



**ESSEX COUNTY IN THE PARK
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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NCCC deserves a new campus

North Country Community College wants a new campus in Ticonderoga.

The college would like to offer a nursing-degree program there that it can't provide from its current downtown storefront location.

This is something that could greatly benefit southern Essex County and something for which the college should be commended for proposing.

There have been numerous bumps along the way to the campus, including stalled negotiations with Inter-Lakes Health for a site near Moses-Ludington Hospital and complaints from neighbors of the location that they don't want more traffic in their neighborhood.

The college ended up with a parcel of land at the front of the Parkview townhouse development on Montcalm Street, a nice spot that overlooks the Lower LaChute Falls and Percy Thompson Bicentennial Park.

It's probably more geographically desirable than the Inter-Lakes site, although it doesn't have the walking-distance closeness to the hospital that students could have used. It is close to restaurants and stores in Ticonderoga's downtown, just as the present campus is.

The Essex County Industrial Development Agency helped out by getting the NCCC Foundation a municipal bond issue to buy the land. Since the college itself is prohibited by law from owning property, the foundation will assume ownership and lease it back. That's an arrangement that has worked for the college dormitories in Saranac Lake, at the main campus.

The college has to get out of its storefront campus as soon as possible. One storefront has a bad roof that leaked pigeon droppings onto computers, so the sooner the better.

We think North Country's plans for a new Ticonderoga campus are excellent, and Essex County should be commended for helping in any way it can. The college and the community rightly recognize that education is an investment, not an expense.

The new campus will graduate young women and men who can look forward to better-paying jobs in the health-care field.

It gives the county a good chance of retaining as residents some of the young people who otherwise would have moved on to find an education and a career elsewhere.

And it simply gives the community more breadth of experience and opportunity for everyone. A community is richer for all the assets it can show its residents, its visitors and its potential new settlers.

The new campus is a good sign for North Country Community College, which apparently is prospering enough to be ready to expand. But it's a good sign for Ticonderoga, as well.