has been critical to our region's progress to date," said FLREDC Co-Chairs, University of Rochester President Joel Seligman and Wegmans Food Markets CEO Danny Wegman. "As we move forward in Round IV of the Regional Council initiative, we are confident that the State will recognize our 2014 progress report and priority projects as representing a region-wide effort to address critical issues and advance projects with the potential for significant economic growth."

The Finger Lakes region's 2011 strategic plan, "[Accelerating Our Transformation](#)," leverages the region's strategic advantages in academic research, workforce talent and high quality of life to position the area as a national leader and innovator in a diverse array of next generation technologies. The plan focuses on strategies that optimize business creation, retention and expansion; strengthens academic and industry partnerships; aligns workforce development

efforts with the needs of key industry sectors; and invests in community and industrial development and infrastructure.

For Round IV, the FLREDC is once again focusing on the implementation of the region's strategic plan and identifying significant economic development projects to invest in. The Governor has directed up to \$750 million in State resources to be made available in 2014 to support the economic development priorities of all 10 regions and spur job creation across the state, including \$220 million in competitive funds from Empire State Development. In the first three rounds of the Regional Council initiative, the Finger Lakes region was awarded \$225 million in state support for 266 projects across the region.

The FLREDC has recommended transformative priority projects and identified a number of other projects that it believes will advance important workforce training, community development, tourism and small business expansion objectives for 2014 funding. The following projects were endorsed by the Council today:

- The **Eastman Business Park Biosciences Manufacturing Center** will create a new shared facility that will establish the Park as a leader in R&D and the manufacture of biofuels and biomaterials.
- The region will continue to expand the reach of its incubation and early stage business support services as well as accelerate the redevelopment of downtown Rochester and create an "innovation district" in the heart of the City by locating the new **Finger Lakes Business Accelerator** hub facility in the City center.
- Several new and ongoing community redevelopment projects will create focal points for new business, residential, and tourism activity throughout the region. These include the **Canandaigua Lakefront Redevelopment** project, expansion of the **Rochester Public Market**, the **Sibley Building Redevelopment** project, the **CityGate** development, and the new **Keuka Lake Hotel**.
- New investments will strengthen the region's leadership in biomedical research, optics, photonics, and imaging, and the graphic arts, lead to new innovation and job creation, and support the R&D needs of the region's technology companies. These include the **University of Rochester Institute for Data Science**, **RIT's MAGIC Spell Lab**, and the **Finger Lakes Regional Center for Advanced Optics Manufacturing**.
- Several new projects will help the region's farmers, food processors, and food entrepreneurs develop new products, expand their operations, identify and access new markets, reduce their environmental impact, and improve access to healthy foods for the region's low-income residents. These include renovations to the **New York State Food Venture Center**, the new **Rochester High Pressure Processing Center**, the **Winery Based Wastewater Treatment Systems** pilot project, the **Growing the Agriculture Industry Now! Fund**, the **Foodlink Food Hub**, and the **Wyoming County Dairy Initiative**.

- New tourism and arts projects will join ongoing projects to enhance the quality of life of the region’s residents, attract more visitors to Finger Lakes cultural, educational, and recreational destinations, and expand local business activity. These projects include **The Strong and Toy Industry National Halls of Fame**, improvements to **Frontier Field** in Rochester, and the continued development of the **Finger Lakes Museum Discovery Campus** in Yates County.

- New and ongoing investment in the infrastructure and capabilities of key industrial sites will enable the region to attract the next generation of high tech manufacturers to the state and convert abundant food and agricultural waste into sources of energy to serve tenants at these sites. This includes the **Science and Technology Advanced Manufacturing Park** in Genesee County, the **Genesee Biogas** project serving the Genesee Valley Agri-Business Park in Batavia, and the **Seneca BioEnergy** project in the former Seneca Army Depot.

- New higher education projects will expand capacity and enable the region to meet the growing demand for skilled workers in healthcare, science, engineering, and business fields, and extend these opportunities to underserved communities, displaced workers, and veterans. These include the **St. John Fisher College Integrated Science and Health Sciences Building**, the **Roberts Wesleyan College NextGen Sciences Initiative**, and the **Keuka College Center for Business Analytics and Health Informatics**.

- The region’s Opportunity Agenda plan will be enhanced by new programs that target at-risk students and prepare them for academic success and job opportunities, and provide underserved communities with affordable child care. These include the **Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection** project, the **Stepping Stones Learning Center’s** new Child Care facility, and the expansion of the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Rochester**.

The Council is again recommending the creation of a Finger Lakes Small Business Expansion Fund and the allocation of Excelsior Tax Credits to support the growth of several small businesses.

The Council has also identified a number of other projects that have applied for funding from various state agencies that it believes will advance important workforce training, community development, tourism, research and development, infrastructure, and small business expansion objectives. The Council has also listed “pipeline” projects that it believes should be considered for state capital funding in future years.

This year the Council will also build upon the region’s position as the Upstate New York leader in exports through its Finger Lakes Global NY Plan, which creates a comprehensive and coordinated set of international trade services necessary to both support existing exporters and enable more firms to enter global markets.

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.

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