

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Keirsten A. Snell
Downtown Revitalization Program
(585) 245-5048
snell@geneseo.edu

LIVINGSTON–WYOMING DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM ISSUES ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

GENESEO, NY, February 14, 2005—The Livingston-Wyoming Downtown Revitalization Program (LWDRP) announces the distribution of \$95,000 in grant funds and low-interest loans to 12 businesses for start-up or expansion activities in 2004. LWDRP anticipates an additional distribution of \$165,000 in grant funds and low-interest loans in 2005.

LWDRP is a pilot project of Livingston and Wyoming Counties that offers financial and technical assistance to businesses in downtown districts of Arcade, Attica, Dansville, Livonia, Mt. Morris, Nunda, Perry and Warsaw.

LWDRP is funded through the Governor's Office for Small Cities (GOSC).

"Rural downtowns, in spite of their seemingly insurmountable obstacles, are viable centers for commercial, recreational and social activities," says Keirsten Snell, Director of LWDRP, "Communities that effectively utilize the tools of this program, experience positive and visible changes in their downtown. We continue to strengthen the economic vitality of our community centers and expand this program with support from public and private sectors."

"Downtown [Livonia] has become usable again," states Ralph Parker, owner of The Livonia Inn. In addition to recent infrastructural improvements, a new farmers' market and several new businesses have opened, which has increased pedestrian traffic and enhances the community.

"LWDRP is the first comprehensive effort by state and local officials to address the challenges of our downtown commercial areas. A healthy community needs a thriving downtown. The technical and financial assistance provided through LWDRP has a significant impact," says Richard Tindell, Director of Wyoming County Planning & Development.

In recent decades, downtown commercial areas have been unpopular destinations for retail development. The modern shopping center's abundant space and convenient parking captured the interest of retailers and the wallets of consumers. As a result, modern conveniences have overshadowed the aesthetic charm of Main Street USA and community reinvestment.

-more-

"LWDRP is directly responsible for placing three new businesses on Dansville's Main Street through the Rent Subsidy Program and MicroLoan Assistance Program (MAP)," states Richard DeAsis, president of the Dansville Area Chamber of Commerce.

LWDRP is an expansion Livingston–Wyoming Microenterprise Assistance Program (MAP), also funded through GOSC. MAP began in 1999 and provides classroom training and technical assistance for entrepreneurs. "LWDRP, combined with the successful MAP, is the center piece of our efforts for small business development," states James Pierce, Executive Director of the Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce.

Since 1999, 48 prospective and current business owners have graduated from MAP. Twenty-five of those graduates have started or expanded their business in either Livingston or Wyoming County.

Chris and Chrystine Smith, owners of Castile Greenhouses, had been in business for 17 years when they decided to enroll in MAP. "We gained an organized vision for the future of our business," says Chrystine Smith.

The next semester of MAP classes begins on March 1, 2005. Applications are being accepted until February 18, 2005.

For information regarding the Livingston-Wyoming Downtown Revitalization Program (LWDRP), contact Keirsten Snell (585) 245–5048. For information regarding the Microenterprise Assistance Program (MAP), contact Kathleen English (585) 245–5754.

About the LWDRP *The mission of Livingston – Wyoming Downtown Revitalization Program is to increase public and private investments and to enhance business activities. Rent subsidies, capital grants and low-interest loans are offered to encourage business start-up and expansion.*

###