

# **Tax Base and Economic Development**

## **GOALS:**

- A. Maintain an environment that supports and encourages the continuation of production agriculture and the agricultural industry.**
- B. Retain existing agricultural-support businesses and encourage the establishment of new ones.**
- C. Encourage the establishment and operation of farm-based and home-based businesses of the type and scale compatible with the agricultural and rural, residential character of the community.**
- D. Encourage tourism and, in appropriate areas of the Towns, the development of the type of tourism-related businesses that are harmonious with the pastoral character of the community.**
- E. Support the efforts of the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency to redevelop the former Seneca Army Depot.**



### Existing Studies and Plans

#### **Seneca Army Depot Reuse Plan and Implementation Strategy**

The original plan, developed by the Seneca Army Depot Local Redevelopment Authority, 1996 and amended in 1997 and 1999, divided the former 10,600 acre army base parcel into various areas. A specific type of use was proposed for each area. The uses included: (1) institutional, (2) warehousing and distribution (3) planned industrial development, (4) special events and training (5) housing, and (6) conservation/recreation.

The plan also called for the conveyance of a portion of the parcel to the U.S. Coast Guard for use for a LO-RAN navigational antenna station and a portion to NYS for the construction of the Five Points Correctional Facility. The former Army housing along Seneca Lake was also sold to a private developer.

The area designated for conservation and recreational use represented the largest of the areas, approximately 8,300 acres in size. The plan proposed that this area be preserved as a wildlife preserve with self-guided nature trails being developed on the site.

In 2004, the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA), the agency responsible for implementing the reuse plan, undertook a "Master Plan Update" to reconsider and reevaluate the area that had been designate for conservation and recreational uses in the Reuse Plan. The process involved identifying potential alternative uses and reconsidering the amount of land allocated for conservation and recreational use.

(Continued on page 76)

## Existing Conditions

### Economic Base

Agriculture is the predominant industry in Fayette and Varick. As noted in the Farmland and Agriculture Chapter, the market value of all agricultural products sold from county farms in 2002 was \$45.2 million. Due to the ideal growing conditions for grapes along Cayuga and Seneca Lake, several vineyards may be found along both lakefronts. Livestock and grain farms are generally found on the higher ground separating the lakes. The operation of small, ancillary farm-based businesses which supplement the incomes derived from farming are common on many farms. This practice is expected to continue into the future. With the influx of Amish and Mennonite families into the area, the variety of farm-based businesses can be expected to expand.

The scenic lake views, wineries, farm stands, Amish and Mennonite crafts and nearby recreational facilities are attractions for tourists.

Commercial areas with concentrations of businesses do not exist in either the Town of Fayette or Varick. Only 35 acres in the Town of Fayette and 12 acres in the Town of Varick are used for commercial and industrial business purposes. The few commercial and industrial businesses operating in the Towns are generally small and are dispersed.

### Employment

Although agriculture is the most prevalent type of business in Fayette and Varick and accounts for a large portion of the land use, few people are actually employed in the agricultural industry. The 2000 Census reported a total of only 66 persons or 3.2% of the 1,856 employed civilians residing in the Town of Fayette employed in the industrial category which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining. In Varick, 57 or 7.3% of the 778 employed civilian population were employed in the same industrial category.

Most employed Fayette and Varick residents worked outside the municipality in which they resided. Information from the 2000 Census revealed that only 17.7% of the employed civilian labor force residing in the Town of Fayette actually worked in the Town; 82.% worked outside the Town of Fayette. Only 15% of the employed civilian labor force residing in Varick worked in the Town of Varick; 85.0% worked in another municipality.

The 2000 Census further reveals that the large majority of the employed civilian population who resided in Fayette and Varick and who worked outside the home, had commuting times of less than a half-hour duration. This indicates that they were employed at job sites

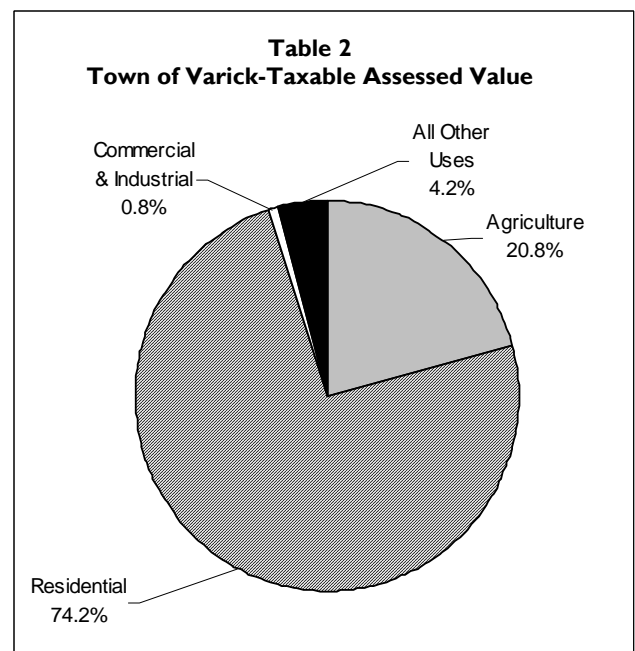
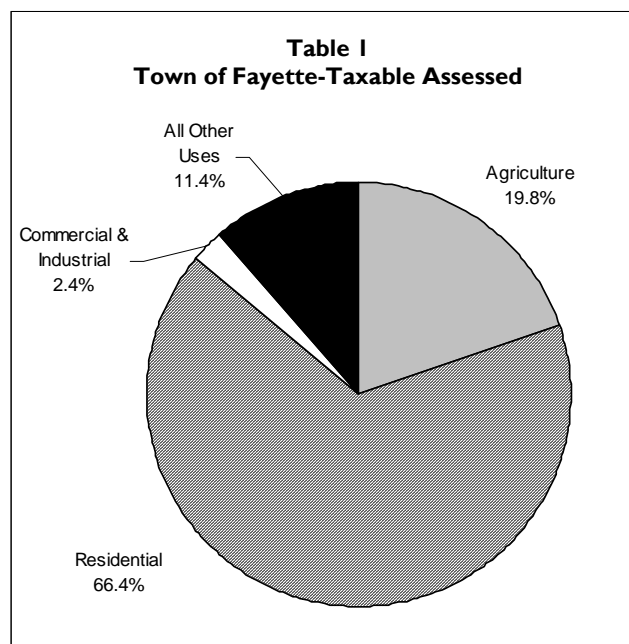
within relatively easy driving distances. More than one-third (39.1%) of Fayette residents who commuted had travel times of less than 15 minutes; 37.1% had travel times of at least 15 minutes, but less than half an hour. Larger proportions of Varick residents who commuted to work had longer travel times. Slightly more than one-fifth (20.3%) of Varick residents who commuted had travel times less than 15 minutes in duration. In contrast 53.0% had travel times of 15 minutes or more duration, but less than half an hour.

The City of Geneva and the Villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls serve as important employment centers for Seneca County residents. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, several manufacturing plants operating in the Villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls and the City of Geneva went out of businesses or relocated out of the area. In the mid 1990s the Seneca Army Depot which employed significant numbers of local residents was also closed by the federal government. As a result of the Army base closure and plant closures and relocations, many Seneca County residents lost their jobs. Despite the economic setbacks that have plagued the area during the past 25 years, the unemployment rates have remained relatively low. The average annual unemployment rates in Seneca County since 1990 have ranged between 4.5% and 6.6%

Waterloo, Seneca Falls and Geneva continue to serve as important employment centers. Each community still contains a mix of manufacturing, commercial, retail and service businesses. In addition, new employment opportunities have resulted from the reuse and redevelopment of the former Seneca Army Depot. Among the new employers located at the Depot are the Hillside Children's Center, Five Points State Correctional Facility, the New York State Police and Emergency Services Training Facility. PEZ Industrial, a company that refurbishes restaurant equipment, has also leased space at the Depot.

### Property Tax Base

Despite the fact that agriculture accounts for such large percentages of land use in the Towns, agricultural land accounts for a much smaller proportion of the property tax base in each Town. In Fayette, 20.8% of the taxable assessed value of real property is attributable to agricultural land. Similarly in Varick, 19.8% of the taxable assessed value of real property is attributable to agricultural land. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the proportion of the taxable assessed value attributable to agriculture and other land uses in Fayette and Varick respectively.



### Existing Studies and Plans

*(Continued from page 74)*

The Master Plan evaluation was completed in July 2005 and a “preferred” land use plan set was set forth in the Master Plan.

Under the “preferred” land use, the area set aside for conservation and recreational use would be reduced to 1,445 acres, while the areas designated for institutional use, training and residential (and resort) would be increases. Areas for utility uses and green energy uses would also proposed an area would be set aside in reserve for “future development.”

See the *Issues and Opportunities* section and *Redevelopment of Former Seneca Army Depot* section elsewhere in this chapter and the *Seneca Army Depot Reuse Plan* sidebar in the *Land Use Overview* chapter for additional information regarding the Depot.

## Issues and Opportunities

### Community Preferences

The results of the residents survey demonstrate that an appreciable portion of the Town of Fayette and Varick residents do not support commercial and residential development in their communities. (See sidebar.) The survey results further demonstrate that those residents who do support commercial and industrial development would prefer such development to be concentrated in specific areas designated for such uses rather than being dispersed throughout the Towns.

The survey results also demonstrate that Fayette and Varick residents who support economic development support the types of businesses that are compatible with the rural, agricultural character of the communities. These include tourist and outdoor recreation businesses, agricultural support businesses and home office businesses rather than other types of commercial and industrial businesses. Moreover, factory-scale manufacturing and similar large industry is unlikely to find the Towns of Fayette and Varick active due to the lack of infrastructure and transportation (discussed below) and the limited workforce. Survey results indicate residents do not regard factory-scale manufacturing and large industry as desirable. Survey respondents also identified the rural, agricultural character of the communities, open space and quiet neighborhoods as qualities they highly valued. Respondents further made it abundantly clear that they do not support gambling casinos and other sovereign-nation businesses in their communities. Gambling casinos are viewed as not being compatible with the pastoral character of the community due to the nature of such business and their tendency to attract undesirable elements.

In view of, (1) the limited potential for commercial and industrial development in Fayette and Varick, (2) the availability of vacant industrial and commercial buildings in Waterloo, Seneca Falls and Geneva and the utilities and infrastructure in place to serve businesses that may occupy the buildings, and (3) the sentiment of Fayette and Varick residents to maintain the rural, agricultural character of the Towns, business development goals for this Comprehensive Plan should support only a limited amount of small-scale business development compatible with the rural character of the community.

### Lack of Shovel-Ready Sites

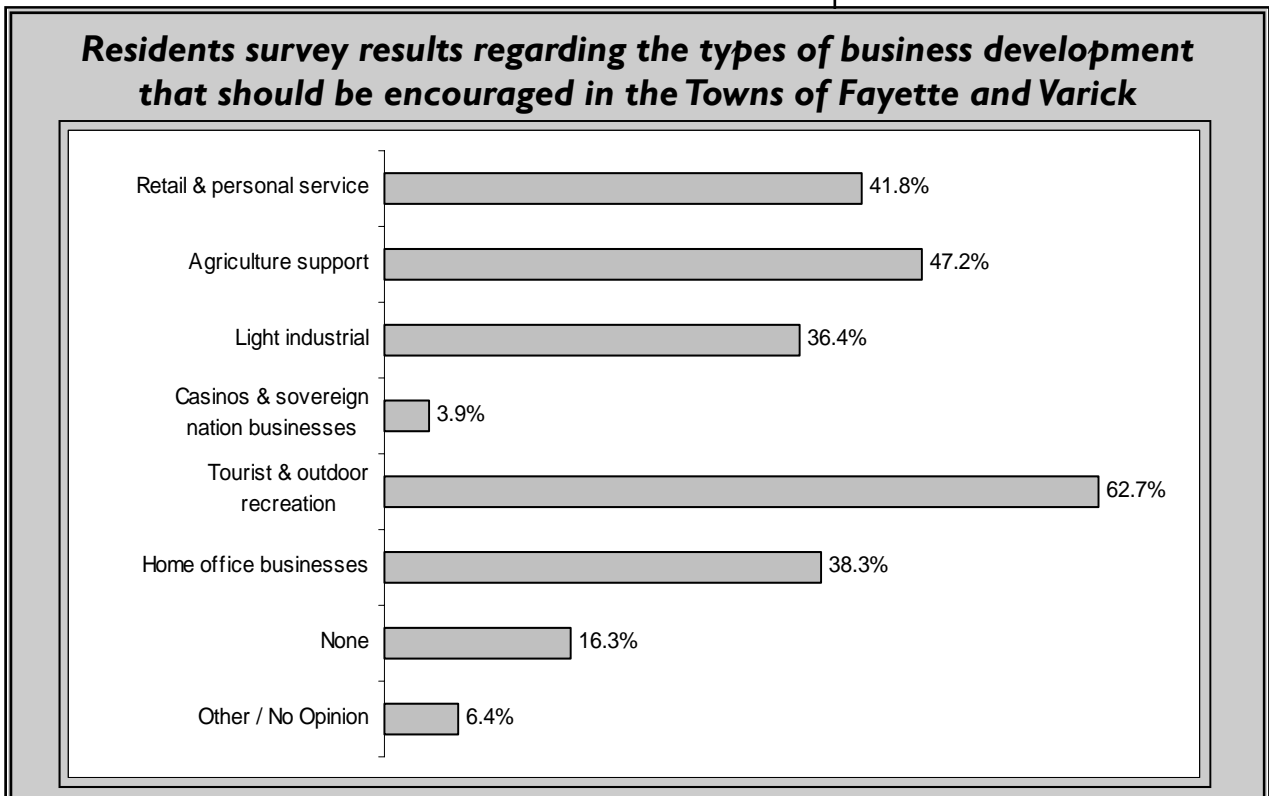
Commercial and industrial businesses prefer to locate facilities on “shovel-ready” sites as such sites enable companies to quickly construct buildings and other facilities and place them into operation in the shortest amount of time. Shovel-ready sites are parcels of land that are accessible by existing access roads and serviced by existing

municipal watermains and sanitary sewers. In today's highly competitive business world, most business executives will not even entertain the notion of locating an operation on a site that is not shovel ready.

There are no industrial parks or shovel ready sites in either the Town of Fayette or Varick. In addition, municipal water and sanitary sewer service is provided only in very limited areas. Municipal water service is provided along the portions of the Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake lakefronts in the Towns of Fayette and Varick and to portions of the former Seneca Army Depot. Municipal water and/or sanitary sewer services are not available throughout the remainder of the Towns. Apart from the potential to provide water to the Boody's Hill area and the Hamlet of Fayette and possibly the Hamlet of MacDougal, there is little potential to extend water and sewer to other areas of the Towns as the low density of development would make it cost prohibitive. Maps depicting the areas currently served by municipal water and sanitary sewer service may be found in the Transportation and Infrastructure chapter.

### **Accessibility**

Highway Access – Highway accessibility is an important consideration for commercial and industrial development. The NYS Thruway serves as the principal east-west route for the movement of people and goods through the region and the State. Although the Villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls are only about five miles from Thruway Exit 41, the Towns of Fayette is a bit more removed while the Town





### Residents Survey Highlights

The survey asked respondents questions about business development with the following results..

#### **Incentives for agricultural support businesses should be provided.**

- 32.7% of Fayette respondents strongly support and 34.9% somewhat support incentives being provided.
- 22.5% of Varick respondents strongly support and 34.9% somewhat support incentives being provided

#### **Where should business development occur?**

- 52.1% of Fayette respondents and 48.1% of Varick respondents indicated a preference for business development to be concentrated in designated areas
- 7.7% of Fayette respondents and 8.1% of Varick respondents indicated a preference for business development to be interspersed along the highways
- 25.2% of Fayette respondents and 37.5% of Varick respondents expressed opposition to business development anywhere in the Towns.

(Continued on page 79)

of Varick is substantially more removed. Traffic between the NYS Thruway and the Towns of Fayette and Varick must pass through either the Village of Waterloo or Seneca Falls, which contributes to travel time.

Routes 96, 96A, 414 and 89 are NYS highways that transect the Towns of Fayette and Varick and provide for good north-south movement despite the fact that the highways are only two lanes wide. NYS Route 336 is the only State highway that provides for east-west movement, but only between Routes 96A and 414. Although east-west movement is possible using County and Town roads, the roadways are not as well laid out to provide for quick and easy movement. The Depot serves as an obstacle to east-west movement in the Towns of Varick and Romulus and Seneca and Cayuga Lakes serve as obstacles that prevent east-west movement to the adjoining counties.

Rail Access – The Finger Lakes Railroad Company, a short-line, is headquartered and has a rail yard in the City of Geneva. The company owns a railroad track that runs along the east side of Seneca Lake between the City of Geneva and the Depot. Although Finger Lakes Railroad used to provide freight service for the Depot when it was an active Army base, the company has no rail customers along this rail line at the present time. Finger Lakes Railroad is maintaining the railroad track in hopes of obtaining freight customers if future commercial and industrial development occurs at the Depot. Although there is a network of railroad tracks inside the Depot, Finger Lakes Railroad is not responsible for their maintenance.

Finger Lakes also owns an east-west rail line that passes through the Villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls which terminates in the City of Canandaigua (Ontario County) to the west and in the Village of Solway (Syracuse suburb) to the east. In addition, the Finger Lakes Railroad also has use of a rail line that runs north from the City of Geneva to the Village of Lyons (Wayne County). There are CSX Railroad Company interchanges in both the Villages of Solway and Lyons.

Airport Access – The Finger Lakes Regional Airport located two miles southeast of the Village of Seneca Falls and the Airtreck Airport located in the Town of Fayette southwest of the intersection of Route 96 and Yellow Tavern Road provide air accessibility by small aircraft typically used by corporations for executive travel. The Ithaca Tompkins Regional Air Port and the Rochester and Syracuse International Airports are the closest passenger and freight airports in the region. The regional airport at Ithaca is approximately 30 miles distance or a half-hour drive from Fayette and Varick. The international airports at Rochester and Syracuse are approximately 60 miles distance or more than an hour's drive from Fayette and Varick. The two local airports are described in greater detail in the Community Facilities and Services chapter.

### Home-Based Businesses

Home-based businesses, especially on farms in Fayette and Varick, have been and continue to be commonplace. Such businesses provide farmers with the means to supplement income derived from farming. In some cases the supplemental income may be necessary to financially enable farmers to continue to farm their land. Usually, these home-based businesses are carried out in a building adjacent to or in close proximity to the farmhouse or other outbuildings. As large distances separate farmhouses and outbuildings in Fayette and Varick, the operation of supplemental home-based businesses are unlikely to impact adjoining property owners.

Home-based business also offer residents who are not farmers with opportunities to pursue livelihoods. Many home-based businesses generate little or no traffic, noise, dust, or odor and often can be pursued inside the home without the need for an ancillary building and without any visible sign or indication of the existence of the business. Telecommunications systems and Internet access often provide the means for such businesses to operate. Examples include: consulting, software engineering and programming, writing and publishing newsletters, magazine articles and books. Permitting the pursuit of such home-based businesses in the Towns of Fayette and Varick will enhance the economic viability of the communities.

### Natural Gas Deposits

Natural gas extraction has occurred in the Finger Lake region for more than a century. Traditionally, gas wells have been drilled to a depth not exceeding 4,000 feet. Advances in technology have now made the extraction of deep deposits of natural gas more economically viable. Recent test wells drilled to a depth of 7,000 feet in the Finger Lakes Region by, for example, Columbia Natural Resources, Inc. resulted in the discovery of large deposits of natural gas at these greater depths. Such gas deposits may serve as a valuable economic stimulus to the local economy in Seneca County. Property owners with natural gas beneath their land could benefit from leasing mineral rights to natural gas companies. Other local businesses could benefit from the local purchases the gas companies will make as they develop the infrastructure to extract the deeper gas deposits.

Property owners who may have gas deposits beneath their property would be well advised to seek legal advice before signing gas leases. Gas leases can be very complex and it is not unknown for property owners to sign leases that result in the property owner not receiving appropriate remuneration for the gas extracted from beneath their land.

*(Continued on page 83)*

### Residents Survey

#### Highlights

*(Continued from page 78)*

#### **Should the Towns regulate business development?**

- 37.5% of Fayette respondents strongly agreed and 43.1% somewhat agreed the Town should regulate business development.
- 39.7% of Varick respondents strongly agreed and 41.7% somewhat agreed that the Town should regulate business development.

### Redevelopment of Former Seneca Army Depot

In the mid-1990s, the federal government closed the 1,000 acre Seneca Army Depot. In response, the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA) developed a plan for the reuse and redevelopment of the facility in order to dissuade the federal government from selling the property at public auction. As approximately one-half of the site is within the Town of Varick, the reuse and redevelopment of the site has the potential to impact both the Towns of Fayette and Varick. The site contains numerous impediments that will constrain and limit the amount and scale of reuse or redevelopment for traditional industrial and/or institutional uses. Among the impediments are the following:

- Approximately one-third of the site contains reinforced concrete munitions magazines, approximately 100 yards apart from each other. The size and type of construction severely limits the potential reuse of the magazines for other uses. In addition, the removal of the structures would be cost prohibitive. The estimated demolition cost per magazine ranges from \$35,000 to \$45,000.
- An appreciable amount of the site contains wetlands.
- A portion of the site contains unexploded ordnance. Although the U.S. Army is cleaning up the unexploded ordnance, there will likely be deed restrictions imposed that will prohibit the land from being developed or that will limit the amount of excavation as a precautionary measure in the event that not all of the unexploded ordinance has been removed.
- Most of the warehouses on the site are in advanced stages of deterioration due to years of neglect and lack of maintenance. Many appear to be unsafe and on the verge of collapsing. Such buildings are not suitable for reuse, cannot be cost-effectively rehabilitated and the razing and removal of such buildings contributes to the cost of development.
- The site is remotely located from the NYS Thruway and is an appreciable distance from both the Rochester and Syracuse metropolitan areas. Its remote location may render the site as an undesirable location for many types of industrial businesses and institutions.

Although the Depot has the foregoing deficiencies, it does have a couple of attributes that may be attractive to some types of business development.

- Portions of the Depot contain municipal water and sanitary sewer infrastructure that could be extended to service new business development.
- A network of railroad tracks exist within the Depot that could be used to quickly and inexpensively to provide rail service to businesses that may locate in the Depot. The railroad tracks on the Depot property connect to the Finger Lakes Railway railroad track which terminates at the western boundary of the Depot property.

Overall, the Depot appears to have very limited potential for reuse or redevelopment for traditional industrial and institutional uses. However, the former Army base may have more potential for innovative uses. Two innovative uses have been proposed to the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency which are described below.



**Center for Renewable Energy**

In April 2005, a member of the Varick Planning Board and two members of the Romulus Planning Board prepared and presented a proposal to the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency urging the SCIDA to investigate the potential for turning the Depot into a center for renewable energy. The proposal calls for the SCIDA to evaluate the potential for the site to be used for producing various forms of renewable energy including: wind power, solar-power, biomass energy, bio gas, bio diesel, geothermal energy, hydrogen fuel cells, hydroelectric and natural gas. Such a center could become a research and development center for renewable energy.

The proposal also identifies ancillary and complementary activities and uses that may occur at the depot. Among these are:

- Greenhouses heated by the energy produced on site.
- Sale of biomass compost for agricultural purposes.
- Greenhouse wastewater treatment.
- Wind-powered pumps to supply water needed on site for the greenhouse, etc.
- Low-tech and affordable ways to use manure produced by concentrated animal feeding operations and dairies while reducing odors associated with concentrations of livestock.

The proposal also suggests that a center for renewable energy could also be used for educational purposes and serve as a tourist attraction.

**Eco-Tourism / White Deer Refuge**

In addition to the foregoing proposal, the Seneca White Deer, Inc. a not-for-profit corporation, has submitted a proposal to the SCIDA to develop the Depot as an eco-tourist attraction. The largest white deer herd in the world inhabit the former Army base. The tract of land also contains a diverse habitat which attracts migratory birds and other fauna. Although eco-tourism is relatively unknown in this part of the country, it is becoming more popular with each passing year. Presentations made by Seneca White Deer, Inc. representatives have generated much public enthusiasm for the proposal. Moreover, the Seneca White Deer, Inc. proposal is compatible with the above proposal to develop a center for renewable energy and would enhance the attraction for tourists.

The foregoing proposals have the potential to turn the former Army base which is currently more of a liability than an asset into a unique facility that would provide employment opportunities to local residents while benefiting the environment. Such uses would also be in character with the Fayette and Varick communities and the desires of residents as expressed in the residents survey.

### Tourism

Tourism is an important economic engine in Seneca County. Tourist attractions in and near Seneca County bring thousands of people into and through the area each year predominantly during the summer and autumn months. Among the existing attractions are:

- Seneca and Cayuga Lakes - Seneca and Cayuga Lakes, the two largest finger lakes, offer a wide array of water-related recreational opportunities including motor boating, sailing, water skiing, fishing, swimming and SCUBA diving.
- Scenic Byways and Highways— Many roads and highways in Seneca County offer panoramic vistas of Seneca and Cayuga Lakes and the rural countryside which attract visitors from within the region especially during the fall foliage season. The Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway, which circumscribes Cayuga Lake and includes NYS Route 89 along the western side of the lake, has been designated by the Federal Highway Administration as one of the National Scenic Byways. The National Scenic Byways Program draws attention to roadways that have scenic, historic, cultural, recreational or archaeological significance by officially recognizing them as a National Scenic Byway.
- Cultural and Historic Attractions—Most prominent among the cultural and historic attractions is the Nation Women’s Hall of Fame, the Women’s Rights National Historic Park, and the Cayuga and Seneca Canal which links Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. Rose Manor and the Peter Smith farm also serve as attractions. Cultural “tourism” is a growing segment of the tourism industry as visitors seek to learn about the history of the places they visit.
- State Parks and Wildlife Refuge—Seneca Lake State Park, Cayuga State Park and Sampson State Park offer tourists a wide variety of facilities and recreational opportunities. The parks contain swimming areas, picnic facilities, playgrounds, playfields, nature trails, and boat launches and docks. Sampson State Park also contains camping facilities and in the fall is the venue for a highly-attended dog show. The Montezuma Wildlife Refuge draws tourists to the area who are interested in observing migratory birds and other fauna, and the addition of the Canoga Marsh Wildlife Management Area in the Town of Fayette can be expected to draw additional tourists to the area.
- Wineries and Restaurants— The many wineries and restaurants that dot the Seneca and Cayuga lakeshore serve as tourist destinations especially during the fall wine season when tourists flock to the area for wine tasting events and festivals. Many motorist and tour buses journey from winery to winery along the Seneca and Cayuga wine trails.
- Amish and Mennonite Shops— The home-based businesses and shops that have sprung up as a result of the influx of Amish and Mennonite families into Fayette and Varick enhance the tourist appeal of the area. Amish and Mennonite baked goods, crafts, furniture, quilts, and other manufactured items do and will continue to appeal to tourists.

The potential for establishing additional tourist related businesses offer Fayette and Varick residents with business opportunities consistent with the types of economic development that would be harmonious with the character of the two communities. Examples include establishing an ecotourism attractions described in the section of this chapter entitled Redevelopment of the Former Seneca Army Depot. The agricultural heritage of the area provides additional opportunities to develop agricultural-related tourist attractions.

*(Continued from page 79)*

**Proposed Revisions to the Seneca Army Depot Reuse Plan**

The 2005 Master Plan Update prepared by the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA) [see Existing Studies and Plans sidebar in this chapter] are not consistent with proposals submitted by Seneca County White Deer, Inc. and members of the Varick and Romulus Town Planning Board to use the majority of the former Army base as a combination white deer refuge and center for renewable energy. If the proposed 2005 Master Plan Update is adopted as currently written, the proposed revisions will effectively prevent the proposals for the combined white deer refuge and center for renewable energy from being undertaken as the amount of land allocated for such uses is very limited (1,445 acres for conservation and 979 acres for “green” energy.) See the Land Use Overview chapter for discussion on future land use in the former Depot.

### Tools and Techniques

#### Real Property Tax Incentives

Section 485-b of the NYS Real Property Tax Law permits municipalities and school districts to provide partial and temporary tax exemptions to businesses that construct new buildings and/or renovate existing buildings provided the cost of the project equals or exceeds \$10,000. The exemption, provided by local option only, exempts 50% of the increase in assessed value attributable to the project for the first year following completion of the project. The exemption is phased out by 5% each year during the following nine years.

#### Zoning Regulations

Zoning (land use) regulations play an important role in economic viability of a community. Zoning regulations identify the types of businesses that are permitted in a community and the area or areas in which such businesses may be established and operated. Often zoning regulations impose special requirements on the establishment of certain types of businesses that have the potential to adversely impact adjoining properties in order to obviate or mitigate such adverse impacts. Often the special requirements establish greater lot line setbacks and screening to provide buffer adjoining properties from the business use.

#### Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA)

The SCIDA offers an assortment of financing and tax incentive programs for the expansion of existing businesses and the establishment of new ones. These programs include:

Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB) – IRB's may be used by eligible businesses for the acquisition of land and buildings, construction and expansion, renovation and modernization and for the acquisition of equipment and machinery.

Sale-Leaseback – By purchasing a business property and leasing it back to the business, the business is able to benefit from real property tax exemptions as well as sales tax and mortgage tax exemptions.

SCIDA Revolving Loan Program – The SCIDA administers a revolving loan fund to provide low-interest gap financing for the acquisition of land and buildings; building construction, renovations and improvements; the purchase of equipment and machinery; and for use as working capital.

Seneca County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Revolving Loan Program – The loan program provides low-interest loans to any-type of business that will create jobs in Seneca County and may be used for the same purposes as the SCIDA Revolving Loan Program described above.

Micro-Enterprise Program – The micro-enterprise program is a low-interest revolving loan program specifically targeting low and moderate income, small business owners who employ five or fewer employees. The loan proceeds may be used for the same purposes as the SCIDA's Revolving Loan Program described above.

### **Telecommunications Infrastructure / Service**

Good quality telecommunications infrastructure and service are essential elements for fostering the development of home-based businesses and tourist-related businesses in Fayette and Varick. Most businesses today rely extensively on the broadband Internet service for communications, advertising, and sales.

### **Community and Rural Development Institute**

The Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI) sponsored by Cornell University is an available resource for information regarding agricultural- and non-agricultural-based economic development resources. CaRDI maintains an Internet website which contains a an economic development “toolbox.” The toolbox contains an assortment of documents with information and ideas that that can be used by farmers and municipal governments to foster agricultural-based economic development in rural communities. Among the titles of the documents in the CaRDI tool box are the following:

- Agritourism in New York State: A Market Analysis
- AIDER: A program for Agriculture Industry Development, Enhancement and Retention
- Farm Markets and Rural Economic Development
- Food Circles and Food Webs
- Community-Based Marketing and Value Adding: Marketing and Trading Clubs
- Adding Value for Sustainability
- Farms, Communities and Collaboration
- Small-Scale Ethanol Production

### **Recommended Actions:**

1. Develop and enact zoning regulations that permit home-based businesses as accessory uses on farms and in residential areas of the type and scale that are compatible with farming and with residential neighborhoods. Incorporate buffering requirements in the regulations to obviate potential adverse impacts such businesses could potentially have on adjoining properties.
2. Continue to provide Real Property Tax Law Section 495-b tax exemptions for commercial and industrial renovations and new construction that meet the eligibility requirements.
3. Encourage local farmers, business owners and residents starting new businesses to avail themselves of the various financing and tax benefits available through the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency.
4. Encourage local farmers to utilize the Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI) “toolbox” strategies for making their farms more profitable.
5. Encourage the Seneca County Board of Supervisors to develop and pursue an agricultural-based economic development program in Seneca County and to create an Economic Development Coordinator position in either the County Planning Department or the Cornell Cooperative Extension to administer and coordinate the program.
6. Encourage the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA) to redevelop the former Seneca Army Depot with innovative uses that are compatible with and enhance the character of the community.
7. Encourage telecommunications companies and Internet service providers to make broadband Internet service available throughout the Towns of Fayette and Varick.
8. Adopt Scenic Byway sign design standards to regulate signage along the Cayuga Scenic Byway.