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Chautauqua County to Hold Public Forum for WNY Regional Council's Strategic Plan:

Edwards Calls Upon Residents to be Involved in the Creation of the Council's 5-Year Plan

Mayville:-- Chautauqua County Executive Gregory J. Edwards invites County residents, business leaders, and other stakeholders to join him and other Western New York Regional Economic Development Council members on Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at 6 p.m. at Jamestown Community College's Robert Lee Scharmann Theatre, located at the Arts & Sciences Center on James Ave in Jamestown, for a public forum.

The purpose of the forum is to receive crucial input from citizens on economic development goals that should be included in the Council's Strategic Plan, which will help guide economic development and job growth in Western NY for the next five years.

At the Council's August 16, 2011 meeting, the ranking elected official from each of the five participating counties were given the task to host a public forum in their counties.

"The goal is to have each county host a public forum where we can gain valuable input from the residents and taxpayers of our region," said Edwards. "After the meeting, each County will come back to the Regional Council with specific recommendations from their county to be addressed or included in the plan. Members will then take this pool of information from the five counties and ultimately decide what will be crafted into the Council's plan."

Chautauqua County's public forum will have four representatives from the Council: County Executive Gregory Edwards, City of Jamestown Mayor Sam Teresi, Cummins Jamestown Engine Plant Manger David Porter, and one of the Council's Co-Chairs— either University at Buffalo President Satish Tripathi or Larkin Development Group Managing Partner Howard Zemsky.

The purpose of the meeting is to engage the public to help participate in the draft plan for Western New York. Topics to be discussed include reinvestment, workforce development, geography, tourism, entrepreneurship, life sciences/healthcare, higher education as an economic driver, and agri-business development.

"Our County's Comprehensive Plan, *Chautauqua 20/20*, went through many lengths to get the input of our residents as the Chautauqua County Department of Planning and Economic Development held 3 surveys and over 12 public meetings and hearings," said Edwards. "Thousands of individuals participated in its process and although the Governor has given the Regional Council only four months to complete and submit our plan, I am hopeful that residents will once again be a part of future development in Western New York."

According to the "Regional Council Guidebook," once the Council has completed their initial Strategic Plan, it must be adopted by a majority of the Council's members and be submitted to the Strategic Plan Review Committee by November 14, 2011. The Strategic Plan for each of the 10 Regional Councils across New York State will then be reviewed for allocations of \$200 million in capital funds and tax credits.

To register for the public forum please visit www.nyworks.ny.gov or call (716) 846-8247.

Residents are also encouraged to take part in an online survey at www.nyworks.ny.gov/content/western-new-york that focuses on economic issues, opportunities, and assets in our region.

The WNY Regional Economic Development Council was launched by Governor Andrew Cuomo in July 2011 to enable the counties of Western New York to work together to promote economic development and stimulate job growth in their region. The Council covers Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara Counties drawing its membership from local elected leaders and local leaders from business, academia, labor, agriculture, nonprofits, and community-based organizations.

For more information about the WNY Regional Economic Development Council, please visit www.nyworks.ny.gov.

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