

Contact: Robert Lillpopp
(518) 457-5519
www.labor.state.ny.us

For Immediate Release
February 1, 2006

FINGER LAKES PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES \$15 MILLION
Grants to Create an Integrated Workforce, Education and Economic Development Plan

State Labor Commissioner Linda Angello today announced that the Finger Lakes Partnership has received \$15 million, available under the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) program by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). Under the program's guidelines, funding will be used to support the development of a regional, integrated approach to workforce, economic development and education initiatives.

Commissioner Linda Angello said, "By promoting teamwork and innovative approaches to education and workforce development, New York has once again shown adaptability and vision. This award provides the funding that will help us to transform the Finger Lakes region into a premier place in which to create jobs, one that invests in entrepreneurial operations and trains workers, empowering them to be agile, adaptable, and aligned with global opportunities."

The Award is one of thirteen given by USDOL. The funding will be provided to the Finger Lakes region in the amount of \$5 million annually, over a period of three years. Governor George Pataki submitted two applications in January. The first was for the Finger Lakes Partnership and the second was for the Central Upstate Corridor for Innovation.

The twenty-one members of the Partnership represent critical leadership throughout the Finger Lakes region. Rochester Works Inc., the non-profit arm of the Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Investment Board (WIB), will lead the project, maintaining communication among regional, state, and federal team members. Other members of the team include the City of Rochester, the County of Monroe, Empire State Development and Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, the Greater Rochester Enterprise, High Tech Rochester, Infotonics Technology Center, Rochester Business Alliance, and the Cornell Agriculture and Food Tech Park. The academic community is represented by the University of Rochester and Rochester Institute of Technology and the Finger Lakes, Monroe and Genesee Community Colleges.

Rochester Works! Executive Director Matthew C. Hurlbutt said, "This project is evidence of the outstanding assets we have throughout the Finger Lakes region and the ability for individuals from a variety of organizations to come together and get things

done. It will be my pleasure to continue to work with all of our partners to make this project a success and enhance our region's competitive advantage."

"Infotonics is pleased to have assisted with the winning of this market-driven initiative that will do so much good to foster collaboration and develop the resources of the region." said David R. Smith, CEO, Infotonics Technology Center.

Paul Wetenhall, High Tech Rochester President, said, "Our proposal integrates creative processes for entrepreneurial development and innovation commercialization that will accelerate our transformation from a big company manufacturing region to a globally recognized knowledge-based, entrepreneurial economy."

Dr. Albert Simone, President of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), commented, "We congratulate the community on winning this very competitive Department of Labor award. RIT is pleased to be part of the Finger Lakes Partnership's innovative and entrepreneurial approach to economic and workforce development. Our region has all the right ingredients to cement its reputation as one of the nation's innovation "hot spots" and this investment will accelerate our efforts in that regard. The creative and hard-working spirit of the Finger Lakes Partnership will make a lasting, positive impression on the lives of thousands of people in our region."

State Senator George D. Maziarz, Chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, said, "This assistance is great news for the workers and businesses of the Finger Lakes region. The integrated education and training that this funding will support will help us meet the demands of a 21st century marketplace. Having a well-trained and knowledgeable workforce has never been more critical to keeping good jobs here and generating new economic activity."

"With the Rochester area facing unprecedented unemployment, many of our families are facing the real possibility of losing everything they have worked for", said Assemblymember Susan John. "I know that these funds will help the families I represent and will be one step in a long journey of economic recovery for the upstate region. I look forward to working with the Department of Labor to expand the programs that benefit our future."

"This announcement is great news not only for Monroe County, but for our entire region," said Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks. "This initiative will enable us to strengthen regional collaboration and build on the entrepreneurial spirit that has long been a hallmark of our community. Working together with all our partners, we will energize our region's entrepreneurial economy, nurture innovation, upgrade the skills of our workforce, and attract new business investment and jobs for the 21st century global economy. This initiative is also a great complement to Monroe County's plans for The Enterprise Institute for our region's promising entrepreneurs."

Richard Calo, Chair of the New York State Workforce Investment Board and Vice President of Workforce Relations at IBM said, "The State Workforce Investment Board and its partners continue to make significant investments for the benefit of New York State's businesses and their workers. We are proud to have worked with Governor Pataki and Rochester Works Inc. to help make this award become a reality."

The grants will provide funding to support the Finger Lakes Partnership's ability to: 1) energize the region's entrepreneurial economy; 2) catalyze regional innovation; 3) empower workers to succeed in the global economy; and 4) build 21st Century innovation infrastructures. Additionally, the Rochester Partnership hopes to access over \$22 million of relevant partner funding. The funding will catalyze the region, resulting in a true integration of powerful resources, propelling the region's economy from a period of slow growth to one of national leadership in regional innovation and entrepreneurship.

For more information about this award, contact the New York State Department of Labor at (518) 457-0380 or Rochester Works at (585) 258 3534.

###

No. 5