

GROW with **Jefferson County, NY**

News & Updates From Starbuck Ave

Winter is in full force but that doesn't slow down business growth and economic development! Happy New Year from the Staff here at JCED! New Year means new ideas and new projects, reach out to see how we can assist you and your new project! We are still working on programs to put together for the spring. Check out our website for additional information or give us a call to see if we can help with your project, 315-782-5865.

[Jefferson County Economic Development](#)

In this Issue:

- CEO Announces Retirement
- North Country Wins REDC Competition
- Workforce Development
- Local Business Highlight
- Coming Up. . .

David Zembiec, CEO, Announces His Retirement



We are sad to announce but very excited for him that our fearless leader and CEO, David Zembiec has decided to retire. Dave has been with JCED for almost 15 years. He became the CEO in 2020 and prior to that was the deputy CEO.

Over the years Dave has been integral in helping various projects throughout the county creating economic development growth. Always looking for new opportunities to help our local businesses be successful.

Lyle Eaton, CFO, states "David is the best individual I have worked with. He has the ability to analyze problems and develop potential solutions. David has always believed in giving back to the community through his involvement with numerous organizations. In fact, during my long working career, I don't believe I have had a better boss."

Marshall Weir, Deputy CEO, describes working with Dave "has been a truly enriching and rewarding experience. I have also enjoyed collaborating with Dave on many projects and supporting those projects with training programs and the many small pieces of the puzzle that make up economic development. Under Dave's leadership and with the support of the Board of Legislators of Jefferson County, our office has managed to transform many challenges into opportunities for Jefferson County, NY."

Jay Matteson, Jefferson County Ag Coordinator, mentions, "It's been a pleasure serving Jefferson County alongside Dave Zembiec. Dave's steady hand at the helm of our agency has helped work through the intricacies of some of our largest projects. Dave has been very supportive of our agriculture, helping our agency secure funding from Jefferson County for the Jefferson County Food Resiliency Grant programs totaling \$1.1 million. Congratulations Dave on a job well done."

Insights from Joy Nuffer, "It has been such a pleasure working with Dave. His leadership, kindness, thoughtfulness, humbleness, and integrity have shown through in every aspect of working with him. Though I continue to attempt to convince him not to retire, I wish him a fun and adventurous retirement. Dave will be missed greatly."

Peggy Sampson feels that "there are so many qualities about Dave; he is calm and compassionate and finds the positive in any situation. It has been a great pleasure working with him over the years."

"Being new to the agency, Dave was extremely patient with answering questions that I would have as well as giving me guidance in areas that I was unsure of. Dave is one of the best bosses I have had the pleasure of working with. He will definitely be missed", says Robin Stephenson.

[WDT News Article](#)

North Country Gets \$10M to Help Build Up the Region's Workforce by Strengthening Recruitment of Fort Drum Soldiers and Their Spouses

In a statewide competition between the state's ten economic development regions, the North Country Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) was one of three winning regions to each be awarded \$10M to implement an innovative solution to one of the state's economic development challenges. The North Country's plan, called *Next Move NY*, focuses on workforce development. It proposes several strategies to better connect former Fort Drum soldiers (and their spouses) with the region's employers.

Approximately 300 soldiers transition out of the Army at Fort Drum each month (3,600 per year), and into civilian life. Of that number, 1,000 or more are accompanied by a spouse. That's a talent pipeline of over 4,600 potential workers. Keeping more of those individuals in the region when they separate from the Army will help to close the region's projected workforce gap over the next 10 years.

Although programs exist on the installation to prepare soldiers for their transition into civilian employment, less than 25% of transitioning soldiers make use of those programs. Over the next four years, the new funding will promote better utilization of existing programs and will implement several new strategies to directly connect transitioning soldiers with employers across the 7-county North Country region.

JCED is proud to have been involved in development of the proposal, and join our work group colleagues in thanking the more than 70 businesses that endorsed the plan. The winning proposal can be viewed at this link: <https://on.ny.gov/3SaOROd>. See Section 3, p. 49 for a summary of the *Next Move NY* plan.



Workforce Development

Workforce Connections 2023

The staff participated in the annual Workforce Connections event held at the Watertown International Airport coordinated by the Jefferson/Lewis/Hamilton/Herkimer/Oneida BOCES and The WorkPlace. This event brought together more than 1200 students, local businesses, and agencies to give the students a chance to participate in a mock interview and learn about local career opportunities. Great event for educating our workforce of tomorrow.



Jefferson Community College Workforce Solutions Digital Catalog

Check out Jefferson Community College's new Workforce Solutions digital catalog! Whether you're looking for professional development, career training or information on microcredentials, the new catalog makes it easy to find all the opportunities Jefferson has to offer. Take a look! <https://bit.ly/47KPVxx>

The WorkPlace brings back their WorkPlace Forum

The WorkPlace is excited to bring back it's popular WorkPlace Forum series for our local business & community leaders! They will hold a different topic for discussion each quarter of the 2024 calendar year.

For it's first Forum of 2024, The WorkPlace will partner with The United Way of Northern New York. The guest speaker will be President and Chief Executive Officer of the United Way of Northern New York, Dawn Cole. Her topic of discussion will be *Workplace Stability* and how businesses can improve workforce retention and productivity for greater profitability.

SAVE THE DATE - Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 9:00 am - 10:00 am at Jefferson-Lewis BOCES (Conference Room A/B in the Administration Building). There will be a light continental breakfast at 8:30 am.

Please RSVP no later than Thursday, January 18, 2024 by calling (315)786-3687

Local Business Highlight

Great Lakes Cheese - Adams, NY



The Great Lakes Cheese plant in Adams, New York had a successful year in 2023. The Adams facility produces award-winning American-style Cheddar cheese and Whey powders (Permeate & WPC80). They received 3 Gold medals and 1 Silver Medal at the New York State Fair, placed 4th in the United States Championship Cheese Contest, and received a 3rd place finish at the same contest for their Whey Protein

Concentrate 80 Powder. In addition to their award-winning dairy products, Great Lakes Cheese seeks to be generous with their time, talents, and finances in ways that are meaningful to their employee-owners and local communities. Great Lakes Cheese in Adams supports the Adams Fire Dept., South Jeff Rescue, several South Jeff sports teams, local FFA programs, Farm Bureau, and the Annual Adams Cheese Festival. There are about 140 employee-owners at the Adams location which produced a record 97 million pounds of Cheddar cheese in 2023.

Great Lakes Cheese is the nation's leading natural cheese packager and an award-winning cheese manufacturer. The company has a national footprint with facilities in Ohio, New York, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, and Texas. Specialties include natural and processed shreds, slices, chunks, and snack products. Family- and employee-owned, Great Lakes Cheese celebrated its 65th year in business in 2023 and currently has more than 4,100 employee-owners.

Eclipse 2024 in Jefferson County, New York!

Did you know that Watertown, NY is in the direct line of "path of totality" of the Eclipse? This will not happen again until 2044, so come experience this extremely cool event.

The City of Watertown is hosting "Total Eclipse of the Park" at Thompson Park on April 8th. Details are being finalized but check out their website for regular updates as well as other community events taking place. [Total Eclipse of the Park](#)

Do you have an event planned for that day or are you participating with other businesses/agencies? Mark your calendars April 8, 2024 is the big day. Reach out to us to get your Eclipse glasses so you can view it! Stay up to date on community events happening all around the county at the following link;

[NY Eclipse in The 1000 Islands](#)

Looking to Locate, Expand, or Start Your Business in Jefferson County?



Jefferson County Economic Development

Looking to start or expand your business and need funding? There might be a program that is right for you and your venture. From Micro loans to Revolving loans and even PILOT programs. To learn more about our programs give us a call!

315-782-5865 or [Jefferson County Economic Development](#)

Coming Up . . .

- Keep a Look Out for Your Invite to the **Spring Jeff-Lewis Manufacturing Alliance Event** in March
 - **Jefferson County Agricultural Conference** also in March
 - Remember the Solar Eclipse & Related Events Happening in April of 2024
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Have questions, just reach out!

Meet our Team

David Zembiec, *Chief Executive Officer*
Peggy Sampson, *Executive Assistant*
Marshall Weir, *Deputy Chief Executive Officer*
Lyle Eaton, *Chief Financial Officer*
Joy Nuffer, *Finance Assistant*
Jay Matteson, *Agricultural Coordinator*
Robin Stephenson, *Economic Dev. Specialist*

Meet our Board of Directors

Robert Aiken - *Aubertine & Currier Arch. Eng.*
Robert Aliasso, Jr - *ErgonArmor*
Kent Burto - *Howard Hanna*
David Converse - *Converse Laboratories. Inc.*
John Condino - *Barton & Loguidice Eng.*
Greg Gardner - *SUNY Potsdam*
William Johnson - *Jefferson County Leg. Dist 2*
Lisa L'Huillier - *Hefferon Real Estate*
Christine Powers - *Watertown Savings Bank*
Edward Walldroff - *Homestead Fields Org. Farm*

