

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES



TIOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

Preface

The Tioga County Legislature and the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning are committed to sustaining and growing diverse business enterprises in Tioga County, New York. The economic future of our people depends directly on the ability of the private sector to create and maintain stable jobs. The Tioga County Government is proactive in its efforts to help the private sector do that.

This document outlines the priorities of the Tioga County Legislature and its Department of Economic Development and Planning for sustaining and stimulating business in the county. The priorities are ranked as short-term, medium-term, and long-term but all of them are considered to be high priority. In addition, the document presents official policy of the Tioga County Legislature regarding economic development in the county. The Tioga County Legislature adopted these priorities and policies in its Resolution K44-95 which appears here in the appendix.

Much of the creative thinking behind these priorities and policies was the voluntary work of industry and business leaders who serve on the Tioga County Economic Development Council. That body is charged with guiding the direction of economic development in the county and its members perform their task with enthusiasm and dedication. Many thanks to them for their efforts.

The daily work of responding to the needs of industry and business is the task of the Department of Economic Development and Planning. However, the full implementation of assistance to firms requires the services of the county's Local Development Corporation and Industrial Development Agency which have specific legal responsibilities in the work. The majority of that work is voluntary. Many thanks to the members of both organizations for their continued dedication.

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1. Summary

Over the past three years, Tioga County has expended considerable effort to create jobs in the private sector and to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of local government. The County Legislature has recognized that the economic future of the County, its municipalities, and its residents depend on the availability of stable jobs that pay well. It formed the Department of Economic Development and Planning as a vehicle for attracting new business and stimulating the growth of existing business in the county.

The Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning in turn created the Tioga County Economic Development Council as an advisory body of county residents comprising leaders of business and academe. This group has struggled diligently to define a course of action that would maximize the effectiveness of available economic development resources and provide the most rapid recovery and growth for the county. The work of the Council and of the Department of Economic Development and Planning has been guided by economic development strategies developed for the Southern Tier Region of New York State and for Tioga County itself (References 1 - 3).

Recently, the Department of Economic Development and Planning conducted a Business Retention and Expansion Survey of Tioga County businesses. The intent of the survey was to find out the real problems and opportunities facing our businesses, and to open a dialog in which the Department could work together with these businesses to help them grow.

All of this work has resulted in the creation of new jobs in the county through the attraction of new business and the growth of existing business. It has also resulted in the progressive restructuring of Tioga County Government and a continuing increase in its effectiveness and efficiency. Much progress has been made, and much remains to be done.

Recently, the Department of Economic Development and Planning discerned the need for a reassessment of its priorities to ensure the most effective use of its resources. The Department also sought to formulate some economic development policy recommendations for consideration by the Legislature. It believes that an economic development policy in Tioga County is needed as a framework for development in the county, and as a guide to the allocation of fiscal resources.

The Department of Economic Development and Planning hired this consultant to work closely with it in the reassessment of its priorities, and to provide economic development policy recommendations. As part of this effort, the consultant conducted a short survey of the Legislators and members of the Council of Governments to determine their thoughts on economic development priorities, and to obtain some understanding of their vision for the future of Tioga County. This document reports the work of the consultant with the Department of Economic Development and Planning, and includes many of the ideas that the Legislators and the Council of Governments expressed in their responses to the survey.

2. Introduction

Tioga County is a rural county with nine towns and two small villages and a smattering of high-technology business. Until about three years ago the County had no economic development function other than an Industrial Development Agency that worked issues on a reactive basis. A major portion of the County's income derived from IBM Federal Systems Division, its suppliers, and their employees and the County seemed content to continue as it was with no overall plan for the future of its development.

Recently we have seen great changes in the future prospects of Tioga County and of the surrounding region. Defense cutbacks, the national recession, global competition, industry restructuring, and the emergence of an energetic competition nationwide for corporate relocation have combined to arrest economic growth in New York State and the County and turn it into decline. As the creators of wealth—our industry and business—have shrunk or moved away, and high-paying jobs have been replaced by low-paying ones, the tax base and quality of life in Tioga County have both deteriorated. At the same time, the cost of human services has risen dramatically as more and more people turn to the public sector for assistance.

Tioga County will have to fight hard to retain and build its ability to create wealth. If it fails to do this the County will continue to lose what economic strength it has until there are few employment options and a quality of life that cannot attract or keep its residents.

2.1. Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this document is twofold:

1. Develop a short list of priority actions that will continue the revitalization of the economy of Tioga County.
2. Formulate economic development policy recommendations for consideration by the Tioga County Legislature.

This report is not another economic development strategy. It provides specific recommendations within the existing strategies. The recommendations are those which, in the view of the consultant, represent the best use of current resources for the creation of jobs and the development of industry and business in Tioga County.

2.2. Problems

Tioga County has a number of serious problems that make economic development difficult. Fundamentally, the County has no identity economically, and very little culturally. Such an identity is measured in terms of products, institutions, organizations, and community origins and practices. To illustrate this lack of identity, Tioga County has:

- Few large employers. There are only two industrial employers with more than 500 employees—Loral employs approximately 3300, and Hadco approximately 600.
- No University or Community College
- No hospital
- No airport
- No major tourist destination
- No shopping malls
- Unattractive business climate, characteristic of New York State
- No large urban area
- Lack of infrastructure (water, sewer, gas) in or near municipalities
- Mobile workforce that seeks opportunities elsewhere
- Small and shrinking tax base
- Escalating human services expense characteristic of New York State
- Multiple Department of Transportation districts
- Multiple BOCES regions

Not only are employment opportunities low in Tioga County. There are few places to shop or to be entertained. Residents in the west of the County tend to associate with Elmira-Corning in Chemung and Steuben Counties; those in the east go to the Triple Cities; and those in the north travel to Ithaca. As a result, what money is generated in Tioga County tends to be spent outside the County with a resulting loss of sales tax revenues.

2.3. Opportunities

In contrast to the County's problems are a number of characteristics that lend hope for the economic and social development of Tioga County. The County has:

- Abundant natural resources—forests, water, gas, farmland
- A central location relative to major markets: Toronto, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Syracuse
- Good ground transportation network—road and rail
- A large segment of the workforce that is highly educated
- Good schools through the secondary level
- Access to resources of Cornell, Binghamton, and Alfred Universities as well as Community Colleges
- Good quality of life, low crime rate, low cost of living
- Low pollution
- Cooperative local government represented in Council of Governments
- High-profile representation in New York State Senate

The challenge facing the County is to leverage its positive characteristics to retain and grow its existing industry and business, and attract new industry and business, in the face of extreme competition from other areas of the country and very small financial resources available from the County or New York State.

2.4. Economic Development Strategies

In 1993 the New York State Department of Economic Development funded a study by Economics Research Associates to define an economic development strategy for the Southern Tier of New York State and for each of its nine counties. Tioga County received the regional report¹ and also the strategy specific to Tioga County.² These reports addressed the problems and opportunities of the region and of Tioga County, and recommended a list of specific actions. However, there was no unifying scheme or implementation plan in these documents.

Working from these strategies, Engineering Resources Group provided the County with an integrated strategy and implementation plans.³

Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning has been using these reports as the framework for its work since 1993.

3. Action Priorities—Economic Development Targets

This section describes projects which should be implemented as a matter of priority in Tioga County to maximize the return on investment in economic development. Each action is ranked as either Short Term [1], Medium Term [2], or Long Term [3]. All of these recommendations are presented as high priority and differ only in their timing.

In compiling this list of projects, a survey was distributed to the Tioga County Legislature and members of the Council of Governments. The survey is shown as Attachment A. Many of the responses to the survey are included in the projects described below.

For other action items of less urgency, please see the recommendations of References 1 - 3.

3.1. Business Growth

In general it is far easier to retain and expand an existing company than to attract a new one. Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning recently conducted a survey of businesses in the County to determine their perspective and specific needs for business growth. As the survey results are analyzed, emerging patterns will assist the Department in the refinement of their current approach to business growth. The survey results have identified a number of businesses with specific business growth needs that the Department is now seeking to meet.

The business sectors in Tioga County that hold the most promise for expansion are discussed briefly below.

3.1.1. Wood Products [1]

Wood products firms in Tioga County are thriving with a healthy domestic market and a rapidly growing international market. The majority of the wood products from these companies is raw logs, although there is also dimensioned lumber and finished articles of furniture. Economics Research Associates (Ref. 1 p. VI-85) recommended filling in the gaps in the wood products value-added chain. Tioga County should explore ways to accomplish this. Far more wealth could be created in the County and many more jobs created by expanding wood products to include veneer, fiber board, and a full range of furniture and cabinet products. The County should also continue to explore with the wood products companies and possibly Cornell University the development of high-strength wood composite materials for construction.

The top priorities for expansion of wood products at present are: Howland Brothers, Precision Wood Crafters.

3.1.2. Electronics [1]

Three firms in Tioga County are engaged in electronics manufacturing, namely Loral, Hadco, and Hidden Valley Electronics. Loral produces electronic equipment for both defense and commercial markets. Hadco and Hidden Valley Electronics are contract manufacturers of printed circuit boards. These companies bring substantial contracts into the County and create new wealth here.

Tioga County must do everything possible to encourage the growth of these firms. It should also seek to help these companies establish supplier relationships with other firms in Tioga County to keep more of the wealth generated here in the County.

The top priority for expansion in electronics at present is Hadco.

3.1.3. Metals Fabrication [1]

Metals fabrication covers activities such as casting, forging, sheet metal working, tool and die making, and machine shops. There are 7 firms in Tioga County engaged in these business areas, employing approximately 100 workers.

The top priority for expansion in this sector at present is Iroquois Tool.

3.1.4. Food Processing [1]

The lone food processing plant in Tioga County is Leprino Cheese in Waverly. This plant is an important market for the county's dairy industry and is a top priority for expansion at present.

3.1.5. Engineering Services [2]

Both manufacturing firms and construction firms require engineering services. As Tioga County seeks to retain and build manufacturing, and as it plans for the development of natural resources and new infrastructure, it should encourage the use of engineering services companies within the County.

3.2. Available Land and Buildings [1]

Tioga County has a number of industrial and retail buildings standing empty. Finding tenants for these buildings offers the fastest means for increasing jobs in the county. Among the most valuable available buildings are:

- **SCI** Owego
- **Gold Medal Ladder** Newark Valley
- **Abrams Building** Waverly
- **Woodruff Building** Waverly
- **Retail Buildings** Owego and Waverly
- **Tioga Park** Nichols

Each of these sites has existing infrastructure that may or may not require upgrading depending upon the prospective tenant.

Business attraction is a highly competitive activity involving identification of companies which are planning relocation, rapid response to company needs on the part of economic development entities, and the provision of meaningful incentives such as taxes, buildings, and infrastructure. In order to attract businesses to its available buildings, Tioga County must put maximum effort into finding and courting businesses. The County must be prepared to offer competitive incentives. These incentives will result in increased tax revenues and commerce in the county. The potential increased revenues must be analyzed carefully in each case to ensure that they more than compensate for the incentives offered.

3.3. Industrial Parks

Industrial Parks represent an investment in infrastructure that is an important element in attracting business. Tioga County has invested in converting the County Farm into the Tioga Industrial Park. Having made this investment, it is imperative that tenants be found for the park.

3.3.1. Tioga Industrial Park [1]

Infrastructure has been created in the park, and a plan has been developed and approved for occupancy. One company (Norwesco) is currently building in the park. A second company has indicated a strong interest in relocating their business there. The County will market the SCI building as the anchor tenant in the park.

3.3.2. Lounsberry [3]

The Lounsberry site is a potential industrial park. If one or more companies can be attracted to establish food or beverage production facilities there, the opportunity will present itself to extend the infrastructure created to develop additional industrial sites. A developer may well be found to invest in this expansion at no cost to the County.

3.4. Business Attraction

Business attraction is the new national competition. The quality of life in a community, and even the community's survival, depend upon the presence of employers who pay good wages. Many States have recognized the need to attract companies who will provide these wages, and are willing to offer huge incentives to accomplish that objective. A million dollar tax break for a company can easily result in a new multi-million dollar revenue stream for a State and a large increase in property and sales taxes for a County. Companies on the move have now come to expect these incentives from prospective hosts and, unless there is an overwhelming reason for a company to move to an area that does not offer such incentives, the company will

move somewhere else. Such moves can leave an area in dire economic straits. Retaining a company in a distressed area in the face of the incentives offered by other areas to move is sometimes a challenge.

For these reasons the major effort of the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning is currently directed towards business attraction and business retention. In seeking firms to bring to Tioga County, there is a benefit to drawing companies with complementary businesses or businesses that can form customer-supplier relationships. This keeps the wealth created in the county circulating in the county. It is also important to seek businesses for which the existing work force is suitable, and which do not have overwhelming competition in the area.

There are four business sectors that are prime candidates for business attraction to Tioga County.

3.4.1. Outlet Mall [1]

Outlet malls draw large numbers of people from a wide area, create large numbers of unskilled jobs, and provide substantial tax revenues. There are no outlet malls in or close to the Southern Tier. Outlet malls require good access from a major transportation route, only basic infrastructure of water, sewer, and electricity, and large areas for parking. To attract an outlet mall there must be sufficiently large markets within the radius of a 1-day round trip.

There are two potential sites for an outlet mall in Tioga County, both located on Route 17:

- Tioga Park Racetrack
- Lounsberry

Both sites would require infrastructure and expansion of an existing interchange on Route 17. These sites are accessible to 1-day round trip travel from Buffalo, Elmira-Corning, Williamsport, Allentown, Scranton, New York, Albany, Utica, and Syracuse.

The creation of an outlet mall in Tioga County would create retail consumer traffic for other businesses in the County. These businesses could capitalize on this traffic by offering specialty goods and services for which there is presently an insufficient market. The new consumer traffic would form a new element of tourism in the County which could be drawn into overnight lodging and secondary destinations.

3.4.2. Retail Malls [1]

The absence of retail malls in Tioga County are a serious detractor from both quality of life and from the tax base. The County should identify desirable sites for a number of such facilities and approach developers and retail chains with the view to building them.

The immediate opportunity for establishing a retail mall is the Weitsman mall at Fairgrounds Plaza in Owego. Completing the arrangements for this mall should be pursued as a top priority.

3.4.3. Warehousing [2]

Warehouses like outlet malls require access to major transportation routes and markets. Tioga County is central to the region bounded by Toronto, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, and Albany with connecting highway access via Route 17. There is potential rail access. Like outlet malls, Warehousing requires basic infrastructure and large, level lots.

Both Lounsberry and Tioga Park Racetrack are good sites for Warehousing operations. Such an operation is not likely to pollute the aquifer at Lounsberry. Development of a warehousing facility at either site would require the expansion of the existing interchange on Route 17.

3.4.4. Backroom Operations [2]

Many companies now exist which operate large mainframe computers to process electronic data. These companies process information for a wide range of businesses including insurance companies,

publishing companies, telephone companies, and mail-order businesses; they also process data for government.

Backroom operations can be located anywhere that telecommunications infrastructure exists to support data transmission. They generally require buildings with raised floors, air-conditioning systems suitable for mainframe computers, and uninterruptible electric power.

Tioga County is in a good location to attract such businesses out of the surrounding major cities. It has two buildings with internal fiber-optic lines. The workforce includes a large computer-literate population suited to the work. The educational institutions in the region are well able to support the changing needs of that workforce.

3.4.5. Professional Complex and Business Development Center [3]

The development of new businesses in Tioga County would be encouraged by the existence of Business Development Centers in which the fledgling firms could have easy access to basic secretarial services, copying services, and professional services. Colocation of these operations leads to economies of scale and reduced costs. Concentration of professional services at specific sites—including legal, accounting, engineering, insurance, medical, and dental services—would tend to draw clientele which otherwise might seek these services in the larger centers outside the County such as Binghamton, Ithaca, and Elmira.

3.5. Telecommunications and Information Systems [1]

The emergence of the global market and the growing importance of time-critical information to every aspect of business demand the existence of telecommunications and information systems infrastructure and business's ability to use it. At present the telephone companies and the cable companies are in fierce competition to build and control the infrastructure; these companies and the larger software companies like Microsoft are competing to control the information systems that we will all use. The US Government is deregulating the telecommunications industry with the result that there will be fewer controls on quality and a tendency on the part of the service providers to serve the largest markets first. This means that Tioga County along with most other rural areas will lag well behind in obtaining full access to these services. Our businesses will suffer accordingly.

Tioga County should establish a Telecommunications and Information Systems Commission to consider carefully the options available to the County in establishing these services. The Commission should make recommendations to the Legislature concerning options for structure, ownership, operations, and funding of telecommunications and information systems in Tioga County.

3.6. Power Authority [1]

The cost of electric energy in New York State is outrageous. This cost is perceived by industry and business as a major competitive disadvantage. The national utility industry has begun to move from a highly regulated structure based on utility monopolies to a deregulated industry providing competitive service by means of retail wheeling. However, the timing, structure, and the ultimate extent of deregulation at both the Federal and State levels is unknown at this time. Nor is it certain to what extent these changes will decrease the cost of electrical energy to industrial and residential customers.

Some communities across the country have made the decision to divorce themselves from a dependence on the electric utility companies and from the unknowns of the future industry structure, and to develop independent power authorities that they own and control. This is an attractive prospect for Tioga County, but one that requires extensive research.

Tioga County has established a Power Commission to research the advantages, disadvantages, practicality, and cost of forming an independent Power Authority or other alternative low-cost source of power in Tioga County.

The Commission should make recommendations to the Legislature concerning options for structure, ownership, operations, and funding for these alternatives.

3.7. Economic Development Zone [1]

Tioga County should work closely with New York State Department of Economic Development to establish one or more Economic Development Zones in Tioga County. These zones have proven to be very effective in attracting and stimulating business in other parts of New York State.

In 1974, the New York State Department of Economic Development (DED) decided to expand the number of EDZs throughout the State. Tioga County expressed the desire to submit an application for an EDZ at that time, but DED refused to accept the application. In that EDZ competition, DED initially awarded EDZ status to only a portion of the accepted applications. However, *all of the unsuccessful applications were eventually awarded some degree of EDZ status.*

Tioga County may need to seek assistance from its State representatives in establishing an EDZ.

3.8. Tourism [1]

Tourism is a mechanism for injecting external money into Tioga County. The County has established a Tourism Council with the task of increasing the size and income of the tourist industry in Tioga County. The legislature should continue to support this effort not only by funding the work of the Council, but through commitment to the development of tourist destinations in the County. Such destinations include an outlet mall and the railroad. The Susquehanna River is essentially as yet untapped as a tourism attraction. The Tourism Council should be an integral part of planning for any new venture that could possibly have an impact on tourism in order to maximize return on investment.

3.9. Municipalities [1]

Responses to the survey of the Legislature and Council of Governments raised many issues that are important for the growth of individual municipalities and of Tioga County as a whole. Responses not mentioned elsewhere in this report are listed together here.

- Some municipalities need water, sewer, and gas. Without these basic elements of infrastructure no significant economic development can occur.
- The deterioration of bridges on secondary roads now requires heavier vehicles to find alternative routes, thereby increasing the cost of transportation for some businesses. All bridges should be maintained at the level of their design specifications.
- Tioga County should continue to exercise pressure on the State to construct a bridge connecting Apalachin and Campville. This bridge would significantly reduce the cost of services in the Owego-Apalachin area.
- Municipalities should address issues of consolidation aggressively. Barriers to consolidation include fear of losing control, fear of losing identity, and apathy. Industry, business, individuals, and municipalities now all face the reality or the prospect of reduced revenues. We must all find ways to reduce costs in order to remain competitive. For some municipalities, the choice may be one between consolidation and loss of economic viability.
- Municipalities should work together with cooperation and support from the County to perform a county-wide property assessment. This would provide a more equitable distribution of taxes. It would also provide an increased sense of unity that would help to build a cooperative spirit throughout the county for addressing our economic ills.
- The following actions should be taken to improve public sector communications throughout Tioga County. The municipalities and the County should work together to increase participation in, and support of, the Council of Local Governments. Legislative representatives should periodically

attend and brief local governments in their respective districts. The County should encourage municipalities to invite county agency heads to brief them and to answer questions. The Chairman of the Legislature should brief Tioga School superintendents at least twice annually.

3.10. Agricultural and Natural Resources

3.10.1. Farmland [1]

Tioga County is mostly farm land and forest. Average farm income in the County is very low and an increasing number of farm workers are working off-farm part of the time to earn a living. According to Reference 2: "In 1987, the average farm income after production expenses was \$9,552...The increase in farmers working off the farm more than 200 days per year between 1982 (46 percent) and 1987 (50 percent) would appear to underscore the difficulty of earning a living at farming..."

Cornell University is one of the greatest resources in the world for Agricultural expertise. Yet its close proximity and active Agricultural Extension program have failed to make Tioga County a vibrant agricultural area. Many Tioga County residents desire to work on the farm, and would if they could earn a descent income. It is vital to the quality of life in the County that Tioga County continue to work for increasing farm production and incomes.

Given the Cornell resources in agricultural science, farm production and incomes can best be stimulated by increasing markets—through the development of new products such as specialty dairy products, and increasing market volume through the development of food processing plants. There are no food processing plants in Tioga County other than Leprino Cheese. Development of the Lounsberry site has great potential for stimulating agriculture in Tioga County.

To provide an additional market for farm products, Tioga County should plan and develop a Farm and Craft Market. "The Windmill" Farm and Craft Market in Penn Yan would serve as an excellent model for this development.

3.10.2. Lounsberry: Water and Gas [2]

The water available at Lounsberry is a unique resource that distinguishes this part of Tioga County from any other area in the Southern Tier. The Campbell Soup Company was interested in this area for a new production facility and conducted an initial engineering study to determine the quality and quantity of water available. The results of that study indicate that at least 8 million gallons per day of water are available at Lounsberry suitable for food and beverage production.

The gas reserves also available at Lounsberry represent an energy source that could be used for both industry and residential consumers. The peak demand for gas in the west end of the County now exceeds supply with the result that industrial users are forced to curtail operations.

Tioga County should actively seek food and beverage companies who could make good use of these water and gas reserves. The County should approach soft drink companies like Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, and Adirondack Beverage Company, as well as breweries and distilleries. Soup companies other than Campbell's might also be interested. The County should open discussions with developers and with the Lounsberry landowners with a view to forming a corporation for the development of the site. Involvement of the landowners as shareholders would preclude the need to purchase land and eliminate some potential barriers to development.

Introduction of any form of food processing at Lounsberry would stimulate agriculture in Tioga County. The County might consider involving Cornell University as a resource in the development of the Lounsberry site, building upon the earlier recommendations of Cornell for alternative commodities and processing technologies at Lounsberry (Ref. 1, p. VI-80). Development of the site has the potential to create many jobs in the County from farm laborer jobs to manufacturing positions.

3.10.3. Gravel [3]

There are considerable gravel deposits in Tioga County which provide both employment and material for construction. Gravel mining can be destructive and sometimes precludes other more desirable land use options. For example, there are large gravel deposits at the Lounsberry site.

There are gravel deposits in the Susquehanna River. Tioga County should explore with the Department of Environmental Conservation the possibility of exploiting these deposits with the goal of deepening the river, possibly creating basins, and increasing the value of the river as a navigable waterway and a recreational resource. The Army Corps of Engineers could be asked to survey specific stretches of the river to determine the placement of dams that would contribute to the deepening of the river. Consideration must be given to the impact of such actions on all current users of the river, on flooding, erosion and other environmental impacts.

3.10.4. Forests [3]

The forests of Tioga County are the basis of a small but vibrant wood products industry that has the potential for considerable expansion. International interest in our wood resources is high and growing. Tioga County currently has abundant quantities of both hardwoods and softwoods. But as demand for wood products increases, there is a real danger of over-exploitation of these resources. At present there are no public or private reforestation programs in place in the county for hardwoods or softwoods.

Tioga County should ask the Department of Environmental Conservation to provide guidance to ensure that our hardwood and softwood resources continue to be replenished at a sufficient rate as our wood products industry grows.

3.11. Cornell University Connection [3]

Cornell University is a knowledge resource of huge potential value in the development of Tioga County. The County should seek ways to use the faculty, staff, and students of Cornell in consulting roles as it seeks to develop its natural, agricultural, industrial, business, and human resources. In addition, Tioga County should actively seek to locate Cornell spin-off companies here instead of accepting their tendency to locate close to Cornell in Tompkins County. Locating such companies in Tioga County would be made a lot easier by the existence of one or more Business Development Centers.

Specific areas in which Cornell can offer development assistance include:

- Agriculture—Cooperative Extension service
- Computational resources—Supercomputer
- Electronics product development—Nanofabrication Facility
- Food Products—Product development and small-scale production
- Industrial Competitiveness—Industrial Extension service
- Industrial and labor relations
- Medical

Cornell's mission comprises the three elements of teaching, research, and outreach. At this time, Cornell is actively seeking a greater involvement in outreach in the region.

3.12. Foreign Trade Zone [3]

Tioga County should work with the US Department of Commerce to establish itself as a Foreign trade zone. This status would permit manufacturing firms and warehouses to carry inventory without having to pay excise tax.

3.13. Planned Communities [3]

A planned community is a balanced mix of homes, places of business, schools, and even medical facilities organized to maximize quality of life. Roads, walking paths, and bicycle paths provide mobility and recreation. Such communities can be built around participating businesses in aesthetic settings and can be a great asset in attracting both firms and workforce to an area.

As Tioga County moves toward the development of Lounsberry and other industrial sites, careful consideration should be given to planned communities as a way of accelerating growth and quality of life in the County. The County should seek developers with experience in creating planned communities and explore the potential of such development at Lounsberry. This development should be privately funded.

4. Policy Recommendations

The following policy statements are recommended to the Tioga County Legislature to guide and support economic development in Tioga County.

4.1. Increase Tax Revenues

Tioga County recognizes that the funds available for human services in the County derive in part from sales tax and property tax revenues. The County intends to maximize those revenues, where possible, through the growth of business and the attraction of new business, and not by raising tax rates.

4.2. Increase and Diversify the Business Base

Tioga County recognizes that diversification of business types and size provides insulation against the adverse impacts of decline in specific business sectors. As a result, the County intends to pursue diversification of its businesses. The County will strive to attract and grow small, medium, and large companies offering diverse products and services. The development of this diverse business base will protect both the quality of life of the residents of the County, and also the tax revenue stream, from the effects of market swings.

4.3. Develop Alternative Markets for Agricultural Products

The survival and growth of agriculture in Tioga County depends directly on the size and proximity of markets. Tioga County will continue to work with Cornell Cooperative Extension, with farmers, and other businesses to develop and promote new agricultural markets in the County. In particular, the County will strive to attract and develop food processing plants and farmers markets. It will encourage and support the establishment of pilot plants, at Cornell and in Tioga County, for the development of new food products that will benefit the agricultural industry of the County.

4.4. Energy Commission

The competitiveness of a business and the quality of life of a household depends directly on the cost of energy it consumes. Tioga County intends to provide the least expensive electricity and gas to its residents and businesses. To accomplish this end, Tioga County will extend the scope of the existing Power Commission to include natural gas, integrating the combined functions into a new Tioga County Energy Commission. The Commission will examine all options available for the delivery of electricity and gas to residents and industry, and recommend a proactive course of action to the Legislature.

4.5. Telecommunications and Information Systems

The competitiveness of business in the global marketplace depends increasingly upon the ready availability of a wide range of information and the ability to communicate rapidly with individuals and organizations around the world. Businesses must be able to communicate via telephone, fax, and modem and can use a wide range of infrastructure such as wire, fiber-optic cable, microwave, or satellite link. These requirements demand the development of new infrastructure and the acquisition of information systems that can control and route the information. Tioga County intends to provide its businesses with the most appropriate telecommunications infrastructure and information systems to ensure the competitiveness of those businesses. The County will establish a County Telecommunications and Information Systems Commission. The Commission will examine all options available for the provision of the necessary infrastructure and systems, and recommend a proactive course of action to the Legislature.

4.6. Support Department of Economic Development and Planning

Economic Development is the set of activities that maintain and stimulate the ability of the private sector to create wealth. This creation of wealth and its distribution to the work force is fundamental to the quality of life in our communities. The Tioga County Legislature has created and supports the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning for the purpose of retaining, growing, and attracting new business in Tioga County.

4.7. Cooperation and Consolidation

Tioga County seeks to minimize the cost of local government, and hence taxes, at the same time as delivering the best possible human services to its residents. Minimizing the cost of government requires elimination of duplication wherever possible. The County will continue to work with all county municipalities and the Council of Governments in sharing equipment, facilities, and staff for mutual benefit. In addition, the County will continue to seek to consolidate its own operations, and assist the municipalities to do the same, when it makes sense to do so.

4.8. Protect the County's Water Resources

The water in the streams, rivers, and aquifers of Tioga County is a precious resource that cannot be permitted to be polluted. The County will continue to work to protect these resources.

References

- ¹ Economics Research Associates, "Economic Adjustment Strategy for the Southern Tier Region of New York State," July 1993.
- ² Economics Research Associates, "Economic Adjustment Strategy for the Southern Tier Region of New York State, Tioga County Strategy" August 1993.
- ³ Engineering Resources Group, "Tioga County Economic Development Strategy," November 1993.

Appendix

CERTIFIED COPY OF RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE TIOGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

RESOLUTION NO. 414-95

**ADOPT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PRIORITIES AND POLICIES PLAN**

**Adoption moved by Legislator Thomas,
seconded by Legislator D'Angelo.**

WHEREAS Tioga County recognizes the need for efforts directed at the retention and attraction of business in the county in order to retain and create jobs for county residents; and

WHEREAS Tioga County recognizes the need for increased sales tax and property tax revenues directly associated with the retention and creation of jobs in Tioga County; and

WHEREAS Tioga County has created and supported the Department of Economic Development and Planning for the specific purpose of business retention and expansion in Tioga County with the ultimate objective of retaining and creating both jobs and public sector tax revenues; and

WHEREAS the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning, with the assistance of business and industry leaders serving on the Tioga County Economic Development Council, has developed a strategy and a prioritized implementation plan for accomplishing the stated purpose of the Department; and

WHEREAS the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning has formulated specific policy recommendations providing a sound framework to enable and support the accomplishment of its mission; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Tioga County Legislature accepts and supports the priorities and policy recommendations which the Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning proposes in its document entitled "Economic Development Priorities and Policies" dated 8 November 1995.

CARRIED

STATE OF NEW YORK)

) ss.:

COUNTY OF TIOGA)

This is to certify that I, the undersigned, Clerk of the Tioga County Legislature, have compared the foregoing copy of the resolution with the original resolution now on file in the office, and which was passed by the Legislature of said County on the thirteenth day of November, 1995, a majority of all the members elected to the Legislature voting in favor thereof, and that the same is a correct and true transcript of such original resolution and of the whole thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the official seal of the County Legislature this thirteenth day of November, 1995.


Clerk of the Tioga County Legislature