


Advertisement

SUBSCRIBER 

Joe Biden sheds light on how feds will boost Syracuse to become global hub for computer chips

Updated: Oct. 30, 2023, 6:10 a.m. | Published: Oct. 30, 2023, 6:00 a.m.



U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., visits Saab in East Syracuse to celebrate the federal designation of Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo as a national tech hub for computer chips, Monday, October 23, 2023. N. Scott Trimble | strimble@syracuse.com

By **Mark Weiner | mweiner@syracuse.com**

Washington – If you want to know how a region stretching from Syracuse to Buffalo will cash in on its [new status as a national tech hub](#), listen to what President Joe Biden has to say.

Biden last week touted Upstate New York – and its potential as a global leader in computer chip manufacturing – when his administration selected 31 regions to serve as technology centers of the future.

“A hub in Upstate New York is going to support a workforce training program for New York’s semiconductor industry, which by the way has seen tens of billions of dollars of new investment because of the CHIPS and Science Act,” Biden said.

“This hub will have a particular focus on training people from communities historically left behind – like women, people of color – to work in the semiconductor industry,” he said.

Biden wants to use \$10 billion authorized by the CHIPS law to give an economic jolt to the new hubs, creating tens of thousands of jobs in places outside of the nation’s traditional tech centers.

The president made it clear the Thruway corridor of Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo will now be part of an exclusive club eligible to compete for a huge pot of money aimed at boosting areas with potential to grow.

Watch President Biden’s speech

Biden wants the federal aid to encourage new ideas that ensure the U.S. remains a global leader in areas that include artificial intelligence, quantum computing, clean energy, precision medicine and biotech.

The hub along the Thruway – what Sen. Charles Schumer envisions as “America’s semiconductor superhighway” – is among four hubs nationwide that will specialize in semiconductor research and manufacturing.

The regions were selected from 378 applicants across 48 states and three territories that applied to the U.S. Department of Commerce for the federal hub designation.

The 31 winners will compete in the next phase of the competition. The Commerce Department said it expects to select five to 10 of the regional hubs to share part of \$500 million in the initial round of grants.

Schumer, D-N.Y., the Senate majority leader who pushed the CHIPS and Science Act through Congress, said he’s “very optimistic” that the Thruway corridor will be among the handful of regions to win initial grants of up to \$75 million.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration, part of the Department of Commerce, began accepting applications this week. Applications are due by Feb. 29, 2024.

The Upstate hub – the New York Semiconductor Manufacturing and Research Technology Innovation Corridor, or NY SMART I-Corridor – is a consortium of more than 80 public and private institutions across Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo.

Advertisement

The partners include some of the region's top technology companies and universities, including Saab, which has its North American headquarters in East Syracuse. Saab specializes in radar and sensor systems used by the military and in civil aviation.

Craig Marcinkowski, Saab's strategy director, said the consortium will have to decide in the months ahead which projects are most likely to be funded in an intense competition for federal aid.

"I think there's going to be a lot sorted out between the communities in the next phase," Marcinkowski said. "We have the designation, but now we've got to write some very compelling proposals and plans."

The consortium is led by economic development organizations in the three cities, including the CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity in Syracuse.

Rob Simpson, CenterState's president and CEO, said the consortium plans to meet in the next few weeks to begin discussing what projects to include in its application for funding.

Simpson said the group is likely to apply for grants from three areas that would strengthen Upstate New York's capacity to manufacture, commercialize, and deploy technologies related to semiconductors.

Advertisement

The Upstate consortium will focus on workforce development, boosting innovation and research that helps startup companies grow, and taking action that fuels growth in the supply chain for semiconductor manufacturing, he said.

Simpson said a key focus will be the workforce training programs mentioned by President Biden.

Micron Technology, which plans to invest up to \$100 billion over the next 20 years building a semiconductor manufacturing complex in Syracuse's northern suburbs, is among the companies driving new demands for workforce training programs.

Micron says it will directly employ up to 9,000 people and expects its project will spur 40,000 more supply-chain and related jobs.

Onondaga Community College is among institutions in the Syracuse area that have already started working with Micron and state officials to ramp up job training programs.

Simpson said the new tech hub will seek to collaborate across Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo on broader projects that capitalize on existing strengths in each city on workforce programs.

Advertisement

Federal officials administering the tech hub program said there are few limitations on the types of projects that could qualify for grants.

Department of Commerce officials say the overarching requirement for all grants will be to promote equitable growth and access for a community.

The department wants those grant ideas to bubble up from communities, said Alejandra Y. Castillo, assistant secretary of commerce for economic development at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

“We challenged the consortia to dream big and plan boldly for a future where their region can be at the forefront of technology, inclusive economic growth, and national security,” Castillo said.

She said that “the plans for Upstate New York are ambitious and inspiring” and need to be shaped by local leaders.

Infrastructure and construction projects are among those that are eligible for grants, federal officials said.

That means that the Upstate hub could apply for funding to build a new water pipeline to Lake Ontario for the Micron plant, or to develop new rapid transit bus lines to help people in underserved communities reach jobs in the suburbs.

Advertisement

Simpson, of CenterState, cautioned that the consortium is unlikely to focus on projects that don't benefit all three metropolitan areas.

Any federal grants would be distributed through the three development organizations leading the Upstate consortium. CenterState's partners are the John R. Oishei Foundation in Buffalo and [ROC2025](#) in Rochester.

Got a tip, comment or story idea? Contact Mark Weiner anytime by: [Email](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | 571-970-3751

If you purchase a product or register for an account through a link on our site, we may receive compensation. By using this site, you consent to our [User Agreement](#) and agree that your clicks, interactions, and personal information may be collected, recorded, and/or stored by us and social media and other third-party partners in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

Around the Web

Nature's 'Liquid Adderal' is going viral in Syracuse

Health Headlines | Sponsored

Try Now

New Senior Apartments Coming to Syracuse (Take A look At The Prices)

Qsearch | Sponsored

The Killer New Volvo XC40: The Ultimate Vehicle For Seniors (Especially At These Prices)

Senior Volvo Deals | Sponsored