

Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council

Meeting Notes

Sept. 13, 2013

SUNY Institute of Technology

Utica

Welcome and Introduction of Members, Agenda and Overview

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Larry Gilroy at 9:10 a.m., followed by the introduction of REDC members and distinguished guests.

Co-Chair Gilroy thanked SUNY IT for its continued support of the REDC and its mission. He noted the departure of Co-Chair Wolf, SUNY IT president, for a new post with the University of Washington in Seattle.

Co-Chair Gilroy introduced Robert Geer, new Acting President at SUNY IT, who was invited to describe to the REDC and the public gathered the changes under way at the college.

President Geer began by noting how impressed he is with the creativity, energy and dedication of Upstate New Yorkers. He highlighted the beginning of construction on the new \$120 million Computer Chip Commercialization Center, or Quad C, on campus. When completed, the 220,000-square-foot facility will be outfitted with two 50,000-square-foot clean rooms on two levels – the first such configuration in western hemisphere. President Geer described this as “an incredible step, a transformational opportunity.”

He said there are already a number of efforts under way in SUNY IT classrooms related to emergence of Quad C. These initiatives, he said, will continue SUNY IT’s historical mission and transformation.

President Geer said that, with Quad C, the pieces are in place to move the Mohawk Valley well into the future of nanotechnology development. However, he said, success is rooted in a creative, engaged work force, and that the value of homegrown talent can’t be underestimated.

Mohawk Valley STEM Hub

President Geer introduced Howard Mettelman, superintendent of the Oneida-Madison-Herkimer BOCES, to launch a new Mohawk Valley STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Hub initiative. President Geer said a focus on STEM Hub will help teachers to illustrate the career opportunities for their pupils.

Superintendent Mettelman said the MV STEM Hub will promote innovation teaching and collaboration to prepare all students for success in the 21st century. The initiative will involve the education, business, and government communities. In the room today, Superintendent Mettelman said, are superintendents from across the Mohawk Valley region, representing 63 school districts. He said that will be a tremendous support network – the reimagining of NY and its educational system.

Rick Short of Indium Corporation of America spoke briefly about the importance of STEM education initiatives to high-tech companies such as his own. He said that Indium took great advantage of capitalizing on the creative work force. He said Indium is working with local students to stimulate their creative interests and encourage them to remain in the Mohawk Valley.

Co-Chair Gilroy said the STEM Hub announcement was a very significant one and another example of the region working cooperatively toward a strategically critical goal.

MV Nanotech Development Partnership

At this point, Co-Chair Gilroy introduced MV EDGE President and REDC member Steve DiMeo and New York State's Assistant Secretary for Economic Development Andrew Kennedy to provide an overview of the recently announced partnership between EDGE, SUNY IT and the College for Nanoscale Engineering and Science in Albany for the development of the Marcy NanoCenter.

On Sept. 12, it was announced that CNSE will develop the Marcy NanoCenter site to attract manufacturers of 450 millimeter diameter computer wafers. Full build-out of the Marcy site could include more than 8 million square feet of facilities, with a long-term potential of up to \$45 billion in public and private investment and 500 direct jobs.

DiMeo said the announcement provides further affirmation that nano will drive the economy of the Mohawk Valley and Upstate New York, supported by a major academic collaboration. He said this links directly to Governor Cuomo's public/private development strategy by using CNSE as a conduit for helping the industry solve common technological problems. What you will have, DiMeo said, is a tremendous pool of intellectual capital engaged in cutting edge research and development.

Co-Chair Gilroy noted that the developments at SUNY IT and at the Marcy NanoCenter represent the collaboration and support of the Governor, the Senate and Assembly, and of local government. The dream is much closer to reality, he said, and there will be tremendous cross-regional benefits.

"Project Foodie"

The Co-Chair then introduced New York State Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi to describe his "Project Foodie" initiative, designed to marry the growth needs of Brooklyn food makers with the capacities and capabilities of Mohawk Valley region food-making enterprises. The idea came to him, he said, when he noted that the Brooklyn Brewery, which makes some of its products at the Utica-based Matt Brewing Company, had moved warehouse and distribution operations to the Utica area.

The Assemblyman said he now has a list of about 20 Brooklyn-area companies interested in working with upstate food manufacturers. He said that he is looking to identify as many successful partnerships as possible and is also planning a tour of the Mohawk Valley food manufacturing community for interested Brooklyn firms. He said the project will help to promote New York State products and to create more jobs upstate and downstate.

Mighty Waters

Kevin Millington, a strategic planner for the New York State Department of State followed with a brief overview of the “Mighty Waters” initiative, an inter-agency effort to promote economic development, community revitalization, environmental sustainability, and flood hazard risk reduction in the Mohawk River Valley. Millington said the end product for the Mighty Waters Working Group is a unified strategy for the MV communities – containing economic and community revitalization/development projects, capitalizing on regional heritage tourism opportunities. Several waterfront projects have received, or are seeking, REDC endorsement and NYS funding as part of the Consolidated Funding Application process.

Committee reports

- Outreach & Education: Three CFA workshops were conducted in June and July. Industry specific outreach sessions were conducted with the cyber-security sector and with the finance/insurance sector in August.
 - Cyber Security sector – The REDC found the industry’s challenges centered on education and training, less on capital-intensive projects.
 - Finance/insurance sector – The region rich in these sectors. Four takeaways were: work force training development needed; revitalization of our communities is vital to their success; learning to speak with one voice across the region, to grow our economy; and the weight of regulation that is preventing/inhibiting economic growth.

Meeting Summary

Co-Chair Gilroy noted that the Region’s six counties are making progress, and that the REDC wants to build on that momentum. He said that seeing some of this momentum build off the Council’s vision is very rewarding and exciting. He noted that the REDC voted earlier in the day to finalize its progress report and Round III CFA project scores. It is anticipated that NYS will publish a list of the MV REDC’s priority projects on or after Sept. 24. In a way REDC’s 2013 work is almost done.

###