

STEG
Southern Tier
Economic Growth

Site Development Plans



I-86 Interchange #50 is scheduled for completion October, 2003

With the introduction of Interstate 86 to Chemung County just one year away, county officials are busy identifying new sites for economic development along the Interstate corridor in anticipation of continued interest in the region.

Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) has identified over 500 acres of land adjacent to existing or newly constructed interchanges along the I-86 corridor. A few hundred of these acres resulted from the addition of Interchange 50, which also improves traffic flow to and from the regional airport.

“Most economists predict an economic upswing in the second and third quarter of this year,” George Miner, president of STEG, said. “If our track record in the mid- to late 1990s is any indication, we need to be ready for another decade of rapid growth for our region.”

According to Miner, the prosperity of the mid- to late 1990s

resulted in the full development of many sites in Chemung County. The Airport Corporate Park and Trinity Industrial Park were fully developed within four years, far faster than anyone expected. Before new parks sites could be identified, NUCOR selected a 110-acre site adjacent to Interstate 86 for its new Vulcraft steel fabricating plant, and SYNTHES USA selected a 35-acre parcel across from the regional airport for its new orthopedic products manufacturing facility.

To identify new, pre-permitted industrial and commercial sites along the Interstate 86 corridor, STEG has submitted an application to the Appalachian Regional Commission for funding to conduct a business development study in Chemung County.

“Now’s the time to determine the highest- and best-use site development strategy for the Interstate 86 corridor,” Miner said. “It’s an essential step that we have to take in order to remain a

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Interactive Web Site has EZ Tax Information



As the deadline for tax season approaches, Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) has upgraded its Web site to provide detailed tax information for Empire Zone certified companies.

The new features added to www.steg.com allow certified companies to download specific tax forms and instructions for all Empire Zone benefits in an Adobe PDF format. In addition,

specific tax publications that provide detailed information on the eligibility and use of each incentive are also available.

2001 was the first tax year that Zone-certified companies were eligible for three new Empire Zone benefits added to the program in 2000: the Tax Reduction Tax Credit, Real Property Tax Credit, and Sales Tax Exemption. Forms for these new credits are now available.

Also, forms for other Economic Development Zone incentives, including the Wage Tax Credit, Investment Tax Credit, Employment Incentive Credit, and Zone Capital Credit, have been redesigned to provide specific forms for individual and corporate filers.

To retrieve any or all of these forms and publications, go to www.steg.com, click the Financial Assistance button on the home page, then click on the Elmira Empire Zone link.

Future plans for the Web site include expanding on its success as a dissemination tool for Chemung County's economic development initiatives. This will require a building selection feature, the addition of an Elmira Empire Zone map, and an e-mail feature allowing people to register for an electronic version of the quarterly newsletter.

State Certification Positions CSS Workforce New York as a Top-notch Agency

Chemung Schuyler Steuben Workforce New York (formerly Chemung Schuyler Steuben Workforce Development) is the first multi-site, multi-system Workforce Investment Board in New York State to become a certified Workforce New York agency.

"Our job is to provide businesses with access to workers with appropriate skills," said Matthew Shick, executive director of CSS Workforce New York, a non-profit agency. "We pursued certification to ensure that we deliver high quality services to the businesses and job seekers we serve, and to help our tri-county region remain attractive destinations for new businesses."

To earn its Workforce New York certification, CSS Workforce New York complied with the quality standards set forth by the state, which are based on the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. The core standards include universal access, customer choice, increased accountability, and strong private sector involvement, in addition to providing action steps for quality improvement methods, customer satisfaction measures, and staff development. The state also completed a mandatory

on-site review of the agency's flagship career center in Corning, and found its overall process and submission exemplary.

As a result of the Corning on-site review, the state extended "universal certification" to the remaining four CSS Workforce New York career centers. Universal certification allows the agency to self-certify each of its career centers without an on-site review, as long as a written application for each site is submitted to, and approved by, the New York State Department of Labor. CSS Workforce New York received certification approval for its Bath and Elmira career centers, and anticipates approval for its Hornell and Watkins Glen career centers by the end of March.

More information about CSS Workforce New York is available at www.workforce2.org.



The Development Power of Partnerships

The economic development partnership in Chemung County continues to provide a shining example of how public-private partnerships are the best economic development tools.

“Programs alone can’t do it,” said George Miner, president of Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG). “It takes a pro-business political environment to facilitate the success of programs like the Elmira Empire Zone.”

The STEG board of directors includes government leaders who serve side-by-side with major industrial and commercial business leaders from the community to set and promote economic development policies. These government leaders include Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli, Chemung County Legislature Vice Chairperson Connie Milliken, City of Elmira Mayor Stephen Hughes, and the Town Supervisors of Elmira, Southport and Horseheads.

STEG also administers the Elmira Empire Zone, the City of Elmira Loan Program, and provides professional staff for the Chemung County Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA). STEG serves as the “one-stop-shop” for economic development services in Chemung County.

“We’re impressed with the level of cooperation that exists here,” said Michael Huggins, president and COO of SYNTHES USA. “New York State, local governments, the Chemung County Industrial Development Agency, STEG, and NYSEG all came together and worked with our site team to make our project a reality.”

“Our local partnership is critical to landing projects like SYNTHES, and to promoting economic growth at large,” Miner added. “Every cog in the wheel has to be in place for it to turn.”

Up-to-Date Information for Growing Business

Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) and its local development partners now have up-to-date information about the workforce and resources available in the Elmira and Corning area, thanks to two recently completed studies they supported: the Economic Development Profile and the Labor Evaluation Study.

“This information will help us fill our vacant commercial space and assist residents, including over 2,700 displaced from Corning, Inc., in search of gainful employment,” said George Miner, president of STEG.

The Economic Development Profile, prepared by Moran, Stahl & Boyer of Duluth, Georgia, evaluated the area’s resources and business environments and found it to be suitable for:

- Call Center, customer service center or back office operations with up to 250–350 jobs.
- Moderate-size light or technology based manufacturing that requires workers with a high school diploma and two-year degree skill levels.
- Operations that require IT and/or engineering/technical talent.

The profile also cited the area’s unique features:

- Strategic Location — central to six major metropolitan areas.
- Quality of Life — substantially more cultural, educational and health care opportunities than a typical community its size.

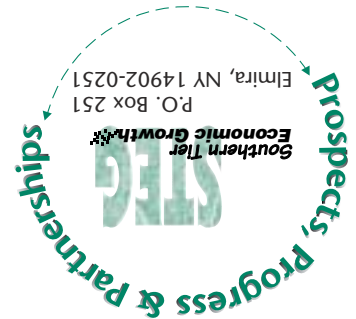


- Workforce — ready access to qualified workers with a strong work ethic.
- Transportation Access — Interstate crossroads, plus air access to six metro areas.
- Incentives — multiple “Empire Zone” locations.

The Labor Evaluation Study, conducted by Human Resources Management Center, Inc. of Tampa, Florida, evaluated the area’s available labor pool. Respondents chose from the following job categories: CSR/Call Center, Engineering/Technical, Manufacturing/Production, Business/Service Support, Administration and Information Technology.

“Response to the telephone survey was excellent,” said Miner. “It put us in touch with the true job seeking population — those motivated to complete a survey without any direct hopes of securing a new job.”

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top contender for new business development and expansion.”

As part of the study, the county will assess four sites and recommend potential business development use for two of them, which will be based on a 1998 Target Industry Analysis and Marketing Strategy, commissioned by STEG and performed by Fantus Consulting. These two sites will be eligible for Empire Zone status.

A conceptual site development report will then be created for the two sites, examining their maximum development potential, cost effectiveness, and aesthetics. The report will depict potential buildings, parking areas, utility layout, drainage facilities, and site amenities for employees, and will determine the costs to bring a

state-of-the-art infrastructure to the area. An environmental assessment will also be done to insure that there are no costly environmental remediation requirements with the site.

When the process is complete, a final report with two conceptual layouts will be produced: one a maximum development plan, and the other a moderate development plan. An added benefit of the study will be the development of a clear policy for future site development in Chemung County.

Final approval of the funding application is expected to take place this spring, allowing for completion of the study by the end of the year.

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Up-to-Date Information for Growing Business

The survey provided information that STEG had never been able to get a handle on before:

83% of the respondents would consider a job change. These workers ranked job security and pay as the most important when considering a job change. Location was least important.

83% are underemployed workers. They would like an average increase in pay of 8.81% over what they currently earn or most recently earned.

People seeking engineering positions responded to the survey in large number. Each averaged 11.28 years of experience in either Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical, or Industrial engineering disciplines. “We need to find jobs for these people fast, before they leave our community,” he added.

Other respondent assets included computer skills and

keyboard skills, as well as high education and experience levels.

Call Center respondents had, on average, 6.45 years experience. Ninety-five percent indicated a basic understanding of computers, while 45% considered themselves proficient. Even 86% of the people with manufacturing backgrounds said they were comfortable with computers.

“Most businesses considering a move or expansion are interested in the underemployed,” Miner said. “Clearly, the Elmira/Corning area has a talented workforce that’s ready for new and greater opportunities. Combine that with our location, and it is a great area for growing business.”

Copies of the Economic Development Profile or the Labor Evaluation Study can be obtained by contacting STEG.