

New York city sketches out revitalization plan for brownfield sites

Since the 1970s, former industrial sites in Rome, NY, have deteriorated, leaving behind abandoned buildings after the closure of companies like General Cable Corporation. City leaders, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other organizations have started to clean up the plots of land and use them for redevelopment purposes.

Rome becomes part of BOA program

Located on the Erie Canal, the City of Rome (pop. 34,950) was once a thriving industrial hub for upstate New York. The community's industrial base, however, has dwindled and the little-used or vacant pockets of land are hindering the development of the city, especially its downtown.¹ To overcome these challenges, Rome became part of the state's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program. It targets revitalization in communities affected by brownfield sites, which require clean up before any redevelopment efforts take place.

After initial success, local planners have more aggressively begun to use the vacant sites to spur economic growth. A crucial piece of the community development plan has been responding to regional labor market data and trends.

Consultants give picture of area's economy

[Camoin Associates](#), a consulting firm based in Saratoga Springs, NY, completed a market analysis of a city-owned property in Rome in 2007. Having done the reuse study, the firm was a good fit to be a contributing partner on the BOA project. Part of Camoin's role involved analyzing current labor, retail, and residential market conditions in Rome. To start things off, Michael N'dolo, Associate Principal at Camoin, used EMSI's comprehensive database and other sources to provide:

- An overview of industry and occupation trends for Rome, Oneida County, and upstate New York compared to state and national totals.
- A detailed analysis of demographic trends for Rome and Oneida County.
- And a breakdown of the region's economic base, as well as the industries with the largest supply chain gaps.

After pinpointing the suggested industries that should be recruited into the region in order to reduce import dependence and those industries' projected growth, N'dolo analyzed the likely office real estate space needs for those industries compared to what was currently available. EMSI's "Suggested Industries" tool helped Camoin Associates identify possible reuse scenarios which would be marketable and successful in the existing economic climate. Camoin used its professional experience combined with the information gathered from EMSI to provide recommendations to the rest of the planning team and the city. The information was helpful in "engaging the community in terms of developing a vision," N'dolo said. "The first step is putting the context together to see what's possible. Then we go to the vision."

About EMSI

Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. (EMSI) is a professional services firm that offers integrated regional data, web-based analysis tools, data-driven reports, and custom consulting services. EMSI has served thousands of workforce, education, economic development, and other policy professionals in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom, and the company's web-based **Strategic Advantage** research and analysis suite is used by over 2,500 professionals across the U.S. For more information, call (866) 999-3674 or visit www.economicmodeling.com.

¹ <http://www.camoinassociates.com/brownfields/Rome%20BOA.pdf>