

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
 Resolution No. 08-10-29  
 October 1, 2008

**APPROVING THE ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY  
 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**WHEREAS**, development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is necessary for St. Lawrence County to qualify for funding from the Economic Development Administration, and

**WHEREAS**, the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency and the St. Lawrence County Workforce Investment Board jointly appointed a committee to oversee development of such a document, and

**WHEREAS**, Committee members and the staff of the Office of Economic Development have worked to create a comprehensive strategy for the County, and

**WHEREAS**, adoption of CEDS will qualify the County for Public Works Assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and

**WHEREAS**, the CEDS will provide a road map for future economic development and growth in the County, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency does hereby accept and approve the St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy presented to them and attached hereto and made a part hereof,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board wishes to express its appreciation to the volunteer members who served on the CEDS Committee.

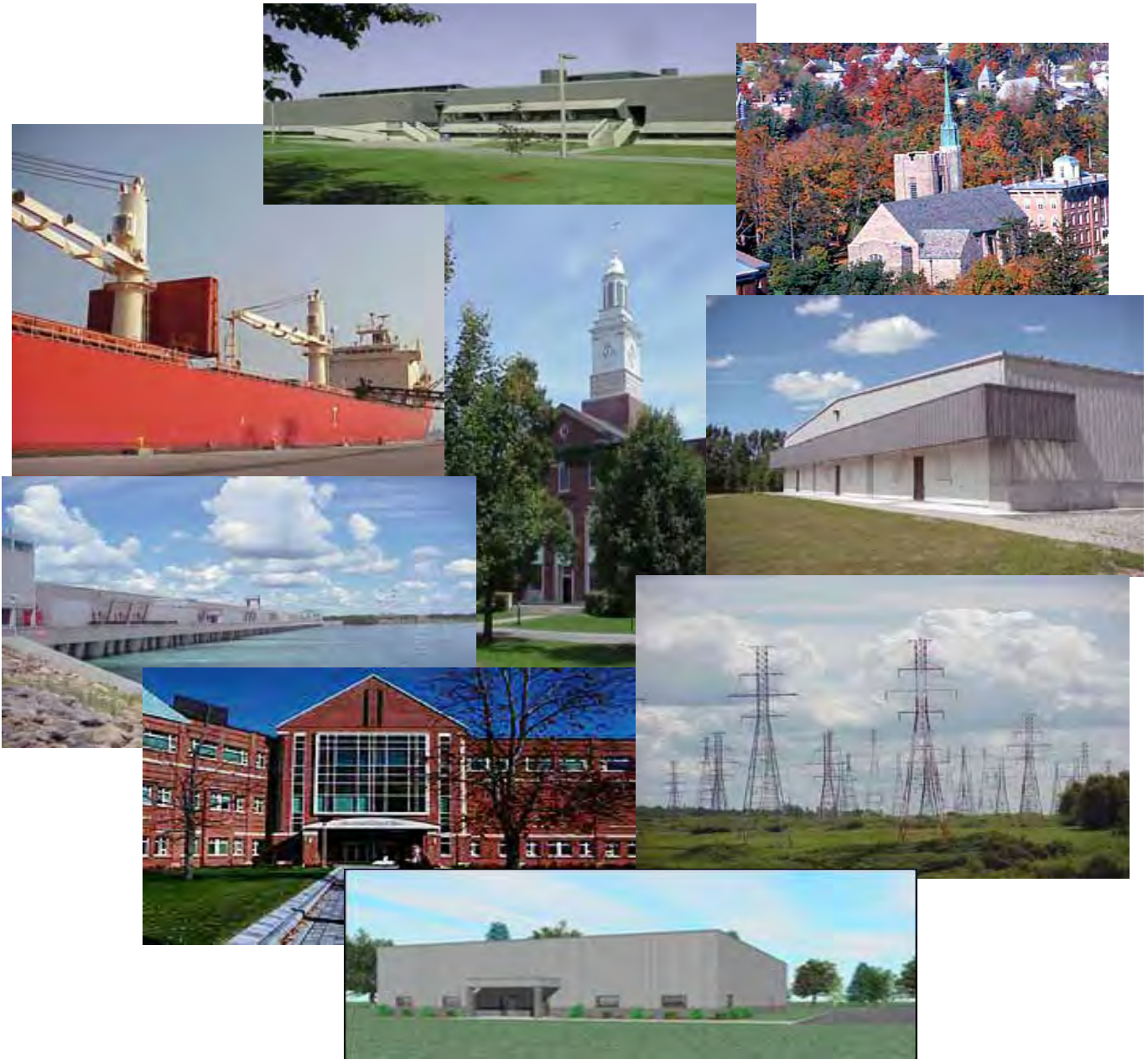
Move:	LaBaff			
Second:	Morrill			
<b>VOTE</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Blevins	X			
Greenwood	X			
LaBaff	X			
McMahon	X			
Morrill	X			
Staples	X			
Weekes				X

I, Suzan Denny, of the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency, DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that I have compared this copy of this resolution adopted October 1, 2008, with the original record in this office and that the same is a correct transcript thereof and of the whole of said original record.

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 /s/  
 Suzan Denny  
 October 1, 2008

# St. Lawrence County

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



2008 Update

## **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

### **Committee**

Richard Daddario, Laborer's Local 322, Chair  
Jack Backus, Mort Backus & Sons  
Douglas Beachard, St. Lawrence Zinc  
Lynn Blevins, Blevins Brothers  
Sue Caswell, Caswell True Value  
Tracy Charleson, Commercial Press, Inc.  
Peter FitzRandolph, St. Lawrence University  
Bruce Green, America One Realty  
Donald J. Hooper, Hooper & VanHouse  
Tom Jenison, Jenison's Books & Antiques  
Dr. Joseph Kennedy, SUNY Canton  
Linda Manchester, NYS Department of Labor  
Lisa McCarty, Kelly Services Inc.  
Ron McDougall, AFL-CIO  
Michael Noble, North Country Savings Bank  
Steve Novacich, VESID  
Richard Orton, USWA Local 450-A  
Walter Paul, St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES  
Daphne Pickert, St. Lawrence NYSARC  
Dale Rice, NYS Small Business Development Center  
Ryan Schermerhorn, St. Lawrence Zinc  
Karen St. Hilaire, St. Lawrence County Administrator  
Korleen Spilman, Gouverneur Chamber of Commerce  
Mark Webster, Claxton Hepburn Medical Center

### **Staff Advisors**

Raymond H. Fountain, St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development  
Patrick J. Kelly, St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development  
Jason Clark, Business Development Corporation for a Greater Massena  
Kim Deschamp, City of Ogdensburg  
Ben Dixon, St. Lawrence University  
Fred Hanss, Potsdam Empire Zone Development  
Linda McQuinn, Town and Village of Canton  
John Rishe, Ogdensburg Bridge & Port Authority  
Tom Sauter, Development Authority of the North Country  
Douglas Schelleng, Empire State Development  
Keith Zimmerman, St. Lawrence County Planning Department

### **Pictures on the cover are clockwise starting from the top:**

SUNY Canton—Dana Athletic Center  
Gunnison Memorial Chapel, St. Lawrence University  
Gouverneur Industrial Park—Kinney Drugs Facility  
New York Power Authority Towers  
Potsdam Commerce Park SLC IDA Building  
Clarkson University - Bertrand H. Snell Hall  
St. Lawrence-Franklin D. Roosevelt Power Project  
Ship docked at the Port of Ogdensburg  
SUNY Potsdam - Satterlee Hall (center)

## I. INTRODUCTION

St. Lawrence County has a rich history as the trade, manufacturing, agricultural, cultural and educational center of Northern New York. The many accomplishments of our individuals, institutions, organizations, companies and corporations have improved the quality of life both within and well-beyond, the borders of St. Lawrence County. World class research is undertaken at our institutions of higher learning, natural and artistic treasures are held within our landscape and our museums, the finest aluminum, glass and other manufactured products are forged in our factories, and the best and most wholesome food and dairy products are grown and processed on our farms and in our cheese and yogurt plants.

The intent of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (“CEDS”) is to maximize the unique characteristics of the County in ways that will lead to economic diversity, activity and ultimately growth. The CEDS committee has included a diverse group of individuals from business, labor, education, government, workforce and economic development and the general public. The committee has attempted to analyze and catalogue the assets and strengths of the County as well its obstacles and challenges. In addition to preparing a hard analysis of the County’s economic condition (as well as the factors that have created this condition), the committee has put together a vision and action plan for moving St. Lawrence County beyond the limits of the economy that we see today into a healthier and more diverse long-term economic condition.

The result of the analysis undertaken by the committee makes it clear that while there are significant challenges facing the County, there are a number of positive factors on which to build. Collectively, these factors have either caused, or been the result of, the County to be part of, or have the potential to be part of, a number of important industry and/or geography-based business or trade clusters. By recognizing these clusters, and working to develop the features necessary to encourage their growth, the County can position itself to best take advantage of its role within the greater regional and sector-specific industries that make up these clusters.

Finally, the committee has determined that in order to assess the value of the CEDS, a meaningful and sustained evaluation must be undertaken to measure the impacts that result from its implementation. Toward that end, an evaluation plan has been included that will allow for the review, revision and addition of new initiatives to the strategy.

## II. ANALYSIS

St. Lawrence County is located on the periphery of both the New York State and United States’ economies. While it is impossible to change the geography of St. Lawrence County, it is not impossible to reverse the consequences imposed on the County by its isolation. A number of factors, such as improved highway and communications infrastructure, could occur in the future

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to provide the County and its residents with an opportunity to diversify and improve the health of its economy.

The County's distance from markets and population centers is compounded by the inadequate surface transportation system currently serving the County. While the County comprises approximately 5% of the land mass of the State, it is one of the few areas in New York not served by a four-lane interstate highway.

As the largest county in New York State (comprising 2,822 square miles), St. Lawrence County is larger in land area than Rhode Island and Delaware, yet our largest municipality has fewer than 15,000 people. Furthermore, the five population centers of the County (the City of Ogdensburg and the Villages of Canton, Gouverneur, Massena and Potsdam) combined totaled only 38% of the County's population in 2000. Ogdensburg and Potsdam currently have New York State designated Empire Zones for economic development, and have seen successful results from the program; however, the overwhelming majority of the County, which includes many of the poorest communities in the State, does not have access to this program. The geographic dispersion of the County's rural communities makes it difficult to view the County as having common labor, retail and tourism markets. This presents challenges in marketing and developing the communities for both outside investment and internal economic expansion.

Perhaps as a result of its large size and the previously mentioned geographic dispersion, the economy of the County is driven by a diverse set of industry types, sizes and locations. Two aluminum reduction facilities are located in Massena, taking advantage of the low-cost electricity sold from the Robert-Moses Power Dam by the New York Power Authority. Four paper mills remain from a vibrant paper manufacturing industry which located in the County in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries to take advantage of the wood fiber resources of the Adirondacks. The two remaining zinc and talc mines located in Fowler (each of which are currently undergoing either downsizing or shutdown) are the last vestiges of larger mining operations in the County which once included lead and iron ore.

A review of the County's economic condition clearly demonstrates overwhelming circumstances of economic need. According to US Census and New York State Labor Data figures, St. Lawrence County had:

- The State's 6<sup>th</sup> highest unemployment rate in 2005 (an improvement from the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in 2001);
- The State's 4<sup>th</sup> lowest per capita income in 2003;
- The State's 7<sup>th</sup> lowest median household income (5<sup>th</sup> lowest excluding New York City);
- Lost 2% of its population from 1980 to 2000.

During the past three decades manufacturing employment has declined as has the number of farms. Today manufacturing employment accounts for less than 14% of the County's non-agricultural employment, down from over 20% in the early 1980's. The number of farms has dropped by over 400 during the same time period coinciding with a 13% decline in acreage farmed in the County. The service sector has grown and now accounts for over 80% of the County's employment. Government jobs furnish the single largest share of jobs at just fewer than 30% of non-agricultural employment.

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As can be imagined, the economic barriers facing the County have led to high unemployment and poverty rates. Historically, the County's unemployment has been, on average, 1% point higher than the annual State unemployment rate. Additionally, approximately 16.8% of the County's citizens live below the poverty line. (This percentage is the 58<sup>th</sup> highest rate among the State's 62 counties.)

The communities within St. Lawrence County struggle to maintain local control of their economic destiny. Several of the communities have staffed economic development offices. For the past eight years, the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency (SLCIDA) has led an effort to use resources of the individual economic development organizations by developing a comprehensive economic marketing plan for the County. This group of local developers includes two current Empire Zone coordinators as well as a number of representatives from county, regional, State and non-profit entities that provide services in the County. The effort has resulted in a closer working relationship among the development entities in the County, including: a county-wide focus and input for the marketing plan; the development of new marketing materials for the County and for each of the participating communities; and collaborative participation in trade shows, seminars, receptions, and other promotional activities.

In addition to working with the communities within the County, the SLCIDA is also a member of the North Country Alliance, a regional consortium of Economic Development, Community Development and non-profit organizations in the six northern counties of New York State (Jefferson, Lewis, Franklin, Essex, Clinton and St. Lawrence). Through the operation of a number of programs, including regional marketing and revolving loan funds, this organization works to improve the overall economic conditions for business in the State's North Country. Active participation in this organization gives the SLCIDA a view of the challenges and opportunities facing not only its own municipalities (many of which are also members), but also a 'bigger picture' view of the regional North Country economy. The SLCIDA is also a member of the New York State Economic Development Council, providing a similar perspective on a number of state and national economic development issues.

The five colleges and universities in St. Lawrence County constitute an important competitive attribute that may be effectively leveraged to advance economic development objectives. In addition to being economic engines themselves through their employee and student base, these institutions possess a diverse mix of assets that support the efforts of the County's developers. The St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency is developing a strategy and subsequent promotion program that seeks to identify, analyze and utilize the presence of local colleges and universities in attracting new firms to the County.

### III. VISION

#### **Vision Statement:**

St. Lawrence County will build a healthy, diverse and sustainable economy designed to promote and encourage future jobs for our children through the implementation of economic and workforce development initiatives that capitalize on our current strengths, assets and attributes while mitigating the factors that limit our development.

#### **Goals:**

- **Diversify the economy of St. Lawrence County**
- **Develop and enhance the County's infrastructure**
- **Address the issues related to the cost of doing business in the North Country**
- **Fully utilize the colleges and universities (our County's "Creative Core") as drivers of economic development**
- **Refine efforts to outreach and assist current employer base**
- **Continue to market and promote outside investment in the County**
- **Capitalize on renewable energy development potential of the County**
- **Develop proficiency in assisting local communities with their development efforts**

#### **Diversify the Economy of St. Lawrence County**

While maintaining and strengthening the manufacturing base in the County is reflected as a priority throughout this Strategy, it is important to note that emphasis on the diversification of the economy is also very important. As global pressures increase, manufacturing in the United States is becoming increasingly threatened. While the County offers a number of resources (such as the low-cost power utilized by Alcoa) that promote its competitiveness in the manufacturing sector, it will be important to develop and prepare alternative sectors to offset any losses to the County's manufacturing base.

St. Lawrence County is part of a number of regional tourism, retail trade, education, agri-business, technology and university-affiliated research and development clusters. These clusters, as well as a number of business and professional services fields, are viewed as drivers for the diversification of the St. Lawrence County economy.

With its unique location among the Thousand Islands, the Adirondack Mountains, and the Canadian cultural centers of Ottawa and Montreal, the County has both a significant tourism trade presently and the potential for greater tourism growth.

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The strengths of our current agricultural, educational, and healthcare sectors provide ample potential for encouraging gains in the above-mentioned agri-business, education-related and research and development clusters. Key to developing spin-offs from our existing non-industrial sectors is understanding the opportunities they hold and working with our existing agricultural base and our colleges and universities to promote and develop their role in the further diversification of our economy. As such, the County realizes that each of these sectors present opportunities for investment within the local economy. Increased focus needs to be placed across these sectors to maximize their potential as future sources of tax revenue and job growth within St. Lawrence County.

Additionally, recently proposed projects include the development of a racetrack/entertainment complex in the Brasher/Massena area as well as a combined ethanol/herd cattle processing facility that could potentially include a number of sites throughout the County. Projects such as these could require intensive planning and development resources and will be followed closely as they develop.

### *Develop and Enhance the County's Infrastructure*

St. Lawrence County has identified a number of areas in need of significant investment if the County is to enhance economic opportunity. These areas include improving the infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, electric, data/telecom, etc.) within the existing industrial parks in the County, the development of new industrial parks in the County, and enhancing the transportation infrastructure both within the County and connecting the County to the outside world. Obvious examples of such enhancement would be the creation of a four-lane highway to serve the County, the development of facilities that would enable the Port of Ogdensburg to grow and diversify its cargo base, and upgrades to the rail infrastructure throughout the County.

In the past, organizations in St. Lawrence County were successful in having four industrial sites (all of which were funded in the late 1970's and early 1980's by the EDA) as deserving of a Build Now designation by New York State. Sites so designated received priority status for the Empire State Development Corporation's industrial prospects.

Other existing industrial park sites in the County include the Gouverneur Industrial Park, the Massena Industrial Park and the Potsdam Commerce Park. All of these parks are in varying states of development and all require specific investments and development efforts to maximize their potential as economic development tools.

Additional plans have been proposed over the past few years for three new parks in the County. One will be built on land adjacent to the new county jail which is currently under construction in the Village of Canton. Another is proposed to be in the Town of Massena on 70 acres being donated by Alcoa. There was also a proposal for a 750 acre 'super industrial park', included as part of the County's 2002 Empire Zone application to New York State for which initial request was denied. All of these parks will most likely require investment in their infrastructure that would be in the millions of dollars. Lack of such funding has contributed to delays in the planning and development of each of the proposed parks. This presents a problem as both the Ogdensburg and Massena parks are nearing their capacity for development. As our

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infrastructure is developed and improved, it will assist with our next goal, lowering the cost of doing business in the County.

### *Address the Issues Related to the Cost of Doing Business in the North Country*

A location in the Northeast United States is not typically associated with a low-cost, low-barrier place in which to do business. Tax rates, workers compensation insurance rates, wages, the cost of benefit packages, energy costs, distances to market/from suppliers (compounded by the lack of a four-lane highway), and burdensome regulatory issues are a number of the barriers and costs to doing business that were highlighted by participants at the 2006 St. Lawrence County Workforce and Economic Development Summit.

While Ogdensburg and Potsdam have Empire Zones that have the potential to ease the costs of a start-up or expanded operation and the rest of the County has access to the SLCIDA and other New York State programs (such as the 485-b Real Property Tax Exemption), there is currently no unified strategy for addressing and lowering the costs of doing business in the North Country. To encourage long-term growth and economic prosperity, such a strategy needs to be created, implemented, and improved over time.

An ad hoc work group composed of representatives of business, labor, education and local elected officials has coalesced around the issue of improving highway transportation in the County. Bolstered by a \$1.5 million federal transportation grant, which authorizes a study to improve highway corridors in the County, the group has been working toward the goal of developing a four-lane, limited-access connection between Interstate 81 to the South and Interstate 87 to the East.

The group has also established a working relationship with the East/West Highway group active in Maine, which is looking into the feasibility of an interstate highway link through northern Maine into New Hampshire and possibly Vermont.

The designation of Interstate 86 (formerly Route 17 in the Southern Tier) as part of the Federal Interstate Highway system means that only residents in the northern-most part of the state are further than thirty-five miles from access to the four-lane interstate system. Without such access, the potential for economic growth is hampered as businesses increasingly demand proximity to the interstate system as a prerequisite for setting up an operation.

Efforts need to be undertaken to ensure that the cost of moving products and people are reasonable and competitive. Affordable rail shipping is key to the movement of goods in and out of the County, and cost-effective and convenient transportation options need to be developed and promoted for the County's airports.

### *Fully Utilize the Colleges and Universities (Our County's "Creative Core") as Drivers of Economic Development*

The colleges and universities in St. Lawrence County are part of a regional educational cluster of over 35 institutions stretching from Ithaca through the "central upstate" region up to St. Lawrence County. Being part of this impressive cluster of colleges and universities provides a

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diverse mix of assets and attributes upon which the County can build its economic development efforts.

At Clarkson University, the Center for Advanced Materials Processing (CAMP) is one such asset that has the ability to assist in the attraction of firms. A Center for Advanced Technology, CAMP is an interdepartmental organization aimed at increasing research interactions with industry. The advanced materials researchers work with solids such as metals, glasses, plastics, and ceramics. CAMP is currently enabling students and faculty to work with over 50 industrial companies, 30 of which are located in New York State (i.e. Xerox, IBM, Kodak, Corning, and Alcoa). Further, a number of 'spin-off' companies have either developed a presence or have expressed an interest in developing a presence near the CAMP facility.

In addition to the Center for Advanced Materials Processing, Clarkson offers undergraduate programs leading to either a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Professional Studies. Their Graduate School offers programs leading to the degrees of Master of Science, Master of Business Administration, and Doctor of Philosophy. The University also offers special interdisciplinary undergraduate programs such as Arête (Management and Social Science) and Engineering and Management.

Efforts to partner with Clarkson have included the mailing of a promotional piece on the SLCIDA's 12,000 square foot building in Potsdam and the recent sharing of a trade show booth by CAMP and SLCIDA staff at the BIO 2007 Biotechnology and Life Sciences Show in Boston.

St. Lawrence University, founded in 1856, was the first coeducational college in New York State. An independent, residential liberal arts college, it offers both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The University awards Bachelor degrees in Arts and Science, and a Masters degree in Education. It offers over 30 majors including a Bachelor of Science degree offered in 11 areas of study and a Bachelor of Arts degree in 20 areas.

As part of its Canton Initiative, the University is actively partnering with the SLCIDA to encourage alums to return to St. Lawrence County. Over the next five years the Canton Initiative will set out to recruit 100 graduates, parents and friends to live in Canton and/or the surrounding area. The Initiative's goal is to build (or cause to be built) \$10,000,000 in new homes or home improvements with all of its positive impact on the local property tax base.

Canton College of Technology (established in 1906) is a public institution dedicated to providing two- and four-year degrees in business, science, technical fields, public services and health services. It is the oldest two-year college in New York State and recently began offering four-year degrees.

SUNY Canton has majors in the health and medical technologies, business and public service, engineering technologies, and liberal arts and sciences. Bachelor degree programs (4-year) provide a well-rounded education with a focus on technical expertise and practical experience. Associate degree programs (2-year) are designed to prepare students for employment or transfer

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into a bachelor's program. Certificates (1-year) lead directly to employment after a one-year program of study.

The College offers a number of unique programs, such as Emergency and Disaster Management, which have enabled the College and the County to partner on seminar presentations and cooperative responses to companies seeking information about the County and its workforce. As the college continues to thrive, these initiatives will be enhanced and continued.

SUNY Potsdam traces its origins to the St. Lawrence Academy, which was founded in 1816. Located on 240 acres in the Village of Potsdam, it is one of 13 State University of New York arts and science colleges.

Offering both undergraduate and graduate programs, it is divided into three schools that offer arts and sciences, music, and teacher education programs. Degrees offered include a Bachelor degree in Arts or Music, and a Master degree in Arts, Music, Science in Education, or Science in Teaching. The School of Liberal Studies offers 38 majors, 39 minors, and 17 education certifications. A double degree engineering program is also available in connection with Clarkson University or the State University of New York at Binghamton. The college also offers two other partnership programs: 2+2 BS degree in Economics with two years at Canton and 2 years at Potsdam, 4+1 MBA with Clarkson with 4 years at Potsdam and 1 year at Clarkson.

As part of SUNY Potsdam's commitment to developing the regional economy, the North Country Economic Research Center was created in 1986. The mandate of the center is to study the local economy and enhance the region's economic prospects. The Economics Department houses the center and researches regional economic trends and provides information to industry, government and the media.

A number of important events, including the Annual Local Government Conference and the 2006 St. Lawrence County Workforce and Economic Development Summit were held on campus at Potsdam. The 2006 Summit gathered insight for the 2007 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy from over 100 businesspeople, educators, government officials, and citizens who attended the event. For further information, please see the 2006 "St. Lawrence County Economic Development and Workforce Summit Report."

The New York State Ranger School, established in 1912, is a unit of the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse. Students at the Ranger School earn an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree in forest technology or surveying.

The Ranger School is located on 2,800 acres of the James F. Dubuar Forest in the Adirondack hamlet of Wanakena on the Oswegatchie River. It is by far the oldest forest technology program in the country and has nearly three thousand alumni.

The curriculum in forest technology is a 1-1 design. During the first year a student attends any college of his or her choice, completing courses in English, Biology, Math, Economics and electives to total 30 credit-hours. The second year is spent at Wanakena in a concentrated study of forest technology or surveying. Each student is required to take Standard First Aid and the core exam of the Certified Pesticide Applicator series. Graduates are employed all over the

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country by government forestry units, land resource agencies, private forestry enterprises, and surveying firms.

The Ranger School's Director, in his capacity as the Clifton-Fine region's local development corporation director, has a longstanding working relationship with the County. A goal for the future will be utilizing this school as a point of contact for outreaching alumni in a similar manner to the programs being developed with St. Lawrence and Clarkson Universities.

### *Refine Efforts to Outreach and Assist Current Employer Base*

The County recognizes that it is typically both easier and more cost effective to assist existing employers to retain and expand their employee base than it is to attract new industries into the area. Furthermore, small to medium-size businesses are known to be the lifeline to job creation and, as such, a number of services and programs are in place to assist the current employer base of the County.

With over 2,200 employers in the County (according to the New York State Department of Labor), it is an ongoing challenge to find the resources to consistently and successfully outreach this base in order to determine the circumstances, needs and prospects of the local employers. Historically, the County had a Business Services Unit (consisting of the County Economic Developer and two Employment and Training Counselors) that coordinated their outreach efforts with State and other local developers. With conflicting work assignments among staff (who had other assigned projects and responsibilities) and the sheer number of employers in the County, the effort to outreach the targeted employer base never fulfilled its potential.

In light of the ongoing 'ups and downs' within the employer base of the County (including events such as the restart of the Newton Falls Paper Mill, the announced idling of the General Motors Powertrain Plant in Massena, and the closure of the St. Lawrence Zinc Mine in Balmat) it is clear that a sustained, ongoing program needs to be put in place to ensure that there is an open and meaningful communications flow between the County's economic and workforce developers and the employer base.

This latter observation is especially true when applied to two of the growing segments of the County's economy, health care and education. At the WIB's 2004 Workforce Summit many participants involved in both industries volunteered to help the WIB devise ways in which the workforce system in the County could be better tuned to help them identify and train the kinds of employees they need to continue to grow.

Some of the employees for these industries may come from among the ranks of the underemployed and early retirees in the County. The WIB's 2004 State of the Workforce report and the 2006 Pathfinders report (highlighted at the 2006 Workforce Summit) together posed the challenge of how the under-utilized skills in these segments of the workforce could be put to good use in filling the skills deficits frequently reported by County employers. However, since the opportunities and challenges posed by the early retirees and underemployed are to date based mostly on anecdotal information, a lot of work must be done to identify and quantify the

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employee pool and figure out how the County's workforce system can connect them with the County's employers.

### *Continue to Market and Promote Outside Investment in the County*

St. Lawrence County has undertaken a comprehensive marketing program designed to promote outside investment and, ultimately, job creation in the County.

A significant and growing Canadian business presence in St. Lawrence County validates the proposition that economic and competitive advantages can be achieved by Canadian companies that invest here. In fact, for a significant number of Canadian businesses located in the Montreal-Ottawa-Toronto business corridor, expansion to the United States is important for them to sustain long-term growth and competitiveness.

Because of its proximity to both their home and U.S. markets, St. Lawrence County is uniquely positioned to capitalize on the huge U.S./Canada cross-border trade cluster. By promoting itself as a key location within this international trade cluster, the County stands to benefit significantly by continuing to target selected Canadian businesses seeking a U.S. presence as a market entry point. The County utilizes a variety of channels when undertaking these outreach efforts, including direct mailings, on-line promotions, trade show marketing, media placements, seminars and special events, strategic marketing partnerships and by maintaining a representative presence in Ottawa.

To ensure that the County's promotional efforts are diversified and balanced, in addition to a Canadian marketing program, the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency markets to companies within targeted U.S. industrial sectors. Furthermore, efforts are being made to outreach former St. Lawrence County residents, graduates of our local colleges, or those seeking the quality of life offered in the North Country, to attract individuals who might consider relocating an existing business or establishing a new operation within the County.

The SLCIDA has a long history of building, marketing, and filling the speculative buildings it has constructed. The availability of these buildings, along with the other sites and facilities throughout the County, often make the difference on whether or not a prospect will consider the County as a potential location for their projects. To continue this success, the County maintains, develops and promotes its online database of such sites and facilities. Outreach to local developers, realtors and property owners on an on-going basis ensures that the most up-to-date information is available both on the SLCIDA website ([www.slcida.com](http://www.slcida.com)) and on the New York State Site Finder System.

As the primary economic development agency in St. Lawrence County, a cornerstone of the SLCIDA's marketing activities has been to foster cooperative relationships at the local, county, regional and state development levels. Toward this end, the SLCIDA facilitates local developers' meetings, regularly works in cooperation with the local development organizations in the County, and furthers the County's interests and participation in both the existing and emerging regional, state and national organizations that have an impact on local and regional economic development activities.

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### *Capitalize on Renewable Energy Development Potential of the County*

Between its vast agricultural resources and the cutting-edge research and development activities being undertaken at its colleges and universities, St. Lawrence County is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the fast growing global cluster of renewable energy developers, providers and users.

There is a significant amount of activity underway within the County to combine our natural, intellectual and human resources to ensure that the County is actively contributing to this cluster. With cellulosic ethanol technologies being developed in Potsdam and a timber-based pellet mill being built in Massena, the County is quickly moving from merely supplying the raw materials being used in the renewable energy sector to developing, building and implementing the technologies that will define the future of the renewable energy industry within the United States and throughout the world.

St. Lawrence County is further positioned to be part of the global renewable energy cluster by both its own immense hydropower resources and its location in the midst of one of the fastest growing wind energy regions in the Northeast. Huge wind farms to both our north and south highlight the potential of the renewable energy sector. Additionally, both the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Port of Ogdensburg (with its Foreign Trade Zone) have seen increases in activity as new towers are shipped in from Europe.

### *Develop Proficiency in Assisting Local Communities with their Development Efforts*

The County realizes that the needs of the individual communities are as diverse and varied as the communities themselves. The college towns may have different priorities than the border communities, and what is important in the Adirondacks may have little meaning in the farming areas. By the same token, economic and community development in the smaller villages and hamlets may take on an entirely different meaning than what goes on in the City of Ogdensburg and the larger villages.

It is a goal of the County to create a plan for partnering with local elected officials, community, economic, planning, housing and workforce developers to develop a comprehensive strategy for assisting communities of all sizes and locations within St. Lawrence County. Too often the interpretation is that economic development in the County is limited to the larger industrial firms and their host communities. It is true, in fact, that the tools and programs at the disposal of most economic developers are indeed geared toward the industrial base. As a result, new efforts will have to be undertaken and, perhaps, new working relationships created in order to broaden the reach and effectiveness of local development efforts in St. Lawrence County.

## IV. ACTION PLAN

As a result of the CEDS process, the Committee has identified the following projects for serious consideration. The projects are divided into two categories, short-term and long-term. The short-term group includes projects whose details are relatively complete at this point and which have an expectation of completion within one year, provided funding is available. These projects will create or retain full-time, permanent jobs. Long-term projects and plans are similar in nature to the short-term group with the exception of the timeframe extending beyond one year.

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### 2007 ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY CEDS

#### RESPONSIBILITY MATRICES

**P = Primary Responsibility (in bold)**  
**S = Active Support Responsibility**

Matrix 1: Short Term Action Items

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
<b>Fully utilize the colleges and universities as drivers of economic development</b>				
Continue efforts to partner with Clarkson – highlighting CAMP and the recent interest in University-affiliated businesses and entrepreneurs.	<b>P</b>		Clarkson, CAMP	Ongoing
Continue conversion of former Peyton Hall site on 'downtown' Clarkson campus into a business incubator.	S		<b>Clarkson</b>	
Work with St. Lawrence University to formalize promotion and fulfillment efforts with the Coming Home Initiative.	<b>P</b>		<b>St. Lawrence University</b>	Ongoing
Assist the County's other three colleges to develop and implement institution-specific projects such as those already initiated with Clarkson and St. Lawrence.	S	S	SUNY Canton, SUNY Potsdam, Wanakena Ranger School	
Establish a continuing means of collaboration with the enrollment offices of the County's five colleges to identify ways in which the County can assist them in increasing enrollments.	S	S	<b>SLC OED</b> All five colleges and universities	
Establish a continuing means of collaboration with the placement offices of the County's five colleges to identify ways in which the County can assist them in increasing local placements of their students and/or how the colleges could provide additional specific training for employees of County organizations.	S	<b>P</b>	All five colleges and universities	

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Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
Develop a non-traditional outreach to the "Come Back Here" market of former residents and/or students.	S	S	Coming Home/Homestead Committee	Ongoing
<b>Develop and enhance the County's infrastructure</b>				
Extend the fiber facilities to, and establish a carrier cross connection facility within, the County's industrial and commerce parks (Canton Commerce Park, Gouverneur Industrial Park, Massena Industrial Park, Ogdensburg OBPA Commerce Park, Potsdam Commerce Park).	S		Canton, OBPA, BDC, Potsdam Planning and Development, DANC, Utility Providers	
Rebuild the road in the Massena Industrial Park.	S		Village of Massena, BDC	
Expand the Massena Industrial Park to include site of the current DPW building which would allow a railroad spur in the park.	S		Village of Massena, BDC	
Complete lot design, layout and demarcation in the Gouverneur Industrial Park.	P			Lot clearing underway
Complete lot design, layout and demarcation in the Canton Commerce Park that is being created adjacent to the new county jail.	P		St. Lawrence County	Planned
Construct a 24,000 sf industrial shell building in the OBPA (Ogdensburg) Commerce Park.	S		OBPA	Building Complete
Ensure adequate rail services to all areas of the County, including upgrade and return to service of the short line serving Newton Falls.	S		SLC BOL Strategic Planning and Economic Development Committee, SLC OED	
Encourage the cost efficiency of rail services, advocate for shared services agreement between CSX and local short line railroad operators.	S		SLC BOL Strategic Planning and Economic Development Committee, OBPA	
Encourage the establishment of affordable, convenient and sustainable air service that will serve the St. Lawrence Valley region, consisting of St. Lawrence County, Franklin County, Akwesasne, and southeast Ontario.	S		St. Lawrence Valley Air Task Force, OBPA, Town of Massena	

## 2008 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
<b>Refine efforts to outreach and assist current employer base</b>				
Create the position of a Business Services Coordinator within the St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development.			SLC BOL	Position created and filled - March 2008
Develop formalized calling program for outreaching the County's employer base utilizing this new position.	S	S	SLC OED	Initiated June 2008
<b>Continue to market and promote outside investment in the County</b>				
Continue development of our Canadian promotional efforts by reinforcement activities within the Montreal-Ottawa-Kingston market region and through extended marketing outreach to the Greater Toronto area.	P		Empire State Development, Local Economic Development Organizations	Ongoing
Promote available (or potentially available) SLCIDA properties, including the Potsdam Commerce Park Building, the Massena building, and the Gouverneur Industrial park as well as other available non-SLCIDA sites and facilities within the County.	P		Potsdam, BDC, Gouverneur	Ongoing
As addressed earlier in this plan, highlight and actively market the research and development, collaborative and intellectual resources available through our five colleges and universities.	P		All five colleges and universities	
Continue efforts to capitalize on the power cost & reliability advantages in the Massena Electric Department territory.	P		MED, BDC	Ongoing
Analyze and focus resources on our identified target industry sectors within the domestic US market.	P		Empire State Development, Local Economic Development Organizations	Planned

**2008 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
<b>Capitalize on Renewable Energy Development Potential of the County</b>				
Create an inventory of the renewable energy resources available in St. Lawrence County.	P		Colleges, Local Developers, NYSERDA, County Planning Office	
Create offering package and direct mail advertising materials for marketing renewable resources.	P			
Create an alternate fuels development area. Provide technical and other assistance to investors wanting to develop alternate energy businesses and encourage the development of small, local energy sources that can reduce the cost of operating in the North Country.	P			
<b>Develop proficiency to assist local communities with their development efforts</b>				
Support upgrading the water infrastructure in Gouverneur.	S		Village of Gouverneur, SLC OED, SLC Planning Department	
Improve the water and sewer infrastructure in Heuvelton.	S		Village of Heuvelton	
Develop an outreach plan for informing communities about existing economic development efforts, programs and services.	S	S	SLC OED	
Continue J&L site remediation plan in Star Lake	S		SLC Planning Department, Clifton-Fine EDC	Ongoing
Continue revitalization plan for former DPW site in Massena.	S		Village of Massena, BDC	Ongoing
Upgrade the integrity of Canton's water delivery system so as to minimize losses due to leaks and other malfunctions.	S		Village of Canton, SLC OED, SLC Planning Department	
Sewer treatment upgrading in Morristown	S		Village of Morristown, SLC OED, SLC Planning Department	

**2008 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
<b>Diversify the economy of St. Lawrence County</b>				
Cross-market economic development with tourism development (i.e. Coming Home Initiative advertising in County Travel Guides).	S		SLC Coming Home/Homestead Committee, SLC Chamber of Commerce	
Prioritize providing assistance to businesses whose products and/or services are (or will be) locally produced and/or developed for which County residents are currently traveling out of County to procure.	P		SLC OED	
<b>Address the issues related to the cost of doing business in the North Country</b>				
Build on, and improve, current Doing Business in New York State Guide to fully understand and explain the cost structure companies face when operating in St. Lawrence County.	P	P	Empire State Development, NYS Department of Labor	
Advocate for continued utilization of the State's Empire Zone program and for the widespread application of its benefits in the County.	P		Ogdensburg and Potsdam Empire Zones	Ongoing
Advocate for the development of a 4-lane limited access connection to I 81 to the South and to I 87 to the East.	S	S	SLC Highway Corridor Working Group	

## 2008 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Matrix 2: Long Term Action Items

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
<b>Goal: Fully utilize the colleges and universities as drivers of economic development</b>				
Categorize the assets and attributes of each of the colleges and determine plans for utilizing the reach, resources and connections of these institutions within the County's economic development efforts.	P		All five colleges and universities	
Revise the plan to redevelop the remainder of the former downtown Clarkson Campus.	S		Clarkson University	Ongoing
Education Zone development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with marketing the colleges.</li> <li>• Aid the colleges in developing new programs that will attract additional students.</li> <li>• Create new housing and other support facilities through tax and other incentives.</li> <li>• Encourage greater cooperation and development to keep the students in the North Country longer.</li> </ul>	S	S	All five colleges and universities	
<b>Develop and enhance the County's infrastructure</b>				
Construct a second building in the Potsdam Commerce Park.	P		Village of Potsdam	Under study
Develop an industrial park in the Town of Massena on 70 acres being donated by Alcoa.	S		BDC, Town of Massena	In planning
Research development potential for a 750 acre 'super industrial park' within the County.	P		National Grid, MED, Empire State Development	
Improve infrastructure in order to receive more diverse cargo base and increase bulk handling capacity at the Port of Ogdensburg.	S		OBPA	
Advocate for the development of a 4-lane limited access connection to I 81 to the South and to I 87 to the East.	S	S	SLC Highway Corridor Working Group	
Develop the "Maple Hill" subdivision in Canton.	S		Village and Town of Canton	Ongoing

**2008 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
Develop the Canton Commerce Park.	P		Village and Town of Canton	Ongoing
Construction of the "Fort LaPresentation" replica in Ogdensburg.	S		Fort LaPresentation Association, City of Ogdensburg	Proposed
Revitalize the retail centers in the county including the St. Lawrence Centre Mall in Massena and various downtown retail districts.	S		Local Economic Development Organizations, SLC Chamber of Commerce, Local Chambers of Commerce	
<b>Refine efforts to outreach and assist current employer base</b>				
Use formalized calling program for reaching all facets of the County employer base. Compile, analyze, and understand detailed company information that leads to improved services, planning and development efforts.	S	S	SLC OED	Initiated in June 2008
Engage local employers, educators, and workforce training specialists (1) in profiling the levels and skill characteristics of the County's underemployed and early retiree workforce populations and (2) in developing an action plan that will guide WIB, the IDA, and State and other County developers in their efforts to fill the skilled worker needs of County employers.	S	P	SLC OED, NYS DOL	
<b>Continue to market and promote outside investment in the County</b>				
Further refine, improve and develop a marketing strategy that maximizes our investment by selecting and targeting the appropriate sectors with the best promotional messaging about St. Lawrence County.	P			

## 2008 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
<b>Capitalize on Renewable Energy Potential of the County</b>				
Develop long-term plan for researching and responding to developments within renewable energy sector	P		Empire State Development, NYSEDA, Local Economic Development Organizations	
<b>Develop proficiency to assist local communities with their development efforts</b>				
Create new platforms for delivering services to the communities, including partnerships with the full spectrum of organizations providing assistance with development, infrastructure, housing, etc.	S	S	SLC OED, Local Economic Development Organizations, SLC Housing Council, DANC, Empire State Development	
Develop long-term reuse plan for J&L site, former Massena DPW site and other brownfield locations in the County.	S		SLC OED, SLC Planning Department, Clifton-Fine EDC, Empire State Development, APA	
Create a continuing annual forum that will identify and analyze the issues and challenges facing the local communities.				
Integrate the CEDS with the long-term development strategies of the County's communities.		P	Local Communities	
<b>Diversify the economy of St. Lawrence County</b>				
Integrate tourism development strategies with the CEDS.	S	P	SLC Chamber of Commerce, Local Chambers of Commerce, Empire State Development	
Develop new tourism opportunities and support structures, including such initiatives as passenger rail service, rail tourism, river recreation zones, bicycle-friendly activities, incentives to businesses service tourism visitors, etc.	S	S	SLC Chamber of Commerce, Local Chambers of Commerce, Empire State Development	
Determine way to utilize proposed 20 mw allocation from the NY Power Authority.			New York Power Authority	
Create a unified strategy for addressing and lowering the costs of doing business in the North Country.	S		SLC BOL Strategic Planning and Economic Development	

**2008 St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Action Items	Responsible Organizations			Status
	SLCIDA	SLCWIB	Suggested Other Responsible Organizations	
			Committee, SLC OED	
Continue to seek development of a rooftop highway.	S	S	<b>SLC Highway Corridor Working Group</b>	
Seek to dramatically reduce the cost of government by addressing in a systematic way the multiple layers of government.	S	S	SLC BOL Strategic Planning and Economic Development Committee, Government Review Committee, Governor's Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Effectiveness	

**P = Primary Responsibility (In Bold)**

S = Active Support Responsibility

## V. EVALUATION

The St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee has been meeting periodically for over 10 years. As such, the Committee has seen firsthand the evolution of this document. Their goal has been to take the CEDS plan from an academic work that was more reflective than action-driven, and turn it into a true plan for moving the County economy forward.

The Action Plan section of this Strategy has been laid out in such a way as to allow for easy performance measurement. In one year these actions will (1) have been accomplished, (2) be in the process of being accomplished, or (3) have been abandoned or never initiated. The Committee's plan for evaluation is, in fact, to reconstitute in one year to undertake that very analysis.

At that point, the Short-Term action plans will be reviewed for progress, and will either be considered complete or will be rewritten (or removed) to better reflect their standing in a year. The Long-Term action plans will be revisited: some will remain unchanged, some will be moved to the Short-Term category, and others will also either be altered or removed.

The evaluation of the success of the activities undertaken as a result of this CEDS will be conducted by measuring the objectives that the County is trying to accomplish through this Strategy, including:

- job growth within St. Lawrence County
- increased investment in the County
- wage growth within the County
- reuse of vacant/abandoned space occupied within the County
- business start ups within the County

St. Lawrence County Office of Economic Development staff and CEDS committee members will evaluate these factors. In preparation for the annual CEDS meetings, reports will be prepared in which planned activities will be highlighted and recent activities will be reviewed. Investments in the County, the inventory of available buildings and vacant sites will be continuously updated, employment totals and jobless rates within the County will be tracked and wage rates will be monitored. These comprehensive reports will be supplemented by data from the New York State Department of Labor and the St. Lawrence County Planning Office.

Finally, new initiatives and action plans will be discussed and incorporated. This Strategy is designed to be part of a process that will go on for many years, not as a time-limited undertaking that will be either put into place or completely abandoned within the inelastic timeframe of the next twelve months.