

NEWS

For immediate release

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Finger Lakes, Genesee and Monroe Community Colleges to Partner and Form Regional Center for Workforce Excellence

Finger Lakes Wired Providing \$370,000 in Funding

New virtual center will expand program reach

Rochester, NY -- December 16, 2008 –Finger Lakes Wired (www.fingerlakeswired.com) announced today that it will award \$370,000 to Finger Lakes, Genesee and Monroe Community Colleges for the creation of a Regional Center for Workforce Excellence.

The proposed virtual Center will provide students and job seekers across the nine-county region with access to technical, lab-based non-credit and credit programs via distance learning and hybrid delivery formats. Non-credit courses currently offered at one college will be hosted offsite at partner facilities or businesses to reduce travel time and increase the number of individuals served. This new approach will expand the reach of programs currently available at only one or two of the three colleges to a wider constituency, reducing geographic barriers.

“This innovative partnership will provide workers across the nine-county region with greater access to advanced skill training in key industry sectors and allow them to upgrade their skills and remain competitive in the global economy,” said Pat Piles, Finger Lakes Wired Program Manager.

The Center will both increase the skills of local workers while also improving the talent pool for regional small to medium-sized businesses. Pilot course offerings in select industry sectors are expected to be launched in spring 2009. A coordinator, based in MCC’s Applied Technologies Center, will be hired to run the program.

Current program offerings in Agriculture and Life Sciences, Applied Technology/ Advanced Manufacturing, Green Industries and Health Care/Sciences at all three colleges will be inventoried and matched with identified business needs for possible inclusion in the Center’s offerings.

James W. Winston, Assistant to President of the Office of Workforce Development at Monroe Community College and project lead for the partnership, said, “The three community colleges have a plethora of high-quality programs and services that will now become more accessible to

businesses, not-for-profit organizations and individuals – ushering in a new era for developing employee and professional talent in our region.”

The Regional Center for Workforce Excellence is one of two projects chosen for funding through the Finger Lakes Wired Transforming the Region Request for Proposals, which sought initiatives that exemplified the spirit of Wired. The Regional Center for Workforce Excellence will be the only program of its kind in New York State.

Finger Lakes Wired is one of 13 designated WIRED regions in the country funded by the U. S. Department of Labor WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Initiative to support economic development and transform regional economies. Finger Lakes Wired initiatives focus on a nine-county region surrounding Rochester, N.Y., to increase entrepreneurship and innovation, expand employment, advance opportunities for workers, and enhance the talent of the workforce through the creation of high-skill and high-wage opportunities.

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