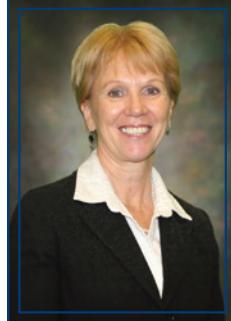


ANNUAL REPORT  
2021 - 2022



# MESSAGES FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This has been an exciting year for the Development Authority and an exciting time to step into the role of Chair of the Authority's Board of Directors. Despite the continuing challenges presented by the pandemic, our organization remained flexible, and our employees were determined to meet the needs of our partners and the residents of northern New York. We concluded 2021-2022 on a positive note, with our new landfill cells ready to open this summer and continued investment in our telecommunications network ensuring that we can meet the broadband needs of our service area today and in the future.

Partnership continues to be our core value, as we work with communities to help them meet their needs in housing, water, wastewater, telecommunications, business development, waste disposal and technical services. The pandemic has magnified some of these needs and our staff has worked hard to develop solutions that can be shared across communities, such as with broadband.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Development Authority, we look forward to many more years of working with our municipal partners to make the North Country a better place to live, work and visit.

Margaret Murray | Chairperson



In thinking about all that the Development Authority has accomplished over the last year, the word "proactive" comes to mind.

*Proactive: serving to prepare for, intervene in, or control an expected occurrence or situation, especially a negative or challenging one; anticipatory.*

In order to continue providing uninterrupted essential services to our municipal partners, we had to be proactive in our approach to the pandemic. We kept abreast of new recommendations as they were issued and continually updated our employee COVID-19 guidance for the protection of our employees as well as our customers. We implemented new protocols as necessary for everyone's health and safety and relaxed them when we could.

We were proactive in our approach to broadband, rallying our partners, community leaders and elected officials to push back on the state-imposed fiber fees that were hampering rural broadband build-outs. We completed broadband studies with our county partners and immediately began working with the counties to identify priority areas, funding sources and possible projects.

The Authority completed the last steps to ensure environmentally safe and sustainable waste disposal at the regional landfill for the next generation by finishing construction of the southern expansion.

We are planning for a significant capital project to enhance the integrity of the Authority's Army water line and ensure that we continue to provide drinking water to Fort Drum, Pamelia, LeRay and Champion.

Despite the challenges the North Country has experienced over the last two years, the Development Authority continues to prioritize inter-municipal cooperation above all else. We want to continue to be proactive in finding solutions for North Country communities so that we can all grow and thrive together.

Carl E. Farone, Jr. | Executive Director

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors sets the policy and strategic direction for the Development Authority and provides oversight through established policies for implementation by the Executive Director. All members serve in a voluntary capacity and are not paid for their service.

## RECOGNITION

The Board recognized 36 years of service to the Authority by John B. Johnson Jr., when he retired from the Board in June, 2021. Mr. Johnson was the longest serving Board member, first appointed by then-Governor Mario Cuomo in 1985 when the Development Authority was created by the New York State Legislature.

The Board also thanked Gary Turck, appointed by Lewis County, for his 15 years of service, and Frederick J. Carter, Sr., appointed by St. Lawrence County, for his 18 years of service, as they concluded their terms.

The Authority recognized the commitment and contributions of Board member Alfred E. Calligaris, who served on the Authority Board for 14 years, appointed by Jefferson County. Mr. Calligaris passed away suddenly in March, 2022 while still serving on the Board.



Executive Director Carl E. Farone, Jr., John B. Johnson Jr., Former Board Chair Frederick J. Carter, Sr.

## APPOINTMENTS

Mary Reidy Doheny was appointed to a four-year term as a voting member of the Authority Board by the City of Watertown, and Alex MacKinnon was reappointed by St. Lawrence County to serve a four-year term.

The Board welcomed new members Eric Virkler, appointed by Lewis County to a four-year term, and Mark Hall, appointed to a four-year term by St. Lawrence County.

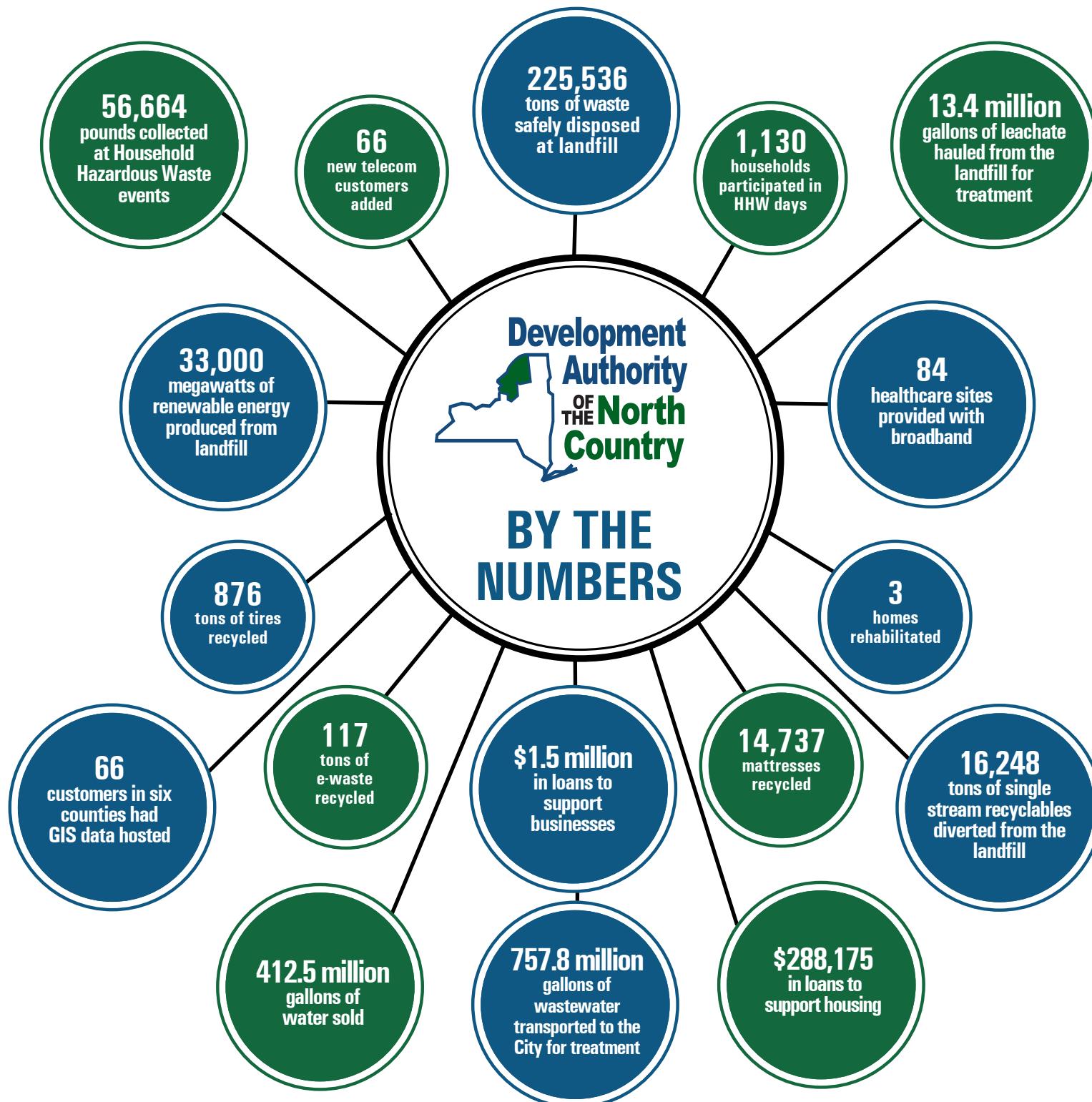
## NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

At its March, 2022 annual meeting, the Board elected Margaret (Peg) Murray as chairperson, Tom Hefferon, vice-chair, Alex MacKinnon treasurer, and Dennis Mastascusa, secretary.

## OFFICERS

Margaret L. Murray, Chair	Appointed by Jefferson County
Thomas H. Hefferon, Vice Chair	Appointed by City of Watertown
Alex MacKinnon, Treasurer	Appointed by St. Lawrence County
Dennis Mastascusa, Secretary	Appointed by Lewis County
Mary Reidy Doheny	Appointed by City of Watertown
Mark Hall	Appointed by St. Lawrence County
Nancy C. Henry	Appointed by Governor
James C. Hollenbeck	Appointed by Governor
Stephen M. Hunt II	Appointed by Governor
Brian McGrath	Appointed by Governor
Eric Virkler	Appointed by Lewis County

*\*Board vacancies currently exist for a Jefferson County appointee and a gubernatorial appointee.*



# DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OVERVIEW

# Development Authority OF THE North Country



The Development Authority of the North Country is a New York State public authority that serves the common interests of Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties by providing technical services and infrastructure that enhance economic opportunities in the region and promote the health and well-being of its communities.

The Development Authority of the North Country is a self-supporting, public benefit corporation operating under the authority of the Public Authorities Law of the State of New York. It is without taxing power and operates as an enterprise fund. The Development Authority is not an agency of New York State nor Jefferson, Lewis, or St. Lawrence county government.

The Development Authority is committed to environmental stewardship, fiscal integrity and building partnerships. To achieve these objectives, the Development Authority works

with its municipal partners through shared service solutions, using advanced technology and fostering municipal cooperation to achieve cost-effective services for the region.

The majority of the revenue the Development Authority receives is obtained from the sale of services to its customers. The Development Authority is nonprofit; all revenue received must be used for operating expenses, construction costs, designated reserves, and outstanding debts.

The Development Authority of the North Country is unique among public authorities in New York State in its scope of activities. Unlike other single-purpose state authorities, the Development Authority owns and operates a number of revenue-based infrastructure facilities and manages a wide range of business and housing development programs. The Development Authority owns and operates water and sewer infrastructure linking the City of Watertown's facilities to Fort Drum, a regional waterline serving communities in western Jefferson County, a materials management facility in Rodman, a recycling transfer station in Harrisville, and a 1,800-mile open access telecommunications network. In addition, the Authority provides contract operations and maintenance services to communities to support water and sewer facilities, technical assistance in geographic information systems and other telemetry services, and administers revolving loan funds for affordable housing and small business development.

The Authority also provides services on behalf of New York State and contractually for municipalities throughout the state's North Country Regional Economic Development Region, including Franklin, Essex, Clinton, and Hamilton counties, in addition to the tri-county area.

# BROADBAND

Where, exactly, are the gaps in broadband coverage in the North Country and how can they be bridged? Emerging from the pandemic, which had only served to magnify the urgent need for rural broadband expansion, this was the question on many minds. The Development Authority partnered with Lewis, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties to conduct broadband user surveys and facilities inventories to help identify areas lacking in sufficient broadband access and develop data that could be used to implement solutions.

Over the last year, the studies in all three counties were completed and results were presented to each county legislature. The data were loaded into the Authority's Geographic Information System (GIS) so it can be mapped and examined, serving as a valuable tool to assist the counties in developing strategies to close the digital divide. Each county created a committee to more closely examine the results, determine priority areas for investment and develop action plans. Authority staff from Telecommunications and Regional Development are assisting each committee in devising technical solutions and investigating funding sources as they move forward.

Working in partnership with the Authority, Lewis County was awarded grants by the Northern Border Regional Commission and the Community Development Block Grant program to provide wireless last-mile broadband service to over 1,500 homes in Harrisville, the Town of Denmark and Lyonsdale. Proposals have been received and construction will take place in 2022.

***"Over the course of the last year, Lewis County has been fortunate to work with Development Authority Telecommunications and Regional Development staff on several broadband expansion projects. From helping develop grant applications to analyzing fixed wireless service provider bids, the expertise that DANC has provided to Lewis County is directly related to the success of our broadband expansion initiatives."***

*- Casandra Buell, Director of Planning and Development, Lewis County*



## NEW INFRASTRUCTURE READY TO GO

Construction is complete on a significant telecommunications project that will expand access to unserved and under-served businesses and residents in Tupper Lake using a combination of fiber-to-the-home and wireless technology. In partnership with the Town of Tupper Lake, the Authority was awarded a \$200,000 Northern Border Regional Commission grant for the project.

SLIC Network Solutions will be providing the internet service to businesses and residents there and that service will be available later this year.

# BROADBAND

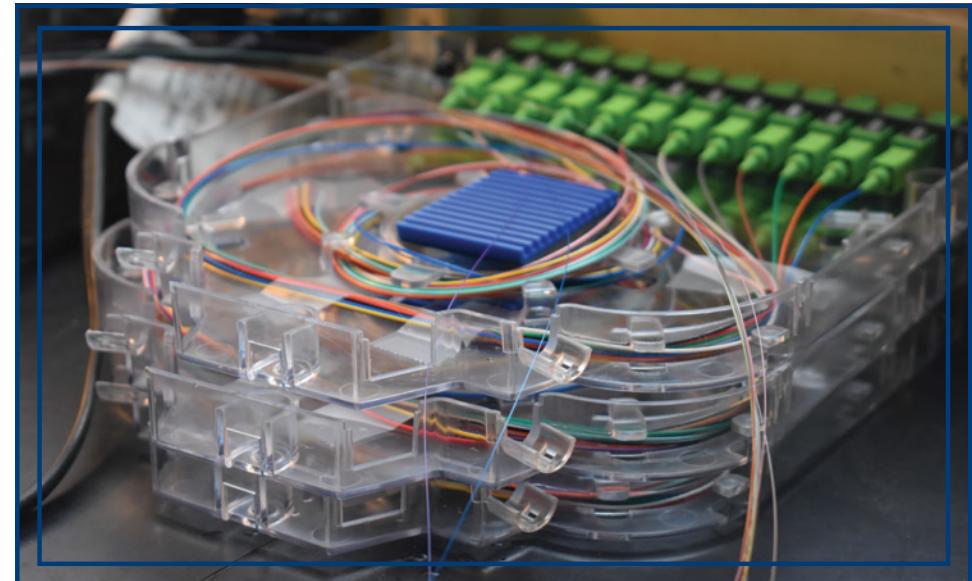
**"DANC has assisted with infrastructure improvements and inventory management, water/sewer projects, district consolidation, building and property improvements, renovations and alterations, to name a few. The current exciting project underway is broadband. The Town of Tupper Lake businesses and residents will benefit immensely from this unique and exciting project to bring affordable, reliable service here during the initial phase. The partnership the town has with DANC is what made this project come to fruition and which will eventually benefit the entire community!"**

**- Patricia S. Littlefield, Former Town of Tupper Lake Supervisor**

## REPEAL OF STATE BROADBAND FIBER FEES

The Authority invested much time and effort over the last two years into educating elected representatives, state officials, community leaders and the public about the devastating impact of state-imposed fees on every mile of fiber optic cable that runs through or crosses a state right-of-way. This was a significant deterrent to broadband build-out in rural areas of the state and would have cost the Authority over \$1.5 million a year.

The Authority supported various proposed legislation to repeal or modify the fiber fees, participated in roundtable discussions held by elected officials from around the state, provided input as legislators drafted legislation addressing the issue, offered testimony at hearings and focused media attention on the issue. In early April 2022, the state repealed the broadband fiber fees - a significant victory for rural broadband!



## WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES



The Telecommunications division has been working with the Olympic Regional Development Authority to design the communications network to support the International University Sports Federation's Winter Universiade in Lake Placid in early 2023. The complex project involves determining how the connectivity will work for media broadcasting, network monitoring, public wifi, timing and scoring functions and much more. This event will see over 2,500 university-level athletes from around the world converge on Lake Placid, Potsdam and Canton for a dozen competition days that will attract global media attention.

# MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

## IMPROVING OPERATIONS

Despite record-setting rain during the summer of 2021, the amount of leachate collected at the regional landfill was the lowest since 2017. This is a direct result of staff making changes that improved operations on the working face of the landfill. Leachate is the liquid produced when rain and melting snow pass through the trash. To reduce the amount of leachate produced, the area that is open to precipitation was minimized and the practice of “clean shedding” was implemented. Clean shedding involves the use of clean soil to form side slopes around the working face which “shed” any water away from the central working area.

A new above-ground fueling station was built to replace two underground fuel storage tanks, which were removed. The dispensers provide diesel fuel for the landfill’s heavy equipment and gasoline for light-duty trucks and other vehicles.



Safety is the first priority at the landfill and being prepared for an emergency is key to running a safe and efficient operation. In June, 2021, the Authority partnered with community first-responders and hosted a mass casualty training event at the landfill to give local emergency volunteers the chance to familiarize themselves with the facility and the types of emergencies they might encounter. It also provided Authority personnel the opportunity to practice confined space rescue and to understand how they would be called upon to interact with local responders in the event of an emergency.

# MATERIALS MANAGEMENT



Hand-in-hand with the opening of a new section goes closure of filled sections of the landfill. Last year a 15-acre section that had reached capacity was permanently capped with a waterproof membrane. The cap is sealed and covered with a thick layer of soil, then seeded. Capping is an ongoing process at the landfill, as sections reach capacity. Every capped section is monitored and maintained in perpetuity. Capping portions of the landfill helps reduce leachate generation and control odors.



## FACILITIES

Taking the steps to ensure environmentally responsible waste disposal for the residents of Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties for years to come has been a priority of the Authority, with the \$24 million expansion of the regional landfill in Rodman. The site analysis, planning, permitting and phased construction has been ongoing for 18 years, and construction was completed on two new cells in 2021. The new cells feature a double-composite liner system, which includes two layers of material that create a six-foot-thick barrier between the bottom of the cell and the environment. The construction of new roads, a storm water collection system, a leachate pump house at each cell and a storage building that also includes a leachate pump station were all part of the project.

# MATERIALS MANAGEMENT



## WASTE DIVERSION

Diverting waste from the landfill through recycling, reusing and reducing helps prolong the life of the landfill and is better for the environment. The Authority continued its partnership with Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties to collect and transport mattresses to be recycled; 14,737 were diverted from taking up valuable landfill space last year. In addition, 876 tons of tires collected from the three counties were diverted, and 117 tons of e-waste.

Five free household hazardous waste collection events were sponsored by the Authority to help residents of the tri-county region safely dispose of hazardous items. A total of 56,664 pounds of hazardous waste was collected at those events for proper disposal and 1,130 households participated.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the North Country Recycles website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "ABOUT US", "DANC.ORG", and "CONTACT US". The main header features the logo "NORTH COUNTRY RECYCLES" with a green leaf icon. Below the header, a large image shows a person holding a clear plastic bin filled with various household hazardous waste items like paint cans. A call-to-action box overlaid on the image reads "Upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day Schedule" and "Click to View More Information (PDF)". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer section with icons for "REDUCE", "REUSE", "RECYCLE", "COMPOSTING", "EDUCATION &amp; OUTREACH", and "HOW DO I RECYCLE...". A welcome message from the authority is displayed, along with a link to learn more about recycling in the community.

To educate residents about the importance of recycling and to promote recycling as a key method of diverting waste from the landfill, the Authority developed four new television ads which ran throughout the region in 2021. The ads were designed to appeal to various target audiences and to point those with questions to the [northcountryrecycles.org](http://northcountryrecycles.org) website. Shorter video versions of the ads were created to be used in a geographically-targeted pilot digital campaign that resulted in 218,855 impressions.

The Authority's recycling website, [www.northcountryrecycles.org](http://www.northcountryrecycles.org) was updated and refreshed to make it easier for residents to find answers to their recycling questions.

# BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

## WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

When operators retire or change jobs, municipalities can find themselves without a certified or licensed operator to run their water or wastewater treatment plant. These are the people who make sure clean water is available to residents and that wastewater is properly treated to ensure regulatory compliance and environmental protection. Under the shared services model, the Authority provides properly certified/licensed operators that can be shared among municipalities, saving taxpayer funds. The Authority provides this service – at the request of the municipality and tailored to each individual municipality's needs – for both large and small communities. New contracts were awarded to the Authority last year for these services by the Town of Pamelia and the Town of Parishville and several existing contracts were renewed.



## ARMY WATER LINE

High-tech devices were used to inspect the 30-year-old Army water line, owned by the Authority, which stretches between Fort Drum and the City of Watertown and provides drinking water to the post. Two different devices were employed to examine the integrity of the inside of the line, without ever shutting down the water service. This proactive approach was used to detect air pockets, leaks, and worn or thinning spots in the pipe before they can become major issues.

The inspection showed that some sections of the water line will need to be replaced. Authority staff followed up with visual inspections and soil sampling in high-priority areas to verify data and prioritize pipeline replacement. The pipeline replacement project will be completed in phases, with the most compromised sections of pipe replaced first.

# BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

## HOUSING

Improving housing stock in North Country communities is critical to the region's economic development efforts, particularly the ability to attract and retain new residents and workers. The Authority's Regional Development division provides housing grant administration and program delivery services to communities to help them meet this goal. A significant need in the North Country is rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes. Improvements made under these programs address critical issues including code violations and energy efficiency.

Staff help communities with housing grant applications and, once funding is received, staff provide assistance in setting up program guidelines, identifying potential applicants, providing inspections and interfacing between the homeowner and contractor.

The Authority is assisting Tupper Lake with administration of \$400,000 in funding it received through the NYS Affordable Housing Corporation. This program will assist 10 homes with improvements and five are underway. The Authority is also assisting the Town of Gouverneur with a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant that will provide 10 households with owner-occupied rehabilitation and the first five are underway.

*"The Development Authority has been an amazing partner to us. They provide a resource that we just don't have at our disposal. They have helped us obtain and administer housing grants that are so important for the rehabilitation of the homes of our community's residents, and the projects are on-time and on-budget. We've had a lot on our plates the last few years and the Authority has also helped us with GIS, water and sewer monitoring and almost every infrastructure project we've done."*

- David Spilman, Jr., Supervisor, Town of Gouverneur

## DRUM COUNTRY REGIONAL MARKETING INITIATIVE

Regional Development staff worked with the economic development offices of the Authority's three county partners and local chambers of commerce to develop a new website and social media marketing effort to attract and retain workforce and businesses to the North Country called Let's Meet: [www.drumcountryny.com](http://www.drumcountryny.com).

The year-long effort was a partnership between the economic development offices of Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties, the Development Authority, Advocate Drum and National Grid. The campaign highlights all the attributes of the North Country that make it a great place to live and work, including proximity to Fort Drum and its potential workforce.



*"'Let's Meet - Drum Country' is an economic development initiative for our new pandemic world. The campaign takes the target off of industry, business and infrastructure and aims at the most important resource: people. Northern New York's strongest asset is its quality of life. 'Let's Meet – Drum Country' is an example of how economic development marketing will happen in our new normal."*

- Corey Fram, Director, Thousand Islands International Tourism Council

# BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

## LAND USE PLANNING

The Authority completed the Fort Drum Compatibility Query Tool, located on the internet mapping application at [www.fortdrumcompatibility.org](http://www.fortdrumcompatibility.org). The portal assists land use planners in understanding how a development project might impact Fort Drum, its mission or activities. Funded in part by a grant from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, Authority staff created a query tool that provides developers, municipal leaders and planners with the ability to search for a parcel to identify potential encroachment issues relating to its development and Fort Drum.

The Authority also hosted an event on Fort Drum to bring together Fort Drum garrison staff and local planning officials to provide both sides with a better idea about how local land use decisions can impact the post's mission and operations. The Fort Drum Compatibility Symposium was well-received and will hopefully become a regular event.

## EMERGENCY PLANS

Ensuring a safe work environment for employees became of paramount concern during the pandemic. The state required the development of Public Health Emergency Response Plans and the Authority assisted several communities in the development of theirs, including the towns of Adams, Morristown and Richland, and the villages of Castorland, Sandy Creek and Lacona. Authority staff worked with municipal staff to determine essential employees and services and how they could continue to operate safely and maintain essential services in an epidemic-like situation.

## TECHNICAL SERVICES

The Development Authority's licensed professional staff, supported by sophisticated equipment, help solve complex problems for municipalities that have limited internal resources and staff, helping them understand technical challenges and working in partnership to develop cost-effective solutions.

The Authority served as the project manager for the Village of Clayton as it completed its Historic District Project last year. The multi-year project included burying electrical and fiber cables, adding new historic lighting and reconstruction of the main downtown streets. The village celebrated completion of the project in Fall, 2021.

The Authority is also assisting the Village of Clayton with fiscal coordination and grant administration for several other projects. The wastewater treatment plant improvement project is a significant capital project for the village and construction is ongoing. Final design work was completed for the Mary Street Dock rebuild, repairs to the Frink Park Dock and Riverwalk and the new floating breakwater that will be installed in the river in front of the village. Construction will begin on those projects in 2022.



# BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES



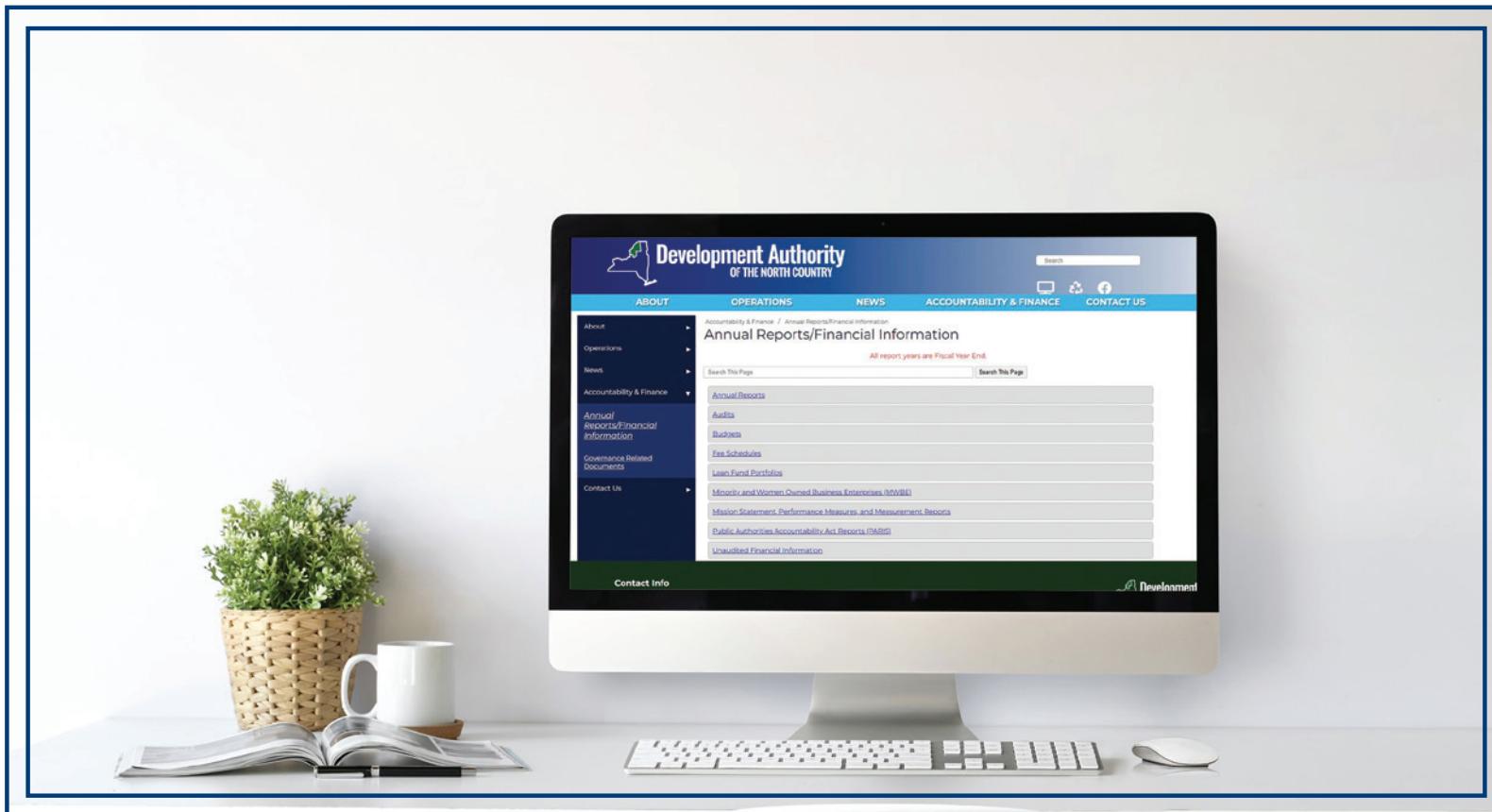
Lewis County requested assistance from the Authority to oversee a hazardous materials survey of a building in Turin that it had condemned and was considering demolishing. Then a fire reduced the building to a pile of rubble that created an eyesore at a main community intersection. The county then asked the Authority to develop a project scope and bid documents for the removal and disposal of the fire debris. The Authority provided project oversight for the cleanup and the corner is now clean and ready for redevelopment.

The Authority worked with several towns to address issues with the municipalities' water sources and systems. Preliminary engineering and design work was completed in the towns of Diana and Louisville for capital projects that will help those townships improve the quality and quantity of their drinking water. Authority staff is also working with the Town of Pitcairn to determine if it is feasible for the municipality to connect to the Town of Diana's system to address salt contamination in some private wells.

The fifth and final phase of the Lyons Falls Mill Redevelopment project was completed. The Authority assisted the Village of Lyons Falls and its partners with the demolition of several buildings over the course of the multi-year project and the property was cleaned up to prepare it for redevelopment. Lewis County is now marketing the parcel.



# FINANCIALS



All of our financial information, including audits, budgets and reports to the Public Authority Reporting Information System (PARIS), are available online.

For complete information on the operations of the Development Authority of the North Country, please visit our website at [www.danc.org](http://www.danc.org).



**DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE NORTH COUNTRY**  
317 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601 • 315-661-3200 • [www.danc.org](http://www.danc.org)