May 2012

2011 was a year of continued change for EWVIDCO and the community we serve. Our organization weathered the impact of a major cut in public funding, and our constituent businesses continued to cope with the lingering effects of the recession. In 2011 we were able to diversify our income streams and trim costs. Despite the major reduction in public funding we have succeeded in keeping levels of service constant. Like our constituent businesses, we have learned to do more with less.

We’ve been inspired by the change that is happening all around us. As we approach our milestone 30th year of service to our community, it is important for us to reflect on what our organization wishes to accomplish, and how we work to achieve these goals. The business community we serve is rapidly changing. In many cases, small creative businesses are replacing older, larger firms. If we want to continue to help businesses grow so we can keep jobs in our community, we need to ensure that our organization and its services are relevant to newcomer businesses as well as long time constituents.

In 2011 we expanded upon our Plan Ahead: Brooklyn business growth programming to target the burgeoning small food producer community. Over the past decade food production employment has held steady and even increased in certain sub-sectors. This is especially true in North Brooklyn where a number of new businesses have set up shop, hiring local workers and increasing our regional and national influence as a food producing community. We have commenced programming to support this growth by offering workshops that pair professional experts with local success stories to share vital information on how to establish, maintain, and grow a food production business in Brooklyn.

North Brooklyn industrial businesses, which employ over 15,000 residents, depend on EWVIDCO for free, quick and reliable assistance with tax credits, incentives, financing, real estate and relocation assistance, energy and green issues, workforce needs, and advocacy. In 2011 EWVIDCO helped 50 local firms apply for over 37 different city and state incentives. We placed 18 employees in jobs and successfully maintained 13,200 square feet of affordable industrial space to retain manufacturing jobs in our community.

EWVIDCO expanded its role as the voice for businesses in industrial North Brooklyn. We represented their interests at public hearings and community meetings. We brought elected officials to meet our businesses and their employees so they could really understand the impact of City policy. We advocated with City, State and Federal officials to help them understand the impact of the Superfund process on the local economy. We continued to serve as the connection between the business and residential community for a variety of issues such as parking and truck routes. In addition to broad based efforts, we worked on behalf of individual businesses to help navigate government agencies on a variety of issues such as permits, tickets, graffiti removal, illegal dumping, utilities and signage. Overall, we helped local firms navigate government agencies 46 times resulting in 17 successful outcomes!

Clearly, our constituents appreciate the assistance we give them. EWVIDCO received a 95% customer approval rating from our 2011 customer satisfaction survey. Respondents attribute EWVIDCO with an overall 91% success rate in resolving their issues. Further, it is clear that the work we do has economic impact that resonates beyond the community-- 95% respondents believe that EWVIDCO’s work is important to helping them stay in NYC. One respondent wrote that EWVIDCO helps “navigate the maze of resources”. Another wrote that the appreciated EWVIDCO’s “personal touch”.

In closing, I am pleased to present EWVIDCO’s Annual Report for 2011.

Sincerely,

Leah Archibald
Executive Director
In late 2010 the Newtown Creek was designated as a Federal Superfund site. This designation carries with it the promise of environmental remediation for a highly toxic site; a worthy goal that most everyone agrees is a necessary and beneficial step for the community in the long term. However, EWVIDCO is concerned that the Superfund designation will have unintended side effects that will negatively impact our ability to retain and grow high quality working class jobs in our community. We have already witnessed several troubling trends that will affect the ability of small businesses to thrive and expand, such as increasing difficulty for businesses to obtain funding for property purchase and renovation and difficulty obtaining proper insurance. If local firms are not able to obtain financing to expand their operations, these sites will not be able to realize their potential for job growth. With continued gentrification continually constricting the availability of suitable land for industrial use, these brownfield areas represent our best, last hope for industrial job growth in NYC.

With a one-year grant from the New York Foundation, EWVIDCO was able to commence an outreach campaign to educate the business community on the potential issues relating to lending, litigation, insurance, and the economic impacts of the designation. This initiative kicked off with an informational seminar entitled “Newtown Creek Superfund: Legal Ramifications for Small Businesses” led by an environmental attorney from Herrick Feinstein. EWVIDCO will continually inform local businesses about ways they can mitigate the regulatory and administrative burdens posed by government agencies through workshops and newsblasts. Early successes of this initiative include securing a seat on the Newtown Creek Community Advisory Group. Additionally, staff alerted the NYC Mayor’s Office of Environmental Remediation about the sudden difficulty for adjacent property owners to obtain financing for land purchase and development and liability insurance; in response their office hosted a series of roundtables with industry representatives to discuss the issue.

**ADVOCACY**

EWVIDCO spends quite a lot of time and energy advocating on behalf of local firms. Some of the work we do benefits the industrial business community as a whole, such as our participation in public planning on transportation issues such as truck routes and bike lanes. 2011’s biggest industrial community issues include a ticketing and other transportation issues, advocating for the businesses along Newtown Creek in light of the new Superfund designation, and working with industrial businesses impacted by continued residential development adjacent to their sites.

EWVIDCO also advocates on behalf of individual businesses to help navigate government agencies on a variety of issues such as permits, tickets, graffiti removal, illegal dumping, utilities and signage. Overall, we helped local firms navigate government agencies 46 times resulting in 17 successful outcomes! Activities include obtaining street signs and loading zones installed for a variety of businesses.
BUSINESS SERVICES
In 2011 EWVIDCO staff served over 270 individual businesses over 450 times. Business clients looked to EWVIDCO for a wide variety of services; the most frequently requested services were assistance navigating government, accessing incentives and workforce support. EWVIDCO provided assistance to firms anywhere between 1 and 5 times, with an average number of just over 2 requests for service per firm.

Northside Merchants Association

2011 was a big year for the Northside Merchants Association! With the support of over 50 local businesses, we were able to launch two new projects to improve the Northside Shopping community. First, the NMA launched the Keep Williamsburg Clean project, a new initiative to combat trash in the Northside commercial neighborhood. The central piece of the program was a dedicated two-man sidewalk cleaning team covering Bedford Avenue, North 6th Street, and North 11th street every Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 11pm, from June 1st to September 1st. To hire the sidewalk cleaning team, the Northside Merchants Association raised over $10,000 from nearly forty local businesses, including major sponsorships from the Brooklyn Brewery, The Open Space Alliance for North Brooklyn and Aptsandlofts.com. Second, the NMA was able to hang holiday lights on Bedford Avenue for the first time, ever! 15 businesses contributed over $3,000 towards the holiday lights, which hung on Bedford Avenue between North 4th and North 11th from Thanksgiving to New Year’s. The lights were so popular, and received so much positive feedback that the Northside Merchants Association plans to expand the holiday lights to include more of Bedford Avenue and N. 6th street in 2012.
REAL ESTATE
EWVIDCO has assisted 6 companies with real estate activities in 2011. EWVIDCO has also advocated for the continued funding of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg Relocation fund. This fund was established as a result of the agreement after the rezoning in 2005. The fund reimburses manufacturers dislodged from the rezoned area up to $50,000 for costs incurred in relocating to another NYC site. EWVIDCO was able to retain 106 industrial jobs in NYC as a result of this program.

FINANCING
EWVIDCO answered 14 requests for financing assistance in 2011.

INCENTIVES
EWVIDCO was able to help 50 local firms apply for over 37 different incentives. 17 incentives were successfully obtained by local companies. These incentives include tax benefits, energy discounts and publicy funded grants for facility expansion and relocation.

EMPLOYMENT
In 2011 EWVIDCO staff responded to requests for recruitment assistance from 15 different firms. EWVIDCO staff processed 36 job orders and successfully placed 18 applicants in jobs.

Steeldeck NY
Steeldeck NY is a staging, seating & auditoria solution company that rents & sells platforms and accessories. When Steeldeck NY Vice President Gail Moorcroft was looking for new crew members she called EWVIDCO for help.

EWVIDCO contacted their partners at the NYC Business Solutions Industrial and Transportation center to locate qualified applicants for the open positions. Staff reviewed resumes and forwarded the most capable applicants. Steeldeck hired Darrell Donaldson Jr. who has been working hard at Steeldeck since Spring 2011.

“We found us an excellent employee. I provided them with a description of the perfect employee for the company, and they pre-screened applicants and arranged interviews with the select few that fit the bill. This saved us a great deal of time and energy, for which I am extremely grateful, and I am definitely going to use this service again!” Gail Moorcroft, VP Steeldeck NY.

Rainbow Plastics
Rainbow Plastics Inc., a plastic bag manufacturer started their business in North Brooklyn in 2009. Rainbow Plastics owner came to EWVIDCO to find solutions to their high energy bills. EWVIDCO researched and found the newly constructed building they are leasing had filed for ICAP which made Rainbow eligible to apply for ECSP. The Energy Cost Savings Program will reduce their energy costs significantly. EWVIDCO helped Rainbow file the application with NYC Department of Small Business Services, Incentive Unit and worked with the property owner to make sure all the necessary documents were filed to make the building eligible for their tenants.

“EWVIDCO helped my company apply for the Energy Cost Savings Program (ECSP) and this program will save us thousands a year on our electric bill. Thank you EWVIDCO!” —Maggie Zheng, Owner

Safety Dynamics
Safety Dynamics is a Brooklyn based safety, health and environmental consulting firm. Since 2007 they have offered a variety of trainings geared towards construction, project management and manufacturing services. In June of 2011 the owners, Chris Bittar and Gabriel Richardson, contacted EWVIDCO because their lease was expiring and they needed to vacate their current space.

This change in circumstances led them to explore the idea of purchasing a building that they could grow into in Brooklyn. EWVIDCO was able to help them locate an 8,000 square foot a building in the Greenpoint IBZ consisting of newly renovated offices and additional warehouse space. EWVIDCO was also able to provide guidance on how to transfer valuable existing Empire Zone benefits to their new location. They now have the property under contract and are poised to grow their business and remain in Brooklyn.

“We have worked with EWVIDCO since we started and they have always been there for us. We are very pleased with all of the advice they gave us as we expanded our small business.”

Maggie Zheng of Rainbow Plastics
Darell Donaldson Jr. and Gail Moorcroft of Steeldeck NY
Rainbow Plastics
Gabriel Richardson and Chris Bittar of Safety Dynamics
Plan Ahead

Since its inception in 2010, the Plan Ahead Brooklyn program has reached nearly 300 businesses in East Williamsburg and Southwest Brooklyn, providing sustainable growth solutions designed to help local businesses add quality jobs to our local communities. In 2011, EWVIDCO hosted a slate of business roundtable events on basic marketing, social media and web development, human resource issues, and year end tax planning. EWVIDCO also launched their first round of micro-grants, awarding 12 companies technical assistance grants of $1,000 each.

With our partners at SBIDC, we launched specialized program tracks in 2011 to target the needs of emerging high-growth industries. SBIDC choose to focus on government contracting, hosting seven separate workshops. EWVIDCO launched the Small Food Producers Network, a Plan Ahead program focused on emerging food entrepreneurs in Brooklyn.

Rainbow Polybag

This past winter, Rainbow Polybag launched a new company website with support from EWVIDCO’s Plan Ahead Micro Grant Program, a new initiative designed to support growth oriented planning in industrial North Brooklyn. Rainbow Polybag was awarded $1,000 as part of the inaugural round of Plan Ahead grant funding. Their application was selected based on the strength of their strategic vision – the launch of their website is part of a long-term plan to increase internet sales through better website design and visibility. Armed with their Plan Ahead grant, Rainbow contracted with a New York City web development and graphic design firm to create a new site design and take professional product photos for use in a new e-commerce section. Rainbow worked with their consultant to create a design that features the company’s ongoing efforts to go green, and to build a site that allows clients to easily view and purchase Rainbow’s products, as well as save their purchase history using the new client login feature.

“... We are very happy with the new design. Going green is extremely important to us as a company and we feel the website reflects our commitment to the environment. We had this plan on the back burner for a long time, but we kept putting it off. The Plan Ahead grant helped jump start this project and make this website a reality.” — Sibel Sartorelli, Account Manager at Rainbow Polybag Co. & EWVIDCO Board Member

Rainbow plans to submit a proposal for a second stage Plan Ahead grant to fund a search engine optimization and social media marketing consultant to increase the visibility of their website.
Financial Statement
EWVIDCO: Statement of Activities for Calendar Year 2011

Revenues 2011 2010
Government Contracts $296,885 $357,250
Contribution and Grants $93,250 68,850
Membership and Events $107,265 102,164
Interest and Other Income $157,361 136,225
Net assets released from restriction 0 0
Total Revenues $654,761 $664,489

Expenses
Program Services $636,811 $607,244
Supporting Services $140,392 158,256
Total Expenses $777,203 $765,500
Change in net assets - $122,442 - $101,011
Net assets-beginning of year $4,444,675 $4,545,686
Capital grant for EIP program and building purchase 0 0
Net Assets-end of year $4,322,233 $4,444,675

Small Food Producer Network
This past summer, EWVIDCO launched the Small Food Producers Network, a Plan Ahead program focused on emerging food entrepreneurs in Brooklyn. The network kicked off with a workshop on smart business planning techniques, which were followed up with two additional 2011 workshops covering human resource basics and cash flow planning and financial analysis. By the end of the year, over 80 businesses have participated in the network in some way, a number we hope to double in 2012.

BELOW: Taylor Erkkinen and Harry Rosenblum pose with Ernie Spears from the Brooklyn Business Center who spoke at the Summer 2011 kick-off event for the Plan Ahead Small Food Producer’s Network.
EWVIDCO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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EWVIDCO FUNDERS

EWVIDCO is generously funded by:
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