

## Vision:

*In the future, Jefferson County will be recognized for its innovative, entrepreneurial spirit and culture of creativity. Its residents will enjoy a high quality of life and ample employment opportunities. These positive aspects of the community will support the retention of youth and retired military personnel and lead to successful business attraction efforts.*

*The future Jefferson County will pride itself on its competitive, well-educated workforce. Collaborations between the County's secondary schools, BOCES, SUNY Jefferson Community College and its affiliates, and industry leaders will prepare students to succeed. The labor force will meet the demands of local employers, allowing firms to compete in the global economy.*

*In the coming years, Fort Drum will continue to be one of the largest employers in New York State, and serve as a foundation of the community, providing employment, business activity, and diversity. Jefferson County will lead the Northeast in the agricultural industry, support the growth of local manufacturing businesses, and will be known for its world-class tourism opportunities. Watertown will continue to serve as a regional service center for healthcare, finance, retail, and government services. The strength of the region's economy will be seen in the thriving local businesses that provide stable and well-paying jobs and in the increasing amount of international investment made in the County.*



## Looking to Implementation

*The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) serves as a blueprint for coordinating economic development activities in Jefferson County. The final product represents several months of CEDS Committee work sessions to analyze emerging trends in our local economy and to identify opportunities for improving the local climate for business and community development. For the many businesses and community members who gave us their input, we thank you for your collaboration.*

Jeff Wood, CEDS Committee Chairperson

*Jefferson County is experiencing rapid change to the structure of its economy. Fort Drum continues to be the largest economic engine in the region. Equally important, though, is the spirit and resourcefulness of our North Country people. Working together, we can capitalize on the opportunities identified in this plan and make Jefferson County what we all desire—a truly viable community in which to live, work, and play.*

Carolyn D. Fitzpatrick, Chairwoman  
Jefferson County Board of Legislators

*The CEDS action plan reflects a broad-based approach to economic development. Fort Drum related growth and development, our proximity to Canada, abundant farmland, and the increasingly global economy are creating many opportunities to proactively strengthen and diversify our business environment. However, no agency or government body can do it alone. The same local and regional partnerships involved in identifying these initiatives must now carry forward to execute them.*

Donald C. Alexander, CEO  
Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency

For a complete copy of the Jefferson County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, scan the QR code or contact:



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2012



# Jefferson County, NY

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

### A "Blueprint" for Economic Development Action

Produced by the Jefferson  
County CEDS Committee

## Recognizing the Need

This 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) updates the Jefferson County CEDS Committee's vision and plan in order to reflect the significant transformation in the local and regional economies over the last few years. Through this update, the Committee has revised its baseline CEDS document to analyze changes in local economic conditions and identify emerging trends and new opportunities for improving the health of the County's economy and employment base.

The CEDS planning process attempts to reflect all major economic sectors in the County, such as Fort Drum, tourism, service businesses, manufacturing and agriculture. The CEDS plan is intended to be used at varying levels to help guide integrated economic development programming and leverage funding for local initiatives. The CEDS Committee will continue to make periodic updates to the plan to anticipate changes in the economic climate.

## The Jefferson County Advantage

- With around 24,000 employees, Fort Dum is the largest single-site employer in Jefferson County and Upstate New York. The post creates over \$2 billion a year in overall regional economic impact through wages, construction, contracting, and local purchases.
- Jefferson County has a large number of legacy businesses that have grown from small start ups to large, successful and stable participants in the local economy.
- The County's agricultural industry presents opportunities for growth and expansion into new markets.
- Visitors to Jefferson County enjoy world class tourism destinations such as the 1,000 Islands, Eastern Lake Ontario, and the Tug Hill Region.
- The County is well positioned to further capitalize on its proximity to Ontario, Canada as many of its targeted industries closely align with top industries in Ontario.



## Key Goals & Targeted Industries

### Cultivate a Culture of Entrepreneurship

Changes in the economic climate in Jefferson County and throughout the U.S. have made entrepreneurship and small business development among the fundamental forces behind economic growth. The County is committed to supporting and encouraging entrepreneurs to help them succeed in their business endeavors, including:

- Expansion of support networks and programs
- Improved access to sources of capital



### Agriculture

The large cluster of dairy farming in Jefferson County supports dairy product manufacturing firms in the County and region. The community should develop and market local value-added products, investigate the potential for biomass feedstock crop production, and work with the industry to further grow dairy product manufacturing.

### Enhance Quality of Life Advantages

Enhancing quality of life in the County will not only benefit our local residents and existing workforce, it will facilitate business investment and attract employers. Among the initiatives the Committee recommends:

- Continue housing strategy implementation
- Increase year round arts and culture
- Continue reinvesting in downtowns
- Support 'Buy Local' campaigns and farmers markets



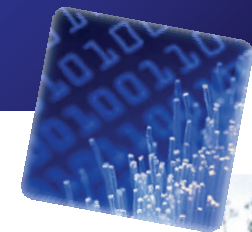
### Develop First-Class Amenities to Support Growth

For Jefferson County to be successful in business expansion and attraction efforts, it must offer new and existing businesses top-rate infrastructure and facilities. These top priorities in the Action Plan include:

- Complete the Watertown International Airport development plan
- Expand broadband access and "last mile" infrastructure
- Support development of technologies that reduce energy costs

### Information Technology

As an important support industry, IT jobs can be found in almost every industry sector. To fully realize this industry's potential, plans should be prepared to develop a technology training and internship program, start an IT peer group, and identify and develop IT skills needed in non-IT industries.



### Develop the Local Workforce to Meet 21st Century Challenges

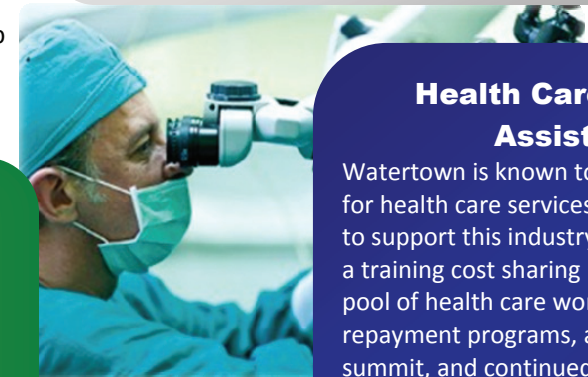
It is vitally important that our educators teach the skills necessary for students and residents to succeed in the 21st century job market. Ways to address emerging workforce needs include:

- Align workforce development programs with targeted industries
- Bring together educators and employers to jointly address workforce needs
- Encourage internship and apprenticeship partner programs
- Increase awareness of higher education offerings



### Tourism, Accommodations, Food Services, & Retail Trade

These industries provide a variety of jobs, attract visitors to the region, and bring vibrancy to the area. Tourism officials should continue to develop, enhance, and market the recreational resources and special places that this unique area has to offer.



### Health Care & Social Assistance

Watertown is known to be a regional center for health care services. Recommendations to support this industry include developing a training cost sharing model to increase the pool of health care workers, tuition repayment programs, an annual health care summit, and continued youth shadowing programs.

### Manufacturing

The County has many legacy manufacturing firms; some have been here for over 100 years. To support these businesses and ensure they continue to prosper, the community should expand manufacturing collaboration initiatives, initiate youth workforce development programs, and target manufacturing supply industries.