State names first wave of
Gov. Andrew Cuomo has announced the first wave of companies accepted into the Start-Up NY program, a statewide economic development initiative that provides tax breaks for qualified companies sited on or near college campuses.

Of the 12 companies accepted, eight of them are based in Western New York and sponsored through the University at Buffalo.

State University of New York campuses are the focus of the program, and each institution vets proposals before final approval from Empire State Development. Accepted companies can operate tax-free for 10 years as long as they meet stated goals such as job creation.

The program "takes New York’s number one liability -- our tax capital reputation - - and turns it on its head by offering companies zero taxes for 10 years, as well as access to all the assets of the Empire State, particularly the talent and research capabilities of our world-class universities," Cuomo said.

The Buffalo-based companies accepted into the program have pledged a total of 204 new jobs. The state provided the following breakdown:

- AESKU NY Inc., a spin-off of Germany-based AESKU.DIAGNOSTICS, will start a new operation in New York state, sited in UB's downtown Gateway Building. The company is already part of one big state initiative -- the $105 million genome sequencing partnership between UB and the New York Genome Center. It plans to invest about $2.8 million into its Buffalo operation.

- Lineagen Inc., a biotechnology company that has also been identified as a partner in the genome project, will locate at the Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute and plans to invest about $55,000. Lineagen focuses on developing diagnostic testing methods for identifying genetic variations associated with autism spectrum disorder, and will use the Buffalo project to expand its test to treat other diseases.

- ClearView Social Inc. one of four companies accepted who are currently tenants at Z80 Labs Inc., an incubator site in the downtown Buffalo News
building. ClearView, a development stage software company that is developing a social media application for the legal services community, will be expanding into the Gateway Building and plans to invest about $925,000.

- CoachMePlus, another Z80 tenant that will be expanding into the Gateway Building, will invest $775,000. The company, formally named Virtuvia LLC, has developed a web-based application aimed at helping coaches and trainers organize data they collect about their athletes.

- Decision Pace, a Z80 graduate expanding into the Gateway Building, will invest about $370,000. The software development company provides data analytics web software to medium and large businesses that allow for immediate and high-end visualization of company information.

- Heads Up Display Inc., a Z80 tenant that will stay put, is an early stage high-technology company that creates products to enhance industrial safety. Heads Up engineers hardware devices and develops software that will provide additional layers of protection for employees who work in dangerous environments.

- Nupur Technologies LLC, a research and development medical device company that is developing a device to clear ear blockages, is slated to invest more than $860,000. Nupur is a new business locating in UB's Baird Research Park in Amherst.

- Sinapis Pharma Inc., a pharmaceutical company developing a novel drug for treatment of traumatic brain injuries and strokes, will be locating at UB’s Center of Excellence in BioInformatics and Life Sciences on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, will invest about $600,000.

Cuomo unveiled the first wave of applicants at several news events today, starting at the Rochester Institute of Technology and moving to Roswell Park Cancer Institute. In all, the 12 new businesses are projected to invest about $50 million and create nearly 400 new jobs. Other companies were approved through RIT, Cornell University and SUNY Downstate Medical Center.

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