



# TODAY: Cortland County

The newsletter of the Business Development Corporation promoting industry and business growth in Cortland County

## Hollenbeck's Cider Mill

The autumn go-to place for the best cider and baked goods in the county. Pages 4-5

## CRMC/Guthrie Partnership

Regional health care affiliation takes the next step forward. Page 7

## Remembering September 11

A new 9/11 memorial is dedicated at Courthouse Park. Page 8

## Hollenbeck's Leads the Charge into the Fall Season

A reliable sign of the fall season in Cortland County is the annual opening of Hollenbeck's Cider Mill in Virgil, where visitors from far and wide stop by for freshly-pressed cider, homemade donuts, crisp apples and some of the best pie you'll ever eat.

A family-run business for more than 80 years, Hollenbeck's is one of the jewels of our community and should be on everyone's "must visit" list as the cold weather settles in. We are happy to profile the business here.

Also, get more information about Cortland Regional Medical Center's new affiliation with Guthrie Clinic, a collaboration recently

approved by the New York State Department of Health and one that will set a new standard for quality health care in Cortland County for generations to come.

We've also got some detail on the recently dedicated 9/11 Memorial at the city's Courthouse Park. Commissioned art and the well-designed and constructed memorial pieces and landscaping that surround it comprise a lasting tribute to first responders and the nearly 3,000 people who lost their lives that day. We've got the story on how the memorial project took shape and who led the way on getting it done.

Finally, read up on Vine, a new, state-of-the-art wellness center in the heart of downtown Cortland. Vine, located in the Bailey Place Insurance building, is the first project completed with some assistance from the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

Thanks for reading!

*The BDC is Cortland County's principal economic development organization working for economic and community growth. Together, their programs, projects, and services aim to support existing businesses while promoting other job-creating opportunities across the county.*

# The Front Desk

It wasn't all that long ago that a leading indicator of a robust local and national economy was the unemployment rate (UE). The lower it was, the better, with available jobs being filled by people willing and able to go to work. That skilled and dedicated workforce fueled business growth and capital investment, contributing mightily to overall economic prosperity.

But these days, low unemployment rates do not tell the whole story of our economic well-being.

Here and across the country, unemployment rates are being driven to artificial lows as the labor force—a critical component of the UE rate formula that counts people working or looking for work—continues to drop. Despite a booming economy and job openings everywhere, millions of work-eligible people have removed themselves from the job hunt and chosen to remain on the sidelines.

The workforce losses are driven by retiring Baby Boomers, large numbers of Millennials enrolling in college, people choosing to stay home and care for loved ones including some unable to afford the high cost of day care, and the disabled. Other factors include opioid and other drug use, skill gaps for some who've been out of work since the recession, and pay scales for unskilled labor that do not adequately challenge social safety net benefits.

Nationally, more than 35 percent of eligible workers are not looking for a job at all.

The impacts of this are widespread and felt here in Cortland County, as well, where businesses continually tell us of their problems finding and keeping workers for open positions.

It cuts across all sectors, and it includes some businesses, like Pall Corporation and others, that have historically been selective in their hiring practices. Today, we see "help wanted" signs in front of their doors. Meat cutters, masons, carpenters, plumbers, welders, nurses, insurance agents and labor in general are in great demand, and while we're always working to bring more jobs to the community, it is an increasing challenge for us to fill the positions that we have.

Economic development and workforce organizations are mobilizing to attack the issue, and the BDC will make it a focus of its work in coming months and years. Solutions will not be found overnight.



Garry L. VanGorder  
Executive Director/CEO

18

Months of  
CRMC Affiliation  
Research

764

Number  
of Hospital  
Employees

\$100M

Pledged Guthrie  
Clinic Investment  
in CRMC

Approval of CRMC affiliation with Guthrie Clinic assures positive future for local health care.



TODAY: Cortland County is the Business Development Corporation's newsletter promoting industry and business growth in Cortland County.

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On the cover and left: Apples in 20-bushel boxes, each weighing close to 1,000 lbs., are delivered to Hollenbeck's Cider Mill, where they are sold fresh or pressed for cider.

Photos by Roger William Photography

# Main Street

## New Wellness Center Opens in Downtown Cortland

Vine Health & Fitness, a new state-of-the-art wellness center in the heart of downtown Cortland, is now welcoming members.

Vine occupies 7,000 square-feet in the Bailey Place Insurance building at 20 N. Main Street and offers the very latest in interactive fitness technology.

“We wanted to provide a space and experience for members of the Cortland community that could get them excited about fitness,” says owner Janine Franco, a physical therapist and Cortland native who most recently worked as an Outpatient Physical Therapy Supervisor at Cortland Regional Medical Center. “I’ve always enjoyed rehabilitating patients to the point of independent exercise and I’ve always had an interest in the fitness aspect of well-being.”

The project is the first completed with assistance from the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award to the city.

Among the many features at Vine:

- Key card entry 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- Staffed hours for member sign-ups and tours
- Personal training
- 1,200-square-foot group exercise room (group exercise classes will begin in November)
- Locker rooms with showers and modern finishes
- New Precor cardio and strength machines
- Interactive cardio consoles that track personal exercise statistics and goals
- Full circuit of free weights featuring kettlebells, cable cross-over and dead lift station
- Hoist MotionCage Studio functional station
- Large variety of core, balance and stretching equipment
- Vine Health & Fitness app for easy membership and class sign-ups
- Massage therapy room

The facility underwent an \$800,000 redevelopment after former office tenants moved out. More than \$1.3 million has been invested in building upgrades since it was purchased by the insurance company’s owner and Janine Franco’s husband, Steve, in 2010. The state has authorized \$270,000 in support of the project through the DRI, believing the new fitness center can be a key component of a revitalized downtown that is attracting new residents looking for that kind of amenity.

Details about Vine membership are available on Facebook and Instagram.

The Francos took special pride in announcing during an early ribbon cutting that more than 20 local contractors had taken part in completing the Vine project. “I think it shows how much talent we have in Cortland and the greater community,” said Janine Franco, who with her husband is a Cortland native. “I think sometimes that gets overlooked.”



Vine Health & Fitness is a wellness center newly opened in the heart of downtown Cortland that offers the latest in interactive fitness technology.

*Photos by Roger William Photography*

### Local Vendors and Contractors on the Vine Health & Fitness Project

American Sign and Electric  
John Bergeron, Excavating  
Corgood Construction  
Hope Cross, IT  
Cute Construction  
D + L Landscaping  
Brian Fuller, Construction  
Glass Smith Inc.

Hall Contracting  
Hopko Designs  
JMS Plumbing & Heating  
Ligas Plumbing & Heating  
McKinney Masonry  
Bob Pace, General Contractor  
Pleasant Valley Electric  
Pro Audio

RH Osborne’s, Flooring  
Mollie Riley Interiors  
Rock Co.  
Skyline Electric Supply  
Tim Smith, Electrician  
Sprouse Painting  
Stile Contracting  
Wilbedone Inc.

# Success Story

## Hollenbeck's Cider Mill

An autumn tradition for more than 80 years, Hollenbeck's is the go-to place for some of the best cider and baked goods in the region.



Matt Hollenbeck is the third generation of the family to run Hollenbeck's Cider Mill. He is seen here filling one of the cider press's 12 cloth-lined wooden racks with a layer of mashed apples. Once all 12 racks are loaded, the press will squeeze the apples and extract the juice, which is collected and later bottled for cider.

*Photos by Roger William Photography*

**B**ack in 1933, at the lowest low of the Great Depression, Americans from coast to coast were scrambling for ways to generate any kind of income.

Among these fledgling entrepreneurs was Harold "Doc" Hollenbeck of Virgil, NY, who came up with the idea to start a cider mill in an old barn on his property. "Everybody had a few apple trees on their land and having someone local who could squeeze their apples seemed like a useful service," explains Matt Hollenbeck, Doc Hollenbeck's great-grandnephew.

Residents of Virgil and other nearby towns soon began hauling their autumn apples to Hollenbeck's place, where for a few cents Doc would press them. It quickly became a

popular, and practical, seasonal event, and over the years evolved from an operation that simply pressed apples for others into a full-blown cider mill that squeezed, bottled and marketed its own cider.

Bruce Hollenbeck, Doc's son, worked with his dad at the apple press from a young age, and eventually took over the business—which now went by the name Hollenbeck's Cider Mill. Under Bruce's leadership, the mill expanded into baked goods, a country store, grape pressing and more.

In November 2016, Matt Hollenbeck, 32, the third generation to run Hollenbeck's Cider Mill, purchased the business from Bruce when he retired.

Like Bruce, Matt has been coming to the cider mill since he was a kid. "Some of my

earliest memories are of watching Bruce at the press and wanting to do it," he says. "I love the antiquity, the tradition of it. And it's not just me. Lots of people have a strong, sentimental connection to this place. It's rewarding to be part of that and continue the tradition."

Hollenbeck's Cider Mill may be grounded in tradition, but it has experienced many changes in its 86 years in operation. Today, Hollenbeck's sells cider; fresh apples; baked goods and donuts; and country store staples such as cheeses; honey and maple products; a selection of jams, jellies and preserves; pickles; fudge and lots more.

Autumn is the business's busiest time, when apple cider production is in full swing and the bakery is churning out pies by the

gross. At the height of production, Hollenbeck's may have up to 30 workers on site and scales down to five or ten as things slow down. "Off season, sometimes it's just me here running things," Hollenbeck says. "That's the nature of this kind of business."

When cider production is at its height, Hollenbeck and his crew do five to six apple pressings per day on weekends, and operate the press one day during the week. Each pressing produces 120 gallons of apple cider. Because there are no apple orchards in Cortland County, Hollenbeck purchases apples from growers along the southern shore of Lake Ontario. "We have a multi-generational relationship with these growers we've developed over many years," he says. "These are the same growers Doc and Bruce bought from."



Pie baking is a massive undertaking at Hollenbeck's Cider Mill during the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving.

Apples are delivered in 20-bushel boxes, each weighing close to 1,000 lbs. Hollenbeck's uses and stores 52 boxes a week at the height of the season.

The types of apples change throughout the season, and Hollenbeck has developed a number of apple "blends" for the best flavor. "Certain types of apples, like pie apples and hard-cider apples, don't have the right taste for our cider," he says. "Some apples, like Cortlands, produce juice that is pale in color and needs to go with other kinds of apples to get the darker color customers expect from a good apple cider."

Pie baking is another massive undertaking at Hollenbeck's during the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, with eight solid hours of daily preparation of pies that bake 144 at a time per oven. The daily selection of pies is dependent on ingredient availability, orders, "and the customers before you," so customers are encouraged to order their pies 24 hours in advance.

Hollenbeck's donut operation is also a weekend endeavor (Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) from opening day until the weekend after Halloween, when the staff pauses to focus attention on the bakery through Thanksgiving and Christmas. Donuts return starting in January on Saturdays.

"Hollenbeck's Cider Mill is a small seasonal family business that faces lots of challenges," Matt Hollenbeck says. "It's like starting a new business every year—restocking, predicting demand, finding enough seasonal help, dealing with the weather, maintaining the apple press and the other machinery—not to mention working 100 hours a week.

"But on the up side, I like the seasonal variation, the physical labor and the customer service part of the business," he says. "I get tons of interaction with workers, friends and family, while I'm carrying on a tradition filled with childhood memories and wonder.

"It's hard to put into words the feeling you get from all the people who come here to relive something that means so much to them, and to us."

## Supporting Local Business

Hollenbeck's Country Store features many products from regional businesses, including:

- Gridley Hollow Honey (Cortland)
- Twin Oaks Dairy (Truxton) Organic Pasture-Raised Beef
- Mill Race (Marathon) Maple Products
- Northland Sheep Dairy (Marathon) Lamb and Sheep's Milk Cheese
- Food and Ferments (Truxton) Lacto-Fermented Products
- Byrne Dairy (Cortlandville) Ice Cream
- River Rat Cheese (Thousand Islands) Cheese, Mustard, Horseradish
- Healthy Sisters' Soup & Bean Works (Rochester) Soup Mixes
- New Hope Mills (Auburn) Pancake Mix
- New York State Apples

## Cortland's Namesake Apple

The Cortland apple is an older American variety of *Malus domestica*, one of the many offspring of McIntosh apples. It combines the sweet flavor of the McIntosh with the cold hardiness of its other parent, Ben Davis. Cortlands have long been one of the most commonly produced apples in New York, consistently ranking in the top ten in the state.

The Cortland apple, whose name is believed to have come from Cortland County, was developed in 1898 by Professor S.A. Beach at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in nearby Geneva, New York. It was first distributed in 1915. Over the next decade it quickly became one of the more popularly produced apples in New York State and won many awards. Today, the Cortland ranks as the 12th most commonly commercially produced apple in the U.S. and can be found growing in regions on the east coast, Washington State, Oregon, and Quebec and Ontario in Canada. Cortlands are also grown in France and Poland.

Sources: New York Apple Association, SpecialtyProduce.com, Wikipedia

# Resources

## New Farmers Grant Funds Available



New York State has allocated \$1 million in the 2018-2019 state budget for the fifth round of the New York State New Farmers Grant Fund. Its purpose is to provide grants to support beginning farmers who have chosen farming as a career and who materially and substantially participate in the production of an agricultural product on their farm.

The program has provided \$3.27 million to farmers since 2014.

The grant fund will help farmers improve farm profitability through one or both of the following goals:

- Expanding agricultural production, diversifying agricultural production and/or extending the agricultural season; and/or
- Advancing innovative techniques that increase sustainable agricultural production practices such as organic farming, food safety, reduction of farm waste and/or water use.

Grants may provide a minimum of \$15,000 and a maximum of \$50,000 for up to 50 percent of total project costs. The remaining 50 percent must be matched by the recipient. Eligible sources of recipient match are limited to cash, lines of credit and loans. Other grant funds may not be used as matching funds. For any award the total project cost must be at least twice the grant award request.

See details at: <https://esd.ny.gov/new-farmers-grant-fund-program>.

## Cortland County BDC Revolving Loan Fund Program

The BDC facilitates business recruitment and retention in many ways, including the management of its \$500,000 revolving loan fund.

Dozens of loans have been granted over the years as an alternative to or complement to traditional loan financing. While our underwriting is designed to protect the agency's investment, it is also structured in a way that recognizes the challenges new and existing small businesses face in today's competitive marketplace.

Eligible borrowers include for-profit manufacturing, professional, service, and commercial businesses. Retail businesses will also be considered on a case-by-case basis. Eligible applicants include sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, and limited liability corporations. At least 50 percent of a project cost must be provided by the borrower (bank or private financing, borrower equity).

Loans are capped at \$100,000 or 50 percent of eligible project costs, whichever is less. The minimum loan amount is \$10,000. For complete details call our office at 607/756-5005 or visit [cortlandbusiness.com](http://cortlandbusiness.com).



**Businesses have access to numerous resources at the local, state, regional and federal level to help them succeed. In addition to Cortland County's Business Assistance Programs, here are other resources to help your business.**

*For more resources visit us online at [cortlandbusiness.com/resources/](http://cortlandbusiness.com/resources/)*

**Cortland County Government**  
60 Central Avenue  
Cortland, NY 13045  
[cortland-co.org](http://cortland-co.org)

**County Planning Department**  
37 Church Street  
Cortland, NY 13045  
[cortland-co.org/Planning/index.html](http://cortland-co.org/Planning/index.html)

**Cortland County Health Department**  
60 Central Avenue  
Cortland, NY 13045  
[cchd.cortland-co.org/](http://cchd.cortland-co.org/)

**City of Cortland**  
25 Court Street  
Cortland, NY 13045  
[cortland.org](http://cortland.org)

**Town of Cortlandville**  
3577 Terrace Road  
Cortland, NY 13045  
[cortlandville.org](http://cortlandville.org)

**Town of Homer**  
31 N. Main Street  
Homer, NY 13077  
[townofhomer.org](http://townofhomer.org)

**Village of Homer**  
Homer, NY 13077  
[homerny.org](http://homerny.org)

# Resources

## State Approves CRMC Affiliation with Guthrie Clinic

Medical partnership will enhance the quality of health care and services within the greater Cortland community and surrounding areas.

The New York State Department of Public Health and the Public Health and Health Planning Council has approved an affiliation between the Guthrie Clinic and Cortland Regional Medical Center (CRMC). Support for the affiliation came after meetings in Albany October 11.

“We are excited to partner with Cortland Regional Medical Center to provide access to integrated, multi-specialty care and services within the Cortland community and surrounding areas,” said Guthrie Clinic President and CEO, Dr. Joseph Scopelitti. “Guthrie has a long history of high-quality patient care and we look forward to meeting the health care needs of patients in the community.”

Now that regulatory approval has been granted, the final steps in the affiliation process will begin immediately. A transition team including leaders from both organizations is identifying specific tasks and opportunities to be pursued over the coming months to integrate the two organizations. Cortland Regional Medical Center is expected to become Guthrie Cortland Medical Center, an entity of the Guthrie Clinic, effective January 1, 2019.

“This is a major milestone, concluding a nearly two-year process to identify the right partner to help Cortland Regional realize its vision of expanding local access to high-quality health care for the people of Cortland and the surrounding area,” said Mark Webster, CRMC President and CEO.

After affiliation, Guthrie Cortland Medical Center will continue to operate its open staffing model so all providers in the community can work together to provide care needed by the community. Local leadership will continue to manage and operate Cortland facilities and programs.

Loss of market to competitors, volatile changes in the health care industry, and other considerations had severely hampered CRMC’s long-term viability as a health care institution in the run up to its decision to seek a partner. A painstaking 18-month-long process, led by a select group of local stakeholders, eventually identified Guthrie as the best choice to assure the continued availability of quality health care in Cortland County.

As a result of the affiliation, Guthrie plans to provide up to \$100 million in clinical investments and Information Technology upgrades, among other things important to the hospital’s ability to grow services.

Cortland Regional Medical Center is an independent, non-profit, 162-bed acute care facility with attached 80-bed residential care center that has been providing quality health care to the Cortland



Cortland Regional Medical Center President and CEO Mark Webster, left, and Guthrie Clinic President and CEO Dr. Joseph Scopelitti speak with reporters after state approval of an affiliation between the two institutions.

area for over 126 years.

Guthrie is a non-profit integrated health system located in north central Pennsylvania and upstate New York, serving patients from an 11-county service area. Guthrie is a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network and is the first health system based in Pennsylvania and New York to join this network. Guthrie is comprised of a research

“We are excited to partner with the Cortland Regional Medical Center to provide access to integrated, multi-specialty care and services within the Cortland community and surrounding areas. Guthrie has a long history of high-quality patient care.” —Dr. Joseph Scopelitti, Guthrie Clinic President/CEO

institute, home care/hospice, hospitals in Sayre, PA, Corning, NY, Towanda, PA, and Troy, PA, as well as a multi-specialty group practice of more than 325 physicians and 210 advanced practice providers in a regional office network encompassing 47 sub-specialty and primary care sites in 21 communities throughout Pennsylvania and New York. In addition, Guthrie offers home medical equipment and respiratory therapy products at six convenient Med Supply Depot locations. Guthrie provides a wide range of services and programs to enhance the health and well-being of those it serves.

Cortland County offers the best in small town living with easy access to some of the nation's top metro centers.

♻️ Printed on recycled paper

## Cortland Remembers 9/11

New memorial in Courthouse Park pays tribute to those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack.

On September 11, 2018, members of the Cortland community gathered at Courthouse Park for the dedication of a memorial honoring the 2,977 American citizens and first responders who lost their lives in the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

While many conversations about creating such a 9/11 memorial in Cortland had taken place over the years, nothing concrete ever came of them. That all changed beginning in 2017 when Cortland Deputy Chief of Police Paul Sandy and Community Police Officer Jesse Abbott struck up a conversation about the idea with City Councilwoman Michelle Mastropolo during the police department's annual used bike sale at the Armory building.

"She was confident the City Council would support such a memorial if we could pull a plan together," Sandy recalls. "It had been many years since the attack, and we knew it was important to have a memorial to honor the sacrifice so many people made and remind us to be vigilant now and in the future."

Sandy and Abbott felt that locating items from the World Trade Center site to incorporate into the memorial was crucial to the project's success. "I put some feelers out and one of my NYPD contacts told me there was a museum in Kingston (NY) that had 9/11 artifacts. I kept making calls until I reached the Trolley Museum of New York, which confirmed they had them."

Sandy shared his plans for the city memorial and was invited to the museum to collect materials. "They had rebar, conduit, wiring, steel plates, car parts, cable, all kinds of stuff from the towers," he says. "Jesse and I loaded it in my truck and brought it home."

With the artifacts in hand, Sandy set about forming a 9/11 memorial committee to present a plan to the mayor and city council. He also recruited a metal artist, Tino Ferro of Frog Pond Farm Folk-Art Gallery in Little York, to create the memorial.

The resulting sculpture—made of steel, copper and aluminum materials formed into a pair of slender towers which stand 14 feet tall—were enhanced by the masonry work of Mike McKinney, who donated his time to create a base in the shape of the U.S. Pentagon, a paved area around the memorial, along with other masonry work. The base also has a plaque in the shape of Pennsylvania. The base and plaque are in recognition of the 9/11 airliner attack on the Pentagon and of the passengers and crew of a hijacked plane that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania.

In addition to planning the memorial, the committee also developed a community fundraising plan. "The project has cost about \$30,000 so far, and was completely funded through donations," Sandy says. "We still need to make some improvements, such as adding security cameras in the area, so our fundraising efforts continue."

"This was a team effort," Sandy says. "Jesse Abbott, Wayne Friedman (Deputy Commander of the Cortland Fire Department), Norm Stitzel (Commandant and Chaplain for the Cortland County Marine Corps League), and many other Cortland County citizens and businesses made this happen."

Donors may contribute to the Cortland 9/11 Memorial through the purchase of \$100 engraved paver bricks which are placed at the site. Visit [bricksrus.com/donorsite/cortland911memorial](http://bricksrus.com/donorsite/cortland911memorial) for details.

