

Summit speaker sees need for innovation leader

Richard Bendis says area possesses many advantages already

By ANDREA DECKERT

The Rochester region has many assets to foster economic growth and could benefit by having one person—an “innovation intermediary”—who makes it easier for the region to bring innovation to the marketplace.

That is the message of Richard Bendis, keynote speaker and one of the scheduled panelists at next Friday’s annual Eyes on the Future, a regional economic summit, at St. John Fisher College.

Such a person could create a database of

global resources that would make it easier to connect people, align and leverage resources, find ways to partner more effectively with others and line up technology and commercialization, he said. An innovation intermediary also could manage commercialization, venture capital and other investment programs.

“There’s often a sense of urgency with people who have new ideas to connect with those who can see if the idea is viable,” Bendis said. “Technology and innovation changes so quickly, so someone who can connect the dots helps create a greater chance of success.”



Richard Bendis

Bendis is the president and CEO of Pennsylvania-based Bendis Group Investments LLC, a financial intermediary and consulting firm, and Innovation America, a non-profit, private/public partnership focused on entrepreneurial innovation.

Bendis is to appear on a panel with Anne Kress, president of Monroe Community College; Richard Kaplan, president and CEO of Pictometry International Corp.; Mark Peterson, president and CEO of Greater Rochester Enterprise Inc.; and Susan Holliday, publisher of the Rochester Business Journal. Richard Bellafore, senior partner and director of public affairs for Eric Mower and Associates Inc., will moderate.

Bendis, who has visited the region before, says its quality of life is a draw.

The area’s assets include a well-educated work force, a history of innovation, highly respected academic institutions, science and technology leaders, and organizations that help with economic development, such as Greater Rochester Enterprise Inc.

“Those together are some of the ingredients necessary to build an economy that can survive and thrive,” Bendis said.

Like other parts of the country, the Rochester region needs to work on accentuating the positive.

What seems to be lacking is an entrepreneurial culture, he said, and business mentors are needed to help fledgling entrepreneurs.

“Those who have done it successfully need to support those who are trying to do it,” he said.

Continued on page 9

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Event focuses on ways for region to grow

Eyes on the Future 2009 will focus on fostering new opportunities for growth, development and innovation of the region's economy.

The free economic summit will be held next Friday morning at St. John Fisher College. It unites professionals from financial institutions, small businesses, large enterprises, local governments, colleges and universities, service organizations and economic development organizations.

An expo featuring local businesses will begin at 7 a.m. and be followed by the summit at 8:30 a.m.

In its third year, the event brings together experts on career and economic development to help attendees understand how they can use the area's resources and networks either to begin a career or to establish a business, officials explained.

Key themes this year include work force alignment, entrepreneurship, innovation, career development and education, and community engagement.

A panel discussion will focus on charting a course toward a work force that can compete globally for industries and businesses, driving sustainable growth.

The summit's lead organizations are Greater Rochester Enterprise Inc. and the Small Business Council of Rochester, an affiliate of the Rochester Business Alliance Inc., which will serve as host for the first Eyes Expo, a business and career event focused on economic development and work force alignment.

Some 50 exhibiting organizations will share insights and perspectives on entrepreneurship and career development, as well as strategies for the recruitment of new talent and businesses.

Organizers said the event motivates people to learn and engage in building a strong economy and a successful community. The past two events drew a total of more than 2,500 people from the nine-county region. This year, nearly 2,000 attendees are expected.

For more information and registration, visit www.eyesonthefuture.biz.

—Andrea Deckert

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Telecommunications Equipment Providers

(Ranked by number of local full-time employees*)

Rank	Name Address Telephone Web Site (if applicable)	No. of Local Employees Full-Time ¹ ----- Part-Time ¹	Total No. of Employees Companywide	2008 Local Revenues (\$000) ¹	No. of Phone Systems Sold and Installed in 2008				Total No. of Phone Systems Sold and Installed in 2008	Percentage of Business that is Commercial / Residential	Percentage of Work Sub-Contracted	Major Brands Offered	Additional/Specialty Services	Notable Clients	Top Local Executive(s)	Year Locally Founded
					Electronic Key	Hybrid	PBX ²	VOIP ³								
1.	SLINX Enterprises Inc. 275 Kenneth Drive Rochester, N.Y. 14623 (585) 359-2922 www.slinx.com	170 ----- 9	179	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA / NA	NA	Cisco Systems Inc., Cisco-Linksys LLC, Grandstream Networks Inc.	VOIP, WiFi phone, inbound international numbers, hosted PBX, high-speed Internet	NA	Craig Jerabeck, president and CEO	2001	
2.	ICS Telecom Inc. 125 Highpower Road Rochester, N.Y. 14623 (585) 427-7000 www.icstelecom.com	40 ----- NA	40	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	100 / 0	NA	Mitel Networks Corp., Inter-Tel Technologies Inc., Vodavi Communications Systems Inc., Cisco, Polycom Inc., Dell Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co.	VOIP, digital telephone systems, IP telephony, mobility, twinning, teleworker, screen pops, Microsoft integration, HTML programming, fiber optics, LAN/WAN, wireless, networking, software, T1, SIP servers, automated call distribution, call recording, contact center applications, call management, green products, power consumption analysis, messaging, usage, school safety communications, emergency notification, internal paging	Rochester City School District, U.S. District Courts, Hart Hotels Inc., Cayuga County	I.C. Shah, president and CEO	1976	
3.	Rel Comm Inc. 250 Cumberland St. Rochester, N.Y. 14605 (585) 546-8888 www.roomm.com	26 ----- 3	36	5,500	0	21	53	26	100 / 0	0	Inter-Tel, Mitel, Nortel Networks Corp., Trapeze Networks Inc.	Voice and data networks, wireless networks, call center applications, VOIP, wireless clock systems, digital logging systems, hospitality systems, cable and fiber installation	City of Rochester, Monroe County, Seneca County, over 70 area school districts, Hillside Family of Agencies	Robert Murray, CEO	1986	
4.	VocalNet Inc. 1159 Pittsford-Victor Road, Building 5, Suite 140 Pittsford, N.Y. 14534 (585) 419-8200 www.vocal-net.net	15 ----- 0	15	NA	NA	NA	15	85	100 / 0	0	Polycom, Dell, Cisco	Managed security and threat management systems, management data connections and networks	NA	Annette Warren, president and CEO, John Warren, vice president of sales and marketing	2004	
5.	Genesis Communications of Rochester Inc. 45 Cedarfield Commons Rochester, N.Y. 14612 (585) 225-1823 www.genesis-comroc.com	8 ----- NA	9	975	NA	132	NA	24	100 / 0	3	Samsung Group, Allworx Corp., AT&T Inc., Nortel, Mitel	Cable and fiber installation, data network design integration with VOIP	NA	Michael Sofia Jr., president	1977	
6.	Qwest Communications International Inc. 6703 Song Hill Lane Victor, N.Y. 14564 (585) 742-5490 www.qwest.com	6 ----- NA	32,838	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	100 / 0	NA	Cisco, Nortel, ShoreTel Inc., Polycom, Adtran Inc.	Installation and maintenance; VOIP; managed IP telephony; hosted VOIP; integrated access with local, long distance and Internet	Fortune 500 companies	Brad Haarr, national accounts executive	1994	
7.	Tricom Communications ⁴ 1050 Dewey Ave. Rochester, N.Y. 14613 (585) 647-2519 www.tricomcommunications.us	5 ----- 2	7	NA	8	30	10	13	95 / 5	10	Panasonic Corp., Nortel, NEC Corp., Comdial, Avaya Inc.	IP communications, multi-site connectivity, public address systems, point-to-point wireless connections for data and voice	Catholic Diocese of Rochester, Enterprise Rent-A-Car Co., Calvary Design Team Inc., Star Headlight & Lantern Co. Inc., Center for Youth Services Inc., Brinkman International Group Inc.	James Cray, CEO	1985	
8.	MAC Source Inc. ⁵ 2110 S. Clinton Ave., Suite 3 Rochester, N.Y. 14618 (585) 368-2100 www.macsourceinc.com	4 ----- NA	105	23,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA / NA	NA	Avaya, Aruba Networks Inc., Juniper Networks Inc., Microsoft Corp., International Business Machines Corp., Axis Communications Inc., Polycom, Adtran	Wireless networks, switches and routers, video surveillance, video conferencing, network infrastructure, cabling and wiring services, network assessments	NA	Gary Leary, regional sales manager	1999	

*In case of ties, companies are ranked by total employees.

Notes: Information was provided by individual telecommunications equipment providers that responded to an e-mail survey. The survey contacted telecommunications companies with offices in Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans and Wayne counties.

¹ Local area is Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans and Wayne counties.

² Private branch exchange

³ Voice over Internet protocol; also includes voice-data integration

⁴ Tricom Communications is the dba for Cray Communications Inc.

⁵ MAC Source Inc. is a subsidiary of Meridian Group.

NA - Not available

Researched by Julia Dickinson

If you would like your company to be considered for next year's list, or if there are any corrections or additions, please write to: Research, Rochester Business Journal, 45 East Ave., Suite 500, Rochester, N.Y. 14604; fax (585) 546-3398; or e-mail research@rbj.net.

EYES ON THE FUTURE

Continued from page 6

Support also is needed for early-stage research that could lead to commercial ventures, particularly when it comes to seed capital and venture funding and branding the area as an innovative region.

"A region can be as insulated or as self-promotional as it wants to be," Bendis said. "There are good ideas here and good people here, but not the element of connectivity there needs to be."

Bendis believes money is available for those who have a valid business plan, even in a poor economy and a state where many balk at the cost of doing business, he said.

"Investors are looking for quality business opportunities and quality people to build a business around," he said.

Bendis said the summit is a step in the right direction and praised the number of people interested in helping the area grow.

"It's a very positive sign there might be a new energy emerging," he said.

Bendis' roles have included corporate executive, venture capitalist, investment banker, innovation and technology-based economic development leader and international speaker and consultant in the technology, health care and innovation development industries.

He is also a frequent consultant and speaker for many organizations, including the United Nations, NATO and national and international technology-based economic development organizations.

Last December, he made a presentation to President-elect Barack Obama's transition team regarding a national innovation framework for the federal government.

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BS&K Announcement

Ingrid S. Palermo Has Joined Our Rochester Office

Ingrid S. Palermo is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College (B.A., 1993) and Western New England College School of Law (J.D., 1996), where she was Note Editor of the *Western New England Law Review* (1995-1996).

Ms. Palermo represents secured creditors, unsecured creditors and debtors in out-of-court workouts in bankruptcy proceedings and foreclosure actions. She also assists taxing authorities and governmental entities in Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases.

Ms. Palermo was formerly associated with the firm of Harter Secrest & Emery LLP in Rochester, New York. Previously, she was the Confidential Law Clerk to Hon. John C. Ninfo, II of the Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of New York and was a U.S. Attorney General Honor's Program attorney in the United States Trustee's Office for the Eastern District of New York.

Ms. Palermo is admitted to practice in New York and before the United States Bankruptcy Court and the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western Districts of New York.

Ms. Palermo will join the following attorneys in our Rochester Office:

Timothy M. Fitzgerald, Real Estate / Lending
William Greener, Intellectual Property
James C. Holahan, Labor and Employment Law
Edward P. Hourihan, Jr., Construction / Litigation
Robert H. Kirchner, Business and Corporate Law

Brian Laudadio, Litigation / Labor and Employment Law
Peter A. Jones, Labor and Employment Law
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