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## Tier groups to join forces

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Two area economic development groups are merging with the Greater Binghamton Coalition to form a united front for improving the economy.

The Economic Development Council and Regional Development Partnership for Greater Binghamton will shed their individual identities and blend their resources with those of the coalition. The Regional Development Partnership was formerly Partnership 2000.

"We can be much more productive and efficient in our economic development activities as one economic development engine versus three," said John Fitzsimmons, former Regional Development Partnership president and current Greater Binghamton Coalition member.

The Greater Binghamton Coalition is made up of seven other business and community leaders focused on improving the area's economy using the BC Plan as a guide. Patrick Doyle is the coalition's executive director and executive director of Broome-Tioga Works, an organization that provides employee recruitment and training.

"By combining, we're guaranteeing that there's going to be one voice and a single focus on the success of the BC Plan," Fitzsimmons said.

The BC Plan, an economic revitalization study, was created by consultant AngelouEconomics of Austin, Texas, to market and develop Greater Binghamton.

Goals include cleaning and redeveloping toxic industrial sites, developing sites for industrial and commercial development, creating a community marketing campaign, and more.

"Both public and private sectors need to understand that 'business-as-usual' is just not acceptable if we want to survive and prosper," said Marc Newman, former Economic Development Council president, Greater Binghamton Coalition member and partner of Newman Development Group.

"We all have to talk up Greater Binghamton and all its many pluses," he said. "We need to get over the low self-esteem of the area. We cannot be our own worst enemies."

Logistics regarding the structure of the new entity are being worked out and should be complete in the next 60 days, Fitzsimmons said.

The approximately 60 members of the former groups will continue to participate in economic development efforts through the Greater Binghamton Coalition, he said.