

Region gets \$68.8M, not among state's big four winners

By [THOMAS ADAMS](#) - 12/8/2011 12:06:45 PM

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council was awarded \$68.8 million in state funding for 93 projects Thursday, the culmination of a four-month statewide competitive process.

The Finger Lakes council is flanked geographically by two councils among four that were lauded for having the best plans submitted by the 10 regional groups. The Western New York council was awarded \$100.3 million and the Central New York council was awarded \$103.7 million as recipients of a Best Plan Award.

The North Country council, with an award of \$103.2 million, and the Long Island council, with \$101.6 million, also earned Best Plan Awards.

Finger Lakes project funding includes \$5 million for the University of Rochester's new Health Sciences Center for Computational Innovation in partnership with IBM Corp., a statement from Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office detailed after the awards presentation.

The funding also includes \$3.5 million for the New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium's Battery and Energy Storage Product Commercialization Center. It will be used to renovate and equip a facility to build, test and characterize batteries and energy storage devices at the Eastman Business Park in Rochester.

Another \$2.5 million will be used to help construct a new business incubator at High Technology Rochester Inc. to ensure better coordination among tech-sector startups.

The city of Rochester is to get \$943,545 for its redevelopment of the Port of Rochester in Charlotte.

"While we would have liked to be one of the top award winners, we are pleased with today's regional economic development awards," Rochester Mayor Thomas Richards said in a statement from City Hall.

"Our area can now depend on nearly \$69 million to further local job creation and infrastructure projects such as the Port of Rochester, as well as many others that may not necessarily be city of Rochester projects but projects located within the city of Rochester. In the big picture, any project that benefits the entire region is a good thing."

The Seneca AgBio Green Energy Park will benefit from \$7 million in low-cost financing for infrastructure development at the former Seneca Army Depot in Romulus, Seneca County.

More than \$1.5 million will be used for advanced manufacturing projects, including \$1.25 million for Ithaca-based e2e Materials Inc., to establish a full-scale production facility in Geneva, Ontario County.

The new facility will manufacture sustainable bio-composite products that replace high-volume wood and wood-composite materials in applications such as cabinetry, furniture and automotive components.

Some \$2.28 million will support the development of a new Finger Lakes Cultural and Natural History Museum located at Keuka Lake State Park.

"As a region, we have a great deal to be proud of," Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks said in a statement. "Our council submitted an impressive blueprint that will accelerate the transformation of our economic landscape in the months and years to come."

A total of 720 projects statewide will be funded with \$785.5 million, officials said.

The Mid-Hudson council was awarded \$67 million. The New York City council was awarded \$66.2 million. The Capital Region council was awarded \$62.7 million. The Mohawk Valley was awarded \$60.2 million. The Southern Tier council

was awarded \$49.4 million.

Each of the 10 councils was charged with compiling a site-specific strategic plan to compete for part of \$200 million in state grants and tax credits. The funding is included in the 2011-12 budget, with \$130 million in grants and \$70 million in Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits available in the 2012 tax year.

An additional \$800 million is available to councils from state agencies.

The top four plans, as judged by a state panel, were to be rewarded with up to \$40 million, including up to \$25 million in grants and up to \$15 million in tax credits.

The remaining \$40 million of the \$200 million pot was to be parceled out to the six other councils.

"The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council should be very proud of the economic development recommendations we've prepared for our community," said Mark Peterson, president and CEO of Greater Rochester Enterprise Inc., in statement after the announcement.

"We have won because our community has a dynamic five-year strategic plan that will help us to effectively accelerate the transformation of our economy, creating new jobs and enriching our community. This plan will strengthen an economy that consistently leads the state in job growth."

A list of all projects statewide and their funding allocations is available at <http://www.governor.ny.gov/assets/documents/CFAAWARDSBooklet.pdf>.