



**Marcia D. Weber
Executive Director**

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
February 14, 2011

Contacts:

Marcia D. Weber
Executive Director, STC
weber@stny.rr.com | 607-962-5092 x208

Joe Starks
President, ECC Technologies
jstarks@ecctec.com | 585-377-1850 x222

**Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties to Build
State-of-the-Art Optical Telecommunication Infrastructure**

*Non-profit organization formed to construct and maintain infrastructure
Corning Incorporated to provide \$10 million*

Corning, N.Y.: Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC) announced today the launch of a \$12.2 million project to deploy an optical fiber broadband network across Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties. When complete, the network will enable access to the highest speed broadband connectivity available in the three-county region.

STC has been working for several years to develop the strategic plan, establish a community partnership and secure the funding necessary to significantly enhance the telecommunications infrastructure available in the region. Construction is expected to begin in June 2011 on the 235-mile optical fiber ring, and will take approximately 30 months to complete.

“All the required elements of our business plan are now in place to launch this important and critical initiative which is so vital to the region’s ability to meet the future needs of our communities,” said STC executive director, Marcia Weber. “An open-access, optical fiber telecommunications infrastructure will put Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties on the fast track to greater economic development, better quality of life and global competitiveness.”

The new broadband infrastructure will offer significant benefits to the region, including connecting public safety towers and 911 centers, and providing state-of-the-art telecommunications technology that will enable significantly greater bandwidth and the highest available connectivity speeds. In addition, this network will allow service providers to enhance their broadband offerings to area residents and extend their service to underserved areas in the community.

New local development corporation to own and operate network

A new not-for-profit local development corporation – Southern Tier Network, Inc. (STN) – has been established to own, build and manage the optical fiber ring encompassing Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties. The new open access network ultimately will connect to other regional open access

networks. STN has a board of directors comprised of representatives from the three counties and other community stakeholders.

“The Southern Tier Network board believes that this network will be a catalyst for future economic development within the region, and that it will drive new and improved capabilities including 4G wireless and fiber-to-the-home and fiber-to-the-premises services,” said Weber.

STN will supply access to the new telecommunications network, not Internet connectivity itself. It will lease network capacity to telecommunication carriers, governments, educational institutions and healthcare organizations, as well as other commercial and industrial businesses. The Southern Tier Network business plan mirrors the successful and nationally-recognized model now operational in Ontario County, N.Y. The Ontario County fiber ring is a model for rural communities seeking broadband access, and was implemented and facilitated by ECC Technologies, Inc., STC’s technical advisor in the Southern Tier Network initiative.

“One of the strengths of the Ontario County model is that it creates partnerships with existing telecommunications service providers leveraging their existing investments in communities,” said ECC President Joe Starks. “Our work in Ontario County has laid the groundwork for seamless, mutually-beneficial relations with regional carriers that will enhance the Southern Tier project.”

Funding for the project

The Southern Tier Network project has received funding commitments from four sources. Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties have committed a total of \$2.2 million. In exchange for this financial support, each of the counties will use the new network to reduce existing communications costs for public safety and interoffice communications. Corning Incorporated (NYSE:GLW) will provide approximately \$10 million to fund the capital needed to build the network.

“Over the years, Corning Incorporated has contributed to many projects that have created economic diversity in our community. This contribution to the region’s telecommunications infrastructure, along with the support of our local governments, represents the kind of public-private partnership that is essential to expand regional economic development. The region’s telecommunication services must be competitive and robust for all segments of our economy to thrive,” said Kirk P. Gregg, executive vice president and chief administrative officer for Corning.

The planning board decided to move forward with its plan to create a fiber optic infrastructure after receiving disappointing news in September 2010 from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). STC’s bid for federal funding, which had reached the final stages, was denied because NTIA did not have sufficient resources to fund the project. An application to Google’s 2010 “Think Big with a Gig” Fiber for Communities grant program has been put on hold by Google.

About Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC)

Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties founded STC in 1969. Among numerous other activities, the agency coordinates regional telecommunications funding and activities, currently drawing on its Telecommunications Business Plan (2010) and Telecommunications Study (2006), both funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission. In 2000, STC secured support for telecom infrastructure that continues to save GST BOCES \$930,000 annually.

###