

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



NATURALLY
LEWIS
LEWIS COUNTY, NY

LEWIS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





Mission

Lewis County Economic Development, through its board, the IDA and its brand, Naturally Lewis, are championing the growth of a community where people want to live, work, build business and play. We foster forward thinking and relationship building, connecting people, businesses, partnerships and resources to effectively and efficiently grow our county.



IDA Board Members



- Joe Lawrence** | Cornell University, Chairman
- Gagan Singh** | Key Bank Financial Services, Vice Chairman
- Ron Burns** | Lewis County Legislator, Board Member
- Herb Frost** | Arborcare, Board Member
- Tom Gillette** | Retired Dairy Farmer, Board Member
- McKenzie Lehman** | BCA Architects & Engineers, Board Member
- Darlene Rowsam** | ParentSquare, Board Member



Staff



Brittany Davis | Executive Director
Cheyenne Steria | Director of Finance & Incentives
Jenna Kraeger | Economic Development Specialist



LCDC
Board
Members



Tim Petersen | Leidos, Chairman
Tyler McDonald | Adirondack Assets, Vice Chairman
Mick Lehman | Grand Slam Safety, Treasurer
Eric Virkler | Lewis County Treasurer, Secretary
Christie Andrus-Nakano | Human Factor Leadership, Board Member
Michael Bradish | Brantingham Golf Course, Board Member
Jessica Clemons | Ex Libris, Board Member
Larry Dolhof | Dolhof Hardware & Legislator, Board Member
Eric Sunderhaft | Sunderhaft Appraisals, Board Member
Shellie Marks | QubicaAMF, Board Member
Terry Thisse | Lowville Sport & Farm, Board Member

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The role of economic development can be quite varied, and this has certainly been evident in the role our organization has played in responding to the needs of the community over the last few years. Initiatives have varied from more traditional IDA roles such as working to assure that our Universal Tax Exemption Policy is on the leading edge of what is possible to facilitate thoughtful development while getting the best deal for our communities to launching a program (DBA Lewis County) to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners with technical resources they need to set up and grow their businesses to investing in workforce development (Daycare Bootcamp) and addressing the child care availability issues that have been prevalent for years and have been driven to a new level by the pandemic.

I am very proud of our staff and board for these accomplishments. I am also proud that the team is never content to rest on past successes. Strategic planning is important for all organizations, though is often a task that gets stuck at the bottom of the "to-do" list. Thanks to the forward-thinking approach of our staff, the team has made sure to carve out time for this important activity and we are confident it will continue to pay dividends to our efforts to support the Lewis County community in the years to come.

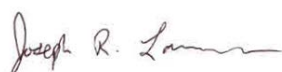
The continued strains of the pandemic led to the board losing a valuable voice as Jerry Cayer needed to step down in 2021. Jerry's incredible knowledge and keen insights are will surely be missed. We were very pleased with the Lewis County Board of Legislators appointment of Herb Frost, a small business owner from northern Lewis County to the board. We are grateful to Herb and all our board members for their willingness to volunteer their time and actively contribute to our team.

The IDA's role in economic development has been in almost constant motion for the past decade as county leadership sought to re-imagine the most effective means for achieving economic development. While we are very happy with the gains that have resulted and the proactive nature of the current structure, there is also recognition that there are additional opportunities to work collaboratively with like-minded entities in the county to bring our efforts to an even higher level.

One such group is the Lewis County Development Corporation, which has worked incredibly hard, with very few resources, to complete the clean-up of what is commonly referred to as the Lyons Falls Mill site. We are pleased to have been able to play a small role in supporting this effort over the years and are excited to see what the future holds for this site which, after many years and lots of work, is now ready to host exciting new employment and public benefit opportunities for the community.

This work is one example of efforts that highlight the synergies of these two groups and how more formal collaborative work can provide even more effective and efficient economic development support for the county. The two boards have had the opportunity to begin exploring collaborative structures that can achieve these goals for serving the county and we are very excited to see where this takes us in the coming years.

We look ahead to a number of potential opportunities as innovative local businesses continue to find ways to move their businesses forward and have sought our help in these efforts. We also continue to face challenges and important decisions that will be critical to both short term and long term successes of our organization and our efforts to support the community, but I know we have a team in place that is well positioned to handle this work.



Joe Lawrence
Board Chairman
Lewis County IDA



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Developing Partnerships.
Developing Policy.
Research & Education.
Outreach & Visibility.
Strategic Funding Development.

It is through our five strategic priorities that we have been able to build business and build communities throughout 2021. The work we do is a product of our strong foundation, our strategic plan, and a hard working team.

2021 has been a year of growth for Naturally Lewis and our communities. Lewis County has stayed resilient throughout the pandemic and made 'game-changing' shifts that kept our rural county thriving when large cities across the globe struggled. In previous years, Rural America used to be listed in national headlines using terms like, "struggling," "in decline," "brain drain," and "trying to stay afloat." We have seen anything but that in Lewis County. We have seen thriving small businesses, new business growth, strong and growing manufacturing, new residents, an increase in outdoor recreation and tourism, and a sense of pride for our small, rural towns. Rural America, is, in fact, thriving.

The Naturally Lewis team, and our boards, the IDA and LCDC, have been hard at work at a number of initiatives to continue to build our rural communities: childcare solutions, creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem, embracing solar and creating policy around solar development, business financing through loans, grants and incentives, marketing Lewis County as a great place to live, work, build business and play, and much more. We have built partnerships, taken thoughtful risks and continue to make wise investments for the betterment of our communities.

I am proud and thankful for my team, Cheyenne and Jenna, for their dedication and motivation to help businesses thrive and communities grow. I am grateful for supportive and engaged board members through the IDA and LCDC, who are involved because they truly want to see Lewis County be the best place it can be.

As 2021 was a year of laying the foundation and growth of our organization and our programs, I look forward to 2022 as we continue to get creative and create new partnerships that will have a lasting impact on our communities.



Brittany Davis
Executive Director



2021 AT A GLANCE

JANUARY

- Economic Development Partners conducted a Tug Hill Snowmobile Economic Impact Study

FEBRUARY

- Hosted a regional North Country Real Estate Virtual Round Table Event

MARCH

- Launched RFEI process to market the Lyonsdale Biomass Property for redevelopment

APRIL

- Hosted Breaking Barriers and Building Connections event to bolster creative ideas among the business community

MAY

- Launched the FREE In-Home Childcare Training Program to address the childcare shortage in the North Country

JUNE

- Began monthly visits to Fort Drum with partners to promote opportunities in Lewis County

JULY

- Received \$200,000 in funding for another round of the CDBG Microenterprise Grant Program

AUGUST

- Sold the Lyonsdale Property for the future development of a USDA Meat Processing Facility

SEPTEMBER

- Completed an installment sale agreement with Snow Ridge to purchase a new groomer

OCTOBER

- Regional partners launched Drum Country NY "Let's Meet" marketing campaign

NOVEMBER

- Final steps of beautification were completed at the Lyons Falls Mill Site; Moving forward with marketing the site for redevelopment

DECEMBER

- Launched the DBA Lewis County Entrepreneurship Program to help businesses launch and grow in Lewis County



BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS



INVESTMENTS IN



CHILD CARE



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



RENEWABLE ENERGY



PROPERTY REDEVELOPMENT



FINANCES

2021 AT A GLANCE

LEWIS COUNTY LCDC

INCOME

Leases	\$28,760
Grants	\$10,000
Contracts	\$30,000

TOTAL \$68,760

EXPENSES

Operations	\$2,728
ED Program Services	\$14,022
Grants	\$23,630
Professional Services	\$7,070

TOTAL \$47,450

LEWIS COUNTY IDA

INCOME

Project Fees	\$598,080
Contracts	\$201,060
Other	\$27,660

TOTAL \$826,800

EXPENSES

Payroll & Benefits	\$185,630
Operations	\$20,150
Professional Services	\$18,220
Marketing	\$26,650
Project Investments	\$260,180

TOTAL \$510,830



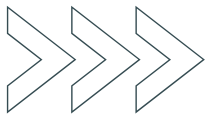
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OUR 2021 IMPACTS



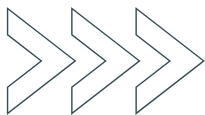
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- **Strategic Plan (2020-2023)** accomplishments & priorities



STRENGTHENING OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITIES

- Launch of **DBA Lewis County** entrepreneurship program
- **Events for business collaboration** leading to creative solutions for our communities



LEADERSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY

- Leading initiatives on a local, regional and state level
- Making strides in **child care, tourism development, and business transitions**



MARKETING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Continued growth on social media channels; **videos rank as top posts** for engagement
- Monthly **visits to Fort Drum** to promote Lewis County transition opportunities



STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- 8 approved renewable energy PILOTs
- The LCDC completed the last phase of beautification of the former **Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper Mill**



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Naturally Lewis Strategic Priorities



Major Opportunities IN THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS

SITE DEVELOPMENTS

MANUFACTURING EXPANSIONS & USE OF IDA & LCDC SERVICES TO SUPPORT

ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH

LEVERAGING & GROWING "LEGACY INDUSTRIES" SUCH AS RECREATION & AGRICULTURE

MARKETING REASONS YOU SHOULD LIVE, WORK OR BUILD BUSINESS IN LEWIS COUNTY



STRENGTHENING OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Naturally Lewis, in partnership with the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, Jefferson County Economic Development, the Greater Watertown Chamber of Commerce and Jeff-Lewis Board of Realtors, hosted a virtual **North Country Real Estate Round Table** event in February. Our economic development partners and regional real estate experts discussed tools to attract and retain people to live and work in our region.



In partnership with the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, we hosted our first hybrid, in-person and virtual, event **Breaking Barriers & Building Connections** for a successful summer season. Business owners and organizations in attendance discussed collaboration for future events in Lewis County.



In partnership with the Lewis County Planning Department and the Village of Lowville, assisted with the application for the **New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative**. Naturally Lewis staff worked with several downtown businesses to explore and develop potential opportunities for grant funding.



CREATING DIGITAL & E-COMMERCE SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESSES

Naturally Lewis partnered with Coughlin in 2020 to launch the **myunny.biz platform** to provide low-cost, high quality digital and e-commerce solutions for businesses. In 2021, we were able to increase small business presence online with a total of **20 small businesses websites**.



Cummings Farms Cream Line Milk



Keystone Lumber & Building Supply



Denmark Gardens Apple Orchard



Blackwell Bookkeeping



Down to Earth Jewelry



Author - amosARK



Hopenhagen Farm



Good Ol' Wishys



Keep the Splash



Painting with Rene



Otter Creek Potters



Otter Creek Potters



Snyders Sugar Shack



Mindful Motivation



Apple Mill Homes



Lake Effect Tech



Entwined Treasures



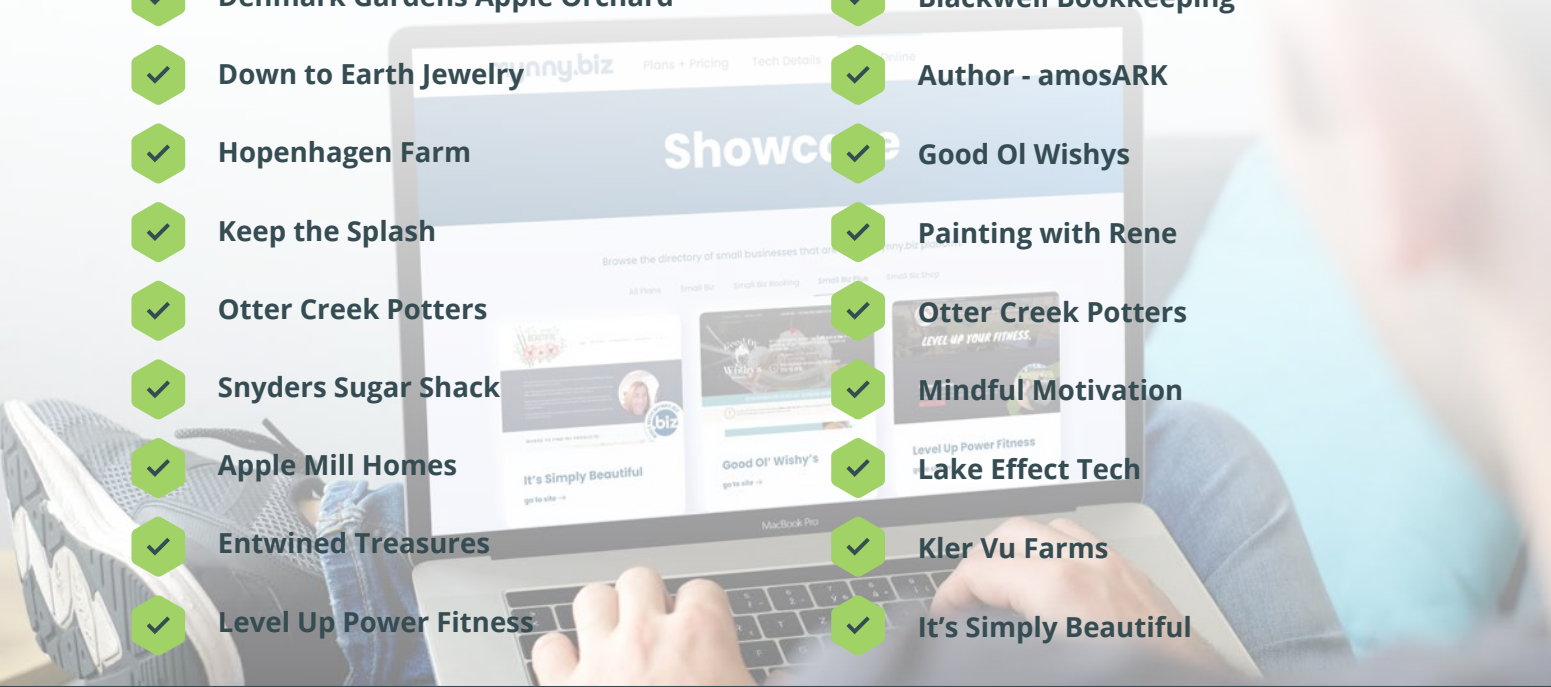
Kler Vu Farms



Level Up Power Fitness



It's Simply Beautiful



STRENGTHENING OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITIES



Naturally Lewis launched the **DBA Lewis County Program** to assist aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners in Lewis County to launch and grow their businesses! By utilizing our local and regional economic development technical assistance partners and building a local network of consultants, we are able to connect entrepreneurs with services and resources to reach their goals. Although many services are free, DBA Lewis County is helping to alleviate some of the costs associated with other programs and services as an incentive to entrepreneurs working to launch and grow.

PROGRAM RESULTS

33
DBALC CLIENTS



8
DBALC CONSULTANTS



MOST USED SERVICE
BUSINESS PLANNING

WINTER DESIGN CHALLENGE

The LCDC was able to secure \$10,000 through the Pratt Northam Foundation and \$10,000 through Lewis County to create a **\$20,000 grant program** for winter based businesses during the 2020-2021 Winter Season. The grant program covered 50% of project costs, up to \$1,000, and asked hospitality, tourism and entertainment businesses and not-for-profits to submit proposals for creative indoor or outdoor dining solutions, creative service solutions or unique experiences.



LEADERSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY

LEADING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Lewis County Economic Development leads monthly economic development discussions with County partners including Lewis County (Management, Planning & Community Development Department, Parks & Recreation Department), Jefferson Community College, Snowbelt Housing Company, The WorkPlace, Cornell Cooperative Extension - Lewis County, & the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce. Conversations have led to collaborative projects and continued progress in the County.



CENTER FOR BUSINESSES IN TRANSITION

A North Country regional partnership working to combat closure of thousands of businesses due to a lack of successor or succession plan. We provide match-making services and the resources businesses need to successfully transition.

2021 Small Communities. Big Opportunities Virtual Conference:

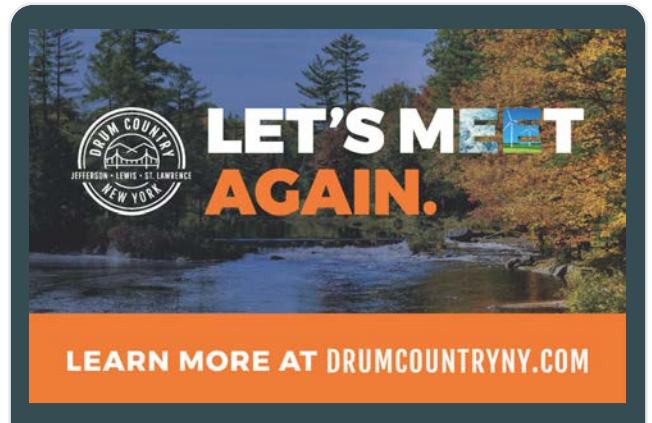
CBIT partners held a virtual conference for aspiring entrepreneurs looking to take over a North Country business — empowering those who live here and those who want to live here to realize their dreams of business ownership.



REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

The Drum Country, New York, region encompasses Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties in north-central New York state. This is a multi-sector **economic and workforce development partnership** created to help prospective Drum Country employer access the information, resources, and incentives needed to make our location their best asset.

In 2021, Drum Country, New York launched the **LET'S MEET marketing campaign** is to encourage business expansion in the region, draw new business and industry, and attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce.



LEADERSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY

CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS

In partnership with Lewis County Planning Department, the Community Action Planning Council (CAPC), Jefferson Community College (JCC), and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), have developed an accelerated program to empower, educate, and launch new regulated in-home day care facilities in Lewis County. The **Regulated Home Day Care Training Bootcamp** will work to support the urgent demand for affordable, safe, high-quality childcare in Lewis County and the North Country while fostering entrepreneurship and the creation of 2 new childcare businesses in Lewis County and 10 in Jefferson County in the first year!



SNOWMOBILE ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

Lewis County, in partnership with Tug Hill Regional Partners contracted with the Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College (JCC) and Camoin 310 to undertake an economic impact study of snowmobiling in Lewis County and the Tug Hill Region.

35,254

unique snowmobile trail users each year

52%

are non-local users, from outside Tug Hill

347,337

days spent in total by non-local users in the Tug Hill Region each year

A non-local snowmobile user spends **\$192** per day.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Northern New York is an ideal location for services and support for those looking to start or grow a business. From business planning to funding options, grants to administrative and business support services, local businesses benefit from services offered in Lewis, Jefferson & St. Lawrence Counties. Lewis County Economic Development proudly collaborates with many North Country Partners to create diverse support and funding options.

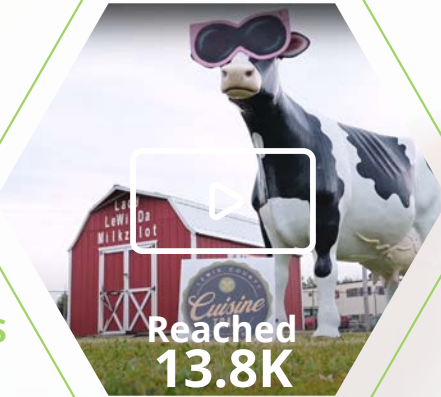


MARKETING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SOCIAL MEDIA *Analytics & Top Posts*



2,700 FOLLOWERS
↑ from 2,100



- ✓ Facebook Page Reached **93,604 People**
- ✓ **Top Post:** Lewis County Cuisine Trail Video
- ✓ **70.8%** of our Facebook Followers are **Women**



1,104 FOLLOWERS
↑ from 980



- ✓ Instagram Reached **8,190 People**
- ✓ **Top Post:** Snowmobiling Scenery on Tug Hill
- ✓ **32.8%** of our Instagram Followers are **25-34 Years Old**



312 FOLLOWERS
↑ from 206



- ✓ LinkedIn Page had over **17,000 Impressions**
- ✓ **Top Post:** Cheyenne Awarded **NNY Business 20 Under 40**
- ✓ **18%** of our Followers have **Business Development** job functions



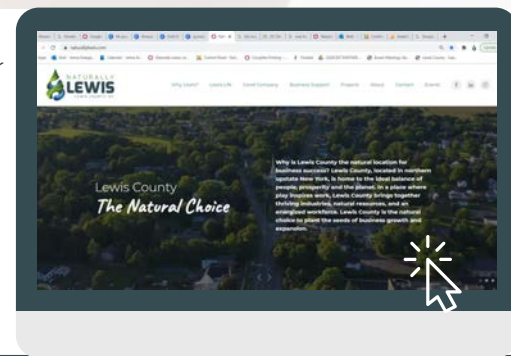
1,100 VIEWS
↑ from 198



- ✓ YouTube Channel "Watch Time:" **73.5 Hours**
- ✓ **Top Post:** "Live Here" Video
- ✓ **15%** of **Traffic from Facebook**

NATURALLYLEWIS.COM *Website Analytics*

- ✓ Over **51,600 Page Views!**
- ✓ **Top Page Views:** Snowmobile Economic Impact Survey
- ✓ **4,000 Returning Visitors & 13,000 NEW Visitors**



MARKETING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

FEATURED IN OVER 30 PUBLICATIONS IN 2021



RADIO *Moving Naturally Lewis Forward*

Featured on a monthly radio segment, 'Naturally Lewis: Moving Lewis County Forward' with The Moose, The Blizzard and Tunes 92.5



Email Newsletter

- ✓ 908 Subscribers
- ✓ 32 Emails Sent in 2021
- ✓ Monthly Updates to the Business Community



FORT DRUM VISITS

Naturally Lewis, in partnership with the **Transition Assistance Program at Fort Drum**, visited Clark Hall monthly to promote opportunities in Lewis County. Each month we invited a Lewis County Economic Development Partner to spotlight different assets including, workforce development, public transportation, tourism, and parks & recreation.



STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

LYONSDALE PROPERTY

The Lewis County IDA sold the former 46 acre ReEnergy Biomass Site in 2021 to Rezk "Rez" Abdelrahman for the **future development of a USDA Meat Processing Facility**. Staff contracted with Camoin310 to undergo a RFEI and RFP process and received 7 project proposals for the site.



LYONS FALLS MILL PROPERTY

The Lewis County Development Corporation completed the last phase of **beautification of the former Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper Mill** after a decade of demolition, clean-up and six-million-dollars invested into revitalization of the property. As a result, the overgrown shrubs that blocked the view of the river and the original canal wall and the piles of industrial debris left behind by the decade-long cleanup process have all been removed, leaving an expanse of possibilities for the waterfront property. Staff is working with LCDC Board to market and sell the property.



SNOW RIDGE INSTALLMENT SALE

The Lewis County IDA assisted Snow Ridge with an installment sale agreement to purchase a **new groomer** help manage and maintain the ski slopes for their upcoming season and for years to come!



STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

2021 LEWIS COUNTY IDA PILOTS



**SEVEN
APPROVED
SOLAR
PROJECTS**



**ONE
APPROVED
WIND
PROJECT**



**130+
MEGAWATTS
OF NEW
ENERGY**



**\$251,339,200
IN
PROJECT
INVESTMENTS**



**\$1,121,000
ANNUAL
INVESTMENT
IN LOCAL
COMMUNITIES**

SIX

ACTIVE TRADITIONAL PILOTS

\$284,240 paid to local government and schools in place of property taxes.
Two additional project applications pending.

TWO

ACTIVE SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS

Exemptions are limited to the construction, reconstruction or installation period and cannot cover ongoing operational costs.

SIX

ACTIVE ENERGY PILOTS

Six current projects active, with 10 additional projects pending signing!

THREE

ACTIVE EQUIPMENT INSTALLMENT SALES

Equipment purchased by the IDA and sold back to a business in installments.

THREE

OUTSTANDING SMALL BUSINESS LOANS

Loan funds available for gap financing for small businesses in targeted industries.

ZERO

PROPERTY TRANSITIONED BACK TO FULL TAXATION

At the conclusion of a PILOT, properties return to full taxation.

\$5,056,500

**COMMUNITY INVESTMENT
FROM PILOT PROCEEDS**

IN 2021



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7551 S. STATE STREET | LOWVILLE, NY
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