

NY wins \$600 million hub for photonics research, development

July 27 2015, by Carolyn Thompson

A \$610 million research and manufacturing hub dedicated to the science of photonics—the use of light in technology—will be developed in western New York, federal and state officials said Monday, which could mean thousands of jobs for the region.

Photonics involves the use of light in robotics, medical imaging, national security and other fields. Western New York already has about 100 companies focused on optics and photonics, and supporters of the new project say it will bring jobs in government, industry and academia to advance photonics research and its commercial uses.

"This is a huge win that will shape our region's economy for decades to come," Rep. Louise Slaughter said.

The project will be funded in part by \$110 million from the U.S. defense department, with an additional \$500 million in state and private investment, Vice President Joe Biden and Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in Monday's formal announcement.

New York's bid was selected from among three finalists competing for the project since it was announced by President Barack Obama's administration last fall as part of efforts to strengthen American manufacturing. Southern California and central Florida also were in the running.

The integrated photonics manufacturing institute is envisioned as a

photonics "ecosystem" that includes domestic foundry access, automated packaging, assembly and workforce development.

"The photonics center we are now bringing to Rochester will harness the power of the Defense Department and the prowess of Rochester's 24,000 employee-strong photonics industry and focus it like a laser beam to launch new industries, technologies, and jobs," Sen. Charles Schumer said in a statement.

New York's bid involved a consortium that includes the Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Rochester, State University of New York Polytechnic Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Arizona and University of California at Santa Barbara.

Biden announced the award with Cuomo following a private briefing on the technology at the State University of New York Polytechnic Canal Ponds business park.

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