

NIAGARA ERIE REGIONAL COALITION

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MEMORANDUM

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD

**From: Economic Development Chair Hector Titus
Government Affairs Chair Peter McMahon**

Re: June, August 2007 Meetings

Date: September 7, 2007

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Economic Development and Government Affairs Subcommittees met jointly on June 19 and August 30, 2007. Present for the June meeting held at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) were subcommittee members Titus, Doolittle, and Roll (Economic Development); Ellis, Nasoff, and St. Pierre Smith (Government Affairs), as well as Regional Coalition Ad Hoc Member Michael Casale. Present for the August meeting held at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) were subcommittee members Titus (Economic Development); McMahon, Nasoff, and Weinstein (Government Affairs), as well as Regional Coalition Ad Hoc Member Michael Casale.

Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS):

At the June meeting a handout was presented by Subcommittee members Jo Nasoff and Laura St. Pierre Smith. Following is the text of that memo:

I. PROGRESS ON CLUSTERS:

1. Life Science: Completed
2. Advanced Manufacturing: Completed
3. Back Office / Financial Services: BNE updating original study – needs implementation steps
4. Agri-business: BNE study complete – needs implementation steps
5. Logistics: need an inventory of recent / on-going studies
 - Meeting June 11th with industry volunteers: Pat Whalen, Jack Ampuja, Luke Rich
 - Update from Hal Morse on GBNRTC's freight study timeline
6. Tourism: ?

II. NEXT STEPS:

1. Complete the Studies

- The Partnership has allocated resources to fund interns to complete the studies and staff to manage this process.
- Suggested Industry Volunteers:
 - Logistics: Jack Ampuja, Niagara University & SCO; Pat Whalen, WTCBN; Mike Casale, NCIDA; John Cappellino, ECIDA
 - Back Office / Financial Services: Graham Smith, BNE
 - Agri-business: Graham Smith, BNE
 - Tourism (if needed):

2. "Blend" the studies into the PART I report (update / extract relevant parts to exec. Summary?)

3. Implement the Strategies

- Convene group of ED professionals to oversee the Strategy
 - MOU on roles / responsibilities? (Life Science model)
 - Creates group ready to respond to funding / grant opportunities
- Strategy policies & implementation steps adopted by ED orgs:
 - WIBs, IDAs, ESD, County Government, other ED orgs.

4. Develop Goals / Benchmarks to measure effectiveness / progress

III. DRAFT TIMELINE:

Interns on board – (30 days) by end of May

Strategies completed – (90 days) September

Combined into one document (30 days) – by end of October

Group of ED professionals meeting regularly – by end of September

Benchmarks developed and tracked – by end of December

Regional Coalition Executive Director Tod Kniazuk agreed to review the existing tourism cluster. At the August meeting he reported that as it is written it just needs a little updating, but that it might need further work to bring it in line with the other clusters. Kniazuk agreed to pursue this, as well as update the rankings and such in the context work. Nasoff noted that the interns had completed their tasks, and also drafted an executive summary of the REDS.

Nasoff also mentioned that perhaps we should not be calling these "clusters" but rather "target industry studies" in light of their focus. She also mentioned that Kate Foster of the UB Regional Institute has an opinion that we should not target individual clusters at all, but rather make the region more desirable for economic development as a whole. While in agreement that the region needs

such improvement, Regional Coalition Co-Chair Barry Weinstein, MD pointed out that much of the reform needed is out of our hands.

Weinstein reiterated that his intent is to release the REDS before the end of the year. Kniazuk noted that the December 7 general meeting will be a focus on government affairs, perhaps making it an appropriate time for the release.

Framework for Regional Growth:

It was again noted that the REDS can fit in to the Framework. Rollout of the Framework continues, and Nasoff reported that different geographic areas have different concerns about the document, as well as find different strengths in it.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included sewer and water infrastructure, a proposed air travel study, the small business assistance website, and the Arts & Economic Prosperity report.