



# Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance

*A non-profit 501c3 corporation whose mission is to restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities.*

Issue #8 November 2018

## Sharing our Vision

The Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance (Ti-Alliance) envisions the Ticonderoga Area (including Hague, Putnam, Moriah and Crown Point) as a regional business and cultural hub that provides its residents and the region with gainful employment and a respectable standard of living, with ample year-round work, recreational, and entertainment opportunities, and a sense of “place”.

We envision a vibrant Montcalm Street that attracts prosperous businesses and plenty of foot traffic, a more balanced residential age demographic to support it, and a destination “brand” that promotes our year-round recreational, historic, present day, and futuristic assets to regional residents and tourists.

What do you envision? Close your eyes and imagine that you could create your ideal Ticonderoga 10 years from now. You are driving into Ticonderoga on a warm summer evening. What might you see? Pedestrians strolling Montcalm Street? Interesting retail shops – open late? Diners in sidewalk cafes? Perhaps people gathering outside a theater waiting for a performance? Did you run into a friend that you haven’t seen in a while?

Now think about a midweek afternoon in the winter. Perhaps you see people ducking in and out of shops, a restaurant, Libby’s Bakery. Are you meeting a friend for a cozy lunch or running into the outfitter store to pick up new boots or gloves? Are there lights on above the street level? Is there



someone working in a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office that you will meet for a dinner later?

At Ti-Alliance we see all of these things. The challenge is in building the infrastructure needed to create and *sustain* this vision. It cannot be created overnight. But we aspire to it by working together, and building incrementally to achieve our goal.

In this issue of the newsletter you will read about several projects The Alliance is working on that will provide some of the needed infrastructure to realize this vision. They include new trade education opportunities that will strengthen our skilled workforce and provide needed services, attracting young growing employers to provide year-round stable employment, and improving Ti’s visual appeal.

But what gets us really excited is that the conversation is broadening to a much larger group of public and private entities, and individuals who share the vision and are ready to move it forward. Tell us about the Ticonderoga that you envision and help us

move it forward. Talk to any board member about your ideas or email [donna@ticonderoga-alliance.org](mailto:donna@ticonderoga-alliance.org).

### Become a Sustaining Alliance Donor & Make an Impact

**Our goal is to add 25 sustaining donors before December 31.** Giving is easy when you make a monthly contribution to Ti-Alliance. Each month your contribution is automatically charged to your credit card.

Think of it as giving to your community in lieu of dining out one night a month. Even the cost of a coffee can help defer our monthly expenses. Any amount is appreciated. It’s easy and significant. If you share the vision, help us meet the goal.

[Click here](http://ticonderoga-alliance.org/support/volunteer.html) or go to <http://ticonderoga-alliance.org/support/volunteer.html>.

## FROM THE BOARD

*It's been an exciting year for Ti-Alliance. As a board, we have honed our vision of the Ticonderoga Region as a vibrant regional business and cultural hub. This enables us to stay focused on key projects that will have lasting impact and move us continually closer to realizing this vision.*

*This focus also provides an excellent framework as an economic development partner for the Town of Ticonderoga and other organizations throughout the region. Our focus on projects that provide economic infrastructure more clearly defines our role and benefit as a Local Development Corporation (LDC).*

*In 2018 we were able to revitalize the possibility of delivering new trade education in Ticonderoga through North Country Community College. This remains a top priority for us in 2019.*

*Beginning in January 2019 former board member Donna Wotton will be a full time paid Director and we are excited about the leadership that she will provide as we expand the capacity, activities, and effectiveness of Ti-Alliance. We also are excited to welcome Bobby Porter and Chris Mallon to our board. Both Bobby and Chris are extremely active in our community and have already contributed some fresh perspectives to our discussions.*

*There's a renewed energy for economic development in our community with many more people joining the conversation every day. Each new voice brings new ideas, opportunities and better solutions. Everything is possible.*

### **Ti-Alliance Board of Directors**

Sandy Morhouse, Vice Chairman  
Pat Ida, Chief Financial Officer  
Joe Giordano, Supervisor, Town of Ticonderoga  
Nancy Archer  
Lance Clark  
Scott Hearburg  
Chris Mallon  
Pam Nolan  
Bobby Porter  
Peter Reale

## Progress on the School of Applied Technology

In the Fall 2018 Ti-Alliance newsletter we told you about renewed discussions with North Country Community College (NCCC) regarding a potential trade school in Ticonderoga – The School of Applied Technology (the SAT). This program is important to our area in a number of ways.

- More than 30% of the graduating seniors from our area's high schools do not go on to college. In some localities the numbers are even higher. These students need another viable career path that will enable them to live, raise families, and make a living wage here in the communities they love.
- We have a shortage of tradespeople in the North Country, particularly in the building trades. In addition, employers in the region struggle to find skilled workers.
- The median age of North Country residents is significantly higher than the state and national average. Over the last several years, the population has declined, wages have declined and an increasing percentage of residents are over 50. A younger population is essential to the collective health of our towns. Not only would the additional students contribute to lowering that average age, but retaining graduates here with viable employment would ultimately build a much-needed younger working population in the area.

Last winter and this spring Ti-Alliance worked with NCCC to revisit and update their SAT feasibility study from 2016. In the process, we identified a number of obstacles to the program and worked through some solutions to them. This spring we worked together to create presentation materials to communicate accurate and consistent information to a variety of audiences regarding the feasibility of creating this much-needed educational resource in our region.

NCCC Board Chairman Steve Reed, and NCCC President Steve Tyrell, together with Ti-Alliance Executive Director, Donna Wotton took this presentation "on the road" in May and June, presenting to varied audiences including the NCCC faculty, Essex County Board of Supervisors, Franklin County legislators, educators, employers, and the general public. We gained valuable inputs and feedback through these forums. Support for the project was overwhelmingly positive.

As a result, the NCCC faculty voted at the end of May in favor of taking the next step toward establishing the SAT, commissioning an independent feasibility study by an outside entity who would fully vet the proposed plan and provide detailed recommendations for moving forward. In June, the NCCC Board of Trustees voted to provide the necessary funding (\$150,000), and following a broad search and several proposals, JMZ Consultants was hired to do the work.

These two milestones were especially significant. In the SUNY system, of which NCCC is a part, the decisions on what curriculum an institution will teach reside with the faculty, so it is essential that they are on board. In addition, the Board of Trustees has committed a total of \$1 million investment in the SAT as part of their strategy to ensure the long-term financial future of North Country Community College. They see trade education playing a critical role in their success as an institution serving the needs of Essex and Franklin Counties.

Four "Councils" have been set up to support JMZ in their work and ultimately support the implementation of the plan moving forward: Curriculum, Recruitment & Employment, Business, and Fundraising. Each council is led by a member of the NCCC faculty and administration, and includes 10-20 members from a variety of stakeholders in the region including existing trade skill educators (BOCES, CV-TEC, union apprentice programs), K-12 school administrators, employers, legislators, civic and business organizations, volunteer consultants, and community members-at-large. It is so exciting to have nearly 100 community leaders actively involved in this project.

As of this writing, the Councils are reviewing first round materials and questions from JMZ Consultants. The final recommendations from JMZ Consultants are due this fall. We will provide an update to this program before the end of the year.

**BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.** Visit <http://ti-alliance.org/support/volunteer.html> and click the DONATE button to contribute online.





*Executive Director Donna Wotton and NCCC President Steve Tyrell present the proposed plan for the trade school to community members in Saranac.*

## The Derelict Buildings Project Continues

Abandoned and derelict properties - we have all seen them in our neighborhoods and in our downtown.

These properties are often unsafe, create health problems (including animal infestation), become havens for drugs and alcohol use, pose potential fire risks, etc. Meanwhile the government is not collecting taxes on them, and the blight that they create hampers efforts to draw in new businesses and residents for revitalization.

Ti-Alliance is working with the Town of Ticonderoga and the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County (HAPEC) on a derelict properties project in Ticonderoga. The Alliance took the lead in developing a \$75,000 grant from New York State to finance the project, and coordinates the project on behalf of the Town government. It will run for 2 ½ years through September 2019.

A great deal of progress took place during the first half of the project. Overall, the Town's Code Enforcement Office reduced the total number of properties in Code violation from 91 to 30. This included 70% of those in the "low" problem category (i.e., with overgrown grass and sometimes trash) and in the "medium" category (those with significant structural problems).

However, only two of the ten properties with "serious" problems (most of which need to be torn down) were remediated during this period, which together with eight medium-level problem properties are the core of the remaining caseload.

On the prevention side, information about HAPEC's counseling and foreclosure prevention services was distributed through flyers, newspaper articles, Ti-TV, the Town's website, and a direct mail-out through the Post Office of a flyer to all Ti residents.

On the management side, the Town's Code Enforcement Office has created a new electronic management and data analysis tool for all derelict properties. The tool has increased the efficiency of Code Office actions, including identifying and analyzing the key problems across the various types of unoccupied derelict properties and creating new or improved mechanisms to address them.

One such mechanism is now in place to address overgrown properties or those with litter and trash. If a property is identified as being in violation, the owner is contacted about the legal requirement to remedy these problems. If action is not forthcoming, a Town contractor mows or cleans the property, and the Town sends the bill to the owner, or lacking payment, puts it in their annual tax bill.

In 2019, the project will focus on three priorities:

1. Exploring how funding might be obtained for the Town to acquire, rehabilitate, and sell selected "Medium Level Problem" properties. These are unoccupied derelict properties that have significant structural problems but not bad enough to be demolished.
2. Funding asbestos surveys for a number of "High Level Problem" properties. Most of these properties are fire damaged, but decisions about demolition have been blocked because of possible asbestos, which if present, dramatically increases the cost of demolition.
3. Expanding the project to multi-unit rental properties, i.e. properties with three or more rental apartments in one property. This would include actions to increase Code Enforcement Office access and inspections of such rental units.

This project is a good example of how a modest amount of funding can be multiplied in terms of actions and great outcomes for our community.

## Platform Tennis

### Year-Round Fun Thrives in Ti

Platform tennis, or "Paddle" as it's often called, continues to thrive in Ticonderoga as a year-round recreational opportunity. The state-of-the-art Northern Lake George Paddle courts on Rt. 9N (by Eddie's Restaurant) have heaters for snow and they are open all year.

The program is spearheaded by former national champion and NPTA Hall of Famer Patty Hogan. With help from Sherrie Burleigh, they offer programming throughout the year and encourage everyone, especially beginners, to join the fun. You'll be addicted!

Membership is \$175/year for a single person, \$225/year for a family. Never played? Patty often gives free lessons to members on Friday nights and Sundays.

Patty has also teamed up with Jay Wells from Five Nations Golf for the past 4 years to offer "Platform for Life", a job training and mentoring program where kids learn work skills, as well as the basics of paddle and golf.

To get on the email list for the weekly play schedule send email to Patty at [pattyhogan8@gmail.com](mailto:pattyhogan8@gmail.com).

# Building Our Year-Round Employment Base

One challenge to economic development throughout the North Country is that much of our economy is based on seasonal tourism and seasonal residents. It's hard to attract and retain skilled workers in the area if they can't work year-round. This seasonality presents unique challenges for both residents and area businesses to sustain themselves over the lean winter months.

But there are some success stories in the North Country of small towns that are rebuilding their workforce by "home growing" new businesses in the tech and light manufacturing fields. With the ability of workers and businesses to locate remotely, ship anywhere, and communicate over the internet, smaller companies can be headquartered where their employees want to live. Communities like ours can capitalize on this trend.

In fact, some of the top universities in our region have "business incubators" as a part of the university. These incubators work with graduate researchers and student entrepreneurs to provide mentoring, business and product planning, and even financing to turn great research ideas into commercial products. To help ensure long-term success, most incubators require their entrepreneurs to be engaged with their support system for several years as they navigate the waters of "start-up". Among the successful incubators in our area are The Shipley Center for Innovation (Clarkson University), The Hub (RPI), and programs at SUNY Albany, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the University of Vermont.

Ti-Alliance is currently researching how Ticonderoga can partner with these established incubators to attract some incubated businesses to our town – a program we call Biz Inc. Initial discussions have indicated that there is high interest on the part of the incubators to use Ticonderoga as a "placement community". These tech and light manufacturing businesses usually bring 3-5 employees with them, have the potential to grow to provide year-round employment for existing residents or returning college grads, and generally contribute to the local economy in a sustainable way.

We are excited at the potential of adding 2-3 young businesses each year through these programs. Over a few years, this could provide a much-needed balance to our employment picture and begin to build a new younger year-round workforce in Ticonderoga.

## Entrepreneur's Fund - Tax-Deductible Gifts Support Local Small Business Start- Ups and Expansion

The goal of the Ticonderoga Fund for Entrepreneurship and Revitalization (or Entrepreneurs Fund) is to stimulate economic growth and opportunity through "gap financing" for new and existing micro and small businesses that will create jobs in the Ticonderoga area. This is an excellent companion project to our Biz Inc project described in this newsletter.

Here's how it works.....Monies from various sources including private individuals and local businesses provide a vehicle to lend or donate monies for small business development and expansion. Our goal is to raise a base of \$50,000 from local sources and friends of Ti-Alliance. When we reach \$50,000 we become eligible for both matched and unmatched funds from a variety of other economic development resources.

The Fund will assist applicants with the drive to succeed, with special focus on established small businesses owned by women, youth, veterans, and persons with disabilities.

For more information and the methodology of the Entrepreneurs' Fund go to:  
<http://ticonderoga-alliance.org/support/volunteer.html>

### Ti-Alliance Successful Past Projects

Ti Arts Gallery  
NLG Paddle  
Workforce Readiness Program  
(at Ti High School)  
Downtown Murals  
Trekonderoga  
Star Trek Studio Tours





## A New Full-Time Director at Ti-Alliance

Thanks to your support, beginning January 1, 2019, the Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance will have a full-time paid Executive Director again. An active Ti-Alliance board member since 2012, Donna Wotton recently retired from her life's work as a high tech marketer to take the helm. Throughout 2018 she supported Ti-Alliance part-time and has already had a significant impact helping to focus our work, expand community outreach, and move the Trade School project forward.

For 34 years Donna owned Unconventional Promotions, a marketing and event company focused on delivering high impact programs for high-tech companies throughout the world. She says that her work with Ti-Alliance takes advantage of many of the skills she has honed in high-tech. "They both involve creating a vision of the future, developing a roadmap to that vision, bringing together the team of people that can bring it to life, and helping them stay on track. It's remarkably similar work but much more rewarding to be putting those skills to work here in my own community!"

Donna has been a lifelong summer resident of Hague. She lived and worked in San Francisco, CA for more than 30 years before becoming a full-time resident of Hague in 2010. She has been a lifelong active member of the Northern Lake George Yacht Club as a racing sailor and coach, serving for many years in the Junior Program Steering Committee and board of directors. She has been the club's Principal Race Officer since 2007.

## Chris Mallon and Bob Porter Join the Ti-Alliance Board

We are excited to welcome two new members to the Ti-Alliance Board of Directors. We look forward to the experience, creativity, and enthusiasm for economic development that Chris Mallon and Bob Porter will bring to our work.

### Chris Mallon

Chris Mallon moved to Ticonderoga in 2002 when he assumed the role of Mill Manager at International Paper's Ticonderoga mill. He managed the mill from 2002 to 2009, and again from 2012 until his retirement in 2015. In a career with IP that spanned more than 33 years, he held various positions in engineering, manufacturing, human resources, and the environment—eventually managing paper mills in New York, Pennsylvania, and Georgia. He loved his assignment at the Ticonderoga mill and especially enjoyed helping the workforce there achieve success and job security.

Although he and his wife Janet (a retired teacher from the Ti school system and active community supporter) have lived in many places, Ticonderoga (Putnam Station) is their adopted and permanent home. Chris has served on boards of organizations in the states in which he has worked, involved with manufacturing, education, health care, and support for persons with disabilities. Chris received his degree in paper science and engineering from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse.

As a Ti-Alliance board member, Chris brings firsthand knowledge of the Ti area's employment challenges, as well as hands on experience with project

management, a broad view of our community, and long-time roots and passion for this community.

### Bob Porter

Bob Porter, is a Science Teacher at Ticonderoga Middle School and owner of The Wind-Chill Factory, which he founded in 1996. He is a lifelong resident of Ticonderoga where he resides with his wife Jennifer and four children; Brandon, Vivian, Aidan & Irelan. Bobby is a past President of the Ticonderoga Teacher's Association (TTA) and has been the TTA Negotiation Chairman since 2004. Bob has been recognized as an Educator of Excellence by the New York State English Council. He is a member of the International Paper's Community Advisory Council and was recently inducted into the Ticonderoga High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Bobby holds a B.S. in Education from SUNY Plattsburgh and a M.S. Degree in Education from the University of New England.

Bobby brings a unique perspective to the board as both an educator and successful businessman in Ticonderoga. He is especially in touch with young people, parents, and business leaders in our community. We're excited to have his boundless energy and creativity on the board.



*Executive Director Donna Wotton welcomes Bobby Porter (l.) and Chris Mallon (r.) to the board.*

# Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance

The Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance plays a unique roll.

As an independent non-profit organization we are able to bring all of the relevant partners to the table for projects that vary from building renovation to job creation, the arts, and business incubation. Our mission is to restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga Region by serving as a clearinghouse for innovative ideas and resources, and a catalyst for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities. We find resources, help to overcome roadblocks, and keep projects moving through completion. We believe that Ticonderoga and the surrounding area can be the economic and cultural hub of the Eastern Adirondacks and can take its place as a historic, cultural, and business leader in the Northeast.

**Be part of something big. Donate and participate.** The Ti-Alliance can coordinate this revitalization effort, but we need all of the citizens of Ticonderoga, Hague, Crown Point, and Putnam to participate. You can be part of the solution and support revitalization in Ticonderoga and our surrounding communities by making a tax-deductible donation to the Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance. Our funding priorities for 2019 include:

- Funding the Executive Director Position – Having Donna in the Executive Directors role this year has created great focus and momentum to our work. We have embarked on important projects that will have significant and lasting economic impact on our area. We need a strong full-time leader to keep them moving. As we develop new initiatives, we will build other revenue streams to provide self-sustaining funding for the Executive Director's position. In the meantime, we need fund the position with money raised by your donations. Help us do this important work by funding the Executive Director position for 2019.
- Operating Costs – Our operating costs are modest. Each year we are required by our 501c3 status to provide a financial audit by an outside firm. It's costly, but necessary. We also pay for insurance, web hosting and list serve fees, and a few office supplies. It adds up.

As you plan your year-end giving, we urge you to include a tax-deductible donation to Ti-Alliance. We can have economic development in the North Country, but we need your support. To donate, contact any board member, donate online by clicking the "DONATE" button below, or send a check to Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance at PO Box 247, Ticonderoga, NY 12883.


[\*\*DONATE\*\*](#)

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead*

Receive Alliance news via email. Click CONTACT at our web page <http://ti-alliance.org/contact.html>.

I share the vision. Enclosed is my donation for

☐ \$500    ☐ \$250    ☐ \$100    ☐ \$50    ☐ Other

OR Donate online using 

Click DONATE at <http://ti-alliance.org/support/volunteer.html>.

I am interested in

- ☐ Investment opportunities. Please have a board member call me.
- ☐ Supporting the Ti-Alliance effort as a volunteer
- ☐ My area of expertise is \_\_\_\_\_

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