

Carthage Industrial Development Corporation
2015 Annual Report

I. INTRODUCTION

The Carthage Industrial Development Corporation (CIDC) continued its focus on Downtown Redevelopment in 2015 with the restoration of 253/255 State Street in cooperation with the Village of Carthage. Community development activities continued in other parts of the Twin Villages and Towns of Champion and Wilna as the CIDC continued to focus attention on improving the existing housing stock through the Carthage Area Housing Rehabilitation Program. The redevelopment of the Braman site was another major success in the community in 2015. The property was transferred to Habitat for Humanity and the Village of Carthage for redevelopment.

Northbrook Energy-Carthage, LLC marked its fourth year of operation of the West End Dam Hydro Facility. The production at the facility remained steady, but with energy prices at record lows, revenues are down.

We continue to work toward making the Greater Carthage Area a “Community of Choice” within the region. The assistance and cooperation of our regional partners including the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage, Towns of Champion and Wilna, Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority of the North Country, Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency, Jefferson County Board of Legislators, Tug Hill Commission, Jefferson County Planning/Highway Departments, River Area Council of Governments, and our local elected officials, have been pivotal toward achieving this goal.

II. CIDC ADMINISTRATION

The Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce continues to provide administrative services to the CIDC and CDG. The CIDC’s agreement with the Chamber has proved to be convenient and effective. We anticipate that this arrangement will continue into the foreseeable future.

III. MAJOR PROJECTS

A. 256-264 State Street Project

Management of the 256-264 State Street project continued to be a major priority in 2015. The apartment complex occupancy rate was one of the best in years. It should be noted that the rental market will continue to be dynamic in the region as new units continue to be brought on line over the next few years. In the spring of 2015, we lost one commercial tenant, followed by a second in January 2016. Both commercial units are vacant and being marketed at this time.

The Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce continued to coordinate rent-up of the building and manage the finances, in 2015. The Chamber’s duties included handling all financial matters, working with tenant prospects, assisting with applications, providing income certifications, and coordinating annual recertification of tenants.

B. Property Redevelopment

The CIDC, in cooperation with the Village of Carthage, continues to plan for the redevelopment of underutilized/abandoned property within the Greater Carthage Area. The primary focus in 2015 was redevelopment of the abandoned Braman property. After securing subdivision and infrastructure approval in 2014, the property was disbursed to the Village of Carthage and Habitat for Humanity. Initial site work was started in the fall of 2014 and the Village and Habitat resumed redevelopment of the property in the spring of 2015. The CIDC will continue to target underutilized or abandoned properties as they become available in the future.

C. West End Dam Hydro-Electric Facility Planning

Northbrook Energy-Carthage, LLC completed its fourth year of operation of the West End Dam Hydro Facility. Under Northbrook Energy operation the facility ran smoothly throughout the year. The last three years the facility has experienced some of the highest production on record. The power purchase agreement with National Grid expired in November 2015, and with historically low power prices, it is anticipated that revenues will be substantially reduced over prior years for the foreseeable future.

IV. FUNDING ASSISTANCE

A. Existing Funding

2013 CDBG Carthage/West Carthage/Wilna/Champion Housing Rehabilitation- \$400,000

The CIDC provided the funding necessary to prepare this Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application which resulted in a \$400,000 grant award. The funds were used to support scattered site housing rehabilitation throughout the Towns of Champion and Wilna, and the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage. The program is a continuation of the very successful Carthage Housing Rehabilitation Program initiated in 2008 and later called the Greater Carthage Area Housing Rehabilitation Program. To date, more than 2 million dollars has been awarded to the communities for this program and over 90 homes have been rehabilitated. The Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce has provided administrative assistance with implementation of the grant. The Village of Carthage manages this intermunicipal housing program on behalf of the four communities. The 2013 program will be coming to completion in April 2016.

Rural Area Revitalization Program (RARP) Grant- \$200,000

To continue its efforts to restore downtown Carthage, the CIDC received a Rural Area Revitalization Program grant to assist with the redevelopment/restoration of 253-255 State Street. The CIDC has been coordinating with the Village of Carthage and property owner on the development of this project. The Village of Carthage was successful in securing \$50,000 of CDBG funds to support restoration of at least two apartments in the complex. Restoration work was initiated in 2014. Restoration work completed in early 2016. The project includes renovation of 4 apartments and 2 commercial spaces in this property. The project also includes restoration of the rear wall of the building and complete replacement of the roof.

B. New Funding

NY Main Street Technical Assistance Grant - \$9,000

In an effort to plan for the redevelopment of abandoned buildings in the community, the CIDC received a small Main Street Technical Assistance grant to study for the reuse of a dilapidated, historic building located along the Black River waterfront. Ultimately, if an adequate reuse is identified, the CIDC will be in a strong position to seek out restoration funding for the building.

Rural Area Revitalization Program - \$107,500

Continuing past successes of restoring commercial buildings in the immediate downtown of Carthage, the CIDC received an award to make physical improvements to two commercial buildings in the Village of Carthage. The two projects, 111 Riverside Drive and 318 State Street, will commence in 2016. The anticipated completion of the projects is December 2017.

C. CIDC Funding Assistance

TLC Real Estate - \$175,000

The CIDC provided financial support for the renovations at 253/255 State Street (see RARP Grant above). TLC Real Estate took ownership of a building that required significant renovations. Were it not for the partnership between the CIDC and TLC Real Estate, it is likely the buildings at 253/255 State Street would have collapsed, or would have needed to be demolished. Restoration work was initiated in 2014. The project includes renovation of 4 apartments and 2 commercial spaces in this property. The project also includes restoration of the rear wall of the building and complete replacement of the roof.