



A visitor at Friends of Rogers' annual Youth Fishing Day hooks a large pike.

Progress Chenango

01

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A lively year for Commerce Chenango positions them at-the-ready for 2017



Evening Sun File Photo

Above is the Norwich Pharmaceuticals, An Alvogen Company, ribbon cutting in October, 2016 to celebrate the one of Chenango County's largest employers' expansion. President and CEO Steve Craig was in attendance as a representative of Commerce Chenango.



Submitted Photo

One of the new, high-capacity culverts that will protect the investment in railroad repairs.

By GRADY THOMPSON
Sun Staff Writer

2016 was an eventful year for Commerce Chenango as they continued to address the evolving business and economic climate throughout Chenango County.

In a year that included a number of objectives and targets for those at Commerce Chenango, President and CEO Steve Craig says that there's been plenty of progress and strides made in the right direction towards their goals in the past year to position them in favorable standing as they look ahead to the future.

"Our goals [in 2016] included the restoration of the rail line through the center of the county, the renovation of the downtown Norwich hotel, the growth of Chamber special events including the Soiree-in-the-Park and the College and Career Connection, and the re-establishment of the Chobani Chamber Challenge as a trail run in the state land west of Norwich," said Craig.

Of these goals, a particular highlight of the headway made in 2016 by Commerce Chenango was the repair of long-standing damage to the NYS&W Utica branch rail line.

In conjunction with sister company Chenango County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), developmental partner Development Chenango Corporation, Chenango County, the New York State DOT, and the U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration, Commerce Chenango was able to hire Frontier Railroad Services to restore serviceability to 45 miles of railroad track between Earlville and Chenango Forks.

In order to restore the track, several dozen washouts that

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Golden Artist continues to Color the World

By MICHAELA WATTS
Sun Staff Writer

NEW BERLIN — For decades now, the global leading manufacturer, Golden Artist Colors of New Berlin has proven to provide the best product while upholding the best customer satisfaction. Golden Artist Colors continues to inspire and spark creativity among the community, classrooms and even on a global sphere though providing the very best tools and materials when bringing a vision to life.

Since the warehouse expansion back in 2014 and the launch of the

new water colors, 2016 has been nothing short of a great year for Golden Artist Colors.

Golden President & COO, Barbara J. Schindler said that, "The company has had a tremendous year in terms of productivity. However there's always improvements when it comes to this line of work. Some days current colors are extremely trend and the next day a new color is developed. So as a paint manufacturing company we have to be able to adapt an stay on top of new products."

Now that Golden's has the opportunity to house the three foremost varieties of paint:

"We are so grateful for all the support and dedication shown by employees over the years."

BARBARA SCHINDLER
GOLDEN ARTIST PRESIDENT AND COO

acrylic, oil and watercolor to artist, "A 25 percent growth in the past year has allowed new invest-

ments and development to be constructed," said Schindler. Jodi L. O'Dell,

Communications Coordinator also commented on the fact that through a increase in product demand, other new strides were taken in the year of 2016. In the fall, "Golden Artist Colors partnered with DCMO BOCES to offer a professional painting instruction course for second grade art teachers within the Delaware, Chenango, Madison, and Otsego BOCES District. Since the 8 week course, Golden Artist Colors will host an art exhibition during the month of February in its Loft Gallery fea-

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Rogers Environmental Conservation Center: *A land of opportunity*

BY GRADY THOMPSON
Sun Staff Writer

When New York State closed Rogers Environmental Education Center in 2010, it was the Friends of Rogers organization who stepped up and intervened.

Fastforward six years later, and Friends of Rogers reports that nearly 13,000 people visited the center in 2016, and that's just the people who visited the lobby.

"We've underwent a lot of change in the past six years, and all for the better," said Friends of Rogers Executive Director Simon Solomon.

Today, Friends of Rogers operates on an annual budget of \$250,000, and they continue to enhance their programs and partnerships to fully take advantage of all that Rogers Center's 600 acres has to offer.

"We see ourselves as a community resource, a destination, and an eco-tourist attraction," said Friends of Rogers Developmental Executive Jessica Moquin. "We're working diligently to really finesse our role as an economic driver in the community."

As the only environmental conservation center in a 50-mile radius, Solomon says that a major factor that sets Rogers Center aside as unique from state land is that

they have taken a programmatic stance to advance events and exploit the best things the land has to offer.

"We've taken a strategic approach by increasing our programs and relations, and we're seeing dividends being paid as a result," said Solomon.

Consequently, Friends of Rogers was recognized by Commerce Chenango as the 2016 Business of the Year.

The complete renovation of the Friends of Rogers lobby for the first time in 25 years was among the notable happenings of 2016. A donation from the Mid-York Foundation enabled the renovation that was unveiled at a ribbon cutting featuring Commerce Chenango President and CEO Steve Craig on January 19, two days before Friends of Rogers' chief winter program: the 39th annual Winter Living Celebration on January 21.

The Winter Living Celebration organized and hosted by Friends of Rogers is a yearly free-will donation program that highlights the winter months at Rogers Center and typically draws over 1,000 people. This year's program featured live music by Susquehanna String Band, horse drawn sleigh rides, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, nature and outdoor living demonstrations,



Grady Thompson Photo

Pictured from left to right are Friends of Rogers Development Executive Jessica Moquin, Executive Director Simon Solomon, Educator Sarah Freeman, and Intern Amanda Phillips.

crafts, and refreshments.

The program precedes other large annual events organized by Friends of Rogers such as Earth Fest in May, the Wild Goose Chase in September, and Animals of

Halloween in October. There are also a number of smaller programs organized by Friends of Rogers every month.

Friends of Rogers employs two full-time employees in Solomon and Moquin, as well as two other part-time employees. They also rotate in environmental interns over the course of the year from schools such as the SUNY College of Environmental

Science and Forestry in Syracuse, and SUNY Cortland.

While the Friends of Rogers employees focus on the day-to-day operations, Solomon says that it is the support of their active and ambitious Board of Directors that keeps them in motion.

"We've evolved a lot over the last few years and increased the number of board members. Some have

come and gone, but anyone who is or has served on the board has put in tons of effort," said Solomon.

Moquin noted that their board members have a wide skill-set with geologists, marketers, even an attorney on board. "We rely on them and the huge depth and expertise they bring. They're solid, strong, and engaged, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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Submitted Photo

A visitor at Friends of Rogers' annual Youth Fishing Day hooks a large pike. While hunting and fishing is not permitted at Rogers Center, Friends of Rogers host an annual catch-and-release event.

New Berlin - A year in review from the mayor

By **TERRY POTTER**
Mayor

There were several activities in the Village of New Berlin throughout the year that as Mayor, I was proud to be a part of. Some of these activities include: "The Helping Hands Project"-a project that has stayed true to its original mission of helping others in our community who may need "a helping hand". We had a record number of volunteers come into our community and help out on this year's projects. Thank you to our committee (Gene, Tony, Betsey and Gary) and all who make this possible! The traditional Christmas Tree lighting ceremony and parade drew hundreds of peo-

ple to the center of the village to experience this holiday kickoff once again. This festivity continues to grow and isn't possible without the support of the UV School, community members, and businesses. Thank you to our committee (Justin, Rachel, and Gina), the Baio family, Frontier, Curtis Lumber, the New Berlin Fire Dept. and the Village of New Berlin DPW for all your help in making sure this event is a success every year! The Spirit of Christmas took place this year at the New Berlin Firehouse and we handed out food baskets and provided toys to families in the village and surrounding area that were in need. Thank you Marty, Jeff, Shirley,

Bob, Tony, Mary Ellen, Mickey, the Levinson's, and Gary for spear heading this effort. This year was with a heavy heart as Father Chuck Taylor who was a pillar of our community and helped establish Spirit of Christmas was not with us. Thank you Father Chuck for making our community a better one, you will never be forgotten. I will miss our Pittsburgh Steelers and Dallas Cowboys banter. Working with the UV Youth Baseball and Softball League throughout the spring and summer continues to be a pleasure. They hosted their annual tournament and the games drew people from through out the area into our village.

The youth summer program provided both educational experiences and fun for many children in the village. This was combined with the free breakfast and lunch program in Hyde Park through a USDA grant. In May I had the honor of emceeing the Village of New Berlin's Memorial Day ceremony. In June the Village celebrated its bicentennial that was an entire day of activities capped off by a marvelous fireworks display! We had our first village luncheon that was organized by a group of ladies and held on the side street by Hyde park. There was entertainment there for all to enjoy along with bands playing on the corner of Main St and the Donna Frech dancers performed as well. The parade that followed was well received and many of the local business had open houses showcasing what they were all about. Our New Berlin Fire Dept. continues to be strong and arguably one of the best fire departments in the county and in 2017 will be celebrating its 150th anniversary! Our EMS continues to serve the village residents, the Town of New Berlin, The Town of Columbus, and the Town of Pittsfield. We appreciate the relationships and cooperation that we have with all of them. The businesses in and outside the village continue to have a great impact on our local economy. Inside the Village: Preferred Mutual remains one of the fastest growing businesses in their industry and continue to be

actively involved with our village events and projects. Multiple meetings throughout the year with CEO Chris Taft continue to keep our relationship strong with the top employer in the Village. Milford Academy is the number one (football) prep school in the country - we had 49 division one schools in the village at the end of November, with the likes of Temple, UMASS, and Florida. My recent conversation with Coach Chaplick was like a proud father talking about his sons. He has Milford Academy alumni that competed in the AFC Championship (Tyler Metakevich-Pittsburgh Steelers) and Niko Koutividas (former New England Patriot player and now a member of their staff). Coach Chaplick and the Falcons went undefeated this season. Congrats coach! NBT Bank - 2016 saw the departure of my good friend Brian Burton as he moved on to be the branch manager in Norwich, his work over the last 10 years is greatly appreciated and the list is too long but events like Youth Days, Helping Hands, and Dollars for Scholars come to mind where he volunteered his time and talent. We miss you Brian, but NBT of New Berlin is in good hands with the new branch manager Jill Eddy. The NY Pizzeria- They are celebrating their 35th anniversary in 2017 - Congratulations! They have built a tremendous business here in our quaint little village and draw people from

near and far. Everyone knows their food is fabulous but above and beyond that they treat you like family and our entire community benefits from the way they generously give of their time and talents to this community. Stewarts Shops- remains the top Stewarts for their region. If they are open, 99.9% of the time there are customers in there and they are busy. They continue to be generous to our youth programs and give us funding to help subsidize our programs. We will be submitting our application again for this funding and appreciate their generosity. Donna Frech School of Dance- Celebrating 40 years of dance in New Berlin, Congratulations Donna! Other businesses in the Village that continue to have success and add to our local economy include, Service Pharmacy, Lake Street Lanes, Remember When (the best Reuben around! stop in and try one), Ted's Body Shop, Stages Auto, Gillee's Auto Parts, Homestead General Store, S and K Treasures, Gates-Cole, Joys Beauty Shop, Dakin Funeral Home, Chase Nursing Home, Red Apple and Mirabito's. Im looking forward to Kelly Banks Cakes open their doors in the Village in 2017. Outside the Village limits but having a significant impact: Chobani - Our dear friend Hamdi and his Chobani Team congratulations to you for

Coloring the world -



Cameron Turner Photo

Above is a photo taken at Golden Artist Colors of various paint products.



Cameron Turner Photo

Above is a photo taken at Golden Artist Colors of various paint products.

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turing the artwork of 11 local teachers who participated in the class. The Master Teacher Program was facilitated by professional artist Carrie Mae Smith and was focused on helping participants explore their creativity." Golden Artist Colors still remains as an employee-owned company with its values of five precepts of 1) Honor work-life balance 2)

Pursue growth and learning 3) Act as stewards in all we care for 4) Lead and inspire creativity and innovation 5) Build and engage community relationships, "Has created an environment where people can thrive and company has flourished. We are so grateful for all the support and dedication shown by employees over the years", said Schindler. Currently Golden's employees 200 people

between the main plant located in New Berlin and the warehouse located in Norwich. When ask if any further expansions would be made, Schindler comments that, "We has a facility would like to remain in New York and investigate back into the community."

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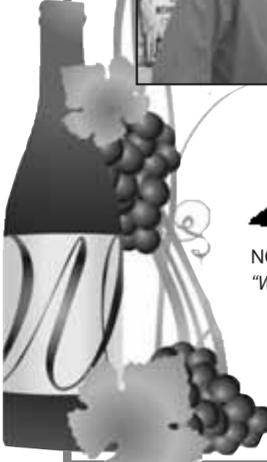




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'In your own words'

Michael Field, CEO, The Raymond Corporation

The Raymond Corporation has been part of Greene, New York, for close to a century now. In that time, Raymond has evolved from early beginnings in 1840 as a century-old iron foundry making agricultural equipment to a material handling industry pioneer in 1922 with innovations and technologies that include the creation of the forklift.

In fact, as we celebrate 95 years of material handling innovation, Raymond's long history is filled with many firsts. In 1939, George Raymond Sr., our founder, and William House, received the patent for the first hydraulic hand pallet truck and the double-faced wooden pallet. The pallet patent enabled stackable unit loads for warehouse organization. Raymond again revolutionized the industry in the 1950s by creating the narrow-aisle warehouse concept and the narrow-aisle forklift. This concept is still used in warehouses around the globe to maximize space and efficiency.

Raymond continues to influence the material handling industry by not only producing world-class material handling equipment, but also by providing end-to-end solutions that are specific to our customers' evolving

needs. Many industries today are taking the opportunity to maximize data and technology, and Raymond looks to lead the way. By providing a high caliber of products and solutions that are more technologically advanced, including telematics and automation, we hope to continue to drive the evolution of our industry.

World-class principles, close to home

As a leading global forklift manufacturer, we still maintain the sense of family in our workplace. We have five best practices that you could say make up our "recipe for success". The first is having the courage to do the right thing and demand the same of others. Secondly, in an effort to find better solutions, we are constantly learning, which helps drive innovation in everything we do. Next, our customer-first mantra — "Will we meet or exceed our customers' expectations" — ensures we're always thinking about what's right for our customers. Also, we are driven by compassion to treat others as we would like to be treated. And finally, our drive for results pushes us to develop products and services we are proud of. Through these principles, we are empowered to reach future milestones as a world-leading company.

It's imperative we stay competitive, and look to our community, our people and our customers to help us achieve that. New York State's continued support in making our state business-friendly helps promote globalization, expands the talent pool and creates investment in our communities. The drive to increase technology jobs within our supply chain ecosystem exemplifies New York's commitment to job creation, while pioneering a vision for the future in which New York State is a global leader in innovation and technology. We are appreciative that state leaders, with the help of local and state organizations, see the value of businesses and communities working together to create a solid and prosperous New York State. Initiatives like the transmission of vital natural gas to Greene, and the importance of transportation systems such as the railway and highways, are vital to keep Raymond competitive on the world stage with global competitors. We will continue to work with the state and community to achieve these infrastructure improvements.

A future built on many achievements

Our hardworking, commit-

ted team of employees are a critical asset to the future of our organization. They enable us to create superior products for our customers and empower Raymond to deliver global, quality solutions for our industry. This has led to our continued growth.

To accommodate our physical growth, we are excited by the many expansion projects across our campus for manufacturing space, as well as the creation of turning lanes and updates to Route 12 for ease of access. Our manufacturing floor is always under constant evolution, implementing a number of state-of-the-art technologies. With this in mind, the development and retention of talent is necessary to achieve our long-term goals in the industry and for accommodating the demands of our customers. As an active member of the community, Raymond partners with vari-

ous colleges, trade schools and high schools to build our future workforce with the necessary skill sets, as well as recruit talent for current positions.

Raymond continually supports the advancement of future technologies through non-profit giving and educational programs. In 2016, Raymond contributed to more than 140 non-profit and educational organizations. Raymond aids the advancement of technologies by supporting education and programs that revolutionize the future through financial contributions, facility tours, mentoring, a cooperative and other programs. Raymond continually collaborates with high schools, trade schools, colleges and universities, one example being the Greene TRobots Robotic club where we were able to provide MakeBlock robotic kits to the

club to encourage STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education. Our appreciation goes out to our employees and their families who give of their time, monetary donations and participation in fundraising events that mean so much to the organizations and individuals we help. Annually, our team, RAY OF HOPE, supports the American Cancer Society and participates in the yearly Making Strides against Breast Cancer walk.

Innovation, quality and service have been in Raymond's DNA since George Raymond Sr. purchased the company in 1922. With the support of our community, county and state, the Raymond team looks forward to continuing to exceed our customer's expectations for the next 95 years.

Friends of Rogers pushes into 2017 —

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they've been the champions behind us ever since the transition. It's the reason we're successful," said Moquin.

Camping is becoming an additional revenue generator for Friends of Rogers, and Solomon says that they recognize the opportunity and have been testing the idea. Although the public is prohibited from camping at Rogers Center, they have hosted Boy and Girl Scout organizations and intend to continue doing so as an educational opportunity for scouts.

Moquin says that there is a mutually symbiotic relationship shared between Friends of Rogers and scout organizations, as Rogers Center provides unique educational opportunities for scouts, and they in turn have helped Rogers Center.

Last year, Eagle Scout Cole Yankowski built and created a 'little free library' at Rogers Center in front of the lobby, where anyone can come and

take or leave a book. In another instance, a group of Girl Scouts refurbished the Rogers Center woodshed to receive a merit badge.

In October of 2017, Friends of Rogers plans to host an overnight event for roughly 150 scouts.

"It should be a great event," said Solomon. "The scouts have been great. They look at this property as being full of unique opportunities, and it is. Rogers Center is an opportunity for many things."

One quality that makes Rogers Center unique is the mutual facility agreement between Friends of Rogers and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Currently, Friends of Rogers and the NYS DEC are under a 10-year mutual facility agreement, which is an unusual relationship for the DEC to be in as they typically run land solely by themselves.

Solomon says that in the future, Friends of Rogers would like to expand their agreement with the DEC span

30 or 40 years, but in order to do so, they would like to see more give on behalf of the DEC.

"It's going to take work and compromise, but we'd like to see things change more in our favor," said Solomon. "We've learned to manage regardless, but for the long haul, we would like [the agreement] to be restructured to benefit our end more."

When asked if the existence of the unusual agreement in the first place was a testament to the level of commitment that the community and Friends of Rogers has to the center, Moquin said, "Absolutely. Only by virtue of community support and regional love for the center are we able to accomplish all that we have. 12,800 annual visitors in just the visitor's center alone last year shows the fact that Rogers Center is a destination for people everywhere."



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New Berlin celebrates bicentennial, mayor delivers updates on village –



Submitted Photo

A shot from New Berlin's bicentennial celebration.

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having another stellar year! Some of the National and International headlines put New Berlin in a positive light and our community continues to benefit. We appreciate our strong relationship with you and appreciate your generosity. In 2016 Chobani was once again in tune with our community and its needs. They donated product and money to help families in the village and throughout our area. In December they gave away hundreds of cases in the village. Words can not express our gratitude. We can not wait to see what 2017 has in store for Chobani.

-Golden Artist- Another success story in our area on a national and international scale. They continue to amaze us with their generosity and

their genuine concern for how things are in the village and the surrounding area as well. When I met with Mr. Golden back in the fall, he asked how my father (Gary Potter) was doing and it caught me off guard. Despite all of the success he remains humble and kind, thank you Mr. Golden for all you do for our Village and for taking the time to meet with me.

-NYCM - Although its location is across the river and in another county NYCM remains a generous donor to all of our village functions and our village benefits from their outreach and volunteerism. Thank you NYCM for your continued generosity.

-Dollar General - Dollar General was eager to pitch in for village events and activi-

ties. They helped out with the Spirit of Christmas among others.

The Village of New Berlin remains on solid ground and is fiscally sound. The commitment of our board members and the village clerk continue to keep us on this path. In 2016 we took a close look at the village's water system and are trying to be proactive with some system upgrades that we anticipate will be coming from state and federal mandates. We have engineers and grant writers involved and will be pursuing grant funding for these upgrades.

Overall, 2016 was a year of prosperity for businesses, having to say good bye to loved ones, saying goodbye but not farewell to friends, continuing traditions, making



Submitted Photo

A shot from New Berlin's bicentennial celebration.

new traditions, and carrying out our fiduciary responsibilities. But as I reflect even closer it was a year about relationships. It was about establishing new relationships and

maintaining existing relationships. This is another note that I can put into my mental journal of being Mayor "never underestimate the power of a relationship".

Thank you to everyone who made 2016 a memorable one for the Village of New Berlin.

Success Story

**"We've aged as well as our finest wines"
Nazzitto's Wines & Liquors**

Still great after 58! This would make a great catch phrase for Nazzitto's Wines & Liquors as 2017 marks their 58th year in business. Nazzitto's Wines & Liquors is the oldest operating wine & liquor store in Chenango County with the original liquor license dating back to the 1930's.

Frank J. Nazzitto moved his family to Norwich in 1950. Frank loved Norwich and felt it would be a great place to raise his nine children (8 girls, 1 boy). In 1959 Frank purchased Herman's Liquors Store which was located on American Avenue in Norwich. Frank, along with his wife Grace, ran the small store until 1976. In 1974 he was joined by his son John, and in 1976 they moved the family operation (now known as Nazzitto's Wines & Liquors) to a new downtown plaza anchored by the new A&P Supermarket and new Rite Aid Drug Store. This plaza was located on South Broad Street across from NBT Bank. Nazzitto's remained in this plaza for 25 years until the year 2000 when the A&P Supermarket left Norwich and Rite Aid moved to its new location. In 2000 John Nazzitto, now the sole owner and operator after Frank's death in 1985, relocated in the Chenango Towne Plaza (Price Chopper Plaza) on Route 12 just South of Norwich.

Always expanding their inventory with new wines and spirits Nazzitto's has one of the largest selections anywhere in Chenango County. Nazzitto's features wine and spirit tastings which gives customers the opportunity to "Try before they buy". when it comes to weddings, graduations, parties or any other celebrations their 58 years of experience is most helpful in choosing the right wines and spirits. Nazzitto's also "Specializes" in "Special" requests. if they do not have the product you want in stock, they will order it for you.

Providing the best customer service, having the most knowledgeable and friendly staff, and offering a great selection of wines and spirits is just part of a family tradition that has continued Nazzitto's Wines & Liquors success since 1959.

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Commerce Chenango says they're ready for the year ahead —

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occurred during the floods of 2006 in 2011 had to be repaired, as well as replacing hundreds of rail ties, re-decking of bridges, and the installation of new, robust drainage structures that are specifically designed to protect the roadbed and rails from future potential flood damage.

"The challenge moving forward is to use the availability of freight rail transport as a business attractor," said Craig. "We have been contacted by several companies eager to ship bulk resources on the Utica branch of NYS&W. We have joined the statewide rail association, and plan to partner with that line and Norfolk Southern [to devise] a marketing strategy."

In terms of the renovation to the downtown Norwich hotel that was sought by Commerce Chenango, Craig says that the renovation has been put on hold because the hotel owner backed away from making the necessary refurbishments to affiliate with Best Western. As a result, the grant funding that was awarded from the Market New York program has since been withdrawn. As for Commerce Chenango's subsequent strategy to renovate the hotel, Craig said, "We are working with community leaders to craft an alternative plan."

Other initiatives by Commerce Chenango that were to take place in 2016 included: devising a way to provide natural gas to the Raymond Corporation and the Village of Bainbridge, the continuance of quality loans through Development Chenango's three loan programs, and reforming workers' compensation as a public

policy initiative to benefit the greatest number of Chamber members.

"Our staff was instrumental in winning grant funding for a gas pipeline spur from the Constitution Pipeline to Bainbridge and Greene, but the Constitution Pipeline itself remains tied up in legal battles over permitting," said Craig.

One factor that makes the pipeline to Greene important is that it would benefit Chenango County's leading employer—the Raymond Corporation—but Craig was not able to put a timeline on potential pipeline progress in the future.

Despite this fact, the Raymond Corporation has been continually growing, and Commerce Chenango reports that the demand for its industry-leading products, services, and systems show no signs of slowing down.

Craig says that the success of the Raymond Corporation and other large manufacturing and financial companies is a testament to the widely diversified economy throughout Chenango County.

"From a land use perspective we are largely agricultural, including forestry," said Craig. "Chenango County boasts 110,000 acres of state land: the most of any county outside the Adirondack and Catskill parks. But if you look at our wealth creation, it lies with our manufacturing sector's production of very high-value products."

Raymond's narrow-aisle electric lift trucks and warehouse systems, GE/Unison's jet aircraft components, Chentronics' industrial ignition systems, and Alvogen's complex oral solid-dose pharmaceuticals are all Chenango



Photo Courtesy of Pinstripes Photography

Photographed is of the inaugural Chobani Chamber Challenge organized by Commerce Chenango and Chobani to showcase one of the area's most precious resources: forestry and state land.

County products that are primary to building the economy, Craig says, but it is outdoor recreation, annual events, and unique destinations like the Northeast Classic Car Museum that are the core tourism attractions in the area.

"The spectacular collections at Northeast Classic Car Museum are Chenango County's major, year-round visitor attraction. Otherwise, our county's main attractions consist of recurrent events, including: Colorscape, the Chenango Blues Fest, the General Clinton Canoe Regatta, the Gus Macker tournament, the antique car show, and county fair," said Craig.

It is reported that in 2015, the most recent year that data was available, visitors to these annual attractions contributed \$28,455,000 into the local economy, supporting more than 500 jobs and generating \$1.9 million in local

taxes. Still, Craig notes that the economy throughout Chenango County remains polarized.

"Our large companies with regional, national, and global customer bases continued to grow and prosper in 2016," said Craig. "These include Alvogen, Chobani, GOLDEN Artist Colors, GE/Unison, Kerry Bio-science, NBT Bank, and Raymond Corporation. And while this growth has resulted in the creation of many good jobs, employers are often unable to recruit qualified candidates from within Chenango County."

Craig suspects the lack of qualified workers throughout the county is a result of the fact that—as with most small communities—the majority of young people are known to leave the area after high school or college for employment in larger metropolitan areas. While a number of

Chenango County natives eventually return to the area as professionals, Craig says in the meantime most of these positions are filled by commuters from neighboring counties.

"Over time, this erodes the viability of some of our small-businesses—especially in the retail and service sectors—because paychecks that are earned in Chenango County are spent elsewhere," deduced Craig.

In an effort to counter this dilemma, Commerce Chenango says that they have a number of projects currently in-process that share the common goal of increasing job opportunities throughout the county. When asked if it could be expected that some of these initiatives would be implemented in 2017, Craig says, "2017 could see some of these projects cross the finish line, but we can't reveal specifics at this point for reasons of confidentiality."

Whether or not the proposed meat-processing plant in the Town of Sherburne would be among these job opportunities remains unclear.

"Value-added processing of farm products is a major economic development priority in much of upstate New York. A USDA slaughter facility would be part of that," said Craig. "Whether Sherburne is the best location, though, remains an open question."

Looking ahead to 2017, Commerce Chenango is planning on playing an important role in a regional and statewide push to reform workers' compensation as a public policy initiative. It is reported that in order to advance this initiative, they are working with NYS

Senator Fred Akshar's Senate District 52 Small Business Advisory Council—a council formed in early 2016 to aid businesses with a bottom-up approach—and the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

The underlying goal of it all, says Craig, is to increase the size and number of paychecks earned, cashed, spent, and ultimately invested throughout Chenango County.

"The chamber part of our organization was founded with the goal of being the business voice of Chenango County. That was more than 50 years ago. And most member businesses rely on industry-specific trade organizations and lobbying groups to advance their public policy goals. But we believe that many policy makers—especially at the state level—still fail to grasp the issues that define day-to-day life in rural upstate New York," said Craig.

Nevertheless, Commerce Chenango plans to focus on integrating job creation and education with community development this year.

"It is complicated, but it's very important that people around the county understand what they're supporting with their membership dollars, and that goes beyond the ability to attend chamber events," concluded Craig. "So coming up in February, we will launch a series of outreach events around the county—particularly centered on school districts—with invitations to all stakeholders as well as prospective members. Stay tuned."

What does your business need?

- ◀ Networking, Referrals, Visibility, Great Benefits
- ◀ Start-up & Expansion Assistance, Low-cost loan programs, Entrepreneur Support
- ◀ Financial incentives for expansion or creation of jobs
- ◀ Tourism Promotion
- ◀ Community Development or Leadership Education

If you said yes to any of the above:

Here are five reasons why you should be part of Commerce Chenango:

1. The Chamber of Commerce
2. Development Chenango Corporation
3. County of Chenango IDA
4. Tourism Promotion & Community Involvement
5. Chenango Foundation

Commerce Chenango is excited to announce a new Chamber Benefit Savings Program. As a member you have access to savings from industry leaders such as UPS® and Lenovo®.

The Program provides additional value to your membership and is a free benefit, there is no cost to enroll. Other benefits include: Enhanced listing on our website, promotional opportunities, governmental advocacy and more.

You may qualify for a discounted membership if you are you a 501c3, individual or sole proprietor, if you have more than one business or are currently a member of another Chamber.



Commerce Chenango's business development division works closely with state and local development organizations to enhance business and industry, and to create and retain jobs in the area. Development Chenango can offer excellent economic development packages to qualifying businesses. With a goal of providing long-term benefits for the community and business, incentive programs have assisted with both successful business attraction and retention projects.



The County of Chenango IDA considers potential projects and determines benefits utilizing an eligibility application and cost benefits analysis. It works closely with current and prospective Chenango County businesses encourage investment and job creation that will have a significant positive impact on the surrounding area.

As the county's designated tourism agency, it is our privilege to welcome visitors and promote our community as a whole. CCT continues to advocate for a quality of life that assists in attracting businesses and contributing to the economy. Our offices continue to be a distribution point for visitors and residents looking for tourism information.



Chamber | Tourism | Economic Development

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