



Photo by Roger William Theise

TODAY: Cortland County

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

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Now on a Friday, 70 degrees on a Monday. That's the way it is in these parts but it's what makes our four-season climate so unique!

And while the official start of Spring seems to be a bit before the actual start of spring weather, we know we're getting close once the Maple Festival in Marathon and the Masters Tournament in Georgia have been completed.

Check and check.

This issue includes some great features on a couple of great—but perhaps unsung—businesses in Cortland County: Precision Eforming in South Cortland and Cortland Seafood in the city. Each business is totally different, of course, but each one has a solid foundation in

Cortland County and each one is an important and unique component of our local economy.

We've also shared some information on the city's investigation whether to change Main Street back to two-way, a proposal for a new hotel tax in the city, and a proposal to open up land in the town of Cortlandville for new gas station development.

We hope you enjoy the issue and please contact us with any comments or questions you may have.

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



Garry L. VanGorder
Executive Director/CEO

If life is about change, or proposed change, we are living it up these days in Cortland County. Consider:

- The city is actively considering whether a one-way main street should be converted back to two-way after a 50-year trial run. The original conversion occurred in 1967 and was intended for only a 30-day test;
- The city is also considering whether to pursue a three percent occupancy tax on hotels that would help fund infrastructure projects in and around the Interstate 81 exit 11. The county already collects a five percent occupancy tax and distributes it to organizations promoting tourism and bringing visitors to county hotels;
- The county has proposed increasing its sales tax from eight to 8.5 percent in an effort to raise revenues supporting debt retirement and the construction of a new jail. Legislators say the sales tax, which applies to all qualified purchases in the county, is preferable to property tax increases;
- One of the longest-tenured buildings in South Cortland, the former McDonald's restaurant, has been leveled to make room for a new branch of Summit Federal Credit Union, which is relocating and expanding from its long-time downtown location. The transformation of the Route 13/281 corridor continues;
- The former Crescent Corset building on south Main Street will be renovated to support new loft-style market rate apartments and commercial space, helping to bring new vitality to the south end of the city;
- New life will also be seen at the former Buckbee-Mears complex on the city's east side when wood chip manufacturer Jenlor begins operations there later this year. The site has been vacant since 2007; and,
- Cortland Regional Medical Center, after 125 years in business, will announce an affiliation with another facility later this year in an effort to stabilize finances, save jobs and preserve quality health for the Cortland community.

These are but a few of the changes proposed or underway in Cortland County, and there is promise for many more as we head into the heart of the year. Change is inevitable, and sometimes unwelcome, but it is the way of things. Let's keep moving forward.

On the cover: (left to right), Jeff Fox, Debbie Quick and Rob White are among a handful of employees at Precision Eforming, a Cortland-based company that produces precision microscale metal pieces for customers worldwide.

30

Days the original Main Street conversion to one-way was supposed to last

50

Years since the change was made

900

Parking spaces in downtown Cortland



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Two-way Main Street?

The Cortland City Council should have on its agenda next month a resolution considering whether to adopt a recently-completed study focusing on whether Main Street should remain one way.

A well-attended public hearing on the topic was held April 3, featuring a presentation by consultants commissioned to perform the study. Part of the study was funded through a state grant.

“People have their own perspectives but clearly, if the topic was going to continue to come up, there needed to be some in-depth analysis,” said BDC executive director Garry VanGorder. “I think the city got what it paid for.”

The study provided options for new traffic patterns for Main and Church streets, and also addressed potential new parking strategies and pedestrian safety.

With the study complete, the city’s acceptance of it may eventually lead to some

long-term planning for what changes might be made and how they would be funded.

Town Gas Law

The BDC provided the lone supporting commentary during a recent public hearing addressing a potential zone change in the town of Cortlandville that would allow construction of new filling stations in select areas.

More than a dozen others spoke against the change.

New service stations are now essentially barred from locating anywhere in the town as an unintended consequence of its long-standing commitment to aquifer protection. Despite opponents’ fears that more stations over the aquifer constitute a direct threat to the water supply, the town defends the proposal with well-documented advances in site construction and monitoring as well as expert opinion that the threat is overblown.

“While the risk of gas stations to water supplies is not zero, there have been gas stations over critical parts of the aquifer for decades with no impact on municipal water supplies,” Pat Ready, a water quality specialist, told the Cortland Standard after the hearing. “What the town is proposing is similar to what many communities across the country have already adopted, and is more restrictive than what many other communities have adopted. Regulations for the operations of gas stations have greatly improved over the years, and studies have shown that gasoline contamination doesn’t migrate far in groundwater. I don’t think Cortlandville’s adoption of this law would be irresponsible or unreasonable.”

The BDC supports the proposal as a business development issue, with VanGorder arguing that the benefits—potential capital investment, job creation and tax generation—far outweigh any risks.

The town is weighing all comments before deciding on a course of action.

City Occupancy Tax

The City of Cortland is considering implementation of a three percent “bed tax” for hotels within the city limits. The tax, which must be approved by the council and also the state legislature, would come in addition to the existing five percent bed tax now charged at all county hotels. The city would use the revenue for dedicated infrastructure projects in the Route 81 exit 11 neighborhood. The county Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Hotel and Restaurant Association are opposing the increase, fearing it may take customers to properties either outside the city or county.



Ken and Susie Poole, Derek Poole, and Branden and Rebekah Brown were named the BDC’s “Farm Family of the Year” for their innovative operations at Trinity Valley farm near Truxton. The family was honored along with 2017 “Friend of Agriculture” awardee Bill Anderson during the annual Agriculture Recognition Banquet March 21 at Tinelli’s Hathaway House.

Precision Eforming

This fabricator of precision microscale metal parts has seen its products used in everything from smartphones and MRI machines to sifting diamond dust and soil from the moon.

Cortland County is home to many businesses and industries that provide a broad range of goods and services to a diverse national and international clientele. Among the more unique companies based in the area is Precision Eforming, located in the Cortland Commerce Center on Route 13 in the City of Cortland.



Julie Griffin is owner and president of Precision Eforming. She took over the company in 2015.

E-forming—short for electroforming—is a method of precision metal making that is key to the fabrication of microscale metal pieces: It is a specialized “additive process” through which high precision mesh products are created by electro-deposition onto a surface and are then removed.

Using pure gold, nickel or copper, depending on the customer’s needs, Precision Eforming chemically deposits thin layers of metal, atom by atom, building each custom piece to the client’s specifications. “Think of it like plating a chrome finish to a car bumper,” explains Julie Griffin, company owner and president, “except in our process, the finished product is the metal layer itself, which is removed from the surface on which it was deposited.”

Compared with other metal forming processes such as casting, forging, stamping or machining, electroforming is highly

effective when requirements call for extreme precision, tight tolerances or complexity in design. The process allows for finer geometries to be produced to tighter tolerances while maintaining superior edge definition with a near optical finish. “Electroformed metal is extremely pure, with superior properties over wrought metal due to its refined crystal structure,” Griffin says. “The proprietary process enables the company to manufacture the most consistent and accurate materials with exceptional surface finish properties and stability.”

Precision Eforming uses this technology to produce a line of ultra-precision sieves which, in the same manner as a common kitchen or garden sieve, is used to sift material into smaller and smaller grades. Super-fine electroformed sieves are used in precision sensitive areas of the powder industry, which include diamond abrasives, nuclear fuels, alumina, ceramics, metals and powders. “Our sieves are also used by NASA and have been to space for sifting lunar dust,” Griffin says. Precision Eforming products are also involved in light and sound filtration systems for sensors, MRI machines, ion chambers, chemical sniffing devices, smartphones, microphones and more.

While the company has been located in Cortland since 2002, its founding dates back to 1907 with Charles E. Buckbee and Norman T. Mears, when they collaborated to establish Buckbee-Mears Company, a small photoengraving plant in St. Paul, Minnesota.

After watching the business grow for many years, Norman’s son, Norman B. Mears, became involved with developing new metal etching technology and pushed for expansion of the business into photochemical reproduction during World War II. When the U.S. Navy needed grids etched on the eyepieces of military equipment, Mears’ technology led to the development of the metal reticle. During peacetime, he found a way to use this technology to



Jeff Fox (left) and Rob White use microscopes to examine newly electroformed screens, ensuring there are no flaws in the finished product.

Photos by Roger William Theise

Fast Facts

- Manufacturer of precision microscale metal pieces
- Specializes in high precision mesh/sieve/filter products
- Used for sifting diamond dust, nuclear fuels, alumina, ceramics, metals, powders and more
- Used by NASA to sift lunar dust
- 10,000-sq.-ft. facility
- 10 employees
- 100+ domestic and international customers

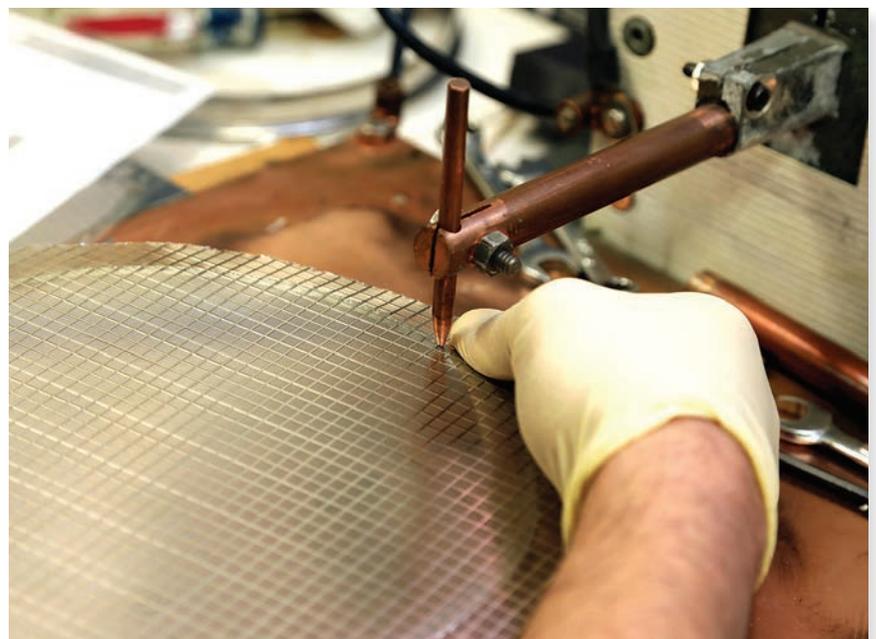
originate processes and equipment for making color television aperture masks.

Early in the 1960s, Buckbee-Mears was working with General Electric on a project that required specifications in aperture size and thickness that were difficult to achieve with the photoetching process. To meet these new product requirements, electroforming was introduced.

After many years of developing and improving the electroforming process, the division was relocated to the Buckbee-Mears facilities in Cortland, New York in 2002. In late 2003, Buckbee-Mears Company announced that they would be selling the assets of its Cortland, New York location, which was being phased out so Buckbee-Mears could concentrate on its optical lens business. The managers of the electroforming division understood the potential of e-forming technology and, in 2004, partnered with a Syracuse investment firm (Torridon Companies) to purchase the electroforming division. In 2015, the investment firm offered Julie Griffin, who had been with Precision Eforming for 15 years, the opportunity to purchase and take over the company.

Today, Precision Eforming has more than 100

customers divided roughly 50-50 between domestic and international. Its 10,000-sq.-ft. facility employs 10. “We’re a strong, successful company and we’re doing great,” Griffin says. “A big reason for our success is our staff—these are people I went to school with and worked with at Buckbee-Mears, which adds a feeling of family, of community, to everything we do here. I’m excited about our future.”



As part of the production process, sieve material is welded to a round form then trimmed and finished with a protective collar to hold it securely.

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 see the website at cortlandbusiness.com.

State Approves Shared Services Planning

The 2017 state budget includes a new law that requires each county outside of New York City to prepare a plan for shared, coordinated and efficient services among the units of local governments contained within the county.

The initiative was a budget priority for Governor Andrew Cuomo, who touted it as a way to drive down the cost of local government. Others, however, questioned the plan's potential and wonder why a legitimate cost-saver—a reduction in state mandates that are crushing local spending plans—continues to be ignored.

The proposal survived the budget process in a somewhat weaker form as it no longer ties county plan approvals to a public referendum and the threatened withholding of state aid should the plans fail.

The new shared services plan would be prepared by each county's chief executive officer in consultation with a shared services panel comprising the chief elected official from each city, village and town in the county. School districts, BOCES and special districts may be invited to participate.

During the development of the plan, the county must regularly consult with the members of the shared services panel as well as representatives from each collective bargaining unit from the county and every city, village and town within the county. Three public hearings must be held as part of the process. The plan would then have to be submitted to the county legislative body by August 1, 2017, at which point the county could make additional recommendations or changes. The county must approve the plan in a majority vote, but each member of the shared services panel may elect to be exempted from the plan.

If the plan is not approved, the county must then follow the same procedures to try to produce a county-wide shared services plan by August 1, 2018. There is no requirement to develop plans in any year beyond 2018.

Each county plan shall be eligible for one-time state matching funding (subject to appropriation) for plan savings that are achieved in the calendar year immediately following adoption of the plan.

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:

Cortland County Government

60 Central Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045
cortland-co.org

County Planning Department

37 Church Street
Cortland, NY 13045
cortland-co.org/Planning/index.html

Cortland County Health Department

60 Central Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045
cchd.cortland-co.org/

City of Cortland

25 Court Street
Cortland, NY 13045
cortland.org

Town of Cortlandville

3577 Terrace Road
Cortland, NY 13045
cortlandville.org

Town of Homer

31 N. Main Street
Homer, NY 13077
townofhomer.org

Village of Homer

Homer, NY 13077
homerny.org

*For more resources visit us online at
cortlandbusiness.com/resources/*

Cortland Seafood: Providing Customers with the Best in Fresh Seafood and Seafood Meals for Nearly Half a Century

For close to 50 years, seafood fans have swarmed to Cortland Seafood, located on Pendleton Street, for the best in fresh seafood and seafood dinners.

It was back in the 1970s when Phil Niver Sr. took over the business from the Biviano family, who, after years of moving from rented property to rented property, had finally purchased land and built a permanent fish market. After 15 years of operation, the Bivianos had decided to sell the business, and began searching for a new owner.

At the same time, Niver was in the market to buy a new business. After years of doing road construction in summers and factory work during winters, he had bought a rundown restaurant in Blodgett Mills and turned it into a successful operation, which he had recently sold. He knew he didn't want to work for someone else again, and had begun looking for a new business in which to invest. The Bivianos' seafood market seemed ideal.

"The Bivianos had already gone through a dozen potential buyers, but none was what they were looking for," says Phil Niver Jr., who now owns and runs Cortland Seafood. "After interviewing for four hours and going through three pots of coffee, Dad apparently showed that he had the smarts and devotion to make it successful and continue on. He got the call agreeing to the sale the next day."

"I enjoy the challenges. ... Purchasing, pricing, product availability—it all keeps me on my toes." —Phil Niver, Owner Cortland Seafood

It was the perfect move. Over time, Phil Niver Sr., who passed away in 2011, turned the humble establishment into a well-respected, in-demand Cortland County food business—a tradition Phil Jr. has continued to maintain.

Cortland Seafood is divided between fresh seafood sales, which is roughly 60 percent of the business, and restaurant takeout, which comprises about 40 percent. Niver supplies both wholesale and retail customers. Haddock is his most popular sale item in both the fresh and restaurant takeout categories. Come summertime, littleneck clams are also in big demand.



Cortland Seafood has many devoted fans who visit regularly from near and



Phil Niver Jr., shown here with his wife Tammy, began working for his father at Cortland Seafood at the age of 7. He took over the business in 1995.

far. Following is a sample of the five-star-rated Facebook comments the business has received:

"We bought 400 littleneck clams here. They were probably the best we have had in a long time, and certainly the best in the area. All our guests enjoyed them and complimented us. We were pleased to recommend Cortland Seafood to all of them!"

"[Cortland Seafood is the] only place in the area to even consider buying seafood. Great quality, great prices and great service! Phil Niver is extremely committed to exceeding the expectations of all who walk through his door. Thank you, Phil!"

Niver began working for his father at Cortland Seafood when he was 7 years old, and says the place has always been a second home for him. "When I got older I considered different jobs," he recalls, "but then Dad took me aside and said, 'Look, I don't know when it will happen, but I will sell the business to you one day,' which he did in 1995.

"Here it is 22 years later, and I still like to come to work every day," says Niver, who runs Cortland Seafood with his wife Tammy and three part-time student workers. "I enjoy the challenges. Some parts of the business are fairly repetitious, but with others, there's always something new. Purchasing, pricing, product availability—it all keeps me on my toes."



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

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The Empire State Senior Games: 2017 Event to Take Place in Cortland County June 10-18

More than 1,000 athletes will descend on Cortland County during the month of June as participants in the 2017 Empire State Senior Games. Now in its 36th year, the Empire State Senior Games are coordinated by the Cortland Regional Sports Council. Cortland County has been the permanent home of the games since 2011, after the State of New York elected to no longer run the event.

Taking place June 10-18, events in the Senior Games are open to anyone 50 years of age or older. Close to 20 sports are represented, including tennis, golf, swimming, track & field, basketball, bowling, archery, badminton, cycling and ping pong.

Many events have men's and women's divisions and accommodate singles, doubles and mixed doubles. A Masters Division will debut this year in swimming, track & field, bowling and archery with the goal of creating additional interest in the competition and drawing an even larger field of athletes.

Local venues such as Cort-Lanes Bowling Center, Elm Tree Golf Course, Lime Hollow Nature Center, Tompkins Cortland Community College and several sites on the SUNY Cortland campus serve as event locations. A complete schedule of events is posted on the Senior Games website: nyseniorgames.com.

"Every other year is a qualifying year, when seniors compete to go on to the National Senior Games," says Machell Phelps, executive director of the Cortland Regional Sports Council (CRSC). "During a qualifier year, more than 1,500 senior athletes come to Cortland to compete. For the non-qualifiers, it's 1,100-1,200. That's a lot of visitors spending a lot of money in the region."



Vicki Fox is an Empire State Senior Games competitor from Centerport, New York.

The National Senior Games are held every two years in various cities around the United States. The games in Cortland are the only avenue in New York State to qualify for nationals.

Since 2005, the CRSC has helped attract more than \$20 million to the region through this and a host of other amateur sporting events.

The CRSC welcomes and appreciates the contributions of volunteers who pitch in when the Empire State Senior Games are held. "We also have a range of opportunities for businesses or groups to sponsor and help support the games," Phelps says. "I encourage anyone interested

in getting involved to contact us and explore those opportunities."

Registration and additional information on the Empire State Senior Games can be found online at nyseniorgames.com or by calling 800-859-2227.