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Contact:

Laura Magee | laura.magee@esd.ny.gov | (800) 260-7313

Pamm Lent | pamm.lent@esd.ny.gov | (800) 260-7313

WESTERN NEW YORK REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AWARDED \$58.6 MILLION FOR 69 PROJECTS

Projects that will move forward as a result of Round Four of the Regional Council initiative include the National Comedy Center in Jamestown and BNMC Infrastructure

As part of Round Four of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Regional Council initiative, the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council (WNYREDC) was awarded \$58.6 million for 69 projects that build on the region's assets to invest in the future. The announcement, which supports projects in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties, was made Thursday in Albany. In the first four rounds of the Regional Council initiative, the Western New York region has been awarded \$273.5 million in state support for 306 projects across the region.

"Across Western New York, transformative work is being done that builds upon our strengths and moves the needle on our economic growth indicators," said Satish K. Tripathi, President of the University at Buffalo and Regional Council Co-chair. "With additional funding through Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council coming to Western New York, we can continue to advance our strategies in key industries, such as advanced manufacturing, tourism, and health and life sciences."

"Governor Cuomo continues to demonstrate his commitment to Western New York between the Buffalo Billion and newly announced funding through the Regional Council initiative," said Howard A. Zemsky, Managing Partner at Larkin Development Group and Regional Council Co-

chair. “By combining strategic planning and regional priorities with state resources and programs, it’s not hearsay anymore—Western New York has a solid economic future.”

The Western New York region’s 2011 strategic plan, “[A Strategy for Prosperity](#),” leverages the region’s strategic advantages in key industry sectors including advanced manufacturing, agriculture, bi-national logistics, energy, health & life sciences, higher education, professional services and tourism. The plan focuses on economic enablers that promote smart growth, prepare the workforce and foster a culture of entrepreneurship. The Western New York projects awarded funding in Round IV includes those in the key strategies:

Entrepreneurship

- \$400,000 to **Olean Business Incubation Center** to renovate an existing building in downtown Olean to make way for a new business incubator. This project ties into the WNYREDC’s continued investment in Olean, which began in 2011 with infrastructure investments, including East State Street’s reconstruction and the North Union Street Walkable Olean reconstruction project, and continues with the most recent redevelopment of a building to create a continuum of services and office configurations to support business development at early maturity and inspire and support entrepreneurial investment in Olean.

Smart Growth

- \$187,225 to City of Tonawanda, in partnership with the Western Erie Canal Alliance (WECA), to establish a Main Street Program for the city’s downtown commercial area in accordance with the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Program.
- \$250,000 to the Greater Lockport Development Corporation to assist in the renovation of mixed-use buildings within Lockport’s Central Business District.

Workforce Development

- \$250,000 to **Gerard Place Housing Development Company, Inc.** to establish extensive training space in the former St. Gerard Parish Hall and School adjacent to its residential facility in Buffalo complete with new classrooms, a simulation room and other capital improvements and renovations needed for the new training facility.
- \$100,000 to **Allegany County Community Opportunities and Rural Development ACCORD Corporation** to provide training services and activities focuses on training and creating sustainable employment opportunities for residents. ASSET project participants will have access to high quality case management, workforce development, supportive services, on-the-job training, and the opportunities to participate in professional development training and attain professional credentials.

Tourism

- \$1,500,000 to the **National Comedy Center Inc.** in Jamestown to launch a construction project to create an interactive guest experience and improved access to the Comedy Center Park and patio along the riverfront. The project will enable the National Comedy Center to draw more than 120,000 visitors each year and generate more than \$26

million annually in local economic activity, sparking further economic development and helping to improve the economic environment in the region.

- \$700,000 to City of Lockport for restoration of the **Flight of Five**, the historic Erie Canal locks built in the mid-1800s in Lockport and the centerpiece of a comprehensive economic development and downtown revitalization strategy. The completion of the Flight of Five is expected to annually draw 230,000 visitors and generate \$17 million in spending.

Health & Life Sciences

- \$650,000 to **Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Inc.** to construct two above-ground pedestrian bridges connecting the new University at Buffalo (UB) School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and UB Research Institute on Addictions.

The full list of 2014 Regional Economic Development Council awards can be found at: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/REDCAwardsBooklet2014.pdf>.

In the first four rounds of the Regional Council initiative, the Western New York region was awarded \$273.5 million in state support for 306 projects across the region. In just the last year, the WNYREDC also recommended and Empire State Development (ESD) awarded \$24 million in Excelsior awards for 24 different companies that are expected to leverage \$181 million in private sector investment and lead to the creation/retention of more than 5,200 jobs. This is in addition to the great strides being made in Western New York through the Buffalo Billion.

The WNYREDC is now accepting Letters of Interest for the next round of Regional Council funding. The WNYREDC encourages interested applicants to submit letters [here](#) to identify high quality projects earlier and offer Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) technical assistance.

A centerpiece of the Governor's strategy to jumpstart the economy and create jobs, the Regional Councils were established in 2011 to transform the State's approach to economic development from a top-down model to one that is community-based and performance-driven. The initiative empowers community, business, and academic leaders, as well as members of the public in each region of the state, to develop strategic plans specifically tailored to their region's unique strengths and resources in order to create jobs, improve quality of life and grow the economy.

During Round Four, members from the 10 Regional Councils traveled to Albany to make in-person presentations of their proposals to the Strategic Implementation Assessment Team. Over the course of two days, the SIAT, which is composed of State agency commissioners and policy experts, heard from each of the Regional Councils directly, reviewed the progress being made on projects that have previously received state funding, and assessed the regions' strategic plan implementations and proposals for funding in 2014.

To learn more about the WNYREDC, visit <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/western-new-york>.

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