

# Grow LivCo

NY

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



INVESTED IN YOU.

# Welcome to LivCo

Grow LivCo is Livingston County's Economic Development Department. The department houses and staffs the Livingston County Industrial Development Agency, Livingston County Development Corporation, and Livingston County Tourism, Inc.

The missions of these organizations are closely connected, and together they preserve, celebrate, and grow what makes Livingston County unique and attractive for residents, visitors, and businesses.

In these pages, you will discover the impactful collaborations, strategic investments, and transformative initiatives that have shaped our community's economic landscape over the past year. This report serves as a testament to our collective commitment to fostering sustainable growth, innovation, and prosperity.

Thank you for embarking on this journey with us. Together, we continue to chart a course towards a future defined by sustained economic growth, innovation, and shared prosperity for all.

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## MEET OUR TEAM



**Bill Bacon**  
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**Maureen Wheeler**  
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**Kelly Burns**  
Director of Tourism



**Louise Wadsworth**  
Downtown Coordinator



**Molly Downey**  
Economic Development Specialist



**Jennifer Clark**  
Economic Development Assistant

# NEW GROWTH ACROSS INDUSTRIES

It was an interesting and exciting year in many ways for Grow LivCo. The economy experienced record-low unemployment while interest rates climbed to a level we have not seen in over a decade. The increase in wages was offset in many ways by rising prices and the costs associated with inflation. However, that did not seem to slow spending as sales tax receipts in Livingston County **increased approximately 8.5%** and home sales in the Rochester MSA were among the hottest markets in the country.

Solar continued to lead the way with development in the County where three (3) utility-scale projects are working to come online with almost **500MW of renewable power**. We saw several companies proposing expansion projects as they look to add more value to their vendor base and one vendor from out of the area who saw value by acquiring their supplier located in Avon. We saw an uptick in new development as well with the addition of the travel center in York, more flex space in Avon at the James Steele Industrial Park, and a new campground proposed for Nunda with close proximity to the Letchworth State Park entrance.

The transfer of ownership in the former Livingston Correctional Facility promises to be a focus of redevelopment and reuse in 2024 and beyond. With over **300,000sf of adaptive space** located next to the Interstate, we are very bullish on the opportunity it presents for the addition of local workers and a return to the local tax base. Infrastructure will also be a continued focus as the County's Light Up Livingston broadband initiative will provide some of our most remote areas with high-speed connectivity. Water and sewer investments and upgrades comprise a multi-year project with additional service being proposed in the towns of York, Leicester, Avon, Geneseo, Groveland and Mt. Morris.

Looking further ahead, we will continue to seek investment opportunities to add to the Livingston Industrial Complex and James Steele Park in Avon while considering development ideas for the Industrial Park and Crossings in Dansville. As a business attraction strategy, we want to see more reuse of existing facilities as a less expensive and more efficient option to activate commercial spaces.

**Read on to learn more about how we're investing in industry across Livingston County.**





# WHAT IS A PILOT?

The Livingston County Industrial Development Agency uses a tool called a “PILOT” to structure tax payments from eligible companies and organizations to the local taxing jurisdictions, such as the village, town, county and school district. PILOT is an acronym which means payment-in-lieu-of-taxes and can range in duration or amount. When it is used to attract new businesses or new construction, it is often misinterpreted as a “tax break” or an expense for taxpayers, which can be confusing. While it is a benefit and does assist with mitigating the immediate effects of increased assessed valuations, it is important to know that a PILOT can never result in a loss of existing tax dollars.

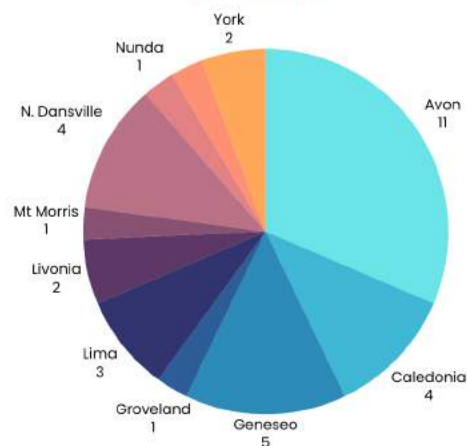
Companies or organizations seeking a PILOT must first qualify for the benefit by adding both employment and assessed value to a property. The benefit provides a phased-in approach on the difference between the existing assessment and the future assessment after construction. The difference in values are broken down incrementally over the term allowing the benefactor to stabilize and solidify their new operation(s) before implementing full taxes.

More recently and somewhat differently, solar companies have sought PILOTs to structure a payment schedule for property taxes to local jurisdictions. Under NYS real property tax law, solar developments can claim a 15-year exemption from property taxes unless required by taxing jurisdictions to enter into a PILOT. In this case, a PILOT is a necessary tool to obtain a payment from the developer.

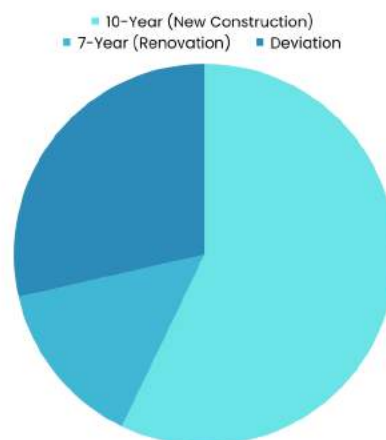
PILOTs have become a competitive tool among different economic development agencies around the State. Some agencies offer longer, more robust terms in an effort to gain an advantage over others as a way to entice prospective out-of-state companies. Most, if not all developers know this and will leverage a local agency to negotiate the longest and best offer. The Livingston County Industrial Development Agency maintains a conservative, standardized approach to evaluate each prospective company seeking a PILOT. If needed, certain projects which offer an increased economic impact can require a deviation which constitutes fiscally responsible decisions, public hearings and a consistent evaluation of the factors involved.

If you take anything away from this article, please understand that any PILOT structure will begin by bringing a taxing jurisdiction equal, if not more, tax dollars than what is currently assessed. The benefit to a company or organization (not including a solar development) is a savings on the future increased tax dollars during the term of the PILOT. For solar companies, a PILOT is an assurance that the jurisdictions will realize additional tax dollars from the development. Lastly and most importantly, the ultimate goal and result is a growth in the overall tax base for your communities.

## PILOTS by Community 35 Total



## PILOTS by Structure 35 Total





# IDA PROJECT ACTIVITY

Project	Town	Status as of 12/31/23
Livingston Associates	Caledonia	Closed on incentives
Blue Heron Logistics	Lima	Closed on incentives
Jaycox Creek Solar, LLC	Geneseo	Closed on incentives
Caledonia CSG, LLC	Caledonia	Closed on incentives
Morris Ridge Solar Energy Center, LLC	Mt Morris	Closed on incentives
PJ Properties of Livonia	Livonia	Closed on incentives
Piranha Tec Drive, LLC	Avon	Closed on incentives
York Travel Center	York	Closed on incentives
Avon R.S.D., LLC	Avon	Closed on incentives
Power & Construction Group, Inc.	Caledonia	Closed on incentives
American Rock Salt	Groveland	Closed on incentives
Horsehoe Solar Energy, LLC	Caledonia	Committed
White Creek Solar, LLC	York & Leicester	Committed
Greenway Campground, LLC	Nunda	Committed
Livingston Associates, Inc.	Caledonia	Committed



# LOCAL LABOR POLICY

In 2023, the Board of the Livingston County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) felt that the protection and use of local labor remain a critical component of development. This was solidified by passing the IDA's Local Labor Policy which states that companies receiving assistance in the form of incentives are required to adhere to a **threshold of 75% local workforce** on a project.

It is anticipated that the surrounding and included counties in the local labor area will be able to provide the necessary services required for project completion however, in the instance that specialized or availability becomes a concern, a waiver can be submitted for review. Projects that do not adhere to the local labor policy risk losing their incentives and may be subject to recapture of any financial benefit.

The intent of the policy is not to restrict the options of a project developer; however, our belief is that local contractors and laborers deserve an honest opportunity to advance the economic prosperity of our communities. This policy also reinforces and compliments the mission of the Agency to provide and strengthen economic impact in Livingston County!

# SMALL BUSINESS IS A BIG DEAL



Some may believe that the demise of small businesses in rural communities is inevitable. E-commerce giants like Amazon place tremendous pressure on “mom and pop” retailers. The pandemic, supply chain challenges, and a looming recession have undeniably shifted buying habits in the past few years.

But in Livingston County, small business is a big deal and an important piece of our Economic Development Strategy! In fact, **93%** of all businesses in LivCo **employ less than 19 people** and **82% employ 9 or less people.**

Think about the small businesses that you interact with regularly... coffee shops, bakeries, hair salons and barber shops, boutiques, gas stations, auto repairs, the car wash, contractors, hardware stores, lumberyards, the deli, the movie theater, the bowling alley, liquor stores, restaurants, breweries and bars. Now imagine your community without them.

Small business entrepreneurs offer communities economic sustainability. They bring growth, provide employment opportunities to local residents, and innovation to rural communities. They also generate revenue that converts local taxes into community improvements.

The Better Business Bureau’s national statistics show that when you spend \$100 at a local business, roughly **\$68** stays within the local economy, compared to a non-local business where \$43 of that \$100 dollars stays in the community. Most small businesses also participate in community festivals, sponsor local sports teams, and donate to local causes.

Local small businesses also provide character and individuality to a community. They are a community’s unique brand. Walking along a thriving business district can create a sense of value and identity for visitors. It’s an impression of vitality and wealth, producing a positive image of the overall community.

**Read on to learn more about how we’re supporting our small businesses.**



# DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT

Livingston County has been acknowledged as a leader in downtown revitalization projects in New York State. These projects have been accomplished through grants, loan programs, and technical assistance funding. We've made a lot of progress over the years including adding residential units on 2nd and 3rd floors of Main Street corridors, remodeling facades, adding new lighting, windows, and doors, and installing branded, eye-catching signs to draw in foot traffic. All of this has made a difference to the visual appeal and sustainability of our downtown districts.

The Downtown Partnership enhances economic growth through programs and assistance in:

- Downtown Revitalization and Community Development in Nine Villages
- Preservation and Enhancement of Historic Downtown Buildings
- Entrepreneurship Development and Recruitment of Businesses
- Integrated Marketing of Existing Businesses and Community

Since its inception (2011), the Downtown Partnership of Livingston County has completed 534 building improvement projects. This is an average of **41 projects a year!**

The nine villages of Livingston County have paid in a total of \$422,750 in support of the Downtown Partnership over the past 13 years (this is an average of \$3,613 per village annually) and have seen a **ROI of 4100%!**

The Downtown Partnership is responsible for securing **\$8,515,880 in grant funding** to spur **534 projects** and leverage **\$9,263,257 in private investment** for a total 13-year investment of **\$17,759,137** in our communities.





# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Our First Impressions Program funds projects that promote a lasting and genuine first impression of Livingston County's communities and businesses. The program contributes to creating a sense of place for residents, businesses, and visitors while driving the economy for future success. First Impressions provides reimbursement of up to 50% for signage, interior or exterior lighting, façade improvements, public art or streetscape enhancements, and digital first impressions.

**Eight projects** were referred for design services from InSite:Architecture. Not all have completed projects at this time.

All 9 Villages were awarded a \$10,000 grant. Most of these projects will be completed in 2024. Dansville is planning to install a large-scale mural, Avon sealed their existing mural and purchased park furniture to complete their pocket park (NYMS project 2022). Caledonia put their funds toward developing a NY Forward application and pocket park planning for the downtown district. Several villages are installing temporary wayfinding signage to gauge public input for future implementation of the LivCo Wayfinding Strategy. Light pole banners are being designed for several villages using the LivCo Wayfinding Strategy design guidelines. Mount Morris is developing a "walk of fame" installation with 9 plaques that celebrate the history of Mount Morris by highlighting a significant person from the past.

This year the First Impressions program was limited to assisting new businesses or major renovations on a rolling basis throughout the year. As a result, the program was able to assist these transformative projects in our downtown districts.

## First Impressions Funded 19 Projects in 2023

Total Grant  
\$64,900.77

Total Match  
\$42,442.86

Combined Investment  
\$107,343.63







**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

## Three Bricks Directory Sign

The existing sign was in poor condition and didn't adequately represent the businesses within the complex. The new sign is carved and has room for additional businesses. Lighting and landscaping will be added.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



## Drumroll Sushi & Stage

Coordinated signage: perpendicular sign, sign board above door, and interior sign reinforcing the brand.



## The Bronze

New Awning and sign with 'prismatic' raised letters in bronze finish.



## The Rabbet Hole

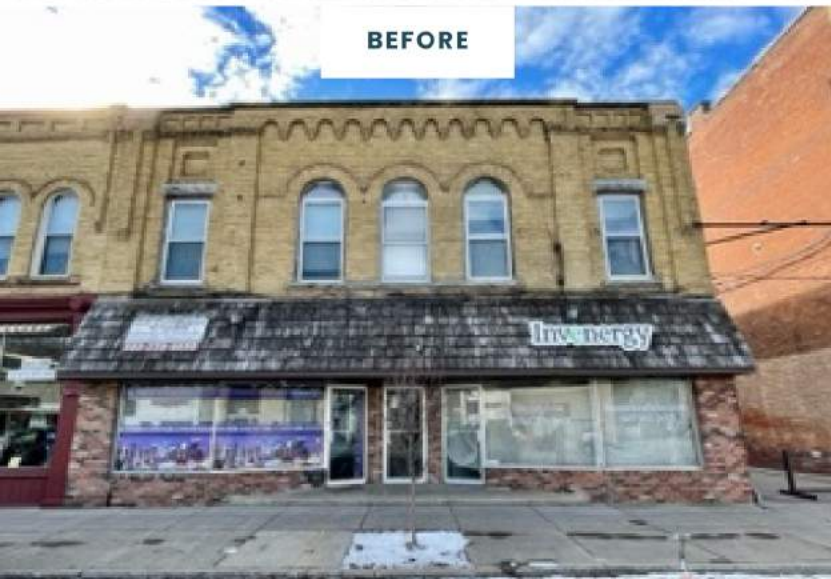
Carved dimensional sign with gold leaf lettering.



## Caledonia Fitness

Caledonia Fitness purchased this building after being a tenant for several years across the street. The entire interior of both storefronts was renovated. First Impressions funded the façade renovation of both storefronts. The structured awning was removed and full-size windows restored.

BEFORE



AFTER





# EXTREME MAKEOVER

Grow LivCo is committed to transformative revitalization that preserves and enhances the charm and character of the communities in Livingston County. Extreme Makeover provided matching grants to transform commercial and mixed-use buildings that are key to revitalization efforts. These renovations will attract visitors and boost the quality of life in the region by creating unique spaces for new and expanding businesses.

The Extreme Makeover Grant Program saved several buildings that were in danger of being lost, and enhanced the commercial viability of others. These buildings are now assets to the economy of the county and will continue to be active commercial spaces for many years to come.

## Extreme Makeover Funded 25 Projects

**Total Grant**  
**\$952,523.70**

**Total Match**  
**\$983,716.17**

**Combined Investment**  
**\$1,936,239.87**

### 3646 Main Street, Piffard Rose's Bar & Grill

Once a destination for travelers and locals alike, Rose's Bar & Grill has been closed for 30 years resulting in a building that was rapidly deteriorating. Descendants of the original owners have long had the dream of bringing this business back to life. The Extreme Makeover funding helped them to stabilize the building by restoring the foundation and rebuilding all the interior supports. A residential unit has been added upstairs, along with increased entertainment space on the first floor. All new HVAC, plumbing and electric were installed.

**Renderings from InSite: Architecture informed the front façade rehabilitation.**



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

*Building  
Saved*



BEFORE



AFTER

**1 Main Street, Livonia**  
West's Shurfine Food Mart

This thriving grocery store in the downtown district of Livonia was in need of an updated façade. **InSite: Architecture** executed renderings that informed the owner's design process. The result is a more modern and welcoming façade at the gateway into Livonia on Route 20A.



BEFORE

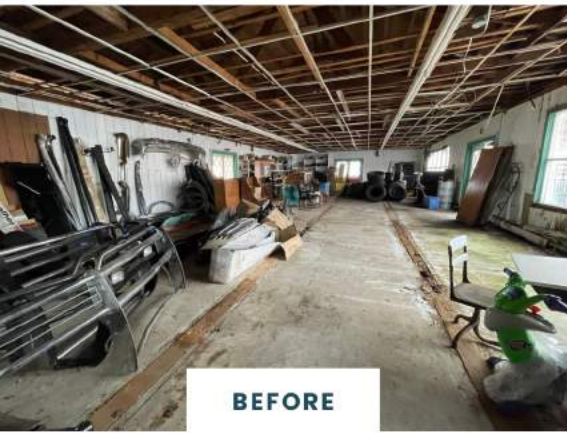


AFTER



**1670 Lakeville Road, Avon**  
Six Sprouts Farm Market

Once a thriving farm market in the 1980's, this building had been derelict for over 25 years and was in danger of being lost. The exterior awning and interior roof structure were completely rebuilt. **Design services from InSite: Architecture** helped inform the metal siding treatment and replacement windows and doors. All HVAC, plumbing and electric were installed and brought up to code. The interior space was designed and built out specifically for Six Sprout Farm Market, a **2022 Dream-O-Vate winner** that offers baked goods and other local products for sale.



BEFORE



AFTER



## 133 Main Street, Geneseo

Kingsley-Meyers LLC  
Building

Florence's Perpetual Estate Sale had been a tenant in this plaza for several years when the building became available for sale. Purchasing the building has allowed the owner to completely renovate and reconfigure the commercial spaces to the needs of the tenants, while also giving her the opportunity to expand her businesses footprint. **InSite: Architecture re-designed the entire façade to comply with the recommendations of the Livingston County Design Guidelines and to emulate a row of historic downtown storefronts.**



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

## 2703 Main Street, York

York Bank

The York Bank - originally built in the 1820s - became a bank in 1914. Abandoned for decades, the roof had collapsed in the back third of the building and had taken the first floor into the basement leaving the entire structure open to the elements. An Extreme Makeover grant was the first step to stabilize the building so that it could have eventual new life. The building is hoped to house a small co-op for local products and be a neighborhood gathering space.

# 63 Big Tree Street, Livonia

## Philosophy & Art Center

Originally built as a Masonic Lodge, this building has seen many uses over the years. In recent years it has stood as a mostly vacant and underutilized property in the heart of Livonia. The building is approximately 10,000 square feet and includes several spaces with individual access. The theater has been completely renovated and brought back to use and 2 large second-floor rooms have been renovated for use as creative arts space for the community. The entire building has been resided and windows and doors have been replaced.



BEFORE



AFTER



# NEW YORK MAIN STREET

Palace Properties of Geneseo originally purchased the Riviera Theater in 2013. This long vacant theater was completely renovated and reopened for business in 2015. In 2016, 8 Center Street was renovated to house Intermissions Bar and Grill, providing a gathering place for show-goers before and after events. In 2023, this entertainment complex was completed with the restoration of 6 Center Street to house Cricket's Coffee and connect the three properties internally.

6 Center Street dates back to 1885. While the building did once house the Carousel Restaurant (from the 1940s - 1970s) it had not been a restaurant since the late 1970s and a significant amount of interior work was needed to create this new anchor space.

Complete interior demolition was necessary and new plumbing, electric, flooring, walls, ceilings, and finishes were installed. Bathrooms were created and comply with ADA guidelines and a full kitchen was built out. A porch was added back onto the building as was originally present in historic photos. Additional exterior work included new windows, lighting, and painting.

Livingston County Economic Development was able to secure New York Main Street funding to assist in the completion of this project as it meets many community development goals and spurs private investment to match grant funds for the renovation of a commercial unit in a mixed-use building. This renovation project utilized local contractors and materials. The creation of this space has resulted in a new business, new jobs, improved quality of life for residents, and increased foot traffic/spending downtown.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



**6 Center Street,  
Geneseo**

The Village of Dansville was awarded a New York Main Street Grant of \$500,000. Six buildings were awarded funds for building renovation and two projects were completed in 2023. Work will continue through 2024.



## 170 Main Street, Dansville

\$75,000 Grant

The second and third floors were completely renovated to create a 5-bedroom apartment. The first floor was renovated to create a multi-use event space. **Renderings from InSite: Architecture** informed the removal of the awning and repairs to the storefront façade bringing it back to the original historic design.





# Maxwell Block, Dansville

\$50,000 Grant

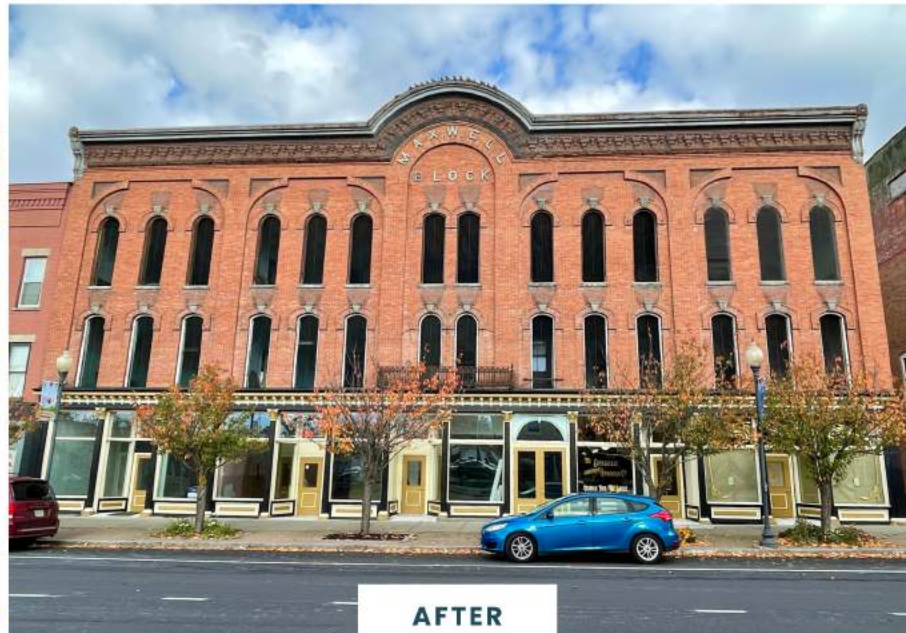
The five storefronts of this building were completely renovated to reveal and restore the transoms, replace doors, and install display windows in line with the original historic design. Floors were refurbished, lighting was installed and commercial spaces were brought up to code. Two retail stores have opened in the renovated spaces: Spindle & Knots and Dansville Granola



MAXWELL BLOCK RENDERING - OPTION H v2

in-site=architecture

SW 6990 Caviar, SW 6131 Chamois, and SW 2833 Roycroft Vellum



Starting a business is hard work and the first year can be the most difficult. Many startups struggle with finding the right location, accessing capital, managing overhead expenses, navigating the permitting processes, and the daily tasks of managing the business.

The Dream-O-Vate Business Competition is a game changer. Dream-O-Vate supports entrepreneurs to bring their dream of opening a business to reality.

Produced by Livingston County Economic Development, Dream-O-Vate is a retail business plan competition that encourages entrepreneurs to compete for the chance to open a storefront and earn a coveted business start-up package to turn their dream into reality. The goals of the program are to:


- Recruit new business that will enhance the existing business mix
- Improve the economic climate for all area businesses through increased resident and tourist traffic in our Village cores
- Capture greater resident and visitor spending
- Create a positive buzz about Livingston County and its communities

In 2023 Livingston County Economic Development completed the 2nd round of Dream-O-Vate (started in 2021) which assisted **14 small businesses** throughout the county. In September of 2023, the third round of the program was announced and **nine new businesses** were selected to receive assistance starting and expanding their businesses.

## Six Sprouts Farm Market Avon, NY

Owned by business partners Elizabeth George and Jordan Guadalupe, Six Sprouts Farm Market offers local goods including meats, dairy products, produce, plants, and seasonal items sourced from local Livingston County farms and businesses. Located in a newly renovated building (with the help of Extreme Makeover), Six Sprouts has quickly become a destination in northern Livingston County.

 Six Sprouts Farm Market LLC

 @sixsproutsfarmmarket



2021  
Winner





2021  
Winner



## little Lake Brewing Lakeville, NY

Owned by Donald and Robbin Carll, little Lake Brewing in Lakeville is a micro beverage center serving small-batch, artisan beverages complemented by a morning menu and seasonal evening menu. After winning Dream-O-Vate, they were able to add an outdoor kitchen and bar space as well as install equipment to host live music and events on-site.


 little Lake Brewing LLC

 @littlelakebrewing

## The Normal Lima, NY

Serving up classic BBQ dishes with a Scandanavian-inspired twist, the Normal BBQ has become a dining destination in Lima, New York. With Dream-O-Vate funding and technical assistance, owner Adam Peterson is focused on expanding the restaurant to include a full-service bar to enhance customer experience and increase sales.

 The Normal

 @thenormalbbq



2023  
Winner





2023  
Winner



## Ironwood Studios Springwater, NY

Located in a refurbished barn in Springwater, welder and owner, Stacey Mrva, has spent the last 25 years establishing a vast portfolio of custom pieces for both public and private spaces. With funding and technical assistance from Dream-O-Vate, Stacey can expand her workshop space for larger classes as well as renovate the second floor of the barn for guest accommodations, art openings, live music, yoga, and corporate retreats.

 Stacey M. Mrva

 @staceymrvametal



## BACK TO BUSINESS

Livingston County received **\$2.1 million** through the NYS Community Development Block Grant CARES program to support small businesses to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

The program allowed businesses to receive \$20,000 per:

- Low-moderate income owner and/or
- Created or retained full-time equivalent job

With **51 awards** made totaling \$2.1 million, the average award per business was **\$41,176**. The Back to Business program assisted 51 small businesses including **24 women-owned businesses** and **16 low-moderate income owned businesses**.

The Back to Business Program **retained 27 full time equivalent jobs** and **created 87 new full time equivalent jobs** for a total impact of 114 jobs in Livingston County. This is an average award of \$18,421 per job. Additionally, the businesses assisted consisted of 67 owners and were already employing 254 people at the time of application. Overall this program impacted 408 workers.



# CO.STARTERS

To enhance and support entrepreneurship in Livingston County, our office engaged CO.STARTERS to implement their curriculum in Livingston County. CO.STARTERS is a nationwide entrepreneurship training company that focuses on connecting community leaders with aspiring entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses to empower them with the programs and tools to collaborate and build a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Our team and partners from **Livingston County Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center at SUNY Geneseo, Letchworth Gateway Villages, and SCORE Rochester** attended a two-day CO.STARTERS facilitator training.

Over two days, we learned about the CO.STARTERS philosophy, reviewed the curriculum, and practiced serving as class facilitators. The training focused on implementing the CO.STARTERS Core program, an accelerator-style course that teaches entrepreneurs business fundamentals. This course is designed to be facilitated in a cohort environment over 10 weeks:

- Session 1 - Knowing Yourself
- Session 2 - Knowing Your Customer
- Session 3 - Finding the Right Solution
- Session 4 - Getting the Relationship Right
- Session 5 - Building Blocks
- Session 6 - Systems & Structures
- Session 7 - Discovering the Bottom Line
- Session 8 - Financial Modeling
- Session 9 - Planning for Growth
- Session 10 - Celebration



**In 2024, two ten-week courses will be conducted in Livingston County.**





# REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Livingston County Economic Development runs a Revolving Loan Fund which offers loans to new or expanding businesses. The primary objectives of the Revolving Loan Fund are to facilitate the expansion and retention of business activity within Livingston County, create and retain employment opportunities and maintain and expand the County's commercial and industrial tax base. The Fund aims to create equitable opportunities for underserved individuals and communities by providing access to capital, knowledge, and resources for small business owners.

Livingston County Economic Development has made **47 loans** over the past 10 years of which 41 - or **87%** - are still operating. This is a success rate that we are extremely proud of as business failure rates have remained more or less consistent since the 1990s across most industries in the US, with 90% of new businesses making it through their first year and only 35% through 10 years.

Project	Location	Loan Amount	Source	Status as of 12/31/23
Fueled Fitness, LLC	Dansville	\$25,000	RLF	Closed on loan
Milk & Honey, LLC	Lima	\$35,000	RLF	Closed on loan
The Normal BBQ, LLC	Lima	\$50,000	RLF	Closed on loan
OSB Ciderworks	Lakeville	\$100,000	RLF	Committed
T's on Genesee	Avon	\$22,000	RLF	Committed
Rising Storm Brewing Co.	Avon	\$150,000	RLF	Committed

Started year with  
37 active loans

Approved six  
new loans

Four loans were  
paid off



"Working with LCED is an amazing opportunity. We've leaned on them for more than just finance. It's such a helpful resource. Not only do they believe in you. They believe in their community. I cant recommend them enough."

- Elise Smith, Owner, OSB Ciderworks

# QUALITY OF LIFE LEADS DEVELOPMENT



Since joining offices with Economic Development in March 2021, Livingston County Tourism has focused on implementing direct programming that enhances the quality of life, creates destination businesses, and elevates outdoor recreation in the Genesee River Valley. Livingston County Tourism's mission is to drive economic growth through travel and increase the annual visitors and number of overnights in the county.

Livingston County Economic Development and Tourism work together to help increase destination marketing and promotion to visitors and locals. Our areas of focus for future businesses and development include local dining and craft beverages, outdoor recreation and agritourism, vibrant public art and music scene, and boutique hotels and glamping. Our programming and projects focus on supporting the following concepts from the LivCo Action Plan developed by destination expert Roger Brooks:

- "Tourism is the front door to your non-tourism economic development."
- "Quality of life is leading both economic and tourism development."
- "Jobs are going where the talent is or wants to be."

To enhance the visitor experience in the Genesee River Valley, Livingston County Tourism has worked to increase our digital presence using targeted advertising, continued producing four seasonal travel guides a year that highlight the must-dos, hidden gems, restaurants, attractions, and events in LivCo, and continue to develop the tourism website as a one-stop-shop for visitors coming to the area.

**Read on to learn more about how we're enhancing quality of life for our residents and visitors.**



# FESTIVAL & EVENTS FUND

In 2022, Livingston County Tourism launched the Festival and Events Fund, a matching grant program that assists community groups, non-profit organizations, and businesses in promoting and marketing festivals and events to increase tourism and promote quality of life, outdoor recreation, cultural experiences, and agritourism. These events increase the economic impact of visitors on regional and local economies, increase visitor spending, generate media awareness of Livingston County, and enhance the quality of life for county residents. In 2023, **12 projects** were awarded including **3 new events** and 9 existing events with significantly new enhancements to draw tourists to Livingston County.

## Caledonia Trout Festival

Caledonia is known as the birthplace of American trout fishing, with the Caledonia Hatchery at 16 North Street being the oldest hatchery in the Western Hemisphere. This legacy is captured in the mural *Trout Culture* by Tim Parsley (painted in 2022 as part of the Livingston County Walls Project). To again bring the community together and celebrate the legacy of Seth Green, trout fishing, and the area's incredible water quality, the Big Springs Historical Society and the Village of Caledonia hosted the first annual Trout Festival on Saturday, June 3rd, in the Village Office parking lot. The festival exceeded expectations and welcomed **over 2,000 people!**



## Hemlock "Little World's" Fair

The Hemlock "Little World's" Fair is Livingston County's largest and oldest (operating since 1857!) fair. Event funds were used to increase promotional efforts with a concentration on radio ads. In 2023 the Fair welcomed approximately **38,000 people** with an estimate of ~35% of those people from outside of the county.



After connecting with Iron Smoke Distillery owner, Tommy Brunett, who was interested in hosting a whiskey and music festival in the Finger Lakes region, Livingston County Economic Development and Tourism pitched Livingston County, specifically the Village of Geneseo, as the perfect location for such an event. As an existing hub for arts and culture, in the heart of the Genesee River Valley and the western gateway to the Finger Lakes, Livingston County was selected as the home of the first-ever Hoochenanny Whiskey Festival in Geneseo, New York on Oct. 20th and 21st, 2023.

The two-day festival included a VIP opening event, a music festival, and whiskey tastings. Designed as a celebration of New York craftsmanship, this festival was produced with the coordination and efforts of multiple organizations including **Iron Smoke Distillery** (Fairport, NY), **Art of Impact** (Louisville, Kentucky), **Twenty6 Productions** (Buffalo, NY), **Helen & Gertrude** (Rochester, NY), **Gallo Event Agency** (Fairport, NY), **Interlace Digital** (Buffalo, NY), **Trade & Prosper** (New York, NY) and **Livingston County Economic Development and Tourism** (Geneseo, NY).

The crowd remained dedicated to the incredible music and whiskey experience throughout the day. Considered a rousing success by festival organizers, the event drew positive feedback from the attendees who came from across New York State, with large percentages from Rochester and Buffalo, as well as out-of-state visitors from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Kentucky. With plans to increase attendance, expand offerings, and bring in larger musical acts in future years, Hoochenanny is expected to continue bringing in new visitors to the area for years to come.



The Struts, a British rock band, headlined, preceded by an eclectic lineup of acts including Public Water Supply, Sam Grisman Project, Los Straitjackets, and Tommy Brunett's All-Star Cavalcade of Scoundrels.



Hoochenanny kicked off with bites, libations, and live music at the Wadsworth Homestead with local businesses The Normal, O-Neh-Da Vineyards, and No BS Brewing.



A maker's fair, open to the public, showcased local products, artisans, and local businesses including Ironwood Studios, Golden Oaks Foods makers of Nunda Mustard, Once Again Nut Butter, Ratchili, Jazz House Designs, and Sweet Arts Bakery.



Hoochenanny partnered the New York State Distillers Guild to host the one-of-a-kind Rickhouse Rendezvous where attendees enjoyed fireside chats and 10 spirit tastings of their choice.





# GRANICUS & PLACER.AI

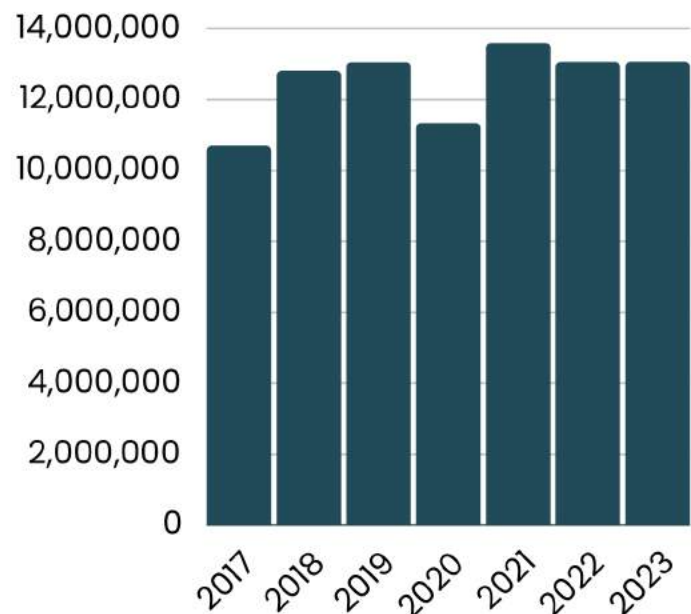
In 2023, Livingston County Tourism invested in two data monitoring and tracking platforms.

Granicus is a monitoring and compliance software for Short Term Rentals. Granicus allows the county to increase compliance with Livingston County's Occupancy Tax Law with proactive enforcement.

Placer.ai is a location analytics company that studies visit trends, trade areas, and demographics. Through collecting geolocation data from mobile devices, Placer.ai can differentiate locals vs. visitors and provide analytics that enables Livingston County Economic Development and Tourism to help retailers and restaurants understand patterns in foot traffic, give municipalities a way to measure economic development, and allow hospitality services to plan effectively for local events.

Towns & Villages	Total Visits
Geneseo	8.41M
Geneseo Village	6.78M
North Dansville	3.41M
Dansville Village	2.85M
Avon	2.77M
Livonia	2.69M
Mount Morris	2.3M
Avon Village	1.81M
Village of Mount Morris	1.79M

### Visits to Livingston County



# TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

On April 8, 2024, Livingston County will be in the direct path of a total solar eclipse, which occurs when the moon completely covers the face of the sun, casting a shadow on the Earth. It will be the first total solar eclipse in the area in nearly 100 years. This event is an opportunity for businesses to capitalize on the influx of visitors as the eclipse is expected to draw in thousands of visitors to the region. The LivCo Tourism Eclipse Event Fund awarded **\$85,000** to high-quality, thoroughly planned eclipse-related events taking place between April 1st, 2024, and April 8th, 2024 that will draw residents and tourists to Livingston County.



On May 23rd and 24th, 2023, Jessica Morgan and Hayley Isbill from Sweetwater, Tennessee visited LivCo and shared how they prepared for the 2017 Eclipse in their small town of 5,700 residents who welcomed over 50,000 visitors for the eclipse that year. Morgan and Haley shared their experience and offered advice to business owners, communities members, and organization leaders on how to prepare for the 2024 Eclipse in Livingston County.

With over **100 attendees** across two days of presentations, our locals got a head-start on preparing for this once-in-a-lifetime event. Livingston County Tourism also shared programs available for eclipse planning including grant funding, a community dashboard, and marketing initiatives.

To help inform businesses, residents, and visitors about events, merchandise, accommodations, and safety, Livingston County Tourism set up **LivCoSol.com**, a website and information for the 2024 solar eclipse to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable eclipse viewing experience.



Livingston County Tourism is selling eclipse glasses, t-shirts, stickers, and various other merchandise at VisitLivCo.Shop. Since launching, our office has sold thousands of glasses, as well as distributing complementary glasses to every school district in Livingston County.



## DESTINATION CREATION

The Destination Creation course teaches the proven 14-point business success strategy developed by internationally known business consultant Jon Schallert. Schallert created this methodology after three decades of coaching independent business owners to make their businesses irresistible to customers. Businesses that follow Schallert's process can attract both local consumers and customers from far beyond their typical geographic market. For roughly three years, two Livingston County Economic Development staff members have been teaching the course.

In 2023, two more staff members, Kelly Burns, Director of Tourism, and Molly Downey, Economic Development Specialist became certified to teach Destination Creation. The pair joins Maureen Wheeler and Louise Wadsworth from Livingston County Economic Development who were the first in New York State to become certified to facilitate the course. Our office now has **four certified facilitators** – more than any municipality in New York State. We will continue to use resources like this award-winning course and other similar initiatives to attract and support small business development in Livingston County.



## SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGN

Livingston County Economic Development and Tourism funds a shop local program each year encouraging visitors and residents alike to support local LivCo businesses to generate sales tax revenue that supports Livingston County, its 17 towns, and 9 villages. The program aims to raise awareness about the economic, environmental, and community benefits of thinking local first.

This year, Livingston County Economic Development and Tourism continued with the 2021 Shop Local campaign "Put Your Money Where Your Heart Is". This campaign established a multi-year brand being built throughout Livingston County and received praise for its focus on supporting local and community pride. To help our business owners in Livingston County, we launched several programs in 2023 to encourage shopping locally this holiday season and beyond.

### 1 Shop Local Info Fair

In partnership with the **Livingston County Chamber of Commerce** and **Genesee Valley Pennysaver**, our office kicked off this year's campaign with a Shop Local Info Fair. Businesses visited booths set up at the Livingston County Government Center to learn about programs and opportunities available to enhance their holiday season.

### 2 Business Kits

For a second year in a row, free Shop LivCo Business Kits were offered to all businesses, modeled after the American Express Small Business Saturday Kits. To encourage gift wrapping, promote the motto "Put Your Money Where Your Heart Is", and offer customers something "extra special", these kits included tissue paper, tote bags, gift bags, gift certificate holders, posters, pennants, yard signs, and stickers. In total, **63 businesses ordered kits.**



### 3 LivCo Loot

A new program this year, LivCo Loot coins, valued at \$5 per coin, were distributed to **63 participating businesses**, totaling nearly 1900 coins in all. Businesses were able to give these out to customers and encourage them to use the coins at another participating business. This program encouraged shoppers to move around the county more and possibly discover a business they might not have been to before.



### 4 Billboards

Another new initiative this year, **four billboards** promoting shopping locally were placed in Avon, Dansville, and two in Mount Morris near Letchworth State Park. By locating these on major roadways throughout the county, both residents and visitors could easily access further information about Shop Local.

### 5 Marketing Matching Grant

The Marketing Matching Grant helped businesses and organizations elevate their marketing efforts by doubling their budget. The grant provided reimbursement of up to 50% of approved marketing expenses for projects including the creation of print and/or digital advertising, placement of advertising, creation of promotional collateral for holiday sales and promotions, and search engine marketing initiatives. **24 businesses** were awarded and **\$10,514.95** in grant funding was dispersed.



### 6 Social Media Marketing

Livingston County Tourism worked with a social media intern to produce **14 reels** shared on Facebook and Instagram to highlight local products, businesses, and events happening in Livingston County during the holiday season. All the posts received high levels of audience engagement, post sharing, and built heightened awareness of businesses.

### 7 Branded Open Flags

Our office offered branded fabric open flags for \$25, a signage asset that would usually cost \$135. At this discounted rate, **51 businesses** ordered flags that can be kept up year-round to promote shopping local and make customers aware of business hours.



# WHAT'S NEXT?

The team at Grow LivCo is well positioned to continue implementation of its strategic plan, supporting the goal to elevate the economy and quality of life in Livingston County. In 2023, the office managed a portfolio of 288 projects, representing more than \$4.2 million in grant funds, \$2.1 million in active loans, and over \$400 million in active industrial projects. The office consistently focused on initiatives designed to facilitate the continued enhancement of communities where people choose to live, public spaces where people want to gather, and off-the-beaten-path experiences sought by visitors. Next year our work will continue with several new projects, including:



## Upcoming Projects



Implementing projects and initiatives with the \$4.5 million in funding awarded to Genesee NY Forward



Grow LivCo and Visit LivCo will begin implementing the comprehensive strategic plan created by Streetsense



A third round of the Dream-O-Vate Business Competition with the \$500,000 received from the Office of Senator Chuck Schumer to continue supporting small businesses



Grow LivCo will continue the already successful First Impressions Program



Visit LivCo will welcome visitors from across the country for the 2024 Total Solar Eclipse as a regional campaign promoting the Genesee River Valley as "Your Dark Sky Destination"



Implement tracking and enforcement of short-term rental taxation with Granicus



Continue working with Livingston County to implement broadband in villages and surrounding areas



Establish a county visitor information center close to Letchworth State Park



Continue implementation of the Livingston County Wayfinding Plan in all nine villages



# Livingston County Economic Development & Tourism

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 Livingston County Economic Development

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 Visit Livingston County, NY

 Livingston County Tourism

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