

I am submitting this as I have been unable to attend the public sessions. I thought I would submit this as an attempt to participate.

Name (brand) the region

It seems as if the region needs some sort of name to make branding and identification internally and externally work. It does appear to be a real region, as opposed to one that is stuck together for practical reasons, but it needs a name. The Southern Tier is a name used by at least three parts of the region already. The Southern Tier is way too simple and designates very little. I 86 is not a bad reference if Tompkins and Schuyler do feel that it speaks to the öspineö, not to the direction of where development might occur. No signal economic theme appears so that can not rally the name like Silicon Valley.

Create an Angel Network

A specific entrepreneurship suggestion is to work towards creating an Angel network. Some communities work at connecting Angels with businesses, others simply facilitate the network. Angels really make start-ups work. The Venture guys are second to third stage and not for start ups. Angels can make university tech transfer businesses work as well. The biggest difference is size of investment. Government is a poor Angel investor and a poor start-up partner due to politics and the start-ups scope (jobs, investment).

Develop tech transfer/start-up infrastructure in accounting and legal professions

Work should be done to insure that technology transfer/start-up infra-structure exists in the accounting and legal profession. This is areas like intellectual property law, joint ventures, licensing, equity based employment contracts. One should not have to go to Syracuse, Rochester Buffalo for these resources. Ithaca has some, but may be the only in the region.

Answer what do I do now?

So what is it that the region should do differently? What is it that the region should not do any longer? As a business person, what should I do to get rich from this plan? As a member of the economy, what should I be doing to make this work? Do not tell me to join a committee. Tell me how to get succeed or how my actions can make the region succeed.

Too many people act as if the government or ötheyö ought to fix the economy. That is a great misconception in my view. I would love to see a plan that says something to the effect of öthere are 500,000 people living in the region, to make the economy succeed, 5,000 of you need to get off the couch and start a business or 10,000 of you need to go back to school to get a degreeö.

Frankly, eliminate economic development personnel at the county level.

If we are serious about regional development, County, or municipal level personnel contradict the vision. Too frequently the economic development actions are driven by politicians despite the existence of business boards, etc.

Self-employment as a solution

Self-employment may define large segments of a future economy that has lots of artists, technology based businesses, and a talent rich workforce. One could look at the region as an under-developed country that has been striped of resources and lacks the structure to continue as it has for 50 years. The developing nations use self-employment and micro-loans as a tool.

Business Competition

Regions like Syracuse hold annual business plan/idea competitions with rather large prizes. The competition is technology focused which sets positive reinforcement of the region and the prize is enough to shift a businesses attention to what the region might want to have occur.

Is this people based or business based?

There needs to be much discussion about recruiting people (talent). I remember reading some research from Cornell Professor Christopherson that claimed the region lost talent at a comparable to the nation rate, but pulled talent in at a very poor rate. Aggressive internships may be one way to connect with the talent already in the region from outside the region attending its colleges.

People based plans are more compatible with technology/entrepreneurial based businesses. The point is what are we fishing for? For businesses that will bring jobs or people that will create businesses. We can fish for both, but if we only fish for businesses the outcome is really different.

Businesses coming in worry about real estate and tax breaks. Business coming from within worry about talent (as employees, professional support), and access to resources (financing, wireless internet access, rental/small spaces etc.). Property taxes and cute incentives just do not matter. In the initiation of tech based start-ups there are no profits.

Public Sessions

I have been unable to attend the public sessions due to work requirements. It is great to gather public input. The process of break-out groups and SWAT analysis does not often lead to highly innovative ideas however. That process is great for evaluation not innovation.

How about a Tech facilitator/transfer base in the region?

Models like Cornell's CCTEC are great, but they are push systems. Tech development in the community is a pull system. Together a balance might reach more success.

High Tech Rochester is an interesting model for bringing together resources of tech transfer, capital, government and entrepreneurship without the burden of government and the slowness of academia.

To an early point, High Tech Southern Tier sounds really flat. A name can really help.

PA

There PA neighbors that live, and work along this region. They should be a part of any plan

I feel some need to qualify my status. I am presently working in the manufacturing accounting field for Borg Warner in Ithaca. I worked in this field or 15 years for Corning Inc. I have owned a Finger Lakes winery. I am also currently also working with a start-up company in the region which has received three National Science Foundation Phase 1 Small Business Innovation Research grants, has several patent based product offerings, and continues to work with Cornell, CUNY, Binghamton University, the University of Washington and possibly Alfred in developing the technology/business.

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