

Council of the Great Lakes Region Launches Global Cities Team Challenge Smart Regions Cluster

Inaugural Project with the City of Defiance to Focus on Digital Solutions for Improving Water Quality and Watershed Planning in the Maumee River Basin

For Immediate Release
Date

Cleveland, Ohio and Toronto, Ontario – The Council of the Great Lakes Region, a binational nonprofit established in 2013 to find new ways of harnessing the strengths and assets of the Great Lakes economic region between the United States and Canada while protecting the environment for future generations, has launched the binational Smart, Sustainable Great Lakes Cities Regional Cluster (the "Cluster") as part of the Global Cities Team Challenge (GCTC).

With a combined GDP of US\$6.0 trillion in 2017, the Great Lakes Region, home to 107 million people, would equal the third largest economy in the world if it were a country, supporting over 50 million U.S. and Canadian jobs. As the region's cities grow and sectors modernize and expand to meet global demands, their long-term prosperity, competitiveness, and sustainability depends heavily on their ability to design, invest in, and implement smart technologies, infrastructure, and data-driven solutions.

The Cluster will provide all levels of government, industry, academia, and the nonprofit sector in the region a unique opportunity to work together to devise a vision and roadmap for accelerating the region's digital transformation, and to drive systemic change and citizen behaviour in achieving a smart, sustainable future in our cities and key sectors. The member-driven Cluster will also allow the region to collaborate in:

- Co-developing and testing smart protocols and standards to support the deployment of groundbreaking Internet of Things and Cyber-Physical Systems applications in an open environment;
- Demonstrating and scaling smart solutions, as well as sharing best practices and lessons learned, in a non-commercial sandbox environment;
- Taking advantage of shared investment and procurement opportunities; and,
- Adopting new techniques for measuring and communicating sustainability, from the city-level to the regional and national level.

“Achieving sustainability where it most counts, at the sub-national level and in our cities and sectors, remains a significant challenge, especially in economies such as Canada and the United States and in cross-border regions like the bi-national Great Lakes,” said Mark Fisher, President and CEO, Council of the Great Lakes Region. “The new Smart, Sustainable Great Lakes Cities Cluster provides a platform to engage multiple sectors in accelerating the adoption of smart,



data-driven sustainability solutions that are replicable and scalable in a collaborative, open, and interoperable environment.”

Defiance, Ohio is representative of many communities facing water quality challenges in the Great Lakes and are an ideal partner for the development of new approaches, which is why the city is leading the first demonstration project under the Council’s regional cluster. A series of demonstration projects to achieve nutrient reduction goals, located in the Maumee Watershed, will highlight Source Water Protection efforts and demonstrate a replicable, scalable means to achieve a prosperous and sustainable future.

Almost 4,000 miles of streams, creeks and rivers empty into the scenic Maumee River, which has the largest watershed of any river flowing into the Great Lakes. The Upper Maumee River is the sole source of drinking water for the City of Defiance and the surrounding residents. With multiple water quality concerns, the city is taking an active leadership role in watershed planning and other collaborative, sustainable development efforts throughout the region.

Agriculture accounts for 72% of the land use in Defiance county. The Maumee River, consisting of seven sub-basins that drain into the western basin of Lake Erie, has been identified as one of the key sources of nutrients leading to Lake Erie algae blooms, with 85% of those nutrients flowing through the City of Defiance. Nutrient loading has been exacerbated by extreme weather events, and research shows that 70-90% of nutrient loading occurs in 10-20% of these wet weather events.

“Big challenges require broader and more strategic thinking on multiple fronts; we believe that these innovative and collaborative efforts will lead to better outcomes for water quality, not just in Defiance, but throughout the Great Lakes Region,” said Jeff Leonard, City Administrator for Defiance, Ohio. “The City of Defiance is dedicated to working closely with the Council of Great Lakes Region and Defiance County in order to protect water quality while supporting the local economy and agriculture in our region.”

About the Council of the Great Lakes Region

The Council of the Great Lakes Region is a binational nonprofit organization that is dedicated to deepening the United States-Canada relationship in the Great Lakes Region. Its focus is on creating a stronger and more dynamic culture of collaboration in harnessing the region’s economic strengths and assets, improving the well-being and prosperity of the Region’s citizens, and protecting the Great Lakes for future generations. It achieves this mandate by conducting evidenced based policy research, connecting diverse perspectives at events like the Great Lakes Economic Forum, and acting as a strong voice for the Region’s varied economic, social and environmental interests.

About the City of Defiance



Defiance sits prominently at the confluence of the Scenic Maumee River and Auglaize River in Northwest Ohio. Defiance has approximately 17,000 residents, is the county seat for Defiance County and the regional center for a six-county area. Recently named as a Best Hometown by Ohio Magazine, Defiance features a revitalized downtown, charming shops, as well as numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation and exploration of a diverse history within a rich park system. Defiance is a Main Street Community, a Buckeye Trail Town, home to Defiance College and growth is in our future.

About the Global Cities Team Challenge

The GCTC is a collaborative platform for the development of smart cities and communities led by National Institute of Standards and Technology, a bureau of U.S. Department of Commerce, in partnership with other U.S. federal agencies including U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), National Science Foundation, International Trade Administration, and National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Contact Information

Mark Fisher
President and CEO / Council of the Great Lakes Region
613.66.2044 / mark@councilgreatlakesregion.org

Jennifer English
MS4 Coordinator / City of Defiance
419.783.4355 / jenglish@cityofdefiance.com

