

# Verizon has "unfinished business" with NYS

By [Rachel Ward](#) Thu, 11/11/2010 - 09:55



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Verizon says \$618 million in incentives isn't enough to convince it to come to WNY. The firm also wants changes in the state's business climate.

## The incentives game

As the Innovation Trail's Daniel Robison reported yesterday, [Verizon has gotten the tax breaks it sought from Niagara County](#). But the more than \$600 million incentive package, in exchange for locating a data center on a farm in Somerset, isn't enough. The Buffalo News reports that Verizon spokeswoman Maureen Rasp-Glose says [the company still has "unfinished business" with the state](#), regarding its business environment:

State and local officials have lobbied hard for the project, but the company also has some concerns about putting a project in New York. Rasp-Glose

said Verizon wants the State Legislature to defeat a bill that would require the company to rebate 40 percent of the proceeds from any sale or merger of its New York operations, either in cash to ratepayers or by means of infrastructure investments in New York.

Rasp-Glose said the Legislature also needs to loosen Public Service Commission regulations on its business, which she said the company considers “antiquated.”

Verizon has predicted the new data center would create about 200 jobs, bringing the cost-per-job for state and local governments to about \$3.1 million.

Meanwhile a company in Niagara Falls is applying for a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes deal [to create 110 jobs at a plant making recycled paper and cardboard](#), according to the Buffalo News. The firm has already lined up a hydropower-for-jobs deal [like the one Verizon has](#).

## Talk show

Our upcoming Innovation Conversation about the green economy [got a mention in today's Post-Standard](#). If you're interested in attending the free public forum in Syracuse on Monday night, email us at [innovationtrail\[at\]wxxi\[dot\]org](mailto:innovationtrail[at]wxxi[dot]org). [Ryan Morden](#) is hosting a panel, including venture capitalist Nasir Ali, business reporter Matt Daneman, and Linda Harstock of CenterState.

## Educator salaries

The Democrat and Chronicle is reporting that [teachers and administrators in New York City's suburbs make the most in the state](#), averaging about \$85,000. School employees in Hilton, outside of Rochester, make an average of \$28,600:

As Gov.-elect Andrew Cuomo seeks to rein in spending by possibly cutting aid to schools, some districts may have to forgo salary bumps and offer less than generous pay packages in the 2010-11 school year, officials said.

The average compensation in school districts around the state increased slightly, growing from \$45,701 in 2008-09 to \$45,923 in 2009-10.

## Medicine

Syracuse's VA has been named [the number one VA in the nation for prosthetic services](#), according to the Post-Standard:

“We try to take care of our veterans within three business days if possible,” said Joseph D. McCreary, chief of Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Services at the Syracuse VA. The Syracuse VA won the national recognition because his department has a more than 90 percent customer satisfaction rating.

It's that time of year again - open enrollment. And more

employees are grappling with spreadsheets and old bills as they contemplate high deductible plans. The Democrat and Chronicle reports that a survey from the Rochester Business Alliance shows [the number of companies offering high deductible plans doubled this year, to 30 percent](#). The plans offer lower premiums, but put employees in the hook for more out-of-pocket costs. Employees can offset their expenses by setting aside pre-tax dollars in an account similar to an IRA, where funds can only be spent on medical expenses:

"It's become very popular and we're seeing more of it for 2011," said Frank DiCesare, president of Rochester's Optima Benefits Group. "There's a lot of uncertainty about health reform, and companies are looking for ways to continue to offer coverage affordably."

## **Nuclear caution**

A steam valve at Nine Mile Point nuclear plant was [automatically shut down yesterday](#), and officials are trying to figure out why, reports the Post-Standard. It's been a busy week for nuclear energy. Earlier this week Indian Point, a nuclear plant outside New York City, had to [shut down a reactor after a transformer exploded](#), according to Business Week. Attention around nuclear power is heightened as French firm EDF considers [building a new reactor](#) at the Calvert Cliffs plant in Maryland.

## **Gas leasing**

Democrats in Broome County's legislature say they don't have enough time to consider a deal to [lease county land for gas drilling](#). Lawmakers are set to vote on November 18, on leasing 3,200 acres of land to Inflection Energy, according to the Press & Sun-Bulletin. The deal could net up to \$7.8 million for the county.