

# 2023 INITIATIVES GUIDE TO



## Fulton County, NY



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Dear Readers:

The *2023 Initiatives Guide to Fulton County* is an exceptional resource to discover the region's current business community. Fulton County is an all-in-one beautiful, affordable and easily accessible location.

The County Board of Supervisors has been immersed in growing the local economy by creating new attractions and assisting local businesses. *Destination: Fulton County*, is part of a strategic tourism plan to expand the community, as part of the County's ongoing *Vision 2026 Development Strategy*. Our Center for Regional Growth and Industrial Development Agency are fantastic resources that assist entrepreneurs, business innovators, startup gurus, and creative thinkers to help move your project from start to finish. Fulton County is passionate about growth and has established a process to expedite any necessary permitting and siting requirements you may need.

No matter what the season, Fulton County has a beauty all its own, making it your ideal destination to call home.

Sincerely,



Gregory Fagan  
Chairman of the Board



# WELCOME TO FULTON COUNTY!



## Business Expansion & Growth...

Revitalization gets by with a little help from our friends	6
Tryon - Build to Suit Opportunities	14
Bright Future through Micro-Grants	31
44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail	34

## Community Focused...

Activity & Culture Flow at Caroga Arts Collective	17
Revitalizing Historic Village through LWRP	28
Nathan Littauer- Golden Care in the Golden Hour	41



# Initiatives Guide 2023

The Center for Regional Growth should be the first stop for any business that's coming into the area and looking for economic development assistance.

– Ron Peters

## Business Focused...

Cradle to Career – Workforce Focus	10
Making an Impact Across the Globe	22
Clean Energy Saves Money	44
A New Environment Through Brownfields	48



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# Revitalization Gets By ...

## With a Little Help From Our Friends.

In December 2021, New York State awarded the City of Gloversville a \$10 million grant as part of the state's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Although some might view this as the pièce de résistance, it was, according to city officials, just one more part of a carefully orchestrated plan to bring a renaissance to this upstate community.

Gloversville's story is not unlike those of many cities across the United States. It was a thriving industrial center in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was home to 200 tanneries whose employees, representing 80 percent of the city's population, produced or vended 90 percent of all gloves sold in the United States. This industry began to decline in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1980s, 86 tanneries had to close after manufacturers took their business overseas. Abandoned factories began to decay. Some even crumpled entirely, leaving a pile of asbestos-ridden rubble. This caused a sharp decline in the city's economic health, and void of its main economic driver, the economy collapsed in the 1990s. The quality of life for residents declined significantly.

Those days are over.

Responding to residents clamoring for the rebirth of the once flourishing city, the municipal government and county economic development agencies, partnering with the citizens themselves, put into motion a very calculated and carefully thought-out plan of action to redevelop residential neighborhoods and brownfields in order to turn Gloversville into what Mayor Vince DeSantis describes as "a 21st century post-industrial community."







along the Cayadutta Creek and downtown Gloversville, creating recreational spaces and preserving historic architecture.

In addition, Gloversville was one of 149 communities nationwide to receive grants in 2019 from the Environmental Protection Agency. The agency awarded the city a \$300,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant that will help the city assess abandoned tannery sites on the Cayadutta Creek. Once assessed, the city can begin the process of redeveloping old factories and former Fonda, Johnstown & Gloversville (FJ&G) Railroad tracks into

“We’re now on the verge of a renaissance, and it was just really based on all the planning and the dogged work that we’ve done over the last three to four years that put us in this position today,” DeSantis said.

The announcement of the DRI grant garnered a great deal of press. These funds will be used to develop a strategic investment plan and implement key projects under the leadership of a local planning committee. One of these projects is Kearney Development’s Glove City Lofts, a 75-unit affordable housing building for mixed-income tenants, including artists.

However, DeSantis points out that the city received several key grants prior to the DRI that paved the road for this latest infusion of funds. In the five years prior to receipt of the DRI grant, the city received \$8 million in grants for revitalization projects.

Among them was a planning grant as part of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. With these funds, the city will work on developing the waterfront area



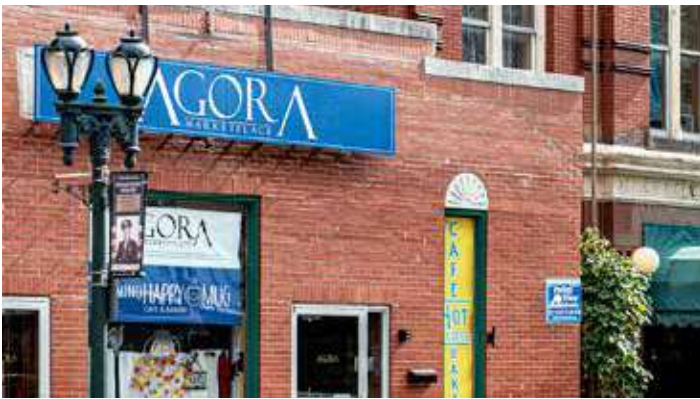


# Revitalization

public areas with expanded green spaces, trails, and perhaps even a skate park, DeSantis said.

In 2020, New York State awarded the city a Brownfield Opportunity Act grant which will allow the city to map, survey, and plan redevelopment of brownfield sites as well as fund community outreach to involve Gloversville citizens.

Throughout the process, the city has involved Gloversville residents, soliciting their input on which proposed projects mean the most to them. “The community is giving us input, and they’re involved in these processes,” said James Hannahs, former Downtown Gloversville specialist for the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth. “They’re coming to open houses and presentations. We’ve gotten so much support from the community.”



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The grants the city sought played an important role in bringing the community in on the rebirth of their city. “These grants have given us this platform to not only plan, but to outreach to the community for their input on the redevelopment of huge areas of the city that we have never been able to do before,” DeSantis said. “It has opened up funding sources for the redevelopment of these areas that we never had access to before.”

Lisa Nagle, a principal with Elan Planning, Design, & Landscape Architecture, PLLC, the firm that has been working with city officials on these efforts, points out that there are four public projects planned as part of the redevelopment. These include creating an urban piazza on South Main Street where an old building was demolished, connecting downtown streets and the rail trail with bicycle lanes, creating a farmers market with an ice skating rink, and connecting Castiglione Park with St. Thomas Square.

“Those public projects are so important because we have lots of private commercial projects downtown, but the public spaces, to have those enhanced, really fosters the catalytic effect that all these commercial projects are giving us,” DeSantis said.

that it’s doing a well-round redevelopment strategy with catalytic programs that are complementing each other. There has been this really consistent, powerful stacking of different resources that are focused on the city and not just downtown. We’re taking this really wide, sweeping approach to redevelopment that’s unique.”

According to DeSantis, the formula for success includes vibrant, walkable, livable neighborhoods combined with a thriving commercial center. “We’re now in a position to move both of those things forward in the next few years,” he said. “I think we’re creating the quintessential city for that work/life balance. We’re a small city near a tremendous array of recreational opportunities with a small-town atmosphere, but a big enough city to have interesting



In addition to federal and state grant funding, the city sought out private endowments to invest in its public spaces in order to create places where the community can gather and enjoy outdoor movies and concerts, among other events.

“Throughout New York State, there are a lot of these renaissances and resurgences in downtowns in all regions of New York State,” said Hannahs. “But where I think Groversville is very unique is

things like a live performance theater, a vibrant arts community, and restaurants—all fun things to do and fun places to be.”

# Cradle to Career

Fulton County takes workforce development seriously in order to meet the current as well as future needs of area employers and those seeking to do business in the county. To that end, the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth facilitated bringing Expertise Project to Northville High School in 2021.

“Choosing a career path is a very significant decision in a person’s life,” said Expertise Project’s founder Mike Baron. “It feels like there’s not a great system for making students aware of career opportunities and helping them to move forward.” He and co-founder Daniel O’Sullivan set out to change that, steering completely away from traditional methods such as career days, watching a marketing video, and going on a field trip to a local business.



## Workforce Focus



Their company struck gold with its latest offering, which puts students into an immersive learning experience with several local employers while at the same time creating an engaging tool available for other students in career exploration and employers to use in recruiting new employees.

At Northville High School, students enrolled in an elective class, and over the course of the semester, they created 3D videos of six Fulton County businesses as well as Fulton County Community College.

Guided by social studies teacher John Karbowski, who said he served more as a facilitator than instructor in this class, students brainstormed questions to ask business leaders as well as employees working at the company.



“A lot of work was done on the front end with planning out the visits,” said Northville High School’s principal Samuel Ratti. “They were being very purposeful in the planning, so when they went to the actual job sites, they went in with a lot of prior knowledge.”

“They actually developed goal-oriented and industry-specific questions that allowed them to learn about the companies while also discovering what it is that they liked and didn’t like,” Ratti said, noting that since



the onset of COVID, he sees more students really searching for a future career that serves their interests, one that they will enjoy.

Students went into a business prepared to find out why a company is successful, why people want to work there, and how a person could transition into professional employment there, Ratti said. “It was truly hands-on learning—understanding what the expectations required are to be successful in life post-high school.” The planning process also helped students think about what they desired to learn about a potential employer.

After this thorough preparation, students visited businesses with video cameras and microphones in hand, where management and employees were ready to be interviewed and give them a tour.

“Students carried around a 360-degree camera everywhere they went,” Baron said. In addition, two other students carried regular video cameras. “They created walk-and-talk interview videos at each location.”

Students, and even their teacher, learned things they did not expect. “The project allowed students to see businesses within Fulton County that I think they knew were there but they may not have realized exactly what is done there,” Karbowski said. “It was an outstanding and eye-opening experience even as an adult.”

The students learned that there are multiple opportunities at a company. For example, at Townsend Leather in Johnstown, a great



deal of science goes into the leather preparation process, but there are also design opportunities for the various products the company designs for its niche market, as well as graphic design, marketing, and manufacturing positions, among others. “It was great for our students to realize that whatever their interest is, there’s a piece of that that fits into that bigger picture of the manufacturing industry,” Ratti said.

Creating these types of connections between schools and industry is a critical piece of successful workforce development. “In talking with these businesses, we realized that there is this blossoming population of the emerging workforce that didn’t realize how many connections there were within 15 to 20 minutes of where they all live,” Ratti said.

Expertise Project has a symbiotic effect, serving both students and employers. The interviews informed employers about students’ curiosities, giving them clues about how their company can tailor its recruitment efforts towards the next generation of workers. In addition, with a pair of 3D goggles, employers could use the videos as a recruiting tool at job fairs.

An unintended benefit was that students were able to see alumni from their high school who were now employed locally. “They might think, ‘If they can do it, I can do it, too,’” Ratti said. “That was a pretty powerful part.”

The interviews also served as quasi, low-pressure job interviews, Baron said. “They’re just sitting there for two hours talking about the job,” he said, noting that students in other counties ended up getting job offers from a

# Workforce Focus

company where they conducted interviews. During interviews, employers could assess a student's skill set, and students could learn what was needed to obtain a job at that company.

The project has prompted some of the Northville students to apply for jobs at the companies they were exposed to during the project. "A number of students are actively pursuing interviews and employment at these companies, and it wouldn't have been had it not been for this job site business," Ratti said.

Post-interviews, Expertise Project took the raw footage that students themselves filmed and condensed it into a 15-minute video that can be viewed in 3D with a pair of virtual reality (VR) goggles. "We want that video to be an educational tool," Karbowski said. "The audio and video can be used for middle school and lower high school as students think about what they want to do post-high school." This way, Expertise Project students have a lasting impact on workforce development.



LET STUDENTS EXPLORE OUR LOCAL AREA IN 360





“The model we’ve adopted now is an engage, enrich, enlist model,” Baron said.

The project enlists students in an appealing way by putting video cameras in their hands to conduct interviews at local companies. Their work enriches the knowledge of other students, and VR headsets engage students in learning about the opportunities that exist for them close to home.

School districts can also subscribe to have access to the dozens of videos that Expertise Project has produced, offering teachers and guidance counselors an engaging tool for making students aware of the career opportunities available to them

“Expertise Project is an example of how Fulton County put the businesses and the students together to make students aware,” Baron said.

For more information, visit <https://www.expertiseproject.org/>



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# Tryon Build to Suit Opportunities



The last large-scale site currently available for development—with 1.3 million square feet available—is located right in Fulton County. “There is not another site in New York or New England at this point that is available that can offer a building of that scale,” said James Panczykowski, Senior Managing Director with JLL, a commercial real estate services company. “That is incredibly unique to that project.”

Panczykowski is referring to the Tryon Technology Park, a property that the Fulton County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and the county have worked for the past several years preparing for development. Not only is there room for a 1.3 million square-foot building, but also two to three others.

When then-Governor Andrew Cuomo decided to close a host of juvenile facilities across the state in 2011—including the Tryon Residential Center—it turned out to be a bounty for Fulton County. The IDA acquired the over-500-acre site at no charge, and in partnership with Fulton County, has made

substantial upgrades to the site. They built a new access road that runs in a loop around the park and demolished several existing buildings. They upgraded the electrical system to provide three-phase power and multiple points of connection and reconfigured the sewer system, installing new pumps. They also constructed a new water pumping station and installed a 300,000-gallon elevated water tank. Already existing was a six-inch, high-pressure gas transmission main. “The site has all the infrastructure necessary for projects,” said Jim Mraz, the IDA’s executive director.

Cannabis products manufacturer Vireo Health, Inc. built its facilities at Tryon in 2015 and recently expanded its facility by 300,000 square feet. The company finds Tryon Technology Park a good place to operate its expanding New York operations.





Concord, Mass.-based real estate development and investment firm Winstanley Enterprises, Inc. became aware of the site when it worked on a property in a neighboring county. Now, with a purchase of sale agreement in place for the remaining 239 acres, Winstanley is preparing to transform the former juvenile detention center, where a young Mike Tyson learned to box, into a thriving industrial park with three to four build-to-suit facilities. “It is definitely ready for redevelopment,” said Winstanley asset manager Linda Costanzo.

Now, in addition to the 1.3 million square-foot building, Winstanley intends to construct two to three other buildings of 500,000, 350,000, and possibly 150,000 square feet, all with ample loading docks and trailer and car parking. For example, the proposed 1.3 million square-foot facility has parking spaces for 685 trailers and 261 cars in addition to 274 loading docks.

“All of these sites could be distribution or manufacturing,” Panczykowski said. “That’s the benefit and attractiveness of the build-to-suit option. There is a whole host of industrial operators that can fit under the Tryon umbrella here.”

“Winstanley is positioned to work with any type and size company in having a building developed at Tryon,” Mraz said.

Tryon’s close proximity to the New York State Thruway provides easy, quick access to numerous northeast and mid-Atlantic metropolitan areas, airports, and ports.

In addition, Panczykowski points out that Fulton



County also offers a large pool of reliable labor and a business-friendly community. “These are big-ticket items to buyers and really appealing to Winstanley and ultimately the end users,” he said, noting that there is “unprecedented demand” for what Tryon can offer across the industrial markets.

# Tryon

Costanzo concurs that parcels for industrial and warehouse development are becoming more challenging to find in the New York and northeast markets. “We’ve entertained a number of prospects already for this site,” she said. “We received proposals, and we continue to receive interest for every one of the pads that is in the park at the moment.”

To learn more about what is available at Tryon, visit [www.tryontechnologypark.com](http://www.tryontechnologypark.com).



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# Activity & Culture Flow at Caroga Arts Collective

What started as cellist Kyle Barrett Price's casual invitation to eight musician friends to come play at his grandmother's lake home has grown into a festival that brings big-name performers to Fulton County. Over the past decade, world-class musicians from across the globe have flocked to the shores of Caroga Lake to be a part of the Caroga Arts Collective's (CAC) annual summer music festival, which provides free performances in a variety of genres for thousands of concertgoers.



Last year, the CAC celebrated its tenth anniversary, while its primary venue, the iconic former Sherman's Amusement Park, commemorated its centennial. The CAC has much to celebrate, as the nonprofit received a \$1 million grant from the New York State Council on the Arts that will fund a portion of the organization's Phase 1 capital project.

After bringing its main building at Sherman's up to code so that it can be used for public events, including free rides during every concert on its historic carousel, the organization is now working on plans to build an amphitheater venue at Sherman's between the main building and the bumper car pavilion. Price has been working with Lacey Thaler Reilly Wilson Architecture & Preservation, LLP in Albany on designs for the new performance space. The firm has extensive experience, having designed dozens of cultural spaces including Tanglewood in Lenox,



# Caroga

Massachusetts, and the Universal Preservation Hall in Saratoga Springs.

The new stage would be large enough to seat an entire orchestra, which will be a fitting addition to CAC's facilities, as it debuted its first major symphony orchestra concert in 2022 featuring Beethoven's 7th Symphony.

The plans also include space for educational and community events, such as the National Summer Cello



Institute, where professors from The Julliard School, Eastman School of Music, and University of Wisconsin at Madison instruct the 25 top cellists from around the country.

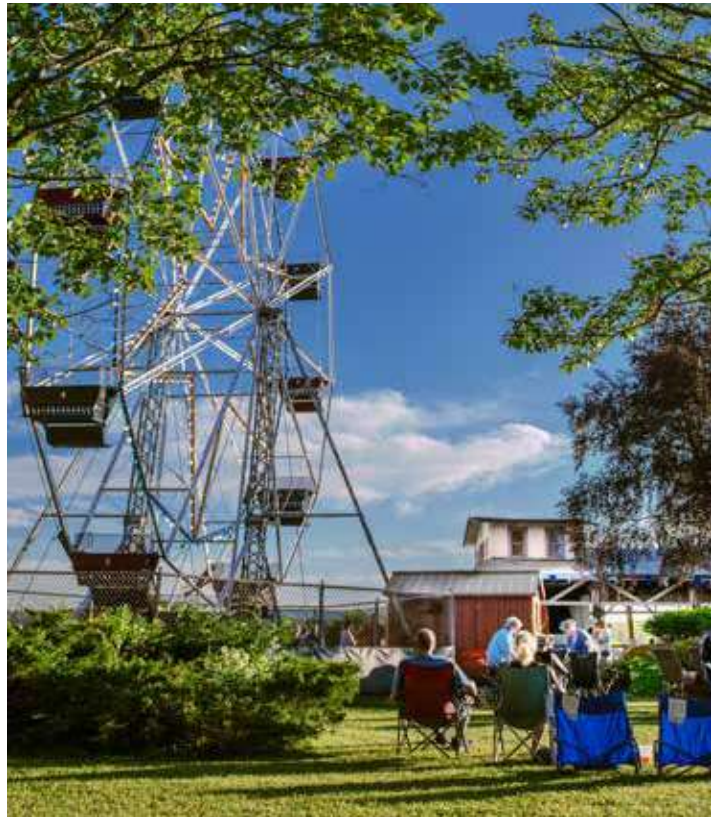
Another aspect of Phase I is transforming MyHil, the former 10-acre estate of the Schine theater-magnate family into a year-round dwelling with eight bedrooms and four bathrooms to host artists, and also to provide office space. "Our organization in general provides accessibility to world-class performances and events—being up close with the artists, living among the artists, being able to interact with them," Price said.





The summer music festival continues to draw major performers to the area. For example, the 2022 festival featured the Bacon Brothers as well as Grammy-nominated musician Cory Wong. Price points out that Kevin Bacon does not perform much anymore, but he found something inviting about being at Sherman's. "It's the unique draw that the area has through its beauty and generosity in the community," Price said. "People are kind and welcoming. We want to bring people from the outside in to have them be part of this ecosystem of sorts."

The festival extends beyond the shores of the lake to several other venues in the greater Capital Region and Mohawk Valley with a variety of performances. "We go



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# Caroga

to anything from concert halls to churches to bars to barges,” Price said. “It’s a huge mix, and it’s our way of reaching out to the community and coming to them,” he said, noting that the concerts have connected people from different cities and towns, creating a larger sense of community overall.

The CAC’s offerings include more than music. The organization hosts the InterArts Symposium where 10 artists, some from as far as California, come together to collaborate with other visiting artists and community members. They share their film, visual art, poetry, and music through special events.

Price is always on the lookout for opportunities to partner with other organizations to reach new audiences and bring activity and culture to Fulton County. “We want to see how we can be of service to the greater region,” Price said. “It just helps to strengthen us all.”

For more information, visit [www.carogaarts.org](http://www.carogaarts.org).







# Making an Impact Across the Globe

The Johnstown-based company **Electro-Metrics** is making an impact across the globe in industrial, military, corporate security, communications, transportation, and a variety of other sectors.

The simple, unremarkable exterior of its Johnstown facility belies the high-tech and far-reaching design and production that goes on inside. Electro-Metrics has a team of nearly 50 employees that includes engineers and fabrication experts who design, test, and manufacture a variety of specialized antennas, sensors, and systems for broadband RF communications as well as custom metal and plastic parts. In addition to serving local clientele in the Capital District, these products eventually make their way to all five continents, including government facilities, corporate offices, industrial sites, and military



bases. Electro-Metrics has an impressive list of clients, including General Electric, Raytheon, Hitachi, and British Aerospace Engineering.

Electro-Metrics has two divisions that help it fulfill its niche role as a high-tech but low-volume producer of specialized technology and equipment. One division reflects how the company originally started out in 1963, specializing in RF and microwave products. “These products are used basically for secure communications and to secure communications,” said Paul Sikora, the company’s president and chief technology officer. The other

is its precision fabrication division, where employees create parts for everything from massive turbines and steam generators all the way down to brackets and battery boxes that facilitate the conversion of delivery trucks and school buses from diesel fuel to electric power.

In its machine shop, highly trained employees use a variety of tools and





machinery such as welding equipment, water jet cutters, 3-D printers, and belt sanders, to name a few. They fabricate items designed by Electro-Metrics as well as those from specifications customers provide.

In the company's assembly area serving the RF side of the business, employees take antennas and mounts of all sizes, such as the "NATO" mount Sikora designed, and package them into cases lined with specially shaped foam that was cut on the premises.



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"I bought the company because I was looking to buy a company that had a lot of potential," Remien said.

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Before that happens, however, Electro-Metrics antennas go through a rigorous -- what Sikora calls a "brutal" -- testing process in a special testing area at the facility. "We test our antennas to surface environmental conditions like blowing sand, wind, and snow," he said. Electro-Metrics determines how they fare in 60 mph winds and temperatures ranging from -40 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit. Employees also perform drop tests 25 times on each antenna. Other tests simulate the vibration of cargo and other aircraft. It costs between \$50,000 to \$75,000 to test one antenna, Sikora said. "The



# Electro-Metrics

investment in design and new products is very substantial.”

Employees assemble and package up for shipping other kits that provide parts for generator maintenance which customers store until they need them. Electro-Metrics even builds the specialized wooden crates that house its products for shipment, meeting state and international requirements for the type of wood used.

In March 2021, the company entered a new phase of growth when former investment banker Thomas H. Remien purchased Electro-Metrics. “I bought the company because I was looking to buy a company that had a lot of potential,” Remien said. “I thought there were just opportunities on both sides of the business to grow the business.”

With that in mind, Electro-Metrics is looking to expand its facilities. Within the past five years, its annual revenue has doubled to reach \$8.5 million per year. “The goal is to make it twice the size it is in three to five years,” Danny Wheeler said.



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- for cities and counties

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The Manufacturing Productivity Program supports "lean manufacturing" and activities that result in top-line growth.

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The Power Quality Program offers financial incentives for the installation of power quality mitigation equipment and controls.

### Innovation / Cleantech

The Cleantech Incubator Program supports the development of self-sustaining entrepreneurial and innovation "ecosystems" that stimulate and support new high-tech businesses.

Renewable Energy and Economic Development Programs support a limited number of projects that demonstrate advances in new technology (gas or electric) and deliver significant economic benefit.



# Revitalizing A Historic Village Through LWRP

Like other municipalities throughout Fulton County, the Village of Northville, the county's gem on the shore of the Great Sacandaga Lake, has begun the process of some serious revitalization initiatives. In 2018, Northville received a grant as part of New York State's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).



Through the LWRP, the state works with communities to redevelop underutilized waterfront areas, improve water quality, and promote public waterfront access. In Northville, this will initially take the form of a walkway across the spillway on South Main Street between Hunter Lake and the Great Sacandaga Lake. After that, village officials are investigating the possibility of dredging Hunter Lake to remove years of silt buildup which has significantly reduced the water level in the lake.

Village officials decided to apply for the LWRP grant after completing a 20-year comprehensive plan for the village. "There are a number of projects that were identified in the comprehensive plan," said John Spaeth, who was serving as mayor at the time of application and now serves as the project administrator for the LWRP. "The concept of the LWRP got mentioned, and we thought that it might be a good starting place to get some of





those projects highlighted at the state level.”

That is exactly what Northville has accomplished since receiving the first grant. In March 2019, the village formed a Waterfront Advisory Committee made up of community members and stakeholders. It went on to hold a public meeting in July of that year at the Northville Central School’s library. Here, residents had an opportunity to comment on the proposed projects and make suggestions about other possible projects for the village. “We had some real positive input from the public sessions,” Spaeth said.

Recommendations included those of the village’s fifth-grade classes. “We were real proud of that input—that we actually got the school kids involved,” Spaeth said. “Some of the things they mentioned ended up in the overall LWRP.”

Fueled by community enthusiasm for the proposals, the committee has launched the beginning planning and investigatory phases of the spillway and dredging projects, respectively. It received a grant for \$135,000 to do the engineering plans for the spillway, which it contracted to Saratoga Springs-based ELAN Planning, Design & Landscape Architecture PLLC. “This is strictly for the engineering and designing the walkway; there is no construction included in this grant,” Spaeth said. If things go as planned, the village will be able to apply for a construction grant in the next round of grant funding.

The revitalization of the waterfront will be a years-long one because even





when the village receives grant funding, it is required to supply 25 percent of the money required for a given project. A project like the dredging could cost \$10 to \$12 million. For this reason, the village has started out with a feasibility study of dredging Hunter Lake, for which it received an LWRP grant of \$72,000. Whether or not it would continue with this project has not been determined at this time.

Spaeth said that when a municipality identifies a project in the LWRP, that lets New York State know that the project is important to the community and gives the village more visibility for anchor projects and possibly a Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant in the future.

The revitalization of this historic and picturesque village, long a hotspot for tourist activity, will be a stepping-stone process, a slow plan of assembling the pieces that lead to more grant funding for the other 16 projects that the village has identified during its planning efforts with the help of community residents.





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# Bright Futures Through Micro-Grants



Dave Webber's Higher Ground Distilling Co. in Mayfield was a brand-new business when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Just as he was working on growing the business, government regulations forced him to close his doors.

Understandably, it was a struggle, exacerbated by the fact that Higher Ground Distilling did not qualify for COVID relief funds. "I was such a new business that I didn't qualify for the PPP, and there was another COVID relief grant that came out, but I didn't qualify because I was so new," Webber said.

**However, there was money available to help, and the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (FCCRG) knew where to find it.**

It came in the form of the FCCRG's robust Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Microenterprise Grant Program.

The money comes from the federal government to Fulton County through the New York State Homes and Community Renewal. The FCCRG administers the funds. The first three rounds of microenterprise grants were for \$200,000 each that the FCCRG distributed to businesspeople at a maximum of \$25,000 per business, depending on the number of jobs created. Given the success of the program, the county applied for \$300,000 for the next round. Since 2013, the FCCRG has helped 48 businesses in municipalities across the county with grants totaling \$900,000, creating 61 new jobs. Higher Ground Distilling was one of them at a critical time for the fledgling business.







While Webber could not use the microenterprise grant for payroll, he did use it for equipment. “It gave us an opportunity to purchase a lot of equipment to give us a leg up on the year, especially coming out of the pandemic when business was so affected. It gave me an opportunity to get further out ahead in production. It really helped out.”

Grants are available only to microenterprises, defined as a commercial enterprise with five or fewer employees at the time of application. Grant funding must result in the creation of at least one full-time job. In the case of a low- to moderate-income business owner, the owner can qualify as the one full-time position created by owning the business.

The minimum grant for each business is \$5,000, plus \$10,000 additional for each full-time equivalent job created, up to a maximum of \$25,000. Grant recipients are required to invest 10 percent equity in their projects.

Grants can be used for capital assets such as real estate, buildings, machinery and equipment as well as working capital. It cannot be used for construction, building rehabilitation or renovation, or for passive investing.

The grant program is designed to set small business owners up for success, so it includes an entrepreneurial training requirement.

In order to apply for a grant, a business owner is required to take a 12-hour course given in four modules. The course provides attendees with a comprehensive look at what it takes to run a small business profitably and effectively. The classes cover legal and employee issues, marketing, branding, e-commerce, social media, recordkeeping, finances, accounting, taxes, and how to develop a business plan. “We bring in specialists like lawyers, Department of Labor advisors, accountants, and business advisors,” said Kenneth Adamczyk, Economic Development Specialist at the FCCRG. “The classes help them grow their business.”





# Micro-Grants

In addition, attendees finish the course with a host of resources to use when problems arise. “A small business is very difficult to run,” Adamczyk said. “When a problem pops up, they have somebody they can go to rather than just being out there and going it alone.”

He now teaches the classes to business owners in neighboring Montgomery County. “I’ve trained about 140 different business owners since August 2019,” Adamczyk said.

In 2021, the grant program helped GrassRoots Lawn Specialists in Northville to purchase an aerator, highwall trailer, and ride-on spreader, all pieces of equipment that allowed the business to be much more efficient at the services it performs. This resulted in needing less labor in the field, so the company was able to reinvest some of its employees’ time into other areas of the business. “We took one of our laborers and turned her into a full-time landscape designer, and she was able to grow that business a lot,” said owner Darcy Morehouse. The business, founded in 2017, has five employees.

In addition to the Microenterprise Grant Program, the FCCRG administered the distribution of \$500,000 of federal



funds as part of the Community Development Block Grant CARES Act. Microenterprises, as well as small businesses of 25 or fewer employees, were eligible to apply. The FCCRG distributed grants of up to \$75,000 to 11 small businesses.

Not all counties take advantage of these funds, Adamczyk noted, adding that they see it as too much time and paperwork for too little money. But he knows the difference that the funds can make for a nascent business, and he operates the application and

administration of the grants as quickly as possible to provide more funds for more businesses.

Adamczyk cites the case of Bright Futures Learning Center in Mayfield. When director Cheryl Curtis first opened the business with three employees, she was awarded a \$25,000 microenterprise grant. “Now she is up to 21 employees and is growing again,” he said. “That is the success of a microenterprise grant and what it can do.”



# 44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail – Oh My!!

“Matt Sherman at Stump City, Mitch Rogers at Rogers’ Cideryard, Erik Stevens at Great Sacandaga Brewing Company, and Dave Webber at Higher Ground Distilling asked if we could have a conversation about a craft beverage trail,” said Anne Boles, Director of Tourism Development for the FMRCC. She readily agreed. “I had four pioneers who are unique in their own way and in different locations of the county who could really showcase the beauty in each part of the county.”

In 2021, the Chamber and local craft beverage makers launched the 44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail. Not only were they able to help their own businesses grow, but they also boosted tourism to benefit the regional economy in general and created a vehicle to showcase what the region has to offer.

## BUSINESS-BUILDING COLLABORATION

“The craft beverage trail has helped us as far as partnering with each other and building that strength in numbers,” Webber said, noting that the craft beverage



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makers carry each other's products. "It gives us much more exposure to our clientele and an opportunity to have our products available at multiple locations." Higher Ground Distilling Company in Mayfield is what Webber dubbed his "retirement project."

Nick Sherman, who co-owns Stump City Brewing in Gloversville with his brother, father, and a couple of friends, likes the idea that Stump City can promote other craft beverage makers. "We get to communicate that there are other places in the county," he said, noting that being exposed to other local craft beverages at his brewery increases the possibility that a customer would visit another distillery, brewery, cidery, or winery, making it a win-win scenario for all craft beverage makers.

The craft beverage trail establishments team up when they combine their own products with others' to create a variety of innovative specialty cocktails, giving customers a chance to



The newly created 44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail is a prime example of how the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce (FMRCC) partners with area business owners to drive tourism, foster inter-business collaboration and growth, and build the area's economy.

sample what else is available in the area.

Boles points out that each craft beverage establishment on the trail has its own unique offerings. For example, Stump City distinguishes itself by using floor-malted grain, an older, more artisanal method of malting the grains, in its beers. Great Sacandaga Brewing Company gives people that quintessential Adirondack feel the minute they walk into the taproom with its décor, including an elk's head mounted on the wall, a fireplace, and a bar decorated with tree trunk rounds from trees Stevens felled on the property. KBC Beer in Mayfield focuses on Belgian-inspired and red ales, and Eisenadler Brauhaus in Palatine Bridge specializes in Bavarian-style brews. Higher Ground offers whiskey, bourbon, and moonshine and is the only Fulton County distiller on the trail. Erie Canal Distillers in Fort Plain uses 100 percent locally grown ingredients in its spirits and is the trail's only Montgomery County distiller. Hummingbird Hills Winery, the sole winery on the trail,

continued on page 37





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IT ALL ADDS UP

**\$15.5**  
billion  
in assets<sup>1</sup>

**\$3.3**  
billion  
in total  
commercial  
loans<sup>2</sup>

**\$856**  
million  
in non-PPP  
commercial loans  
originated in 2021<sup>3</sup>





# 44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail – Oh My!!

differentiates itself by using only fruits grown on its own farm in Fultonville or other farms in Montgomery County.

## CRAFT BEVERAGE MAKERS AS ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Craft beverage makers have bettered the communities in which they operate when they pursued their own passions to bring fine craft beverages to Fulton and Montgomery Counties. Several built from scratch or upgraded existing structures to house their establishments.

For example, the Shermans cleared land and constructed a building which now houses their brewery and taproom. Remodeling an existing structure on the property owned by his daughter, owner of Zippy's Ice Cream, was easy for Webber, a U.S. Air Force veteran who used to own his own construction company. Stevens, a career U.S. Army veteran and electrician, purchased an older, vacant building in his hometown of Broadalbin and completely remodeled it, stripping it down to the studs. He opened Great Sacandaga Brewing Company as a means to give back to the community and offer a service that did not yet





# 44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail – Oh My!!

exist in his hometown. He has been excited to see the economy turn around with new businesses opening up. “The economy will continue to develop around us, and we can grow right along with it,” he said.

In the case of Rogers’ Cideryard in Johnstown, Mitch Rogers ensured that the family business would continue to grow when he founded a hard cidery five years ago as a companion business to Rogers Family Orchards, which was founded by his father. In addition to traditional apple hard cider, he makes ginger, strawberry-jalapeño, blueberry, and peach ciders. At the cideryard, customers can also enjoy



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a menu of rotating appetizers and entrées, including Rogers' own pork hotdogs with homemade meat sauce, adding another healthy business to Fulton County's economy.

The trail has been a great success thus far. "We're communicating a lot better, we're informed, we trade products, and we promote each other," Sherman said. The trail's success in its inaugural year led to its expansion into neighboring Montgomery County in 2022.

In addition to boosting the economy, the trail adds to the counties' leisure offerings. Customers can not only sample locally made craft beverages, but also enjoy a bite to eat and, at several places, some music too. Boles notes that the craft beverage trail pairs well with another tourism draw, the Fulton



County Tourism Department's Fulton County Five Hiking Challenge ([www.44lakes.com/fulton-county-5-hiking-challenge/](http://www.44lakes.com/fulton-county-5-hiking-challenge/)) that also started in 2021. After completing a trek, hikers can stop for refreshment at one or more of the establishments on the craft beverage trail.

For a complete list of the trail's craft beverage establishments, visit [www.44lakes.com/craft-beverage-trail/](http://www.44lakes.com/craft-beverage-trail/)





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# Nathan Littauer-Golden Care in the Golden Hour



Patrice McMahon, vice president of Primary and Specialty Care at Nathan Littauer Hospital (NLH) points out that if a region is going to grow, it needs good schools, decent housing, job opportunities, and great healthcare. Fulton County has them all, and NLH has been the cornerstone of healthcare in the region since 1894.

With 12 primary/specialty care clinics throughout the region, residents have access to not only primary and urgent care, but a long list of medical subspecialties as well.

Over the past quarter century, the NLH has been partnering with local municipalities to expand medical services beyond the borders of its main campus in Gloversville in order to serve residents right in the communities where they live. Most recently, that has taken the form of a new care center in Caroga Lake and an additional outpatient facility in Amsterdam that NLH runs in partnership with Albany Medical Center.

Working with municipalities is critical in providing convenient, and quick access to medical care. For example, McMahon notes that the Speculator center, opened at the request of the village, can provide patients with lifesaving care within the “golden hour,” that time right after a traumatic injury or other medical emergency, when receiving care could mean the difference between life and death.

To meet weekend needs, NLH instituted “Quick N Sick” in 2019, where people can obtain appointments or simply walk in to receive medical care on the weekends at its Gloversville center.

To coordinate patients’ care, NLH made the largest



# Nathan Littauer

single investment in the history of the hospital when it upgraded its electronic medical records system in 2021. No matter where in the NLH system a patient receives care, whether at a primary care center, specialty center, the emergency department or the hospital, the medical record is



available. “All providers attached to the network are all working together using the same record,” McMahon said.

The healthcare system also distinguished itself when it established its COVID Recovery Program, one of the few in the country to treat patients with long-COVID. NLH’s President and CEO Sean Fadale, who came to the hospital in October 2020 at the height of the pandemic, discovered that NLH “was an amazingly well-positioned organization to manage through the challenges of the pandemic.” Now, it continues to treat COVID patients as well as to re-engage area residents in their healthcare after the period of isolation caused by the pandemic.

In addition to medical care within communities throughout the county, NLH patients have access to 13 medical subspecialties. “We are an integrated delivery





system that has a full continuum of care from emergency room and urgent care opportunities to inpatient care to outpatient care with primary and specialty care located throughout the region,” Fadale said. “If we need to send people to a higher level of care, we have the relationships in order to be able to do so, and we continue to build those every day.”



## MEETING THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS

As one of the largest employers in the region with close to 1,000 employees, NLH partners with other local employers to meet their specific needs. Through the Littauer Occupational Alliance, NLH partners with local businesses to keep their workers healthy, providing medical exams, alcohol and drug screenings, TB and hepatitis testing, hearing tests, vaccinations, rehabilitation and other services, all with an eye towards being cost-competitive. Participation in this program helps businesses obtain good liability insurance, McMahon said.

NLH is fully prepared to meet the healthcare needs of residents and employers in Fulton and nearby Montgomery Counties, from prenatal to end-of-life care, a service provided at its 84-bed skilled nursing home. “The pandemic has shone a very bright light on the importance of hospitals in our communities,” Fadale said.

For more information, visit <https://www.nlh.org/>



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# CLEAN ENERGY SAVES MONEY

## New York State has set its most ambitious and comprehensive goals for clean energy in the state's history.

By 2030, New York's government wants 70 percent of consumers' electricity to come from renewable energy sources, which includes solar, wind, and hydropower. In addition, the state passed legislation setting the goal that all new passenger cars and trucks sold in New York State be zero-emissions by 2035. These goals affect not only individuals, but businesses as well.

To help businesses save money and make it easy for them to meet these goals, the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (FCCRG) developed a partnership with Clifton Park-based AMP Energy Services. This full-service energy consulting company takes the work out of going green and makes it easy for businesses to use clean energy and save money at the same time.

Andrea McMaster, owner and CEO of AMP Energy Services, points out that many businesses are looking for ways to go green. With her expertise in the clean energy field, paired with grant-writing skills, she is in a prime position to help organizations meet their goals.

Some have opted to take advantage of the community solar available in Fulton County. Developers build solar farms throughout the state, and businesses or residents can subscribe. When power goes to the grid from this farm, subscribers receive credits on their electric bills. "Normally, any business customer can save 10 percent by enrolling in community solar," McMaster said. "When someone takes part in community solar, they're not only helping New York State meet its green energy goals, they're getting compensated for it through a discount on their energy bills."



While this is an easy way to use more clean energy, AMP Energy Services provides a wide range of other energy-related services at no cost to customers. They perform energy audits and then come up with a plan that best meets a customer's needs. This could include a variety of solutions such as the installation of co-generation plants, solar panels, and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

For example, if a business is interested in installing rooftop solar, a popular way for a





company to lower energy costs, AMP Energy Services would work with solar developers to assess the building's structure and location to determine if this is a viable option.

EV charging stations provide another example of the services offered by the company. AMP Energy Services conducts a study to determine the best place to locate EV charging stations, partners with installers, applies for available grant money to reduce the customer's cost, and manages the project to completion. "We are working with the customer from start to finish," McMaster said.

For a customer who is purchasing a vacant building, AMP would assess and suggest utility upgrades that needed to be done and then oversee that process, working with local utility companies.

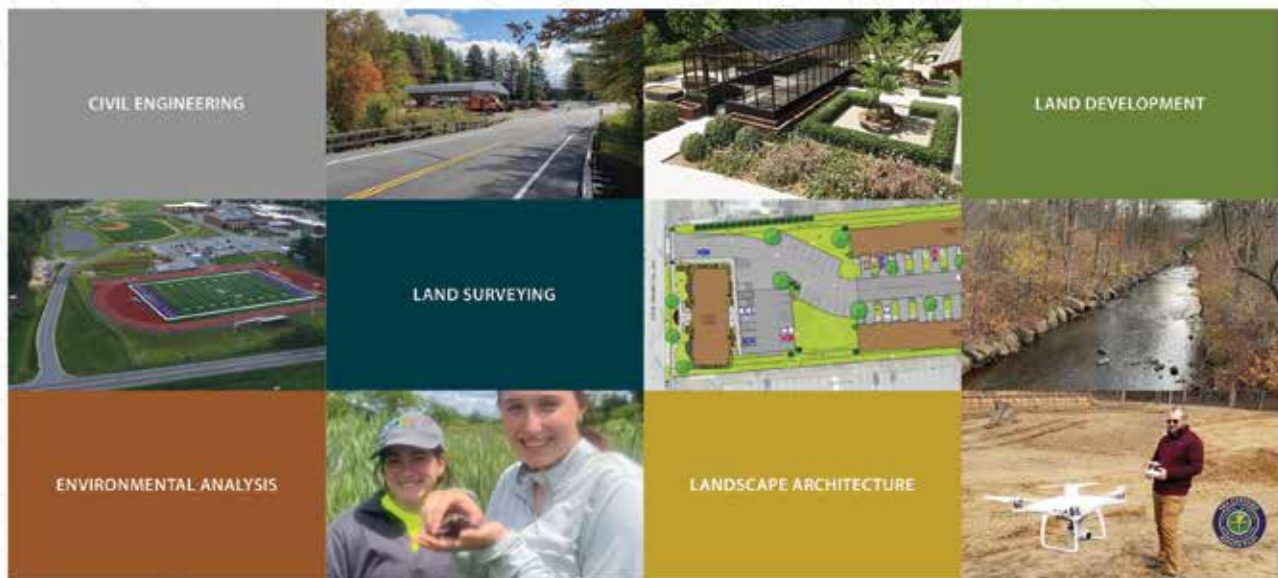
"We don't charge our customers for any upfront cost from those services," McMaster said.

McMaster helps to mesh the concerns of facility directors who are seeking to meet the state's clean

energy standards and comptrollers who are looking to save their companies money. AMP finds ways to reduce energy costs and helps a customer obtain any available funding for clean energy projects.

Parkhurst Field in Gloversville, is a case in point.

Parkhurst Field was once a state-of-the-art playing field



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for early 20th-century baseball. It is now being restored and transformed into a destination field for Little League. Initially, McMaster helped the foundation obtain a \$500,000 New York State Consolidated Funding Grant in 2016.

The board continues to work with McMaster as construction plans are being made. “She’s very creative in not just providing solution ideas, but helping to obtain the funding to achieve them,” said David Karpinski, Parkhurst Field Foundation’s executive director. Proposed clean energy features include EV charging stations, electric vehicles and LED lighting, among others. “A lot of times, businesses or foundations like mine don’t know what they don’t know,” Karpinski said.

McMaster listens to what an organization is trying to achieve and then makes suggestions about how that can be accomplished, all with clean energy options in mind. For example, McMaster suggested a porous pavement option, rather than asphalt, for parking lots so that the project would not negatively affect the watershed. That suggestion became part of Parkhurst’s plan that was approved by the City of Gloversville. The city deemed the design appropriate because it would be more like the current state of the park now, which has no pavement.

“There’s funding available to do those kinds of projects,



and I would not have known about that had I not been working with her,” Karpinski said. McMaster’s expertise allows AMP Energy Services to bring previously unknown, sustainable options to its customers.

“The main thing is that when you choose Fulton County as your company home base or your location, your energy needs are handled,” McMaster said. “You don’t have to do the work. We do the work for customers and bring them the energy solutions that best fit their businesses. My main goal is that every customer has an energy plan that makes sense to them and saves them money. On average, we do save our customers through these programs about 20 percent on their energy costs.”

For more information, visit: [ampenergyservices.com](https://ampenergyservices.com)







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There was a time when the idea of redeveloping a brownfield site was as unappealing as the dilapidated, unsightly, and potentially contaminated sites themselves.



# A New Environment Through Brownfields



Those days are over. There are now multiple programs available to assist with bringing these sites back to life.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield site as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.” Why would a brownfield site be desirable? It is because these sites, once investigated and remediated, are easier to develop because they typically already have the infrastructure such as, water, sewer, gas, electric, roads, and fiber optic connections) that is required for any project.





Federal, state, and local governments working in tandem with the citizenries where these properties exist are transforming them into lucrative business opportunities for developers using grants and tax credits for the redevelopment of former brownfield sites. They are also removing the unknowns by investigating sites for contamination, and if it exists, determining the cost of remediation and the funds available to pay for that.

Augmenting the federal funds available are New York State's own programs. The Brownfields Utilization, Investment and Local Development Act of 2018, coupled with New York State's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program and Brownfield Cleanup Program, have completely changed the redevelopment landscape of communities across New York. Through these programs, potential developers have the information, assessments, studies, community buy-in, and financial assistance that make brownfield redevelopment a viable opportunity.

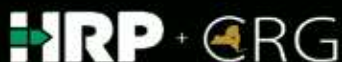
## Over the past 19 years, New York State communities have received over \$45 million in BOA grants.

The process begins with a BOA Nomination Study outlining a path to return brownfield sites to productive ones. After a community receives BOA designation from the Secretary of State, it can go on to assess sites for possible contamination and cleanup. This designation also affords tax credits to developers who revive the site in accordance with the community's vision and plan approved by the Secretary of State.

This is when the EPA's grant program comes into play, helping to fund the inventory and environmental assessments of brownfield sites. "EPA has awarded \$1.3 million to brownfields projects in Fulton County since 1999," said Ariel Iglesias, Division Director for Land, Chemicals, and Redevelopment at EPA Region 2. "We

## Congratulations to FCCRG on Their Brownfields Funding Award!

HRP is proud to work along side FCCRG as we push toward a revitalized Fulton County.



# A New Environment

are proud to work with local communities to assess, safely clean up and sustainably reuse contaminated properties through EPA's Brownfields program and grants."

The EPA awarded one of those grants for \$300,000 to the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (FCCRG) in 2021, allowing it to inventory brownfield sites, conduct eight environmental site assessments, develop four reuse plans, and hold community outreach activities. The following year, the agency awarded the City of Gloversville an additional grant for \$500,000 to continue these activities.

"Brownfields are generally pretty desirable as places for redevelopment," said Tom Seguljic, an engineer with HRP Associates in Clifton Park, New York who has been working on investigating and evaluating potential sites for redevelopment in Fulton County. "Contamination is a barrier, and what the brownfield grant does is address those issues, finding where there is contamination and how much it is going to cost to address."

Saratoga Springs-based ELAN Planning, Design & Landscape Architecture PLLC has been working to form redevelopment plans by engaging residents in creating a vision for what they would like to see done to improve the community in which they live. "We started with 30 sites in Gloversville," said ELAN principal Lisa Nagle. "The idea with the BOA program is to identify the top eight that would be catalytic." This means that redevelopment of these key sites would spur economic growth in the area by increasing property values and the local tax base and eliminating health risks and any other environmental issues if necessary. ELAN worked with residents to ascertain those sites and using economic and environmental findings, then developed mini master plans with drawings that the city can use for marketing to

potential developers.

The requirement for community involvement is key. This ensures that residents warmly welcome developers because they have had a part in choosing the projects. "It's a process that the community has to understand," Seguljic said. When that happens, the path forward for the developer is straightforward, he said.

An example currently in progress is a former property that hails back to the late 1800s through the 1950s, when Gloversville produced most of the gloves made in the United States. The abandoned Tradition Leather tannery, vacant for eight years, burned down in 2018.



Through grant funding, Gloversville has been able to identify possible reuses for the site, including an independent living center. "We're trying to get to the essence of what the potential redevelopment is," Nagle said. "We want to remove that bleary lens that the developer might have in terms of buying that property."



To make the site more appealing and the picture for redevelopment even clearer, the city has removed the rubble so that HRP Associates can conduct tests to determine if the site has any contamination. “We’re taking the unknowns out of any potential development sites that might be suspect,” said Ron Peters, FCCRG President and CEO.

State and federal funding, combined with community engagement and municipal support make the redevelopment of brownfield sites a great financial opportunity and offer the chance to improve a community. “It should be very easy for a developer to get it done, and you feel good, too,” Seguljic said. “You’ve eliminated a hazard.”



### A ONE-STOP SHOP

To make developers aware of a potential site like the former Tradition Leather property, the FCCRG teamed up with other economic development organizations to create the Mohawk Valley Brownfields Developer Summit. “The whole Mohawk Valley region decided it was better to work as a unit to try to market brownfield sites throughout the region,” said Kenneth Adamczyk, FCCRG’s Economic Development Specialist.

In April 2022, more than a hundred real estate developers, lawyers, economic developers, EPA professionals, elected officials and educators will gather to learn about the development opportunities in the seven counties of the Mohawk Valley region. “They can look across all of them and see all of the different options at one stop,” Adamczyk said. “It’s better customer service.” In addition, attendees to this event will learn about federal, state, and local funding available to facilitate that development, such as tax credits for remediation, site preparation costs, and redevelopment.

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