



Progress CHENANGO 24

VOL. 9

AN EVENING SUN PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY 9, 2024

'Gradual improvement' is Commerce Chenango's key to a better future

SHAWN MAGRATH
EVENING SUN

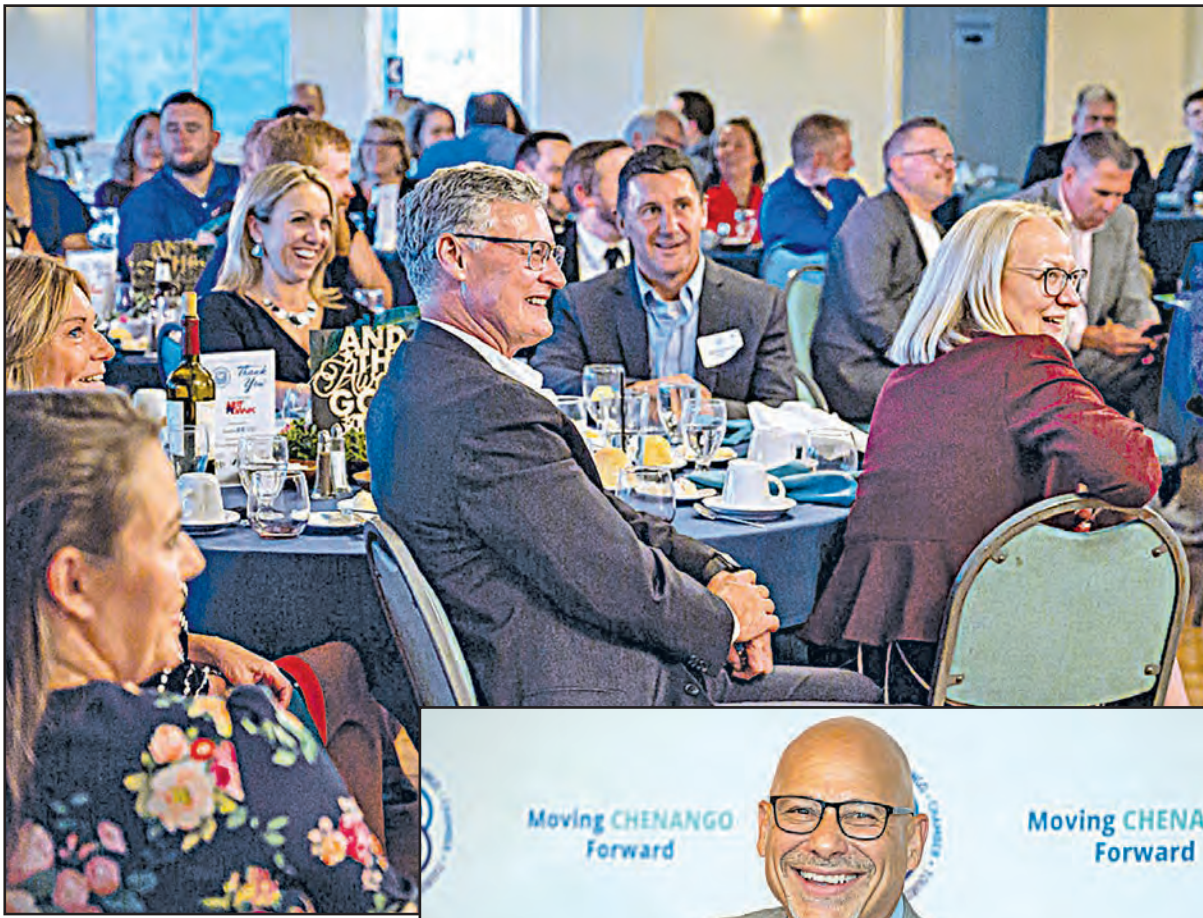
NORWICH – After a year at the helm of Commerce Chenango, President and CEO Sal Testani says his agency's looking ahead with optimism – and a mild sense of realism – about what's in store for 2024.

Commerce Chenango saw an eventful year, adding nearly 70 new members to its roster in 2023, launching new events, and continuing programs that have made the agency a go-to for businesses looking to start up, relocate, or network with stakeholders and other business leaders in the area.

"Commerce Chenango is here to make Chenango County a better place to live, work, and visit," said Testani. "I think that starts with community engagement, talking to businesses, talking to patrons, and then building on things we're good at. We're trying to make sure that our organization is sustainable and someplace that's good for the community."

Mindful of that philosophy, Commerce Chenango hosted a slew of events over the last year promoting sustainable economic growth. Its Community Spotlight series has touted local businesses and organiza-

Continued on page 58 ▶



Commerce Chenango celebrate its annual awards Gala in June at the Canasawacta Country Club in Norwich. The Gala recognized businesses and individuals chosen for their accomplishments and achievements for the past year. (Photo by Commerce Chenango)



About a year ago Commerce Chenango welcomed President and CEO Sal Testani to head the organization. He says he hopes to promote an optimistic sense of realism to help the community grown. (Photo by Commerce Chenango)



Peter and Donna Faber own and operate the family business Faber's Home & Kitchens and Countryside Stove & Chimney in Oxford. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

Faber's Home & Kitchens celebrates 35 years

TYLER MURPHY
EVENING SUN MANAGING EDITOR

OXFORD – Faber's Home & Kitchens will celebrate its 35th year as an Oxford business in 2024.

Pete Faber is owner of Faber's Home & Kitchens and Countryside Stove & Chimney of Oxford, which shares the same building. Countryside Stove & Chimney is managed by his son, Peter.

The demographics for the two companies are totally different, but the companies are intertwined, sharing expertise and employees.

Faber's Home & Kitchens was created in 1989.

Unfortunately in the early '90s was when Proctor and Gamble moved out of the area and a recession hit Chenango County.

"So there were some really tough years at the start. But when you're self-employed and you made a huge investment in opening a store, it's like farming - just because you had a bad crop doesn't mean you walk away from it that year, you just know that you have to stay alive and next year hopefully things will get better," he said.

"My first remodeling job I did was when I was 18 years old, so this is my 52nd year of remodeling work and contracting," said Faber.

He started out in North Jersey, and was partners his with father-in-law operating a home improvement business and a kitchen and bath showroom.

"That's where I had my roots, but I moved here in 1989 and started over. It was tough to move to a new area where nobody knows you. The only way you go any place is by quality of work and word of mouth," he said.

"I've always had support from my family. In the early days it was my son-in-law, Josh Gould, who helped me, but he left in 2003 to join the Sheriff's Department. Then his wife, Jennifer, who is my daughter, worked here for the last nine years as the business manager. My son, Peter, runs the business at the other side of the building, Countryside Stove & Chimney, 100 percent," said Faber.

The business was in Oxford for five years before the family purchased a building with help from the Oxford Industrial Development. Oxford Industrial Development is a nonprofit that lends money to small businesses in the Oxford area.

"It was a success story, because at the time my lease wasn't being renewed she wanted me to buy the building but the terms weren't reasonable and in hindsight that was the best thing that could've happened to me," he said.

Countryside Stove & Chimney of Oxford

One of the reasons Faber started Countryside in 1998

Continued on page 57 ▶

Trusted by customers for more than 60 years: Mayhood's Sporting Goods



Business owner Mike Mayhood, second from left, and the Mayhood's Sporting Goods staff. Mayhood's offers products for hunting, hiking, archery and a number of other outdoor activities. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

TYLER MURPHY
EVENING SUN MANAGING EDITOR

NORWICH - The 62-year history of Mayhood's Sporting

Goods began with a sign on a front porch in the early 1960's when a father and son decided to share their extra fishing worms with the neighborhood. Store owner Michael

Mayhood said the business was started by his parents, Merritt "Red" Mayhood and Charlotte Mayhood, when he was around five years old at their home on Division Street in Norwich.

"I've been running Mayhood's since 1990. It was my father's before that, and it was only live bait and tackle," he said.

Continued on page 54 ▶

Trusted by customers for more than 60 years: Mayhood's Sporting Goods -



In 2022, Mayhood's celebrated its 60th anniversary and was recognized by the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

Continued from page 53 ▶

"It actually started when my oldest brother wanted to go fishing and my dad told him to pick the worms and he would take him fishing.

"They had extra worms, so they put a sign on the porch, 'Worms for sale'" said Mayhood.

The worms sold so fast the family began actively picking them. Kids in the neighborhood would also pick worms to sell. All the family sold for a time was worms, but as more people stopped by many asked where they could also buy other fishing gear.

Mayhood recalled, "So I went out and bought hooks, sinkers and bobbers and marked them up and sold them, and after doing that two or three times, we had so much business that we ended up going through a distributor to get a better price."

The business was transformed from Mayhood's Bait Shop into Mayhood's Bait and Tackle.

Over the years, a little bit at a time, the family kept adding inventory and when they finally had enough money saved they purchased land and built a store. "We never thought we'd be able to fill the store once we had it built, but the store is full," said Mayhood.

Chenango County is a special place

In 1990 Mayhood's expanded inventory for hunting, hiking, archery and a number of other outdoor activities and the name became Mayhood's Sporting Goods. In 2022, Mayhood's

celebrated its 60th anniversary and was recognized by the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry.

Today, Mayhood's carries firearms, ammunition, archery supplies, fishing supplies, paintball gear, footwear, clothing, and much more.

"I do appreciate the local support, and I cherish my help. We try to do the right things all the time, and we try to increase our selection so that they have a good place to shop, and we try to keep competitive prices. I appreciate our customers, because I know there's a lot of other places they could go to get the stuff that we sell," said Mayhood.

"I'm still trying to keep a good inventory, I'm trying to invest in the right inventory at the right times. We have areas of growth, like trapping, fishing and footwear, so we're going to increase inventory in those departments to make up for the lack in ammunition sales. It's seasonal, so right now we're taking down our deer hunting stuff and we're putting in more predator and turkey stuff. We're having a turkey seminar as well."

Mayhood said Chenango County is lucky to have so much wilderness and the local area would benefit by embracing and advertising its outdoor identity more.

"In our local area, we are in the midst of some of the best hunting in New York State. We've got more state land in Chenango County than any county in New York State, outside of the Adirondack Park," he said.

"We're close to Hudson Valley, we're close to the Adirondacks, we're close to the Catskills, and we have deer and turkey hunting, we have good fishing in the rivers, lakes and ponds. So this is where people want to use the products that we sell," he said.

"People come here for hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, camping — there's a lot of camping sites that people come here from out of the area to enjoy. Bowman Lake is a real nice facility. People come here just to be in the outdoors, to be in the country," he said.

Over the years the Mayhood family has donated to a number of youth organizations relating to education, athletics and scholarships.

As a personal policy Mayhood said he has always tried to find a way to "donate to everything that is involved with children."

He said, "The school programs, stuff like that. We've helped with fundraisers in the past, like the SPCA's annual fundraiser, the Snowball. We try to do stuff like that as much as we can."

For many years Mayhood has held a Customer Appreciation Sale around August that attracts other private vendors and crowds of customers.

"We're continuing to grow our demographics and customer base with advertisements, so we are getting more well known further outside of the local region. We have to go after that larger market because so much is happening to our mar-

Continued on page 55 ▶

Thank You For 25 Years!

Offering safe and reliable waste & recycling services for your home or business



Casella has been a part of the Oneonta community since 1998. We're proud to employ the very best in the area and to provide economically and environmentally sustainable services to help keep our community safe, clean, and thriving!



Matt Lubbers
Otsego County resident
& driver for over 6 years



ESTABLISHED 1975

607-432-5351 • casella.com

Trusted by customers for more than 60 years: Mayhood's Sporting Goods -

Continued from page 54 ▶

ket here with customers going to Pennsylvania," he said.

New York State gun laws are harder to follow

"We were able to comply with all of the New York State Police and Federal requirements to stay in business - that had been a big focus for us in 2023," said Mayhood.

In the past few years, especially in 2023, New York State passed several unprecedented laws that fundamentally changed how gun owners in rural parts of the state have been treated for the past generation.

"All day long people are asking us questions about the laws. They're confused, and the laws are confusing. I was threatened by an individual to be sued because I retained his social security number that he wrote down to buy ammo. The law says I have to have your social security number to buy ammo," said Mayhood.

New York State, which had some of the most stringent requirements already in the country, has introduced additional requirements for background checks and has expanded the checks to include ammunition by state police.

It also requires owners to renew their permits more

often. The state has effectively revoked the right to carry a pistol in almost all places even with a permit. New York State now also prohibits the sale of semi-automatic rifles without a permit.

Many of these new changes also include additional state fees and are in the process of being legally challenge in court. New York has been previously ordered to relax some regulations but in response to those rulings political leaders created different more-strict laws to take their place instead.

Failure by law-abiding owners and permit approved holders to properly follow the changing requirements can result in their guns being seized without compensation and criminal felony charges being filed against them.

The sudden tightening of the laws and lack of clarity has sparked demand for guns and encouraged many owners to seek gray area's of compliance. These changes in attitudes have been felt in gun clubs and on the bottom line of New York gun stores.

Gun store owners and employees bear the brunt of handling the public's responses and questions, since they are the ones who are helping gun owners navigate a legal sale.

They are often the first people to notify gun owners, many who have had their firearms for decades, of the consequences the new laws will have on them.

"We have ten employees, five full time and five part-time. It's hard to find the right workers sometimes. We have a good crew right now, and I count on them for everything," said Mayhood.

"We're very fortunate to get people traveling from further away to come here. That's why it's so important for us to stay

up on top of the laws to comply and stay in business, because so many more people are counting on us," he said.

The new laws are changing the habits of gun owners, and perhaps not for the better warned Mayhood.

In the last few years he suspects unregistered ghost guns and out of state purchases for ammunition and firearms are increasing. Though often illegal, these practices are hard to trace and owners do not have to worry about compliance with the constantly changing laws, unless they are caught.

The legal hobby of reloading and making your own ammunition at home is also increasing.

Mayhood's has tried to adapt to this new trend. "We have seminars scheduled so we can try to get customers in here. We have one coming up about reloading for beginners and novices."

He said Hornady manufacturers are bringing in machinery and have a hands-on ammunition reloading experience at Mayhood's.

"Reloading- making your own ammunition- is a huge new thing that a lot of people are getting into now. You don't need a background check with reloading. There's a lot of skepticism against our government, as you know, and a lot of people don't trust them with all of this information that they've got," he said.

Many of the new laws in New York State went into effect on September 3 of 2023.

"There was a whole sheet of stuff that we had to do," said Mayhood.

New York State requires data from surveillance cameras be stored for two years, and requires cameras on all doors for firearm sellers.

The locations allowed to sell

ammunition has been restricted, such as hardware stores no longer being allowed to sell ammunition. New rules prohibit customers from touching ammunition themselves.

Stores are prohibited from showing guns to anyone under 18, even though the legal hunting age is below that.

"They don't want us to encourage anybody under the age of 18 to buy a gun, even though they can get a hunting license. You have to be 14 to get a hunting license in New York. We had to put signs all over that nobody under 18 can handle a gun on the floor. We had to move all of the ammo to the back as well," he said.

Before the new laws took effect a customer could buy ammunition with a driver's license and no background check. Now an extensive check is done, even when buying just one bullet of any kind. This has made the process of buying ammunition much more time consuming.

"For ammunition, the customer has a page and a half of information that they have to fill out now, including social security number, address and all that stuff.

Then we have to go online to New York State's website and enter all of that information and what kind of ammo, what caliber, and how many bullets they're buying - each and every time they go to buy ammo.

Then the state either gives us permission or denies us or delays the process for allowing the customer to get the ammo. The customer isn't told why if they're denied or delayed. We've even had current, active state troopers delayed or denied on ammunition purchases," said Mayhood.

Most New York firearm sell-

ers now have a special section filled with attempted ammo purchases that are pending, waiting for the state to approve them so a customer can return to pick them up later.

"They know everything that's going on now with ammo, even if you bought ammo here, then went to Bass Pro and bought ammo, or somewhere else, New York would still know what you're buying, how much you're buying, and when you're buying it. So consequently, a lot of people are going to Pennsylvania to buy their ammo now. That was one of the most significant changes that happened for us last year," said Mayhood.

He also said the state is planning on increasing the sales tax on ammunition and firearms and firearm accessories by 11 percent.

"You can save 11 percent in sales tax in Pennsylvania, and no background checks, but the way I read it, it's against the law to buy the ammo there. You can buy ammo in another state, but you can't bring it into New York. All ammunition acquired in New York has to come from a licensed dealer, according to the new law. We're losing a big customer base now to Pennsylvania."

The state has also added an additional layer to purchasing a firearm requiring it to be registered and approved by state police.

"The feds don't do the background checks for ammo, that goes to the state. The state police are still transferring the call to the feds for the gun background checks, but they're recording everything on the form at the state level and retaining that information," said Mayhood.

He said business owners expect the new laws to be challenged in court and overturned due to constitutionality, but it

hasn't been challenged yet.

"One thing that is really positive is that we have been able to comply to the new rules and stay in business so far," said Mayhood.

"We do have a lot of loyal customers who continue to call on us for their needs, and we are reaching a further demographic of customers because a lot of small gun store are now closed," he said.

In the last year two firearm dealers in the Utica area closed, another in Sidney and one in Greene. Other larger stores like Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods have decided to stop selling or limit the selling of ammunition and firearm products.

"We have to do additional training now too. New York State sent us a fifteen page thing on rules for selling ammo. Mainly what it is: know your customer, make sure you have their ID. We've been doing a lot of this with guns forever, but now we have to do it with ammo as well," he said.

The New York State police by law now have to also inspect the store at least twice a year to confirm compliance.

Moving forward, Mayhood said there are no plans to expand or change the way they do things. He said he just wants to continue to serve their customers that have supported them all these years. He also said the store will always follow the law no matter what it is.

"We have a real good relationship with our manufacturers and our vendors, and we really appreciate our customers that have been loyal to us for a lot of years. We see a lot of the same faces here now as they were in 1990," he said.

AMERICAN FIREWORKS DISPLAY LLC

PO Box 980, Oxford, NY 13830

Kevin Fritschler: KEVIN@AMERICANFIREWORKSMFG.COM

CELL 607-316-3011 • FAX: 607-647-5405 • TOLL FREE: 855-HDPYROS



For All Your Sign and Screenprinting Needs

(607) 242-4204

Dannyboy4479@gmail.com



Whether you are buying or selling, Posson Realty LLC knows farms.

Offering a specialized service devoted strictly to Agriculture.



245 Posson Road, Norwich, NY 13815 • 607-334-9727

Kara Posson-Reed, Associate Broker

Rich Posson, Licensed Salesperson

Noah Posson, Licensed Salesperson

www.possonrealty.net possonrealtyllc@gmail.com



Your Home Away From Home

The BIDA HOME offers:

- Pleasant atmosphere in a quiet, friendly community.
- Freedom to come and go as you please.
- All your meals.
- All your housekeeping and laundry needs.
- Help in getting to your scheduled appointments.
- Help in taking prescription medicines.



Bida Adult Home

WASHINGTON PARK, OXFORD, NY 13830

607-843-6769

We offer you the freedom of being on your own with the comfort of never being alone.



WE ARE HAPPY TO BE BACK AT ROMA'S AS OWNERS, AND WE THANK OUR MANY FRIENDS AND CUSTOMERS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Gabe, Danielle and Family

We look forward to serving you dine in or take out. Thank you also to our dedicated staff of employees. Glad you are on the Roma's team!

Quality you can taste. Always fresh! Always delicious!

Roma

PIZZERIA & RESTAURANT

607-843-6555

2 Main St., Oxford

Open 7 Days A Week

Order Online at www.toasttab.com/roma-pizza



Kozmo's Hometown Eatery serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Open every weekday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and week nights from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Take-out, dine-in and delivery are available: call (607)373-4037. (Submitted photo)

Business SPOTLIGHT

Kozmo's Hometown Eatery

SOPHIA ROOT
EVENING SUN

NORWICH – Kozmo's Hometown Eatery, a new family run business in the heart of Norwich.

Located on North Broad Street in the building where Garf's was, Kozmo's has been serving delicious meals since its opening in March of 2023. Owner Savannah Collins described her restaurant as "If a diner and a deli had a baby."

Collins and her co-owner Kris Maiurano are known for many things, such as their creative and ever-changing list of daily specials and being the only restaurant in town to vend everything Bagelry's Bagel bowls. Most importantly, they are known for their appreciation and support of the local community.

Local business engagement is one of Collins' favorite parts of having her business located here. Collins is grateful for

Commerce Chenango and her fellow businesses for their support and facilitation of Kozmo's. In return, she is generous with her time and resources. According to Collins, "The more you invest in the community, the more you get back".

She has many ways of giving back. Kozmo's contributes to the backpack program and hosted the Norwich City School District's Stay and Play Foodies group in her restaurant earlier this year, giving them a behind the scenes tour of Kozmo's and letting the kids make some of their specialty waffles.

Collins displays local artists' work in her restaurant and has been known to provide opportunities for community members. "We have a block that attracts kids who have no sense of purpose. One day, I gave them brooms and told them to sweep the block for a free meal" Collins said. "They were so excited and the people in our diner were complimenting them. When some little old ladies told these kids that they were such hard workers, you could see these kids smile from the inside." Collins mentioned how fond of a memory this was for her, and how impactful it was to these kids and her patrons.

Loyalty is a common theme with Kozmo's Hometown Eatery, as evidenced by Collins' commitment to bettering her community. Maiurano and Collins grew up here and love being near family. They both attest that Norwich is a beautiful place to raise kids and they are thrilled to be right on the corner where they can engage with people, friends and strangers alike.

"There's nothing better than the vibe on a Saturday morning when people are having conversations in our diner. It's just surreal. We play good music and get the vibes right, it's still weird to us, but it's the best when people are busy and chattering," said Collins.

Kozmo's Hometown Eatery serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Open every weekday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and week nights from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Takeout, dine-in and delivery are available: call (607)373-4037.

To learn more, visit Kozmo's Hometown Eatery on Facebook, or drop by their 24 North Broad Street location during business hours.

RIVERSIDE REDEMPTION CENTER

NO LIMIT ON ORDERS



Please separate GLASS from PLASTIC & CANS
— Thank You —

SPONSORING SATURDAY BOTTLE & CAN DRIVES,
Call Us For Details

Location:
5012 State Hwy. 12, Norwich.

Phone: 607-316-0408

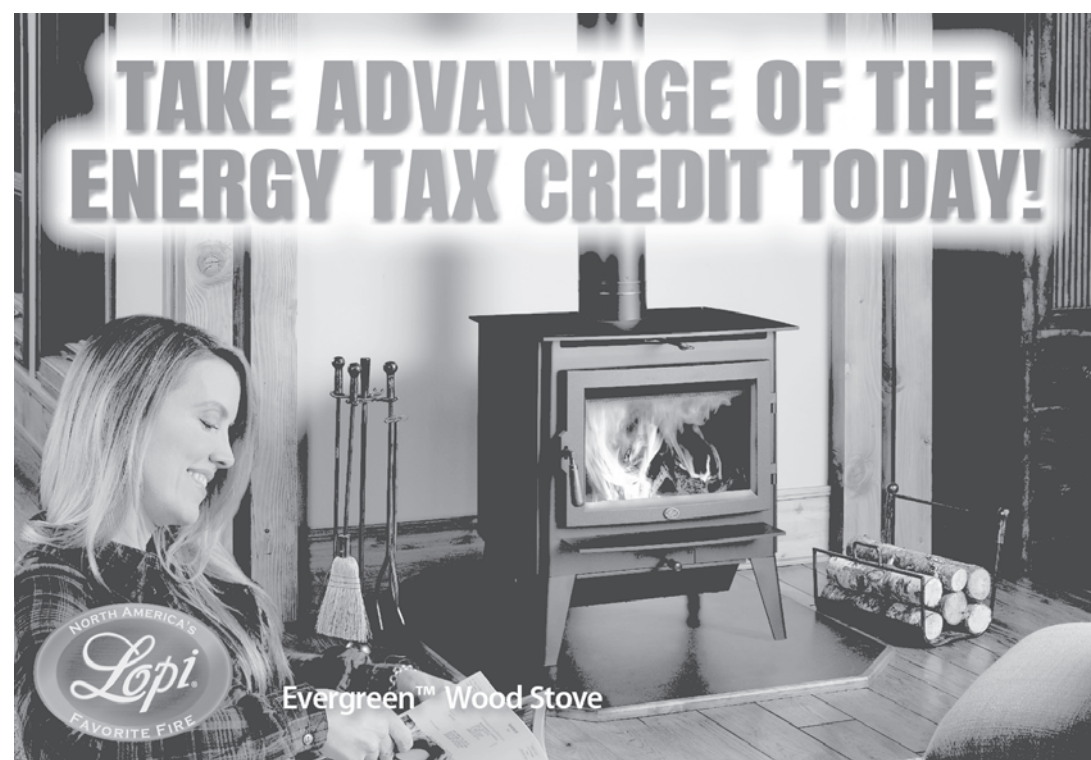
WE DO LARGE PICK UPS TOO! CALL TODAY



116 Warn Pond Rd.,
Rte. 12 South, Oxford
607-843-2000

Hours: Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri. 10 am-5 pm,
Thurs. 10 am-6 pm; Sat. 9 am-1 pm

Financing Available



YOUR TAX CREDIT CAN ADD UP TO \$2,000!

Come in today to fall in love with a qualifying stylish and efficient Lopi Wood or Pellet, Stove or Insert.

No Power? No Problem!



Don't be left out in the cold this winter. A Fireplace Xtrordinair® or Lopi® hearth appliance can provide your family with warmth & comfort even when the power goes out! P.S. - You can even use your Lopi to cook on! Now is the perfect time to invest in a beautiful Fireplace Xtrordinair® or Lopi® gas or wood heater. Come see our vast selection of fireplaces, inserts and stoves that can add the ambiance of fire to any home. Talk to us about your creative vision of fire and let us help you ignite the fire within.

Faber's Home & Kitchens celebrates 35 years -

Continued from page 53 ▶

was because the two companies complimented each other so well. In the wintertime, Chenango County construction comes to a standstill and few are buying home improvement products.

"We were at a home show in Binghamton, and we sold a wood stove, and my wife said 'I'd like to open a business'. So one thing led to another, and she was the one who opened Countryside Stove & Chimney of Oxford," explained Faber.

"My son-in-law was working for us then, and I had about three or four carpenters — back in those days we were doing sales, installs and general remodeling work — doing a little bit of everything to make it in Chenango County. There isn't enough to specialize in just one thing here. So that's when we opened Countryside," he said.

There were about 12 Countryside Stove & Chimneys in New York State at one time but only about half that number now.

"We buy through a wholesale distributor out of Western New York, and having the franchise name, we're able to buy at a better price. We also got assistance with the storeroom design and training and all of that kind of stuff that came along with the franchise. When you're new that was huge. We're at the point now where we can go there and train dealers for them," said Faber.

Being self employed takes dedication said Faber.

"There's no such thing as days off, no sick days, very few vacation days. And because this is a rural area it's tough. You can't charge the money here for doing what you're doing like you can out in the suburban areas. Most



Faber's Home & Kitchens will celebrated its 35th year in 2024. The company is owned by Pete Faber He also owns Countryside Stove & Chimney of Oxford at the same location. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

of your overhead costs are the same, but we have to work on a much smaller margin because you can't pass all the costs on to the customers here," he said.

"When I go to national shows and trainings and they tell you how much you should be charging and you talk to the other guys and hear how much they're charging, we're probably half the price," he said.

He said the increase in minimum wage was very hard for small businesses.

"We used to hire a lot more kids to work for us, but I can't justify \$15 per hour for them. Then to be fair to my adult employees I've had to increase their wages too. I'm paying employees more now than I ever

could have fathomed. I'm paying them more than what I was charging per hour with company overhead twenty-five years ago," he explained.

The company doesn't have trouble keeping employees, but it's very hard to find new ones.

Technical skills are required and there is a small pool of qualified candidates in the area.

Cabinetry for kitchens and bathrooms is Faber's number one product. Flooring is the second-most popular product.

Seasonal products, such as vinyl railings, maintenance-free decking, boat docks, etc. are also popular. A majority of customers are private homeowners.

"I've been doing dealings with some of these families for thir-

ty-five years now, and every time I go to their house to measure for a kitchen or something like that, we sit down and have a cup of coffee and talk about family, you know, 'what's your brother doing' and that kind of stuff. Almost everybody who comes through the door here, I can connect the dots and know why they're coming in. It's very rare that we have complete strangers come in through the door," said Faber.

The business does not get a lot of through traffic so when Faber meets a customer they probably traveled to the store for a specific reason.

"We're a destination. People will come in the door here only because they want to come here.



Cabinetry for kitchens and bathrooms along with flooring are some of Faber's Home & Kitchens most popular products. (Photo by Tyler Murphy)

Because of that we have a higher ratio of closing sales than they do at a home center like Lowes, where everybody and their brother will walk in and ask about designing a kitchen, but then you won't ever see them again. People are coming here already knowing about us, and they want to buy from us. It's a whole different type of customer," he said.

Country Stove & Kitchen shares space in the same building.

Faber has seven full-time employees, and seven to ten part-time employees. They also work closely with a number of local contractors.

"Ones that we know are of quality, that we recommend. Likewise, these guys send their customers to us," he said.

"We're a mini home center, where it's one-stop shopping for anything you need for your home improvement," said Faber. "We're like the special order desk at Lowes. The difference though is that we don't inventory anything here, everything is special order. Anything here at the store, one of us family members or the employees have installed it, we've been to the factory, we've had in-store training — we're knowledgeable, inside and out about everything we offer."

Get Answers To Your Medicare Questions Today!

Call or text me for a private and no cost consultation!

As your independent health care resource, I can offer you Medicare Plans from several private insurance companies...

So you're guaranteed to get the plan that may be best for you!

Eileen Fetzko Hoffman

Independent Sales Agent

607-316-0255 • [www.Medicarevalue.com/Eileen Hoffman](http://www.Medicarevalue.com/EileenHoffman)

THORNTON ELECTRIC

Specializing in Electric Remodeling, Residential & Commercial

Norwich, NY • 607-336-7164

ski-doo

Proud ski-doo Dealer 50+ Years!

Full Service for Snowmobiles & ATVs

PRESTON SNOWMOBILE, LLC.

www.prestonsnowmobile.com

607-336-2815

241 Murphy Rd, Oxford NY 13830

We are family owned and operated for over 60 years.

We believe that this makes a great difference in the care and service we offer to the families we serve!

For information on pre-arranged funerals and your free copy of

"Guidelines for Putting My House in Order" booklet, write or phone.

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Phone: _____



607-843-6888

BEHE FUNERAL HOME INC.

21 Main St., Oxford, NY 13830
 Steven E. Behe, Licensed Manager

'Gradual improvement' is Commerce Chenango's key to a better future -

Continued from page 53

tions, while networking events throughout the county connected business leaders with local bureaucrats. What's more, job fairs sponsored by Commerce Chenango have opened opportunities for people to submit their resumes directly to the employers looking to hire.

Perhaps the agency's foremost event of 2023 was held at the Chenango County fairgrounds. The inaugural "Taste of Chenango" saw more than 4,000 visitors to the fairgrounds in July, marking one of the county's most successful festivals of the year.

"One of the things we wanted to do was highlight things Chenango County has to offer. And one of the most important things we have here is a sense of pride that people feel," Testani explained.

The idea was that if you can make it, eat it, drink it, and sell it, then we wanted to promote it."

Given its success, Commerce Chenango has floated the idea of making future Taste of Chenango events a two-day affair.

Though Taste of Chenango

may again be a headline of tourism events hosted by Commerce Chenango in 2024, the agency has also directed attention toward helping recruitment efforts of local businesses through a new microcredential program that would provide young people the skills needed to get a job locally.

"Many companies would give young people a 90-day trial right away if they have those credentials," Testani said. Commerce Chenango is now collaborating with employers on developing the curriculum, and it's talking with local school administrators about how that curriculum could be applied to content areas in high school classrooms.

The agency is also looking forward to a new cohort of graduates from Leadership Chenango, a program designed to groom future leaders in the hopes of preparing them to assume roles of responsibility in political, civic, and charitable organizations as well as contribute to their professional and career success.

local government, agriculture, education, social services, the nonprofit sector, judicial system, economic development, business and entrepreneurship, leadership development, tourism, and health care in Chenango County.

"Leadership Chenango works with emerging leaders throughout the county and gives them an exposure to a variety of businesses within the county, hoping that they can take best practices with them and have a better appreciation that Chenango County is a good place to live and work," Testani said.

Commerce Chenango also has an eye on business developments in Central New York that could have an indirect impact locally - namely Micron Technologies which announced in 2022 that it would build the country's largest semiconductor manufacturing plant in Onondaga County.

"When I think about what we want to focus on this year, we want to try to understand what it is that truly makes this place attractive for new businesses," Testani said. "We're not only going to promote the things we have here, but we also need to think about what we could have here. How do we exploit what we have, and how can we capitalize on that? We want to figure those things out."

"We're not really in the home run business," he added. "To get Chenango County to a new level, it's not going to be one big thing that happens. It's not going to be done like that. It's



In January 2024 Commerce Chenango hosted a Career Expo at the SUNY Morrisville in Norwich Campus. (Photo by Commerce Chenango)

going to be done by a series of gradual improvements over time. It's going to be done by good people coming together around important issues and moving them forward."

One of those "gradual improvements" in the last year came in the form of a \$10 million New York State grant for downtown Norwich. When the economic development grant was announced in 2021, Commerce Chenango went to work pinpointing the most promising investments in Norwich's business district.

Identified projects will enhance business and housing opportunities, improve streetscape walkability and public spaces, and expand arts and cultural amenities. The grant will also spur job creation and stimulate the local economy. Nine projects were slated for DRI funds which will leverage private investments. Money will be used for facade improvements and interior renovations to create apartments and retail space in some of Norwich's oldest buildings.

Allocations include: \$3.36 million for development of a 45-room boutique hotel;

\$3 million for redevelopment of the 10,000 square-foot Unguentine commercial building and creation of roughly two dozen new apartments and commercial space;

\$292,000 for the Heritage building on North Broad Street for a healthy food market and brewery;

\$140,000 for facade improvements and new living space at 15-19 Lackawanna Ave.;

\$1.1 million to improve East, West, and Library parks to support better programming and events;

\$165,000 for updated seating and a digital display on the historic marquee at the Colonia Theatre;

\$570,000 to upgrade the seating, lighting, and audio-visual equipment in the Martin Kappel Theater at the Chenango County Council of the Arts;

\$470,000 to outfit American Avenue with improved lighting and aesthetics.

Another \$600,000 of DRI funds will be utilized by the Development Chenango Corporation (DCC), the economic development arm of Commerce Chenango, to pad its Downtown Norwich Small

Project Grant Fund. The fund leverages investments from private property owners for building improvements and other transformational projects in the heart of the city. Testani says DCC is conceiving additional funding and meetings were scheduled with project leaders to keep plans moving forward.

In the meantime, Commerce Chenango is honed in on its core mission of bringing people together to make Chenango County a better place to live, work, and visit.

"If you listen to enough people and they talk about things they think are good, could be better, or be done in this community, and those things resonate, then I realize those are things that we should get people together on," said Testani. "We're fortunate that we have a lot of people in the community who care. If we could get several people in a room who care about our safety and prosperity, making our community a place where we can be comfortable, and improving life, then I think we can be much better off."

Wharton Valley The Gazette

Serving the Unadilla and Butternut Valleys since 1871

The GAZETTE

New Berlin's own social network... delivered to your mailbox or at a local newsstand every week.

Advertisement for The Gazette newspaper, showing a sample of the publication with headlines like 'Boy Scouts thank supporters and celebrate recruitment boost' and 'January is Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month'.

WANT A SAMPLE OF OUR WORK?



YOU'RE HOLDING IT!

Not only do we print The Evening Sun each weekday, we also printed all sections of this year's "Progress Chenango". In a very short time, the 15 full and part-time employees of Sun Printing, Inc. have helped us to become one of the largest newsprint printers and paper assemblers in Central New York.

If you are holding a copy of Progress Chenango, The Evening Sun, The Gazette, Norwich Pennysaver, Sidney Pennysaver, Oneonta/Cooperstown Pennysaver, Turnpike Pennysaver, Schoharie County Edition of My Shopper, Mohawk Valley Edition of My Shopper, Hi Neighbor or the Sherburne News, we are proud to say that we handled them first.



SUN PRINTING inc. 57-65 Borden Ave • Norwich • New York

Call 337-3087 to start your subscription today - for as little as \$39 a year! (In County)



Wealth Management Without Limits



Christopher K. Griffith, CFP®, CPWA®
 Managing Partner,
 Co-Founder

In November of 2023, Stablepoint Partners was born.

While this was an intense and arduous process, it has created a truly one of a kind independent advisory firm that will make a meaningful difference for clients in the years ahead.

Thank you for your support!

We are on a mission to reimagine wealth management, revitalize the importance of personal relationships, and relentlessly make a difference in the lives of clients.

We are an independent, SEC-registered advisory firm committed to simplifying your financial world, protecting your hard-earned wealth, and pursuing growth opportunities. As reinforced by our name, we strive to ensure financial stability and confidence at every stage of life and point in your journey.



Wealth Protection



Growth Opportunities



Concierge-Level Service



Central Point of Contact





Faber's
HOME & KITCHENS

Proudly Celebrating 35 Years in Business

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED IN OXFORD SINCE 1989



LOOKING FOR A NEW KITCHEN OR BATH...

COME TO THE #1 DESIGN CENTER IN CHENANGO COUNTY.



Our designers have over 50 years of combined experience.
BUDGET TO CUSTOM, WE CAN HELP!
Call or stop in today to start your dream kitchen or bath.
Flooring • Windows
• Shower Doors
• Countertops- Corian, Quartz, Granite & Laminate
NO INTEREST FINANCING available to qualified buyers.
Stop in for details.

• WINDOWS • DOORS • SIDING • AWNINGS • SCREEN & 3 SEASON ROOMS • SHEDS • PERGOLAS



• VINYL FENCE • ALUMINUM FENCE • CEDAR FENCE



• VINYL RAILING • ALUMINUM RAILING



• COMPOSITE DECKING • POLY DECKING



• DOCKS • CARPORTS • GARAGES • UTILITY & AGRICULTURE BLDS.

116 WARN POND RD., OXFORD - CALL FOR A FREE ESTIMATE 607-843-9834

Hours: Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri. 10 am-5 pm; Thurs. 10 am-6 pm; Saturday 9 am-1 pm

YOUR COMPLETE BIG/LITTLE HOME CENTER

- Kitchen Cabinets & Vanities**
 - Omega Framed
 - Omega Full Access Frameless
 - WF Cabinetry
 - WF Capital
 - JSI Cabinetry
 - Cubitac Cabinetry
 - Avance Cabinetry
 - US Cabinet Framed
 - US Cabinet Frameless
 - Backwoods Amish Built RTA
 - Kitchen Kompact
 - Amerock Cabinet Hardware
 - Wurth Cabinet Hardware
 - Richelieu Cabinet Hardware
 - Rev-A-Shelf Cabinet Accessories
- Outdoor Kitchens**
 - Open Air Outdoor Cabinetry
 - Rock Run Aluminum Cabinetry
- Countertops**
 - WilsonArt Quartz
 - Silestone Quartz
 - Hanstone Quartz
 - Dekton
 - Sensa Granite
 - Coran Solid Surface, Quartz & Endura
 - Laminate - Custom & Postform
 - MSI Quartz
- Vanity Tops**
 - Quartz & Granite
 - Remee Cultured Marble, Granite, Quartz
 - Stone Central Granite or Silestone
 - Samuel Mueller Solid Surface
 - Swanstone Solid Surface
- Ceramic Tile & Stone**
 - Florida Tile - Wall, Floor, Backsplash
 - Merola Tile - Wall, Floor, Backsplash
 - Lungaro Backsplash & Specialty Tile
 - Earthen Treasure Granite, Marble, Stone Tile
- Sheet & LVT Flooring**
 - IVC Flexitec
 - Tarkett Fiberfloor
 - Floormation LVT Glue Down
 - Congoleum Triversa LVT Click
 - NextFloor StoneCast LVT Click
 - NextFloor Scratchmaster LVT Click
 - H*Flor Pikes Peak Click
 - H*Flor PRESTG Artistry LVT Down/Click
 - Trillium Cerameta LVT Glue Down
 - Generations Lineage LVT Glue Down
- Flooring**
 - BSL Hardwood
 - Elite Advantage Engineered Hardwood
 - Advanced Edge Sports Flooring
- Carpet**
 - NRF Select Carpet
 - Carpet Tile - Commercial & Residential
 - Indoor/Outdoor Carpet
 - Foss Carpet Tile
 - NEFS Carpet
- Shower & Tub Walls**
 - Samuel Mueller Solid Surface
 - Swanstone Solid Surface
 - Fibo Laminate
 - Wedi Tub & Shower Systems
 - Certified Wedi Pro Shower System Dealer
- Shower Doors**
 - Century Bathworks Shower Doors
 - Arizona Shower Door
 - Samuel Mueller Shower Doors
- Samuel Mueller Bath Accessories**
 - Grab Bars, Shelves, Towel Bars, Hooks,
 - Shower Niches/Storage Pods,
 - Shower Seats - Fixed & Stand Alone
- Maidstone Claw Foot Tubs, Kitchen & Bath Oak Pointe Stair & Railings Components**
 - Wood, Metal, Cable
- CycloVac Central Vacuum Cleaners**
- Railings & Porch Posts**
 - Superior Plastics Vinyl
 - Superior Plastics Cable
 - Keylink Aluminum
 - Keylink Aluminum Cable
 - Eastern Illusions Vinyl Railings
 - Eastern Ornamental Aluminum
 - Evolve Solid Plastic Railings
- Decking**
 - Clubhouse Cellular PVC
 - MoistureShield Composite
 - Evolve Solid Plastic Lumber & T&G Decking
 - Renew Decking & Trim
 - Rhino Armadillo Decking
 - TruNorth Composite
 - Duxbak Composite Decking
 - Aeratis Cellular PVC Porch Flooring
 - Siberian Larch Wood Decking
 - Western Larch Wood Decking
 - Lunawood Thermowood Decking
 - Tropical Hardwood Decking
 - Southern Yellow Pine Porch Flooring
 - Western Red Cedar Boards, Decking, Siding
 - Trimax Plastics Structural Plastic Lumber
 - ZipUP Underdeck Ceiling Panels
- Fencing**
 - Superior Plastics Vinyl
 - Keylink Aluminum
 - Masterlink Chain-link
 - Eastern Illusions Vinyl Fence
 - Eastern Ornamental Aluminum
 - Eastern Cedar
- Siding**
 - Royal Vinyl Siding
 - Foundry Vinyl Shakes & Siding
 - MidAmerica Shutters & Siding Accessories
 - Koma Cellular PVC Boards & Trim
 - Metal Sales Steel Roofing & Wall Panels
- Awnings - Retractable, Window, Door Pergolas, Sun Shades, Canopies**
 - Aristocrat Awnings
 - Sunair Awnings
 - Agecraft Aluminum Awnings
- Screen & 3 Season Rooms**
 - Ballew's Aluminum Screen Rooms
 - Ballew's Alum. Carport & Patio Covers
 - Ballew's Mobile Home Roof Overs
 - Ballew's Aluminum & Vinyl 3 Season Rms
 - Aristocrat Aluminum & Vinyl 3 Season Rms
- Outdoor Patio & Stone Veneers**
 - Adorn Firepits, Planters & Pavers
 - Genstone Veneer Panels
 - Adorn Mortarless Stone Panels
 - Interceramic Ledger Stone
 - Slimstone Stone Veneer Sheets
- Boat Docks**
 - Tommy Docks & Accessories
 - Techstar Dock Floats
 - Dockmaster Boat Ramps
 - DockEdge Dock Components & Accessories
 - American Muscle Dock Components & Accessories
- Doors & Windows**
 - NC Fiberglass & Steel Entrance Doors
 - Wood & Molded Prehung Interior Doors
 - Woodgrain Interior & Exterior Wood Doors
 - National Vinyl Sliding Doors
 - Larson Storm Doors
 - National Vinyl Replacement Windows
 - National Vinyl New Construction Windows
- American Steel Carports, Garages, Ag Bldg**
- Catskill Sheds & Garages**