



**NYSAC**  
NEW YORK STATE  
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

**May 15, 2007**  
**Southern Tier Regional Summit for County Leaders**  
**Summary Report**

County Leaders from the nine counties in the Southern Tier Region met for the first time on May 15, 2007 to address important workforce development confronting the region.

This historic meeting, hosted by NYSAC and NYSDOL, was attended by 50 county leaders from Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Broome, Tioga, Tompkins, Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties. The meeting focused on a key industry sector in the region, Advanced Manufacturing, as well as other economic challenges the region faces.

Attendees were welcomed by NYSAC Executive Director Stephen Acquario, Broome County Executive Barbara Fiala, Chemung County Executive Thomas Santulli, NYSAC President, Lucille McKnight, New York State Labor Commissioner Patricia Smith and Lloyd Constantine, Senior Advisor to Governor Eliot Spitzer.

The findings of a research study on Advanced Manufacturing in the Southern Tier Region were presented by a research team from Cornell University.

**Why Focus on Advanced Manufacturing in the Southern Tier?**

- Manufacturing makes up a higher proportion of the Southern Tier's economy than any other regions of New York State. Manufacturing jobs make up 15% of the total jobs in the region, and 21% of the total payroll.
- The jobs in advanced manufacturing, a sector of high potential growth, require a higher level of technical skill than traditional manufacturing jobs.
- Advanced Manufacturing jobs make up 30% of all manufacturing jobs in the Southern Tier Region, and pay an average annual wage of \$63,095, much higher than any other sector of the region's economy.

**The Future is Now: Principle Findings of the Study on Advance Manufacturing in the Southern Tier**

- There is a severe skills gap being experienced by Advanced Manufacturing companies in the Southern Tier Region.

- Although there are fewer manufacturing jobs overall because the manufacturing sector has experienced dislocation of workers from plant closings and layoffs, these workers do not have the skills needed for these highly skilled, well-paying jobs.
- Existing workers with highly technical skills are retiring at a quickening pace, as the “baby boom” generation ages. The average age of the workforce in the Southern Tier Region is significantly higher than other areas of the state.
- Available jobs with advanced manufacturing firms are going begging because of the skills mismatch, threatening their ability to manufacture their products on a timely and cost-efficient basis.
- Advanced manufacturing companies within the region are resorting to “pirating” of workers who possess the necessary technical skills from each other as a recruitment strategy.
- To stay competitive, companies that rely on advanced manufacturing techniques are increasingly considering relocating business divisions to areas of the country where they can find workers with the skills they need.
- Although this sector exhibits strong growth potential, its viability within the region is threatened by this emerging skills gap.

### **Working Together to Find Solutions: A Southern Tier Regional Approach to Economic and Workforce Development.**

Counties need to work together as a region on these and other workforce and economic development issues confronting them.

NYSAC, with funding from NYSDOL, is piloting the Workforce Intelligence Project in the Southern Tier Region. The project is designed to give local elected officials and policy makers the tools they need to better identify workforce issues that may have a direct affect on their economic futures.

The next step in the project will be to have each chief county elected official in the region designate a representative to act on their behalf as we develop a regional strategy that addresses the workforce issues confronting the Advanced Manufacturing sector in the Southern Tier.