



# Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance

*A non-profit 501c3 local development corporation whose mission is to restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities.*

Issue #6 Fall 2016

## In The News

### \$75,000 Grant for Abandoned Properties in Ticonderoga

The government of the Town of Ticonderoga has just received a \$75,000 funding grant from the New York State Office of the Attorney General for actions to address the problem of vacant and abandoned properties. The funding proposal was written by TRA and the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County (HAPEC) with Supervisor Joe Giordano and Town Board member Fred Hunsdon.

Like many small towns in upstate NY, Ticonderoga is plagued with numerous derelict and abandoned buildings. Ti has over 70 such properties, almost all residential, with many linked to the national mortgage foreclosure crisis of recent years. These properties can create problems such as health, safety, use of vacant properties for drugs and alcohol



use, fire risks, etc., and they seriously hurt efforts to attract new businesses and residents.

The Town government is giving increased attention to this problem, including strengthening the actions of its Code Enforcement Office, and PRIDE is assisting with repairs to help homeowners prevent homes from deteriorating. However, more actions are needed on this complex problem. This new project will:

- Increase preventive measures such as counseling services and legal advice to persons and families at risk of foreclosure, and to launch a community outreach effort to let people know more about these services.
- Strengthen the computer-based tools of the Town's Code Enforcement Office and increase the capacity for legal action to enforce Code measures.
- Increase the Town's ability to enforce newly passed state laws, including requiring mortgage companies to "secure and maintain" abandoned properties.
- Investigate relevant new policies and mechanisms such as how the Town might more easily recover its expenditures on cleaning up derelict buildings, and therefore be able to take more, and earlier, actions of this type.

TRA will assist in the implementation and reporting for this new project. As part of its ongoing focus on derelict and abandoned buildings TRA is also exploring ways for the Town to acquire,

rehabilitate, and rent or resell selected properties through the use of the tools that TRA can bring as a Local Development Corporation (LDC) acting on behalf of the Town.

### Trekonderoga Returns to Ti...An Out-of-This-World Success

The second Star Trek and pop culture convention - Trekonderoga - was held again in Ticonderoga on August 12-14 and by any measure it was an out-of-this-world success! This year's convention included stars, fireworks, studio tours, a special Elvis concert, and much more.



Ticket sales doubled over last year with over 600 paid attendees. \$1,610 was donated from the Elvis concert to the Ti Kiwanis Back Pack Program, and Trekonderoga sourced everything possible locally including printing, catering, signage, flowers, and port-a-potties in order to maximize the benefits to the local economy.

**BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.** Visit <http://ti-alliance.org/support/volunteer.html> and click the **DONATE** button to contribute online via PayPal.

## FROM THE BOARD

*Nancy Archer and Lance Clark have been in our director's chairs for a year and a half now and have breathed new life into TRA. Though they operate in a volunteer capacity, they are tireless in their pursuits and work nearly full time. We are so grateful for their time and passion.*

*Our challenge is to fund the Director's position, something that we see as key to the long term effectiveness of the organization. There's only so much we can do as an all volunteer organization without a full time director. Nancy and Lance have worked to get us compliant with the extensive state LDC requirements and led TRA's participation in Trekonderoga, both of which have put us in an excellent position to apply for federal and state grants to fund larger projects.*

*Pam Nolan of the Ticonderoga Federal Credit Union has joined our board of directors to lend her passion to the revitalization efforts. Pam has been extremely active in the community both as an individual and as a representative of the credit union and comes to TRA with an extensive knowledge of financial products and processes. We welcome Pam to our ranks.*

*Our board goals for the remainder of 2016 are to fund our 2016 audit, play a key role in some new economic development projects in Ti, continue to work with the Star Trek Original Series Set Tour and James Cawley, add 2-3 new board members to our team, and elect a new board chair. We are looking for enthusiastic people with ideas and passion for building a more robust economic engine for the Ticonderoga region and welcome anyone interested in participating.*

### **The TRA Board of Directors.**

The convention - a partnership between James Cawley, TRA, and scores of volunteers, has provided a sizable economic boost to the area. The estimated direct and indirect impact for Trek 2016 is \$340,000. Combined with \$160,000 from last year's event, the estimated boost to the local economy for the two events was over a half million dollars.

The convention also boosted area tourism by drawing in new visitors, with more than 40% of the respondents to our online survey indicating that this was their first visit to Ticonderoga.



James Cawley wrote, "My deepest thanks to the TRA and to Nancy Archer and Lance Clark for their incredible support and work to make Trekonderoga a success. Together we have built a wonderful event, that I hope will live long and prosper, and will help boost downtown Ticonderoga for many years to come."

James recently completed an agreement with CBS as the sole official Star Trek licensee in the nation. The Star Trek Original Series Set Tour now offers guided tours of the meticulously re-created studio sets from the original Star Trek TV series in the 1960's.

Trekonderoga is an example of a productive partnership between TRA and a local entrepreneur. TRA was impressed from the beginning by the vision and energy of James and the volunteers involved in the creation and use of the studio sets in Ticonderoga. We have been pleased to provide our time and energy, and our experience in planning and management to

help make the Trekonderoga conventions a success.

### **Exciting Progress on Vocational Education in Ticonderoga**

Discussions have continued with vigor surrounding vocational education and a trade school in Ticonderoga. TRA is working with a variety of educators and employers in our area to advance a consolidated plan to identify and fulfill the requirements for vocational education in the North Country.

The focus is three fold; to provide training and alternative career paths for high school students, to provide career training/retraining for adult learners, and to provide a ready workforce for area employers.

Possibilities exist to expand the current BOCES program with new certification programs for high school and adult learners, as well as the possibility of establishing a fully accredited School for Applied Technology in Ticonderoga. TRA has been coordinating meetings with North Country Community College (NCCC), BOCES, Ticonderoga Schools, local employers, and private/corporate investors to help advance both programs.

A feasibility study is just concluding on the School of Applied Technology at NCCC. The next step is for the NCCC faculty to review the proposed curriculum this fall. The faculty determines which curriculums are developed for the future. If any of the proposed vocational programs are supported by the faculty, the plan is submitted to the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) as part of their Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) in June 2017. This funding application would provide support for the start-up costs of the program. The college administration has requested a response from the faculty by the end of the Fall 2016 semester.

Residents and employers interested in this project can contact Donna Wotton to discuss how you can get involved. [dwotton@unconventional.com](mailto:dwotton@unconventional.com)

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

*- Margaret Mead*

## What is special about TRA?

*There are a small number of organizations in our area working to improve the look and economic well-being of our area, and to assist local families in need. TRA is a registered non-profit focused specifically on economic development, and is unique in being a Local Development Corporation (LDC).*

### Not sure what an LDC is or why you should care about it?

An LDC is a Local Development Corporation, and a non-profit organization. The LDC model was created under New York State law and was established to be utilized by towns and cities as an economic development arm for them.

### Why do we need an LDC?

One would think that a town would have the ability to do economic development activities to benefit its community. But the law restricts a municipal entity from managing business transactions not directly related to town operations. For a town to do economic development investments, an LDC brings important benefits.

### What kinds of projects can an LDC do?

The role of an LDC is to assist the community with economic development projects that impact employment opportunities, training and skill development, the attraction and retention of business and industry, and other activities that affect the economic health of Ticonderoga. In this capacity TRA has been able to:

- Facilitate the implementation of the National Workforce Readiness Credential Program at the High School,

and work with CV-TEC to include it in their curriculum.

- Work with JASAMA, a group of investors, to bring new businesses like Libby's Bakery to the downtown area.
- Create the Downtown Gallery and build it to a ongoing Montcalm Street business, now run by Ti Arts.
- Work with North Country Community College to advance their plan to establish a School of Applied Technology in Ticonderoga (feasibility studies underway).
- Finance downtown beautification projects like the large murals at the Wicker Street and North Montcalm entrances to Ticonderoga.
- Play key coordination roles in creating two Trekonderoga conventions.
- Design an Entrepreneur's Fund that, once fully funded, will stimulate economic growth through financing for new and existing businesses, with an emphasis on opportunities for youth, women and persons with disabilities.

### What's in our tool kit?

LDC's can acquire, own, and sell property. This can be extremely helpful in developing larger projects such as the trade school where securing a location for the school is essential, but neither the town, nor the college can purchase a building. It needs to be leased. The LDC can own the building and lease it to the college allowing this project to locate in Ti.

An LDC can acquire and rehabilitate properties, and otherwise engage in construction projects. The town is

restricted from these types of projects. With our derelict building project we can assist the town in reclaiming some of these over time into functioning homes and businesses, which will not only enhance the town, but bring them back on to the tax rolls.

And finally....

**An LDC has the ability to acquire and administer large grants to support economic development.**

In the coming years we hope to write a number of proposals to provide funding for projects focused on expanding light industry and other business opportunities that will make a significant impact on the ability of our community to attract and maintain a younger demographic vital to our future.

The transparency of an LDC is held at a very high standard. An LDC must be audited annually, is required to keep an easily accessed website up-to-date, holds public board meetings, and operates with the same transparency as municipal government.

**To be part of the solution, contact any board member, attend a board meeting, contribute, or joining a Working Group or the Board.**

### Some successful LDC's in our area include:

Saranac Lake: <http://www.saranaclake.gov>  
Troy: <http://www.troyny.gov/Departments/EconomicDevelopment/TroyTLDC.aspx>  
Plattsburgh: <http://thedevelopcorp.com>

## Fall Funding Drive - Make an Impact!

### Support the Economic Development and Revitalization in Our Area

As you plan your year-end giving, we urge you to include a *tax deductible donation* to TRA. Our goal for this year is to fund our operating costs, projects, and a salary for a full time director. We can have economic development for our area, but the effort needs your support.....support TRA.

**To donate, contact any board member, donate online, or send a check to the address below.**



# Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance

The Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance plays a unique role.

Our mission is to restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga Region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities. We find resources, help to overcome roadblocks, and keep projects moving through completion. We believe that Ticonderoga and the surrounding area can be the economic and cultural hub of the Eastern Adirondacks and can take its place as a historic, cultural, and business leader in the Northeast.

**Be part of positive change. Donate and participate.** The Ti-Alliance needs the citizens of Ticonderoga, Hague, Crown Point, Moriah, and Putnam to participate. You can support the effort with a donation, an idea, your time, investment, or other creative contribution. It all works toward the goal. Contact the Directors Nancy Archer and Lance Clark to see how you can participate.

**TRA is looking for an Administrative Volunteer.** We are currently looking for an Administrative Assistant to help manage LDC requirements with the NYS Authorities Budget Office that oversees LDCs, assist with TRA Board minutes, and assist with project development.

Receive TRA news via email. Visit our web page and click on CONTACT <http://ti-alliance.org/contact.html>.

#### CO-Directors (Volunteer)

Nancy Archer  
Lance Clark

#### Board of Directors

Sandy Morhouse, *Vice Chairman*  
Pat Ida, *Chief Financial Officer*  
Scott Hearburg

Jim Major  
Pam Nolan  
Peter Reale  
Vincent Smith

Donna Wotton  
Alex Levitch, *Trustee Emeritus & Founder of TRA*


## Fall Funding Drive - Make an Impact!

### Support the Economic Development and Revitalization in our Area

To donate, contact any board member, donate online, or send a check to the address below.

I want to be part of the TRA Solution. Enclosed is my check for

\$500     \$250     \$100     \$50     Other

OR Donate online using 

Click DONATE at <http://ti-alliance.org/support/volunteer.html>.

I am interested in

- Investment opportunities. Please have a board member call me.
- Supporting the Ti-Alliance effort as a volunteer
- My area of expertise is \_\_\_\_\_

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email		
Phone		