



Work Group Meeting Notes

Work Group Name: Entrepreneurship/Business Development
Work Group Chair: Jeff Belt, SolEpoxy
Meeting Date: August 31, 2011
Meeting Location: Larkin Building, 726 Exchange Street, Buffalo, NY

Work Group Members Present:

Jeff Belt*, SolEpoxy
Ben Rand, Insyte Consulting
Al Culliton, Erie County Industrial Development Agency
Scott Friedman, Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP
Kory Schuler, Niagara USA Chamber
Tom Ulbrich, UB Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership
Dolores McCarley, Resource Planning Associates, Inc.
Sue McCartney, Buffalo State Small Business Development Center
Robert Genco, UB STOR
Mike McNally, United Association of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry, Local 22
Sean Myers, NBT Solutions
Rosa Gonzalez*, R. Gonzalez Consulting
Duncan Ross*, Arrowhead Spring Vineyard
Lynn Oswald, Niagara County Community College Small Business Development Center
Deanna Brennen*, Niagara USA Chamber
Jack McGowan, Insyte Consulting
Keith Blakely, The Inventures Group

* = Regional Council Member

Work Group Members not able to attend:

Marnie LaVigne, UB Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics
Bob Fritzingler, SUNY Fredonia High Technology Incubator
Anthony Johnson, Empire Genomics
Mike Weisman, Campuslab
Robert Gioia*, Oishei Foundation
Pamela Henderson*, Regional Council

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Summary of Meeting:

The meeting began with introductions by the members present, followed by a presentation on the nature and timeline for the Regional Councils by Christina Orsi. A brief discussion of the scope or definition for Entrepreneurship/Business Development touched on several themes:

- The important role entrepreneurs play in creating companies and jobs;
- Making it easy to create new businesses by streamlining government requirements and making it easier to understand and access various types of assistance available;
- Embracing diversity of entrepreneurial activity from restaurants to high-tech start-ups;
- Increasing local tolerance for both failure and success; and
- Identifying obstacles to entrepreneurship and eliminating them.

The Work Group then did a SWOT analysis which identified the following top three items for:

Strengths:

- People
- Market Access
- Affordability
- Strong research university

Weaknesses:

- Aggressive regulatory environment
- Lack of funding
- Lack of confidence/intolerance of failure

Opportunities:

- Revise regulations
- Existing infrastructure
- Increase diversity of business ownership

Threats:

- Losing out to other, higher functioning regions of the country
- Poor national image
- Non-collaboration

The next meeting date was set for September 7 @ 5PM, then the meeting was adjourned.