



2016 Annual Report

MISSION STATEMENT

“Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance is a not-for-profit, local development corporation whose mission is to help 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.”

TRA continues to act as a catalyst for growth, private-public partnerships and investment opportunities within the Ticonderoga area, which includes the communities of Crown Point, Hague, Moriah, Putnam, and Ticonderoga. Below are the activities and accomplishments of 2016.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2016

The accomplishments and discussion below are divided into three categories, under which the original planned goals are noted, and accomplishments reviewed:

- Economic development;
- Arts; and
- TRA organization and development.

I. Economic Development

A. Goal: Continue to help lead development of Trekonderoga and the Brewpub, the two business ventures identified in 2015.

1. Trekonderoga: TRA co-sponsored a second successful Star Trek and pop culture convention – Trekonderoga – 2016 - in Ticonderoga on August 12-14. Paid attendance at

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the event doubled from 2015 to over 600 persons, with an additional over 60 volunteer staff helping with the convention. The Regional Office for Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) calculated the direct economic benefits to the Ticonderoga area from Trekonderoga – 2016 at \$155,136. This analysis is based in part on survey data from those who purchased their tickets online (the majority of ticket holders). The reply rate was a very high 61%. It includes the estimated expenditures on food, lodging, etc. made by the attendees and staff, as well as the local purchases made by the convention organizers. ROOST's calculations of direct economic benefit are more than double the amount ROOST calculated for the first Trekonderoga convention in 2015. The 2016 convention also boosted area tourism by drawing in new visitors, with over 40% of the survey respondents saying that this was their first visit to Ticonderoga. Trekonderoga - 2016 received significant local, regional and national media attention to the Ticonderoga area, which has raised and enhanced the town's profile as a unique as well as beautiful destination.

In addition, the convention generated substantial "ripple effects" through indirect economic impacts, such as purchases of additional supplies by local businesses, and other local spending. Using the multiplier of 1.24 generated by similar events in the area, the indirect impacts of Trekonderoga – 2016 are an estimated \$185,000. This gives an estimated total direct and indirect economic benefit to the area from Trekonderoga - 2016 of approximately \$340,000. Combined with the estimated direct and indirect economic benefits from the Trekonderoga convention last year, the two Trekonderoga conventions together have brought an estimated half million dollars in economic benefits to the Ticonderoga area in the year from September 2015 through August 2016. The two conventions have brought in 900 persons to the Ticonderoga area, the majority being first-time visitors to the area.

The Trekonderoga conventions are a partnership between James Cawley and the Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance. The convention was supported by the Ticonderoga Town government (including the Highway Department and Police Department), the Fire Department, North Country Community College, the Elks, the Central School District office, St. Mary's School, Sun Community News, local businesses that provided special discounts during the convention, and all those whom welcomed the numerous visitors to Ticonderoga. Trekonderoga generated \$11,653.37 in revenue after expenses.

2. A Brewpub was identified in 2015 as a priority business to bring some of the Fort visitors into downtown and to possibly be the start of the HUB concept (a multi-use downtown area). Little progress has taken place in 2016 primarily due to the large time investment required to promote the success of Trekonderoga. We continue to track the progress of a group of young local brewers and plan to pursue the Brewpub in 2017.

B. Goal: Support to new and existing small businesses

1. Star Trek Original Series Set Tour: The success of Trekonderoga and business assistance from TRA has helped James Cawley to establish his Star Trek Original Series Set Tour as a new business attraction in downtown Ticonderoga. A central rationale for TRA's engagement in Trekonderoga was to use it as a stepping stone to realize the vision to establish an attraction in downtown Ticonderoga to help draw some of the 70,000 visitors to Fort Ticonderoga to the downtown area.

The new business was launched by James Cawley at the end of August after receiving a Star Trek license from CBS; the only one of its kind in the nation! The new business is thriving and has received national and international press drawing visitors from near and far to experience the set tour and participate in monthly events with special Star Trek guests.

It is now operating beyond the summer season through the end of December. This is a significant achievement in this area where most service oriented businesses close down or shrink their hours beginning in September when the summer season ends. TRA board members have provided support to James Cawley to promote the success of his business, including legal assistance and business advice and mentoring.

2. Support to other local small businesses:

a. As a means to increase the financial benefits to the local area, Trekonderoga used locally owned small businesses for catering, printing, food vendors, etc. Trekonderoga operating expenses which entailed such local injections into the economy totaled over \$12,333.

In addition, The Hot Biscuit, a local restaurant, provided exclusive vending services at Trekonderoga, which they reported as boosting their business by 70% over the previous year's revenue for the same period. Other local businesses also reported as receiving a boost from Trekonderoga.

b. Ticonderoga Fund for Entrepreneurship and Revitalization. The Fund has two, related goals:

- Stimulate economic growth and opportunity, through gap financing for new and existing small businesses that will create jobs in the Ticonderoga area; and
- Improve access to monies to fund revitalization efforts, by providing a vehicle for investors (individuals, businesses and companies) to gift monies for revitalization.

While the Fund will be open to all worthy applicants, another goal of the Fund will be to promote businesses owned by women, youth, persons with disabilities and minorities. Approved applicants will be awarded cash in exchange for 4% equity owned by TRA in future revenues of the business. A key component of this Entrepreneurship Fund is the Mentoring Network. Mentoring assistance will be provided to all funded

projects through TRA's network of business leaders. Mentoring will be additive to services provided through the Chamber of Commerce. All awardees must agree to participate as a member of the mentoring network.

The framework for the Entrepreneur's Fund has been developed. Time invested in Ticonderoga seriously impeded the ability of TRA staff to identify funding sources for the Fund and its mentoring component.

C. Goal: Support economic revitalization endeavors of other community organizations.

a. TRA partnered with the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County (HAPEC) in development of the derelict buildings project discussed below under point D.

b. TRA reached out to PRIDE to identify areas where the two organizations could support the town to address the problems of derelict buildings. Properties that are eligible for PRIDE to assist through their housing assistance and repair projects and which are also on the Town Code Enforcement Office list of derelict buildings will be identified for possible PRIDE assistance.

c. TRA participated in the Town of Ticonderoga's Economic Development Committee.

d. TRA supported the Ticonderoga Montcalm Street Partnership fundraising efforts through its support to the Ti'Coustics coffee house (which channeled its donations through the Partnership), and part of the funds from Ticonderoga - 2016 in the amount of \$1,610 were given to the Kiwanis Backpack Program for school children at risk of hunger.

D. Goal: Support the Town of Ticonderoga to develop and implement a plan to address the problem of derelict buildings

In October 2016, the Town of Ticonderoga was awarded a \$75,000 grant from the New York State Office of the Attorney-General under the "Zombie and Vacant Properties Remediation and Prevention Initiative". TRA took the lead together with the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County (HAPEC) in developing and writing this successful proposal, on behalf of the Town of Ticonderoga. The grant will strengthen counseling, mortgage negotiation, and other foreclosure prevention actions, reinforce the capacity of the Town's Code Enforcement Office, increase the capacity of the Town Attorney to undertake related legal actions, and help the Town enforce relevant new laws. Implementation will be over an 18 month period beginning January 2017.

E. Goal: Support the NCCC in Development of the School of Applied Technology

Discussions have continued regarding vocational education and a possible trade school in Ticonderoga. TRA is working with a variety of educational institutions and employers in the locality to advance a consolidated plan to identify and fulfill the requirements for vocational education in the Ticonderoga area. The focus is three fold – to:

- Provide training and alternative career paths for high school students;
- Provide career training and retraining for adult learners; and
- Provide a ready workforce for area employers.

Possibilities exist for two approaches - to expand the current Board of Cooperative Educational Services (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 the North Country Community College (NCCC), BOCES, Ticonderoga Schools, local employers, and private/corporate investors to help advise both possible programs.

A feasibility study (led by NCCC) of the possible School of Applied Technology is under way. The NCCC faculty will review the proposed curriculum and determine which curriculums are developed. The college administration has requested a response from the faculty by the end of the fall 2016 semester. If any of the proposed vocational programs are supported by the faculty, the plan will then be submitted to the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) as part of the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) in June 2017. The funding application would provide support for the start-up costs of the program.

II. Arts: Support actions related to music and the arts as they contribute toward economic revitalization.

TRA staff supported the Ticonderoga Festival Guild Players in two productions. The Cultural Arts Initiative of which the Festival Guild Players is a part, was created for the primary purpose of being an economic stimulus, improving quality of life in Ticonderoga, and creating an environment where people would want to remain and/or return, as well as contributing to the image of Ticonderoga as a town that would be an attractive place for new business development. TRA remains interested in the HUB and facilitating the inclusion of the arts as one of the elements of this future mixed use downtown complex.

III. TRA organizational development

A. Goal: Maintain LDC Compliance: Authorities Budget Office (ABO) compliance remains a burden in terms of both time and money for such a small organization as TRA. The 2014 audit was completed and full compliance as well as Pre-Qualification to receive State funding were achieved. The organization was then challenged to complete the 2015 audit by March 2016 and was not able to secure the required funds in the time required.

An exemption for the 2015 audit was sought from the ABO. We were advised that while an exemption could be granted the organization would be considered non-compliant. Thus, the exemption would not advance the needs of the organization and its mission. Discussions with other small LDCs have revealed similar concerns and challenges. Consideration needs to be given by the ABO to relieving the burden on small LDCs with a budget of less than \$25,000 to comply with the numerous and expensive ABO requirements, which are far beyond that required of small nonprofit organizations.

The following policies required by the ABO were drafted and formally adopted by the Board in 2016:

- Anti-nepotism Policy; and
- Staff Diversity Policy.

B. Re-establish the Steering Board and utilize it to further achievement of the TRA mission. Terms of Reference for the Steering Board were drafted and adopted by the Board of Directors in 2015. A TRA working group on derelict buildings and one on possible education programs were formed and some members will help to relaunch the Steering Board in 2017.

C. Finalize selection of Board Chair, and new Executive Director
A new board member Pam Nolan was brought onto the board and is an active contributor. Recruitment of additional board members is an ongoing activity. A new executive director will be actively sought next year.

RECENT AND ONGOING PROJECTS

Downtown Gallery: The Gallery was launched by TRA and spun off in 2014 to the Ti Arts Initiative. It continues to be a viable concern in the downtown offering art shows, monthly receptions, a Plein Air weekend competition, and a gift shop. It hosts the TRA Office.

Workforce Development: This was initiated by TRA and spun off to the Ti High School in 2014. The high school workforce program continues to serve the community. Adult workforce development is addressed by the town of Ticonderoga.

Northern Lake George Paddle Tennis, LLC:

Paddle was launched in 2014 in a partnership (the NLGP) between several persons who are key advocates and investors in paddle tennis, and TRA.

In 2016, NLGP provided year round participation for players aged four to eighty and now has 40 regular players. Weekly and summer memberships are

offered, as well as “pay as you play” and try it for free. Several summer only memberships were purchased, which helps to support ongoing costs of the facility and to sustain, summer job training program and year round kids free paddle. Approximately 750 guests have played paddle over the past three years. Free instruction has been offered by national paddle champion, Patty Hogan, to help build the clientele. In 2017 she will move toward paid teaching in order to support the facility. Some high level players have been attracted from surrounding areas, which has helped locals improve and embrace the game.

The Summer Job Program included five youth whom worked three hours a day each week for either three, four or five weeks. Participants were paid and learned skills from job coaches drawn from NLDP and surrounding businesses including Five Nations Gold, Eddie’s Restaurant and Ticonderoga Country Club. Youth job training participants learned the basics of golf and paddle along with work skills. NLGP will work with the Kiwanis Backpack Program, which provides nutritious food for low income area students, to offer additional work experience for youth job training [participants].

Expansion plans will include offering free Junior Paddle to area schools in order to evolve into high school and middle school Paddle Clubs. A high school coach is in the process of being hired to help formulate a plan to get greater youth paddle participation. Several Junior Paddle events were held in 2016. Our facility was recently featured in the national platform tennis magazine, which we anticipate will bring some national high profile outings to our area in summer 2017.

ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

TRA conducted a formal process to assess the effectiveness of its internal control structure and procedures. This is documented in the 2016 audit document. Internal controls were found to be adequate and fully compliant.

2016 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Total assets are \$192,266, including the TRA investment in NLG Paddle LLC, and liabilities totaling \$4,500. Fundraising in 2016 increased including receipt of funds from board members, \$5,750 in revenue from Ticonderoga 2016, a November annual fundraising campaign, a commitment of funds from the Town of Ticonderoga for 2017, and funds for TRAs part of the implementation of the Town’s derelict buildings project.

