

STC REGION TODAY

Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties

New York State

Spring/Summer 2010

Telecommunications



STC seeks to revolutionize the region's telecommunications system and to that end has submitted two major grant applications this spring.

The **STE-STC Region Fiber Backbone Initiative** would create a fiber optic infrastructure, connecting all public safety towers and 911 centers in a six county area and making fiber available even in rural areas that have had to rely on dial-up service.

Submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in March, the \$24.5 million project application was rated #1 in its category in New York State and has advanced to the due diligence phase in its federal review, indicating that it is "a very highly qualified application." STC staff, most of whom participated in the grantwriting process, are pleased at the application's progress. The funding decisions should be made in the fall of this year; the program is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), also known as stimulus funds, and the intention is to distribute the grants relatively quickly.

The fiber will be available to "anchor institutions," including business and industry as well as schools, health care facilities, government offices, libraries, and other organizations, strengthening public safety, education, medical services, municipalities, and the economy of the region.

An extraordinary public-private partnership, the project involves Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties as well as three counties in the Southern Tier East region: Broome, Delaware, and Otsego. All six counties have pledged financial support, recognizing that this support will leverage the dollars that will update outdated public safety systems and offer the best opportunity to meet the region's identified needs for sustainable, available, affordable telecommunications infrastructure. .

New York State has committed funding to match 10% of the federal award.

Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board and Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board are working together on this project, as they have collaborated to improve the region's access to telecommunications for almost twenty years.

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Also participating in the application is Corning Incorporated, the inventor and manufacturer of fiber optic cable and one of the largest employers in Upstate New York, which recognizes the need for high speed bandwidth in this region and is donating to this project 235 miles of premium fiber optic cable.

The second application proposes making the Corning area a **Google** community!

In response to Google's offer to bring fiber to the home (FTTH) in a number of communities around the country, STC gave many reasons why the Greater Corning Area (the Towns of Erwin, Corning and Big Flats and the City of Corning) would be the best place to build and test the ultra-high-speed bandwidth available with FTTH.

Among the reasons are the following:

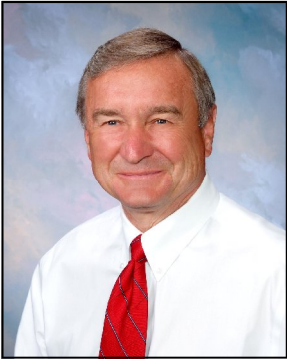
The Greater Corning Area is the major research and development center for Corning Incorporated. The scientific expertise in the area is outstanding, with an exceptionally high proportion of the residents understanding and valuing technology and capable of using it creatively.

The presence of Corning Community College (CCC), an early user of computer technology, also increases the need and demand for high speed internet.

During the past 20 years, STC has engaged in multiple activities and produced comprehensive telecommunications/broadband access studies with the goal of improving telecommunications, particularly internet access and broadband speeds, to residents throughout this community. Elected and appointed leaders as well as the general population in the community have participated in these activities, including focus groups, and are now knowledgeable and enthusiastic supporters of efforts to improve Internet access.

Google hasn't said when they will announce the chosen communities, but the Corning area is hoping to be included. For more information, check out STC's Google web page and You Tube video at <http://stcplanning.org/index.asp?pageid=169>

Regional Leadership Conference Another Success



More than 450 local officials, community leaders, presenters and exhibitors attended the 14th annual STC Regional Leadership Conference on April 15th at Corning Community College. This year's theme was "Spend a Day of Shared Learning."

The conference kicked off with a welcome from Schuyler County Administrator, Tim O'Hearn. Jack Benjamin, President of the Three Rivers Development Corporation, gave the keynote address which featured the current status of the local economy, social and economic trends, and impacts for local communities.

There were 28 classes throughout the day on a variety of topics including planning and zoning issues, impacts of Marcellus Shale drilling, ARC grants, effective meetings and hearings, budgeting, regional transit, and a variety of other practical topics. A total of 30 businesses and agencies displayed their products and services at a trade show of products and services for local governments.

County Participation (Towns, Villages and Cities)

Chemung County - 100 officials	15 out of 17 municipalities
Schuyler County - 62 officials	11 out of 12 municipalities
Steuben County - 196 officials	37 out of 47 municipalities
STC Region - 358 officials	63 out of 76 municipalities

Additional participation included state officials, class presenters, vendors and exhibitors, volunteers, and guests.

An average of 92% of the conference participants felt that the information and training were either "useful" or "very useful" for their positions in local government.

**Mark your calendars!!
Next year's conference
will be on April 14, 2011**

More than \$4,500 in donations was received from private and public supporters. Special thanks to Three Rivers Development Corporation (Co-Sponsorship), Hunt Engineers (tote bags), TVGA Consultants, Chemung County Executive, Steuben County, Rural Association of Mayors and Supervisors of Chemung County (RAMS), and Corning Community College for helping to make the conference possible.

**Thank you to all the
participants, presenters, exhibitors, staff,
and the Conference Committee.**



NYS Department of State (John David Wood and Joann Ryan) was one of the many exhibitors that participated in the conference.

**Sponsored by STC, the conference is
supported, in part, through a grant from the
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**



Local government officials attend one of the 28 classes held throughout the day.

Appalachian Regional Commission Applications Received



The applications for fiscal year 2011 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funding have been submitted and are undergoing the first step of the review process. They were due on June 14, and STC staff is now reviewing the six projects submitted, with committee and board reviews to follow in July.

“It’s an interesting collection of projects,” says Executive Director Marcia Weber. “We have two downtown revitalization projects, an expansion of a health and nutrition program, a water and sewer project, a business study, and a project to reinforce Schuyler County’s agricultural assets. These projects address the various goals of the ARC program as well as New York State strategies.”

The sponsors, their requests, and their projects are:

- STEG (Southern Tier Economic Growth): \$15,000 for a “Business Park Development Update”
- City of Elmira: \$150,000 for the “Mark Twain Riverfront Park Renaissance”
- The Village of Bath: \$150,000 for the “Downtown Pultney Square Revitalization Project”
- The Town of Reading: \$150,000 for the “Town of Reading Water District # 3 Formation
- Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler: \$145,691 for the Schuyler County Community Farm Project
- Meals on Wheels of Chemung County: \$98,250 for the “Healthy Lifestyles Nutrition Program Expansion”

Project requests for FY2011 total \$708,941. ARC has funded projects in Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties equaling about \$38 million over the last 41 years.

The Southeast Steuben River Vision Project



The second of three public workshops was hosted on March 24, 2010 to review maps of existing conditions, proposed trails and river access sites, and new recommended trail projects on the Chemung River from Erwin through the City of Corning to the Big Flats town line, and to gather ideas about other needed projects and/or waterfront issues. Public support for recreational trails along the Chemung River in Steuben County was strong as people shared their vision for the recreation trail network, and any issues or constraints that would affect these improvements. A final public workshop is scheduled for early summer. This project is funded by the local communities and with funds through NYS Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

Staffing Changes



Chelsea Robertson is a new addition to our STC team. Beginning in May, Chelsea has taken over the position of Planner that was vacated by Victoria Ehlen. Victoria now works as the Economic Development Coordinator with Thomas McGarry’s retirement.

Chelsea is a recent graduate from Binghamton University with her Bachelors in Urban and Regional Planning and her Masters in Public Administration. During her graduate studies she interned for Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board (STERPDB) in Binghamton and continued work with STERPDB to complete her Capstone project, which resulted in a succession plan for STERPDB’s leadership. Chelsea’s key role working with STC will be to provide assistance to local municipalities, working on the Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan and helping to complete Round 9 of the Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP). Join us in welcoming Chelsea on board.

This report has been funded in part by the following Federal and State agencies: Appalachian Regional Commission; U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) through Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act (administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC); New York State Department of State; NYS Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration; USEPA Chesapeake Bay Program.

Flood Hazard Mapping

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently updating the flood hazard maps for Chemung County. The new maps will be computer-based digital maps that can be used with other digital data layers. They will replace the current paper maps as the technical basis for managing floodplain development, flood insurance purchase requirements, pricing of flood insurance policies, and other purposes.

STC has joined Chemung County officials in advocating for the development of high quality maps that provide an accurate assessment of flood hazards. Of particular concern are the mapping procedures for levees and floodwalls, which reduce – but do not eliminate – the risk of flooding. Areas in Chemung County that are protected by levee systems are currently mapped as moderate flood hazard zones that are outside of the regulated floodplain. A levee certification process (to provide assurance that the structures will not fail or overtop) is needed before the new mapping can recognize the flood protection provided by these levees.

STC staff is also involved in efforts to craft improved national policy for managing flood risks. This includes serving as Chair of the Public Policy Committee of the NYS Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association. The Committee is currently developing recommendations for reforming the National Flood Insurance Program so that insurance costs are more closely aligned with flood risks.

For additional information, contact Janet Thigpen (STC Flood Mitigation Specialist) at 607-737-5271 or jthigpen@co.chemung.ny.us.



Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan



The "Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan" for the Susquehanna and Chemung River Basins of New York is a two-year Water Quality Management Planning Project to develop a strategy for conserving and protecting water

resources. The Plan will use an "ecosystem-based management" approach that integrates human needs, economic issues, and environmental concerns. The Action Plan will be a concise, highly accessible document that provides a unified vision for the region and promotes funding for projects that benefit the Basin's residents.

The "Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan" is being developed cooperatively with stakeholders from throughout the basin. The economic development community is engaged in this process, as well as those involved in flood mitigation, community planning, transportation, agriculture, recreation, and other issues.

Opportunities for involvement include: joining the ad-hoc Advisory Committee, taking part in stakeholder meetings, [reviewing drafts](#), including Action Plan recommendations in local plans, providing website links, and working together to implement the Plan. STC, in conjunction with Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board (STERPDB), has created a new website that presents a vision for the watershed, proposed goals, and other information. Please visit the new website at: www.susquehanna-chemung.org. We encourage you to join the Advisory Committee, share comments, or provide additional information by calling 607-962-5092 ext. 209 (ask for Jennifer) or jfais@stny.rr.com.



Eleventh Annual River Float Focuses on Stormwater



Lindley Town Supervisor, Rich Biggio, and STC staff, Jennifer Fais, enjoy the Tioga River.

About fifty paddlers gathered on the banks of the Tioga River at the new NYSDEC Lindley Launch Site to listen to Pauline Burnes, NYSDOT Region 7, describe stormwater control measures as part of the I-99 construction. Pauline also took interested paddlers on a tour of the mitigation wetlands before the launch. Janet Thigpen,

STC's Flood Mitigation Specialist, was also part of the program as she demonstrated the flood model (see photo). Paddlers enjoyed breakfast provided by Town of Lindley officials. Town Supervisor, Rich Biggio, and County Legislator, Robert Nichols, commended the group for their efforts to protect the watershed as they dedicated the museum-quality kiosk built with funds from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Program. Jim Pfiffer, the director of the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, led the safety talk before paddlers launched on Saturday, May 15 on their way to the Mulholland Bridge Launch site in the Town of Erwin.



Pauline Burnes, NYSDOT, explains stormwater mitigation measures.

The River Float has been an annual event sponsored by the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership (CB RTP), a network of governmental agencies with the goal of improving public access to the Chemung River and its tributaries while promoting the protection of the watershed. Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board co-chairs the CB RTP.

The Friends of the Chemung River Watershed is a not-for-profit organization of community volunteers whose mission is to protect, preserve and promote the watershed, and to improve economic resources, the quality of life and the natural environment for the residents of the Chemung River Watershed. STC staff serves on the Board and fully supports the work of the Friends.

Special thanks to Dave Buck, Endless Mountain Outfitters, for leading the Float, to Earl Titus for providing the free shuttle service, to the Gang Mills/Forest View and Lindley Fire Department crews for providing emergency protection, to the Lindley Community Church for rest room facilities, and to the Friends for providing insurance. For more information on the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, the Partnership, and future events, please visit www.chemungriverfriends.org



STC staff member, Janet Thigpen, uses a stormwater-floodplain model to demonstrate the impacts of land use on flooding, as well as various techniques for alleviating flooding problems. The model was purchased by Environmental Emergency Services to educate people of all ages throughout the STC region. To request a demonstration or training in use of the model, please contact Janet Thigpen at 607-737-5271 or jthigpen@co.chemung.ny.us.

2010 STC Board of Directors

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Chelsea M. Robertson, Planner
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