



Community and Economic Development Summit

Cobleskill-Richmondville High School

April 5, 2008

THE FOUR PARTNERS:

SCHOHARIE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SCHOHARIE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

SCHOHARIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

SUNY AT COBLESKILL & PUBLIC EDUCATION

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter Page 3

Agenda..... Page 4

Strategic Plan (Draft):
 Overview/Summary of Project..... Page 6

Common Strategies..... Page 8

Agriculture Overview Page 10

Agriculture Strategies..... Page 11

Agriculture Rationale..... Page 16

Manufacturing Strategies Page 24

Tourism Overview Page 26

Tourism Strategies..... Page 27

Tourism Funding Summary Page 38

Micro-enterprise Overview Page 39

Micro-enterprise Strategies..... Page 40

Micro-enterprise Supporting Information..... Page 42

Four Partners Contacts..... Page 44

Group Leader Contact Information..... Page 45

Participant List Page 46



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SCHOHARIE COUNTY FARM BUREAU
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SUNY AT COBLESKILL & PUBLIC EDUCATION

Dear Community Leader,

The Four Partners are pleased that you have chosen to attend the second Schoharie County Community and Economic Development Summit.

As a follow up to the first Summit, groups were formed around four areas (Tourism, Agriculture, Manufacturing/Service and Micro-enterprise) and a “grass-roots” effort was begun. The purpose is to determine where Schoharie County economic development needs to be in five years time and to draft a comprehensive, actionable strategic plan to get Schoharie County to that place, incorporating information and analysis from any of the previously completed studies. A draft of the plan that has been developed will be presented and discussed at this Summit.

Schoharie County must be strategically nimble to attract and grow new and traditional businesses and to maintain its desirability as a place to live, work and play. The population of the area may grow greater than expected, and we must be prepared in terms of infrastructure, services, proper land use and far-sighted vision.

To that end, we are asking you to review and have input on the proposed plan. The Four Partners feel strongly that input from the community and businesses is needed to make this plan a success. All four groups have worked extremely hard to put this working document together and are looking for your feedback and participation as the plan moves forward.

Thank you for your participation and we look forward to working with you as we prepare for the future of Schoharie County.

Sincerely,

Eric Stein, President
Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce

Earl Van Wormer III, Chairman
Schoharie County Board of Supervisors

Dr. Anne Myers, Officer in Charge, State University
Of New York, Cobleskill

Winnie Nelson, President
Schoharie County Farm Bureau



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April 5, 2008 – Cobleskill - Richmondville High School

SUMMIT AGENDA

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 7:30 – 8:00 AM | Registration and Refreshments |
| 8:00 – 8:30 AM | Introductory Remarks |
| 8:30 – 9:15 AM | Plan Review & Questions – Tourism |
| 9:15 – 10:00 AM | Plan Review & Questions – Manufacturing |
| 10:00 – 10:15 AM | Break |
| 10:15 – 11:00 AM | Plan Review & Questions – Agriculture |
| 11:00 – 11:45 AM | Plan Review & Questions – Micro-Enterprise |
| 11:45 AM – 12:15 PM | Common Strategies (Matrix Review) |
| 12:15 – 12:45 PM | Next Steps |
| 1:00 – 2:00 PM | Lunch |

Thank you to our Sponsors:

- National Grid
- Kintz Plastics
- Schoharie County
- Schoharie County IDA & Empire Zone



Community and Economic Development Summit

Strategic Plan

April 5, 2008

DRAFT at 3/31/08

THE FOUR PARTNERS:

SCHOHARIE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SCHOHARIE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

SCHOHARIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

SUNY AT COBLESKILL & PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Schoharie County
Strategic Plan Development
2008-2012**

Goal: Determine where Schoharie County economic development needs to be in five years time. Draft a comprehensive, actionable strategic plan to get Schoharie County to that place, incorporating information and analysis from any of the completed studies, such as the Rhodes study, the CPI Downtown Cobleskill study and the Empire Zone application. Present the plan at an economic summit of community and leaders who will take responsibility to implement the tactics to achieve a strategic vision for Schoharie County.

Plan Development: Oversight for the Schoharie County Strategic Plan will be provided by the Economic Summit Planning Committee comprised of representatives of the Four Partners: Agriculture, Business, Education and Government. The plan will be developed by four or more work groups, each with the assignment to develop strategies and tactics specific to a given economic group.

The initial work groups are:

- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Manufacturing and Service
- Micro Enterprises

Each work group will have several leaders and will recruit other members as the group determines appropriate to complete the scope of the work. The group may decide its approach to developing its section of the plan, but the final version must include a statement of strategy, tactics to achieve that strategy, rationale for the tactic, time frame and status. In addition, the plan should include supporting information and analysis of that information. A template is provided for this purpose. The resources and studies of the Schoharie County Planning and Development Office are available to all work groups.

Schoharie County Strategic Thesis: Over the next five years,

- The population of Schoharie County may grow more than projected by census reports due to new business and residential expansion pressures and opportunities from the Capital District and out of the area;
- Schoharie County must market and position itself to attract and take advantage of this growth possibility;
- Without a plan, such growth may result in less than optimal use of land resources and conflicts among competing enterprises;
- Infrastructure investment will be required to support economic development;
- Workforce development will be required to support economic investment;
- Quality of life is a key community asset and must be preserved;
- Increasingly, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and service industries will have to not only co-exist, but also provide mutual support in order to encourage and sustain economic growth; and
- Schoharie County's strengths are its location, community cooperation and leadership, desirable lifestyle and environment, debt-free county government, mix of business, tourism and agricultural economy, high quality health and education systems, available flatlands, workforce availability and empire zone designation.

“Evidence Based Planning” Data / Information:

- Rhodes Study
- Hyett / Palma Downtown Cobleskill Study
- Empire Zone application
- County Planning and Development Office Studies and Reports
- Town and village plans
- Sharon Springs project
- Private business support resources (ie: Ace Hardware database)
- Center for Economic Development
- Tech Valley Coalition
- SUNY Cobleskill
- Census Bureau
- New York State government resources
- Federal government resources

Schoharie County Strategic Vision: Schoharie County has great potential for significant economic development because of its location, resources and leadership. Schoharie County offers a highly desirable lifestyle environment of convenient country living. These two elements need to be blended into a composite that will assure sustainability of our community for the future. Some areas to take into consideration when developing the plan might be: infrastructure, workforce, technology, quality of life, marketing, governance, telecommuting and so on.

To accomplish this we will strengthen our roots in these areas:

- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Manufacturing and Service
- Micro Enterprises

We will continue to be a significant agricultural center, including farming, agriculture education and research. We will continue to develop as an historic and modern tourism destination. Planned growth of manufacturing and service industries are a top priority. Micro enterprises will find a nurturing and supportive environment in Schoharie county.

Schoharie County must be strategically nimble to attract and grow new and traditional businesses and to maintain its desirability as a place to live, work and play. The population of the area may grow greater than expected, and we must be prepared in terms of infrastructure, services, proper land use and far-sighted vision.

Schoharie County Community and Economic Development Summit

Draft as of 3/31/08

Bolded Areas are tactics that were found in all four areas

| Common Strategies Planning/Zoning | Agriculture | Manufacturing | Tourism | Micro-enterprise |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Land use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistent regulations - Comprehensive zoning and land use regulations based on county-wide criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educate community about manufacturing to ensure positive attitude towards sitings - Consistent regulations - Comprehensive zoning and land use regulations based on county-wide criteria - Empire Zone - Support the efforts of the IDA to make their site 'shovel ready' and to initiate the building of initial structures within their park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive zoning and land use regulations based on county-wide criteria - Consistent regulations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication/website listing all zoning regulations in towns & villages - Consistent regulations - Comprehensive zoning and land use regulations based on county-wide criteria - Dntown/village settings-ie: Middleburgh - CPI model - Empire Zone |
| Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land/Farm preservation - Enforce existing assessments - County-wide fund to purchase or lease development rights - Better utilization of forest lands - Empire Zone - Explore production of alternative fuels - Processing plant needs - Water/sewer facility to support growth - Broadband accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build water/sewer facility to support growth - Processing plants - Broadband accessibility - Involve retired persons - Develop a resource center - Encourage younger persons to stay in the County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directions/informational signage regulations - Development of additional and/or expanded key attractions - Empire Zone - Multi format arts center - Film/video productions - Multi-use sports and recreation facility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broadband connectivity – County wide - Water/sewer facility to support growth - Involve retired persons - Encourage younger persons to stay in the County |
| Workforce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage people to stay in farming - Involve retired persons - Encourage younger persons to stay in the County - Promote SUNY programs for career & internships on the farm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve retired persons - Identify arts professionals in the County - Encourage younger persons to stay in the County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broadband accessibility - Water/sewer facility to support growth - Signage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve retired persons - Encourage younger persons to stay in the County |
| Business Support Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a funding handbook - Outreach and workshops - Grant writing workshops - Incubator farm/resource center - Train and encourage farmers to stay in business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish economic impact data - Develop a resource center - Grant writing workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add visitor information centers - Use film database to identify professionals in the County - Establish a facility for arts education - Develop local educational programs, including German culture, Iroquois culture, 18th century lifestyle - Grant writing workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A guide to starting a business in Schoharie County - Mentoring service - Business incubator - Grant writing workshops |

Schoharie County Community and Economic Development Summit

Bolded Areas are tactics that were found in all four areas

| | | | | |
|---------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Marketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase number of markets - Wholesale to local restaurants - Multi-processing facility - Educate consumers - Educate government leaders - Educate growers and producers - Brand locally produced products - Hire a sales/product distribution coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market to bring business here – use IDA, Chamber, Empire Zone & Planning & Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inventory, publish and promote all present attractions - Fully develop visitor information centers - Inventory and create arts and conference database & directory - Educate & promote the 2012 tercentennial locally, nationally and internationally - Support film commission and database - Unify county tourism businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website for shop Schoharie County |
| Funding Needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transfer tax fee/County fund - Source funding for infrastructure - Ag development matching fund - Grants/private foundations - Revolving loan fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revolving loan fund - Funds to help with college and keeping kids in the County - Source funding for infrastructure - Grants/private foundations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revolving loan fund - Source funding for infrastructure - Grant program - Return on sales tax increases - Grants/private foundations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revolving loan fund - Source funding for infrastructure - Grants/private foundations |
| Energy Applications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better use of wood products - Use new farm products or by-products as alternative fuels - Energy Savings - Develop alternative energy sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy Savings - Develop alternative energy sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy Savings - Develop alternative energy sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smart-grid - Energy Savings - Develop alternative energy sources |

AGRICULTURE OVERVIEW 2008

Agriculture has been the leading business activity in Schoharie County since the area's settling. It remains today the largest industry of the county—although the forms and varieties of agriculture have changed significantly over the past hundred years.

Small, self-sufficient farms of the early 1900's yielded to larger, primarily dairy operations in the later twentieth century. Today dairying faces great challenges to remain vital and vibrant while other, more diversified models, including organic and sustainable production, continue to grow in strength and number. The 2002 USDA Agricultural Census reported that the market value of all agricultural products sold from the county was almost \$27 million. Dairy products amounted to 60% of total sales; other products included hay and silage (11%), cattle and calves (11%), vegetables (7%), nursery and greenhouse (4%), maple (1%) and other products (6%). Methods of marketing farm products have changed, also. Some farmers still rely on the bulk commodity sale of product, while others have branched into larger wholesale activity and into direct marketing through farm stands, CSA's, and farmers' markets to the ultimate consumer.

Recognizing this changing nature of Schoharie County agriculture, the Economic Summit Agriculture Workgroup began by surveying as many agricultural operators as possible to gain a sense of perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to agriculture in the county. Surveys were distributed through the mailing lists of Schoharie County Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, and the Farm Fresh Guide, published through the Schoharie County Office of Planning and Development. In addition, notices were published in local newspapers to advise interested individuals who had not received a survey to request one from the Schoharie County Planning and Development Office. Four hundred three surveys were mailed or distributed; fifty-one were returned. Sixteen people indicated interest in assisting with development of the plan.

Responses to the survey reflected the changing nature of agriculture in the county, and suggestions for economic development covered the gamut from widely generalized strategies to highly specific undertakings.

The workgroup consisted of as many as 30 or more people, who attended meetings or contributed by telephone as their schedules allowed. New participants were welcomed throughout the process. The group discussed the responses to the survey and quickly developed a long list of proposals. Further discussion refined the proposals into the document presented here.

The group divided the proposals into four areas: land and farmland preservation; agricultural processing needs; agricultural marketing and education needs; and funding. The first area of priority, land and farmland preservation, was a response to the pressures for housing development currently increasing in the county. Participants expressed strong support for encouraging and reactivating farm use of the land. The needs for processing covered the full range from meat to dairy, vegetables and fruit, and wood. Marketing and education included a component for branding a Schoharie County product. Participants considered all aspects of funding, and education of all community members was integral to the entire proposal.

The scope of the proposals ranges from short range to long range, from individual actions to town, county- and statewide legislative changes, from nuts-and-bolts, hands on (local directory of funding sources; a new processing facility) to scratch-the-head, mental (education). Presentation of these proposals is, however, only the first step in the continued economic development of the County. The wider audience, those who live, work, or plan to live/work in the County, must recognize the importance of their role in controlling the economic destiny of Schoharie County. They must take up the cause and contribute time, thought, and energy to the accomplishment of these goals. These contributions--writing a letter to a legislator or making a telephone call to ask others to do the same--need not demand large amounts of time or energy, and yet champions—willing to spearhead a more sizable undertaking—will also be needed.

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008 – 2012
Agriculture**

Strategy: Preserve Open Land and Farms

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|---|---|------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Enforce existing ag assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourages agricultural use - acres fraudulently claiming ag assessments - may encourage land owners to lease land | 6-12 months | Discuss with supervisors and assessors | N/C to inc in tax per | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |
| Explore and develop production of alternative fuels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meadows, woodlands and waste/by-products currently underutilized - may encourage a more "green" approach | 1-2 years | Improve education | TBD | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |
| Development of a county fund to purchase/lease development rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct/has track record in other areas - may be transfer fee on all real estate transactions | 2-3 years | Bring to board of supervisors | Cost to purchasers | Possibly: Schoharie County Land Trust |
| Consider different lease options on assessment: 10 yr or 5 yr roll-over | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - greater security for farming operations - farmers more likely to invest with longer-term commitment | 2-3 years | Bring to state level | N/C | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |
| Rewrite criteria for obtaining ag assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lower first year gross recognizing it is the most difficult, most costly and most educations | 2-3 years | Bring to State level | Low | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |
| Better utilization of forest lands to improve farm profitability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - under utilized asset in county (60%) is forest land - untapped "agroforestry" options with mushrooms, botanicals, berries, ferns, etc. | 5 + years | Improve education – CCE/DEC, etc. | Low | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008 – 2012
Agriculture**

Strategy: Increase the availability of local USDA Meat Processing

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|--|--|------------------|---|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Persuade SUNY Cobleskill meat lab to offer off-season training programs | - opens the facility to interested parties - facility could share it's expertise and see a new revenue source | Within 6 months | SUNY Cooperation | Low | Possibly: MADE in Schoharie County |
| Provide alternative ideas for SUNY Meat Lab to reopen on conditional basis | - reduction of responsibility and resources from SUNY system (possibly) | Within 6 months | SUNY and farmer cooperation | Low | Possibly: MADE in Schoharie County |
| Source funding & construction of processing facility | - farmers need local meat processing facility | 1 year + | Funding, permits, approvals, construction | High | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |
| Establish a multi-processing facility, marketing, etc | - cost sharing – combined resources - new local economic engine | 1 year + | County approval & farmer cooperation | High | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |

Strategy: Establish a dairy processing facility in the county

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|---|--|------------------|---|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| SUNY – county cooperative processing facility | - combined efforts to provide a variety of value-added products | 1 year + | SUNY, county, farmer co-op | High/moderate | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |
| Use existing dairy processing plan to initiate conversation | - business plan already exists with feasibility and market research - modification may be made easily | 1 year + | TBD | High | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |
| Establish a multi-use site for processing and marketing | - Cost sharing – combined resources | 1 year + | County approval, farmer cooperation and funding | High/moderate | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |

Strategy: Establish a processing facility for wood products and wood/ag by-product energy

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|--|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| SUNY consider public use of Bio Energy composter | - already in process for SUNY may be expanded for county-wide use - may provide ecologically sound management of manure and waste county-wide | 1 year + | SUNY involvement | TBD | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |
| Multi-processing facility – consider alternative energy wood pellets, corn, sorghum etc. | Cost sharing – combined resources | 1 year + | Cooperation and funding | High | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008 – 2012
Agriculture**

Strategy: Ag marketing - expand marketing of local products

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|--|---|------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Advertise - SCNY Diet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cannot sell without it - good local food – catchy name - Cornell Cooperative Extension support for nutritional value and approach | 1 year | Incorporate into existing publications; benchmark sales to determine increase | Low | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |
| Create the position of Product Sales Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase diversity of sales ops | 1-2 years | Match buyers and products; outline job duties and hierarchy | Moderate – may be broker fee at Railex, cooperative etc. | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |

Strategy: Ag marketing - educate all audiences about the benefits of ag in our community

| | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| Develop a marketing plan focused on consumers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consumers are generations form the farm - “buy local/ 100 mile diet” is hot | Plan in 6 months, effort on-going | Coordinate efforts w/other community groups | TBD based on plan tactics | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |
| Develop a marketing plan focused on government leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government decisions greatly affect business efforts - key to making farming more affordable | Plan in 6 months, effort on-going | “Itinerant Preacher” approach” to local lawmakers | TBD based on plan tactics | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |
| Develop a marketing plan geared toward growers/producers to understand existing programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - energize and bring together the local farm community | Plan in 6 months, efforts on-going | Outreach for collaboration | TBD based on plan tactics | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |

Strategy: Ag marketing - brand locally produced products

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|--|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Host contests for naming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - greater recognition and buy-in through a collaborative effort | 1-2 years | Product recognition in marketplace by 2010 | Moderate | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|--|----------|-----------------------------------|

Strategy: Ag Funding – prepare a funding handbook

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|---|--|----------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| Get \$ to compile book | - may be published on-line, cd or in print | Within 1 year – Spring '09 | Re-examine budget needs and availability | TBD – depends on format | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |
| Contact USDA, NYS Ag & Markets, Farm Credit Svc, local lenders etc. | - gather info, provide funding sources and more info for inclusion | Within 1 year – Spring '09 | Include yr. The program is in effect | Low | Possibly: Schoharie County ED office |

Strategy: Ag Funding – increase commitment & investment of town & county government for Ag

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|---|---|------------------|--|--|--|
| Ask Board of Supervisors to contribute cost share/matching dollars for grants | - large pool of money for use county-wide - supports county ag protection plan | Spring 2009 | "Itinerant Preacher"; develop recommendation | Low – ask Moderate/High – to establish | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |
| Make broadband internet accessible to all households | - will improve/increase market opportunities, education and research | 2-4 years | Establish Task Force reps; service to all that want it | TBD (High) | Possibly: Schoharie County Government |

Strategy: Ag Funding – increase grant/loan funding brought into the county

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|--|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Educate farmers & potential farmers about availability of \$ | - the more people know, the more likely people will utilize the programs | Ongoing – 1-2 years | Outreach and workshops | Low | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |
| Connect with grant writers – volunteers | - make assistance and education available and affordable | Ongoing – 1-2 years | Compile list of grant writers | Low - Publicity | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |
| Sponsor grant meeting/workshops/training | - make assistance and education available and affordable | Before spring 2009 | Outreach for sponsors | Moderate - sponsorships | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008 – 2012
Agriculture**

Strategy: Ag Funding – establish private foundation to support ag

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|---|---|------------------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Involve existing groups – land trust, farm bureau | - encourage a collaborative approach with like-minded groups - expands ownership and knowledge base - why reinvent the wheel? | 1-2 years | Outreach and Collaboration | Low | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |
| Research existing foundation models – Community Foundation for the Capital Region | | 3-4 years | Approach recommendation | Low | Possibly: Schoharie County Land Trust |

Strategy: Ag Funding –influence NYS & Fed legislators to support ag

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|--|---|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Advocate for rehab of Hunt's Point Market | - encourages SC farmers access to the largest wholesale market in the northeast | Ongoing | Lobbying & community outreach | Low | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |
| Intense lobbying of NYS and Fed legislators to increase funding and policy support | - see "Preserve open land and farms" | Ongoing | Lobbying & community outreach | Low | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |

Strategy: Train and encourage farmers to stay in business

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Champion |
|---|---|------------------|--|----------------|---|
| Develop a Schoharie County model a la NY FarmLink | - why reinvent the wheel? Use existing model programs to connect farmers with future farmers | 1 – 2 years | Use existing program to adapt existing model | Low - Moderate | Possibly: Cornell Cooperative Extension |
| Encourage school field trips/adopt a farm program | - leverage existing farm to school programs - kids generally do not understand the value of a farm & sources of their food | 1 – 2 years | Farmers and the public in a coordinated effort | Low | Possibly: Schoharie County Farm Bureau |
| Promote SUNY internships and programs | - educating students/people with real-life, hands-on experiences is invaluable - educate publics about resources available | ASAP | More participation | Low | Possibly: SUNY Cobleskill |
| Establish an incubator farm | - allows hands-on experiences and easy access for beginning farmers - encourages mentoring by "old-timers" - keeps farms in operation instead of being sold | 2-4 years | Find farms & mentors; establish program parameters | High | Possibly: Ag Marketing Specialist |

Agriculture Committee Strategies and Rationale

Strategy: Preserve Open Land and Farms

(County)Tactic: Enforce existing ag assessments.

Rationale: Longstanding leases made to obtain an ag assessment may have expired without being removed from the assessor's rolls, or the farmer leasing the property may not have kept it in active production. Maintaining a current roll of land being actively farmed would encourage the landowner to lease his land and the farmer to continue production.

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau

(State) Tactic: Provide for different lease options for an ag assessment, such as a 10-year lease or a 5-year rollover, a new 5 year lease to be signed after the first year and each succeeding year of the original lease.

Rationale: Farming operations would have greater security in the longer lease; farmers might be more likely to invest in improvements on their own or on a cost-share basis with the owner.

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau (to take to NYS Farm Bureau)

Tactic: Develop a countywide fund to purchase and/or lease development rights through a 1% or 2% transfer fee on all real estate transactions or a tourism tax.

Rationale: This method of raising funds for preservation of open/farm land is direct and has a successful track record in other areas and states.

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Land Trust

Tactic: Rewrite the criteria for obtaining an ag assessment exemption so that the producer must have \$5000 gross sales for the first year only and \$10,000 gross sales every year after.

Rationale: The first year of production is the most difficult, most costly, and most educational. Allowing the producer to claim ag exemption on only \$5000 gross sales would encourage new farmers and would help retain farmland.

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau—to take to NYS Farm Bureau.

Tactic: Utilize forestlands better to improve farm profitability.

Rationale: Schoharie County is 60% forested. Forestlands currently represent an under-utilized asset in the county.

Some logging does occur, and that wood is largely shipped out of the area, with little added-value benefit to our community. Also, agroforestry can be conducted: mushrooms, forest botanicals, berries, ferns, wood for smoking, maple products.

Possible Champion: CCE

Tactic: Explore/develop local production of alternative fuels—biodiesel, pellets, methane gas, wind, solar, etc.

Rationale: Meadows, woodlands, and waste by-products currently being under-utilized or disposed of in less environmentally friendly methods can yield fuels for local consumption and in yielding financial gain will remain viable farmlands rather than become subdivisions.

Possible Champion: CCE

Strategy: Increase the availability of local USDA meat processing facility.

Tactic: Persuade SUNY Cobleskill to institute a significant training program off-season for meat cutters/plant managers

Rationale: Offering this program will train new workers and cause the Meat Lab to be open to the public during off-season. The facility exists and is currently functioning only to serve the SUNY Cobleskill students during the academic year.

Possible Champion: MADE in Schoharie County

Tactic: Provide alternative ideas for SUNY Cobleskill to reopen its Meat Lab on a conditional basis, i.e. lease to a private entity for use perhaps one or two days per week.

Rationale: The conditional lease would reduce the responsibility and draw on the resources of the college.

Possible Champion: MADE in Schoharie County

Tactic: Build a new processing facility.

Rationale: The need for another USDA meat processing facility is dire. NELPS, a locally organized business designed to help alleviate the pressure on producers and processors alike, has found that their solution has been only short term. A plant in western Massachusetts burned; the loss of this plant has caused pressure on processors in New York State as the Massachusetts producers move west to have animals slaughtered. A local plant would keep transport costs for the producer to a minimum, and the animals would suffer less stress from a shorter trip. A new facility could include "green"

features, such as a facility for composting the wastes and producing methane gas for local use. The drain on local water and sewer facilities would thus be reduced, and odors would be kept to a minimum.

Possible Champion: Ag. Marketing Specialist

Tactic: Build a multi-use site/ag. business park for processing of meat, vegetables/fruit, grains and wood and for marketing/sales of these and other agricultural products, with "green" features such as composting the by-products and producing methane for fuel.

Rationale: Combining the uses on one site would mean cost sharing and shared resources, such as manpower. This site could move with the ebb and flow of product availability with less impact on the financial aspect of the businesses. Adding the "green" features will help not only protect the environment but also reduce possible negative community reaction to the presence of the site in the neighborhood.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Strategy: Establish a dairy processing facility in the county.

Tactic: Working with SUNY Cobleskill, a county cooperative should establish a processing facility.

Rationale: Training for SUNY students, offering a variety of products, and adding value to local milk would benefit many corners of the community. Consumers would enjoy fresher products; producers would save in shipping costs; a workforce would be established to continue such processing here or elsewhere.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Tactic: Establish a multi-use site for processing and marketing.

Rationale: See same tactic in previous Strategy.

Tactic: Use existing dairy processing business plan to initiate establishment of a dairy processing facility.

Rationale: The business plan already exists. Modifications could be made relatively easily. Funding could be by farmers or private, non-agricultural investors.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Strategy: Establish a processing facility for wood products and wood/agricultural by-product energy.

Tactic: Approach SUNY Cobleskill to propose/initiate public use of its Bio-Energy Composter.

Rationale: Such a facility or one similar to the one proposed is already in the works at SUNY Cobleskill. The college facility has received extensive funding and has been designed. It could utilize by-products of local producers and, thus, provide ecologically sound management of the manure and other waste. The college might even find it financially profitable to engage in this sort of transaction.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Tactic: Build a multi-use processing site, which would include production of local wood products and energy products from wood and farm products/by-products. Examples would be lumber, firewood, biodiesel (from canola or other grains), pellets from grasses, grains or wood, wood by-products, and methane gas.

Rationale: See same tactic in strategy for the multi-use site.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Strategy: Expand marketing of local products.

Tactic: Advertise a SCNY diet, featuring products from Schoharie County farms.

Rationale: A catchy name attracts attention and promotes locally grown food.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist/CCE

Tactic: Create the position of Product Sales Coordinator at the multi-use site or at Railex. This person would assist producers by coordinating sales to restaurants, wholesalers, and local markets. Buyers could call in an order; producers could report availability of produce; the coordinator could also call buyers or producers for that information.

Rationale: Providing a centralized dispersal/connection point for sales increases the opportunities for local producers to sell their goods.

Funding: Moderate—through a broker fee at Railex/marketing site or by an independent cooperative.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Strategy: Prepare a Handbook of Funding Sources.

Tactic: Schoharie County Planning and Development would compile this handbook and publish it online in pdf or by CD.
Rationale: This office has existing infrastructure for such a task and could utilize an intern to accomplish the compilation of the handbook. Since this handbook would benefit the entire county, it makes sense that County Planning undertake this venture. Publication online would allow for inclusion of links to the most current information from various sources. Publication by CD would provide a low-cost method of disseminating the information to those who have dial-up or no internet connection. CD's could be available at the offices of the Four Partners.
Possible Champion: Sean, Scho. Co. Planning and Development

Tactic: Contact Farm Credit, CCE, local lenders, and private sources for information on funding programs.
Rationale: The handbook should be as complete as possible and should include as many funding sources as exist locally, county-wide, statewide, and nationally.
Possible Champion: Sean, Scho. Co. Planning and Development

Tactic: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County would obtain the money to fund the publishing of this handbook.
Rationale: CCE has the existing infrastructure to publish such a document and would be able to use it in its mission to educate its audience in Schoharie County.
Possible Champion: CCE

Strategy: Educate all audiences about the benefits of agriculture in our community

Tactic: Develop a marketing plan focused on educating **consumers** (may include these messages - quality, safety, health, timing of field to table, etc.)
Rationale: Consumers are typically generations removed from the farm and do not fully grasp the benefits. Now is a ripe time to capitalize on growing market interests of local products
Timeframe: Defined outreach plan in 6 months; on-going execution
Measures: Increased awareness of ag businesses in the area; increased sale of ag products locally
Costs: TBD based on plan tactics
Possible Champion: CCE

Tactic: Develop a marketing plan focused on **government** leaders (may include these messages - need for affordable business costs, favorable land values, enforce regulations such as ag assessments/subdivision rules, etc.)
Rationale: Government decisions greatly affect business efforts, particularly as influence over taxes, regulations affecting processes, etc. - a key audience for making change happen
Timeframe: Defined outreach plan in 6 months; on-going execution
Measures: Farm costs hold the line
Costs: TBD based on plan tactics
Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau

Tactic: Develop a marketing plan focused on **growers/producers** (may include early conversations to determine capacity, cooperation, "planting the seed" of opportunities, future hope of local processing facility, educational opportunities available—CCE--etc.)
Rationale: Energize and bring together the local farm community to become most effective
Timeframe: Defined outreach plan in 6 months; on-going execution
Measures: More active, energized and hopeful farmers in Schoharie County
Costs: TBD based on plan tactics
Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Strategy: Brand locally produced products

Tactics: Host contests for naming; identify priority markets for the goods (direct mkts, schools, prisons) and leverage existing programs (Pride of NY, SCW, etc.)
Rationale: Greater name recognition through a collaborative effort
Timeframe: 1-2 years
Measures: Product recognition in marketplace by 2010
Costs: Moderate – high
Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Strategy: Train and encourage farmers to stay in business.

Tactic: Develop a Schoharie County model a la NY FarmLink

Rationale: Utilize an existing model with adaptations to meet local need.

Possible Champion: CCE

Tactic: Encourage school field trips/adopt a farmer programs a la Schoharie County Farms (leverage existing farm to school programs)

Rationale: Children do not know generally the source of their food. Making them aware of the sources of their food and developing relationships with the producers of that food will develop and encourage support for continuation of farming enterprises.

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau

Tactic: Promote SUNY internships and other programs available

Rationale: Educating college students in real-life experiences enhances their ability to succeed in farming after graduation.

Possible Champion: SUNY Cobleskill

Tactic: Establish an incubator farm

Rationale: allows hands-on experiences and easy access for beginning farmers, encourages mentoring by "old-timers" and keeps farms in operation instead of being sold to developers

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist

Strategy: Influence NYS and Federal legislators to support agriculture.

Tactic: Advocate for rehabilitation of the Hunt's Point Market as a viable option for upstate growers/producers.

Rationale: Improvement of Hunt's Point will enable producers from Schoharie County to sell produce in the area's largest wholesale market.

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau—to take to NYS Farm Bureau

Tactic: Intense lobbying of NYS and federal legislators to continue/increase funding and policy support of agriculture.

Rationale: The squeaky wheel...

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau

Strategy: Increase the commitment and investment of town and county government for agriculture.

Tactic: Ask the Board of Supervisors to contribute ag. development money for cost share/matching dollars for grants (include in County Plan and CCE funding).

Rationale: Creating a fund at the county level would produce a large pool of money for use county-wide; the proposed realty transfer fee could be applied here.

Timeframe: Spring 2009

Measures: 2% realty transfer fee and other funding options.

Cost: Moderate

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau

Tactic: Make broadband internet connection accessible to all households/businesses of Schoharie County.

Rationale: Improved access to internet will improve/increase marketing opportunities, ease and speed of communication, availability of up-to-date research and educational materials.

Possible Champion: Schoharie County Farm Bureau/Chamber of Commerce

Strategy: Increase grant/loan funding brought into the county.

Tactic: Educate farmers and potential farmers about the availability of funds through outreach and workshops.

Rationale: The more the audience knows about the availability of funds and methods to obtain them, the more likely the audience is to apply.

Possible Champion: CCE

Tactic: Connect with grant writers, paid or volunteer.

Rationale: Applicants for grants may need assistance in appropriate presentation of their needs/proposals. Application forms request specific information and proposals and plans in specific and appropriate language, which may or may not be part of the producer's everyday functioning.

Possible Champion: CCE

Tactic: Sponsor grant-writing workshops.

Rationale: Training local individuals in the skills of grant writing would develop of source of assistance for grant applicants.

Possible Champion: CCE

Strategy: Establish a private foundation to support agriculture.

Tactic: Involve existing groups, such as Farm Bureau and the Schoharie Land Trust.

Rationale: Utilize existing knowledge base and expertise.

Possible Champion: Ag Marketing Specialist.

Tactic: Utilize private dollars for support of agriculture.

Rationale: The entire community will realize benefits by maintaining open land and farming; asking that greater community to contribute money will increase the interest in preserving farming.

Possible Champion: Schoharie Land Trust

MANUFACTURING OVERVIEW 2008

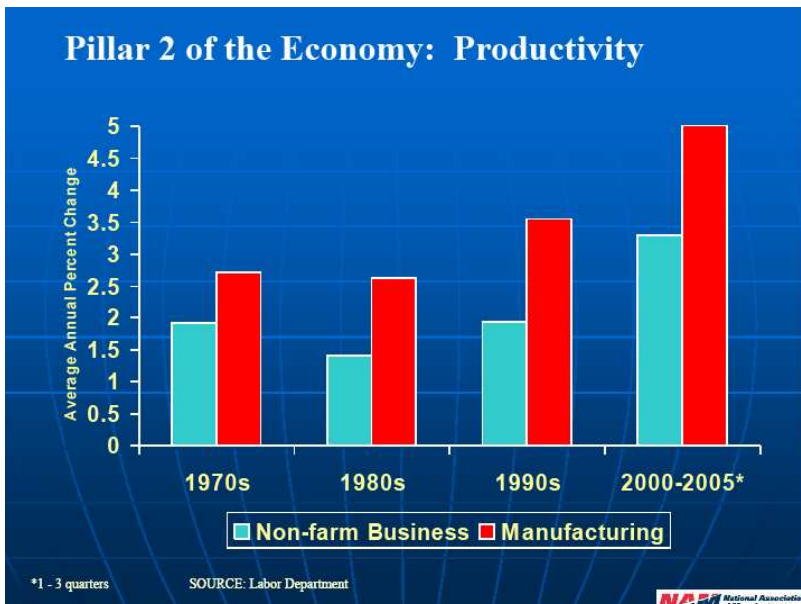
According to the National Association of Manufactures, there are six pillars that support today's U.S. economy:

- Manufacturing makes the **highest contribution to economic growth** of any sector;
- Manufacturing is responsible for more than **60 percent of private sector research and development** and the center for a wide range of advanced technologies that cut energy use and lead to a cleaner environment;
- Manufacturing achieves a **high productivity rate year in and year out**, increasing by more than 50 percent in the past decade;
- Manufacturing contributes more than **60 percent of U.S. exports** or about \$50 billion a month;
- Manufacturing pays **wages and benefits that are about 25 percent higher** than in non-manufacturing jobs; and
- Manufacturing **multiplies every dollar spent into an additional \$1.37** in economic activity, greater than other sectors.

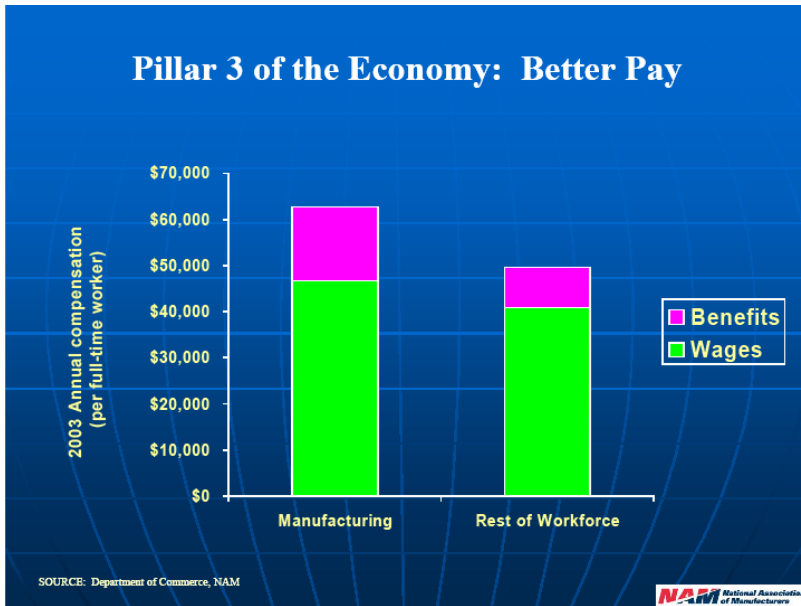
Manufacturing accounted for 15 percent of economic growth between 2001 and 2005, more than any other sector.



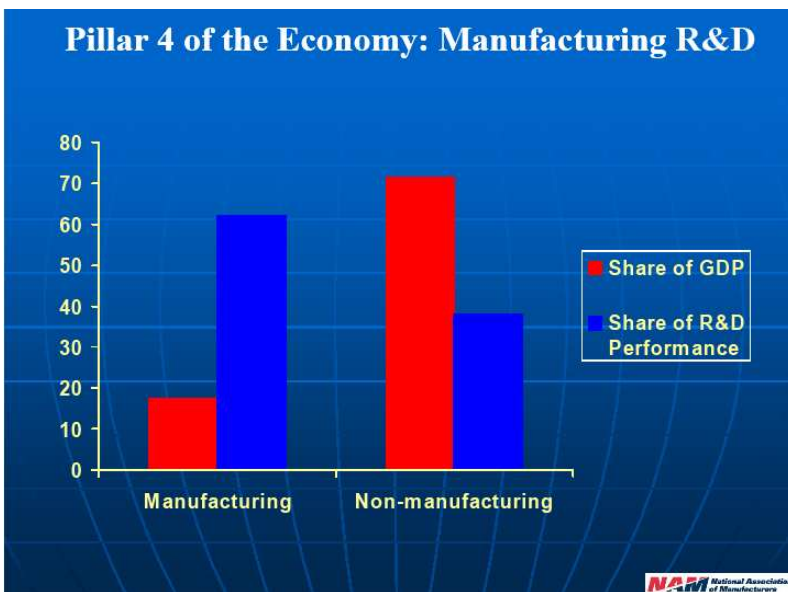
Manufacturing productivity consistently outpaces productivity growth in other sectors. Between 1987 and 2005, manufacturing productivity grew by 94 percent, roughly two and a half times faster than the 38 percent increase in productivity in the rest of the business sector.



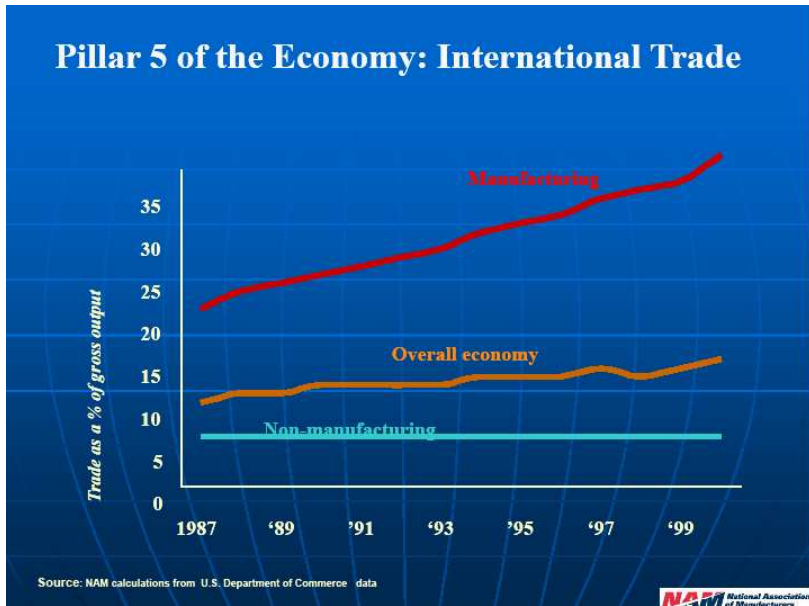
Today's manufacturing employees earn higher wages and receive more generous benefits than other working Americans. In 2004, manufacturing employees earned an average of nearly \$65,000 a year in wages and benefits, while employees in the remainder of the economy earned about \$53,000. That's a 23 percent premium for working in manufacturing.



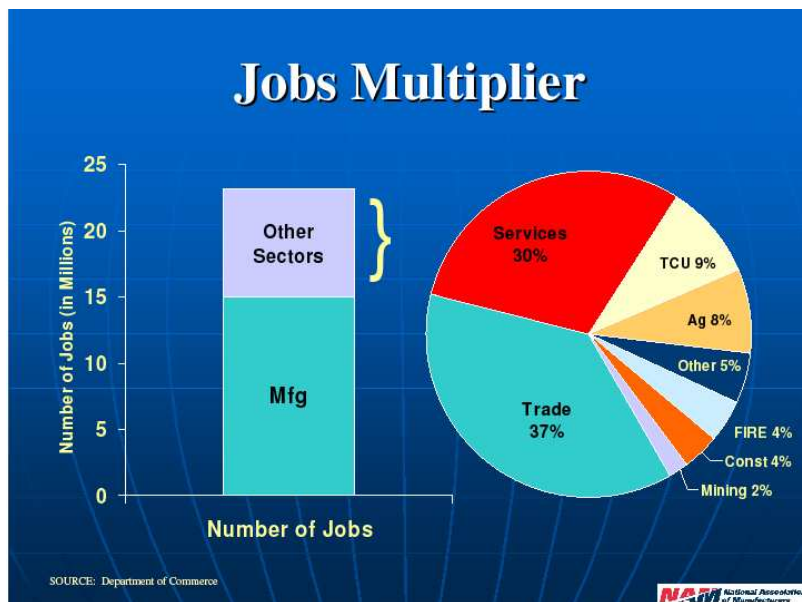
As stated earlier, manufacturing is responsible for more than 60 percent of private sector research and development.



Manufacturing is also the leading sector in international trade. The United States is the world's number one manufacturer, accounting for about a quarter of global manufacturing output in 2004.



In addition to the fact that manufacturing multiplies every dollar spent into an additional \$1.37 in economic activity, greater than other sectors, manufacturing also has the greatest job multiplier of any sector.



There are currently over 40 manufacturing firms located in Schoharie County. Of these, 24 are listed in the New York State Department of Labor's data base as companies looking to fill vacancies.

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008 – 2012
Manufacturing and Service**

Strategy: Improve general political/cultural environment

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|--|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| Publish economic impact data | Helping the general community understand the economic impact of manufacturing to the local community should develop a positive impact on siting and expansions. | immediately | | Low to moderate | Being prepared for the Economic Summit |
| Develop resource center | Provide expertise to local business on technical or complex issues (insurance, banking, tax compliance) | This year | | Low | |
| Develop Zoning and Site Plan Procedures Manual | Many Businesses don't know the steps in the review process. | This year | | Low | County Planning has developed flow chart |
| Institute County-wide Assessing | Many of the commercial/manufacturing facilities should be assessed by same individual for consistency. | Next Year | | Moderate | County is studying the consolidation |

Strategy: Improve Infrastructure and Site Preparedness

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|---|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|
| New Infrastructure Development | Build water/sewer facility to support growth | soonest | | high | |
| Improve Existing Infrastructure | Many of the Village systems are old or can not accommodate new users. | On-going starting this year | | high | |
| Support the efforts of the IDA to make their site 'shovel ready' and to initiate the building of initial structures within their park | Several smaller businesses in the County are in need of new or larger space but there is a lack of available buildings or sites in the County to suit their needs. | This year | | Low | |

Strategy: Provide alternatives to conventional bank financing for small businesses

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Micro-Enterprise Loan Fund | Many Start-up Businesses don't have access to conventional bank financing | Ongoing | | Low | |
| Market Capital District Loan Fund | Many small businesses are lacking knowledge of this program | Immediate | | Low | |
| Market SBA 504 Loan Fund | Many businesses don't know of this program and often banks do not refer to it. | Immediate | | Low | |
| Market Broome IDA Loan Fund | For manufacturing companies, this program is available | Immediate | | low | |

TOURISM OVERVIEW 2008

Tourism is an important industry in Schoharie County. In fact, it is a very important industry because it is the county's second largest industry, with agriculture being the largest.

The Economic Summit Tourism Workgroup began its work by developing a five-year Vision Statement for the Tourism component of the Economic Development Plan. That Vision Statement, with the metaphoric reference to agriculture noted is:

- Foster a sense of pride within Schoharie County that values the richness of our agriculture landscape, history and culture, education, leisure activities and the positive economic impact of the tourism industry for all residents. *"Prepare the ground..."*
- Generate marketing themes and a "brand identity" for Schoharie County. *"Plant the seeds..."*
- Project a positive image to the traveling public by utilizing the latest marketing research and techniques. *"Cultivate the fields."*
- *"Harvest"* an annual increase in tourism-related revenue county-wide that exceeds the annual rate of inflation.

Leaning on reports from the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance (the most recent information we have is from 2005), tourism in Schoharie County is valued at \$30 million or \$39 million depending on what segments are included. Counting "direct" tourism revenues from accommodations, restaurants, attractions, entertainment and retail, which is the way we prefer to calculate, the annual tourism revenues are \$30 million. Adding in second homes, service stations and transportation brings the number up to \$39 million.

Using the \$30 million "direct" tourism revenues the annual sales tax contribution to the county treasury is \$1.2 million. When property taxes on tourism businesses are included, the annual sales and property tax contribution is about \$2 million.

Our tourism industry employs 570 people directly for an annual labor expenditure of more than \$9.1 million – an average wage of \$16,000. Some employees make much more and part time seasonal employees make much less. Never the less, a significant labor component.

As with most businesses, revenues and wages are also economic development resources because they turn over many times before leaving the area. A turnover of three times in the area is a reasonable assumption, making the economic impact of tourism revenues about \$90 million and the wage impact \$27 million. Tourism and other small businesses are especially important because nearly all the revenues and wages are spent right here within the county.

Tourism is an interesting industry because it draws people who usually live outside the area. They come, leave their money and then move on. With tourism, Schoharie County is importing money!

With that in mind, the more we can offer and the more people we can attract, the more money we import, thereby increasing revenues, increasing the number of people employed, increasing the wages paid and increasing the contributions to the county treasury through sales taxes.

The strategies and tactics proposed are based on the Vision Statement and are designed to increase the number of people who come to enjoy what Schoharie County has to offer in order to increase tourism revenues by 5% per year through 2012. The modest goals are intended to add \$1.5 million in revenues each year and \$60,000 in additional sales taxes creating a five-year economic impact of \$7.5 million in revenues \$300,000 in sales taxes.

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008-2012
Tourism**

Strategy: Fully Exploit Present Facilities, Activities and Events

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|--|--|------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| #1 Inventory, publish and promote all present attractions, accommodations, restaurants, recreational activities, events and other facilities of interest to the traveling public. | Compiling, publishing and promoting the existing facilities will contribute to an increase in business and can be quickly achieved. | Spring 2008 | Inventory complete, Lists published, Promotion plan exists | Low | Needs updating |
| #2 Extend the tourism season by internally and externally promoting the current, and developing more fall, winter and spring activities and events. | Promoting Schoharie County as more of a year round destination will increase attendance and business beyond the traditional summer season. Recognize and promote sporting opportunities such as hunting, X-C skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, bird watching, hiking, biking and photography. | 2008 on | Activities and events added Promotion and Public Relations efforts tracked | Low | Some efforts underway |
| #3 Provide finances and human resources to focus on tourism development. | Money and staff are necessary to effectively raise the awareness of tourism and to promote tourism in order to increase revenues. | 2008 on | Staffing increased. Adequate promotional dollars available. | Moderate to High | Partial staffing and funding exists |
| #4 Create a practical marketing and promotion program to increase awareness among travelers most interested in what Schoharie County has to offer. | Targeted promotion is efficient and has a greater likelihood of attracting visitors. See #2, above. | 2008/2009 | Marketing Plan in place | High (already appropriated) | Marketing study results due in August, 2008 |

Analysis: An immediate way to impact tourism growth in Schoharie County is to focus on knowing and promoting the present tourism assets in the county. Lists of current assets exist and merely need to be updated and categorized. Once completed it will be easier to see what current assets may be used and what additional assets may be needed to extend the season to a more year round industry. To fully accomplish the tasks, additional staffing in the form of a full time Tourism Program Coordinator is necessary (moderate cost is involved to move the current position from 3/4 time to full time). Once the marketing study that is currently underway is completed, the recommendations must be heeded and implemented in order to create a practical and targeted marketing and promotion program.

Supporting Information: **Tourism Budget Request**, Carle Kopecky, November, 2007
Request For Proposals, Development of Tourism Marketing Strategy (marketing plan), Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce, February, 2008
Making a Splash, One Drop at a Time. Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Management Plan, Executive Summary, May, 1999
A Program For Tourism, Schoharie County, NY, July, 1968

For Reference:

- Schoharie County Fact Book 2007 (“2007 Fact Book”) prepared by the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Develop Board – the entire Fact Book as a community data base.
- A Program for Tourism for Schoharie County (“1968 Study”) prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce, 1968. The entire study offers important information and should receive thorough attention. For this strategy see the pages i – iv and pages 1, 21-39, 40-45, 46-80
- Long Range Economic Development Strategy (“Rhodes Study”) prepared by Moran, Stahl & Boyer, LLC, 2004. Important to this strategy are the following: Section 1, Executive Summary; Section 2, Overview; Section 4, pages 4.2 – 4.4, 4.6 IV, 4.10 VI 1 Recreation/Tourism, 4.11 VI 4 - Sports Arena, 4.14 VII - Long Term Action Plan #4.
- Cobleskill Downtown Economic Enhancement Strategy 2007 (“Hyett Palma Study) prepared by Hyett Palma 2007. Pages 37 – 69.
- Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Management Plan, and Interpretive Plan, adopted 1997-1999 Prepared by the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission with Mary Means & Associates, Christopher Chadbourne Associates, Elaine Carmichael Economics Research Associates, Trowbridge and Wolf Architectural Associates Provides a prioritized plan for; Building an Identity, Strengthening Place, and Making and Selling Tourism Products, based on Heritage Tourism as an economic development engine.

List of Suggestions for addressing the strategy: Fully Exploit Present Facilities, Activities and Events, Tactics #1 and #2.

- Strengthen and promote the School of Country Wisdom
- Elevate on promotion to local residents (internal promotion)
- Increase use of Times Journal, My Shopper and SCHOPEG
- Increase brochure distribution within Schoharie County using volunteers
- Consider SUNY Cobleskill and/or FBLA students as interns
- Use lodging packages
- Consider Maple Month, Christmas in Schoharie County
Bring county tourism businesses together for a common purpose

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008-2012
Tourism**

Strategy: Improve Visitor Awareness Through Information and Communication

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|---|---|------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| #1 Fully develop visitor information / welcome centers at Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce and develop satellite staffed info centers at other gateway locations. | Providing personal face to face information increases the length of stay, number of properties visited and the money spent. | 2008 Season | At least three welcome centers fully developed for 2008 season | Moderate | Partially complete |
| #2 Add I-88 attraction signage at exits 20, 21, 22 & 23 and improve existing I-88 wayfinding signage. | It is a high priority to entice travelers to exit, pause and discover Schoharie County. | 2008 and 2009 | Attraction signs installed and wayfinding signs improved. | High | Concept and research completed |
| #3 Develop driving tours of Schoharie County with supporting maps, signs and narrative descriptions, beginning with the already designated Timothy Murphy Trail. | Themed driving tours assist visitors in finding various tourism locations while enjoying the scenic beauty of Schoharie County. | 2008 and forward | Establish one or more driving tours per year | Moderate | Prototype exists |
| #4 Provide finances and human resources to focus on tourism development. | Money and staff are necessary to effectively raise the awareness of tourism and to promote tourism in order to increase revenues. | 2008 and forward | Staffing is increased as needed. Adequate promotional dollars available. | Moderate To High | Partial staffing and funding exists. |

Analysis: An effective way to promote Schoharie County tourism and increase awareness is to address travelers already in Schoharie County. Highway signage will pique interest and assist with wayfinding. Information and welcome centers provide specific information. Driving tours help visitors see more. Inevitably, attendance and tourism revenues will increase. It will be necessary to increase staffing and find substantial new funding sources for infrastructure.

Supporting Information: **The Timothy Murphy Trail & Scenic Byways of the Schoharie Valley**, Schoharie Valley Association, 1995
Tourism Ambassador Program, Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce, 2006
Making a Splash, One Drop at a Time. Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Management Plan, Executive Summary, May, 1999
A Program For Tourism, Schoharie County, NY, July, 1968, pages 74 – 77 and pages 78 - 80

List of suggestions for addressing the strategy

- Satellite information suggestions: Howe Caverns, New York Power Authority, Sharon Springs
- Driving tour suggestions: History, Historical Markers, Farm Stands, Art & Artists, Antiques, Scenic, Shopping, The Schoharie Valley, a “Green” tour, Barns, Water Sources and the Gilboa Reservoir

- Reinvigorate the Ambassador Program
- Bring county tourism businesses together for a common purpose
- Increase brochure distribution within Schoharie County using volunteers

- **Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008-2012
Tourism**

Strategy: Exploiting the Arts for Economic Development and Tourism

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|---|---|------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| #1 Establish a multi-format arts center | A multi-format arts center would serve the County by creating a facility for arts education, exhibitions and performances that would draw local and out of region visitors for arts classes and arts events. | 2008-2012 | Multi-arts classes, exhibitions and performances initiated and attended | High | Beginning phase 1 |
| #2 Assist further development of Arts Council projects | Encouraging increased artists' participation in ArtsWorks! co-operative, enhancing marketing of established gallery schedule, enlarging scope of the Decentralization Grant program and supporting arts related community events would increase arts sales to local and out of region visitors as well as increase attendance at arts events. | 2008-2009 | Increased arts sales, and increased numbers of attendees at arts events | Low to Moderate | In progress |
| #3 Develop an Arts Tourism trail | Tourists driving such a trail to visit local studios and galleries would be likely to visit other County attractions and use local accommodations and restaurants. | 2008-2012 | One or more tours in place | Moderate | In progress |
| #4 Inventory and create arts and conference venue data base and directory | Compiling and publishing a directory of venue information will provide a promotion tool and be an aid in booking performing and visual arts, educational and commercial events. | 2008-2009 | Inventory and directory completed | Moderate | In progress |

Analysis: The Arts are both an economic and tourism engine for the County. A recent study by Dun & Bradstreet indicates that Schoharie County has forty-five arts related businesses employing one-hundred and eighteen people.¹ Rhodes points out that this makes the art related sector one of the top five employers in the County.² Creating a multi-format arts center would further develop the arts business community. In addition, assisting the further development of Arts Council projects would encourage local people and tourists to spend more money locally, generating additional governmental revenue through increased sales tax collection and supporting arts practitioners and arts educators who would spend money locally. Arts business has the additional positive effect of generating revenues for restaurants, overnight establishments, and other tourist attractions and local retail businesses. For example, Dreeszen has found that in addition to paying admission fees for arts events, the average local person spends \$21.75 and the non-local person spends \$38.05.³ This multiplier effect is another strong argument for arts support that would further develop the capabilities of arts business.

The State of New York in its "I love New York" program and its Cultural Tourism Initiative is supportive of Tourism throughout the State. Developing the Arts Tourism Trail in Schoharie County is congruent with these State efforts. It would encourage arts tourists to visit the art studios and galleries in the County and have the same salutary multiplying effect, cited above, on other County tourism venues and related service providers.

¹ Dun & Bradstreet, *The Creative Industries in Schoharie County, NY*, Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2005, p.1.

² Rhodes, J., *Schoharie County, NY, long range economic development strategy*, New York, NY: Moran, Stahl & Boyer, 2004, p. 8.

³ Dreeszen, C., *Monograph: Building Creative Economies: The Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Development*, New York, NY: Americans for the Arts, 2003, p.8.

An inventory and data base of arts performance and conference venues would be a boon to organizations wishing to bring arts performing groups or conferences to the county. Having such a reference available would enable planners to choose appropriate sites for performances and/or conferences that had the necessary space and equipment for success. It would also aid theater companies, dance companies, and musical organizations in preparing for performances within the County. Making it easier to find the appropriate venues will make it more likely that arts and conference events will take place here, bringing performing artists, lecturers, and the public to the County and increasing revenues again by the same multiplier effect.⁴

⁴ The foregoing analysis is based on the preliminary research of Niles Voyer-McGiver, Assistant Executive Director, Tri County Arts Council

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008-2012
Tourism**

Strategy: Film Commission

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|--|---|------------------|--|-------------|---------------|
| #1 Support Film Commission by procuring membership in the Association of Film Commissions International | Membership allows access to Association's annual location exposition, a variety of services to film commissions and it provides a means for promoting the sites of Schoharie County | 2008 | Certificate of Membership | Low | Not begun |
| #2 Assist in creation of data base of sites and services | The creation of this data base would create a visual catalog of County sites for location shoots and a directory of services available in the county to support location production. A digital format would permit the creation of internet and DVD presentations | 2008-2009 | Data base completed, web site established, and DVD produced. | High | Not begun |
| #3 Provide finances and human resources to promote County as a location for film/video productions and to spur tourism development as a result | Money and staff are necessary to effectively promote the use of the County as a location for film/video production | 2008-2012 | Administrative office in place, attendance at AFCI location exposition and ads in location periodicals | High | Not begun |

Analysis: The reason for the formation of such a commission is the economic impact a location shoot has on the community in which it occurs. In 2003, ECONorthwest, a commission set up by the state of Washington to study the economic impacts of film production in the state, published data that indicate:

" . . . the average TV show spends about \$85,000 a day on location. For a single episode of a show a shoot may last 7 to 14 days. High-end feature films spend \$100,000 or more per day on location. Low budget films and documentaries will spend between \$15,000 and \$35,000 a day. Local spending on television commercials runs from \$50,000 to \$100,000 a day."⁵

While much of this spending is devoted to paying talent and film technicians, these film company employees will in turn pay for personal goods and services in the shooting location, benefiting not only local business, but also local governments through sales tax revenues. The production companies also pay a significant portion of these moneys to local businesses for lodging, food service, technical service, and supplies, including lumber, hardware, textiles, and heavy moving equipment.

All of these purchases have a secondary impact on purchases of supplies by local business people. For example, a local caterer might well use locally grown products in his or her service to a production company.⁶ In addition, moneys could be expended on local labor necessary for a shoot. Such labor might include technical assistance and the hiring of "extras." Finally, fees and rentals for use of locations may be collected by both governmental and private entities. These immediate economic impacts are frequently supplemented by the effect on tourism generated by a location shoot. Word of a location shoot brings tourists into the region eager to observe the film making process and the celebrities that may be involved. More importantly, however, the use of a local site gives it exposure in the local, national, and international media markets often making the location a tourist attraction or enhancing the attraction of an already established site. In addition, tourism clearly has many secondary economic impacts.

⁵The Economic Impacts of Film & Video Productions in Washington State, ECONorthwest, 2003, p. 4.

⁶Ibid., p. 8.

Supporting Information:

Tactic # 1 of this Strategy, to apply for membership in the Association of Film Commissions International, will put the Schoharie County Film Commission in the league of local, national and international Film Commissions. It will give the County access to the annual location trade show and the production professionals that attend it.

Tactic # 2 of this Strategy, to create a digital presentation, will offer film and video production professionals easy access, in multiple formats, to the variety of sites in the County for location shooting.

Tactic # 3 of this Strategy, to publish a production services directory, will make it easier for production professionals to select and/or purchase services and products within the County in the process of production. Having such a directory will enhance the likelihood of a production company selecting Schoharie County for location shooting.

Tactic # 4 of this Strategy, to attend the AFCI Locations Trade Show, is a further development of the first three tactics listed above. Attending this trade show with the presentation and directory will not only put on display the quality of Schoharie County sites for location shooting, but will promote the development of contacts that would make Schoharie County site selection more likely.

Tactic # 5 of this Strategy, to create a County Film Commission Office, would create a central location for the administrative work that would facilitate location shoots in Schoharie County. It would also develop the personnel that would be able to entice production location shoots and to act as the liaison between entities and the production professionals.

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008-2012
Tourism**

Strategy: Celebrate the Tercentennial (300th Anniversary) of Palatine Settlement

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|---|--|------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------|
| Form a steering committee to create and coordinate plans. | A large celebration, to be successful, requires advance planning and leadership. This committee will serve to coordinate a variety of grass-roots ideas and initiatives. | 2008 | Committee formed and meeting regularly. | No cost To Low Cost | |
| Create a budget and begin funding plans. County to appropriate annually. | Small, annual investments will stimulate big returns and act as matching funds for grants as well as pay direct costs. To realize the full potential, a paid event coordinator will be needed by 2011. | 2009-2012 | Annual increase with decreasing percentage of taxpayer funding. | Moderate To High | |
| Partner and coordinate local initiatives with regional and state organizations and celebrations. | The synergy generated by mutually beneficial partnerships will create a much bigger impact and recognition than working alone. Palatines to America will hold a Tercentennial event in the Hudson Valley in 2010, a perfect springboard for our event. | 2009-2012 | Number of partners and degree of media attention. | No (minimal) Cost | |
| Develop local educational programs, including German culture, Iroquois culture, 18 th century lifestyle. | Unique opportunity for educational partnerships between public schools, the college, and other cultural organizations that also provides grant opportunities. This will also foster local pride. | 2009-2012 | Number of programs and number of students and the public served. | Moderate | |
| Organize Cultural and Tourism exchanges with Germany. | An opportunity to establish a new international tourism initiative for Schoharie County. The influx of foreign money into the local economy will stimulate travel services, lodging and dining as well as attractions. | 2010-2012 | Success at attracting group and individual visits – both ways. | High | |
| Hold a Homecoming Event | One or more weekend to week-long celebrations bringing Palatine descendants home to their American roots. Will stimulate lodging, dining and attractions economy. | 2011-2012 | Full accommodations | Moderate To High | |

Analysis: The 300th Anniversary is a unique opportunity for Schoharie County and what it has to offer. This celebration should be a unifying, educational series of events that will attract national and international attention and foster local pride while stimulating the local economy. By combining local “self-congratulatory” components with regional, national and international efforts, the economic impact will be greatly multiplied. The success of this event could echo with continued national and international tourism for many years.

Opportunities for partnering exist within the County between the educational institutions, community groups and travel-related businesses, regionally with the Mohawk Valley and Hudson Valley heritage corridors, statewide and nationally with I Love NY and such organizations as Palatines To America, and even internationally with the German state of Rhineland-Pfalz and cities like Heidelberg.

Supporting Information: Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Management Plan (Homecoming 2001 event), May, 1999

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008-2012
Tourism**

Strategy: Plan for Future Growth

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status |
|--|---|------------------|--|------------------|--|
| #1 Support the development of additional and/or expanded key attractions. | New or expanded attractions and tourism facilities add to the reasons to visit for the first time or to return for a visit, thereby creating increased attendance and revenues. | 2008 - 2012 | Public support voiced. Funding leveraged. Regulatory hurdles overcome. | Low | Some development or expansion is pending |
| #2 Develop comprehensive zoning and land use regulations based on county wide criteria that prioritize agricultural and tourism development (scenic, natural, sustainable) beyond current Empire Zones and already developed areas. | Consistent regulations encourage appropriate development and welcome both new businesses and visitors while maintaining the natural beauty and heritage of the area including the family farm and the small-town feeling. | 2008 - 2012 | Adoption or updating of county, town and local plans. | Low to Moderate | Underway |
| #3 Capitalize on the growing interest in residency by current non-residents through second home leisure communities. | Part time residents contribute to the local economy through fees, taxes and spending without demanding many local services. | 2008 - 2012 | Adoption or updating of county, town and local plans | Low to Moderate | Not begun |
| #4 Explore the development of a multi-use indoor/outdoor sports and recreation complex for both local and outside the area use. | No similar facility exists between the Capital District and Cooperstown. Such a venue in the county would serve local citizens and may also draw larger events such as tournaments and playoffs from outside the area. | 2008 - 2012 | Create awareness, Discussions begin | Potentially High | Not begun |

Analysis:

Without a plan, growth in Schoharie County may result in less than optimal use of land resources and set up conflicts among competing enterprises. We must support the community-planned growth of facilities and services in an organized and somewhat consistent manner. By expanding our offerings we also positively contribute to the quality of life with the addition of more year round activities, leading to a more steady revenue flow and more stable employment.

Supporting Information: Adirondack Club/Orvis Sporting Lifestyles Community Proposal Overview, Preserve Associates, LLC, 2007
Clark Sport Center, General Information, Internet web page, clarksportcenter.com

For Reference:

- 1968 Study – pages 41 – 45, 56 & 57, 66 & 67, 74 – 77, and 78
- Rhodes Study – pages 4.10 & 4.11
- Hyett Palma Study - as a reference for development suggestions

List of suggestions for addressing strategy: Plan for Future Growth

- Tactic #1 – Sharon Springs, Cave House Museum, Deer Run Village
- A revolving loan fund for tourism development similar to IDA loans

• Schoharie County Empire Zone Development Plan

• Eco-Tourism development

TOURISM FUNDING SUMMARY 2008

Funding and Human Resource components always present a challenge. Said differently, where does the money come from to fund additional programs and staff? In an effort to not put additional pressure solely on the county budget, funding and human resource alternatives are presented for consideration.

Human Resources: Skilled and trained staff are an important component of success and are necessary for the most critical functions. For other functions Schoharie County has many capable people who would be willing to serve as volunteers. In addition, with the fortune of having SUNY Cobleskill hospitality program students and FBLA organizations in many of the high schools provides the possibility of available interns. The Economic Summit Tourism Workgroup urges that all resources to accomplish the tasks be explored.

Funding: While county and local governments and private businesses will and should continue to bear responsibility for participating in the funding of certain elements of economic development, there are additional possible means of funding or self-funding tourism development. Potential alternative funding sources for consideration are: Major business funding partners; major attraction contributors; sharing or dedicating incremental sales tax revenues generated from increased tourism revenues; transient occupancy fees; and/or added sales taxes on accommodations, meals, attraction tickets or any combination thereof.

In summary, there are alternatives to increases in county budget expenditures and/or increases in property taxes. Again the Economic Summit Tourism Workgroup urges consideration of alternative methods of creating funding for needed economic growth.

MICRO-ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW 2008

A micro-enterprise is a type of small business which is typically defined as having 5 or fewer employees and a seed capital of not more than \$35,000. Persons who found a micro-enterprise are usually referred to as entrepreneurs. Broadly stated, a micro-business is a business started with as little capital as possible, or less capital than would be usual for a business.

It is estimated that there are more than 24 million micro-enterprises in the U.S., representing 18% of all private employment and 87% of all businesses. One out of six U.S. private sector employees works for a micro-enterprise. Historically, micro-enterprises have been considered the backbone of the U.S. economy. In Schoharie County, the majority of businesses are micro-enterprises.

Most micro-enterprises are sole proprietorships, which create employment for the owner and, often, other family members; they are commonly called "mom and pop" businesses. Some grow into large enterprises employing other members of the community. Micro-enterprises include a variety of businesses in the products and service sectors such as repair and cleaning services, specialty foods, jewelry, arts and crafts, gifts, clothing and textiles, computer technology, child care, and environmental products.

Successful small businesses are the primary engines of economic development, income growth, and poverty reduction in much of the developing world. These businesses can also build foundations for stable communities, civil society, and gender equality. However, poor infrastructure, weak public services, inadequate mechanisms for dispute resolution, and lack of access to markets and formal financing remain major impediments to small business growth.

Over the past five years, America's average annual funding for micro-enterprise has been around \$155 million. This support has reached more than 3.7 million micro-enterprises worldwide — whose activities include producing goods for export, such as footwear, furniture, agricultural crops, and other foods; providing services ranging from equipment repair to information technology; marketing raw materials to manufacturers; and trading a wide variety of goods. As these businesses expand and integrate into the formal economies of their countries, they empower the world's poor, create higher incomes and more jobs, contribute to economic growth, and strengthen democratic societies.

The micro-enterprise group struggled to get moving on this plan. It was difficult to schedule meetings and generate a lot of attendance. The research that has been done with respect to this group has been completed mainly by conversing with other micro-enterprise owners and using the information gathered to form the strategies and tactics listed below.

**Schoharie County Strategic Plan
2008 – 2012
Micro Enterprises**

Strategy:

| Tactic | Rationale | Timeframe | Measures | Cost | Status * |
|--|--|------------------|--|---|---|
| Broadband Accessibility throughout Schoharie County | Broadband is a vital communication for Business. Businesses can thrive and the community becomes more educated of the products and services available with Broadband – It allows a global connection, Schoharie County explore the marketplace worldwide. | 3-6 years | Establish Technology Task Force All people & businesses that want broadband – receive broadband | To Be Determined | Task Force Initiated |
| Business Zoning Companion Publication/Website | The NEW or Existing business community would benefit from a publication including all towns and villages, etc. and outlining current zoning/building regulations. One stop shopping for all towns zoning regulations/site planning in the county. | 6-12 months | Complete gathering information from sources | Some portions of this would have no cost Low | Data already available needs to be updated and compiled into one source |
| A Small Business Start Up Guide: Starting a Business in Schoharie County | Update publication outlining all the necessary business strategies to “start” a new business. This could be well-needed guide to help new business be successful | 6-12 Months | Marketing the guide, once updates have been done. | Low | Needs updating & modifications to existing data. |
| Mentoring Service | Have a network of business professionals willing to donate some time giving specific advice to potential & existing business owners. Offer a monthly meeting time – to meet with a business professional. Use existing SUNY Cobleskill’s “Small Business Series” | 3-6 Months | SUNY Cobleskill SM Series. SB Consultant Mentoring Referral list of professionals | Med – High | Compile List of Business Professionals Gather data into one source |
| “Business Incubator” Joint Venture with other groups | Develop a SC Full Service Incubator-Business Services Center. This could begin as small as a one room facility offering business services | 2-5 years | Getting input about needs of the business community When Where How | Cost of Center/ Startup Equipment/ Staffing High | Concepts Investigated. Look at other models |
| Website for “Shop Schoharie County” | Any business that creates a “product” could sell their products on-line. This site would host a group of diverse products, and would be marketed | 12-24 Months | Lining up vendors | Med | Create vendor list, interest in selling. |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------|--|--|
| | <p>globally. There will be links from this site to the individual businesses website (if available) The focus will be "home grown", shipping services will be available. This promotes a better quality of living, potential new jobs with product sales and support of sales. Pulls in money from a large market area.</p> | | Selling on-line | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------|--|--|

*See supporting data.

Analysis & Supporting Information

A. Universal Broadband:

1. Current providers: Verizon (DSL) Midtel (DSL) RoadRunner/TWC (Cable), HughesNet (Dish) and Wild Blue (Dish)
2. New broadband technology: Broadband over the Power Lines (BPL)/Smart Grid offering many diverse community services – could allow rural areas to have high speed access
3. Document all coverage areas as a map visual. See what areas overlap.
4. Contact all current providers to see what development is on calendar/scheduled. Meet with them to determine feasibility of adding geographic locations. This includes “wired areas” as well as “wireless access points.”
5. Contact other providers to determine if they would consider development in Schoharie County. Contact governmental agencies/heads to see how government can assist and also what funds are available for these resources.
6. See about “grant writing” to secure develop funds.
7. Review other communities in the United States to assess and compare successful implementation of broadband.
8. Use of SUNY Cobleskill Internship Program

B. Business Zoning Companion Publication/Website:

1. This begins with sweat equity: Several committee members contact each governmental office that handles “zoning/building” and gets a copy of the existing language that each community defines. All of this language gets put into a brochure publication, that will allow a new or existing business to evaluate what location is best for them.
2. Once this document has been completed a copy is turned into a PDF that is located on several pertinent websites. Perhaps a .com can be created to be the “Introduction to Business in Schoharie County”. The publication gets “dates” and governmental offices are contacted yearly for updates.
3. There can be a relationship between “B” and “C” offering comprehensive business start-up information.
4. Use of SUNY Cobleskill Internship Program

C. A Guide to Starting a Business in Schoharie County:

1. Create a “Package” that has a resource kit for potential and existing new businesses. Maps, Locations, Statistics, how to get a “website” information, Marketing tools, the Zoning Publication (above), Paying Taxes information, DBA information, local attorneys and accountants, and MORE. This could be available at county offices, local government offices, banks, real estate offices etc. Education: SUNY Cobleskill, Small Business Series. Perhaps a request online for this at the Chambers website too. The Small Business Association is a great source of information, that could be incorporated into this “package” This Kit would also have contact information for utilities and internet resources. See the NY State website for helpful information. Also offers info on grant writing, and low interest loans. Some of the funding for this publication, comes from Professional Advertising.
2. Use of SUNY Cobleskill Internship Program.

D. Mentoring Service:

1. Create a list of business professionals willing to donate some time (or offer a lower cost fee) giving specific advice to potential business owners for a “Startup Situation”. With certain criteria met (having completed the series of Small Business courses at SUNY Cobleskill/following a check list), the perspective business owner can meet with the heads of many businesses for advice. Appointments arranged.
2. Use of SUNY Cobleskill Internship Program

E. Business Center/Incubator – Joint Venture with other groups:

1. A business incubator is comprised of multiple businesses operating independently within one location or under a membership group. The objective of the incubator is to help it’s businesses get started and grow. Incubators offer services that can help entrepreneurs overcome a wide range of obstacles by reducing startup costs with a shared system of support and resources. Most incubators offer shared office space, utilities, and services that create a unique environment for new businesses to grow. Incubators are known for helping startups lower overhead costs, create networking opportunities, and increase the chances of survival. Tenants in business incubators share overhead costs such as utilities, office equipment, IT support,

conference rooms, laboratories, and receptionist services. Additionally, basic rent costs are usually below the normal market value for the area. Often, incubator managers and staff members provide insightful advice on a broad spectrum of issues including, business development, market research, strategy, and fund-raising. Some of the services could be broadband sharing, network computers, faxing, emailing, shipping, research workstations, and computer use as well as conference rooms. Additional information: <http://www.nbia.org>

2. Use of SUNY Cobleskill Internship Program

F. **Website for “Shop Schoharie County”.**

1. The creation of an “add-on” site to the Schoharie Chamber site to “sell” products designed, created and/or manufactured in Schoharie County. This is a way of globally advertising and selling home grown products. The sales from each vendor can be shipped by the individual businesses, and/or the use of the Incubator Business Center can offer assistance to businesses. Provisions can be made notify vendors of sales so sale can be completed & shipped, assisting vendors with the use of technology that would be off-premises. The site will be marketed globally – using Search Engine Optimization. This potentially brings more outside money into Schoharie County, and also could create new jobs.

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The Four Partners would like to thank the following people for their participation in the preparation of the Strategic Plan. Without all of their hard work, this plan never would have happened.

Thank you!

Richard Ball
Duncan Bellinger
Harold Bristol
Gaetano Catapano
Bruce Cater
Bob Cross
Linda Cross
Eric Dahlberg
Gary Davis
Barbara Diefendorf
John Diefendorf
Chuck Finin
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