

# Now You Know

*Fast Facts about Fort Drum and the North Country*

**ADVOCATEDRUM**  
FORT DRUM REGIONAL LIAISON ORGANIZATION



# Quality of Life

Fort Drum and the North Country provide quality housing choices for Soldiers and Civilians, both on and off the installation.

An estimated 5,892 jobs existed in our local economy during 2024 because of Fort Drum related activity; these are civilian jobs not on Fort Drum.

**With a median age of 30.6 years, Watertown is ranked among the “Youngest Cities in Upstate New York”.**

The origins of Arbor Day (J. Sterling Morton), the Dewey Decimal System (Melville Dewey), the Five and Dime Store (F.W.Woolworth), the safety pin, Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Lifesavers and Thousand Islands Dressing, can all be traced to the North Country.

**USA Today’s 2022 & 2023 10 Best Reader’s Choice Travel Awards Clayton NY Voted #1 Best Small Town Cultural Scene.**

Local transportation infrastructure has improved through Federal, State and Local investment. Significant improvements include Interstate 781-Fort Drum connector and Watertown International Airport. In 2018, NYS funded and built the \$7.6M Bomporto Bridge over NYS Route 26 connecting Fort Drum’s main post to Wheeler Sack Army Airfield.

The Watertown International Airport (ART) features two runways with full parallel taxiways, advanced navigation aids, multiple instrument approach procedures, and real-time weather reporting systems. A major terminal expansion including additional gates, a jet bridge, a restaurant, automated baggage claim system, and increased circulation space to improve passenger comfort and convenience. Completion is expected by September 2026.

The Airport supports the region’s General and Commercial aviation needs with a commercial medical evacuation helicopter station, two flight schools, Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Station, a Full-Service Fixed Base Operator (FBO), and multiple storage hangars. American Airlines provides Commercial Air Service with two daily flights to and from Philadelphia International Airport (PA), offering seamless access to global destinations. The airport supported over 47,000 passengers in 2024, reflecting its essential role in regional connectivity.

Operation Yellow Ribbon works with local community groups to highlight family focused events that support our Military Families through special recognition and/or admission discounts.



There are fifteen NYS Parks in Jefferson County, many which offer scenic views of Lake Ontario or the Thousand Islands. In fact, two are only accessible by boat.

No matter what the season, outdoor recreation abounds in the North Country from fishing to boating, skiing hiking, hunting, and chasing beautiful sunsets.

# Education

**Military families enrolled 4,680 children in Jefferson County schools, or 26.7% of all students enrolled during the 2024--25 school year.**

The three largest school districts in Jefferson County have military student populations of 46%, 41% and 12%.

Approximately \$39M in Federal Impact Aid was received by local school districts to support education of students during the year ending September 30, 2024. Over the past three years, approximately \$109M in Federal Impact Aid has been received by local schools.



Fort Drum’s STARBASE Academy allows local students to expand their knowledge about the military, explore future careers within STEM all the while enhancing the connection between Fort Drum and the local community.

**Nearly 25% of Jefferson Community College (JCC) enrollment was Soldiers, Family Members and Veterans** during the 2024 Fall Semester. With a dedicated support team for active duty service members and veterans, including a Veterans Center on campus, Jefferson’s staff have the unique skills needed to assist our military and military-affiliated community.

Educational offerings in the Fort Drum region include associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees, along with microcredentials, career training and pre-certification courses. In addition, Jefferson offers credit-bearing classes on Fort Drum.

JCC, Lewis County and Jefferson-Lewis BOCES are partners in an Education Center in Lowville, NY. The facility includes 5 classrooms, a fabrication lab, mechatronics classroom, and a lab for BOCES instruction. The Center offers a mix of college credit classes, professional certifications, career training, leisure learning, and BOCES classes.

**JCC is one of 102 schools selected for “gold” award status and ranked 7th out of 80 small community colleges nationwide, for its leading practices, outcomes, and effective programs in the 2024-25 Military Friendly® School designation by Viqtory. Additionally, JCC is a 2023-24 Military Friendly Spouse School as designated by Viqtory.**

**JCC proudly holds the #1 ranking as the Best for Vets community college in New York State, according to the Military Times. Recognized for its veteran support since 2017, JCC is among only 304 institutions nationwide to earn this distinction again this year. Syracuse University, SUNY Oswego, and SUNY Canton also earned this distinction among the Best Colleges For Vets.**



Photo by Michael Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs

# Economic Impact

Fort Drum is the largest ‘Single Site’ employer in New York State.

Fort Drum is the largest employer in Northern New York. As of September 2024, there were 13,480 Soldiers assigned to Fort Drum and about 3,754 civilians and contractors employed.

**Fort Drum’s total economic impact for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2024 was \$1,932,165,084 or \$220,567 per hour, every hour of every day.**

**In addition to the 17,234 Military and Civilian jobs on post, Fort Drum spending also supported 5,892 jobs in the local community.**

The top five indirect and induced job sectors are: Health and Social Services; Educational Services; Construction; Agriculture & Natural Resources; and Retail Trade.

**Total military, civilian, retirees, and contractor payroll for FY 24 was \$1,599,599,531 or \$4,382,464 per day.**

In 2024, the Fort Drum community was comprised of 13,480 Soldiers and 24,013 Family members. The 37,493 members of the Fort Drum community represent 33.1% of Jefferson County’s Population.

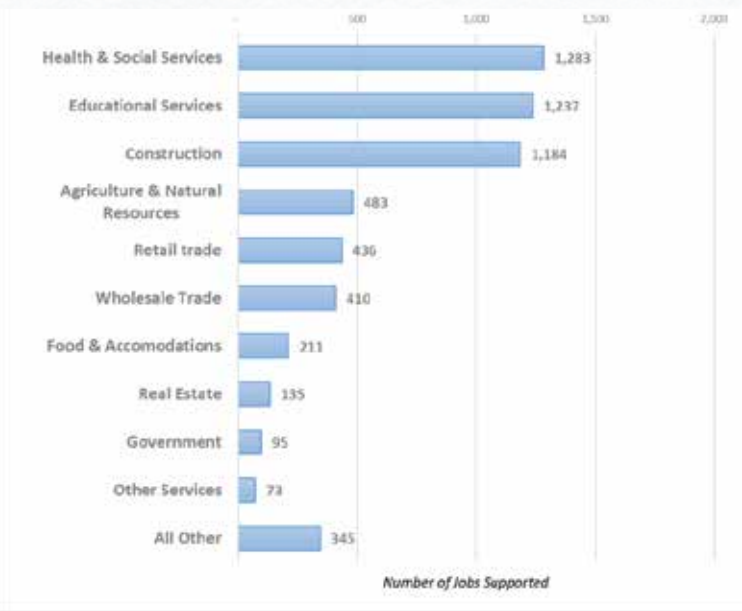
- 3,570 Families live in housing on Fort Drum.
- 4,834 single, junior enlisted Soldiers live in the barracks on Fort Drum, and
- 186 Soldiers live in unaccompanied housing on-post,
- 13,480 Soldiers are eligible to live in either housing location: 8,642 live on-post (64%) and 4,838 live off-post (36%)
- Of the 24,013 family members, 7,786 live on post (32%) and 16,227 live off post (68%)

**Fort Drum has the largest defense community in the Northeast.**

According to realtor.com, financially-savvy Generation Zers are successfully becoming homeowners. Many of the metros on their list have strong military connections. Watertown is No. 6.

Over the past 10 years (2015-2024), the median price for a home and the number of homes sold in the tri-county area surrounding Fort Drum has steadily increased while the time a home spends on the market has plummeted. The median price over the period has increased 46% in Jefferson County, the number sold is up 19%, and ‘time on the market’ is down 65%. In Lewis County, the price is up 57% with a 17% decrease in single family homes sold and a 61% reduction in the time it takes to sell a home. The price is up 71% in St. Lawrence County, the number sold up 14%, and marketing time is down 58%. **Of the homes bought in Jefferson County in 2024, 33% were bought using VA financing.**

Indirect and Induced Job Impact by Industry In Tri-County Region



FY 2024 Fort Drum construction, supplies and services totaled approximately \$133M and was predominately spent in New York State. Over \$110M was specifically spent in the area surrounding Fort Drum.

For the year ending December 31, 2024, Taxable Sales in the tri-county region was:

Jefferson County	Lewis County	St. Lawrence County
\$296,479 per hour	\$52,823 per hour	\$243,400 per hour

In response to NYS’s Food Donation Organics Recycling law, Fort Drum donated 22.7 tons of food in 2024.

Through a Public/Public/Public partnership, the Development Authority of the North Country and the City of Watertown provide water and sewage transmission and treatment services to Fort Drum and surrounding communities.

**Since the reactivation of the 10th Mountain Division, the direct financial impact of Fort Drum in the North Country is \$35.9 billion dollars.**



# Healthcare

Since the 10th Mountain Division arrived in 1985, Fort Drum has relied on the local community for hospital services. The Army and local hospitals work collaboratively to provide inpatient capabilities since there are no hospitals on Fort Drum.

Fort Drum is the only military installation with a division that does not have a hospital on post. Since the 10th Mountain Division arrived in 1985, Fort Drum has relied on the local community for urgent, emergency, inpatient, and some specialty services.

As reported in the Fort Drum Economic Impact Study for Federal Fiscal Year 2024, the Fort Drum healthcare model has contributed more than \$140.9M to the economic stability of the region.

In FY24 approximately \$861,00 in dental treatment was provided to Soldiers through the local civilian dental provider network.

Fort Drum MEDDAC provides outpatient healthcare services on post, maintains 27 facilities and a workforce of 797 personnel. Its economic contribution included \$6.4M in supplies, equipment, and contracts; \$59.6M in Tricare; and \$73.9M in payroll.

Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization works to strengthen the integrative healthcare system by leveraging resources to address identified gaps. In partnership with the Military Treatment Facility, we focus on emergency medical services, behavioral health/substance use, healthcare workforce recruitment/retention, care coordination, health information technology, telemedicine, and population health.

Hospitals in the Fort Drum region annually support: outpatient visits - 753,000; emergency room visits - 74,000; hospital admission - 12,000; babies delivered - 1,800.

Since 2010, approximately \$24.9M has been spent on expansive-fiber optic network infrastructure and monthly recurring services. Users of the two local fiber networks only paid \$6.5M out of pocket, saving \$18.4M, or 74% through FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund program.

More than \$7.5 M for health workforce support, which has yielded several new health education programs and hundreds of new healthcare professionals.

Approximately \$4.5M invested in behavioral health initiatives, including increased access to care, opioid use disorder treatment, and suicide and substance abuse prevention since 2013.



In partnership with Fort Drum Emergency Management, the FDRHPO EMS Program Agency holds two simulation training events on base to build stronger, more efficient regional EMS capabilities. Since its start in 2024, approximately 50 regional EMS Providers and 8 Army Medics have completed these trainings.

More than \$2.2M to improve coordination of Emergency Medical Services, including air medical services since 2015.

Over \$6.5M in population health investment to conduct community health assessments and improvement activities since 2015.

Directly in line with the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), this model has established a military-civilian integrated healthcare delivery system. We are planned, positioned, and proven, innovatively working together to ensure a high quality, patient-centric system.

# Fort Drum Facts

**The 10th Mountain Division is the Army's most deployed division since 1992.**

The Division has participated in 13 Division Headquarters (HQ) deployments (Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Poland, Europe, and the U.S. Southern Border). The Division has also supported operations with 48 separate unit deployments to Afghanistan and 41 separate unit deployments to Iraq. There have also been 2 separate unit deployments to Cuba and Africa.

Fort Drum is a Department of the Army designated Regional Collective Training Center that provides full-spectrum training and base operations support to all service branches to include U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard organizations from 12 states as well as members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Annually, Fort Drum provides training and base operations support to 14,076 members of the U.S. Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC), as well as Federal, State, and local Law Enforcement agencies.

Fort Drum and Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield lead the Unmanned Aerial Systems operations in support of the warfighter and joint and national initiatives to integrate UAS operations within the National Airspace System. Fort Drum was the second location in the Army selected to field and integrate the Gray Eagle (MQ-1) into operations.

Fort Drum is comprised of 108,733 acres; 75,600 acres of that land is used for ranges and training areas.

Fort Drum has 47 range facilities, 2 active drop zones, plus 18 major training areas and 2 urban terrain training sites; this allows all weapons fielded by the Army to be fired at Fort Drum.

Fort Drum has a Joint Air-Ground Bombing Range which provides training opportunities that integrate Close Air Support with ground maneuver live fires. This facility supports up to 2,000 lb. Aerial delivered bombs and fixed wing strafing scenarios. The installation is equipped with 3 Joint Threat Emitter Sites that are designed to replicate a large-scale integrated air defense system. This capability is unmatched in the Northeast and places **Fort Drum as the premier training site for all aviation platforms along the east coast.**

Fort Drum has numerous virtual training suites to assist Soldiers in the preparation for live training and real-world missions. This includes a Mission Training Complex, Small Arms Weapons Simulators, Rotary Wing Aircraft Simulators, Combat Trauma Medical Simulators, Vehicle Route Clearance Simulator, and Artillery Simulations.

Fort Drum has the longest military runway, 10,000 feet long, by 150 feet wide, in the northeast United States, with maximum on ground space for nine - C-17 Aircraft (174 ft long and has a wingspan of 169 ft, 10 inches). The airfield also has a 1,200 Soldier capacity passenger terminal and is home to 123 rotary-wing aircraft.

**Fort Drum is a premier training facility, and the Division is the training partner of choice for New York, Ohio, Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Delaware, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maine & Massachusetts Reserve & Guard units.**



**Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization**