

Moving North Country Small Businesses Forward!

ANNUAL
REPORT
2023



Letter from AEDC's Chair of the Board of Directors and Executive Director

The past year provided incredible opportunity to play a role in positively growing our region. It inspired and challenged us. We are extremely grateful to our dedicated team, our incredible Board of Directors and our partners across the region.

The many small businesses that we assisted this year are the heroes in AEDC's story. Their dreams, dedication, and incredible work to provide the services that we need, and that create the communities that we love, cannot be recognized enough. AEDC is honored to work with these tireless individuals and families.

AEDC saw several friends leave and welcomed strong talent to fill staff roles in 2023. We experienced a resurging volume of business lending that we have seen in the last decade. We hope you enjoy seeing a few of the successes from the year.

We look forward to amazing things in 2024!

Warm Regards,


Victoria Zinser Duley,
Executive Director


Rob J. Aiken,
Board Chair



ROB AIKEN ASSUMES CHAIR ROLE FOR THE AEDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FROM WAYNE THOMAS WHO SERVED FOR THE PAST 9 YEARS.

PHOTOS NOTES FROM COVER:

- Our Plates (Saranac Lake) co-owner Charles Williams greet Commissioner of NY Empire State Development Hope Knight, with Victoria Duley from AEDC.
- Rebekah Hilpl, Owner of High Peaks Brew coffee shows the “before and after” of her completely restored second trailer for operation, funded in part by AEDC
- Plattsburgh Golf owners James Conway and Griffin Parks receive AEDC loan.



Small Business Lending

AEDC has been a critical microlender to the under-served entrepreneurs across our region for decades. We continue as one of the first Microlenders designated in the nation by the Small Business Administration (in 1992). We also partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and New York State's Empire State Development for loan funds to collectively manage 9 publicly sponsored funds for capital access.

In early 2023, AEDC had a watershed activity in accepting its first investment of private loan dollars (and establishing its 10th loan fund) for re-lending to the region's small businesses and community. This fund, seeded by the Adirondack Foundation, the Weatherup Family Trust and the Cloudsplitter Foundation, allows AEDC to expand its capital access to critical community projects and leverage substantial public investment.

The capital provided to regional small businesses in 2023 showed continued steady growth since the pandemic. We managed 91 loans to 54



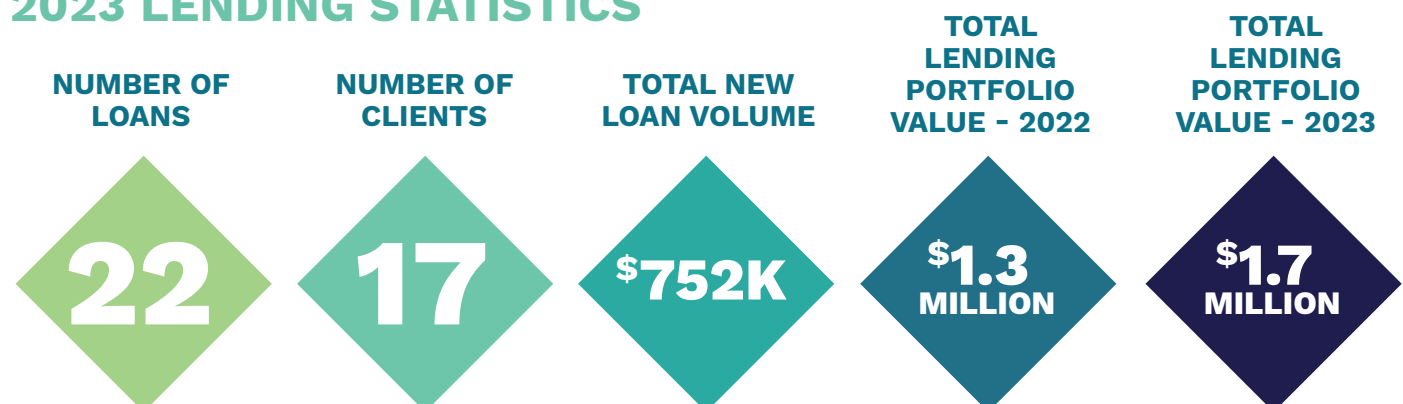
PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCING AEDC'S "ADIRONDACK OPPORTUNITY FUND" (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VICTORIA DULEY SPEAKING) INCLUDING LOAN FUNDING FROM EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT (COMMISSIONER HOPE KNIGHT) AND PRIVATE PARTNERS ADIRONDACK FOUNDATION (CALI BROOKS AND LORI BELLINGHAM), CLOUDSPLITTER FOUNDATION (LEE KEET) AND THE WEATHERUP FAMILY TRUST (CRAIG WEATHERUP).

unique clients with a portfolio balance of just under \$1.7 million.

AEDC provided 22 new loans to 17 small businesses across the region in 2023, for a total of \$752,000. These included loans to 12 start-up businesses, 3 expansions and 2 refinances.

The average loan for 2023 was just over \$34,000 or \$44,235 per client. This is an increase of 15% from 2022. We believe the strength in these figures shows positively for our regional economy.

2023 LENDING STATISTICS



Lending Stories

LIL' TYKES DAYCARE

BLOOMINGDALE, NY

It is well known that there is an extreme shortage of childcare facilities across our region. In Essex County, one-third of all available childcare slots were lost during the pandemic. The lack of childcare has a substantial effect on our economy through limiting our workforce.

AEDC was delighted to begin working with Lindsey Murray, a certified teacher with more than a decade of experience. Ms. Murray acquired the former Catholic church in the hamlet of Bloomingdale and set to work to completely rehabilitate this property into an institutional daycare.

The extensive renovations to the property took a great deal of time and expense. The project has been a community affair, with a great deal of help from partner agencies, volunteers and Ms. Murray's own family, including her father and grandfather who are expert contractors.

AEDC was pleased to provide loan funds, in conjunction with its brand-new "Adirondack Opportunity Fund" private investment funding. This loan fund initially included three investment partners. AEDC matched these loan dollars with its own funding provided from a loan secured through New York State. A generous donor matched a portion of this loan to provide seed-grant funding, in addition, to

Lil'Tykes as it completed construction and readied to open its doors.

The childcare facility will accommodate 8 infants, 16 toddlers, and 10 after-school children and will employ 5 certified daycare providers. We are so excited to see the center open.



LIL' TYKES DAYCARE (BLOOMINGDALE)



BIG SHOTZ GOLF

POTSDAM, NY

Big Shotz Golf is an indoor entertainment business owned by Cameron Murray and located in the downtown corridor within the Village of Potsdam. Big Shotz offers golf simulators, a pool



BIG SHOTZ GOLF (POTSDAM) OWNER CAMERON MURRAY ACCEPTS AEDC LOAN CHECK FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VICTORIA DULEY TO EXPAND HIS OPERATIONS.

table, and darts. Beer, wine, and a selection of food are offered onsite. There is outdoor seating under a covered deck overlooking the riverfront. Indoor golf simulators not only help avid golfers improve their game in the off season, but are a welcome activity for anyone when weather is not favorable. The new equipment will significantly improve the golf experience and also allow for other games such as soccer, baseball and targeting games. This business is a wonderful addition to the recreational offerings in the thriving Village of Potsdam downtown.

Mr. Murray worked with AEDC to open his business in 2022 and returned in 2023 with the opportunity to expand the operation through upgraded simulators and adding additional entertainment equipment. We were pleased to provide a new loan, in conjunction with the Village of Potsdam, to help this great downtown

business in downtown Potsdam expand to better serve its current and future clientele.

THE TOWNE STORE

SCHROON LAKE, NY

The Towne Store has operated in historic downtown Schoon Lake at its Route 9 location for 140 years. It is a general merchandise retailer with a wide variety of products for locals and visitors. This includes toys, apparel, accessories, home goods, outdoor equipment, toys and games.



TOWNE STORE OWNERS AMANDA & RYAN RAGLAND



THE TOWNE STORE IN DOWNTOWN SCHROON LAKE



Amanda and Ryan Ragland were looking to settle year-round in the region and saw the opportunity to take over this downtown anchor store which was for sale. Ms. Ragland is a senior purchaser with a major fashion brand and brings a wealth of design experience to this endeavor. Mr. Ragland comments: “The services AEDC provided with respect to writing a business plan were invaluable and at a great cost- free. The staff on hand are extremely knowledgeable about the process, guidance, examples and feedback every step of the process. My wife and I had no experience writing a business plan and by the time we were finished we felt proud and confident about the plan we were able to produce with their helpful hand”.

The Raglands worked with AEDC and partner Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board to transition the business from its former and long-term owners. AEDC and the Planning Board provided loan funding to assist with purchasing the business and improvements and inventory.

We are so excited to see this historic property continue to grow and thrive to meet the needs of new generations in Schroon Lake.

AP LAUNDRY AND DRY CLEANERS **MALONE, NY**

Tony Pryce started AP Laundry and Dry Cleaners in 2017 after a devastating fire destroyed the previous laundromat and dry-cleaning business which had been located on the site in downtown Malone for 75 years. Mr. Pryce decided to invest his more than 30 years of experience working for



AP LAUNDRY AND DRYCLEANERS (MALONE) OWNER TONY PRYCE RECEIVES AEDC LOAN CHECK FROM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR RUSS KINYON FOR HIS BUSINESS EXPANSION

the previous business to meet laundry and dry-cleaning needs.

The business began a steady growth following the pandemic and the challenge became having the equipment to service the market need. Mr. Pryce came to AEDC to assist with loan funds to purchase larger and far more efficient washers and capital to grow the business.

The loan dollars provided have allowed an expansion of this important business in Malone and for services reaching far beyond.



2023 HOLIDAY GATHERING AT HOTEL SARANAC, INCLUDING AEDC STAFF, SEVERAL BOARD MEMBERS AND FRIENDS



Technical Assistance

AEDC works with hundreds of clients annually to provide assistance in furthering their small business from concept to opening to expansion. This work varies from assisting with business plan development, Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) certification, business needs counseling and referrals to partners for other specialized work.

One of the key programs that defines AEDC's "technical assistance" work is the New York State Entrepreneur Assistance Center (EAC) program. AEDC participates as one of 24 centers across the state to further the entrepreneur ecosystem and provide intensive business counseling. It is important to note that all of these services are provided at no cost to the client.

AEDC worked in depth with 40+ new EAC clients in 2023. Through this work 15 businesses were established or retained. AEDC additionally provided this client work, assisting with other

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CLIENTS AND HOURS IN 2023

NUMBER OF
CLIENTS

195

COUNSELING
HOURS SPENT

356



CHELSEA ST. DENNIS AND AEDC STAFF AT ST. D'S PIZZERIA

business counseling needs with nearly 200 clients in 2023.

This careful and varied counseling work with clients who may be seeking access to capital, or not, is critical to business success. AEDC continues its business counseling with clients following opening and following receipt of loans to help position our clients for the best chances of long-term success.



CHEF DARRELL, OWNER OF THE MOUNTAIN DINER (BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE) AND AEDC CLIENT, WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VICTORIA DULEY



Technical Assistance Stories



ST. D'S PIZZERIA

Chelsea St. Dennis is a registered nurse who worked at Bub's Pizza in Elizabethtown. When the owners were looking to sell she saw an opportunity to take over this long-established community restaurant. Ms. St. Dennis purchased the business and worked with AEDC on a business plan for its sustainability and growth.

St. D's Pizza (now called) is a thriving pizza shop that offers many other food options and fills an important role as one of the few family restaurants in the area. Ms. St. Dennis states, "over these past months of working with AEDC staff, I have learned so much in regards to

running a successful business! Everyone was very helpful! It was a learning experience that taught me so much." The St. Dennis family have put their heart and soul into this wonderful location and we can't wait to see them grow.

ASA ADIRONDACK

Christine Powers is CEO and Founder of Asa Adirondack in Bakers Mills, a very small community in Warren County. Ms. Powers self-describes as a "facilitator, modern mystic, and reformed marketing, fundraising, events, and PR executive." She put these skills and vision to work with her husband, Larry Powers (a builder and wilderness guide) to build a sanctuary for "rest, relaxation and gentle adventure" called Asa Adirondack. A key feature of Asa is the new



OWNER OF ASA ADIRONDACK (BAKERS MILLS) CHRISTINE POWERS WITH AEDC BUSINESS COUNSELOR DR. CHAD CZELUSNIAK-SERVISS AT THEIR GRAND OPENING





**ADIRONDACK LABYRINTH ATTRACTION AT ASA ADIRONDACK
(BAKERS MILLS)**

Adirondack Labyrinth. Unveiled in July 2023, it is the Seventh Legacy Labyrinth in the world, a part of a network of labyrinths dedicated to healing and peace. In the first three months of the labyrinth's operation, almost 1,000 visitors came to enjoy some inner balance and calm!

Ms. Powers worked with AEDC to further her vision for Asa Adirondack. She discusses this experience: "AEDC team member Dr. Chad Czelusniak-Serviss was a great sounding board and mirrored back to me his feedback on my future concepts to serve the North Country through the development of a transformational leadership center (now underway). As a big visionary with a lot of capability, my ideas must be vetted, tested, and narrowed down. Chad was a trusted partner in delivering his assessment on whether he thought my plans would have viability in the North Country, provided regional insights that I needed, and offered possible next steps to make this a reality."

We wish Christine and Asa Adirondack much-continued success and can't wait to see what is next!

Trainings

AEDC provides small business assistance throughout the year for group clients through its training program. One of the core components of training is AEDC's annual fall "Entrepreneurship Skills Program". This 6-week course, provided online since the pandemic shifted course format, includes a rigorous curriculum guiding students through the development of a business plan. The course also provides business experts in areas such as law, marketing, accounting, insurance, for student experience and connection. The 2023 cohort graduated 10 new students.

AEDC participated in 4 other web-based training courses during the year and conducted 5 in person trainings, including presentations at partner conferences. In total, over 300 individuals were provided information about entrepreneur support, skills and resources.

Two of these trainings were with our close partners at the Ticonderoga Area Chamber of Commerce (TACC) and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. At TACC, the AEDC team and partners presented information on becoming certified as a New York State designated Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) and support for this process. At the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, AEDC and team presented a day-long seminar on financial literacy to advanced students.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VICTORIA DULEY AND AEDC TEAM PROVIDE TRAINING FOR "WOMEN IN BUSINESS" IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TICONDEROGA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND GLENS FALLS NATIONAL BANK



Operational Excellence

AEDC completed a new corporate strategic plan in 2023 which will guide its services and growth in 2024-2027. A behind-the-scenes, but critical component (or cornerstone) of excellence in client services are administrative efficiencies. Staff embarked on a detailed implementation plan to strategize carrying out the ambitious strategic plan, including embracing new technologies and expanded staff expertise.

AEDC was re-certified for its three key designations in 2023. These include the Small Business Administration's Microlender program, the New York State Entrepreneurial Assistance Center program and the U.S. Department of the Treasury Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) program.

A new area of growth kicked off in 2023 through the Adirondack Opportunity Fund. As defined previously, this was a unique (to our region) partnership between AEDC and three private funders to leverage additional public dollars to be available for lending to key community projects. AEDC is grateful to these generous and forward-thinking entities who stepped forward to start this program.

Our staff are our heart and soul of the work that we do across the region. AEDC said farewell to two long-term team members in 2023. Beverly Deso retired as AEDC's Comptroller after an incredible 26 years. We were fortunate to bring on Kevin Wilson, CPA to oversee our finance department. Steven Garneau moved on after 11 years of leading AEDC's small business lending and just after the



STAFF AND PAST BOARD CHAIR WAYNE THOMAS RECOGNIZE BEVERLY DESO'S (FORMER AEDC COMPTROLLER) RETIREMENT AFTER 26 YEARS WITH THE ORGANIZATION

holidays, Jamie Cecilia joined the team as its new Loan Officer with a deep background in both economic development and finance.

Julia Chambers joined AEDC as its Project and Grant Coordinator, at the beginning of the year, to skillfully lead project management and compliance. Mid-year we were pleased to bring S. Russ Kinyon on as our Business Development Director. This is a new position and Russ supports AEDC's partnerships, businesses in transition, strategic growth initiatives and provides supplementary expertise in small business lending. Russ also manages the Adirondack Opportunity Fund.

Our team participated in some amazing experiences in the region and beyond in 2023. Some of these included: participating as a liaison with the Center for Businesses in Transition, working with an economic recovery team from the International Economic Development Council in Henry, Alabama, joining partner Chambers of Commerce for their events and attending the annual conferences for two of our key programs—the Small Business Administration Microlenders program and the NY State Entrepreneurship Assistance Center program.

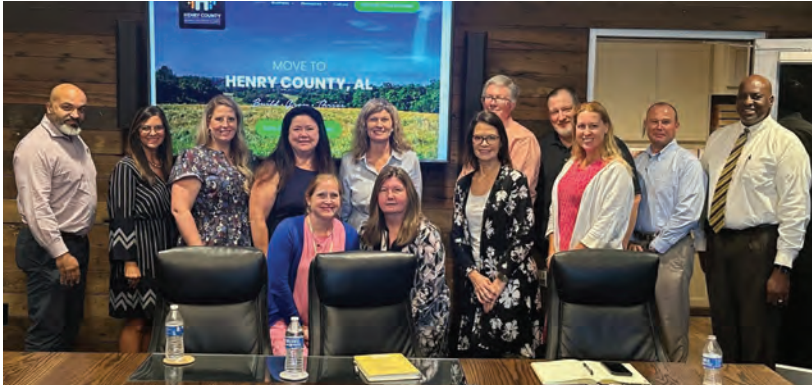




SBA PROGRAM ANALYST CLINTON DUNN WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VICTORIA DULEY AT SBA MICROLENDER CONFERENCE IN DETROIT



ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER STEPHANIE DONALDSON (CENTER) WITH EAC PROGRAM CENTERS STAFF AND ESD PROGRAM STAFF AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN LONG ISLAND.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VICTORIA DULEY WITH IEDC RECOVERY TEAM IN HENRY COUNTY, AL



AEDC STAFF AND BOARD CHAIR ROB AIKEN WITH CLIENT LASHAWANDA INGRAM OF SEASONS BEAUTY (POSTDAM) AND VILLAGE OF POTSDAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR FRED HANSS AT THE ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNUAL DINNER

AEDC is incredibly grateful for its amazing partners who provided tremendous growth opportunity during the year. We could not do the things that we do and expand our client service without the financial support from these partners.

We gratefully acknowledge:

Adirondack Bank
Adirondack Federal Credit Union
Adirondack Foundation
Cloudsplitter Foundation
Community Bank NA
Craig and Connie Weatherup Family Trust
NBT Bank
TD Bank
United Way of the Adirondacks



AEDC STAFF WITH PARTNERS DOUG BARTELL AND JOHN BUFFA OF ADIRONDACK BANK



JOIN US!

Help us support entrepreneurs, bring equity to our business community and greater opportunity to our region.



Mission

Advancing economic opportunity by supporting start up and existing small businesses.

Vision

We envision vibrant, diverse communities across the greater North Country driven by small business.

Core Values

- Making a difference
- Trusted partner
- Expertise
- Support

AEDC's 4 Strategic "Corner Stones"



67 MAIN STREET, SUITE 300
SARANAC LAKE, NY 12983
518.891.5523
AEDCONLINE.COM

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Development Authority of the North Country

Cedric Carter

TD Bank

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Blue Line Insurance Agency

Timothy Kononan

Champlain National Bank, retired

John Piseck, Jr.

Herkimer County IDA

Tori Riley

Saratoga Economic Development Corporation

Molly Ryan

Clinton County IDA - Economic Development

Cheyenne Steria

Lewis County IDA/Naturally Lewis

Amber Stevens

GovCon Advisors LLC dba LionHeart Solutions

Wayne Thomas

Internal Revenue Service (IRS), retired

Patricia Wilson

North Country New York Power Authority

AEDC Staff



Jamie Cecilia

Loan Officer



Julia Chambers

Grant and Program Coordinator



Stephanie Donaldson

Entrepreneurship Program Manager



Victoria Duley, AICP, CEcD

Executive Director



Russ Kinyon

Business Development Director



Kevin Wilson, CPA

Accountant