

North Country Regional Economic Development Council
Public Participation Meeting Notes
Lowville Academy and Central School, Lowville, New York
October 26, 2011 (6:00pm-8:00pm)

Anthony Collins, Co-Chair of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council (NCREDC), provided an overview of the Regional Economic Development Council mission/ process. The Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process was highlighted; all applications are due by October 31, 2011 at 4pm. This was the seventh Public Forum for the North Country (one in each of the seven counties in the North Country region).

Question/Answer Session

Question

How will the CFA process work if you receive requests through NYSERDA?
Questioner expressed concern over processing time and length of application.

Answer

The Lt. Governor is very interested in learning about anything that might be impeding progress in the State. We will communicate your concerns; there may be ways that State agencies can expedite applications. One reason the application process is longer is because it is a consolidated application that can be used across agencies for funding.

Speakers

Katie Liendecker, Mayor of Lyons Falls

The Lyons Falls Paper Mill closed in 2001. The paper mill was a very large employer and the closure impacted the entire community. The paper mill is now owned by a non-profit and is now in Phase 2. There is a plan to use the site of the former paper mill in new ways that will reinvent the use of forest economies and could serve as a model throughout the state (referred to as Preston Gilbert for more details). Mayor Liendecker also noted that four season tourism is very important to Southern Lewis County.

Response: I think you will find recognition for this type of activity in the NCREDC strategic plan. The Tourism workgroup has considered the Black River and Moose River along with other rivers and bodies of water in the North Country when considering tourism issues. We can showcase our assets and connect them for a cohesive regional approach to tourism.

Preston Gilbert, Director of Brownfield Studies, SUNY ESF

There are 77 paper mills in New England, 26 in NY State. Over the next ten years, we expect half to close. As paper mills are collapsing, they are taking entire communities with them. Through a plan to convert paper mills into hydroponic greenhouses, developing bio-fuels to generate electricity and heat

for consumers, and developing public/private partnerships for research and teaching, we see Lyons Falls as launching a new forest economy in NYS and serving as a national demonstration model. We are working with a variety of federal agencies on grant applications. The former Lyons Falls paper mill and a former paper mill in Connecticut are the first locations targeted as Technology Launch Pads.

Response:

Has a CFA been submitted?

Yes, there will be a CFA. The issue/project has also been brought to the attention of the Strategic Cluster Workgroup for Energy and to the Central Region Economic Development Council.

Is this a project that can be phased in over a period of years?

Yes, this is what is anticipated.

Mickey Lehman, Bernier, Carr & Associates

In response to the presentation and the question of “How is business being impeded in New York State?” we have concerns about the new regulations pertaining to the MBE/WBE programs. We are now included with areas such as Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo but do not have access to the same resources as these larger areas. In order to meet our MBE/WBE goals, we need to recruit subcontractors from further distance at additional cost and delay to our customers. If they are not granted a waiver, this will have a negative business effect.

Response: NYS Empire State Development staff noted the concern.