



# 2008 Progress Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

## Background

Finger Lakes Wired is a partnership of 23 economic development, educational, workforce development, and business organizations from the nine-county Finger Lakes region surrounding Rochester, NY.

This collaborative effort is led by the chief executive officers of its partner organizations, who have met regularly since May 2006, to support a strategic approach to regional economic development. They have adopted a mission and vision, and have agreed to guiding principles, a strategic direction, and actions in support of this effort.

## Mission

Increase the region's capacity to support talent development for sustained economic growth.

## Vision

The Finger Lakes region is a premier place in which to innovate, investing in entrepreneurial operations and educating workers, empowering them to be agile, adaptable and aligned with global opportunities through an integrated system.

## Strategic Direction

1. Energize the region's entrepreneurial economy;
2. Catalyze regional innovation and convert orphan or under-utilized technology into vibrant business ventures;
3. Educate and empower workers to successfully compete in the changing global economy;
4. Build a collaborative regional education, workforce and economic development system.

## Strategic Outcomes – Completion of WIRED

1. Increase private sector job growth relative to national average.
2. Increase average wages relative to national average.
3. Increase retention of 20 to 34 year old workers in region.
4. Adoption of a regional identity resulting in collaborative networking and communication in support of regional economic strategies.

## Implementation

An implementation plan was developed to provide an early stage roadmap for the WIRED initiative in the region.

Now in 2008, the plan is well underway.



Partners have utilized feedback from our National Advisory Panel to refine activities and identify other opportunities for improvement in support of regional economic development activities.

Finger Lakes Wired, which builds on the success of the national WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) brand, encourages collaboration and connectivity throughout the Finger Lakes region to show how we are "wired together" for growth.

Partners are working to align resources and assets to support the growth of entrepreneurs and existing businesses throughout the region.



## PROJECT OUTCOMES TO DATE

The following projects noted below are strengthening talent development in the region and are supported by USDOL WIRED funds as well as other resources. Additional projects will be considered by Finger Lakes Wired in 2008.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### **Predictive Analysis – Business Attraction – GRE**

In an effort to expand its internal capabilities, Greater Rochester Enterprise is attempting to make initial contacts with prospect companies at high-level entry points by utilizing the services of a professional research and corporate intelligence service. The objective is to establish initial communication, information gathering and, ultimately, set up mission trips of regional leaders to visit target companies in order to match regional assets with industry leaders and create more opportunities for growth.

Through the end of September, 2008, these efforts have resulted in the identification of 20 new business attraction projects and 22 corporate executive level meetings.

ZoomProspector is a GIS-based tool that allows easy access and identification of sites and buildings in the region, ZoomProspector allows users to easily educate themselves about the region's assets. There are now 96,617 pages of views of regional sites available, including real-time information about specific site locations, demographics, workforce data, and industry information. Site selectors and businesses can access ZoomProspector at any time.

### **Regional Cluster and Competency Networks – GRE**

The goal of this initiative was to foster the growth of a more interconnected technology community via cluster and competency networks. With input from business leaders and companies that are already involved in one or more existing industry associations, this initiative now focuses on convening inter-network discussions aimed at establishing a collaborative technology council across Upstate New York. Seventeen associations and/or technology networks have begun to explore the potential of working together to deliver greater connectivity and value-added services to their network members. Accomplishment highlights for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter include:

- Completed outreach to all 17 industry associations and tech networks throughout the Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo regions.

- Individual meetings and/or discussions were held with each organization to outline goals, objectives and desired benefits from their participation in the Technology Council of Upstate New York.
- Held the first meeting of the Technology Council of Upstate New York (TCUNY) on September 18, 2008.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### **Strategic Growth through Innovation Program – RIT**

Rochester Institute of Technology's immersion program is educating 23 C-level executives, in small to medium sized businesses, in a new round of classes underway in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2008. The participants work individually and in teams to internalize a curriculum that includes:

- Understanding the Growth imperative
- Utilizing a Strategic growth planning template
- Inventorying internal capabilities and resources
- Better leveraging of existing capabilities
- Understanding SWOT analysis
- Recognizing growth traps
- Recognizing Active Inertia
- Locating sources of funding
- Creating a Product/Market matrix
- Implementation strategy and measurement
- Change management

Emphasis continues to be placed on selecting participants with expertise in industries such as Optics/Imaging, Biotech/Life Sciences, Food/Agriculture, Alternative Energy and other clusters. High growth, small enterprises are supported through this immersion program. As of this class, there have been 63 C-level executives who have benefited from this Wired funded educational offering.

### **The Entrepreneurs Network – TEN**

Delivering a six month program including a boot camp, workshops and panel events, TEN is designed to optimize exposure to and interaction with leading entrepreneurial experts to introduce local entrepreneurs to new ideas and attract needed capital investments.

TEN has served more than 100 executives from 82 companies spanning the nine-county region. TEN members have created more than 70 jobs, increased revenue by more than \$5.7 million and secured more than \$7.2 million in angel and venture capital investments.

Solar Sentry, Logical Images, ePostmarks, and eHealth Global Technologies have all received financing as a result of contacts made through their TEN involvement and participation.



## **The Young Entrepreneurs Academy – U of R, Geneseo**

Through this program high school students start and run a real business, learn how to pitch investors, and manage sales and service. Business leaders provide mentoring and advise based on real-world experience.

SUNY Geneseo joined the University of Rochester in 2008. Last year 23 students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades participated in the YEA program. Geneseo kicked off its first year with 14 Wired scholarship recipients in 2008. Students start their own business under this innovative project developed by the University of Rochester with support from the Kauffman Foundation.

Wired scholarship supported participation in YEA since 2007 is now at 37.

Two more regional institutions are targeted to become active sites in 2009.

## **INNOVATION**

### **Pre-Seed Workshops - HTR**

These workshops provide an assessment of potential for a specific invention, and foster a collaboration of technologists and/or inventors knowledgeable about business.

- Workshops for 2008 are scheduled for the Rochester area in October/November, and in the Geneva area in November/December.
- Wired funded workshops served 100+ participants in the first two years of availability.

### **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Outreach**

With HTR in the lead, this program assists technology and manufacturing firms throughout the region by providing training and assistance to improve regional success in securing funding through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Programs funded by the federal government.

Eight specific company proposals were submitted for SBIR/STTR funding consideration with HTR's assistance. Training and services included drafting, editing, and budget review of proposals submitted for scoring and review. Additionally, two training seminars were conducted this quarter. One focused on the NIH and life-science grant applications, attracting 17 participants 15 different businesses, while the other focused on SBIR/STTR process changes overall and addressed recent changes and collaborations across local universities and attracted 58 entrepreneurs and researchers from 43 different businesses.

## **Tech Commercialization**

Training researchers, students, faculty and entrepreneurs in the business aspects of commercializing technology and innovative ideas is the focus of this program. The program also fosters collaboration between and across the five (5) major players in the Finger Lakes Region in the area of technology commercialization. Those five entities are:

- High Technology of Rochester (the project lead organization)
- University of Rochester Medical School
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Cornell Agriculture and Technology Farm
- Infotonics Technology Center

These five regional technology developers have adopted a common vocabulary and have evolved to a more integrated approach to business development, and are integrating research and new product design processes with the benchmarks associated with key industries.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION**

### **Scholarship Fund – RW, FLW, GLOW**

The Scholarship program provides matching resources to businesses who invest in worker skill improvements in key industry segments of alternative energy, biotech & life sciences, food & agriculture, optics & imaging, advanced manufacturing, information technology, engineering, business services and health care leading to transferable skills and industry recognized credentials.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2008, businesses in targeted industries were able to provide necessary training to 790 employees.

Since the program launch in September 2006, Finger Lakes Wired has allocated over \$3.1 million for 169 unique businesses to increase the skills of over 4600 workers with \$5.5 million in matching funds provided by business.

### **Regional Apprentices System – MCC, FLCC, GCC**

All three Community Colleges had operational Apprenticeship programs underway in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2008. Joining Monroe Community College and Finger Lakes Community College, Genesee Community College launched its health careers program with six CNA's in pursuit of becoming Clinical Patient Care Technicians. FLCC has 12 students enrolled in their Bio-Manufacturing program and MCC has 16 incumbent workers in their Optics, Advanced Manufacturing, Printing apprenticeship program.

Now that all three programs are operational, enrollments are expected to grow as employers benefit from the new additions to the talent pool.



## **Educator Internships – FLW, RACEC**

Twenty six Educators from 14 school districts participated in the 2008 program. Twenty five employers across the region provided access to their organizations as educator-teams of two learned about industry sectors and the jobs and career opportunities available within those industries.

Focusing on Advanced Manufacturing, Food and Agriculture, Information Technology, Life Sciences and Optics, the educators returned to their campuses with first-hand exposures, PowerPoint presentations and game plans for sharing industry and career opportunity insights with fellow faculty and students.

The PowerPoint presentations can be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.monroe.edu/racec>

## **Expanding Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Camps**

Added to last year's 150 scholarships, Wired scholarships have now made it possible for 254 youth to benefit from STEM Camp exposure in the Finger Lakes Region by directly experiencing applied learning in biotechnology, physics, chemistry, geo-spatial technology, environmental protection, botany, mathematics, human-computer interaction and astronomy.

In 2008, 104 STEM scholarships were provided to programs offered by:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County, 4-H Camp Bristol Hills
- Finger Lakes Institute - Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Kids College
- Infotonics Summer Science Camp
- Rochester Institute of Technology, Kids on Campus
- Rochester Institute of Technology, National Institute for the Deaf
- Finger Lakes Council, Boy Scouts of America
- Monroe Community College Career Track

## **Increasing Emerging Worker Skills**

Finger Lakes Wired funded six programs targeted at exposing youth (ages 16 and up) to high tech careers, providing them skills and an understanding of the competencies required in key industry sectors and encouraging them to complete high school and to pursue technical training.

Unique to this Wired program was the requirement that projects address the Competencies Building Blocks model as it relates to employer/employee workplace success. Programs were specifically challenged to include components of Tiers I, II, and III into the learning experience of participants. Tier I includes Personal Effectiveness Competencies, Tier II addresses the Academic Competencies, and Tier III is referred to as Workplace Competencies.

The combined number of participants through September 30, 2008 was 172. Some of the programs will run through January, 2009 with additional participants in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter.

## **Partners**

City of Rochester  
County of Monroe  
Empire State Development Corp  
The Entrepreneurs Network  
Finger Lakes Community College  
Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board  
Genesee Community College  
Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council  
Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, and Wyoming Workforce Investment Board  
Greater Rochester Enterprise  
High Tech Rochester  
Infotonics Technology Center  
Monroe Community College  
Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Investment Board  
Rochester Area Colleges  
Rochester Area Community Foundation  
Rochester Angel Network  
Rochester Business Alliance  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
RochesterWorks, Inc.  
Technology Farm  
Trillium Group  
University of Rochester

## **Finger Lakes Wired**

Finger Lakes Wired is one of the first regions across America to be awarded \$15 million over three years through the United States Department of Labor WIRED Initiative. Partners will leverage over \$22 million in regional resources devoted to the successful achievement of these goals.

We are working together to support talent development strategies that increase economic growth in the region. Additional information on this initiative can be found at [www.fingerlakeswired.com](http://www.fingerlakeswired.com).

### **Nine-County Finger Lakes Region**

Genesee	Seneca
Livingston	Wayne
Monroe	Wyoming
Ontario	Yates
Orleans	

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