

Wyoming County Business Center, Inc. Annual Report

Accomplishments and Objectives December 20 20



**Economic Development in
Wyoming County**



President's Message:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Wyoming County Business Center (WCBC), I proudly present to you the 2020 Annual Report. The WCBC celebrated its 14th year and has continued to make tremendous contributions in furthering the growth of Wyoming County's economy.

The pandemic gave our business community some tremendous challenges to deal with in 2020 and I am proud to say the WCBC was a key player in helping the businesses understand the constant changing of the Governor's Executive Orders and helped our business to gear up for a new way of doing business. We developed new and innovative programs and financing programs to help many of our businesses to survive. The Business Accelerator Academy and the Business Mentorship programs are new initiatives to help businesses re-invent themselves and cope with the restrictions brought on by the pandemic. We also suspended loan payments for a period of 6 months and developed the Re-start loan program as a way to serve the needs of our businesses. I am proud to say we have not lost any of our small business that we have served.

One of our main economic development strategies continues to be the support of entrepreneurship development for Wyoming County. This strategy is implemented in part by our FastTrac entrepreneurship program. Normally we hold two cycles of the 10-week class one in the spring and one in the fall. The spring cycle of the class was suspended because of the pandemic but the fall class was held. The results for the program are quite remarkable since the inception of this program in 2010. To date 91 businesses have been created or grown in Wyoming County creating over 160 jobs. These businesses are generating a new source of jobs and sales tax revenue for Wyoming County.

The WCBC will continue to provide a very important role in economic development and will remain in place to carry out our core activities, micro lending, business attraction marketing, entrepreneurship development and the remediation and redevelopment of environmentally challenging properties such as the former Emkay site.

Thank you to everyone who has played a role in the WCBC and our collective work to improve the economic viability of Wyoming County especially during this pandemic. I also want to thank the Board of Directors of the WCBC for the privilege of allowing the Wyoming County IDA, on a contractual arrangement continue the vital services of the organization.

Sincerely,

James Pierce

Mission: The Business Center provides opportunities for business growth by promoting and assisting economic development projects that result in capital investments and job creation and retention in Wyoming County.

Introduction

The Wyoming County Business Center (WCBC), Inc. was established in 2006 by the Wyoming County Board of Supervisors to become an economic development organization that could provide business services such as micro lending for retail businesses, business attraction marketing and become the lead organization for encouraging and supporting the development of entrepreneurs in Wyoming County. In addition, the WCBC was created to get involved in the remediation and redevelopment of environmentally challenged properties on behalf of Wyoming County.

The WCBC is co-located and works with our development partners the Wyoming County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), Wyoming County Planning, Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and the Wyoming County Business Education Council.

Board of Directors 2020

- Richard Fish Sr., Chairman
- Sam Gullo, Vice Chairman
- Jeremy Satchell, Treasurer
- Dan Leuer, Secretary
- James Brick

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WCBC Economic Development Activities

FastTrac Program

KAUFFMAN **FASTTRAC**®

An Entrepreneurship Development Program- *"Growing Our Own Jobs"*

A key component of Wyoming County's economic development strategy is supporting and assisting with entrepreneurship, new business startups, and business expansions. This is a significant source of job growth for Wyoming County. The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation's FastTrac program, offered by the Wyoming County Business Center, has proven to be a very effective entrepreneurial program in Wyoming County. The program is designed to develop sound business plans and get new businesses started on the right foot.

FastTrac is offered twice a year, in the spring and fall. The training includes a fast-paced and challenging itinerary that spans over 10 weeks including guest speakers and interactive activities. The topics include analyzing the viability of the business idea, assessing the marketplace, cash flow projections, marketing, learning about the various legal structures for businesses, and the development of a business plan.

The classes, which are intentionally kept small in size, are facilitated by two local entrepreneurs trained and certified by the Kauffman Foundation.

The Wyoming County Business Center, Inc. is greatly appreciative of the generous program sponsors, **Tompkins Bank of Castile, Complete Payroll, Community Bank, Robert D. Strassel Esq., Five Star Bank, Wyoming County Board of Supervisors** and the workforce development resources available to participants through **Community Action for Wyoming County.**



A testimonial from one of the participants summed up the program this way...



"I would highly recommend taking the class to get an understanding of what it takes to start a business and to see if you have what it takes (desire and commitment) to make it happen."

Spring & Fall 2020 Class

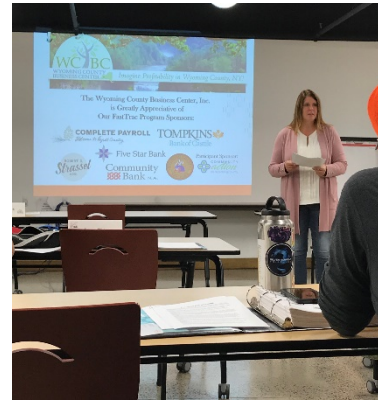
As the spring class began we continued to take concerns over COVID-19 extremely seriously and do everything in our power to ensure the safety of the employees and public visiting the Wyoming County Agriculture and Business Center. To help limit the spread of COVID-19, we suspended the FastTrac program and continued to monitor the guidance from the CDC, state and local public health agencies. Participants continued to work on their business concept statement and refine their elevator speech. After setting a few tentative restart dates and as time went on, it was inevitable that the class would have to be postponed until the fall. A few more participants joined the fall class.

Class Business Concepts

Bakery & Coffeehouse
Primitive Camping
Chocolate House

Fishing & Bait Shop
Outdoor Sporting Events
Farmhouse Airbnb

Permaculture gardening
Adult Living Facility



FastTrac Results

This year the Wyoming County Business Center marked its 10th year offering the FastTrac program.



The results for the program are quite remarkable since the first offering of this program in 2010. To date, 91 businesses have been created or grown resulting in over 160 jobs created or retained. FastTrac is helping entrepreneurs transform their innovative business ideas into viable career options, and moving their ventures to reality or new levels of growth. The program is helping entrepreneurs overcome barriers and challenges common in starting a business.

FastTrac Graduates



Knotted Massage Therapy – Warsaw, NY

“What being a business owner means to you and why did you become an entrepreneur in the first place? Being a business owner means a lot of things for me, it means being an accomplished and driven woman who can set and obtain goals to better her future, while creating a welcoming space and facilitating healing for my clients, who come from all walks of life. It means flexibility, being able to provide for my family, and do something that I absolutely love to do. It is taxing and requires a lot of discipline but it also means that I get to be my own boss and that makes me feel empowered and proud.” - "Woman in Business", Alyssa Cutcliffe owner of Knotted Massage Therapy interview with the Wyoming County Chamber



Endlessly Outdoors Company - Perry, NY

“Blaszak said that as she began to envision making Endlessly Outdoors Company a reality, she realized how beneficial it would be to take the FastTrac Program. “Upon graduation, I have the knowledge, resources and plan to execute my dream”- Batavia Daily News interview with Brianne Blaszak owner of Endlessly Outdoors Company

Wyoming County Business Accelerator Academy



"Advance Your Business to the Next Level"

This new 4-week interactive program was developed to better equip business owners with the tools, resources, and knowledge to advance their business to greater financial success and long-term sustainability. The program is targeted at existing business owners who are looking to overcome barriers to growth and develop strategies to move their business to the next level.

Participants can expect to develop new business strategies and tactics to promote growth and profitability; identify their businesses' distinct competitive advantage and tap into new markets; increase online marketing and hear from a digital marketing expert, and learn how strategic thinking can dramatically improve their business performance.

Classes will be offered in the spring and fall of 2021. The classes, which are intentionally kept small in size, will be facilitated by the same facilitators as the FastTrac program. Specialized guest speakers will bring valuable insight to business owners. The Wyoming County Business Accelerator Academy is sponsored and supported by the **Wyoming County Business Center, Inc. Board of Directors** and the **Wyoming County Board of Supervisors**. Program funding resources are provided by a \$5,000 competitive grant awarded from the **Wyoming Foundation, a division of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo**, and a \$1,000 sponsorship from **Key Bank**.

Wyoming County Business Mentorship Program

Are You Ready... for What's Next?

What does the future hold for my business?

Am I moving in the right direction?

Have I prepared for the "new normal"?



The new Wyoming County Business Mentorship Program was developed to connect experienced Business Mentors with Small Business owners with up to 8 hours of no-cost, one-on-one consultation. Participants explore the issues that matter most to their growth; analyze and prepare their business operations for the "new normal"; improve their existing practices in response to the changing environment; learn how to build and sustain momentum in their business; develop new strategies on growing their business, and learn how to open new markets and gain new customers. The Wyoming County Business Center, Inc. administers this new program that is made possible through CSBG CARES ACT funding administered by Community Action for Wyoming County.

Micro Loan Program

The Wyoming County Business Center, Inc. administers a micro loan program utilizing grant dollars provided by the Wyoming County Board of Supervisors that were originally sourced from grant dollars from the NYS Office of Community Renewal.

The following business requested and received funding from the program in 2020:

1. **Sands Restaurant, Inc., Warsaw** - The funding was used to finance the expansion of the current restaurant business into the catering business and working capital for equipment and completing electric and HVAC.
2. **Windy Brew, LLC, Sheldon** - Financing from the program provided the custom brew center working capital for expansion and renovations.
3. **Datum Works, LLC, Portageville** - Financing from the program provided the newly established business working capital to purchase software, equipment, and furniture.

Listed below is the current portfolio of micro loans that are currently being administered:

1. Attica Pharmacy, Inc.
2. Canaan's Butcher Block
3. Datum Works, LLC
4. JKW Unlimited, LLC
5. Jacked 24/7, LLC
6. Majestic Hill Coffee Roasters, LLC
7. Relax Salon & Spa, LLC
8. Sands Restaurant, Inc.
9. Silver Trail Outfitters, LLC
10. Stang Tek Service
11. West's Bookkeeping Services, LLC
12. Windy Brew, LLC
13. Wolcott Brothers Music
14. Wyoming Gas Light Market, LLC
15. Country Homes & Interiors
16. NY Stork Exchange

Total Loan Portfolio ***\$392,557.68***

In 2020, the following business paid the balance of their loan.

Spotlight Theater of Warsaw, LLC - Warsaw

The micro loan program is specifically designed to help finance startup businesses and higher-risk loans. The program is a very effective tool in helping Wyoming County's entrepreneurs startup and grow. A loan stabilization program was established in light of the economic status due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Deferral of principal and interest payments for borrowers in good standing was offered for a 6-month period. Seven businesses participated in the program.

Re-Start Wyoming Loan Program



Recognizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on our small business community, the Wyoming County Business Center Board of Directors established the Re-Start Wyoming Loan Program. The purpose of the loan program is to assist small businesses in Wyoming County that have been impacted by the COVID-19 health crisis and to help "re-start" their businesses as governmental orders restricting business operations in Wyoming County are eased or lifted.

Funds from this program may be used to provide eligible borrowers with funding to modify current business operations to adapt to governmental orders imposing restrictions on business operations; provide funding to assist in the re-opening of their businesses within 30 days once governmental orders have been lifted; and provide funds for payroll support, rent assistance, payment of utilities, replenishment of inventory, employee health care and accounts payable. Six businesses have received funding through the Re-Start Wyoming Loan Program.

Listed below is the current portfolio of Re-Start Wyoming loans that are currently being administered:

1. Byrncliff, Inc.
2. Hybrid Design and Construction
3. Invictus Barber & Brand, LLC
4. Jay Bee Contracting, LLC
5. River Spring Lodge, LLC
6. The Quilter's Daughter

Total Re-Start Wyoming Loan Portfolio \$59,000.00

Business Attraction Marketing

One of the important services of the WCBC is to conduct business attraction marketing for Wyoming County. The following marketing activities were undertaken during the year.

1. Jim Pierce continues to serve on the Board of Directors for Invest Buffalo Niagara (IBN), our regional business attraction marketing partner. This appointment helps the WCBC maintain high visibility of Wyoming County as a place to consider for business expansions and relocations. IBN provides the WCBC business leads for projects looking for sites that meet their needs.

2. Jim Pierce also remains active with the Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE) also a regional business attraction marketing partner. GRE also provides the WCBC business leads for projects looking for sites that meet their needs.
3. The one stop website for economic development for Wyoming County that launched in August 2018 continues to be a source of leads for businesses looking for locations and well as a source of economic development services for our existing businesses and cultivating entrepreneurs for the FastTrac program.
4. The WCBC has a section in the Wyoming County Business Directory that features the FastTrac program and the WCBC business attraction marketing information. The directory is distributed to 20,000 households and businesses.

Industrial Real Estate Development Strategy

The regional business attraction entities of Invest Buffalo Niagara (IBN) and the Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE) shared with the WCBC and WCIDA several leads during 2020, unfortunately 90% of the leads are for existing industrial buildings and Wyoming County, much like Western New York does not have any vacant industrial buildings and as a result many business prospect leads are lost. This building shortage led to IBN creating an Industrial Real Estate Development Strategy Committee of which Jim Pierce is a member. The Committee worked to develop and RFP for the development of an assessment of the situation and provide some recommendations. The study was conducted by Newark Knight Frank and was recently presented to the Committee members. The next steps are for the implementation of the recommendations by the Committee and Jim Pierce will continue to participate.

Workforce Development Initiatives

The WCBC continues to play a key role in supporting and developing regional workforce programs to help address the workforce shortages for our existing businesses. The WCBC in collaboration with GLOW regional workforce service entities have worked on two initiatives to help address the skill gaps and attract and raise the awareness of the region's youth for high growth, high demand careers in agriculture, manufacturing and skilled trades.

The annual **GLOW Works with Their Hands** was a virtual event for 2020 due to the pandemic. The annual career awareness opportunity is for the GLOW region's students. Plans are underway for going back to an in-person in September of 2021 with a goal of surpassing the numbers from the first year when over 800 students representing 24 school districts from the region attended the interactive event with 60 GLOW region

manufacturers, agriculture businesses, trade unions, contractors, colleges, and organizations.

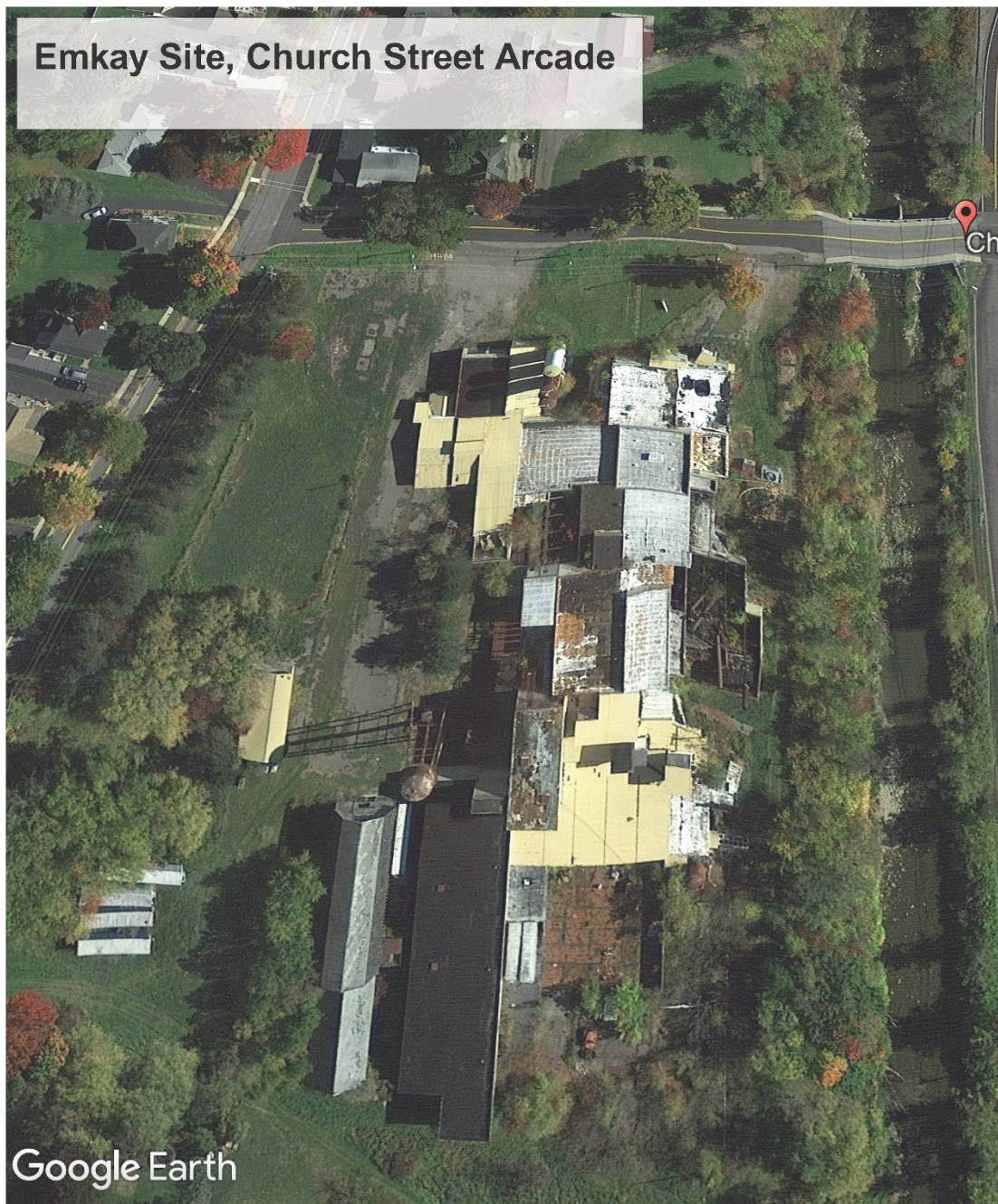
Jim Pierce continues to be involved with the GLOW Apprenticeship Program that was developed to meet the needs of workforce shortages by our manufacturers in Wyoming County. The interest in the program has grown since the pandemic and the extension of unemployment benefits with the added bonus awarded by the federal government.

Environmentally Challenged Development Sites

Historically, the WCBC has served as the entity that works to investigate and plans a strategy for the redevelopment of former manufacturing sites that are potentially contaminated with environmental issues. This led to begin working on the former Emkay site located on Church Street in the Village of Arcade a long time abandoned and deteriorated industrial site. A new WCBC North LLC was formed under the WCBC to conduct the work on the 10.5 acres.

The WCBC Board in 2020 authorized Jim Pierce to engage in an environmental assessment with Labella Associates out Buffalo for a Phase I and Phase II environmental assessment on the former Emkay site. The study was completed and it pointed out among other things asbestos and 4 underground petroleum tanks that have leached product into the surrounding soils and into the groundwater making this a brownfield site. From there an Expression of Interest Letter was circulated to all brownfield developers in Western New York and a relationship was formed with one developer in particular that is interested in the site and are working with us to develop an Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Grant Application. The developer has provided the WCBC Board a letter of intent to take over control of site.

In December of 2020 the WCBC Board authorized the WCBC North LLC to take over ownership of the site and begin working on securing grants for the remediation and demolition of the site.



Conclusion

The WCBC will continue to play a vital role in the economic development of Wyoming County. The WCBC plays a key role in the assistance of retail projects, development of entrepreneurs, micro lending, marketing for business attraction and strive for solutions for our workforce needs and work to redevelop environmentally challenged properties.