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WNY REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL VOTES ON STRATEGIC PLAN, ANNOUNCES PRIORITY PROJECTS

The Western New York Regional Economic Development Council today finalized and adopted the council's five-year strategic plan and priority projects for the region, which is composed of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties. Focused on preparing the region's workforce for its key industry sectors, investing in smart growth infrastructure to pave the way for private investment, attracting and retaining more visitors and leveraging Western New York's research capacity to drive innovation and commercialization, the plan will be submitted in response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's challenge to stimulate real, regional economic development.

"This plan endeavors to ensure sustainable growth in jobs and income and will contribute to the the long-term revitalization of New York State – economically, socially, and culturally," said Western New York Regional Council co-chair and President of the University at Buffalo Satish Tripathi. "It is the product of thousands of hours of work by hundreds of volunteers who care about and are engaged in the future of Western New York. I cannot thank them enough for their commitment and expertise."

"We strongly believe our plan deserves to win, not just because it is truly a home-grown plan that reflects the values and aspirations of Western New York's citizens, but because it is a practical plan that is achievable," said Western New York Regional Council co-chair and Managing Partner at Larkin Development Group Howard Zemsky. "Public participation was an integral component of our strategy, which justifies our priority projects for state funding."

The Governor has made \$1 billion available for the 10 Regional Councils, including \$200 million in competitive funding. A Strategic Plan Review Committee will analyze and compare each region's Strategic Plan. Based upon this review, four regions will be awarded up to \$40 million each in capital funding and tax credits to be applied toward the priority capital projects identified in their plans. The remaining allocations will be divided among the other six regions.

"A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York," a comprehensive plan to create a more dynamic and sustainable economy for the region and its citizens, identifies three fundamental opportunities: job readiness, smart growth and entrepreneurship. The strategy also puts forth ways to capitalize on opportunities in eight economic sectors where Western New York has advantages to build on: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, bi-national logistics, energy, health and life sciences, higher education, professional services and tourism. The

plan can be found at: <http://nyworks.ny.gov/content/western-new-york>. The Council reserves the right to edit the Strategic Plan until its submission date, at 4 p.m. Monday, November 14.

The plan is the product of a planning process that involved the Regional Council members, more than 200 stakeholders from across Western New York and more than 1,000 citizens who added their voice through interactive forums and the Empire State Development website.

The Western New York Regional Economic Development Council also identified priority projects that it recommends for immediate state support. The projects represent critical opportunities to build upon the region's strengths and competitive advantages, and immediately accelerate job creation and economic growth. The projects represent a regional approach, as there are some projects with a regional impact, and at least one project in each county. The projects collectively support direct creation/retention of more than 1,500 jobs with nearly \$285 million in capital investment and \$74 million in state investment.

Western New York's priority projects support the continued transformation of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus as a key driver of economic development (Roswell Park Cancer Institute Genome Project, Hauptman Woodward Crystallization Laboratory and Center for Innovation in Medicine); train and prepare our workforce (Urban Automotive Center of Excellence, Buffalo Arts and Technology Center and Hospitality and Tourism Center); attract and retain more visitors (Niagara Experience Center); support smart growth with investments in central business districts in Buffalo, Olean and Chautauqua County; and help renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and life sciences companies grow with Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits.

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 Western New York 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.

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.

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Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Priority Projects

- **Roswell Park Cancer Institute Genome Project** will build a robust approach to personalized medicine based on detailed definition and study of genetic sequences, the health information data associated with the individuals, genetic sequences and a powerful informatics approach to enable analysis and discovery to inform more personalized medicine.
- **Hauptman Woodward Crystallization Laboratory** will expand the high throughput crystallization laboratory biotech services at this research institution to expand services and offer competitive and sustainable research.

- **Center for Innovation in Medicine** will be a center for innovation and entrepreneurship, which will include a cutting-edge, state-of-the-art medical device prototyping facility. It will be the only U.S. center for entrepreneurship in the heart of a clinical facility and will include a fabrication center, machine shop, and clean room, to create new devices and techniques and a training center for physicians to test them.
- **The Urban Automotive Center of Excellence** will be a facility to provide training in the field of auto body repair and auto-service technicians and mechanics. Students will also receive GED and Mentorship assistance.
- **Buffalo Arts and Technology Center** is two co-located programs: health care industry training for unemployed and underemployed adults and an after-school arts and technology program that will provide at-risk teens with the tools needed to succeed in school and graduate.
- **Hospitality and Tourism Center** will renovate nearly 90,000 sq. ft. of the former Rainbow Centre for the Hospitality and Tourism Center. Niagara County Community College will train students for employment in the growing field of hospitality and leisure in a facility that will include 8 teaching kitchens /classrooms, student restaurant, culinary theatre, Barnes and Noble college bookstore and retail center, bakery, deli, wine boutique and exhibition space. It will also add a small business development center to help support entrepreneurship hospitality.
- **East State Street Re-construction** will reconstruct E. State St. (NYS Route 417) to include replacement of the water line, sanitary sewer line, installation of new storm sewer and complete road base to enhance access to Downtown, critical to the employees in that area including Cutco Cutlery, Dal Tile, Olean Advanced Products and Cooper Industries.
- **Olean CBD** will redevelop several properties on N. Union and West St. along with the redesign of Union Street and adjoining streetscape improvements in order to advance downtown revitalization and to encourage private investment at the site.
- **Buffalo CBD** will reestablish high-quality, multi-modal transportation corridors that link Main Street, the Genesee Gateway and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, critical to continued private sector reinvestment in the central business district.
- **Small Business Green Retrofit Initiative** will provide incentive grants to small businesses and non-profit organizations throughout the region for pre-retrofit repairs on commercial properties to help businesses increase energy efficiency and stabilize central business districts.
- **Niagara Experience Center** plan calls for the NEC to be an 80,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art “experiential museum” utilizing masterful story-telling techniques to present the true story of Niagara—its importance to nature, history, technology, the development of two nations and more—all using the best of technology and showmanship to create a setting that is enlightening to the scholar and the six-year-old alike. At the same time the Center will inform visitors about the many other cultural destinations throughout the region encouraging visit to those locations.
- **High-Temp Materials Characterization Laboratory** at Alfred State will purchase equipment and renovate facilities for testing applications of high-temperature materials, including a wind energy/fluid mechanics lab; a thermal science/solar energy lab; a photovoltaic solar energy lab; an alternative fuels laboratory and a power conversion and controls laboratory.

