

For Immediate Release: Thursday, October 18, 2012

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ESD BOARD APPROVES GRANT FOR REGIONAL COUNCIL PRIORITY PROJECT TO EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW YORK STATE

Empire State Development's Board of Directors met today in New York City and approved funding totaling \$125,000, pledging to support a Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council priority project to enhance rural educational programs in Upstate New York. The funding will leverage \$325,000 in investments to upgrade the current program to provide specialized workforce training and establish a platform for business and economic expansion in the region.

"A workforce that has a quality education is good for business and makes for a stronger economy that works for New Yorkers," said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Kenneth Adams. "The upgrades to Milford's CORE program will help prepare the next generation of engineers, teachers, and medical workers with the quality education they need to compete in the local and global economy."

The Board has approved a Regional Economic Development Council grant for the following:

Milford Central School District – Priority Project (Mohawk Valley Region) – \$125,000

As a result of the Governor's Regional Economic Development Council Initiative, the Milford Central School District was awarded \$125,000 through the Consolidated Funding Application process. Milford conceived of the Career Opportunities in Rural Education (CORE) program to respond to the large disparity in the community between employment openings and actual jobs filled. In response to this need, Milford designed an upgrade to the CORE curriculum that focused on career preparedness, recognizing that accessibility to higher levels of job training, education with degree and certification are now necessities for all age levels within the population. Milford applied for the Regional Council Award in 2011 because it encountered a funding gap of \$125,000 when it attempted to improve the CORE program. To close this funding gap, ESD made an incentive offer to Milford in April 2012 which Milford accepted that month.

The updates to the CORE program involved additions to medical coding classes, improvements to technology access, and training for two new teachers in "Project Lead-The-Way", a curriculum for middle school engineering students. Milford also hired the services of two contractors for videography, and a new instructor for medical coding. Additionally, Milford has

purchased new supplies for the pre-engineering, middle school students. The School has marketed the CORE program through newsprint and radio advertisements. To date, Milford has ordered all supplies and equipment, solicited contractors and selected an instructor for the medical coding class. Two instructors for Project Lead the Way have completed training. As a result, this \$450,000 project will increase enrollment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs, ultimately providing a more qualified candidate pool for regional STEM businesses. It will also build relationships with regional businesses with the goal of drawing young professionals to the distressed upstate economy.

The next meeting of the ESD Board of Directors will be held in November at a location to be announced closer to the time of the event.

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York's chief economic development agency (www.esd.ny.gov). The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I Love NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit www.nyworks.ny.gov and www.esd.ny.gov.

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