

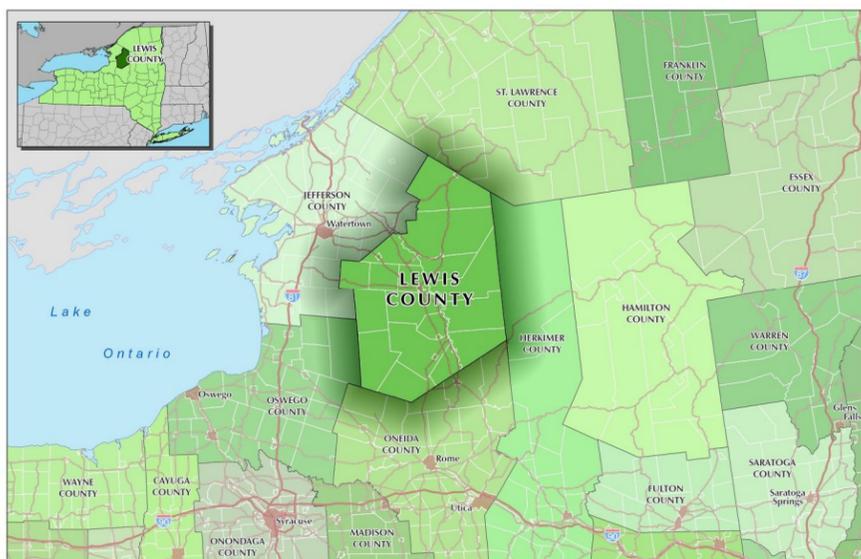
COUNTY PROFILE

Location

Lewis County, part of what is commonly referred to as the 'North Country' of New York State, is located north of the New York State Thruway corridor and the Utica-Rome metropolitan area, east of Lake Ontario, and southeast of the City of Watertown. The primary organizing feature of the county is the Black River Valley which runs south-north through its center, and constitutes one of three primary geographic regions within the county. The Black River Valley is flanked by the other Tug Hill Plateau to the west and the Adirondack Foothills to the east. Eastern portions of five of the towns in the county are also within the Adirondack Park Blue-Line boundary.

Lewis County is bounded by five other New York counties including: Jefferson County to the northwest; St. Lawrence County to the northeast; Herkimer County to the east; Oneida County to the south; and Oswego County to the southwest. Within the region, the cities of Watertown (Jefferson County), Rome (Oneida County), Utica (Oneida County), Syracuse (Onondaga County), and Ogdensburg (St. Lawrence County) are all within a 90 mile trip from the County Seat in Lowville (see Figure 1). From a state-wide perspective, Lewis County is located 120 miles northwest of Albany, the state capital, 225 miles northwest of New York City, and 216 miles northeast of Buffalo.

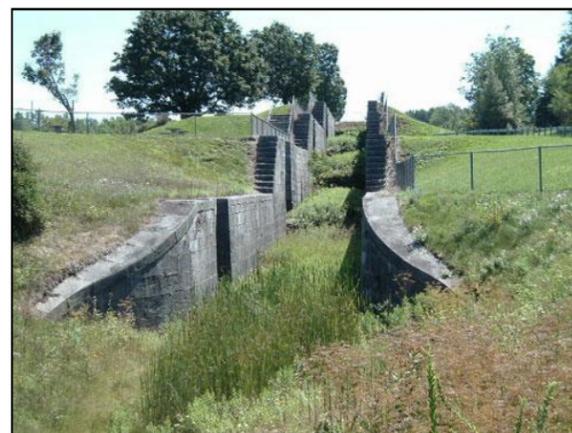
Figure 1: Lewis County's Regional Context



County History

Present day Lewis County was originally part of Oneida County and was formed by an act of the New York State Legislature on March 28, 1805. The county was named in honor of Morgan Lewis, then governor of New York State. The county originally consisted of five towns: Leyden, Turin, Martinsburg, Lowville and Harrisburg. Early settlers of Lewis County ventured westward from New England, north from the Mohawk Valley and from as far away as France, Switzerland and Germany to the unknown wilderness of northern New York.

Transportation systems opened up the North Country to settlement and economic growth, including roads that were built in the county as early as 1797. In 1803, with the authorization of the NYS Legislature, construction began on a road which would pass through Turin, Lowville and Watertown. Today, that same road is known as NYS Rte 26. Construction of the Black River Canal connecting Rome with Carthage was undertaken in 1836, and completed by 1855. The Black River Canal



Historic Black River Canal Lock

connected Lewis County at Lyons Falls, and traveled approximately 35 miles south to the City of Rome where it connected with the Erie Canal. The Black River Canal was the longest surviving of the Erie Canal System feeder canals, with segments remaining in use until circa 1920. The earliest railroads began to appear in the county in 1853, with the Utica and Black River Railroad reaching Carthage in 1871. This more efficient mode of transportation led to the decline of the Black River Canal, a transition that was happening throughout New York State. In 1882, locomotives were changed from wood burning to coal burning and by 1885, ten passenger trains were traveling through Lowville daily. By the mid-1900s, passenger and freight rail service was in steady decline due to the increase in automobile and truck traffic. The first asphalt roads arrived in 1910 and connected Lowville to the top of the hill in Martinsburg.

Early on, and as a result of the canal, Lewis County developed an economy based upon forest products and agriculture, shipping its vast resources economically down the canal to Rome. Resource extraction

opportunities led to the development of large industrial mills, such as T.B. Basselin (1883-1909) at Castorland and the Beaver River Lumber Co (1890). As technology improved, pulp and paper were also produced on an industrial scale in mills operated in Croghan, Diana, Lyons Falls, Port Leyden, and Greig. Thin soils and a cold climate made Lewis County primarily a location best for the grazing of cattle. The first load of butter and cheese was shipped to Deerfield (Oneida County) in 1833 by Levi Bowen of West Rd. As a result of the climate, dairying became an important endeavor and farmers embraced cheese production, building 49 factories by 1875 which made the county ninth in the state. Refrigerated cars for dairy products were introduced on the railroad in 1899, opening up the market for Lewis County dairy products on a regional level.

The Black River Gazette, the first newspaper printed north of the Mohawk Valley, was begun in Martinsburg on March 10, 1807. The first county courthouse was constructed in Martinsburg in 1812, and was relocated to Lowville in 1864 where it stands today. The county was governed by a board of town supervisors until it established a 10-district county legislature in 1970. The legislature first appointed a county manager in 1988.



Amish hay wagon in Martinsburg

Lewis County has a long tradition in dairy farming, with over 4,000 farms concentrated primarily in the Black River Valley by 1875. In the following quarter century the area in farms increased slightly, but the number of farms had already begun to decline. After World War I, farms given up by longtime operators were taken up by new immigrants; but ultimately only the best of the county's land could support modern agriculture. The number of farms declined dramatically in the 20th century despite an increase in average farm acreage. In recent years Amish farmers have begun to settle in Lewis County, separate from the long-established Mennonites. In the 20th century Lewis County continued to have a significant industrial sector; furniture was made in Lowville, knit goods in Port Leyden, and bowling pins in Croghan. Paper was an important product made in Diana until the mid-1950s and in Lyons Falls until 2001.

By 2003, however, fewer industries remained. Wood and other forest products continued to be harvested, and manufacturers including Burrows Paper Corp, Kraft (cream cheese), Climax (boxes), AMF (bowling pins,



flooring), Fibermark (paperboard), Interface Solutions (binders, gaskets), Otis Technology (gun-cleaning products), Harrisville Dry Kiln (lumber), and Viking Cives (snowplows), continued operations through 2008. Suzorite Mineral Products continues to mine talc in Diana, a town that lost a large part of its usable land area to state reforestation efforts in the 1930s and to the expansion of Fort Drum beginning in 1941 and continuing today. Tourism is Lewis County's growth industry, with its lakes, forests, and public lands attracting vacationers and recreation oriented visitors for camping, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling and other activities enhanced by Lewis County's vast collection of natural resources.

County Government Structure

Lowville is the County Seat of Lewis County, home to the majority of county-level agencies and services. The county's original governing body was a Board of Supervisors with one elected Supervisor representing each Town and having one vote. In 1971, a reapportionment plan went into effect, providing for ten districts of approximately equivalent populations and the creation of the Board of Legislators. The present governing body is the County Board of Legislators, with a representative from each of the ten districts. The Board elects a Chairman from its members who serves as the Chief Elected Official of the county government. There are nine standing committees of the Board, addressing a variety of issues. Several county departments, agencies, and staff positions exist for the purposes of managing government operations and providing services to citizens.

Lewis County is part of the 47th District in the State Senate, the 122nd District in the State Assembly, and the 23rd District in the US House of Representatives.



Lewis County Courthouse in Lowville

County Municipalities

The county contains 26 separate municipalities (17 towns and nine villages, see Figure 2) spread across approximately 1,272 square miles of land dominated by woodlands and farmlands. The following is a list of towns along with their respective villages.

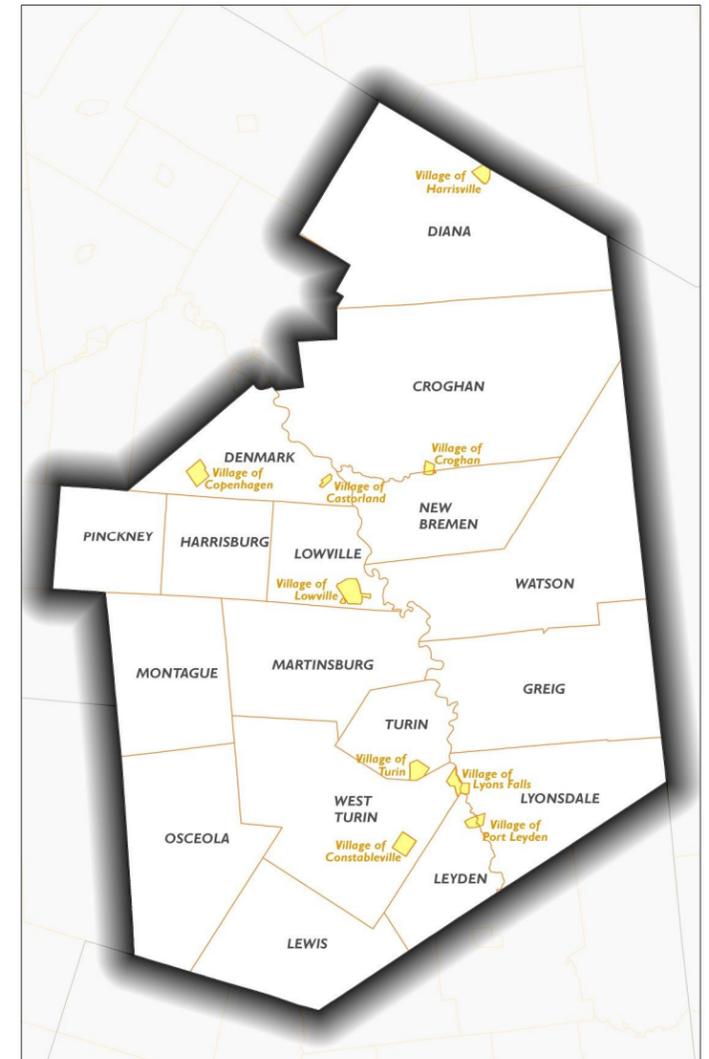
| <u>Towns</u> (17) | | <u>Villages</u> (9) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Croghan | → | Croghan (part) |
| Denmark | → | Copenhagen, Castorland |
| Diana | → | Harrisville |
| Greig | | |
| Harrisburg | | |
| Lewis | | |
| Leyden | → | Port Leyden (part) |
| Lowville | → | Lowville |
| Lyonsdale | → | Port Leyden (part), Lyons Falls (part) |
| Martinsburg | | |
| Montague | | |
| New Bremen | → | Croghan (part) |
| Osceola | | |
| Pinckney | | |
| Turin | → | Turin |
| Watson | | |
| West Turin | → | Constableville, Lyons Falls (part) |

The county can be roughly divided in half by the Black River, with six towns and two villages located to the east, and 11 towns and five villages located to the west. The remaining two villages (Lyons Falls and Port Leyden) straddle the Black River, each with portions located in multiple towns. The largest municipality by geographic area is Croghan (181 square miles), while the smallest in area is the Village of Castorland (0.27 square miles). Villages make up 28.9 percent of the population, while accounting for 0.6 percent of the geographic area. With a population density of 932 people per square mile, these urbanized areas are significantly more dense than the surrounding towns.

Defining Sub-Regions of Lewis County

Lewis County's location within the Adirondack Region and the abundance of natural resources from which the community can benefit for economic and recreational purposes creates a high quality of life for residents and visitors. The Tug Hill Plateau, Adirondack Foothills, and Black River Valley represent the three most influential environmental resource regions within Lewis County (see Figure 3). The Tug Hill Region and Adirondack Park in their entirety provide more than 10,000 square miles of forests, mountains, rivers, and lakes throughout northern New York State.

Figure 2: Lewis County Municipalities



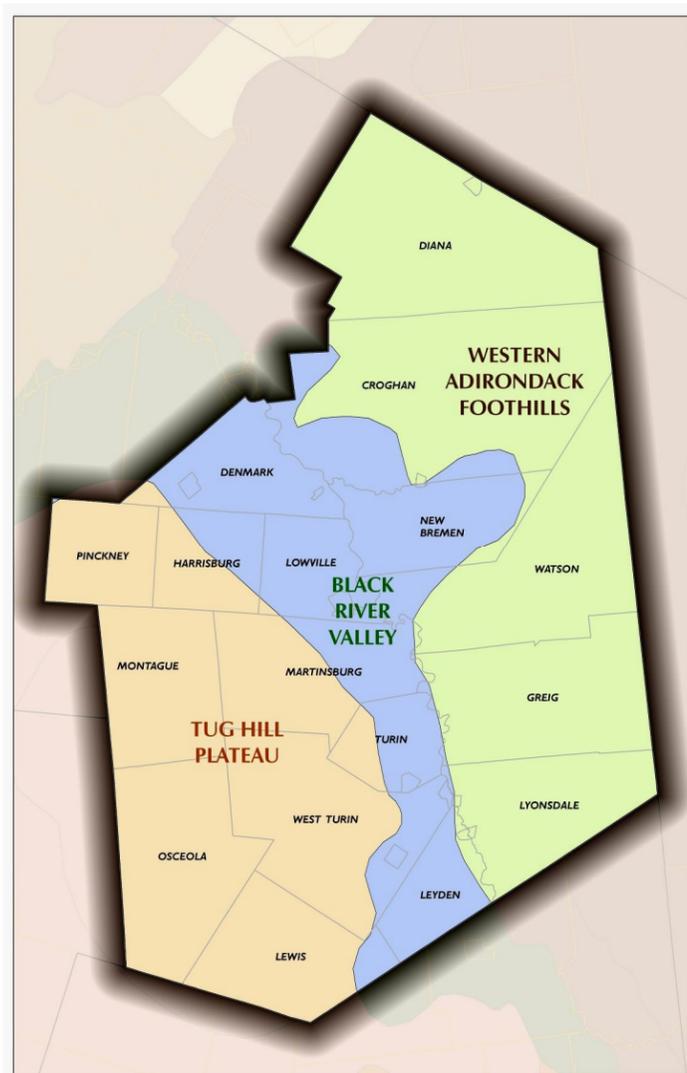
Tug Hill Plateau

The Tug Hill Plateau is one of only a few distinct, large plateaus in the Eastern US. It lies between Lake Ontario, the Black River and Oneida Lake, and is approximately 2,100 square miles. It encompasses towns and villages scattered in a vast acreage of forest and farm land. The core of the region encompasses more than 800 square miles of remote forest land and the headwaters of several major rivers, with much of the area inaccessible by public road. The plateau's location on the eastern end of Lake Ontario makes it the most substantial lake-effect snow location in the country. These lands and waters are important to the state of New York as municipal water supply, as wildlife and plant habitat, and as key resources supporting the forest industry, farming, recreation and tourism, and traditional land uses such as hunting and fishing.

Adirondack Foothills

Lewis County contains a portion of the western foothills of the Adirondack Mountains. The Adirondack Park was created in 1892 by the State of New York amid concerns for the water and timber resources of the mountainous region. Today, the park is the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous United States, greater in size than Yellowstone, Everglades, Glacier, and Grand Canyon National Parks combined. The boundary of the Park encompasses approximately six million acres, nearly half of which belongs to all the people of New York State and is constitutionally protected to remain “forever wild” forest preserve. The remaining half of the park is private land which includes settlements, farms, timber lands, businesses, homes, and camps. The wild forest, water, wildlife and aesthetic resources of the Park along with its open space character provide an outdoor recreational experience of national and international significance.

Figure 3: Geographic Sub-Regions



Black River Valley

The Black River flows from its headwaters in the western Adirondacks, through Lewis County along the edge of the Tug Hill Plateau and into Lake Ontario. The River plays an important role in the economy of the North Country region, and was historically utilized to capitalize on water power which could be harnessed to run mills and transport goods. In addition, the Black River was a connection point for the Erie Canal at Lyons Falls via the Black River Canal. Today, the Black River is a recreational corridor used for fishing, canoeing, whitewater rafting, kayaking and wildlife viewing along its 114-mile length. The 42-mile flatwater section through Lewis County from Lyons Falls to Carthage is known locally as the “Black River Flats.” The river drops only approximately 15-feet over the 42-mile distance. The river is in a broad open valley that is between two and five miles in width. Changes to the river’s cross-section created deep sections that flow at a slow to moderate pace, suitable for small boats such as canoes, kayaks and shallow-draft motorboats. Periodic flooding of the river valley has resulted in the presence of high quality soils, which contributes to the dominance of agricultural land uses in the valley.

Regional Agencies with Influence in Lewis County

Tug Hill Commission

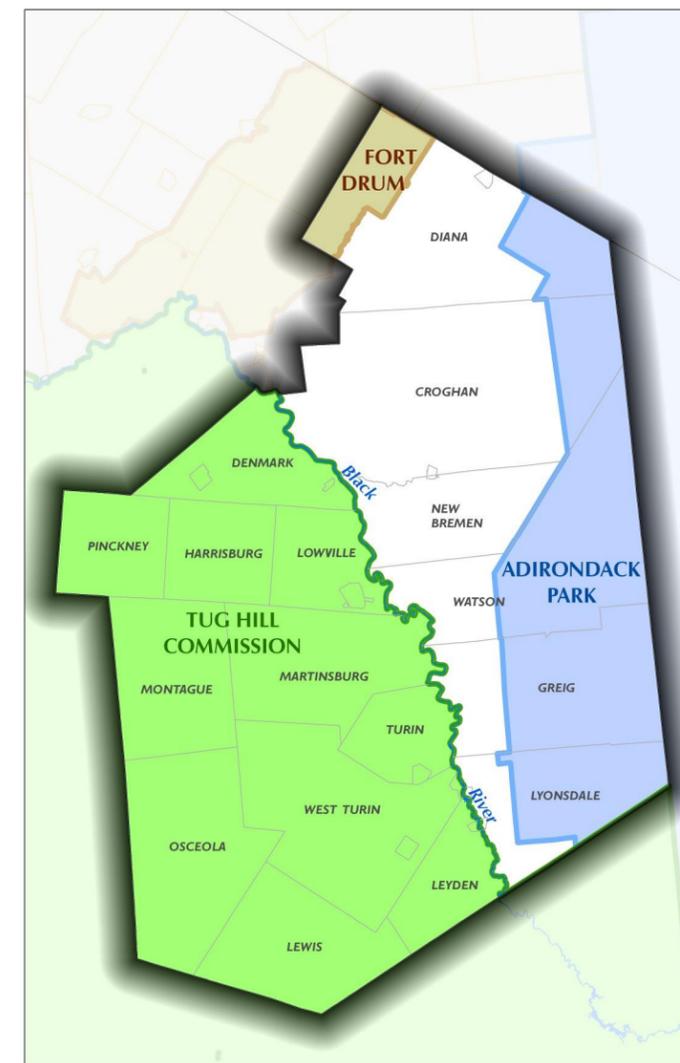
Originally established in 1972 as a temporary body, the Tug Hill Commission (THC) was created to enable local governments, private organizations, and individuals to shape the future of the Tug Hill Region. The non-regulatory THC provides technical assistance to the region’s 62 local governments, economic development organizations, and other local groups in the areas of land use planning, community economic development, and natural resource management. The THC also provides training and information for local officials through workshops and issues papers on a variety of topics.

All municipalities within Lewis County west of the Black River are included within the Tug Hill Commission’s jurisdiction, of which participation is voluntary. This accounts for 18 of the county’s 26 municipalities, including: the towns of Denmark, Harrisburg, Lewis, Leyden, Lowville, Martinsburg, Montague, Osceola, Pinckney, Turin, and West Turin; and the villages of Castorland, Constableville, Copenhagen, Lowville, Lyons Falls, Port Leyden, and Turin (see Figure 4).

Adirondack Park Agency

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) was created in 1971 by the State Legislature to develop long-range land use plans for both public and private lands within the Adirondack Park. The primary purpose of the APA is to insure conservation, protection, preservation, development and use of the unique scenic, aesthetic, wildlife, recreational, open space,

Figure 4: Regional Agencies with Influence in Lewis County



historic, ecological and natural resources of the park. A further purpose of the APA is to focus the responsibility for developing long-range park policy that takes into consideration the needs of the entire state.

In contrast to the Tug Hill Commission, the APA is a regulatory body that strives to ensure that current and projected future pressures on the park’s resources are provided for within a land use plan that recognizes matters of local concern along with those of surrounding regional and New York State. It is this intermingling of public and private lands that provides the Adirondack Park with its unique character. In an effort to cope with unregulated development on private lands, the APA created a framework to assist local governments within the park, including those within Lewis County, against the pressures of development and to help these municipalities exercise their discretionary powers to guide growth.



Portions of five municipalities (Diana, Croghan, Watson, Greig, and Lyonsdale) are within the APA boundary, also known as the Blue Line. The Town of New Bremen shares its eastern boundary with the Park (see Figure 4).

United States Army Base at Fort Drum

Since its reactivation in 1984, the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) of the US Army has called Fort Drum home. Recent expansion of United States Army facilities at Fort Drum in support of conflicts around the globe has led to significant development within the surrounding communities.



10th Mountain Division Monument at Fort Drum

Fort Drum has a long history as a military installation. It has been used as a military training site since 1908; however, the Army's presence in the North Country may be traced back to the early 1800's. Originally known as Pine Camp, the area saw its largest growth spurt with the outbreak of World War II in 1942. At that time the area was selected for a major expansion and an additional 75,000 acres of land was purchased.

Pine Camp became Camp Drum in 1951. During and after the Korean Conflict a number of units were stationed and trained here to take advantage of the terrain and climate. The post was designated Fort Drum in 1974 and a permanent garrison was assigned. On September 11, 1984, the announcement was made that Fort Drum would be the new home of the 10th Light Infantry Division.

Today, approximately 17,296 acres (27 square miles) of the 107,265-acre military installation are located in the extreme northern portions of Lewis County (see Figure 4). The majority of these lands are undeveloped. Although most of the growth and economic impact has occurred in Jefferson County, some of that impact extends into Lewis County, especially along the Route 26 corridor south of Carthage.

Regional Impacts of Fort Drum on the North Country

The North Country region has long been defined by the presence of Fort Drum, with significant contributions to the region's economy coming from the military base as a generator of direct employment. In addition, the services required by personnel and military families stationed in the area benefit permanent residents through the provision of jobs and economic opportunity. The presence of the base and the resulting demand for housing has also put upward pressure on the cost of rental and owner-occupied properties, impacting the residents of surrounding communities throughout the region. The activities at Fort Drum make it one of the largest generators of traffic and visitation on an annual basis to the region, and a primary driver of economic opportunity in Lewis, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.

Due to growth generated by Fort Drum, two organizations have been created to manage regional impacts while fostering communication between the public and the military. The Development Authority of the North Country and the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization are currently working together towards the effective and efficient communication of the needs of each parent organization, while identifying economic growth opportunities through improved leveraging of military spending.

Development Authority of the North Country

As a result of the decision to locate the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, a need arose for a regional entity with the capability to effectively and efficiently communicate with the United States Army to address the fort's economic and social impacts on the region. In 1985, New York State formed the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) and charged it with providing the region with the capability to effectively plan and develop the infrastructure needs of the three-county region (Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties) as a result of expansions of Fort Drum.

As one of its first official tasks, in 1986 DANC undertook a comprehensive economic evaluation of the region and developed a detailed, long-range economic development strategy. Currently, the Development Authority administers several business loan programs to promote job creation and retention among small businesses. The Authority also provides funding for the development of quality, affordable housing in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties through its housing programs. In addition, the Authority's staff advises several local development corporations including those in Clayton, Carthage and Lewis County.

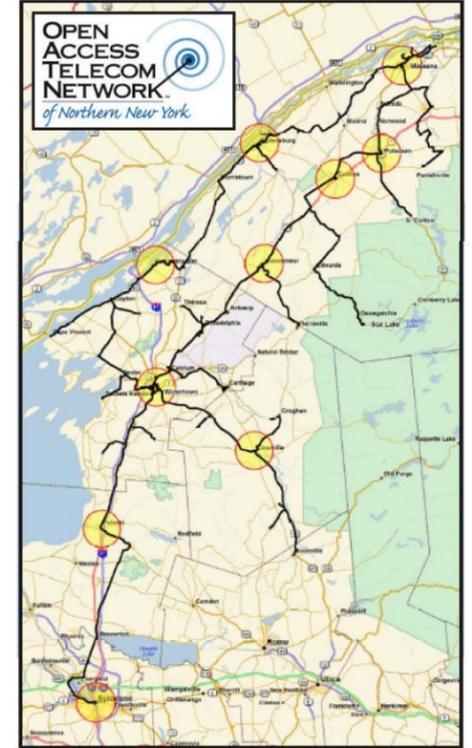
DANC's programmatic areas of interest include: community development, solid waste management, water and wastewater, and telecommunications. In 2004, the Open Access Telecom Network went into service, providing connectivity in the tri-county region with major telecommunications carriers in New York State.

Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization

Citizens of the tri-county region of Northern New York directly impacted by the location of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum formed the Fort Drum Steering Council, a predecessor to the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization. The primary purpose of the Council was to be a first point of contact between the military and civilian communities. The Council was originally slated to disband in 1990 when it was determined that its planning role was no longer necessary.

The civilian and military communities in the Fort Drum Impact Area felt that a follow-on organization was necessary to keep the lines of communication open between them. The Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO) was formed, recognizing the need for various organizations and agencies both on base and off to maintain regular contact on specific issues and programs. The FDRLO became the point of contact for those issues which transcend the specific missions of any individual organization or agency in either the civilian or military communities.

The FDRLO fills a range of roles including efforts to promote integration and leveraging of Fort Drum activity with outside community and business development. Since its creation, FDRLO has sponsored numerous studies of how Fort Drum can aid the region's economy, ranging from the Fort Drum economic impact update to military housing in the community and even joint use airport options. Most recently, FDRLO conducted a study focused on identifying and exploring ways to improve the quality of jobs in the North Country. The study addressed leveraging opportunities associated with national changes in how the military procures contracts and services from private business.



DANC's Open Access Telecom Network