

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Prepared on behalf of:

***THE COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE***

Prepared by:

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## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **A. INITIAL BACKGROUND**

On September 17, 1997, in conjunction with the Rural Economic Policy Program of The Aspen Institute and Congressman Amory Houghton Jr., Southern Tier West hosted a seminar on rural economic development. The seminar presented those in attendance with an opportunity to reflect on some of the successes and failures of the region's traditional rural economic development strategies in addition to introducing some new alternative approaches being implemented elsewhere. As a consequence of this initial seminar, Southern Tier West, Congressman Houghton and others felt it was necessary to continue the rural economic development discussion with an eye toward the creation and implementation of a region-wide rural economic development strategy.

To that end, Southern Tier West embarked on a campaign to begin a Regional Economic Strategic Planning Initiative, a process which got underway with a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission for this project. As a first step in the project a regional strategic planning steering committee known as *The Commission for the Future* was created in the Spring of 1998.

### **B. COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE**

The objective of the Commission was to outline ideas relative to future rural economic development strategies and to discuss these ideas with regional leaders from within the respective communities and counties. From these discussions, the plan was to develop a prioritized list of strategic economic development priorities that would form the basis of a new strategy for regional economic development. The members of *The Commission for the Future* are as follows:

- Honorable Amory Houghton, Jr., United States Representative 31<sup>st</sup> Congressional District
- Jess Present/Patricia McGee, New York State Senator 56<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District
- John Walchli, Jr., Chairman, Allegany County Board of Legislators
- Gerard Fitzpatrick, Chairman, Cattaraugus County Board of Legislators
- Mark Thomas, County Executive, Chautauqua County
- Joseph Eade, Board Member, Southern Tier West RP&DB

The Assistants and Facilitators to the steering committee include:

- David Szczerbacki, Ph.D., Dean College of Business, Alfred University
- Brian Fitzpatrick, staff, Congressman Amory Houghton
- John Sayegh/Tom Livak, Director, Cattaraugus County Department of Economic Development, Planning & Tourism
- Michael Bobseine, Majority Leader, Chautauqua County Legislature
- Donald Rychnowski, Executive Director, Southern Tier West RP&DB
- Eric Bridges, Southern Tier West RP&DB
- Kier Dirlam, Southern Tier West RP&DB

## C. THE SIX STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The Commission for the Future met over the spring and summer of 1998 to discuss the economic climate of the region and to determine which priorities should become the top strategic economic development priorities. These were narrowed down to six, which are:

1. Achieve and Maintain a Balance between Natural Resources/Environment and Economic Development
2. Target Industry Clusters
3. Target Infrastructure Development
4. Encourage a More Positive Regional Attitude
5. Enhance and Upgrade Transportation Networks
6. Target Demand Side Workforce Training

## D. THE TASK FORCES

The Commission for the Future Steering Committee formed Task Forces for each of the six identified Strategic Action Items. Each Commission member was charged with nominating candidates for each of the Task Forces. In addition to these nominations STW invited members from the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board and its various committees. The next step was to assemble the groups of interested people for each of the Strategic Economic Development Priorities to develop goals, actions, and results for each priority. The commission determined some general goals and actions for each, but the Task Forces looked at these in more depth. Members of the Task Forces were asked to share their individual perspectives and thoughts on how an individual Strategic Economic Development Priority can or should be implemented. These ideas were produced during a series of meetings in January and February 1999. Each Task Force was assigned at least one STW Staff Facilitator to write down the ideas and put them into a short package that could be integrated into a single document. The results of the task forces were synthesized and distilled by the facilitators and are included in this document. Each of the results has been edited for format and minor content changes. Drafts of this document have been reviewed by the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board, the Task Force members and the staff facilitators.

## E. PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

September 1997	Aspen Institute seminar on rural economic development
October - January 1997	STW develops program outline.
January 1998	ARC allocates funding for program.
March - August 1998	Commission for the Future convenes and develops Priorities.
January 1999 - March 1999	Task Forces convene and develop goals, actions, and results.
April 1999 - July 1999	Results are compiled, reviewed by Task Forces, and revised.
August 1999	Commission for the Future receives & reviews <u>Task Force Results</u> .
November 1999	Commission for the Future reviews Plan and recommends County level review.
January 2000	Southern Tier West adopts plan

## **F. DEFINITIONS**

**“Goals”** refers to long term objectives that relate to the particular Strategic Action Item.

**“Actions”** refers to initiatives that should be undertaken over the next 12 months to produce Results over that same period. The Task Forces recommend that the Commission adopt the following Specific Actions as step-by-step work elements:

**“Results”** refers to those things that when measured will show progress toward achieving the goals.

## **G. OVERALL GOALS OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE FUTURE**

The following are the overall goals of the Regional Economic Development Strategic Planning Initiative for the Southern Tier West region.

- Enhance the performance of the region's economy as measured by such indices as: employment, per capita income, private and public sector investment, human capital, and value added productivity.
- Develop a multi-county agenda defined as a new paradigm of economic development. This approach is centered around a commitment to regional priorities as a basis for planning and action.
- Improve communication among the various entities and interests positioned to support economic development in the region: regional, county, and municipal entities; non-profit agencies and institutions; and the private sector.

## **H. PRIORITY GOALS**

The following are the goals that were developed by the task forces for each of the six strategic economic development priorities.

### **ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Goal # 1 - Create A Regional Mechanism For Balance
- Goal # 2 - Establish the Socio-Economic-Environmental Standard
- Goal # 3 - Utilize Planning and Land Use Tools
- Goal # 4 - Provide More Education and Outreach
- Goal # 5 - Environmental Regulations Need Proper Enforcement.



## **TARGET INDUSTRY CLUSTERS**

- Goal # 1 - Utilize Industry Clusters.
- Goal # 2 - Promote Start-Up Businesses within the Selected Target Clusters
- Goal # 3 - Promote Retention And Expansion Of Existing Regional Businesses Within The Selected Target Clusters
- Goal # 4 - Attraction To The Region Of Cluster Businesses Not Currently Located In The Region
- Goal # 5 - Development Finance Strategic Action Items

## **TARGET INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

- Goal # 1 - Economic Development Will Not Be Limited By Infrastructure
- Goal # 2 - Foster Improved Communication
- Goal # 3 - Encourage Private Sector Involvement

## **ENCOURAGE A MORE POSITIVE REGIONAL ATTITUDE**

- Goal # 1 - Create Competitive Advantage for the Region
- Goal # 2 - Publicity Development
- Goal # 3 - Promote Community

## **ENHANCE AND UPGRADE TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS**

- Goal # 1 - Capacity for Comprehensive Transportation Planning
- Goal # 2 - Improve Highway Efficiencies for All Roads in the Region

## **TARGET DEMAND SIDE WORKFORCE TRAINING**

- Goal # 1 - Establish Workforce Development Systems(s) in the Region
- Goal # 2 - Form Permanent Partnerships
- Goal # 3 - Reduce Regional Out-Migration
- Goal # 4 - Develop Career Development System

## **I. OVERALL PROJECTED RESULTS**

The overall results that are expected are directly related to the goals stated above. There are many other goals, actions and results noted throughout the remaining document for each of the targeted priorities.

- Lower unemployment rate of the region and each county.
- Increase per capita income of the region's residents.
- Better overall employment levels in the region and in each county.
- Increased labor force participation rates in the region and in each county.
- Improved communications between the economic development community and municipalities.
- Improved communications between economic development organizations.

- Increased the understanding and support of the three county legislatures regarding the essential nature of economic development, and regarding the essential need for a new paradigm for economic development in the region.

## **J. IMPLEMENTATION**

It is anticipated that each county and Southern Tier West will interpret this document to implement the various aspects noted within. Many of the actions will require a concerted effort by one or more divisions/departments/agencies within each county to successfully implement. The County leaders who are part of the Commission for the Future will actively endorse and work to implement parts of this plan within their county structure based on a particular county need or capacity. Members of the Task Forces have noted their interest in assisting in the implementation of various actions noted within the plan. It will be up to the agencies and departments within the counties to take ownership of this plan and to work to implement the actions noted. Some actions are specifically noted as likely to be undertaken by Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board on behalf and in conjunction with the counties.

## **K. PROGRESS MONITORING**

Approximately once a year Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board will contact the county and agency leaders to determine what the status of progress is on the various aspects of the plan. A report will be made to the Commission for the Future members on the status. The Commission for the Future may wish to reconvene and update the process and plan every few years.

**I. ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Priority Statement: The region must not lose sight of its natural resource base when pursuing economic development opportunities. Regional economic development should not occur at the expense of the region's environment and should complement its natural resources.*

**GOAL # 1 - CREATE A REGIONAL MECHANISM FOR BALANCE**

The region needs a mechanism whereby the pros and cons of each economic development project are weighed in comparison to the demands on the environment and natural resources to achieve and assure that a balance is kept to protect the environment during projects.

**Proposed Actions for Goal # 1**

1. Establish an Environmental Management Council, possibly regional in scope to assure that development is both economically viable and preserves open space and natural resources.
2. Work to Sustain capacity at the local (city, town, village, and district) level to plan for smart growth or which preserves the natural environment and overall quality of life.

**Expected Results for Goal # 1**

1. Have a single entity that can assist the developers and communities in determining whether a project is both economically and environmentally positive. Development of a better protocol to weight the pros and cons of projects on both economic basis and an environmental basis. An Environmental Management Council is one method toward implementing this.
2. Communities will either stay the same or grow in positive ways while not subjecting the environment to negative impacts.

**GOAL # 2 - ESTABLISH THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC-ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARD**

A sound evaluation strategy and assessment process will be routinely applied to insure consistency and offset bias. Prior to the initiation of an action and the allocation or mobilization of resources, determine that the socio-economic and environmental BENEFITS (positives) will outweigh the socio-economic and environmental COSTS (negatives, impacts, losses).

**Proposed Actions for Goal # 2**

1. Utilize the SEQR process to structure the weighing of costs and benefits. Specific tools will be provided to facilitate implementation of the assessment.
2. Each project should provide Documentation of Costs associated with a project both fiscally and environmentally including health hazard costs.

3. Utilize an Environmental Management Council (either at the county level or possibly regional in scope) as a tool in reviewing proposed projects either in conjunction with municipalities or on behalf of municipalities. This would allow the County and the region to have a more positive impact on the evaluation of the projects.
4. Encourage the Seneca Nation to adopt a like approach in assessing environmental impacts of activities within reservation boundaries.

### **Expected Results for Goal # 2**

1. Sound methods and practices employed by communities in development efforts.
2. Increase documentation of development projects evaluation prior to the implementation of the project.

### **GOAL # 3 - UTILIZE PLANNING AND LAND USE TOOLS**

Utilize Land Use Tools and Planning to increase the economic viability and readiness of the region for new development. Good preparation for the future will allow the area to grow without being a burden on the environment and natural resources. Elimination of urban sprawl and reutilization of sites is an important goal.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal # 3**

Provide a combination of tools to empower local cities, towns, and villages to adopt sound and effective master plans and resulting non-regulatory (capital budgeting, technical assistance) and regulatory (zoning) tools to implement them

1. Land Use Tools should be utilized more. Zoning and other land use tools need to be:
  - Implemented in the remaining municipalities across the region
  - Enforced and updated by those communities that already have such tools.
  - Hold public informational meetings explaining the pros and cons of having these tools.
2. Southern Tier West needs an updated *regional study* of the land uses, topography, soils, brownfields, wetlands, etc. to determine where developable sites are.
3. Reuse of old industrial sites (Brownfields) should be encouraged throughout the region by all agencies and government entities rather than utilizing new, heretofore, undeveloped sites (Greenfields).
4. Establish criteria and conditions by which investment in infrastructure can and will be made. These may include but not be limited to such things as the existence of master plans, zoning, sub-division or other land use controls, or where capital improvement plans have been adopted.
5. Encourage the application of seed funds or small-scale financial resources in support of local planning and capacity building efforts.
6. Encourage and promote other locally driven smart growth efforts or areas.

### **Expected Results for Goal # 3**

1. Increases development and implementation of land use tools by local communities.
2. A Regional study by STW
3. A Checklist/methodology by which communities can evaluate projects.
4. Increased Technical Assistance to communities for Grant writing and local planning efforts.
5. Increased local efforts for smart growth.

### **GOAL # 4 - PROVIDE MORE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

Increase education of both local officials and developers in the proper methods of economic development and weighing the pros and cons of development projects.

#### **Proposed Actions for Goal # 4**

1. Increase Education of the SEQR rules and process for the local officials that have oversight on projects. This education can be done by:
  - SEQR kits for each Town (providing maps, information needed in order to fill out the forms completely and accurately).
  - SEQR Help Group (A group of agency professionals that are willing and able to help work through the SEQR process with businesses and municipalities).
  - SEQR "Guide to the Answers" booklet should be put together.
  - SEQR Training videotape for new officials should be developed.
2. A source (newsletter or flyer) should be developed that lists all of the relevant money sources that local groups, agencies, governments and businesses can tap into for grant and loan assistance. This should be distributed to all the interested parties in the region. This could include Bond Act moneys, EPF, ARC, EDA, DEC, EPA, private foundations, etc....
3. Hold public informational meetings explaining the pros and cons of having land use tools in your community.
4. Provide training seminars and other technical support initiatives in support of local planning and capacity building efforts.

#### **Expected Results for Goal # 4**

1. Increased educational outreach to local communities by STW for Environmental concerns to local communities.
2. Newsletter
3. Increased Technical training on land use tools to municipalities.
4. Increase training for environmental and land use concerns.

### **GOAL # 5 - IMPROVE PROPER ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS.**

Existing environmental regulations need to be enforced so that further degradation of the environment is not allowed to occur. Through proper education, enforcement of existing laws as well as regulatory reform of poorly designed laws, the business community will be protected better as well as the natural community.

#### **Proposed Actions for Goal # 5**

1. Increase the staffing of environmental conservation officers for the state.
2. Disposal and recycling of wastes (and the related industries) should require a heightened review and insurance, as well as responsible oversight being maintained through proper reporting and subsequent monitoring by the permitting agencies.
3. Increase business awareness of environmental regulation. Perhaps this can be done through environmental compliance manuals.

#### **Expected Results for Goal # 5**

1. While more infractions may be found due to an increase in conservation officer staffing, it is felt that there would be a decrease in the number of actual infractions of the environmental conservation laws.
2. An increase in the number of DEC enforcement officers, foresters and related officials available in the Southern Tier West region.
3. Less pollution and environmental contamination is an expected result.

## II. TARGET INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

***Priority Statement: The region needs to develop a unified effort to encourage the development and expansion of existing business as well as bringing in new businesses within clusters.***

The Southern Tier West region (Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties) should be a center of activity for businesses in the selected clusters. To accomplish this, the region should research, market the region and the opportunities therein, attract business ventures through comprehensive incentives and packaged turnkey proposals, assist in the start-up of new business ventures, assist in the expansion and retention of existing businesses, and continue the process in future cycles. This focus is directed toward the selected clusters.

The region's goals and activities should be dynamic. The region should be open to changing its goals and actions over time, in response to changes in the regional and world economies. The choice of targeted clusters should be dynamic. The region should be open to changing its choice of targeted clusters over time, in response to changes in regional and world economies.

### **GOAL # 1 - UTILIZE INDUSTRY CLUSTERS.**

The region needs to develop a unified effort to encourage the development and expansion of businesses that presently exist, as well as bringing in new businesses within clusters. The following goals are proposed for the Industry Clusters Priority.

Develop a unified effort to encourage the development and expansion of existing business as well as bringing in new businesses within industry clusters (concentrations of competing, complimentary and interdependent firms and industries that create wealth in regions through export). The Task Force has identified the following clusters as appropriate target clusters:

- Agribusiness
- Automobile parts manufacturing
- Ceramics, glass and advanced materials
- Education/Schools
- Food processing
- Metal fabrication
- Plastic products manufacturing
- Technical support services (back office computer support)
- Technology-based industry clusters (E-Commerce)
- Telecommunications
- Tourism
- Trucking and distribution
- Wood processing

## **Proposed Actions for Goal #1**

1. Although there are programs supporting industry clusters in the region, all sectors (public, private and government, particularly economic developers) need to support the recommended actions by focusing development activity and incentives in these clusters.
2. Investigate other potential industry clusters for the region, combining existing and potential businesses.
3. Develop a job referral system for industry clusters.
4. Implement the actions that have been noted below for the various industry clusters.

### ***Specific Clusters Actions: Agri-Business Cluster:***

1. The development of agriculture and related businesses should be encouraged through tax incentives, abatements, etc. and business in this cluster should be encouraged to do more business within the region or locally with retail outlets.
2. Need to inform the cluster businesses about the available incentives.

### ***Specific Clusters Actions: Wood Products Cluster:***

1. The regions should focus activity and investments on developing niche market secondary processing. Examples of niche market secondary processing are veneer manufacturing, flooring manufacturing, cabinetry dimensioning, etc.
2. As regards sawmills, the focus should be on financing vehicles and non-traditional technical assistance. A key focus is overcoming traditional obstacles to sawmill financing.

### ***Specific Clusters Actions: Ceramics Cluster:***

1. The region should encourage the Center for Advanced Ceramic Technology (CACT) and Alfred University to become more user-friendly.
2. The region should promote increased interaction between Alfred University and the ceramics cluster businesses; to improve business operations, access to technology, and access to research opportunities.

### ***Specific Clusters Actions: Telecommunications Cluster:***

1. The region should determine where geographically the specific capacities of the region's telecommunication infrastructure is located.
2. The region should determine what the region's telecommunication infrastructure capacity is.
3. The region should determine what types of development the region's telecommunication infrastructure capacity will support. The region also should identify those businesses that our technology and colleges would support. Assess existing technology businesses, to identify gaps and opportunities.
4. The region should determine the needs of telecommunications cluster businesses.
5. The region should disseminate this information to the economic development community, the private sector business community, prospective telecommunications businesses, and businesses considering locating in the region.



6. Economic developers and government will need to support efforts at different levels and stages of the development of e-commerce businesses. Educators and training providers will support their efforts in developing an appropriate workforce.
7. Market the availability of the region's telecommunications and other technological infrastructure to attract "e-commerce" businesses and high technology.
8. Establish a contact system for the recruitment of businesses to package necessary information regarding the region and to respond and court prospective businesses.
9. Establish a centralized location for regional statistics (labor force, infrastructure, educational institutions, vacant facilities, open space, etc.) to be used as a readily accessible marketing tool. (GIS based)
10. Market the skills of the current workforce, including the college workforce.
11. Market the assets (quality of life, inexpensive real estate) of the region.
12. Investigate the types of businesses prevalent in areas contiguous to the region (Buffalo, Erie, Northern PA) as to the feasibility of operating in this region (more effectively, inexpensively, sufficiently, etc.).
13. Utilize EDZ and other possible incentives in marketing efforts.

***Specific Clusters Actions: Trucking and Distribution Cluster:***

1. The region should promote the development of distribution centers and transportation firms at or around interchanges. The highest value use of land immediately adjacent to interchanges is probably not distribution centers and transportation firms. Transportation companies and distribution centers could be part of an industrial park or other development at/around interchanges, however. Thus, this item must be consistent with an interchange development plan.
2. The region should promote the development of private sector truck driver training companies in the region.
3. The region should promote the development of Intermodal freight transfer facilities to integrate and encourage the development of both the trucking and railroad industries in the region.

***Specific Clusters Actions: Technical Support Services Cluster:***

1. The region should contact firms in this cluster and pitch expansion in one or more southern tier locations.

**Expected Results for Goal # 1**

1. A visitation schedule will be implemented to reach all of the regions manufacturing business community within a reasonable period of time beginning with and focusing on cluster businesses.
2. A job referral system will be developed by 2001 for businesses within the targeted clusters.
3. A summary of available tax incentives and abatements will be developed and promoted for the agri-business industry cluster by 2001.

4. Interaction will be increased between the ceramics cluster businesses and Alfred University by the end of 2000.
5. An inventory will be completed of the region's telecommunication infrastructure capacity by mid 2000.
6. An increase in the trucking, truck driver training firms, transportation firms and distribution centers will be achieved by 2001.
7. A private sector truck driver-training center will be attracted to the region by 2001.

## **GOAL # 2 - PROMOTE START-UP BUSINESSES WITHIN THE SELECTED TARGET CLUSTERS**

The area needs to increase the number of start-up businesses within the selected target cluster areas through a renewed and innovative effort.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal # 2**

1. The economic development community should reach out, identify dislocated workers, especially workers dislocated from cluster businesses. The economic development community then should market to these people the possibility of Entrepreneurship and the types of assistance available to entrepreneurs, encouraging and facilitating their start-up of businesses in the selected target clusters.
2. The economic development community should develop partnerships with the region's colleges to identify these people prior to and post-graduation. The region should market the possibility of Entrepreneurship and the types of assistance available to them, encouraging and facilitating their startup in the region of new businesses in the selected clusters.
3. The region should promote the establishment of small business incubators in appropriate communities in which the need for the encouragement of Entrepreneurship exists. The joint development and ownership of these facilities could promote reduction of overhead costs of ownership and operation. These facilities should promote the start-up of cluster businesses.
4. A complimentary strategy to 3 is the encouragement of the acquisition and re-development of vacant facilities as multi-tenant facilities by the private sector. Incentives could be provided to the private sector that would both enable and be conditioned upon the provision of a below-market-rate-operating environment. This could be augmented by targeted technical assistance provided by the public sector to tenant firms.
5. The region should encourage the State to continue and expand and extend the Economic Development Zone (EDZ) program, and should consider developing special local incentive zones to encourage the start-up of cluster businesses. The State also should be encouraged to provide more direct financial assistance to start-up and expanding EDZ-certified businesses.
6. The region should survey existing cluster businesses to learn what opportunities they feel exist for the development of vendor and customer businesses within the region. After this information is obtained, the region should pursue a strategy to

develop these types of businesses in the region, either through the promotion of start-ups or the attraction of these types of businesses into the region.

### **Expected Results for Goal # 2**

1. A concerted and unified effort will be made by the economic development agencies to market the types of assistance available to entrepreneurs and college graduates for start-up businesses within the clusters through 2000.
2. There will be an increase in the amount of incubator/multi-tenant facilities available, through the creation of new incubators and expansions to existing incubators/multi-tenant facilities, and an increase in the utilization of underutilized incubators/multi-tenant facilities by 2002.
3. A survey will be undertaken and completed of the existing cluster businesses to learn what opportunities they feel exist for development by 2001.

### **GOAL # 3 - PROMOTE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING REGIONAL BUSINESSES WITHIN THE SELECTED TARGET CLUSTERS**

The region needs to promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the region that are within the selected target clusters.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal # 3**

1. The economic development community needs to implement an ongoing visitation program in the selected target clusters. The economic development community would use the cluster visitation program as a mechanism to communicate information about what types of assistance are available to the cluster businesses. The economic development community should ask cluster businesses what they need to:
  - maintain viability in their current location, before they make a decision to go elsewhere, or
  - expand in their current location or elsewhere in the region.Referrals should be made to all appropriate response entities, including human resource agencies (training providers).
2. The region's economic development community needs to actively seek out and learn about business assistance programs that are available to the region's industrial community, and then market them to firms in the selected target clusters. The economic development community needs to develop a packet with information on programs that would be disseminated to the region's target cluster businesses. The packet should be kept current and new packets explicitly superseding old packets should be disseminated as revisions are made.
3. The region's education community needs to work with the economic development and business community to do more research projects that lead to the development of new/better products that can be produced in the region.
4. The region needs to prepare for the deregulation of electricity and gas in New York State, and prepare the region's business community for this as well.

### **Expected Results for Goal # 3**

1. A visitation program will be established for the selected target clusters.
2. A packet of information on the programs that are available to existing businesses will be developed and disseminated.
3. A study of the possibility of the development of an energy purchasing alliance by the end of 2000.

### **GOAL #4 - ATTRACT CLUSTER BUSINESSES NOT CURRENTLY LOCATED IN THE REGION**

The region should undertake a unified program to attract new businesses to the area, regardless of which county they end up choosing, for each target cluster.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #4**

1. The region should undertake a marketing program both at the regional and county level to attempt to attract new cluster businesses to the region. The region should identify and invest in a pool of financial resources at both the county and regional levels with which to undertake marketing activities.
2. The region should develop an inventory of regional resources and assets as data to be utilized in marketing activities, and marketing materials for use in the marketing program.
3. The region should do external marketing using the Internet instead of site magazines, because of the relative cost differences and ability to reach a wider audience.
4. So that the marketing program is cost effective, the region should use the region's business community as a resource for marketing the region (an "ambassadors program") to external cluster businesses. To facilitate this, the region should develop marketing materials to give to the region's businesses that have relationships in the chosen clusters. As ambassadors, these businesses would distribute the materials to their vendors and customers. Regional marketing materials also could be sent out by the region's businesses along with their invoicing and checks.
5. The region should mail informational packets to prospective cluster businesses that are viewed as having potential for locating business operations in the region.
6. The region should research clusters having potential for growth in the region. The region should approach NYSDOL, and should search the Internet for information on clusters. The region should look at other geographic regions in the same temperate climate for ideas regarding expanding clusters. The region should evaluate all clusters chosen as target clusters in terms of what the attributes of the clusters are and where the gaps are. Then the region should respond by bridging the gaps in the clusters and service provision to the clusters, and to spin-off and/or support sectors.

#### **Expected Results for Goal # 4**

1. A marketing program will be implemented by 2001.
2. An inventory of regional resources and assets will be developed as part of the marketing program materials by the end of 2000.
3. The Internet will be utilized as a marketing tool for the region with an inventory of sites and firms on-line by the end of 2000.
4. A regional ambassador's program will be developed to utilize and disseminate the marketing materials for the region.

#### **GOAL # 5 - DEVELOP STRATEGIC FINANCE ACTION ITEMS**

The basic implication of cluster targeting is that resources have to be focused on these clusters to promote increased cluster firm growth rates. One such resource is the financial resource base. The alternative development finance paradigm involves three facets: encouraging the banking community to adopt non-traditional lending practices as regards the cluster, encouraging the development of non-traditional public financing vehicles (i.e., a venture capital fund, etc.), and streamlining access to existing public loan funds.

#### **Proposed Actions for Goal # 5**

1. The region should encourage banks to lend more aggressively in the chosen clusters. The region should convince banks that the selected target clusters have economic growth opportunities exceeding other clusters, and hence loans to companies in the chosen cluster should ultimately have a greater positive impact on the bank's profitability than lending to other companies outside the chosen clusters.
2. The region should encourage banks to be more aggressive in providing working capital loans to start-up cluster firms. The region should encourage banks to make increased use of the SBA and USDA RD loan guarantee programs (where needed) to make more loans to cluster businesses. The economic development community also should facilitate increased bank working capital lending to cluster start-ups through increased partnerships between banks in senior collateral partnerships and RLF's in junior collateral positions.
3. Banks should be encouraged to disseminate their application process and lending parameters. This would improve the business community's access to bank loans.
4. The economic development community should work more closely with cluster start-ups to help them develop bank loan application documentation (including better pro forma cash flow projections).
5. Banks should be encouraged to form a regional lending pool that would target loans to "high-risk" start-ups and/or expansions within the clusters. Participating banks should view this as having the ultimate impact of improving the region's economic health, with an ultimate positive impact on their own profitability. The region should utilize loan-specific public sector loan guarantees as available to provide additional incentive for participation.
6. The appraisal community should be encouraged to view appraisals relating to cluster projects with an economic development focus.
7. The region should develop a venture capital fund. The fund should be a regional fund that is housed in an entity that services the entire region, so as to minimize

overhead allocation per transaction. The region should approach the Western Region Corporation (or its affiliate-to-be-formed) or some other entity, to become the fund operator. The fund should be developed with public and private participation. The counties should contribute funds to seed the capitalization of the venture capital fund, and then bring in banks, individual and other investors to participate as well. The structure of the payback mechanism for the proposed speculative capital fund needs to be fleshed out to provide the incentive for individual investment. The region should investigate pooling investment tax credits from the region's EDZ's to improve the fund's effectiveness.

8. The region's EDZ's should be encouraged and empowered to create Zone Capital Corporations or other venture capital programs, so as to provide an EDZ-specific venture capital source of funds. The corporation/fund should be designed to provide incentives for private investment into the venture capital fund. The region should consider the advantages of creating one corporation/fund to cover all four of the region's EDZ's, so as to centralize expertise and lower administrative overhead. This fund should give target preference to cluster businesses.
9. Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) administrators should attempt to simplify, streamline, and standardize RLF loan application forms/processes where possible, especially for smaller cluster loans.
10. RLF administrators should revise RLF operating procedures to allow the substitution of the submission of either or both bank loan applications or other RLF loan applications, plus any incremental information/forms required by the RLF.
11. The RLF administrators should prepare the application for loan applicants from the chosen clusters.
12. RLF's should obtain additional capitalization so as to avoid queues for funding. One specific need includes working capital.
13. RLF operators should make sure that they engage in prudent lending practices.

#### **Expected Results for Goal # 5**

1. Banks will lend more aggressively to firms that are in the targeted industry clusters.
2. Banks will increase the number of working capital loans to start-up cluster firms.
3. A venture capital fund will be developed by 2001.
4. The region's Revolving Loan Fund administrators will simplify, streamline and standardize their loan application forms/processes by 2001.
5. Creation of zone capital corporation by region's EDZ's by 2001.

### **III. TARGET INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

*Priority Statement: The region needs to develop new and improve existing infrastructure (water, sewer, natural gas, power, telecommunications, technology, access roads, etc.) so as to support business expansion.*

The charge to the Task Force on Infrastructure Development is to develop an Action Plan for the region concerning the most effective and desirable means of enhancing the region's infrastructure. The following goals, actions and results are proposed for the Infrastructure Priority.

#### **GOAL # 1 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE LIMITED BY INFRASTRUCTURE**

A region with development potential not limited or restricted by inadequate, insufficient or deficient infrastructure.

##### **Proposed Actions for Goal #1**

1. Each of the appropriate County Departments (Development, Public Works, Planning, etc.) in conjunction with local cities, towns, villages, B.O.C.E.S., the Economic Development Zones, cable and other telecommunications companies, etc. need to identify all existing and planned locations of development infrastructure.
2. Each of the appropriate County Departments (Development, Public Works, and Planning) should adopt and apply appropriate technology to enhance and ease the maintenance, expansion, utilization, and application of infrastructure-related data.
3. Each County (Department(s) or Legislature) should develop its own priorities concerning the investment of public/other dollars in infrastructure development.
4. The development community should document existing and promote new inter-jurisdictional infrastructure development projects.
5. Provide direct and/or leveraged technical assistance to local governments considering infrastructure development activities.

##### **Expected Results for Goal #1**

1. Within 12 months, each County will have a complete and accurate inventory of infrastructure, including but not limited to water (wells, pumping stations, transmission lines), wastewater (treatment facilities, transmission lines, pumping stations), access roads (industrial parks), cable and fiber-optics, natural gas transmission lines, bridges, roads, etc.
2. Within 24 months, each County will have developed a new or updated its existing Master County Plan.
3. Within 12 months, each County has agreed to pursue the acquisition of GIS or other appropriate technology for application toward infrastructure either individually or through a collaborative arrangement with an external party.
4. Within 12 months, counties with such capabilities will begin the process of plotting/digitizing infrastructure location, capacity, condition, etc.

5. Within 18 months, each County will have a completed and prioritized list (capital improvement schedule) that outlines where infrastructure improvements will be made, to what extent, for what development purpose, at what projected cost paid for by what anticipated or known sources.
6. Within 12 months, a region-wide inventory of successful multi-jurisdictional infrastructure development projects will be compiled and published. (Southern Tier West could lead).
7. Within 12 months, each County (Southern Tier West) will have in place, specific technical assistance capabilities to help local governments plan for and develop necessary infrastructure.

## **GOAL # 2 - FOSTER IMPROVED COMMUNICATION**

Improve communication among development agencies and government units concerning the location, condition, utilization, maintenance, and/or development of infrastructure.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #2**

1. Institutionalize a regular series of dialogues between the economic development community, federal, State, local government officials, and concerned citizens.

### **Expected Results for Goal #2**

1. Within 12 months, at least one development community/local government/citizen forum is held within each County. (Southern Tier West could plan, schedule, coordinate, and facilitate these discussions)
2. Within 18 months, the process and schedule for these forums is officially institutionalized within each County's docket.

## **GOAL #3 - ENCOURAGE PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT**

Identify ways to encourage private sector involvement in leveraging support and resources for infrastructure development.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #3**

1. Identify strategies to encourage private sector involvement in leveraging support and resources for infrastructure development.

### **Expected Results for Goal #3**

1. On-going (re) capitalization of infrastructure-related revolving loan funds.
2. Within 6 months, the Southern Tier West Development Foundation making direct or leveraged seed grants/loans to local governments in support of local planning and/or development activities.
3. Within 12 months, each County (Departments, etc.), the development community, and/or Southern Tier West will establish a business/private sector outreach program.



4. Within 12 months, the private sector (business and industry) will make available to the development community their short, medium, and long-range business (expansion) plans.

#### **GOAL #4 - INCREASE REGIONAL EFFORTS IN ENERGY MARKETS**

The region and counties should be cognizant and active in pursuit of cost effective and efficient energy possibilities in the deregulated market.

##### **Proposed Actions for Goal #4**

1. Develop a local or region wide energy purchasing aggregation group.
2. Research opportunities for other types of partners in energy markets.
3. Research what other types of initiatives are already being done and how they can be utilized in this region.

##### **Expected Results for Goal #4**

1. Better prices for the region's energy customers including residents, local governments and businesses.
2. New businesses working in the region providing energy related services.

#### **IV. ENCOURAGE A MORE POSITIVE REGIONAL ATTITUDE**

*Priority Statement: The region needs to embark on a concentrated public relations campaign to improve the regional "attitude". The region needs to develop regional unity in political and government arenas so as to enhance the "clout" of the region when dealing with state and federal agencies. Such unity will also lessen the impediments of parochialism. The region needs to do more to institutionalize strategic thinking, to create an environment where we anticipate and manage change, not just react to it.*

Encouraging a more positive regional attitude is a complex proposal involving many aspects of the region. A positive regional attitude starts with every person living in the region. If the region does not believe in itself, no one from outside the region will believe in it either. All levels of business and government must buy into the concepts, in order for this to become a reality. A certain care needs to be taken with this process. Ideally, everyone in the region will begin to think positively and promote the region as a whole. The outline below emphasizes promoting the positive aspects of the region in many instances. Promotion is very important. However, the concern arises with the possibility that by working on promoting the positives, the negative aspects can start to be overlooked.

On the way to encouraging a more positive regional attitude, several goals must be realized. The following goals are proposed for the Positive Regional Attitude Priority.

#### **GOAL # 1 - ARTICULATE THE REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

The task force feels that articulating the region's competitive advantages that it has over other areas must be done primarily through the promotion of the positive aspects of the region.

#### **Proposed Actions for Goal #1**

1. Develop a profile of the region. This profile can be adapted from county tourism brochures that already exist, but should include all three counties. The profile should highlight positive aspects of the region including infrastructure, workforce, etc. The profile will introduce 'branding' for the region. Southern Tier West will be accomplishing this aspect of this action through the Regional Internet Based Geographic Information Systems Project. It is expected that this will require 18 - 24 months to accomplish and should be finished by 2002.
2. Identify funding for a regional marketing director. This provides the ability to hire a regional marketing director. The counties should be charged with identifying the funding. This should be accomplished by the end of 2000.
3. Hire a regional marketing director. This individual would be charged with assisting to develop the profile, develop Internet materials, and organize ways to promote the region. Marketing Director will also develop branding for the region. Create a single contact and responsible person for many of the activities presented here. All counties will need to accept this idea. It would be a good idea to include the Chambers of Commerce in the process as well. This should be accomplished by mid 2001.

4. Utilize the Internet for the dissemination of promotional materials. As the Internet becomes more widely used it provides the opportunity to reach various audiences easily and inexpensively. Much of this action can be accomplished through the Regional Internet Based Geographic Information Systems (RIBGIS) project of Southern Tier West. This program should be completed by 2001.
5. Promote the "good" rating of our workforce productivity and our workforces positive attitude.

### **Expected Results for Goal #1**

1. Develop community components of the profile.
2. RIBGIS is underway and should be completed by 2001.
3. Needs assessment will be completed for the Regional Marketing Director.
4. The roles and responsibilities will be developed for the Regional Marketing Director.
5. Promotional materials are developed and a dissemination strategy as well as distribution locations are determined.

### **GOAL # 2 - INCREASE PUBLICITY DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

Publicity reflects the region and its actions. By developing and utilizing media, positive publicity can begin to promote a more positive regional attitude.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #2**

1. Establish a seminar on how to utilize media to the advantage of the region. The Seminar should be geared toward municipal officials and non-profit organizations. Seminar will show these individuals how to properly develop media contacts, get results with press releases, and explain tactics for getting the word out about positive activities. This process should be undertaken as part of the Southern Tier West Center for Local Government and Community Services and be accomplished by 2001. The seminar could become part of the Southern Tier West Local Government Conference and/or the Center for Local Government and Community Services training series. This should be undertaken by mid 2000.
2. Develop a media kit that coincides with the seminar. This kit would include sample press releases and contacts a local media. The kit would enhance the seminar and allow for constant reference. The kit should be developed in conjunction with local media input.
3. Invite media to all events. This is a general action that all organizations in the region can practice. The more positive publicity that is developed through the media, the better off the region will be. Media often do not know about events if they do know they are more likely to cover them. This a long term and on-going effort.

### **Expected Results for Goal #2**

1. Increase the number of seminars tailored toward utilizing the media for advantage of the region.
2. Develop consensus on what should be developed as part of the media kit in order to improve the quality and quantity of information utilized by the media.
3. Increase in media coverage of positive events in the region.

### **GOAL # 3 - INSTITUTIONALIZE STRATEGIC THINKING WITHIN COMMUNITIES**

The communities need to increase their ability to think strategically through leadership, planning and land use controls. Communities are the backbone of the region, and their recent decline is cause for concern. Planning that addresses the concern is imperative to preserve the inner community concept.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #3**

1. All municipalities should develop land use plans, zoning laws, site plan review, etc. to preserve communities. Attempts to preserve communities can instill feelings of pride. Communities are the backbone of a rural area such as this region. Destruction of the small community feeling creates more parochial thinking. The task force felt that communities are one of the positives the region possesses. The small town charm that exists in many parts of the region is attractive to people. This can be utilized to promote the region to outsiders. Therefore, communities must be protected through specific actions by municipalities. This is an on-going effort.
2. Promote regional planning and development. This is a long term and on-going effort. Each municipality, county, and business entity should support plans and development that help the region as a whole. Supporting a project that does not have a direct affect on an entity can go a long way toward strengthening the region. Someday perhaps they will return the favor as well. All governments and boards should pass resolutions in support of projects and regional initiatives. This needs to be supported by the Counties and Southern Tier West.
3. An increase in programs & services to encourage community citizens including the youth component to be involved in the community.

### **Expected Results for Goal #3**

1. The region will see an increased utilization of land use tools and the development and updating of community comprehensive plans.
2. Increase provision and utilization of technical assistance to communities concerning land use controls.
3. An increase in leadership development programs targeted toward non-traditional community development partners (residents, youth).
4. Evidence that the non-traditional partners are involved in community issues.

### **V. ENHANCE AND UPGRADE TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS**

***Priority Statement: The region needs to make a concerted effort to publicize and increase utilization of Route 17 (I-86), the expansion of Route 219, the mainline railroads and the airports.***

Note: The term Agencies within this document is meant to represent all Federal, Seneca Nation of Indians, State and Local Governments and other agencies across the Southern Tier West Region.

The term Region is meant to represent the Southern Tier West Region comprised of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany counties.

### **Regional Rural Transportation Planning Capacity**

In many other regions in the state, there are organizations known as metropolitan planning organizations (MPO's). These organizations are funded by federal transportation funds, administered by the state and matched by state and local resources. While primarily focused on urban area, many MPO's provide services to surrounding rural communities. Southern Tier West is the only NYSARC region in the State who does not have one (1) MPO operating within the boundaries. Therefore, it has developed little local capacity and expertise to address its own transportation needs. A local entity/rural transportation organization could address all aspects of transportation in the region: highway, air, freight rail, passenger rail, high-speed rail, local bus service, etc. These areas are all in need of a comprehensive coordinated approach.

### **Highway Efficiency**

The amount of time it takes a person to go from their residence to work, or the time it takes to ship goods from one place to another is generally a function of the highway network. It is generally conceded with the exception of some residential streets and roads, most likely there will be no new State or county roads constructed in the region in the foreseeable future (with the exception of Route 219 being upgraded from an unlimited access highway to a limited access highway built to the Interstate Standards). Therefore, road efficiency becomes a function of road classification and maintenance.

Highway efficiency is important to commercial interests in the region, because it has a bearing on ease of shipment and time of delivery. Therefore, road classification and road condition are extremely important to the economic development of specific communities and the region.

The region, its counties and communities, should focus on transportation in all its forms, as a major element of economic development.

The region needs to make a concerted effort to:

- Increase utilization of Route 17 (I-86).
- Support the expansion of US Route 219 to Freeway status.
- Support the expansion of NYS Route 19 and NYS Route 60.

The following goals are proposed for the Transportation Priority.

## **GOAL # 1 - INCREASE THE CAPACITY FOR COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

The Southern Tier West Regional Planning & Development Board should develop the capacity to provide for comprehensive transportation planning for the region.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #1**

1. Work with the Seneca Nation of Indians and the counties to develop a specific plan to initiate, coordinate and support transportation planning capacity.
2. Petition the federal, state, tribal and local agencies to provide funds and/or support for rural transportation planning, specifically for this region.
3. Make an application to relevant federal, state, tribal and local agencies for funding for administration and operations of a comprehensive rural transportation planning process for the region.

### **Expected Results for Goal #1**

1. Southern Tier West will work to develop Transportation Planning Capacity within the region by 2004.
2. Receive funds from state and federal agencies for rural transportation planning by 2004.

## **GOAL # 2 - IMPROVE HIGHWAY EFFICIENCIES FOR ALL ROADS IN THE REGION**

Improve highway efficiencies for all highways and roads within the region.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #2**

1. Work with the counties, Seneca Nation of Indians, towns, cities, and villages to have them use the federal functional classification system for their road system.
2. Each county/municipality and the Seneca Nation of Indians, establish a pavement management system to provide a rational policy for road improvement based on functional classification, condition, traffic, and importance to regional economic development.
3. Local municipalities should work with the agencies that have jurisdiction over the various roadways to develop roadway access management plans, prioritized by functional class, within the municipal boundaries.

### **Expected Results for Goal #2**

1. Local municipalities recognize the functional classification system in use by New York State.
2. Funded and implemented Pavement Management System by each municipality.
3. To make funding available, by 2005, for:
  - Access management plans

- This is important because a lesser number of access points (driveways) in any state, county, or local road, has a positive impact on the level of service and safety at which people, goods, and services can be transported.
- Land use planning and design around interchanges

### **GOAL # 3 - IMPROVE THE AIR SERVICE OF THE REGION**

The region needs to increase its capacity at the local level and the service level provided to air commuters.

#### **Proposed Actions for Goal #3**

Develop a plan for air service in the region:

- Inventory and develop improved marketing for the services that are serving the region.
- Actively seek and recruit new air carriers to the region.
- Improve/maintain infrastructure at the present airfields to accommodate service demand.

#### **Expected Results for Goal #3**

1. Improved level of air service available to the residents and companies within the Southern Tier West Region.
2. Completion of a regional air service plan.

## **VI. TARGET DEMAND SIDE WORKFORCE TRAINING**

***Priority Statement: The region needs to develop a workforce that is market or demand side driven. The region's workforce (and training programs) should be consistent with what business and industry needs or projects as needing in the future.***

Training must become performance based. The economy must grow to allow for new jobs. State and local governments must have incentives to retain the region's companies and assist them to grow, and attract new businesses. The following goals are proposed for the Workforce Development Priority.

### **GOAL # 1 - ESTABLISH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS (S) IN THE REGION**

Establish Workforce Development (Investment) System (s) in the region as mandated by Federal and State Legislation. A workforce development system is the structure by which the workforce preparation and employment process is designed to meet both the needs of the businesses and the needs of job seekers and those who want to further their careers. A successful workforce investment system will increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase occupational skill attainment by participants, and, as a result improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the region.

#### **Proposed Actions for Goal #1**

In accordance with and in the implementation of Federal and State Legislation, the public and private sectors will support this effort. The private sector will be a key player and will drive the development and implementation of the system.

1. Creation of Workforce Investment Board(s).
2. Develop strategic plan.
3. Identify one-stop partners and training providers and if necessary assist in developing partners. Partners need to be aware of each other's programs and capabilities, and publicize it to the public to encourage utilization.
4. Inform employers about and compliance with the Workforce Investment Act.

#### **Expected Results for Goal #1**

1. Creation of a one-stop career system.
2. Continuation of funding for training providers.
3. Better coordination through the Workforce Investment Board(s).
4. Promote innovative business, community and educational partnerships.



## **GOAL # 2 - FORM PERMANENT PARTNERSHIPS**

The region needs to form permanent partnerships between employers, economic developers and education/training institutions, so as to establish a direct and consistent connection between education/training programs and projected jobs. NYS Education Department has identified, as a goal, “a continuum of training programs” and “skills needs of employers.” As a result, the region will experience implementation of these efforts. The public and private sectors will support current and future efforts in the following actions.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #2**

Although strong and successful partnerships already exist in the region, all sectors (public, private and government) need to support the recommended actions.

1. Develop stronger linkages and communication between employers, economic developers and education/training providers to target the training and preparation of a skilled labor force. Recommendation to have regular meetings, seminars, and visits to area employers which will include:
  - Employers sharing skill needs.
  - All levels of education/training/employment entities should work closely together and share ideas (ie. Higher education facility interacting with primary schools).
  - Employers working with education institutions in the region for developing programs and providing training.
  - Training providers sharing programs and capabilities. This does exist on a local basis, however it would be more beneficial on a regional basis. The region does not need head to head competition in providing training.
  - Economic developers sharing business development opportunities and identified training needs.
2. Create a regional continuum of training programs to be available for employers to utilize on a regular rotating basis. (e.g. course offerings booklet)
  - Includes all levels of skills (unemployed, never worked, upgrades).
  - Identifies training providers and their programs.
3. Develop system for determining skill needs of employers, current and projected, on a consistent basis.
  - Compile statistics on past job openings by occupation.
  - Identification of general basic skills that employers expect upon hiring.
  - Identification of site specific skills.
  - Identification of specific job skills common to industry clusters.
4. Develop employers’ recruitment strategy.
  - Includes method for keeping a pool of applications on file.
  - Pool of college graduates.
5. Partnerships should enlist more industries, new participants.

- Maintenance of a good current list of human resource managers at companies and contacts at training providers.
  - Work with chambers of commerce.
6. Employers should increase their employees' parental involvement in local schools, though flex time, etc., so as to promote proper educational and social development of the region's population and future labor force.
  7. The region should provide start-up cluster firms more hands-on assistance with assembling training and other types of applications.
    - All of the counties in the region should develop cluster-training programs such as Chautauqua County's, in which that county provides \$300,000 annually to subsidize training costs. Further, Chautauqua County should increase this amount.

### **Expected Results for Goal #2**

1. Better recognition of the differences between reactive and proactive training, and a positive move toward developing more proactive training.
2. Skilled labor force in demand by local employers.

### **GOAL # 3 - REDUCE REGIONAL OUT-MIGRATION**

Reduce the regional out-migration of the educated population and skilled workers.

#### **Proposed Actions for Goal #3**

All sectors (public, private and government) need to support the recommended actions and understand the importance of awareness of jobs that are available.

1. Market the educational, employment, and life style opportunities to the region's youth to entice them to remain in the area.
2. Develop programs by which employers can "adopt a student" for future employment in that company.
  - Includes financial programs in which employers finance students' college education with the requirement that the students work for them "X" number of years. If the student neglects to work the agreed upon number of years, then the student will reimburse the employer for expenses incurred. (Similar to a student loan.)
  - Includes training programs in which employers work with selected students to train them for a future job in that company. (Includes apprenticeships, internships, mentoring, etc.)
3. Market employment opportunities to unemployed skilled workers and provide training programs for transition to other jobs in the region.
4. Encourage socially responsible employment practices (higher wages, benefits, training and opportunities for advancement) as a way to provide incentives to keep the youth of the region, in the region. Increased wages should be tied to demonstrated skills or educational attainment.

### **Expected Results for Goal #3**

1. Growing base of marketable skilled and educated workers.

### **GOAL # 4 - DEVELOP CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

Develop a Career Development System in the region to encompass primary, secondary, higher education, and life long learning. A career development system is the structure by which the education and training process is designed to meet the needs of the current and future workforce in selecting a career, developing the skills required for a chosen career, and changing careers.

### **Proposed Actions for Goal #4**

Educators and private sector employers should be the driving force of implementation. Labor Councils should be involved in the marketing of jobs and the development of apprenticeships. Although there are many excellent programs that already implement the suggested actions, much more can be done.

1. Provide a well-rounded education (Life Long Learning) that will meet the needs of the community and the work place.
  - Provide continuous training and education to the currently employed.
  - Provide educational forums whereby education becomes a thread through all community sectors.
  - Provide further education to employees for advancement in their companies with a focus on academic skills.
  - Provide incentives (financial and time) to employees to further their education.
2. The State is in the process of testing a State K-12 Career Curriculum which will lead to a mandate of career curriculum in every school (a School-to-Work theme). The region should develop partnerships between potential employers and K-12 educators to develop curriculum for preparing students for current and projected education and skill needs.
  - “Adopt a School by Industry”.
  - Assumes every teacher is a Career Teacher.
  - Engage teachers in local businesses by providing “Public School Teacher Sabbaticals” so those teachers may work in and study a business/industry for a period of time.
  - Encourage emphasis on the "3 R's" whereby more is accomplished in primary and secondary schools thus resulting in less need for remedial work at the higher education levels.
3. Market the availability and financial attractiveness of blue collar/union jobs for which good wage employment opportunities exist.
  - Market skills needed.
  - Market wage scale and career ladder (potential of leading to white collar jobs).

- Prepare marketing package for students and parents.
  - Concentrate marketing on high school students and women.
4. Market the concept of apprenticeships to unions and assist in startup, both in the private and public sector.
    - Apprenticeship programs in cluster trades should be developed in the region. Apprentice programs should be registered with NYSDOL, so as to promote wage progression and certification of skills and/or education. Cluster businesses should view this as a way to increase productivity.
  5. Provide degree programs in the technical fields.
  6. Provide prevention maintenance training, specifically in the electronics and mechanics areas.
  7. Trades education must be able to adapt to changing technology. Curriculum must be able to adapt to worldwide applications, and be flexible to teach the basics to be applied to various applications.
    - Approach the larger employers regarding contributing funds (and/or equipment) to training providers such as BOCES.
    - Market the trades to both high school students and post-secondary students, to get them into proper training programs. Prospective initiatives could include more internships.
    - Training providers such as BOCES should be encouraged to develop innovative models for upgrading training equipment to current technology. One relevant model is that of the BOCES in East Aurora. This BOCES has direct links with Moog that involve design of technology training programs and BOCES capital program financing.
    - The region should market the availability and financial attractiveness of trade jobs for which employment opportunities at good wages exist in the clusters, since many of the trades offer income opportunities exceeding those of white collar professions.
    - The region should change the perspective so that being a trade person (e.g., a machinist) is considered a respectable/acceptable career choice.
  8. The region's colleges should offer more courses in Entrepreneurship, both as part of their regular curriculum and as adult education outreach courses. The region's colleges and technical assistance providers should increase the region's citizenry's awareness of existing (and developing) Entrepreneurship programs.

As it relates to career development, the issue of "Functional Literacy" (the ability to use reading, writing, and arithmetic to solve the problems of daily life) should be studied more closely. As functional literacy becomes the key to job success, educators/training providers need to emphasize its importance. Implementation of SCANS and skills standards should also be emphasized.

1. Develop programs to address the increasing drop out rate of high school students.

2. Develop programs designed to prepare the long-term unemployed (displaced homemakers, dislocated workers, etc.) for the modern workplace (e.g., job application skills, job retention skills, value clarification, etc.)
3. Develop training programs to address the specialized needs of the region's traditionally unemployable population.
  - Identify the steps the individual must go through to obtain a job.
  - Identify barriers to employment and solutions to those obstacles.
4. Promote skill standards in the region. Start with students in K-12 to develop student portfolios.
5. Market to employers and employees. Encourage workers to obtain the skill level required and employers to hire the skill standard "graduate".

#### **Expected Results for Goal #4**

1. A workforce with a certain skill level with a recognized skill standard.
2. Break the welfare cycle.
3. Change in the perception of vocational education.