

LEWIS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / IDA



ANNUAL REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 LETTER FROM
THE DIRECTOR

2 LETTER FROM
THE CHAIRMAN

3 MISSION &
STRATEGIES

4 2018 ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
WINS

5 BUSINESS
ASSISTANCE
INITIATIVES

6 ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
PROJECTS

7 NATURALLY
LEWIS
MARKETING,
EVENTS &
OUTREACH

9 BOARD
MEMBERS &
STAFF



A Message from the Executive Director...

Lewis County Economic Development has been a coordinated effort since 2016 between the County of Lewis and the County of Lewis Industrial Development Agency. This partnership is continuing to benefit our area and our citizens, and we are using our Naturally Lewis brand to promote the advantages of doing business in Lewis County. The Naturally Lewis website, facebook page and other social media activity are generating significant attention to our activities. We also use these avenues to promote other partners such as the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce and Lewis County General Hospital.

Quarterly Business Leaders Breakfasts have continued to be a huge success in generating discussion and interaction in our County. In addition, we have been an active participant in the Lewis County Leadership Academy. Cheyenne Steria, a graduate of the Academy joined our staff in 2018 as finance and technical specialist. Brittany Davis, our marketing specialist and another Leadership graduate, was recognized as a North Country 20 Under 40 awardee in December and also the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce Citizenship awardee for 2018.



The LCIDA was successful in acquiring the Climax Manufacturing building in Lowville in October. This acquisition was about twelve months in the making and the building is now our primary focus for site opportunities for business growth. The building has been renamed the Lewis County Center for Business. It's 170,000 square feet provides great space for operational space and office space. In late 2018, we initiated work to winterize the building and being to ready it for future tenants. Two private businesses are currently leasing space in the Center for Business and we look forward to more activity in 2019.

Other key projects include: continued demolition and revitalization work at the Lyons Falls mill. The fourth phase of this project started in June 2018 and should be completed in the middle of 2019. We are also actively engaged on three wind project developments and also been working with multiple solar energy developers on potential projects in the county. In late 2018, Lewis County was awarded a NYS Microenterprise grant for \$200,000. These funds will be used to benefit small businesses with a new program to start in the new year.



The Lewis County Economic Development staff, the LCIDA Board of Directors, the County Board of Legislators and County Manager are working closely together to create new opportunities for business growth in Lewis County.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric J. Virkler".

Eric Virkler
Executive Director
Lewis County
Economic Development & IDA

A Message from the Chairman...

Building and maintaining a resilient economy requires constant adaptation, 2018 tested this attribute and our team was up to the test. We reacted to a number of unexpected changes in 2018, both in team members and projects, allowing us to make the most of opportunities presented while also maintaining focus and making progress on our long term goals.

We were saddened by the death of long time board chairman Rocky Fawcett and would also like to recognize the key contributions of board members Shawn Moshier, Craig Brennan and Gary Herzig and staff member Vanessa Shultz who moved on this year. While they left big shoes to fill we are very fortunate to have fresh perspective and energy from our new team members assuring continued productivity in advancing economic development in the county.

Working with key partners throughout the county and region we assisted with a number of projects to enhance the opportunities available to the businesses and citizens of Lewis County. We are very proud of our work to secure the former Climax property (now the Center for Business) and know great things are in store as we work to bring new life to such an important piece of our past. On a similar note we are pleased to see new life at the former Lyons Falls Pulp & Paper site. Even as the final stages of cleanup move forward, the first new business activity (Black River Valley Naturals dairy processing) has commenced.



Joe Lawrence
Chairman of the Board
Lewis County IDA



MISSION

Our mission is to attract and enhance industrial and economic development, help create jobs and maintain economic stability within Lewis County.

We will work to promote and enhance the economic conditions, recreational opportunities, prevent unemployment and economic deterioration, and ensure the prosperity of our businesses, industries, communities, and citizens, leading to an overall better quality of life.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- ▶ Keep established businesses growing & profitable
- ▶ Create a business friendly environment that encourages organic growth from within the County
- ▶ Provide infrastructure improvements needed to help existing businesses expand and/or attract businesses from outside of the area
- ▶ Market Lewis County as the Natural Choice to start & grow a business through the Naturally Lewis branding

2018 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WINS

CENTER FOR BUSINESS

was created within the former Cimax Manufacturing facility in Lowville, NY. The Lewis County IDA purchased the building in October 2018, and are creating a multi-tenant facility and shared office space. Currently, two tenants occupy 60% of the building, **securing 21 full time jobs.**

LYONS FALLS MILL

project entered its fourth and final phase of hazardous materials abatement and demolition. Through \$1,600,000 of grant funding and vital partnerships, the 9 acre mill site demolition will be completed in 2019.

BLACK RIVER VALLEY NATURAL

continued to work with the Lewis County IDA and Development Corporation to secure a location and funding for their butter processing facility. The company located in the High Falls building, adjacent to the Lyons Falls Mill site, and secured a \$21,000 sale-leaseback transaction through the IDA for equipment.

CDBG MICROENTERPRISE GRANT

was awarded to Lewis County to establish a grant program for small businesses in Lewis County. Businesses of 5 or fewer employees can qualify for grants of up to \$35,000 for working capital, equipment, or fixtures.

ANCA CENTER FOR BUSINESSES IN TRANSITION

program was established in 2018 and the Lewis County IDA was chosen to be a Community Liaison to market and communicate the benefits of the program. The CBIT program will work to serve businesses who are looking to transition, and connect them with the resources needed to prevent permanent closure.

50+ SMALL BUSINESS

met with Lewis County Economic Development to discuss business ideas, financing, growth options and more. We continue to market our services and resources to make Lewis County a business friendly community.



BUSINESS ASSISTANCE INITIATIVES

► **Lewis County Economic Development** was able to meet with over 50+ small businesses in 2018 to discuss business ideas, expansion efforts, financing options, and marketing. We work with small businesses and our partners to provide the best resources to help our businesses succeed.

► **Manufacturing Visits** are made 1-2 times a year to ensure that our facilities are strong and viable. In 2017, all manufacturers increased employment numbers, and into 2018, those numbers were steady or continued to increase.

In conjunction with local manufacturers, **Manufacturing Day** was held on October 12, 2018, where approximately 1,000 middle and high school students toured manufacturing facilities in Lewis, Jefferson & St. Lawrence Counties to educate them on future workforce options.

► **A Starting & Growing Your Business Seminar** was hosted by Lewis County Economic Development & the Small Business Development Center of Watertown, NY. We brought in speakers in the accounting and legal fields, and discussed business planning and financing options.

► **Marketing Assistance** was given to multiple businesses, such as Stanford Green Waste LLC & Hidden Pastures Dairy, in regards to social media, email lists, websites, and other marketing materials.

► **Osceola Cross Country Ski Area** has worked with the Lewis County Economic Development office on business planning and obtaining financing. This is an ongoing, priority project that will work to enhance tourism and lodging in Southern Lewis County.

► **North Country Procurement Technical Assistance Center** of Watertown officially signed a partnership agreement with the Lewis County IDA to provide PTAC services to Lewis County businesses at our location.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- ▶ **Wind Projects** are strong and increasing in number. The Denmark Wind Project completed construction at the end of 2018 with 40 new towers in Northern Lewis County. The Maple Ridge Wind Project negotiated PILOT renewals, and Deer River, Number 3 and Roaring Brook Projects continue to develop.
- ▶ **Solar Projects** continue to progress in Lewis County, with our first Solar Policy in development and multiple informational seminars provided to local Town Boards. We continue discussions with multiple solar companies and towns to bring these projects to fruition.
- ▶ **The HDK Property** in Harrisville, NY is currently under negotiations with the owner for IDA purchase. The 40 acre property, previously a dry kiln facility, will make a viable property that is strategically placed between Lewis, Jefferson & St. Lawrence Counties for future business expansion, relocation, or to serve a community need.
- ▶ **Hand in Hand Early Childhood Center** was able to purchase their building back from the Lewis County IDA. The IDA had previously owned and leased the building to Hand in Hand. The IDA and Hand in Hand reached an agreement to sell the building back for \$200,000 to provide the the childhood center a foundation for the future.
- ▶ **The Lewis County Business Park** has been an ongoing project to create Shovel Ready sites for future business expansions or relocations. The IDA currently has an option agreement with the land owner and have completed significant activity to achieve Shovel Ready status. The IDA, land owner, and Town of Lowville will continue to work together to progress towards the first ever Lewis County Business Park.
- ▶ **The Lewis County Cuisine Trail** project gained traction in 2018 and was officially approved as a State sanctioned trail. The trail will promote Lewis County food producers to residents and tourists alike, showcasing products from wine, meats, cheeses and local produce. The trail will officially open in 2019.



NATURALLY LEWIS MARKETING, EVENTS & OUTREACH

In 2018, Lewis County Economic Development expanded its marketing through its increased website presence, social media outlets, numerous informational and networking events, seminars and various sponsorships. The “Naturally Lewis” brand, which was launched in 2016, is the tag-line for LIVING, WORKING & DOING BUSINESS in Lewis County, and has been recognized across regional and state levels. LCED will continue to market the value of Lewis County, its communities, and build relationships on the regional and state level to increase awareness, vision and economic growth within our County.

35,000+
WEBSITE
VIEWS IN
2018.

NATURALLY LEWIS
WEBSITE WON

**BEST IN
CLASS**

AT THE 2018 NYSEDC
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**SOCIAL
MEDIA**

FACEBOOK
1,007 LIKES

INSTAGRAM
337 FOLLOWERS

LINKEDIN
100 FOLLOWERS

PRESENTED AT 7 LOCAL
CONFERENCES AND
EVENTS ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPEMENT

CCE MAPLE SCHOOL

LACS CAREER DAY

**(2) YOUTH ADVISORY
CONFERENCE**

LEWIS COUNTY LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY

**BROWNFIELD PITCH
CONFERENCE**

LAUNCHED
NATURALLY
DAIRY
CAMPAIGN

NATURALLY
DAIRY 

ATTENDED 4 STATE &
NATIONAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCES

NYSEDC JANUARY*

NYSEDC COOPERSTOWN
ANNUAL CONFERENCE*

**NYSEDC & NYATEP
WORKFORCE CONFERENCE**

AREA DEVELOPMENT
CONSULTANTS FORUM

* SPONSOR OF EVENT

NATURALLY LEWIS EVENTS

HOSTED 4 BUSINESS LEADERS BREAKFASTS & 1 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS TO PROMOTE NETWORKING & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AMONG THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

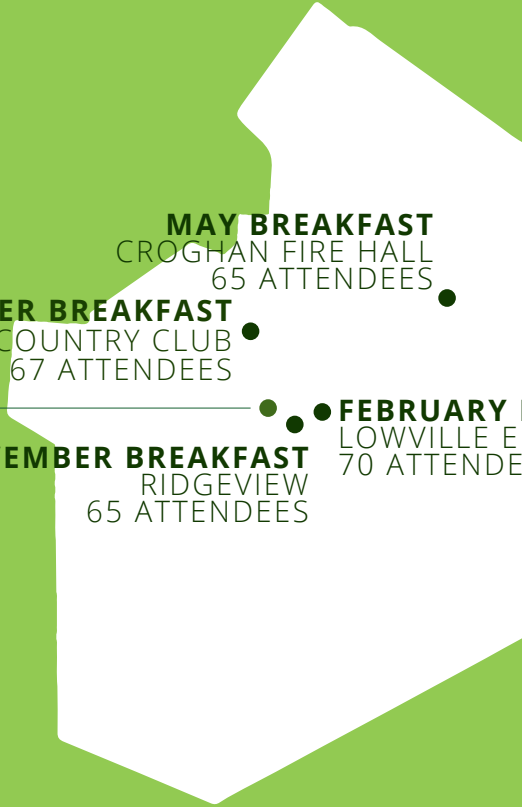
**NATURALLY LEWIS
BUSINESS AFTER
HOURS**
TUG HILL VINEYARDS
80 ATTENDEES

SEPTEMBER BREAKFAST
CARLOWDEN COUNTRY CLUB
67 ATTENDEES

NOVEMBER BREAKFAST
RIDGEVIEW
65 ATTENDEES

MAY BREAKFAST
CROGHAN FIRE HALL
65 ATTENDEES

FEBRUARY BREAKFAST
LOWVILLE ELKS
70 ATTENDEES



PUBLICATIONS

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS MAGAZINE
SEPTEMBER ISSUE

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

DRUM COUNTRY BUSINESS
LEWIS, JEFFERSON & ST. LAWRENCE
COUNTY REGIONAL INITIATIVE

NORTH COUNTRY ALLIANCE
BOARD MEMBER

NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
STEERING COMMITTEE

LEWIS COUNTY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT/IDA MARKETING &
COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST

BRITTANY DAVIS

WAS AWARDED:

NNY BUSINESS 20 UNDER 40
EMERGING LEADER

LEWIS COUNTY CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE 'CITIZENSHIP OF
THE YEAR'

LEWIS COUNTY IDA BOARD

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Joe Lawrence
Dairy Forage Systems Specialist
Cornell University

VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Jared Thisse
Manager
Lowville Sport & Farm

BOARD MEMBERS

Christina Schneider
Chief Financial Officer
Purcell Construction

Ron Burns
Lewis County Legislator

Jerry Cayer
CEO
Lewis County General Hospital

Gary Herzig
Retired Business Owner

Gagan Singh
Wealth Management Advisor
TIAA

LEWIS COUNTY IDA STAFF

Eric Virkler | Executive Director

Brittany Davis | Marketing & Communications

Cheyenne Steria | Finance Technical Specialist

Tim Petersen | Business Development

LEWIS COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 1

John Lehman

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 2

Randy LaChusse

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 3

Ron Burns

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 4

Bryan Moser

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 5

Richard Chartrand

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 6

Andrea Moroughan

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 7

Gregory Kulzer

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 8

Lawrence Dolhof

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 9

Thomas Osborne

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 10

Jerry King



LEWIS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
7642 N. STATE STREET | LOWVILLE, NY
NATURALLYLEWIS.COM | 315.376.3014