CORNELL UNIVERSITY
EDA UNIVERSITY CENTER 2008-2011
A COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP IN THE SOUTHERN TIER

FINAL REPORT
SUBMITTED AUGUST 2011
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THE CORNELL EDA UNIVERSITY CENTER

The 2008-2011 Cornell EDA University Center was hosted by Cornell’s Community and Regional Development Institute. CaRDI is a multi-disciplinary, applied social science institute dedicated to responding to current and emerging needs in community and regional development needs. CaRDI works within New York State, across regions, and on campus to: offer research-based information designed to help communities solve problems and capitalize on opportunities; provide training based on research and data for elected and appointed officials and community leaders to foster informed decision making; and connect Cornell faculty and staff from various colleges with local and regional leaders to build collaborative partnerships and to envision community economic development alternatives in key areas.

For the purposes of implementing the 2008-2011 Cornell EDA University Center, CaRDI engaged multiple partners across the Cornell campus and within the Cornell Cooperative Extension System to bring the resources of the University to bear in the communities of thirteen counties in Upstate New York’s Southern Tier, known as the Pipeline for Progress Region. Off campus, Pipeline for Progress (P4P) and Three Rivers Development were key partners in implementing the project. P4P is a think tank and public forum dedicated to creating, attracting and retaining talented individuals to the Southern Tier of Upstate New York. P4P pursues its mission by forming policies and creating initiatives that support the economy of the New York Pipeline, taking special interest in the 40-below demographic by keeping them connected to their community, business, and political leaders and serving as a public forum for those leaders, making them more accessible to the residents they serve. As the primary sponsor of P4P, Three Rivers Development, a Corning-based economic development organization, was fundamental in helping to guide the project.
REPORT OVERVIEW

In spring 2008, Cornell University’s Community and Regional Development Institute, in collaboration with P4P, responded to the call for proposals for University Centers issued by the United States Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration. The EDA University Center program is designed to help institutions of higher education apply their resources to the support of economic development in economically distressed multi-county regions.

The Cornell EDA University Center submission proposed to “conduct an integrated program of applied research, technical assistance, and training for elected and appointed officials, local business owners, and other community leaders to help them understand and overcome economic, demographic and organizational barriers that constrain economic development in a 13 county region in New York’s Southern Tier, known as the Pipeline4Progress region.” The overall goal of the proposed project was to build capacity, across the region, for collaboratively identifying, pursuing and achieving shared economic development goals, and, more specifically, to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and regional economic competitiveness.

The proposal was funded and the project was implemented between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2011. This report documents the activities undertaken to achieve the project goals, outcomes of these efforts, activities that are continuing beyond the scope of the project, and challenges and opportunities noted along the way.

In addition to this Overview, the report contains the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Year I: Goals, Activities, and Outcomes
3. Year II: Goals, Activities, and Outcomes
4. Year III: Goals, Activities and Outcomes
5. Additional Research and Education Initiatives
6. Project Related Outreach
7. Continuing Activities Connected to the Cornell EDA University Center
8. Observations and Conclusions
INTRODUCTION

As noted in the Report Overview, the overall goal of the Cornell EDA University Center 2008-2011 project was to build capacity across the Southern Tier, for collaboratively identifying, pursuing and achieving shared economic development goals, and, in doing so, to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and regional economic competitiveness. We proposed to achieve this goal through “an integrated program of applied research, technical assistance, and training for elected and appointed officials, local business owners, and other community leaders designed to help them understand and overcome economic, demographic and organizational barriers that constrain economic development across the region. The activities and related outcomes are addressed under the subtitle “Target Region Goals, Activities and Outcomes” in each year of the project.

In addition to fulfilling these objectives, we also sought to support the economic development of other communities and regions of New York by engaging them in activities targeted to the P4P region and, on occasion, applying EDA University Center resources directly to them. These efforts are addressed under the subtitle “Other Activities and Outcomes” in each year of the project.

In the following sections we provide the specific objectives we focused on during each of the three years of the project as well as what we did to achieve those objectives and what happened as a result of our efforts.

YEAR I: TARGET REGION GOALS, ACTIVITIES, and OUTCOMES

Year 1 Goals and Activities

The first year of the 2008-2011 Cornell EDA University Center project focused on (1) understanding existing resources, collaborative relationships, specific needs, and opportunities in the P4P Region; (2) sharing existing training and research based information; and (3) creating a plan for additional programming that would integrate applied research, training, technical assistance, and tool development to achieve the region’s goals identified in its regional action plan.

Recognizing that our resources limited us from pursuing these goals in each of the 13 counties in the P4P region, we decided to maximize our resources through work with two pilot communities, one in the east and one in the west of the Southern Tier.

The communities selected were chosen because they were:

- small cities which serve as sub regional economic hubs for surrounding rural communities
- at opposite ends of the P4P region, theoretically allowing us to maximize our impact across the counties between them
- similar and different in ways that allow for comparative studies
• proactively exploring economic development opportunities
• already collaborating locally and across counties, but open to exploring opportunities to do so more regionally.

Teams of local economic and community development representatives were formed in each community and members of these teams worked with EDA University Center staff to develop the programming agendas.

Specific activities in each of these three programming areas (1, 2, & 3 above) are described below:

**Understanding existing resources, collaborative relationships, specific needs, and opportunities in the P4P Region in the context of the project goals**

A variety of methods were used to understand the needs and opportunities within the region:

• Recent P4P region high school students were engaged through a study to understand the circumstances which influence their understanding of and pursuit of regional job opportunities, and their decisions to stay, leave, and return to the region as adults.
• Web-based research was used to identify entrepreneurship support agencies and organizations across the region.
• Meetings were held with representatives of individual agencies, organizations, and businesses.
• EDA University Center staff participation in strategic planning conferences.
• Meetings were held with pilot community teams.
• Local and regional planning documents (comprehensive plans, economic development plans, etc.) were reviewed.
• Pilot community team members were surveyed regarding existing and desirable activities and resources.
• Web-based research was used to identify programs and resources at colleges and universities in the region that support: regional economic development in general; entrepreneurship; and green industry.

**Sharing existing training and research based information to address these goals**

While conducting a baseline assessment of needs and opportunities, we developed initial outreach mechanisms to market training opportunities and research-based information to community and economic development partners in the region. These mechanisms included:

1. Regular email correspondence to our pilot community project teams.
3. Announcements through the P4P Network which distributes information to over 900 members via a website, bi-weekly newsletter, Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter.

Through these venues we marketed the following EDA University Center, CaRDI and Cornell sponsored events:
• The Cornell Municipal Clerks Institute – a four day professional development training program for municipal clerks hosted by Cornell and certified by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.
• A Local Government Leadership Institute – a two-day institute targeted to city, village, town and county elected officials and school superintendents in the P4P region.
• An Entrepreneurship Seminar Series – aimed at providing meaningful topics and networking opportunities for the general entrepreneurial public, combining live attendance and webinar sessions.
• Six “Sustainable Community” webinars.
• Two regionally focused Rural Learning Network conferences.

Creating a program that integrates applied research, training, technical assistance, and tool development to further achieve the region’s goals over the next two years, including an evaluation component for each aspect of the program

Based on our background research and work with the pilot community teams, we developed a logic model articulating an integrated set of training, technical assistance, and tool development activities that we focused on in Year II. Although some of these activities were specific to the pilot communities, with the goal of maximizing our impact whenever appropriate and feasible, they were marketed and held in locations that are central to the entire 13 county region.

Year 1 Outcomes

While most of our activities during Year 1 focused on building a foundation for future programming, important strides were made towards our project goals in the Southern Tier:

• We designed and began to implement a study to better understand the circumstances influencing workforce decisions.
• We reached out to partners in our two pilot communities and (1) made an initial case for the value of regional economic development and (2) secured a commitment from them to collaboratively work with us to achieve their goals.
• We worked with the members of the pilot project teams to develop, prioritize, and schedule an integrated array of regional training, technical assistance, and tool development activities, tailored to their specific needs, which would be the focus of our work over the next two years of the project.
• We identified existing resources, needs, and opportunities related to regional economic development, entrepreneurship, green industry, and regional collaboration and, as a result, developed a preliminary set of references for entrepreneurs, small business owners and professionals interested in finding out more about business opportunities in the P4P region.
• We began to identify additional funding and investment opportunities to further this programming agenda.

YEAR II: TARGET REGION GOALS, ACTIVITIES, and OUTCOMES

In Year II, we continued to work with local partners in the regional pilot communities, building on the activities and outcomes of Year I. Based on what our pilot community partners identified as economic development goals, existing and needed resources to meet those goals, and our understanding of
related resources at Cornell and across the region, our Year II objectives were to focus our integrated
applied research, training, technical assistance, and tool development programming on (1) increasing
awareness of assets within the region, (2) sharing research-based information about economic
development strategies of interest to the region; and (3) catalyzing collaborative and innovative regional
partnerships designed to capitalize on existing and emerging economic development opportunities.
Specifically, emphasis was placed on assets and emerging economic development opportunities relating
to entrepreneurship and related resources available through institutions of higher education.

**Year II Goals and Activities**

The goals noted in the paragraph above were approached in an integrated fashion through the following
categories of activities: (1) Technical Trainings and the Promotion of Regional Learning Communities; (2)
Online Resource Development; and (3) Research. Specific activities accomplished within each category
(1-3) during Year II are outlined below.

**Technical Trainings and the Promotion of Regional Learning Community**

**Webinar: Green Economy Investments: What do Local Policy Makers Need to Know?**

Hosted in collaboration with Susan Christopherson, a Professor in the City and Regional Planning
Department, and featuring the work of Cornell Master's Candidates, the goal of this webinar was to help
local officials understand the potential impacts of green economy investments for their communities
and, given this understanding, make informed policy decisions. We addressed a set of issues (wind
energy, biofuels, green technology & jobs, and local foods) that involve local policy makers as initiators,
facilitators, decision-makers, and negotiators.

**Entrepreneurship Seminar/Webinar Series**

A collaborative effort of various Cornell campus-based entrepreneurial programs to offer specialized
trainings and practical advice to regional entrepreneurs, the series offered in-person seminars combined
with networking sessions as well as webinar participation. The following topics were covered: 1)
Building the Team (May 8, 2009); 2) Intellectual Property Horror Story (September 18, 2009); 3) Idea
Validation & Opportunity Assessment (November 20, 2009); 4) Raising Money (February 23, 2010); and
5) Upstate Venture Connect (April 23, 2010).

**Marcellus Shale Webinars in partnership with Penn State University**

This educational 4-part series introduced community and economic considerations for the national gas
exploration in the Marcellus Shale. The program targeted small to mid-sized businesses and
entrepreneurs to assist them in making informed decisions about business opportunities arising from
the natural gas development. The Webinar Series covered the following topics: 1) Local Business
Success Stories and Lessons Learned I (January 27, 2010); 2) Local Business Success Stories and Lessons
Learned II (February 10, 2010); 3) Working with the Industry: Natural Gas Company Perspectives
(February 3, 2010); and 4) Partnering Industry and Local Business Panel (February 17, 2010).
Southern Tier Business and Entrepreneur Conference, November 2009, Binghamton, New York

This one day conference brought together technology transfer offices of Cornell University and Binghamton University. By collaborating with various regional organizations (Southern Tier Opportunity Coalition, SCORE, SBA, SBDC, Regional Technology Development Center and the Tech Garden), it offered a truly regional venue for networking and learning. The event aimed to foster regional economic development by strengthening the connection of the Southern Tier’s leading research institutions to entrepreneurs and innovation needs of local companies.

Community and Regional Support for Entrepreneurship and Green Economy Focus Group Meeting, December 2009, Ithaca, NY

This meeting brought together community and economic development professionals from the Central and Southern Tier regions to build awareness of the Cornell EDA University Center and identify entrepreneurship development opportunities. The Center developed a partnership with The Tech Garden in Syracuse to provide technical trainings on green entrepreneurship.

Community Support for Entrepreneurship Workshop – May 2010, Olean, NY

The Cornell EDA University Center partnered with the Business School at St. Bonaventure University and the Cattaraugus County Business Development Corporation to host a one-day workshop on community support for entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy. Economic development practitioners, entrepreneurs, and community leaders came together to learn from RUPRI’s Center for Rural Entrepreneurship about key capacity considerations for developing a community plan to mobilize area resources for supporting entrepreneurship.

Community Support for Entrepreneurship Workshop – May 2010, Elmira, NY

Community meetings were held with economic development leadership in Chemung County to discuss new concepts, best practices and tools available to support entrepreneurship as a core economic development strategy.

Support for Entrepreneurship Workshop – May 2010, Mt. Morris, NY, Livingston County

The Cornell EDA University Center partnered with the Livingston County Development Corporation, the Alliance for Business Growth, and Cornell Cooperative Extension to provide tools and strategies to aid the leaders of six villages (Dansville, Geneseo, Lima, Livonia, Mt. Morris, Nunda) in their community development and entrepreneurship initiatives. The half-day program was followed by an afternoon of individual technical assistance with the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.

Green Job Panel Presentation – Tompkins County Workforce Development

Staff from the Cornell University EDA Center discussed emerging green job opportunities with unemployed and employed individuals interested in pursuing employment in a green sector.

Online Resource Development

Online Communication Tool
Using, NING, an online, social networking forum, a platform designed to facilitate shared learning, peer support, communication, and collaboration among community and economic development professionals in the P4P region was developed.

Economic Development Resource Database
We continued collecting information on economic development resources and activities available at colleges and universities and other local and regional economic development programs and, working with a professional web designer, created an online regional economic development resource database.

Research
Attracting & Retaining Young Workforce in the Southern Tier
Cornell researchers from the Department of Development Sociology implemented a study of recent high school graduates to better understand how they make decisions about where to live and work. The research aimed to identify appropriate measures to reverse the low in-migration rate of college educated persons in upstate NY and to retain young workers. Cornell worked with four regional high schools (two rural, one urban, and one suburban) to conduct the study, with the goal of combining results of the study with findings from key informant interviews and focus group meetings with high school seniors. The members of the Class of 2008 were contacted to fill out a survey through Facebook, MySpace and email. Those without internet access were contacted through the postal service. At the end of Year II, preliminary results had been collected and were being studied for dissemination.

Experiential Education Collaborations between Higher Education Institutions and Economic Development Agencies and Organizations
St. Bonaventure University, a key partner in our western regional pilot community, designed research to understand how, if at all, colleges and universities in the region with educational programs related to economic development (business programs, entrepreneurship curricula, economic development classes, incubators, etc.) are collaborating with local/regional economic development agencies and organizations and businesses. The EDA University Center and St. Bonaventure agreed to explore ways to share the results of their research efforts through presentations and publications targeted to the region, as well as to community and economic development agencies more generally.

Entrepreneur Forum Feasibility Survey:
The EDA University Center partnered with Alliance for Manufacturing and Technology (AM&T) to explore whether or not there were a sufficient number of interested businesses and entrepreneurs in the Elmira-Corning region to create an Entrepreneur Forum. The effort addressed the question, “Is an ‘Entrepreneurs’ Forum’ a viable mechanism to promote and support entrepreneurial activity in the Elmira-Corning Region?” Established Forums were identified and their critical success factors noted. The functions and impact of Forums in other locations were documented, along with suggestions as to how they might be replicated in the target region. From a database of individuals involved in manufacturing and technology-based businesses (and from other sources), 37 people were contacted and presented with this information via in-person or phone interviews. The individuals were presented with a vision:
“New and existing business owners in the region could improve their positions by getting together regularly to talk about successes and difficulties, exchange ideas, meet with potential customers and suppliers, and learn new information from invited guests.” Possibilities for Forum structure and function, program topics, and other details were explored, then the interviewees were asked to respond to a series of questions designed to establish levels of interest and commitment.

**Year II Outcomes**

- An effort was launched to create a regional partnership of existing agencies and organizations to coordinate and enhance support for entrepreneurship in the greater Olean area.

- Post event evaluations indicate that Southern Tier Business and Entrepreneurship conference participants have a better understanding of resources at higher education institutions and ways to engage these resources for the benefit of their businesses. In addition, the following topics and resources were made available to about 100 participants: 1) Universities and technology commercialization; Universities and business & industry outreach; 3) Business planning; 4) Intellectual property; and 5) Funding sources. There was a consensus among participants similar types of events targeting universities and technology commercialization would benefit businesses and entrepreneurs in the region

- Post event evaluations indicate that participants in the Community Support for Entrepreneurship workshops (in Olean, Livingston County, and on the Cornell campus) increased their understanding of key concepts and frameworks that can be used to develop community strategies for supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs. Assessment and planning tools developed by RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship were made available at the events (e.g. the ways regional support for entrepreneurship contributes to economic development; resources for supporting regional economic development; etc.)

- An online infrastructure to support communication across the Southern Tier regarding community and economic development was created.

- Understanding of how high school students make decisions about where they plan to live and work and disconnect between young people and employment opportunities in the Southern Tier was increased.

- The Entrepreneur Forum feasibility survey led to the conclusion that the creation of an Entrepreneurial Forum in the Elmira-Corning region is not feasible at this time. At the most basic level, creation of an Entrepreneurs Forum modeled after the existing successful examples requires a group of existing high-tech entrepreneurial companies. To be sustainable, this group needs to be large enough to supply an average attendance of at least a couple dozen entrepreneurs, and continue to do so despite turnover, business failures, and scant available
free time. Based on the results of the initial inquiry (via the survey), this condition does not yet exist the Elmira-Corning region.

YEAR III: TARGET REGION GOALS, ACTIVITIES, and OUTCOMES

During year three we continued to refine our focus, based on the needs and interests of the regional pilot communities. We chose to concentrate on four goals: (1) Facilitating coordinated, collaborative and strategic community support for entrepreneurship in the pilot communities; (2) Coordinated, collaborative and strategic partnerships with colleges and universities in support of regional economic development across the region; (3) Coordinated, collaborative and strategic support for workforce development; and (4) Continued ongoing support for capacity building via training, technical support, research and network facilitation. In the following sections, we identify the activities completed in support of each goal and related outcomes.

Year III Goals and Activities

Coordinated, collaborative and strategic community support for entrepreneurship

Support for Pilot Communities efforts to coordinate and collaborate across agencies and organizations to support and promote entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy.

As noted in Year II, the Cornell EDA University Center worked with RUPRI’s Center for Rural Entrepreneurship to host regional workshops and individual community meetings to introduce new concepts, best practices and tools to enhance economic development through entrepreneurship. Since then, via technical assistance, we have supported the greater Olean community’s efforts to: 1) establish a Cattaraugus County Entrepreneur Task Force; 2) mobilize local and regional technical services for area manufacturers; 3) strengthen business development resource ties to Cornell University and Alfred University; and 4) collaborate in a broader regional context by networking with business development professionals and business representatives from the Buffalo and Ithaca areas.

Facilitation of the Chemung County Community Empowerment Economic Development Workgroup

The purpose of the workgroup was to develop a strategic plan that would address a comprehensive needs assessment involving over 500 Chemung County residents. Over the course of eight months, the economic development workgroup was tasked to develop strategies that identified and addressed community priority areas.

Entrepreneurial Friendly Community Readiness Assessment Tool

We began developing a tool to help communities assess their readiness to support entrepreneurship as community-wide economic development strategy. During Year II, we have conducted research to identify existing tools and criteria used in other states (e.g., Texas and Georgia). When completed, the tool will aid community members in identifying key characteristics of entrepreneurial friendly communities and a process they can use to implementing strategic support.
Support for Youth Entrepreneurship

The Center shared the Community Empowerment Economic Development Workgroup’s action plan with Greater Southern Tier BOCES after school coordinators at the Elmira School District. The coordinators agreed with the workgroup that it is important to engage youth in entrepreneurship development activities and invited an extension educator to offer youth entrepreneurship after-school activities as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Center. As a result, we completed an eight-week session at the Elmira Free Academy High School (November 2010 – December 2010) and another eight-week session (February 2011-March 2011) at the Southside High School in Elmira. We collaborated with Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) on the curriculum development.

Efforts to Catalyze Connections between Entrepreneurs and Resources at Regional Colleges and Universities

The October 7, 2010 Southern Tier Business & Entrepreneur Conference was designed to strengthen connections among economic development service providers and regional businesses and cultivate connections between these groups and technology and research & development opportunities at Cornell and other leading research universities in the Southern Tier region. Held at St. Bonaventure University, the conference introduced regional industry representatives, entrepreneurs, and economic development professionals to partnership opportunities and initiatives of the Cornell Center for Materials Research, Alfred University’s Center for Advanced Ceramic Technology and St. Bonaventure University’s MBA Outreach Program. A real-time poll was conducted to gain a better understanding of the needs of businesses and entrepreneurs in the region. The conference also provided business development support in five technical resource categories: Research & Development, Entrepreneurship & Business Development, Public and Private Funding, Facility Expansion and Renovation, and Workforce Development.

Coordinated, collaborative and strategic partnerships with colleges and universities in support of regional economic development

Efforts to Catalyze Higher Education Partnerships

Our work towards establishing a network of regional colleges and university in the P4P region actually began in Year I when we started identifying higher education institutions and the programs within them with an economic development focus. We nurtured some of these connections through Fall 2009 and 2010 Southern Tier Business and Entrepreneurs Conferences, increasing awareness of some of the services offered through regional institutions (see above). We are cultivating relationships with major research universities in the P4P region. We are also connecting with community colleges recognizing their importance in regional workforce development.

These efforts resulted in a database finalized in Year III that was used to identify planning committee members that worked with CaRDI and the EDA University Center to host a June 2011 workshop on “The Role of Universities and Colleges in Community and Economic Development.” The goals of the summit were to: (1) share activities to increase understanding and awareness of activities across the state and
(2) have members identify opportunities to regularly and strategically collaborate to support economic development across New York.

Southern Tier Education Pipeline Summit

At the request of Broome Community College, the EDA University Center and CaRDI helped to organize and facilitated a “cradle to college to career” education pipeline summit hosted by Broome Community College and Lockheed Martin, in the eastern part of the P4P region. This regional summit was designed to identify aspects of the pipeline that are currently working well and not so well with the goal of working together as a region to better prepare young people and current employees for local and regional career opportunities.

Coordinated, collaborative and strategic support for workforce development

Increasing awareness among college students and workers across all career stages of Southern Tier and NY internship, employment, and career opportunities.

- With the goal of highlighting internship and job opportunities with innovative small to mid-sized green industry entrepreneurial companies in the P4P region, and work with colleges to market these opportunities, the Cornell EDA University Center identified entrepreneurial firms in the Elmira pilot region, setting the stage for P4P to contact those firms and work with them to develop Project ION internship opportunities and post their job opportunities in the Essential NY Jobs database.

- Co-sponsored and co-organized the April 2011 We Live NY Conference targeted to the under-40 demographic, policymakers, and community and economic development officials for the purpose of showcasing regional assets and opportunities to attract and retain young people. In addition to helping to identify speakers across multiple tracks, we organized and hosted a community development track, which was designed to complement those focused on economic development. Examples of workshops in this session include: Cornell’s “Rust to Green” community revitalization initiative, How to start a young professionals organization in your community, Green Building Initiatives, Paths to Sustainability, Grant Writing, and Vital Communities and Regional Vitality: The Role of Demographics; Green Career Pathways, and Entrepreneurship as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization - Mt. Morris case study.

Webinar featuring regional workforce development initiatives.

In December 2010, we hosted a webinar on “Attracting and Retaining Young Adults: Research and Initiatives from New York State” featuring several efforts in the Southern Tier dedicated to connecting young people to economic development opportunities in the region. The program description follows: Rural communities are concerned about the exodus of high school graduates and the challenge of getting both local and non-local young adults to stay, return, or move to the area to pursue careers and raise families. In response to this concern, community and economic development professionals are exploring and investing in strategies to retain and attract young adults. In this webinar we will share: (1) research undertaken by Cornell’s Department of Development Sociology, with support from the U.S.
Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, to better understand the ways youth perceive and explore career opportunities; and (2) regional programs designed to connect local adolescents and non-local college students to regional career opportunities and other community assets.

Attracting & Retaining Young Workforce in the Southern Tier Research Initiative

The results of the survey completed in Year I were combined with findings from key informant interviews and focus group meetings with high school seniors, analyzed and shared in Year III. Our findings indicate that recent high school graduates anticipate being geographically mobile and that both local economic and social conditions may be important push factors in selecting their expected residence. Educational aspirations and perceived efforts of improvement by local communities also play an important role in shaping residential expectations.

This research was presented at the New York State Rural School Conference, the Rural Sociological Society Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, a USDA w-2001 multi-state research group mini-conference, and in the December 2010 webinar described in the paragraph above.

Continued ongoing support for capacity building via training, technical support, research, and network facilitation

Stronger Economies Together

The EDA University Center provided support to the development of a USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) request for proposal that was funded and is now supporting the development of a 9-module Regional Economic Development training program designed to guide communities of Tioga County and its surrounds through a collaborative process that assesses and plans for regional economic development opportunities. The program is building on and adapting the Stronger Economies Together curriculum developed by USDA Rural Development and the nation’s Regional Rural Development Centers, to focus specifically on bioenergy. With an emphasis on supporting rural economic development through regional cooperation, the program has proactively sought participation from land owners and agri-business owners to generate new business ideas for the area’s renewable land-based resources.

The trainings will launch in September 2011 bringing together regional partners to develop a regional economic plan with an emphasis on the bio-energy business developments.

Vital Indicators for Enhanced Well-being

In March, the EDA University Center sponsored a webinar on Demographic Data: Uses, Sources and Tools, with the goals of providing participants with (1) an overview of how to access and use the latest American Community Survey and other census data via the U.S. Census Bureau's new American FactFinder tool, and (2) highlighting on-line data and tools from Cornell University's own Program on Applied Demographics, including population estimates, projections, school district and local government data. Following the workshop, we reached out to pilot community project team members to ascertain interest in co-hosting a similar, in-person event in their regions.
State of Upstate New York Initiative

Cornell’s EDA University Center and the Community & Regional Development Institute (CaRDI) respond to current and emerging challenges and opportunities in community and economic development in New York State. New Yorkers are living through a period of remarkable change. Among challenges faced are the restructuring of traditional economic bases, increasing local government costs and demands for services, a global recession, land use changes, and pressures to develop new energy resources in the face of climate change. At the same time, new domestic and global markets are emerging, green technologies represent a growing employment sector, land use planning innovations are taking hold, the local agricultural sector is growing, environmental interests and concerns are influencing policy directions more generally, and communication technologies are bringing people together in new ways.

In response, the EDA University Center and CaRDI organized a “State of Upstate New York” conference for June 2011 in Syracuse, New York. In many ways, this 2011 effort is a continuation of a project began in 2005, in collaboration with the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources (LCRR) called The Rural Vision Project (RVP). The project included a series of listening sessions held around NYS, culminating in a conference held in Syracuse, NY in 2006. The project helped to identify the key challenges, opportunities, and potential policy issues which rural communities in NYS face. Since that time, CaRDI’s focus has expanded to regional perspective, one that recognizes that communities, as well as the state, must consider local development from a regional perspective. This regional approach is important, whether for economic development, land use, schools, health care, etc.

After the RVP project, CaRDI and the NYS LCRR produced a post-project booklet that captured the main findings and conclusions of the listening sessions and the conference. Many of the issues identified became legislative agenda items in Albany in late 2006. New partnerships were created in many areas of the state to help communities deal with particular issues. Further research and outreach efforts were spurred on as a result of questions and issues identified by project participants.

In 2011, CaRDI and the EDA University Center continue this work in New York State’s upstate region. The State of Upstate New York project focuses on almost identical issue areas as did the RVP project several years ago. However, while the focal areas are similar, our approach to this project is somewhat different. A data chartbook, the *Upstate New York in Profile: Trends, Projection, and Community & Economic Development Issues*, was released just prior to the conference. The trends and changes portrayed in this chartbook served as a foundation for much of the discussion at the conference sessions. We rely on several primary and secondary data sources in this document. Data from the Decennial U.S. Census are provided for the years 1990, 2000, and 2010, and from the American Community Survey. In addition, we include estimates and projections through 2035 produced by the Program on Applied Demographics (PAD) at Cornell University (in collaboration with the NY State Data Center). Primary data collection was achieved through commission of a special survey, the State of Upstate Survey. The survey of 600 Upstate New York households, designed via the EDA University Center, was conducted in January 2011 by Cornell University’s Survey Research Institute (SRI).

Conference attendees attended three of nine workshop sessions to examine and explore the major challenges and opportunities facing the region. Key points from the nine workshops include:
Agriculture & Food Systems: While the agricultural sector is not the largest industry in NYS, it plays an important role. Increasing the focus on the intersection of manufacturing and agriculture was a key theme, along with the diversification of the industry, the local food movement, and the role of state and federal regulations in supporting the industry.

Local & Regional Governance: A major focus in this area was on government consolidation, functional consolidation, structural change, and government accountability. The property tax cap and resulting impact on service provision was discussed in detail.

Community & Energy: The need for a national climate strategy and energy policy was deemed necessary in order for regional and local efforts to move forward and be effective. The link between energy goals and land use policies was also discussed.

Economic Development: Among the themes discussed were higher educational institutions as economic drivers, manufacturing as a crucial component of job growth, regional clusters as ways of stimulating creative, self-generating local economies, and policies that contribute to the preparedness of young adults for manufacturing jobs.

Health Care: A variety of issues were discussed, including the feeling that health care costs are an impediment to economic development, cost savings must come from efficiencies (e.g., consolidation) and standardization, incentives must be realigned to reward quality, and not quantity, of care, and that the mobility management/health service transportation strategies, especially in rural areas, are key to maintaining independence among the growing elderly population.

Environment, Land Use, & Natural Resources: Among the issues discussed were the need for green infrastructure, more Smart Growth policies, increased coordination between regions and local governments, the need for more data on land use, and how communities can start green initiatives.

Poverty & Income: A variety of issues were discussed, including the inter-generational dimension of poverty, the concentration of poverty in rural Upstate NY, the significant intercounty income inequality that exists, and the need for policies that will reduce poverty and increase incomes such as job training, youth programs, and entrepreneur assistance.

Schools & Youth: The issues discussed in this workshop included the restructuring of school finances, the consolidation of school districts, regional variations, and the impact of STAR, the property tax cap, and other budgeting issues.

Workforce Trends: Among the issues discussed were the decline in manufacturing jobs, the need for greater collaboration and transparency among local governments and regions, the shift towards higher skilled and higher human capital labor force/jobs in Upstate, and the key role that higher education plays in workforce development and job creation.
Year III Outcomes

- The Center’s education and technical services have provided the Greater Olean pilot team with critical tools to start developing a strategic community support for entrepreneurship. A member of the Olean pilot team commented that “the collaboration and partnerships that are developing are very positive. Cornell University and CARDI played a key role in helping business, economic development agencies, and educational institutions link to create new opportunities in Cattaraugus County. We very much appreciate the efforts [from the Cornell staff members].”

- The outcome of our work with the Chemung County Community Empowerment has been the adoption of action plans targeted to: 1) growing small businesses; 2) creating and nurturing an entrepreneurial culture; and 3) utilizing innovative developments and economic forecasts to enhance education and training programs. This effort has engaged the interests of over 500 Chemung residents with the goals of promoting successful aging and creating economic opportunities to retain young adults in the region. The Center has continued to provide a facilitating role to implement the action plans since the adoption of the plan in July 2010. A member of the Elmira pilot team commented on Cornell EDA University Center activities: “Thank you for all of your time and efforts. The important work that you have done provides us with the building blocks necessary to move forward with successful economic development in our communities.”

- The leg work for developing a tool for assessing community readiness for collaborative, coordinated support for entrepreneurship has been completed.

- As a result of Cornell EDA University Center activities that emphasized youth entrepreneurship, community leaders from both the Greater Olean and Elmira pilot regions have identified youth focused action plans.
  - The Chemung County Community Empowerment has adopted an action plan to develop K – 12 educational programming related to local history, culture and entrepreneurship to provide role models, build community pride and encourage young people to remain in our community.

- Following our work with the Greater Olean pilot team on community support for entrepreneurship, the group identified building the capacity for youth entrepreneurship by providing RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship’s Energizing Entrepreneurship workshop to the area’s youth educators as one of their goals.

- By partnering with upstate higher education institutions and economic development agencies and organizations to host the Business and Entrepreneurship conferences fostered the development of stronger ties and new collaborative initiatives among businesses/entrepreneurs, higher educational institutions and various business development programs. Attendees responding to the event evaluation identified networking opportunities,
especially with other business people; presentations by CCMR and CACT and a panel presentation by regional business representatives entitled “Product Innovation through University Collaborations” as highlights of the conference. One participant, representing a business start-up, summed up his experience with the following statement: “Thanks for the opportunity and all the people I was able to meet and share my experiences with. It was a great event and I am glad I could be a part of it! It has been a very busy week, but I am glad I took the time to drive down there. I hope to be able to visit Cornell and discuss potential collaborations in the future for research or economic development partnerships. We may also be looking for new employees and Cornell would be a great resource for that.”

- The Cornell Center for Materials Research sponsored an Olean based start-up to attend a PreSeed Workshop allowing the company to find business development assistance for its innovative technology. This connection has allowed the company to access other valuable resources such as business coaching, business plan development, and an opportunity to speak to venture capitalists.

- Our efforts to identify and strengthen connections between economic and community development initiatives at other colleges and universities in the P4P region and throughout NY state
  - provided the leadership for the above referenced regional entrepreneurship conferences that reached nearly 200 people with new resources information and networking opportunities; and
  - resulted in approximately 45 representatives from colleges and universities across the state attending the higher education summit and agreeing to be part of a listserv designed to facilitate ongoing communication and meet again, via conference calls, to focus on specific areas for further collaboration (see section VI: Continuing Activities).

- The Southern Tier Education Pipeline Summit was held in May 2011. 80 representatives of regional k-12 schools, colleges, universities, public and private business employers, and human service organizations attended. The event culminated with the identification of a committee of individuals willing to work together to develop a plan for addressing related needs and opportunities.

- The State of Upstate NY Initiative resulted in a well-received conference attended by 175 people and a chartbook. (See section VI: Continuing Activities for additional outcomes)
ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN WHICH CORNELL EDA UNIVERSITY CENTER WAS A PARTNER OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT

ENERGY AND COMMUNITIES

There is no question that energy-related issues are already affecting communities all across New York State, and that they will continue to do so. A 2009 New York State Energy Research and Development Association (NYSERDA) report indicates that in 2007:

- New York’s total fuel consumption amounted to 4,128.9 trillion BTUs, and cost New Yorkers $64.9 billion
- Greenhouse gas emissions from fuel combustion totaled 229.5 million tons of CO₂
- 13% of the state’s total primary energy requirement was met from in-state resources, including 6% from hydropower and 5% from biofuels

Many of the most critical economic, societal, and environmental issues affecting the future well-being of individuals, families, businesses, communities, and regions have an energy underpinning. Whether the local discussion is prompted by Marcellus shale, renewable wind energy, carbon tax credits, the development of biomass fuel production, the reduction of household or business energy costs, or land and water use decisions, the discussion is occurring.

The EDA University Center supported the following activities over the course of the project:

- A symposia for Cornell Cooperative Extension educators to work through possible community-energy research and education program scenarios. This was part of a larger endeavor to focus on households, agriculture and communities in an integrated, cross-disciplinary framework.
- Development of a white paper on a systems approach to energy transitions;
- Community and energy inservice offered for extension educators and energy smart community coordinators;
- Community and energy workshop offered at the Cornell Municipal Clerks Institute;
- Enhanced understanding by municipalities and community task forces of the array of possible impacts and strategies for mitigation and monitoring;
- Development of a platform for working with municipalities and local officials on community energy planning

FUTURE OF RURAL NEW YORK SEMINAR SERIES

The Future of Rural New York Seminar Series brings together researchers, policymakers, Extension educators, and agency staff to collectively address topics of interest to New York Communities. The following topics were addressed through EDA University Center support over the course of the project.
Year III

**Workforce and Economic Development: The Competitive Position of NYS Regions**

**Transportation as a Critical Component of Community and Economic Development**

**Young Workers, Community Capacity, & an Entrepreneurial Climate**

Year III

**Positioning New York's Rural Communities: Vision, Policy, and Action in a Regional Context**

**The Impact of 'Green' Energy Development on Rural Community Sustainability**

Year III

**Cumulative Impact Assessment: What is it and why does it matter?**

See CaRDI's recent publication on this topic at:


**REGIONAL LAND USE MANAGEMENT:**

**THE LAND USE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE (LULA) TRAINING**

The award winning LULA training was first established in the mid-1990’s to provide current and emerging community leaders involved with land use issues the opportunity to participate in an intensive training program focused on how the land use decision making system typically functions, and how negotiation, conflict management, and community decision making approaches can be constructively integrated into this system. Through formal nomination, recruitment, and selection of deliberately diverse participants throughout a region, the training also provides a unique opportunity for sustained dialogue across the boundaries of place, occupation, and ideology that typically separate leaders involved in land use decisions in the region.

The primary purpose of the LULA program is to use law and negotiation theory to help local leaders understand that solutions to complex and persistent community issues are more likely to be reached through authentic collaborative initiatives than through the typical adversarial processes that accompany land development and preservation decisions. LULA fosters the creation of leadership networks on a regional basis by building personal relationships and shared experiences and understandings of the subject matter. LULA initiates and supports grassroots regionalism, creates opportunities for civic engagement, and promotes intentionally sustainable communities.

Originally developed by Pace University’s Land Use Law Center, over 1,000 local land use leaders have attended the popular LULA trainings in the Hudson River Valley. Cornell University’s Community and Regional Development Institute (CaRDI), with financial support from Cornell’s Economic Development
Administration (EDA) University Center, has taken the lead in partnership with both Pace and Albany Law School’s Government Law Center to make the training available in other parts of the state. The LULA training has won multiple awards, including the 2009 National Leadership Award from the American Planning Association. Organizers for the Southern Finger Lakes / Southern Tier region training included the Cornell Cooperative Extension associations and planning departments for the counties involved, as well as CaRDI and Farm Bureau.

**Year I**

**LULA Program in the Keuka Lake Watershed**

In the Keuka Lake Watershed this innovative pilot program was funded with a grant from the New York State Quality Communities Program and involved numerous partners. Fifty-four members of communities from within the watershed participated in the program. As part of the first day, participants identified a spectrum of issues that concerned them individually and collectively. At the top of the list were (a) protecting steep slopes and forests from inappropriate development, (b) finding the right balance between agricultural and development opportunities, and (c) discovering ways to work together efficiently on a regional basis. In the overall evaluation, 90% of participants rated the program as “excellent”, 10% as “good”. Some of the comments participants made on the usefulness of the training included:

- It will all be useful.
- Makes one more able to participate in a Town Committee on land use.
- As a person relatively new to being involved in a decision making role, I think the materials will give me another resource to being fluent in both the vocabulary and interpersonal negotiation tools.
- It has given me a good overview of all issues needing to be considered [regarding] how to work with all types of people in all types of situations.
- Should be required of all Town officials.
- All charts are useful- sections on collaboration most important- learning the idea of “stakeholders”

**Year II**

**LULA Program in Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties.**

In Spring 2010, 34 leaders from a five-county Southern Tier region successfully completed a LULA training led by CaRDI’s David Kay. The focus on the five-county region reflected a desire to encourage learning opportunities and networks across the Southern Tier. These communities share similar geography, attitudes towards land use planning, and straddle two major watersheds (Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay). Water, land use, transportation corridors and potential energy development all drove the decision to reach out to the five counties. Because of the salience of potential energy development for the participants, portions of the program were tailored to respond to this interest.
All of the individuals involved were selected because they were already involved in leadership roles involving land use in their communities. Despite some initial skepticism about whether the sessions would be worth the time away from other activities, interest remained high and evaluation scores and comments were very positive. Responses like, “I would highly recommend this training to any local official interested in bettering their community” and “A truly excellent experience - great people, invaluable information, skilled and knowledgeable presenters. For any and all involved in land use issues.” were indicative of the value of the course to participants themselves.

Year III

**LULA Program in the Southern Finger Lakes/Southern Tier Region.**

With the goal of increasing the likelihood that the learning which took place during the Year II LULA would be put into practice in the region (via the increased support theoretically available as the number of trained practitioners increases) a second training encompassing the same region was held in Year III. On April 7, 2011 a diverse class of 28 “local land use leaders” from the Southern Finger Lakes / Southern Tier region graduated from the award-winning Land Use Leadership Alliance (LULA) program. These leaders joined the thirty-four participants from the same region who in 2010 had completed LULA. Because of strong interest in energy issues in this part of the state, the LULA curriculum was tailored to address the relation between land use planning, law, and energy. The words of one satisfied participant summed up the feelings of most of the rest, “Whether or not you think you know everything about planning, this class will help. This course does a great job of summarizing the many aspects of planning.”

**THE MARCELLUS SHALE**

The Marcellus Shale is a geologic shale bed that extends across much of Pennsylvania and southern New York State, and is estimated to contain one of the world’s largest deposits of natural gas. While a moratorium on an extraction technique known as hydraulic fracturing over the course of this project has slowed the development of the Marcellus play, NY landowners, municipal and state officials, energy firms, and concerned citizens are all grappling with what the potential for extraction means for them, with economic and environmental impacts being chief among the concerns. Each of these groups has a range of interests, responsibilities, and opinions. Recent intensive natural gas development in other states has been accompanied by substantial changes in established trends in population, land use, environment, community, and economy. These changes have the potential to transform the fabric of many—especially rural—communities in NYS in ways that are both positive and negative.

The EDA University Center contributed to the following activities designed to help NY communities understand the implications of Marcellus Shale Natural Gas development:

**Year III**

- **Public Forums:** Cornell Cooperative Extension commenced a series of Public Forums providing an overview of Marcellus Shale development in the Southern Tier of New York State. Five public forums, as well as several additional specific topic forums, were provided. Interviews with a range of
stakeholders (including pro-development landowners in Steuben County and environmental activists in Schuyler and Tompkins Counties) showed that outreach efforts (particularly the “road show” public forums) are perceived to have increased the quality and objectiveness of information available to the public on Marcellus Shale related issues.

• **Workforce Development:** Initial outreach efforts on workforce development - including a meeting of regional workforce development leaders held at Cornell University – has been effective in spurring additional research and cross-collaboration among participants on Marcellus Shale-related workforce development opportunities within local colleges and universities. As a direct result of participating in this meeting, Corning Community College is partnering with The Pennsylvania College of Technology to study these opportunities.

• **Community Preparedness:** As a direct result of outreach efforts, community task forces are known to have formed in Broome and Tioga counties to prepare their communities to best take advantage of natural gas development.

• **Effective Dissemination of Accurate Information:** Information that has been organized and disseminated via a website and through publications regarding Marcellus Shale development - particularly information regarding workforce composition, environmental impacts, and community preparedness.

**Year II**

• **New York Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Summit: Challenges and Opportunities, Owego, NY.** November 2009: With legislative and regulatory controls being scrutinized, local government officials, landowner coalition representatives, citizens seeking more information, industry representatives, environmental advocates, researchers and educators attended the summit with the goal of addressing two key questions: Where do the people and the communities of New York State go from here in addressing the myriad issues associated with gas drilling? What strategies can be implemented to protect the environment and help the regional economy?

**Year III**

• Dissemination of a wide variety of materials that support informed dialogue and decision making on the natural gas development process and associated impacts;

• Enhanced naturalgas.cce.cornell.edu website;

• Support of academic research at Cornell University that targets development impacts and mitigation strategies;
LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE WITH THE NYS OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER

Year II
A partnership of the NYS Office of the State Comptroller, Hofstra University and Cornell University’s Community and Regional Development Institute (CaRDI), the Institute was designed to both inform and challenge local government officials through engagement on regional issues of common concern. Throughout the Institute, participants were provided with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, leadership, and decision-making skills.

Two Institutes were held in Year II:

Beyond the Fiscal Crisis: How to Build Partnerships and Leverage Opportunities, Cornell University, August 13-14, 2009.


REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OTHER REGIONS:

Rural Learning Network of Western and Central New York
The rural learning network and semi-annual conference series focused on community and economic development issues vital to rural central and western New York. The region is comprised of several counties also in the P4P region as well as several to the north of the Southern Tier: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates Counties. Public officials, non-profit agency personnel, business leaders/other decision makers and citizens from the region were invited to join the learning network free of charge.

The broad goals of this program were to: Enhance the quality of public and private decision making with evidence-based information and technical assistance; enhance community development, economic opportunity and the quality of life of citizens of rural central and western New York; Enhance inter-local cooperation among rural communities in the region.

Year I
In Year I, the EDA University Center helped support two conferences of the Rural Learning Network of Western and Central New York.

Achieving Greener Communities through Civic, Private & Government Sector Innovation – October 2008
Conference Purpose: A growing movement is underway to share information, learn from one another and revamp federal, state and local policies to promote greener communities. This conference examined innovative programs, policies and strategies that promote sustainable communities through such avenues as energy saving development/land use practices; efficient use of conventional and
alternative energy sources in housing and transportation; and assessments by civic organizations, municipalities and the private sector of their energy use and savings’ potentials.

Promoting Regional Assets for Community and Economic Development - May 2009
Conference Purpose: Regional assets are key building blocks in sustainable revitalization efforts. Assets include the skills of the workforce; the vitality of community organizations; the resources of public, private and non-profit institutions; and the physical and economic resources of local places. The numerous lenses through which we can view regional assets include, but are not limited to, tourism, education, entrepreneurship, arts and culture, natural resources, agriculture and history.

Year III
In Year II, the EDA University Center helped support one conference of the Rural Learning Network of Western and Central New York.

Featuring Bill Bishop, Creator of Daily Yonder website and author of The Big Sort, the conference focused on community leadership, consensus building, social networking and other skills designed to enable Upstate New York communities to survive and thrive during these difficult economic times. The conference stressed opportunities for community actors to work together in a spirit of cooperation and strong leadership to promote healthy communities and regional collaborations. In addition to the keynote speaker, the conference included sessions with practical exercises for developing leadership skills and consensus building in a political environment.

The Canal Corridor Innovation Initiative
In late 2009, a chance conversation on the untapped potential and seemingly consistent pattern of related concerns and barriers to economic development identified along New York State’s canal corridor led to an informal gathering of principal staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension and the New York State Department of Labor as well as numerous representatives of other regional, state, and federal agencies. The meeting was convened by Cornell University’s Community and Regional Development Institute (CaRDI) and facilitated around a presentation by Dr. Susan Christopherson on legacy assets, “phoenix industries,” and the canal corridor as the economic and symbolic “spine of upstate New York’s historic strength and innovation.”[1] At the same time, the Economic Development Agency (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce released a paper on economic clustering in the United States and New York State was void of any multiregional cluster on the nationwide map produced by Harvard University’s Business School and used in the EDA report.[2]

Out of these observations and conversations was born the idea of undertaking a series of search conferences along the canal corridor in 2010 to bring together a diverse mix of economic, cultural,

[1] December 2nd 2009 Conversation Notes
educational, community, and employment development entities from urban and rural settings across multiple upstate metropolitan regions. Four conferences, sponsored by Cornell’s EDA University Center, were held in total between April and December 2010 in Syracuse, Buffalo, Utica, and Ithaca. During each of these approximately four-hour long search conferences, participants were asked to identify regional and meta-regional assets and barriers toward future economic development and clustering, as well as tactical plans to move these efforts forward over both the short- and long-term. Additionally, a paid intern from the policy studies program at Syracuse University was engaged in researching the features of successful economic clusters and the historic patterns of the canal corridor around innovation. The final intention of these efforts was to determine if the canal corridor has what it takes to form a recognized multi-regional economic cluster and, if so, what is currently impeding the developments necessary toward that end.

**Assets, Authenticity, and Multiple Entry Points**

A key theme that emerged from the four search conferences was the incredible sense of bountiful amenities and a high quality of life throughout Upstate. The Canal Corridor was described as a series of “amazing pearls” strung together. This sense of place relates to authenticity and the lasting legacy of early settlement by the five Iroquois nations, the Dutch, and the English. Four unique community identities emerged, deriving from a combination of assets ranging from history and heritage, the arts, farms and food, educational institutions, natural amenities, water resources, recreational activities, seasonal variations, and cultural diversity to a skilled workforce, varied transportation infrastructure, and diverse economies—seen as competitive advantages in the development of a meta-regional corridor for economic development.

There are several economics development entities in the state of New York, each with a slightly different emphasis. The life sciences and renewable/green energy and clean technology, however, are common points of entry and recognized assets shared by several of the economic development organizations. Development in computer and electronic products is emphasized in central New York and the Southern Tier, while homeland security/defense and nanotechnology/semiconductors are a focus of the Center for Economic Growth in the Capital Region and the Greater Rochester Enterprise. Other key industries for development identified by regional economic development agencies include aerospace, agribusiness, information technology, optics and photonics, knowledge/learning, and chemical manufacturing.

**Opportunities and barriers to Establishing a Meta-region**

Regardless of geographic differences, participant discussions in the four Search Conferences made it clear that barriers to business growth were consistent across the Canal Corridor. The following common barriers emerged across the four conferences:

- A lack of collaboration and cooperation; parochialism; and a lack of cohesive plans to move the entire region forward may be the result of inadequate political leadership and/or too many layers of government;

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• Upstate NY has lost its ‘identity;’ compounded by state branding that is most identified with New York City; and
• New York State is perceived as not business friendly with its high taxes and inconsistent transportation and infrastructure capability and capacity.

Rather than focusing on these issues participants in each of the four search conferences expressed the desire to find solutions to these impediments that prevent the metro-regions and the meta-region from reaching their full potential. Ideas generated through this iterative approach ranged from very specific tactics to those broader in scope.

In many cases participants considered the benefits of leveraging education assets to forward regional initiatives; for example, as part of a class curriculum students could be used to develop materials that:

• Encourage connectivity and cooperation by creating a networking central resource (some specific actions could include a listserv, outreach database);
• Leverage formal partnerships with education institutions, tap into students to help with projects; and
• Enhance connections among educational institutions.

Further, there was a general consensus about the need to develop a brand that builds on the existing strengths of the region and would enhance cohesiveness across the metro-regions:

• Establish one vision/one goal and use meta-regional media to promote the brand and its inherent benefits;
• Study other successful regions across the nation and apply best practices;
• Expand the role of an existing marketing person (for example, at a Chamber or economic development organization) to promote and coordinate a set of activities across all the metro-regions; for example ‘Embrace winter’ with a series of events;
• Develop top ten lists for each region, for example create an interactive cultural food map (I © to eat NY); and
• Link to a Canal Corridor cost of living calculator from individual metro-region websites to demonstrate the (relative) low cost of living along the Canal Corridor.

Each metro-region described the importance of increasing business growth and attraction opportunities. Potential solutions ranged from broad approaches to addressing the need to simplify and make more cohesive the means by which economic development is conducted across the Canal Corridor:

• Increase access to broadband;
• Foster public-private partnerships;
• Align requirements and enforcement policies across municipalities to provide better services and simplify processes for organizations whose businesses reach across metro-region geographies; and
• Grow entrepreneurial opportunities.
NEW YORKERS are living through a period of remarkable change. They face challenges and new opportunities few could have predicted even a decade ago. Among challenges faced are the loss of traditional economic bases, increasing local government costs, a global recession, land use changes, pressure to develop new energy resources in the face of climate change, and the weakening of traditional community-based civic organizations and decreasing civic engagement.

At the same time, new domestic and global markets are emerging, green technologies represent a growing employment sector, land use planning innovations are taking hold, the small farm sector is growing, environmental interests and concerns are influencing policy directions more generally, and communication technologies are bringing people together in new ways.

In this context, the Sustainable Communities Webinars were a web-based opportunity for Extension Educators, local officials and other community leaders to broaden their understanding of current and emerging community and economic development issues and processes, and resources for addressing them. Researchers and practitioners share research-based information and personal experience designed to help New Yorkers make informed decisions.

Year I
During Year I, the following topics were addressed in six webinars:

• Sustainable Communities Overview, January 2009
• Engaging Constructively with Controversial Public Issues, February 2009
• Broadband - A Tool for Civic Engagement and Sustainability?, March 2009
• Understanding and Using Demographic Information, April 2009
• Agriculture and Farmland Protection in New York State, May 2009
• Wind Energy, June 2009

Year II
During Year II, the following topics were addressed in five webinars:

• Exploring the Green Economy, March 2010
• Integrated Data System for School District & Community Planning, April 2010
• Green Entrepreneurship as an Economic Development Strategy, May 2010
• Prospects for Fighting Poverty in the 21st Century: Strategies and Methods for Communities, June 2010

Year III
During Year III, in addition to the webinars noted above because they supported specific goals related to our pilot communities, the following topics were also addressed in a Sustainable Communities webinar:

• Leadership Development as a Community and Economic Development Strategy, Sept. 2010
• Economic Implications of Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Development, March 2011
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Years I - III

The Green Collar Pipeline Initiative, Phase I & II

Increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy are important strategies in meeting state and local energy goals, and in increasing the number of local jobs. An effective way to increase energy efficiency is through whole-building energy retrofits, something that is actively being promoted, especially to homeowners and small businesses that would benefit directly from lowered utility costs. Currently, there is not a sufficient trained workforce to meet the need if there were to be a surge in retrofits in the next two to four years. In addition, jobs created through such a surge cannot easily be outsourced and therefore support New York State’s economy.

The Green Collar Pipeline Initiative focuses on the steps, organized into a pathway, necessary to expand the workforce in energy-related fields in order to meet the projected increase in demand for energy retrofits. While there are workforce development efforts already underway that could apply to energy fields, they are not sufficiently coordinated and accessible to those seeking employment. Additionally, some services have not been successful in reaching or helping populations with the highest unemployment rate.

Phase I focused on the following:

• Identification of the agencies and institutions that support people seeking jobs and the roles they play
• Creation of a website to show the progression of jobs from entry to senior levels, the skills and expertise typically needed at each level and the types of jobs at each level.
• Survey of contractors who currently employ energy workers to identify their needs and the likelihood of and barriers to increasing the number of green jobs available.

Phase II promoted the website (http://ccetompkins.org/energy/green-jobs), identified barriers and developed strategies aimed at overcoming barriers. We presented the website, along with background information, at a conference for energy educators in New York State from within and outside of Cornell Cooperative Extension. The website was also shared at a mini-summit on green jobs in Tompkins County and with people in the target audience. We documented barriers to obtaining green jobs and formulated strategies.

Barriers for Low-Income/People of Color Populations

The energy efficiency field has the potential to provide good-paying jobs with the potential for advancement for people without higher education degrees. According to Russlynn Ali, U.S. assistant secretary of education for civil rights, “Despite the best efforts of America’s educators to bring greater equity to our schools, too many children — especially low-income and minority children — are still denied the educational opportunities they need to succeed.” A 2011 study by the U.S. Department of Education found that low-income, African-American and Hispanic students continue to face disparities in access to quality educational opportunities and resources at the K-12 level, which is a key predictor in
college success. An article in the MIT journal *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, February 2011, “black workers earn less than their white counterparts and have higher rates of unemployment.” It reached as high as 16.3 percent.

Lack of sufficient training is one of several barriers for low-income individuals attempting to enter the energy pathway. Informal individual and group interviews were conducted with low-income, minority residents in downtown Ithaca and low-income, majority residents in rural Tompkins County to determine what additional obstacles prevented entry into the pathway. Participants identified the following barriers:

- Lack of education
- Racial bias/discrimination
- Low self esteem/self worth
- No “real” jobs
- Lack of personal assistance during the job search
- Too many forms
- Job search process takes too long
- Green jobs are “not for me”
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of understanding of “green” jobs
- Lack of child care
- Lack of basic needs (food, shelter, clothing)
- Felt unwelcome at local employment and or temporary agency

A majority of these sentiments were expressed in all of the conversations and within both groups. Low-income individuals participating in the interviews appeared to view themselves as “unqualified” and sometimes unwilling to pursue entry into the pathway. One consistent message that resonated during conversations with people of color was the fact that their race played a significant barrier to entering into energy jobs. One job seeker commented, “These jobs aren’t for black people. The people that are doing this work are not willing to train or hire us and for the one that will, they catch it from homeowners that don’t want “those people” in their homes.”

**Initial Strategies**

There are some short-term strategies for addressing these barriers, however most are long-term. All of the strategies listed below except the last are focused on Tompkins County, NY. The final strategy listed is being undertaken in Utica, NY.

1) Training for high school-age youth through a free Building Analyst Certification course. The first course was offered in July 2011. Seventeen youth attended. Students took the National Building Performance Institute (BPI) Certification exam at the end of the course. Funding is being sought to continue these trainings with new cohorts.
2) Rebuilding the Wall Work Readiness Program (RTWWRP) provides training and employment services to hard-to-employ, low- to moderate-income, public assistance recipients, non-violent offenders, and ex-offenders in the Ithaca, NY and surrounding areas. The first five participants started in the summer of 2011. They received job readiness training, are now seeking job placement, and will receive ongoing job retention support.

3) Increased education about the benefits of energy efficiency (EE) to residents and businesses with the intent of increasing demand for energy efficiency work. We began a pilot program in the summer of 2011 to get groups of neighbors meeting for 4 weeks to commit to and complete EE work. The neighbor teams will expand in the fall of 2011.

4) A campaign aimed at reaching all county residents with two years with at least one EE message will kick off in the fall of 2011. As a kick off to the campaign 10,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs, along with educational materials, will be distributed free to county residents.

5) Funding is being sought for a long-term effort called “Building Bridges”. A multi-racial group representing leaders in sustainability and social justice who are committed to increasing the number of green jobs in the greater Ithaca area and ensuring that people in populations with the highest unemployment rate will benefit from this growing field.

6) The City of Utica is participating in Rust2Green, an effort to revitalize New York’s seven rust-belt cities. Rust2Green and various planning documents have identified transportation as a key barrier. To support green job efforts through Rust2G, we are pursuing support to begin a Carshare program modeled off existing programs in Buffalo and Ithaca NY.

PROJECT RELATED OUTREACH

_Pilot Community Project Team Meetings_

Meetings were held with the region’s community and economic development leaders, throughout the course of the project, with the goal of continuing to engage them in the development of EDA University Center activities designed to address their needs and goals.

_Project Updates_


_Cornell University Newsletter_

Regional Newspapers

- Olean Times Herald. Article on CaRDI and the Cornell EDA University Center project in the Pipeline for Progress Region. Title: "Program looks to put plug in 'brain drain'." (August 2009). Elmira Star Gazette. Article on CaRDI and Cornell EDA University Center project in the Pipeline for Progress Region. Title: New effort aims to keep young professionals in the area. (July 2009).
- Ithaca Journal. Article on CaRDI and the Cornell EDA University Center project in the Pipeline for Progress Region. Title: CU joins effort to keep young professionals in area. (July 2009).
- Olean Times Herald. Article on Cattaraugus County Entrepreneur Task Force and the EDA University Center. Title: More help for area businesses. (September 2010).

Other Newsletters


Poster


CONTINUING ACTIVITIES CONNECTED TO THE CORNELL EDA UNIVERSITY CENTER

Several projects initiated with support from the Cornell EDA University Center have taken on a life of their own and are continuing beyond the June 30, 2011 term date of the Cornell EDA University Center funding. The projects and forthcoming activities are described below:

Ongoing Regional Economic Development in NY’s Upstate Southern Tier

In late July 2011, NY’s Governor Andrew Cuomo established ten regional economic development councils around the state focused on job creation, economic development, and long-term regional sustainability. Cornell’s EDA University Center and CaRDI are playing important roles in the Southern Tier region in this effort, sharing the efforts of the 2008-2011 CaRDI EDA University Center and our focus on entrepreneurship, workforce development, and the roles of colleges and universities in regional economic development.

State of Upstate New York Initiative Activities

The response to the State of Upstate New York Conference has been so positive that we anticipate hosting a conference bi-annually and will be facilitating an ongoing dialogue on topics addressed during the conference through the following activities:

- Regular media updates (the first Upstate Update was released in mid-July (http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/upload/UU-July-11-draft-05.pdf))
• These updates are being timed to coincide with our regular publication series the Research & Policy Brief Series and the New York Minute, which for the next nine months focus on each of the topic areas covered in the SOUS initiative.

• A legislative briefing will be held this Fall in Albany to strengthen links between Cornell and state policy makers on the issues covered in SOUS.

• A post-conference publication is currently under development which will provide highlights of the initiative to date, focusing on the conference workshops and the challenges and opportunities identified in each of the issue areas.

• CaRDI anticipates leveraging much of the data collected during the SOUS chartbook development to support the work of the recently established Regional Economic Development Councils in New York State.

Higher Education Network Meeting Follow-up Activities

Following our meeting with representatives of higher education institutions on June 9, 2011, in conjunction with the State of Upstate New York conference, CaRDI has:

• In July 2011, established a listserv to facilitate ongoing communications among participants; and

• In late August 2011, set up four conference calls to explore opportunities for ongoing collaboration in programming areas common to the institutions at the June meeting: Community and Energy, Education to Workforce Pipelines, Entrepreneurship/Tech Transfer/Advanced Manufacturing, and Sustainability/Community Development. It is anticipated that new initiatives will emerge as a result of these conversations.

Stronger Economies Together in Tioga County, NY

Working in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tioga County and the Tioga County Rural Economic Area Partnership Board of Directors, CaRDI is co-leading, Sustainable Tioga II, a USDA RBOG funded training to catalyze regional economic development and explore the feasibility of bioenergy in Tioga County and surrounds. As noted above, the CaRDI EDA University Center supported staff time to develop this initiative and lessons learned in our work with Southern Tier pilot communities is being incorporated into the Sustainable Tioga II program. An anticipated outcome of this effort is that program participants, representing Southern Tier communities, will better understand the potential for developing bioenergy as a regional sector and, if feasible, create a development plan that will be shared with the newly established regional economic development council.

Workforce Pipelines; See “Initial Strategies” in Green Collar Pipeline Initiative description under Section V above.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

When we responded to the 2008 EDA University Center Request for Proposals in April of 2008, we did so in partnership with Pipeline for Progress, with the goal of supporting P4P’s Regional Workforce Action Plan strategies by better understanding specific needs of the region and helping to address those needs through the application of Cornell’s resources: technical assistance, training and research. We sought to build on and contribute to the momentum generated by P4P’s call to action by building capacity,
across the region, for collaboratively identifying, pursuing and achieving shared economic development goals, focusing specifically on entrepreneurship, innovation, and regional economic competitiveness. We also sought, whenever possible, to engage other communities and regions of the state with our work in the Southern Tier in order to maximize the potential benefits of our efforts.

With thanks to the Economic Development Administration’s University Center program, which granted us funding and, in turn, an opportunity to pursue these goals, and the greater Elmira and Olean communities, which agreed to serve as sub-regional pilot communities for the project and enabled us to target our programming while benefitting communities across it, we have employed a wide variety of strategies and resources in pursuit of our goals over the last three years and based on evaluations of these activities, accomplished a great deal. In particular, we’ve increased understanding of regional economic development and strategies and resources for pursuing it.

In the course of this work, we’ve also learned some important things about the region. Although local stakeholders see the value of regional economic development efforts, their experiences suggest that traditional administrative and political boundaries can make it challenging to collaborate on a regional level. Working across multi-county regions, in counties and communities that do not necessarily recognize themselves as part of an economic development region, can be challenging. Communities historically have been in competition with one another in attracting businesses and industries as the dominant way to creating jobs. The transition to incorporating a more collaborative economic development approach such as creating the community environment and infrastructure to build successful start-ups will require a new level of understanding in how this can be achieved. At the same time, there is clear interest in doing so and this interest is spawning new collaborative initiatives, presenting an opportunity to cultivate new capacities for economic growth. In this context, New York State’s new regional economic development councils in New York State are very timely and provide a framework for uniting counties in the Southern Tier in ways that, perhaps, only state-level mandates and the lure of millions of dollars in investment opportunities can.

As the work of the Southern Tier and Western New York Regional Development Councils is pursued, given the interest in entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy, they may find it valuable to build on our work to promote understanding and development of “entrepreneurial friendly communities.” Based on our experience in the region, it will be important to encourage communities therein to (1) recognize and invest in entrepreneurship as a viable economic development strategy and (2) work collaboratively to support entrepreneurship not only as individual agencies and organizations that collaborate on specific projects but as long term partners, engaged in shared plans of work and long term goals. It will also be important to nurture a cultural shift, from one where innovation has historically been led by large corporations to one, that looks to and supports small businesses for innovation, while being open to risk taking, seeing both business successes and failures as important indicators of a vibrant regional economy. When asked what information and resources have been most valuable to supporting area entrepreneurs and businesses through the engagement of Cornell EDA University Center, the following response was offered by a pilot team member in Elmira. “The need for a systematic approach to economic development that partners with all players and that balances
support for established businesses and entrepreneurial start-up business. We need to create an atmosphere and a structure that fosters, encourages and incentivizes risk taking and entrepreneurship."

At the same time, it is important to note that not only is the timing of the Regional Economic Development Council implementation right for the Southern Tier, but so is the make-up of the councils, with the inherent connections they are designed to promote between business, industry, community service institutions, and higher education institutions. The communities we worked with in the Southern Tier identified a disconnect between these groups as a gap and welcomed opportunities to better understand economic development resources within regional institutions of higher education, particularly those related to technology transfer and development. While evaluations suggest that the Business and Entrepreneurship conferences hosted through the support of the Cornell EDA University Center were good first-steps, they are not sufficient; for meaningful and fruitful business, industry, higher education research and development partnerships to form, a sustained engagement of these institutions while cultivating elements of entrepreneurial communities will be required.

In conclusion, although the Regional Economic Development Council of the Southern Tier has, like councils in other regions, a lot of work ahead of it, the tremendous resources of the region and willingness to address challenges should serve as a strong foundation for moving forward.