

NEWS

For immediate release

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Finger Lakes Wired Wraps Up Successful 4-Year Initiative with Celebration & Report to Regional Leaders Monday January 25 Leaves Legacy as Catalyst for Regional Collaboration and Innovation

Rochester, NY—January 25, 2010 --Finger Lakes Wired, the federally-funded initiative launched in 2006 to support workforce development and help transform the regional economy, wraps up its planned four-year long efforts this month.

Finger Lakes Wired was one of the first 13 of 39 designated WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) regions in the country to be awarded \$15 million by the U. S. Department of Labor to support economic development and transform regional economies. The partnership encompasses more than 23 economic development, education, workforce development and business organizations from Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties.

“The intent of Finger Lakes Wired has been to transform the capabilities of the Rochester area work force to prepare for the new generation of jobs that we are trying to grow here,” said Peter Robinson, Chair of Finger Lakes Wired and Chief Operating Officer of the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Finger Lakes Wired’s key focus has been to:

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

“The principle incentive with Wired,” added Robinson, “has been to work closely with the business community making sure that we understand their needs, not only now but where they’re going, and then prepare a workforce that is going to be available to support those future directions. So we have been looking towards a more high-tech economic environment here in the greater Rochester area, so preparing workers for that environment is going to be very important for us.”

David Zorn, Managing Director of Finger Lakes Wired, said, “As we reach the end of Wired, the numbers have shown that we have reached the audience that we set out to reach. There is always more that can be done. But we have tracked and monitored the programs and we’re seeing in the numbers that we’re affecting regional workforce and talent development and economic development.”

Regional workforce, and talent development and economic development impact includes:

- 8,400+ workers from 305 companies received training
- 1,200+ individuals received a Career Readiness Credential
- 1,100+ entrepreneurs and innovators were trained in high growth sectors
- 500+ youth ages 16-21 gained skills required for high tech industries
- 400+ youth ages 16-18 received exposure to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics careers
- 148 participated in The Entrepreneurs Network
- 132 executives received training in strategic growth
- 4 college courses or curricula were developed
- 4 industry associations were supported or developed that represent more than 1,000 regional businesses

41 Initiatives Funded

To impact this change, Finger Lakes Wired funded 41 initiatives in the past four years focusing on the nine-county region surrounding Rochester N.Y.

- Building Regional Clusters
- Career Navigator
- Educator Internship program
- Entrepreneurship & Strategic Growth Immersion Sequence
- Emerging Entrepreneurs
- Finger Lakes Wired Scholarship program
- Knowledge Clearinghouse (Finger Lakes Resource Network)
- Friendly Home Long Term Health Care Career Pathway
- Golden Horseshoe Business Plan Contest
- Increasing Emerging Worker Skills
- MS in Science and Technology Commercialization
- Pre-Seed Workshops
- Predictive Analysis for Business Attraction
- Predictive Analysis for Business Retention and Expansion
- Regional Apprenticeship System
- Regional Skills Alliance (including Finger Lakes Advanced Manufacturing Enterprise) and Career Readiness Credential

- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) / Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Training
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Camps
- Technology Commercialization
- The Entrepreneurs Network (TEN)
- The Essential Links
- Winery and Grape Grower Training
- Workforce Excellence Regional Center (WERC)
- Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)

Maggie Brooks, Monroe County Executive said, “Wired has put Rochester, Monroe County and Upstate NY on the map for a number of different reasons. It highlighted our ability to work together collectively to strengthen our economy and lay a strong foundation for entrepreneurial and innovative success in our region’s future. The strategic investments made by Wired have also kept our economy moving forward by allowing us to remain competitive in a wide variety of markets.”

“WIRED has allowed us to think and ultimately act as a region,” noted Robinson. “Areas like Rochester are having hard time competing in the national economy, but if region is not working together it is going to make it that more difficult. I’m very optimistic about both what Wired has done and its sustained effect on the community.”

Finger Lakes Wired is one of several regions funded by the U. S. Department of Labor WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Initiative to support economic development and transform regional economies. Finger Lakes Wired initiatives focus on a nine-county region surrounding Rochester N.Y. (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates), to increase entrepreneurship and innovation and enhance the talent of the region’s workforce.

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