

Inside



A year of rapid expansion and growth at Mid-York Press.

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BOCES expands its educational offerings after capital project.

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The United Way is grateful for a generous local community.

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Fast Facts

180,584

Number of acres out of Chenango's 582,528 devoted to agriculture.

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United We Stand



PHOTO BY TYLER MURPHY

Commerce Chenango

Facing our challenges together

By MELISSA STAGNARO
The Evening Sun

In a time when local businesses face more challenges than ever, the local organization committed to advocating on their behalf is poised to take an even more active role in lobbying for and promoting their interests.

"Our primary focus is to strengthen Chenango County through business support, advocacy, business development services and quality of life," reported Commerce Chenango President and CEO Maureen Carpenter.

Now in its 50th year, the organization - which was known for the first four and a half decades of its existence as the Chenango County Chamber of Commerce, is in what Carpenter calls "an implementation year."

"We spent a lot of time



Commerce Chenango celebrated the accomplishments of six small businesses at its Salute to Small Business Dinner held Tuesday, Dec. 1 at the Silo Restaurant. Pictured from left are Jeff Webster of The White House Cabinet Shop, Small Business Gem; Commerce Chenango Chairman Bruce Erath; Rick Mirabito of Mang Insurance, Small Business of the Year; Dr. Lawrence Rosenblum of Central Diagnostic Imaging, Small Business Gem; Dave Cirello of Fred's Inn, Small Business Gem; Commerce Chenango President Maureen Carpenter; Bob Tenney of The Mid York Press, Small Business Manufacturer of the Year; and Entrepreneur of the Year Enzo Olivieri of Nathanael Greene's Publick House and Hilltop Building & Construction, LLC. (Photo by Melissa Stagnaro)

over the last two years building the organization back up, setting goals and strengthening our organization's role in the community," she explained. "In 2009, we were finally able to implement our ideas with

strong results." With the guidance of Commerce Chenango's board, she and her five-person staff have worked to expand the organization's program offerings. These new offerings include the

Employee of the Month program sponsored by Mang Insurance, the Member2Member discount program, the Good Morning Chenango breakfast series and a new partnership with Data Merchant

Solutions which provides members with discounted credit/debit card processing services.

This year, Commerce Chenango has also implemented a new, simplified dues structure, which was the result of several months of research by the Chamber's Advisory Committee.

"I think this has helped us with not only obtaining new members, but also in retaining existing members," Carpenter said. The organization currently counts approximately 420 businesses in the greater Chenango area as members, a number the chamber executive says represents a retention rate of 92 percent, well above the national Chamber of Commerce average of 83 percent.

While the organization hates to see any business drop their membership, she says that those which chose not to renew this year said it was due to the economy.

"(They) hope to return in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

DESTINATION: CHENANGO

Gus Macker

For the past 14 years, the Gus Macker 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament has brought basketball enthusiasts in Chenango County and other parts of the country together around a fun-filled family event, sponsored each July by the Norwich Family YMCA.

The original Gus Macker 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament was started in 1974 by Scott McNeal (alias Gus Macker) on his parents' driveway basketball court in Lowell, Michigan. It started with 18 friends playing competitively for \$18.

Since then, the Macker Tournament has expanded, holding both indoor and outdoor tournament in over 75 cities and with over 200,000 players and 1.7 million spectators enjoying 3-on-3 competition and family fun each year.

The Macker has grown to national prominence, but is still run in a hometown, friendly manner. Teams of various age,



size, and talent levels pay a team registration fee for the opportunity to compete against other teams of similar make-up and the chance to win top-quality trophies. By prohibiting alcohol or tobacco-related sponsors, the Macker has maintained the wholesome nature and pure fun of the event which draws players, spectators, and media wherever it is held.

Commerce Chenango

Implementing ideas and getting results

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the future," Carpenter explained.

At the same time, through the efforts of Membership Coordinator Rachel Crandall, they have also picked up a number of new business members and added a number of former members back into their ranks. It's no surprise that the chamber president sees this as a positive development.

"I think it shows that we are having an impact," she said. "People are really starting to see the value of what we do."

According to Carpenter, the biggest challenges facing businesses in Chenango County and the surrounding region are high taxes, high energy costs and the high cost of health insurance, the impacts of which are being exacerbated by the economic downturn.

"Until the state government does something ... to reduce the cost of doing business, and until there are real reforms in healthcare, those top three are not going to change," Carpenter said. "That is why we will continue to push for productive reforms, oppose legislation that is burdensome on business and encourage reduced state and local government spending."

One of the things she says she is most proud of this last year is the growth of Commerce Chenango's advocacy efforts on the local, state and federal level on behalf of local businesses.

Through the Governmental Affairs Committee, the



Community leader Pegi Lopresti and Frontier, represented by Jim Currie, were honored at Commerce Chenango's 50th Annual Dinner at Baron's Inn in April. Pictured from left are New York State Assemblyman Clifford Crouch, Commerce Chenango President Maureen Carpenter, Lopresti, Currie and Commerce Chenango Chairperson of the Board Barb Schindler. (Photo by Melissa Stagnaro)

Chamber strives to keep on top of legislative issues which have an impact on Chenango's businesses, explained Communications Director Audrey Robinson. When such an issue arises, in addition to the Chamber taking a stance, Robinson will also send out a Legislative Alert to members, encouraging them to also take action by contacting legislators.

Carpenter credits much of the advances the organization has been able to make, as well as its forward-looking direction, to the local business leaders who serve on the Chamber's board of directors. "Barb Schindler, our board chair for 2007/2008, provided us with the leadership we needed to get back on track and put together a solid strategic plan," she explained.

Earlier this year, Schindler turned the board chairmanship over to Bruce Erath of The Voss Group. In his brief tenure at the organization's helm, Erath, who Carpenter says has both a "positive outlook and a 'can-do' attitude," is already making his mark.

"Bruce has been a tremendous asset in encouraging innovation and pro-activity," she said. "That has afforded us the ability to be forward thinking and try new things."

Erath is something of a self-proclaimed fan of Chenango County and its environs.

"I'm extremely optimistic about Upstate New York," he said, listing the region's abundance of clean water, seasonal climate and the economic potential associated with natural gas exploration

as a few of the things the area has going for it.

Some of the most exciting developments he's seen in recent months, he said, are the potential revitalization of the Procter & Gamble facility at Woods Corners, Raymond Corporation's expansion in Greene, and, again, natural gas.

"That's a very exciting opportunity for us," Erath said, particularly because of the opportunity it presents to grow businesses which could provide ancillary services to the gas companies. Citing the California gold rush as an example, he explained, it wasn't the miners themselves who saw the biggest profits, but rather those who provided services to those miners.

In an effort to capitalize on this and other opportunities

in relation to natural gas development in the local area, Commerce Chenango is offering its second series of webinars on the topic, which will have a stronger focus on the business sector than the first it offered last year. According to Carpenter, they are also working with Steve Palmatier, who was recently hired by Chenango County as a consultant, in developing a database of businesses which could support the budding industry.

Commerce Chenango is in a unique position to assist with encouraging this and other economic growth because it also wears the hats of Development Chenango, the Chenango County Industrial Development Agency, Chenango County Tourism and the Chenango

Foundation. Carpenter explained that the strategic goals of each of these organizations are closely linked, and all are focused on the betterment and growth of the area.

Other topics which have been a focus for the organization over the last 12 months include examining future usage of the railroad corridor, the fight against the New York Regional Interconnect powerline project, continued participation in the Route 12 Taskforce, development of the Earl B. Clark Industrial Park, advocating for Camp Pharsalia and the old Vets' Home facility in Oxford, and assisting in securing and administering economic development incentives for Raymond Corporation, Agro Farma and the Evans Farmhouse Organic Creamery expansion in Greene.

On the economic development front, 2009 has been a busy year. "We had over 150 inquiries, made over 100 referrals to partner organizations and ... have worked with several existing businesses on expansion and retention projects," Carpenter said, referring to the programs which fall largely under the auspices of Economic Development Specialist Jennifer Tavares.

According to Carpenter, they will continue with these efforts and implement more as the organization moves into 2010 and its 51st year of serving the businesses and communities of the greater Chenango area.

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Mid-York Press

2009: "Our best year ever"

By TYLER MURPHY
The Evening Sun

Mid-York Press continued to expand in 2009, purchasing millions in new equipment and even adding an addition to its main production plant – in fact, this past year was the best for the company in its history.

"What was 2009 at Mid-York Press? 2009 was a year of some pretty rapid expansion," said President Robert W. Tenney.

Sales continued to grow for the Sherburne commercial printing company from \$11,720,845 in 2008 to \$12,482,937 in 2009.

"This has been our best year ever," Tenney said.

One of the factors that helps Mid-York buck the printing industry's downward trend, explained Tenney, is its clientele, which are mostly associated with the pharmaceutical and the cosmetic markets. He estimated the majority of the facility's work involves pharmaceuticals and together with the cosmetic customers, about 90 percent of all printed material they produced was paid for by those two industries.

Tenney said the company's success is due foremost to its dedicated employees and the financial stability of the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries that they serve.

"Even in hard times, people need medicine. Even in hard times, people might not go out as much – but when

they do, they want to look nice," he said.

Once acquiring a customer, Tenney said the Mid-York goes to great lengths to satisfy their needs to help ensure a long partnership.

"Our customers are like golden nuggets. We take every chance we can to go see them," said Tenney, who said much of the Mid-York's work comes consistently from its top 10 customers.

"We understand customers are one of the most valuable assets to a company and our top 10 purchasers account for about half of all our sales," Tenney said.

Although most of Mid-York's work is focused in the tri-state area, the company has customers in 14 states and ships its products around the world. But many of the customers found on the company's top 25 customer list include other local businesses such as Mead-Westvaco in Sidney,

Norwich Pharmaceuticals in North Norwich, Community Workshop (CWS) in Norwich and Golden Artist Colors in New Berlin, to name only a few. Tenney said the company also fills much smaller orders for loyal customers in the Chenango community.

The Mid-York Press traces its origins to 1829, with the formation of the first newspaper in Hamilton, The Hamilton Republican. Mid-York Press was incorporated in 1946 when the company acquired the print shop from the Norwich Pharmacy Company.

Since then, the Sherburne-based business has been

involved with many types of commercial printing. The company is a highly specialized supplier of printed paperboard, folding cartons and packaging inserts.

Recently Mid-York purchased two state-of-the-art Bobst Expertcut 106 PER Blanking Die cutters for \$1.3 million each. In the coming year, Mid-York will be adding a 9,000 square feet for a new manufacturing plant, and refurbishing another 3,400 square feet to accommodate some of the new equipment upgrades. Overall the company has spent \$3.5 million in new equipment and another \$650,000 in expansion costs this past year alone.

Besides the die cutters, the company also purchased two new 2009 gluing machines. With all the new upgrades, the oldest piece of manufacturing equipment in the entire business was purchased new in 2008.

Tenney said the machines being replaced would be resold, including the two older die cutters, which would earn the company back about \$500,000.

The new gluing machines, Bobst Masterfolds, will be the first installed in the United States with their new Speedwave device.

"We were taken with the Speedwave during a demonstration at Bobst's Lusanne, Switzerland Factory," said Mid-York Vice President Shawn Aikins. "They were promoting the high speed of the system, but what really sold us is the reduction in set-up time. In our particular business, it is our close atten-



The most senior Mid-York Pressman, Jim Robinson, has 28 years of experience at the Sherburne commercial printer. Here, he examines the prints fresh off the newly purchased 2008 Heidelberg XL-102 Hybrid 6-color press. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

tion to very fast set-ups that has been our key to success."

This past year's growth comes on the wings of a number of expansions in 2008, including 19 new employees and \$3.2 million dollar investment on a new printing press and other line equipment.

In the coming year, the

company will begin operation of its Xerox iGen 4 Digital press in a new 9,000 square foot facility adjacent to the main Sherburne plant, which has about 60,000 square feet.

Tenney said the new plant would require hiring at least five new employees in 2010 and, later in the year, as many as ten more.

The Commerce Chenango honored Mid-York Press in December with their annual Manufacturer of the Year award.

For more information about The Mid-York Press, Inc. visit their web site at www.midYorkpress.com.

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BOCES

Increasing educational opportunities

By **BRIAN GOLDEN**
The Evening Sun

Completion of its \$18 million expansion and renovation project puts DCMO BOCES in a unique position to offer a hands-on, real-life educational experience for its students. A tour of its North Norwich facility revealed improvements to both new and existing construction, including the daycare, special education, auto maintenance, graphic design, bakery/kitchen, dining hall, cosmetology, library and science centers.

"The renovations of the existing campus were completed on September 1, 2009," said Steve Perrin, director of Career and Technology. "We've added 40,000 square feet to our classrooms, labs and shops, including a brand new, full-size gymnasium."

The Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) provides educational opportunities to 16 school districts in a 1,825 square mile radius throughout Delaware, Chenango, Madison and Otsego counties. They continue to operate two campuses, located in North Norwich and Walton.

"Our goal is to create a real-life work environment for our students," said Perrin. "All of our programs literally run small businesses right here on campus."

Students interested in auto-



A multi-million dollar expansion and renovation project at the East River Road, North Norwich, BOCES campus was completed in 2009, providing Chenango County students with increased opportunities in several areas of study, including, pictured above, automotive and computer science. (Photos by Brian Golden)

motive technology, for opportunities to further their instance, have extensive knowledge in the field. The

garage, paint room and wash bay, has doubled in size due to the renovation.

"Our automotive students are currently restoring a 1938 Cadillac LaSalle, a 1940 Lincoln Zephyr and a Ford Model-T," said Perrin. "They're also collaborating on a electric car and the production of bio-diesel fuel."

"I love it here," said BOCES automotive student Brock Hoag, who has participated in the upgrading of the electric car. "My friends and I have learned so much about the basics of the automotive industry."

These environmentally friendly projects are a sign of things to come at DCMO BOCES, according to Perrin. "Our biggest increases have leaned towards science, technology and math, as it pertains to green energy," stated Perrin. "We know that, in the future, this will be an area for continued job growth, not to mention that students can receive math and science approval through the State Education Department."

Other improvements to the facility include a new, state of the art gymnasium, which boasts a professional quality weight room, aerobics room and is now much larger than the original, smaller gym, boasting a 1280 person capacity.

The new and improved cosmetology department features a full service salon, a pedicure and manicure station and its own customer service station.

"We've done our best to create a working atmosphere, which helps students learn what they need to be more

professional," stated Perrin. "It's important to realize that these students are not forced to be here, they're here because they want to be, and that's the magic."

A visit to the modernized nursing station at the North Norwich campus reveals a miniature hospital, complete with beds, prep areas, a dispensary and its own classroom.

"We seek to provide the students with quality nursing home training, another field which is experiencing growth at this time," said Perrin.

In the near future, BOCES is exploring the possibility for new career and technological education in Heating, Venting and Air Conditioning/Electronics programs.

"It's something we had available twenty to twenty-five years ago," stated Perrin. "We're seeing increasing interest in the community for many of these skills."

Students in the culinary arts, serving and bakery programs are currently preparing for their yearly Skills USA competition, which takes place on the local, state and national levels. Students in all BOCES programs compete in the event.

"The renovation has been a major success," said Building Principal Judy McCann, regarding the recent improvements to the classrooms and laboratories. "We plan to utilize our new facilities in an effort to maximize the integration of our CTE programs and our academic team."

For more information visit the BOCES website at www.dcmoboces.com.

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Success Stories

White House Cabinet Shop LLC

2009 was a year of continued growth for White House Cabinet Shop LLC. The White House Cabinet Shop LLC produces Kitchen Cabinets, Office Furniture, Entertainment Centers and other furnishings for the home and/or office.

The production facility and showroom are located on 11 Knapp Street in the heart of Sherburne. The majority of its clients are located in Chenango County but their market extends to Binghamton and Syracuse. White House has shipped products to Ohio, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and California.

Examples of their work can be seen in the showroom. You can also get in touch with them by e-mail. They offer artful design and expert workmanship. Most of their products are made of oak, maple and cherry that they purchase locally. They use state of the art hardware and finishing materials.

White House's specially designed furnishings fill needs not met by mass-produced products. Through creative use of space, they solve storage problems and simplify traffic flow. As custom builders they pay careful attention to both form and function, working to meet the needs of the customer while maintaining scale and proportion. Each piece is designed to harmonize with its environment. White House chooses quality wood, looking for continuity of color and grain. With a combination of traditional methods of joinery and modern finishing techniques, they produce unique woodwork with lasting beauty and a balanced appearance. Whether the project is a small bedside table or a large kitchen, White House uses the same care in design, material selection, construction, and finishing.

The cabinetmakers completed a number of built-in projects this year, including new kitchens and renovations, custom countertops, custom staircases, home and commercial offices and built-in entertainment centers. One-of-a-kind furniture built in 2009 included tables, stands, display cases, and corner cabinets.

White House Cabinet Shop LLC also offers both residential and light commercial custom construction services. We have over twenty-six years of experience in construction. In 2009 major construction projects included historic renovations, office remodels, new additions, garages, porches, decks and major residential remodeling.

White House Cabinet Shop had a busy year – including being named a "Small Business Gem 2009" by Commerce Chenango – and is currently scheduling work for the spring and summer. *Free CDs of completed jobs available for viewing. If they can help you with your project, call them at 607-674-9358. You can also reach them by e-mail at whitehousecabinet-



The Gus Macker Three-on-Three Basketball Tournament is an event that brings thousands of spectators and participants to downtown Norwich each July. (Photo by Frank Spziale)

Success Stories

Rentals to Go

Are you planning a project or event this year? Whether it's for your business, family or community, you probably have every detail taken care of -- or do you? Rentals To Go offers the most convenient, cleanest, and affordable portable restroom rentals. With over 200 units to choose from, all and any needs are met easily.

Getting together for a family reunion? Is someone graduating this year? Having a July 4th Pig Roast? Weekend rentals are available for outdoor parties, weekend projects and events. Rentals To Go offers four styles of portable restrooms to fit the needs of our clients. There are standard (basic) portable units, Handicap units for those with special needs and units equipped with sinks for your guests to wash their hands. One of our best sellers is the flushable unit that offers a combination flushing toilet and sink.

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In Their Own Words

We've always been a charitable community

By **BRYNE LEWIS ALLPORT**
Chenango United Way

Fundraising makes plenty of people nervous. So when I was hired in July of 2009 to be the Campaign Director at Chenango United Way, it's no surprise that I started the job with a little trepidation. How could I present the mission of Chenango United Way in a sincere and compelling way? How would that mission be received by the Chenango County public? However, as I discovered more about the Chenango United Way organization and the charitable character of the Chenango County community, I quickly lost all my unease.

Chenango United Way is a local funding organization dedicated to positive, long-term change in Chenango County. That mission is carried out efficiently and passionately by our small office. Five years ago, Chenango United Way adopted a community impact allocations model. In the past, the United Way funded "Member Agencies." In contrast, the community impact model is now directed at funding specific agency programs called "Community Partners." Each year agencies submit competitive funding proposals for programs which address the most pressing needs of Chenango County. These proposals are evaluated by two volunteer staffed panels



Approximately 150 students had a chance to run through the hallways of the Oxford Primary School in early December as a reward for the money they raised during the school's Miles for Quarters fundraiser for the Chenango United Way. By doing chores and helping out at school and at home, the children raised a total of \$634.81 for the cause. (Photo by Frank Speziale)

according to their clarity, their fiscal responsibility, and their community cooperation. Approved proposals are then evaluated by a third panel during the year to assess that funds are being used in accordance with the proposal's goal.

In adopting this system, Chenango United Way has become more responsive to emerging community needs. The most pressing community concerns are given the most weight in evaluation. For example, because of our community impact allocations model, Chenango United Way has been able to direct more financial aid toward the issues of economic self-sufficiency, poverty and homelessness.

Also, the community impact allocations model has provided increased accountability to our donor base. Chenango United Way is able to track not only where the

money goes, but how well it is being used. Our donors can be confident that their charitable contributions are being put to the most effective use. Chenango United Way does the homework most donors don't have the time or expertise to do. When you choose to give to Chenango United Way, you can feel confident that we are working day in and day out to make sure your gift is used well. In turn, I feel confident in representing Chenango United Way to our donors as a valuable advocate for long-term, positive change in Chenango County.

It's no secret that the global financial situation has hit home in Chenango County. Many of our residents are feeling less secure about their jobs, their homes, their future economic stability. It was with this knowledge that I began bringing the story of our organization to the com-

munity this year. We began the fall 2009 fundraising campaign cautiously; we wanted to be sensitive to any unease in our donor base while acknowledging the increased needs in our community. In deference to both of those factors, Chenango United decided to keep its fundraising goal flat, \$465,000.

Chenango County has an incredible history as a charitable community. Not only has our donor base remained strong throughout national turmoil (9/11, Hurricane Katrina), but we have seen the community rise up again and again to take care of its own. Chenango County did a commendable job of cooperating as a community to overcome the devastation from the 2006 flood events. The charitable nature of our community has persevered over time and through difficulties.

As I began the 2010 cam-

aign, it became immediately apparent to me that Chenango County was determined to meet this current crisis with equal character. Donor after donor, business after business expressed their concern for and commitment to the community in Chenango County. While non-profits nationally reported as much as a 40 percent decrease in funding, we continued to watch our total climb. After plateauing for several weeks, the Chenango County community stepped up, putting Chenango United over \$420,000. Our campaign numbers have not yet been finalized, but we are confident that we will finish above 90 percent of our goal.

Even more telling, participation has not significantly declined. This indicates that Chenango County residents give not according to the thickness of their wallets, but out of the depth of their character. Donors in Chenango County are committed to sharing even when they might have less to share. I am thankful to live in an area with such spirit and proud to serve an organization which partners with that spirit.

I am greatly looking forward to serving Chenango County at Chenango United Way this coming year. As campaign closes, I will find myself more involved in community collaboratives and conversations. Chenango United Way prides itself as a convener in the community, bringing together agencies, organizations, and volunteers who have the passion and expertise to meet pressing issues head on. I enjoy listen-



Bryne Allport

ing to community organizers who directly serve our residents. I continue to be impressed with their dedication and commitment.

We are also looking toward our 2010 allocation decisions. This year we received \$765,000 of allocation requests. While we look forward to the chance to advocate for our donors in funding the best programs the county has to offer, we regret that we cannot meet all needs. I am thankful to be working with a board and a team of volunteers who are sensitive and discerning going into this process.

Campaign 2010 has been a great learning experience for me. I am pleased to find myself working for an organization with such integrity in a community with such generosity. While fundraising makes plenty of people nervous, serving Chenango County with Chenango United Way has put my fears to rest.

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