



Progress in 2007

Background

Finger Lakes Wired is a partnership of more than 21 economic development, educational, workforce development, and business organizations from the nine-county Finger Lakes region surrounding Rochester, NY.

This collaborative effort is led by the chief executive officers of its partner organizations. These leaders have met regularly since May 2006 to support a strategic approach to regional economic development. They have adopted a mission and vision, and have agreed to guiding principles, a strategic direction, and actions in support of this effort.

Mission

Increase the region's capacity to support talent development for sustained economic growth.

Vision

The Finger Lakes region is a premier place in which to innovate, investing in entrepreneurial operations and educating workers, empowering them to be agile, adaptable and aligned with global opportunities through an integrated system.

Strategic Direction

1. Energize the region's entrepreneurial economy;
2. Catalyze regional innovation and convert orphan or under-utilized technology into vibrant business ventures;
3. Educate and empower workers to successfully compete in the changing global economy;
4. Build a collaborative regional education, workforce and economic development system.

Strategic Outcomes – Completion of WIRED

1. Increase private sector job growth relative to national average.
2. Increase average wages relative to national average.
3. Increase retention of 20 to 34 year old workers in region.
4. Adoption of a regional identity resulting in collaborative networking and communication in support of regional economic strategies.

Implementation

An implementation plan was developed to provide an early stage roadmap for the WIRED Initiative in the region. At this point in 2007, the plan was well underway.

Partners have utilized feedback from our National Advisory Panel to refine specific activities associated with Finger Lakes Wired as well as to identify other opportunities for improvement in support of regional economic development activities.

The Finger Lakes Partnership has adjusted its moniker to leverage the United States Department of Labor WIRED Initiative (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development). Finger Lakes Wired builds on the success of the national WIRED brand and focuses on the collaboration and connectivity throughout the Finger Lakes region to show how we are wired together for growth. As a result, the Partnership is referenced as Finger Lakes Wired – conscious not to become just another initiative.

Partners are working to better align resources and assets to support the growth of entrepreneurs and existing businesses throughout the region.



Project Outcomes to Date

The following projects strengthen talent development in the region and are supported by USDOL WIRED funds as well as other resources.

Additional projects may be considered by Finger Lakes Wired and move forward in 2008.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Predictive Analysis – Business Attraction – GRE

- This project will help identify high-growth opportunities, perform in-depth research on each identified company, and set up mission trips of leaders to visit target companies.

Have identified more than 65 companies that could benefit by connections to local Optics/Imaging, Biotech/Life Sciences, Food/Agriculture, Advanced Manufacturing and Alternative Energy companies. Planning an executive level outreach campaign to inform decision makers and provide leads for attraction efforts.

Zoom Prospector has been added to the Greater Rochester Enterprise website to allow corporate site locators to identify potential sites in the region.

Predictive Analysis – Retention & Expansion – GRE

- Develop and utilize predictive analysis tools to identify companies with the likelihood of expansion or contraction, so that economic development resources can be focused wherever necessary.

Predictive analysis model has been adjusted to produce a list of over 1,200 companies for economic developers to utilize within the region.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Masters of Science Degree in Science and Technology Commercialization – U of R

- Addresses the shortage of people who can assess a technology and determine whether it can be commercialized by utilizing curriculum from University of Texas at Austin.

Six students have assessed over 22 technologies with one selected for a full commercialization plan.

Strategic Growth through Innovation Program – RIT

- The immersion program targets potential high-growth small enterprises seeking to expand and emphasizing growth through innovation and technology commercialization.

Company executives helped tailor course curriculum to meet business needs. Initial class of 40 executives began October 2007 with great reviews.

The Entrepreneurs Network – TEN

- Six-month program including a boot camp, work shops, and panel events designed to optimize interaction with leading entrepreneurial experts to introduce entrepreneurs to new ideas and attract capital.

70 company executives have participated to date. Three sessions completed since 2006 with a fourth to begin soon with 20 high tech business leaders.

Members have created more than 50 jobs, increased revenue by more than \$5.7 million and secured \$7.2 million in angel and venture capital investments.

Winery and Grape Grower Education Program – ROI

- Develop business skill sets of winery and vineyard owners and key staff to increase growth and investment.

14 business owners have participated in workshops and other business and production improvement efforts since summer 2007.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy – U of R, Geneseo

- High School students start and run a real business, pitch investors, manage sales and service. Business leaders provide mentoring and advise based on real-world experience.

24 students are starting businesses based on an expansion of the YEA Academy at SUNY Geneseo.

INNOVATION

Pre-Seed Workshops - HTR

- Provide an assessment of business potential for a specific invention, and foster a collaboration of technologists and/or inventors knowledgeable about business.

Two workshops held in Geneva in 2006 with 50 participants investigating commercialization options.



SBIR Outreach and Access – HTR

- Improve the region's small business tech transfer efforts to increase success under federal Small Business Innovation Research grant programs.

Assisted 74 applicants with strategies and proposals leveraging other efforts such as NYSTAR and Insyte Consulting. 12 proposals were submitted with funding decisions expected in late 2007.

Tech Commercialization– HTR, U of R, Technology Farm

- Trains researchers, students, faculty and entrepreneurs to increase skills and success with technology commercialization. Creates a more integrated approach among partners to improve business development. Demonstrates how to integrate research and new product design with the benchmarks associated with key industries.

Participants and technologies have been identified for assessment through a technology clearinghouse leveraging resources from Excell Partners, High Tech Rochester, RIT, U of R and the Technology Farm.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

Scholarship Fund – RW, FLW, GLOW

- Matching business investments to increase worker skills in Key Industry Segments of Alternative Energy, Biotech & Life Sciences, Food & Agriculture, Optics & Imaging, Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology, Engineering, Business Services and Health Care leading to transferable skills and industry recognized credentials.

Since the program launch in September 2006, have allocated \$1.6 million for 99 businesses to increase the skills of 2,564 workers with \$3.3 million in matching funds. Businesses are encouraged to apply.

Regional Apprentices System – MCC, FLCC, GCC

Develop industry-based apprentice system for the Finger Lakes Region with new training programs for Optics & Imaging, Biotech and Health Care companies.

Optical fabricator apprentice program started with 21 workers from 4 businesses. Credit bearing coursework will begin in January 2008. 13 students are engaged in the program.

Educator Internships – FLW, RACEC

- Placing educator interns in industry and engaging employers from Optics/Imaging, Biotech/Life Sciences, Alternative Energy, and Food and Agriculture to better connect education and industry.

16 educator interns completed projects with companies throughout the region and are in the process of bringing the experience to their schools.

The Friendly Home Long Term Care Facility Career Pathway

- The Friendly Home effort is supported by members of the Senior Health Alliance of Greater Rochester which includes nursing homes, hospitals and other healthcare facilities in the region. The project establishes a career path for individuals in the long-term care industry.

7 formerly unemployed adult workers completed a 90 hour training program and were employed by sponsor and partner organizations. A second class of 8 graduated in October 2007, and were immediately employed by sponsor and partners.

Expanding Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Camps

- Supported efforts that encourage youth to explore the possibilities linked to studies in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and enhance awareness of the region as a premier locale for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics career opportunities.

150 scholarships supported applied learning in biotechnology, physics, chemistry, geo-spatial technology, environmental protection, botany, mathematics, human-computer interaction and astronomy during the summer of 2007.

Efforts will be made to expand the reach of the camps for 2008 by working with partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County, Finger Lakes Institute - Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Genesee Community College, Infotonics Technology Center, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the University of Rochester.



Related Accomplishments

The success of Finger Lakes Wired has led to other successes in the region, including but not limited to:

- Rochester Institute of Technology received a \$1.1 million USDOL High Growth Job Training Initiative grant to provide RIT and its partners with high skill training to businesses engaged in the food and beverage manufacturing industry throughout the region. RIT is working closely with Constellation Brands, Wegmans Food Markets, the New York Wine and Culinary Center and the region's Workforce Investment Boards.
- A proposal to create the Upstate Partnership under the New York State Office of Science, Technology & Academic Research (NYSTAR) Regional Partnership Program Request for Proposals. Several Finger Lakes Wired activities will find sustainability and support through this NYSTAR effort as it may be implemented by Governor Spitzer and his administration.

The Upstate Partnership, led by Excell Partners, Inc., plans to maximize the ability of the region to transform new knowledge and technologies into commercial use for the benefit of existing and emerging companies through a seamless and coordinated infrastructure

- The Infotonics Center has been awarded a \$3 million grant from the Economic Development Administration in the US Department of Commerce. The funds will help the center incubate businesses in the fields of photonics, information systems and optics and create approximately 200 jobs in the Greater Rochester region.

Original Partners

- City of Rochester
- County of Monroe
- Empire State Development Corp
- The Entrepreneurs Network
- Finger Lakes Community College
- Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board
- Genesee Community College
- Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council
- Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, and Wyoming Workforce Investment Board
- Greater Rochester Enterprise
- High Tech Rochester
- Infotonics Technology Center
- Monroe Community College
- Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Investment Board
- Rochester Area Colleges
- Rochester Area Community Foundation
- Rochester Angel Network
- Rochester Business Alliance
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- RochesterWorks, Inc.
- Technology Farm
- Trillium Group
- University of Rochester

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Finger Lakes Wired

Finger Lakes Wired is one of the first regions across America to be awarded \$15 million over three years through the United States Department of Labor WIRED Initiative. Partners will leverage over \$22 million in regional resources devoted to the successful achievement of these goals.

We are working together to support talent development strategies that increase economic growth in the region. Additional information on this initiative can be found at www.fingerlakeswired.com.

Nine-County Finger Lakes Region

Genesee	Seneca
Livingston	Wayne
Monroe	Wyoming
Ontario	Yates
Orleans	

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