

# 2021

## ANNUAL REPORT



### PROGRESS & RESILIENCY



## ADAPTING FOR RESILIENCY

As a continuation of its commitment to economic prosperity, 2021 offered a chance for SEEC to lay the groundwork for long-term strategies that adapt to the new normal that has evolved out of the global pandemic. While working closely with the Advisory Council, alliance members, and regional partners, SEEC began working to identify the key economic points that create resiliency and address the concerns or accessibility issues present in day-to-day rural life that became exacerbated throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

These areas of focus have been identified as Digital Strategies, Industrial Strategies, and Main Street Development. SEEC evaluates the success of these efforts through the measures of success identified during 2020 and will continue to value efforts against these key measures. ♦

### SEEC MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- ♦ Expanded Business Resources & Network Connections
- ♦ Community & Economic Development Engagement
- ♦ Environment & County Character Enhancements
- ♦ Industry Growth & Prosperity



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS, 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### ◆ EXPAND BUSINESS RESOURCES & NETWORK CONNECTIONS

- Assisted Sterling Insurance direct \$100,000 Federal Home Loan Bank of NY grants to local businesses
- Initiated internship program with SUNY Cobleskill
- Developed Schoharie County project portfolio suited for the Southern Tier 8 Opportunity Zone portal in order to attract investment
- Served on the Mohawk Valley Program Committee to host the first Regional Real Estate Developer Summit
- Implemented a Customer Relationship Management system of more than 900 local business contacts

### ◆ COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT

- Co-hosted Recovery Roundtables showcasing local Business Pivots & Successful Event Redesign due to COVID
- Featured 26 businesses and 9 Alliances in the County's first celebration of Economic Development Week, May 2021
- Established a Farm & Food Advisory Council to guide the Regional Independent Food Processing business plan as a public private initiative of more than \$55,000
- Coordinated a Community Development Survey in cooperation with Schoharie County Office of Community Development & Planning

### ◆ ENVIRONMENT & COUNTY CHARACTER ENHANCEMENTS

- Developed & launched the Schoharie County Eagle Trail featuring 16 observation points and bike routes
- Secured \$300,000 grant to enable the Town of Jefferson to improve walkability from the school to their Hamlet Green
- Defined SEEC Core Beliefs as a guide for economic development opportunities

### ◆ INDUSTRY GROWTH & PROSPERITY

- Channeled grant funds directly to businesses with promise of retaining 60 existing jobs and creation of 14 new job opportunities
- Defined a robust "Digital Strategy" initiative and secured \$366,000 to implement
- Linked CARES Act resources to advance Schoharie County "Industrial Strategies" and site assessments along the Route 7/188 corridor
- Moved our Mission to Main Street, SEEC is poised to deliver 21st century tools & resources boosting rural vitality at 287 Main ◆



## MOBILIZING CAPITAL FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

SEEC works to identify funding opportunities to meet a variety of needs in Schoharie County. From the renovation of the Parrott House, to repairing sidewalks in Jefferson, to funding professional service projects such as a food processing study and allocating dollars to fund digital marketing tools for small businesses.

### SEEC FUNDING COORDINATION

**\$25,000** Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)  
**\$10,000** Carver Company Pledge  
**\$15,600** SEEC Match

**\$50,000** MVEDD & National Grid

**\$100,000** CDBG Economic Development

**\$121,973** SEEC Impact Fund

**\$125,000** SEEC Resiliency Fund

**\$300,000** CDBG Public Facilities

**\$366,000** CDBG CARES Act

**\$100,000** FHLBNY/Sterling Insurance

**\$500,000** Restore NY

**\$500,000** Empire State Development



## SEEC CORE BELIEFS

SEEC Advisors expressed the importance to shape “Strategic Economic Development Policies”. Their goal was to tie guiding principles to the defined Measures of Success outlined as industry growth, alliance engagement, resources/network connections and community character. The Advisory Council effort delivered SEEC Core Beliefs known as placemaking, asset-based economic development and resiliency which have driven forth the 2022 priority strategies.

### PIVOTING COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Start of 2021 Project Priorities → End of 2021 SEEC Strategies



#### TARGETED VALUE ADD INVESTMENTS

SEEC impact and  
Resiliency Funds,  
Grantsmanship



#### BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Digital Strategies, Main  
Street Development  
& 287 Main



#### INDUSTRY/TALENT ATTRACTION

Industrial Strategies &  
Corridor Development



## DIGITAL STRATEGIES

Digital Strategies is a commitment to the creation and implementation of digital infrastructure in our communities and for Schoharie County businesses.

This strategy looks to address the concerns that arose during the pandemic, where rural communities did not have the same access to the digital tools that eased the burden for their urban counterparts. From broadband access, to providing access to capital to fund e-commerce infrastructure and digital marketing tools, digital strategies looks to thrust Schoharie County into a 21st century economy.

This strategy looks to create growth, engage customers, and connect the community to the broader digital landscape. ♦

## WI-FI IN DOWNTOWN SCHOHARIE

The County and Village of Schoharie together have demonstrated a commitment to infrastructure investments to improve digital accessibility for the local community. \$100,000 was allocated in 2021 to put towards the installation of wireless internet in downtown Schoharie. This Village WiFi investment will enable residents and patrons to access free, publicly available internet. The funds were secured and allocated in 2021, and the implementation of this effort will continue into 2022.

### THE BENEFITS OF THIS NEW INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDE:

- Continuing critical remote education and telehealth services on new broadband;
- Maintaining socialization and soft skill, emotional or intellectual development which may continue to occur in the digital realm despite what may be happening in the physical world;
- Enabling innovation on Main Street, adding value to enterprises; and
- Utilizing outdoor public spaces to live, work and play while enjoying healthy and safe social distances. ♦

## DIRECT TO BUSINESS - DIGITAL MARKETING GRANTS

The global pandemic demonstrated a shift in shopping trends and consumer engagement to online platforms. SEEC has acknowledged the intersectional values in enabling enterprises to upgrade to 21st-century infrastructure and internal systems so they can become more resilient and support orders from the community and beyond, their storefront opened or closed.

SEEC, in cooperation with the Schoharie County Office of Community Planning, secured a grant and allocated funds totaling \$266,000, which will fund local business owners' access to professional marketing agencies, digital strategists and technical specialists from around the region to learn, innovate, and further develop their online presence and e-commerce experience. The local Digital Strategies Initiative was conceived early in 2021, after nationwide research and modeling best practices and will continue to be implemented throughout 2022. ♦







## MAIN STREET DEVELOPMENT

Main street developments and placemaking is a strategy that looks to preserve the unique character of the six-village centers and eight historical districts, while supporting the development of amenities and the maintenance of facades to ensure that unique character lasts for generations to come.

This initiative also looks to create more dynamic places in our villages to exemplify the unique character of each village and create an energy in the downtown spaces that draw people in. SEEC looks to support the creation of bustling main streets, where people are living, working, dining, and shopping.

This strategy seeks to preserve the county character while improving community connections through the development of dynamic spaces and opportunities. ♦

## PLACEMAKING IN THE TOWN OF JEFFERSON

Walkability and connecting community institutions and the business district by foot, bike or car has proven to stimulate community and economic development. The Town of Jefferson, in collaboration with the Schoharie Economic Enterprise Corp (SEEC), was awarded a \$300,000 grant and proactively issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify an engineer to facilitate the project.

The grant is slated to address traffic calming, accessibility, and stormwater issues along Route 10 between the Jefferson Central School and the Town Green through sidewalk improvements. This aims to improve the built infrastructure that is the heartbeat of a connected community. ♦

## THE SCHOHARIE COUNTY EAGLE TRAIL

In 2021, SEEC partnered with a nationally acclaimed wildlife photographer, Bill Combs Jr. to share stories and feature our scenic landscapes. The Schoharie County Eagle Trail is an accessible bird-watching route designed to entertain and educate visitors on the flourishing eagle population in Schoharie County. While on the trail, visitors are directed through the heart of Schoharie County, seeing the area's stunning beauty, contributing to the local economy, and perhaps most importantly, becoming better informed on our nation's crest and our community ties to Native heritage.

The Schoharie County Eagle Trail appeals to the unique character of Schoharie County and looks to exemplify the beauty available around nearly every corner and adapted to the market trends showing an increasing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities. Now with over 2,000 followers on Facebook, the Eagle Trail is committed to showcasing Schoharie County to birders and nature-lovers far and wide and will continue with Bill Combs Jr. serving as Ambassador in 2022. ♦





## 287 MAIN: A NEW HUB ON MAINSTREET

In September of 2021, Schoharie Economic Enterprise Corporation (SEEC) announced the relocation of its headquarters to 287 Main Street in Schoharie, New York. Bank of America donated the building to SEEC to support SEEC's mission and commitment to continue to foster economic growth in Schoharie County and the aspiration to utilize the space as a foundation to bring a 21st-century economy to life.

This space looks to serve the community and SEEC's work in an intersectional manner that meets the varied needs of small businesses, entrepreneurs, agriculture-based businesses, freelancer professionals and more. 287 Main will serve as a physical representation of SEEC's mission and looks to deepen community connections and collaboration opportunities as is necessary to facilitate long-term economic prosperity.

Following space renovations at the 287 Main in the summer of 2022, the building will house SEEC's business headquarters, collaborative 21st-century work environment and robust programming opportunities. The programming looks to facilitate community building, networking, as well as learning opportunities that meet the needs of the local community and provide the tools to create self-reliant, resilient systems that facilitate growth. ♦



*Credit: Sydney MacMillan*



## A GROWING STAFF FOR A GROWING MISSION

With SEEC's undertaking ever-growing, the end of 2021 brought with it new full-time staff to support Executive Director, Julie Pacatte. Thank you to Trish, Jason, Sarah, Jared, and Jerrine for contributing to SEEC's mission in 2021.

In September, SEEC hired Sam Forehand as the Strategic Collaborations and Communications Associate. Ms. Forehand comes to SEEC from the Glimmerglass Festival where she held the role of Communications Manager.

In December, SEEC hired two additional full-time employees. Anne Sacket was hired in the role of Finance Associate. Ms. Sacket is a Schoharie native who graduated in 2019 with a degree in Mathematical Economics, and before joining the SEEC team, held a role at The Carrot Barn in Schoharie. SEEC then hired Spencer Cocca in the role of Associate Project Specialist. Mr. Cocca holds a Master's Degree in Luxury Brand Management and previously held the position of Business Manager for Sharon Spring's business, Brimstone Bakery, and was instrumental in its business launch successes.

These staff members bring a unique skill set that is tailored to serve the strategic goals and efforts set for 2022. SEEC is thrilled to round out its team to increase the potential impact of its work and to serve the dynamic and varied needs of the organization and the Schoharie County community. ♦



## 2022: A YEAR OF DEMONSTRATION

2022 offers a chance to bring to life many efforts SEEC has been working towards, through the implementation of an intersectional approach to the adaptive strategies identified throughout the pandemic. Fundamental to this demonstration is the continued commitment to the alliances formed throughout the pandemic that positioned Schoharie County to be not just adaptive, but proactive.

SEEC is looking to 2022 as a year of impact, demonstration, and evaluation, but also one where that work is contingent on the success of collaborative efforts. The Advisory Council will continue to be a cornerstone of SEEC strategic planning, and SEEC looks to enhance the opportunities available to Council members who in their own right offer unmatched expertise and guidance, but when convened, that potential is only enhanced. This also requires continued collaboration with local municipalities, regional economic development organizations, and local institutions, such as SUNY Cobleskill. This combined innovation creates opportunities for and paths to realization that would be unlikely without the unified approach.

In 2022, SEEC looks to 287 Main as an opportunity to serve as a place where the community can come together, and ideas can flourish. There is a heightened value of human connection and personable discourse, particularly after the pandemic, and 287 Main looks to create an environment where people can know there is connection and support waiting for them. ♦



## HONORING STALWARTS

### **KEVIN NEARY, MARCH 5, 1949 - JULY 11, 2021 SEEC ADVISORY COUNCIL**



A born leader whose passion for the community never wavered, Kevin was tapped by the SEEC Board to serve as an Advisory Council member in its inaugural

year. Kevin was instrumental in organizing SEEC's downtown development forum and he naturally directed discussions as the pandemic took hold culminating his 40 years in emergency management and public safety. Kevin was an exemplary leader that worked to gain commitment and strive for the highest standards. He was in his 25th year as Mayor of Richmondville, was the Deputy Director of the Schoharie County Emergency Management Department, was an active member of the Richmondville Volunteer Fire Department, and previously served on the Board of Education for both Richmondville Central School and Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School. For the past thirty plus years he helped organize the Community Thanksgiving Day Dinner which provided hundreds of Thanksgiving meals each year to the people of Schoharie County.

Kevin was a friend and a person we all admired for his enthusiasm and commitment to bettering his community. There was no task that was too difficult and his encouragement gave us all the willingness to push ahead against obstacles that seemed too impossible to overcome. Most of all, we will miss his playful nature and the way he could diffuse a tense meeting and turn the conversation to a collaborative conclusion. ♦

### **MARJORIE SILLIMAN ROSE BECKER AUGUST 10, 1922 - MAY 25, 2021 SEEC BENEFACTOR**



A life-long resident of Middleburgh, chairman of The Middleburgh Telephone Company (MIDTEL) and founder of the Marge and Randy Becker Foundation, Marjorie, known as Marge to her many friends and fellow residents of Schoharie

County, was a giant of an individual and a great supporter of the community.

During her 48 years at MIDTEL, Marge championed growth. Throughout the years, MIDTEL made constant strides, including the establishment of one of the first communications towers in 1966. Marge continued to address the ever-advancing and changing technology by championing the move into Cable TV, DSL, Internet and Fiber broadband services in Middleburgh and the surrounding areas. MIDTEL now serves over 400 square miles in Schoharie County and parts of Albany County.

Throughout her life, Marge led efforts to preserve and beautify the community with lights and flowers for each season and assuring new businesses were attracted to the charming area and town of Middleburgh. After the devastating flood of 2011 ravaged Middleburgh and its businesses, she worked tirelessly to revive the community by helping to secure funding, attract a local grocery market, and re-develop Baker Avenue. Marge continued to support prosperity in Schoharie County, with the Marge and Randy Becker Foundation contributing to SEEC since its founding in 2019. ♦



# SEEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**THOMAS O. PUTNAM**

Founder & Executive Chairman,  
Fenimore Asset Management;  
Co-Manager of FAM Funds,  
SEEC Chairperson

**ERIC H. STEIN, FACHE**

President of Cobleskill Regional Hospital,  
SEEC Treasurer

**PETER J. JOHNSON**

Former Historian  
for David Rockefeller,  
SEEC Secretary

**JAMES R. BECKER**

President of MIDTEL; President of INOC Datacenters  
SEEC Founding Member

**STEPHEN A. HARRIS**

President & CEO of Sterling Insurance  
SEEC Founding Member

## 2021-2022 SEEC ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Richard Ball**, Commissioner  
of Agriculture, NYS  
Department of  
Agriculture & Markets

**Cindy Barber**, President,  
Barber's Family Farm

**Jim Barber**, Ag & Farmland  
Implementation Specialist,  
Cornell Cooperative  
Extension

**Paul M. Conroy**, Vice  
President of Global  
Marketing and Sales,  
Hanwha L&C

**Dr. Tara Winter**, Chief  
Strategic Planning and  
Institutional Effectiveness  
Officer, SUNY Cobleskill

**Ron Filmer**, Chief Executive  
Officer, Schoharie  
County IDA

**Bart Finegan**, Retired  
Executive

**Dr. S. Scott Ferguson**,  
Executive Director,  
Institute for Rural Vitality  
at SUNY Cobleskill

**Jacqui Hauser**, Owner,  
Global HR Strategies

**Donna LaVigne**, Retired  
Small Business Owner

**Maureen Lodes**, Owner,  
Cobbler & Co

**Leo T. McAllister**, Wealth  
Advisor, Cadaret Grant & Co

**Anne Morton**,  
Retired Executive

**Carl Mummmenthey**,  
Superintendent of Schools,  
Cobleskill Richmondville  
Central School District

**Benjamin Oevering**,  
Councilman,  
Town of Schoharie

**Doug Plummer**, Mayor,  
Village of Sharon Springs

**Nan Stolzenburg**, Principal,  
Community Planning &  
Environmental Associates

**Steve Wilson**,  
Administrator, Schoharie  
County Government

## SEEC ASSOCIATES

**Julie Pacatte**, Executive Director

**Spencer Cocca**, Project Associate

**Sam Forehand**, Strategic Collaboration & Communications Associate

**Anne Sacket**, Finance Associate

## SEEC FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2021

<b>Revenue &amp; Support</b> (Donations w/o Restrictions, In-Kind, Investments)	\$ 507,246
<b>With Donor Restrictions (Impact Fund)</b>	\$ 145,000
<b>Expenses</b> (Program & Management)	(\$ 321,760)
<b>Net Assets Year End 2021</b>	<b>\$ 1,245,165</b>

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