

North Country Regional Economic Development Council Submits Round V Progress Report

NCREDC Endorses 23 Priority Projects for Round V of Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council Initiative

September 22, 2015 - The North Country Regional Economic Development Council (NCREDC) announced its progress report was submitted to the State to meet the September 21 deadline. The progress report, which details the Council's achievements in implementing its five year strategic plan, is entitled "Accelerate," reflecting the North Country's readiness to accelerate economic growth and transformation across the region.

The report outlines the region's strong performance record in implementing its strategies and projects since the first round of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council initiative in 2011. The first four rounds resulted in \$338.1 million in State funding to support 291 projects that are completed or in progress and have committed to create or retain 4,931 jobs in the region. The Council's plan supports this positive trend and will continue to build on the success of previous years, accelerating the North Country's regional economy.

The progress report can be found on the North Country Regional Council's website:
<http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/north-country>.

"This year's Progress Report once again tells a strong story of how the North Country has come together behind economic development strategies that are working," said Garry Douglas, President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce and Co-Chair of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council. "It tells of the ever stronger partnership that has developed across the seven counties, and the solid record of performance on all of our projects and aims. Best of all, it shows a region that is very much prepared for great advances over the next few years with the continued partnership of the state."

"Our progress and success in the North Country can be wholly attributed to the diligence of so many people from our regional community who are coming together to build strong public-private partnerships," said Tony Collins, President of Clarkson University and Co-Chair of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council. "The North Country -- more than any other region -- has embraced Governor Cuomo's transformative approach to economic development and is implementing a strategic plan that represents broad public participation among business, academia, local government and non-governmental organizations. We thank everyone for doing their part to make our region one of the special places on the planet to visit, live, work and study."

There was strong public participation throughout Round V that proved extremely valuable as the NCREDC hosted more than 50 forums, summits and meetings, including two in Canada, to gather public input on its strategic plan and priority projects for this round. In addition, four 'Big Ideas' sessions took place, including one in New York City.

The Council also looked to the next phase of its work, and placed significant focus on the continued development of collaborations both in and out of the region, and successful implementation of its strategies and programs, including Innovation Hot Spot/Business Incubators, the Cleaner Greener Initiative, Veterans and Opportunity Agendas, NY Rising, SUNY 2020 and START-UP NY.

The following 23 projects, located across the seven-county region and supporting the North Country's diverse economic sectors, were endorsed by the Council as regional priorities for Round V of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Regional Council initiative and submitted to the State for recommended direct funding:

- Watertown Industrial Center LDC - New Building D
- Hoosier Magnetics Capital Improvement Project
- Lake Pleasant Lodge Expansion
- Seaway Timber Harvesting Sawmill, Wood Pallet, Shaving, and Briquette Manufacturing

- Ogdensburg Bridge & Port Authority – Ogdensburg International Airport Terminal Expansion
- Belcam Private Label and Export Development
- Schroon Lake Hospitality, A Destination Transformed
- Village of Tupper Lake Potable Water Supply & Water Distribution System Improvement
- ACTLS Trails and Lodging
- LC Drives Up
- North Country Redevelopment Fund – Phase 2
- RAIL Revitalization Project ICT Hub
- North Country Value-Added Agriculture Program Phase 2
- Adirondack Health Medical Fitness Center at Lake Placid
- ANCA The Energy Capital Project
- Sustainable Olympic Venues, Global Center of Sports Excellence, & Olympic Winter Games Bid
- Planting Hope 2015
- Promoting and Sustaining Tourism & Resiliency in Adirondack Blueway
- Village of Tupper Lake Premium Wood Pellet Fired District Heating System
- Malone Greenhouse – Valco Building Renovation
- Robotic Farming for Organic Food – Agbotics, Inc.
- North Country Transformational Community Tourism Revolving Fund
- Village of Lowville Infrastructure Improvements

Strong performance and growth in the region's key strategic sectors are a result of the Council's dedication to transforming the region's economy:

- A 43 percent increase in employment in the region's Transportation Equipment cluster since 2010, now employing 1 in 17 workers across the region.
- Since 2010, acres of active farmland in the North Country has increased 6 percent; there has been a 26 percent increase in the value of the region's agricultural output; and a 14 percent increase in employment in the region's agricultural and forestry industries.
- A 13 percent increase in visitor spending, with visitor industry employment up 8 percent and tourism-generated taxes up 10 percent.
- A 100 percent increase of biomass energy production in the region since 2011, with 292 locations of on-site clean energy generation today, up 181 percent from 2010.

Also highlighted in the Plan, is the region's success in addressing crucial housing and energy needs at Fort Drum and in the surrounding Watertown area, including assistance with four major housing projects and the launch of the ReEnergy biomass energy plant on base. Region-wide partnership behind Fort Drum coupled with investments secured by the Council, were a factor in this year's avoidance of potentially significant force reductions, helping to secure Fort Drum's annual economic impact on the North Country of \$1.8 billion.

To continue building on the success of the last four rounds, up to \$750 million in State resources is available in Round V. This fall, the region will also submit a strategic plan to compete for one of three \$500 million Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI) awards. Governor Cuomo's \$1.5 billion URI competition is part of an overall program aimed at systematically revitalizing the economy of Upstate New York.

The Council created three new work groups to focus on the URI, which received tremendous feedback from the 'Big Ideas' brainstorm meetings.

Three Upstate winners of the URI will receive approximately \$130 million each this year (\$100 million in URI funding, and an estimated \$30 million from Round V of the REDC competition). Aside from those regions, three regions will earn "Top Performer" distinction in the REDC competition and will receive approximately \$105 million each. Finally, the remaining four regions will receive approximately \$90 million each through the REDC competition – which is more than the average amount awarded to the top place finisher in prior years.

Funding awards for Round V of the CFA process are expected to be announced by the end of the year.

The NCREDC, which is composed of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties, is one of 10 regional councils across New York State that serve as a single point of contact for economic activity in the various regions. The NCREDC was awarded \$63.4 million supporting 69 projects in 2014.

The NCREDC was named a "Top Performer" in 2013 and 2012, in addition to its Strategic Plan being named a "Best Plan Awardee" in December 2011. There are 291 projects across the region that have been awarded a total of \$338.1 million in state support through the Regional Economic Development Council initiative and Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process in the statewide competition.

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