

Bethel Local Development Corporation

c/o Supervisor Town of Bethel, PO Box 300, White Lake, NY 12786 / 845-583-4350 x12

2015 BLDC Measurement Report

Performance Goals:

- **To identify, apply for and secure foundation, county, state and federal grants beneficial to the economic vitality of the Town of Bethel.**

2014 Corridor Beautification Grant -- the BLDC applied for and received a \$5000 grant from Sullivan Renaissance for a second Corridor Beautification Program designed to assist businesses in enhancing their appearance in the 17B corridor. Not all projects were completed in 2014 for various reasons and were given extensions for completion in 2015. One of the properties withdrew from the program and the funds were transferred to another business that successfully completed a project. One project remains to be completed as of the end of 2015. This program was not renewed for 2015 so remaining funds were allocated to a business on 17B to assist with a sign renovation. It is anticipated that all funds will be expended in the spring of 2016.

A \$5000.00 matching grant was obtained thru the Sullivan County Department of Planning and Environmental Management for signage in the Reserve at Smallwood. As the park and trail system is developed this funding will be expended. It is anticipated that these funds will be expended in the spring of 2016.

- **To provide grant funds to assist individuals, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and government agencies that are able to contribute to the vitality of the Town of Bethel.**

2005 NYS Main Street Grant (KLMS I) – 2015 Annual Property Inspection Reports were prepared for each of five projects funded by this grant. The Streetscape portion of this grant was also inspected in 2015. Because the Streetscape was not completed until 2010, inspections will continue through December 2017.

2008 NYS Main Street Grant (KLMS II) – 2015 Annual Inspections were conducted for all six projects under this grant. These inspections will continue through December of 2019.

The Citizens Energy Assistance (CEAP) Program was again activated to assist needy Bethel citizens in paying heating costs. Donations were accepted and several applications were received and approved. This program is on-going.

- **To sponsor fundraising efforts to fund local activities that contribute to the economic vitality of the Town of Bethel.**

A total of \$1,237 was raised for the various local entities that the BLDC supports.

Literacy Center began the year with \$1,283 available and ended 2015 with \$1,613 available.

Smallwood-Mongaup Valley Fire Department began the year with \$1,337 available and ended with \$350 available.

2ManyCats Program started and ended 2015 with \$294 available.

CEAP Program started the year with \$3185 and ended the year with \$1,985 available.

- **To undertake projects and conduct on-going activities which contribute to economic vitality of the Town of Bethel**

Smallwood Property Acquisition – The Smallwood Golf Course property totaling 196 acres was purchased by the BLDC from Sullivan County in 2011 using funds borrowed from the Town of Bethel. In March of 2013 the BLDC Board authorized the Chairman to finalize a conservation easement with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy for this property, to permanently protect the portion of the property designated as a public park. In 2014 a grant application was submitted to New York State to fund a development plan for this property. Outreach was conducted to other organizations such as the Catskill Mountainkeeper and the NY-NJ Trail Conference for assistance in developing the park.

The trail conference surveyed the property in 2015 and began the process of laying out a comprehensive trail network. It is anticipated that work on the trails will begin in earnest in the spring of 2016.

A CFA application for state funding for the development of the park was submitted in July of 2015. This application was an amended version of the 2014 application. Unfortunately as of December 2015 this effort was once again unsuccessful. It is not clear if another attempt will be made in 2016.

A community forum to discuss the development of the park was held in June of 2015 at the Bethel Senior Center. The overall plans for the park were discussed and input from the community was solicited. Volunteers were signed up to work on trails and signage in the park. These committees met at least once to begin planning for work in the park. These volunteer committees will be active as work begins in 2016

Signs were purchased by the BLDC in 2015 to help delineate that boundaries of the Smallwood Water Company property. These signs were put in place by the owner of the water company.

In 2015 the BLDC formed a strategic alliance with the Bethel Business Association. It is anticipated that this partnership will allow both organizations to initiate programs, secure funding and in other ways work to enhance the economic vitality of the Town of Bethel. As a first step, a marketing arrangement has been secured with the Bethel Woods Center for Arts whereby businesses in the Town of Bethel will have access to the advertising materials of Bethel Woods. This is a positive first step in what is anticipated to be a long-running relationship that will benefit all involved.

The Town of Bethel is beginning a process leading to the creation of a Cultural District within a specific geographic area of the town. Such a district would enhance the business climate by attracting arts related businesses and investment. This effort is part of an overall plan to focus on arts and cultural activities as a driver of economic development and the long-term enhancement of the quality of life in Bethel.

- **To provide educational and advertising services which encourage residents and visitors to participate actively in the economy of the Town of Bethel.**

As discussed in the previous sections, the BLDC and the Town of Bethel are embarking on strategic alliances with the local business community and the major arts and cultural institution in the town to create a focus on the arts and to enhance the quality of life in the town and provide opportunities for both residents and visitors to participate in these activities. This effort is on-going and will be expanded in the coming year.

Approved by the BLDC Board on at its meeting on April 11th, 2016