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## **CAPITAL REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNOUNCES PUBLIC FORUMS**

*Public is invited to three community sessions across the region intended to share ideas for an economic development strategy*

The Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) today announced details of public forums designed to gain input and aid in the creation of the council's five-year strategic economic development plan for the Capital Region, which includes Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Albany, Greene and Columbia counties.

"To create an effective strategic plan for a region as broad and multidimensional as the Capital Region, we need equally broad community input on the strengths and weaknesses of today and the opportunities we can exploit for tomorrow," said Michael J. Castellana, Co-Chair of the Council and President and CEO of SEFCU. "The underpinnings of the planning process as outlined by the Governor call for a grass roots, iterative and transparent process. These public forums are another in a series of efforts to ensure that we are true to that charge. In the short time since we have begun the planning process, we have had thousands of stakeholders from throughout the region already join the effort."

"Our eight county Capital Region has extraordinary and diverse assets. These public forums, in addition to the on-line survey and other research, will provide an important opportunity to get input on how best to harness those assets to sustain, leverage, and expand economic opportunities throughout the region," said CREDC co-chair and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute President Shirley Ann Jackson.

The community forums will be held:

**Saratoga Springs: Wednesday, 8/31/11, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

SUNY Empire State College

Rotunda room, Saratoga Springs

**Hudson: Tuesday, 9/6/11, 6:30 to 9 p.m.**

Columbia Greene Community College  
The Arts Center Theatre, Hudson

**Troy: Wednesday, 9/7/11, 6:30 to 9 p.m.**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center Building (EMPAC), Troy

The meetings will begin with an overview of the purpose of the regional council. Next, invited guest speakers will discuss issues and opportunities facing the region. There will also be an open forum for individuals to provide the council with ideas and suggestions related to economic development. To allow as many to participate as possible, each individual will be limited to 3 minutes of speaking time. The council will also accept written testimony at the meeting.

Individuals who plan on attending are encouraged to RSVP to [elweld@rpi.edu](mailto:elweld@rpi.edu). It is not necessary to RSVP to attend, but it will assist the planning process.

In addition to these community forums, the CREDC continues to encourage all residents from the region to complete an on-line survey at <http://capitalregionopenforbusiness.com> to maximize public input on this important initiative.

Created by Executive Order 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 Capital Region 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.

To learn more about each region and their economic development plans, visit [www.nyworks.ny.gov](http://www.nyworks.ny.gov).

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