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NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MOVES FORWARD WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Council provides updates on workgroup progress and presents Priority Project Criteria

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council met today and conducted its fourth meeting, which was open to the public. The meeting at SUNY Potsdam was attended by Lt. Governor Robert Duffy and led by North Country Regional Economic Development Council co-chairs Garry Douglas, President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, and Anthony Collins, President of Clarkson University. The council is continuing its work to create a five year strategic plan for economic development in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

During today's session, the council provided updates on the activities of its Adirondack Park, Infrastructure, Canadian Connection, Tourism Development, Community Development, Small Business Development, Strategic Clusters, Public Participation and Planning Committee workgroups. In addition, the Planning Committee presented criteria it has developed to be used in identifying priority projects for the region. The criteria will guide the Committee in identifying and determining ready-to-go, transformative projects and priority actions that are central to achieving the region's vision and addressing the needs and issues most critical for enhancing the region's economy.

"The workgroups have diligently identified the assets, strengths and challenges in our unique region that will guide our next steps," said Anthony Collins, Co-Chair of the Regional Council and Clarkson University President. "Many of the emerging strategies under review carry a common theme to create a sustainable economy that benefits residents and visitors alike, as well as allow for intelligent use of our natural resources."

"The process is really humming now," said Garry Douglas, Co-Chair of the Regional Council and President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce. "We're seeing the core strategies emerge from all of our working groups and are seeing the broad range of investment opportunities and needs across the region. October brings us to the actual drafting of the plan, and we're confident that it is shaping up to be the comprehensive roadmap we hoped it would be."

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council continues to seek public input on the process and held a public comment session at the meeting. Their goal is to integrate the public into the strategic planning process to design an economic development plan that reflects the local communities' vision for job creation and economic opportunity.

In addition, the North Country Regional Economic Development Council will be holding four public forums around the region. They are as follows:

Potsdam: Monday, October 17, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Clarkson University
Cheel Campus Center – Barben Room (Large Multi-Purpose Room)
8 Clarkson Avenue
Potsdam, NY 13699

Elizabethtown: Tuesday, October 18, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Elizabethtown-Lewis Central School
School Auditorium
7530 Court Street
Elizabethtown, NY 12932

Indian Lake: Wednesday, October 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Indian Lake Theatre
13 East Main Street
Indian Lake, NY 12842

Lowville: Wednesday, October 26, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Lowville Academy and Central School
Large Group Instructional Auditorium
7668 State Street
Lowville, NY 13367

The North Country Regional Economic Development Council encourages public participation and feedback through these forums, outreach, community meetings, and online at www.northcountryopenforbusiness.com and on its Facebook page, "North Country Open For Business" at <http://www.facebook.com/NCOpen4Business>.

The next regular scheduled North Country Regional Economic Development Council will be **October 21st at SUNY Potsdam at 11 a.m.**

The North Country Regional Council, which is comprised of a diverse group of 30 area leaders from the private and public sectors, labor, chambers of commerce, higher education, and community-based organizations, is working to create a five year strategic plan for economic development in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

Created 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 North Country Regional 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.

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