



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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We will officially be swinging into summer by the time this hits your mailbox, and there's no better time to be in Cortland County. From the golf course to the lake house, picnic grounds and forests, Central New York is unrivaled for warm weather fun.

No matter what the weather, Contento's is always busy in the region and across the state. See our feature this month on this thriving family-owned company and learn more about how it's poised for growth.

We also have a great feature this issue on Evan Geibel, the young editor and publisher of the *Cortland Standard*. The paper has been a part of the landscape in Cortland County for 150 years, and Geibel is fully prepared to maintain that long run as the

community's primary news source.

Downtown Cortland is a great summertime destination, and we've included information on this year's Main Street Music Series, which will host local and regional musical groups over four weekends in July. Don't miss your chance to enjoy lots of great music from the Main Street stage!

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we hope everyone has a chance to get outside this summer to enjoy friends and family.

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

A local environmental activist recently recalled being “astounded” that Cortlandville Town Board officials would prefer to let the marketplace determine what the community needs by way of business development—in this case, more service stations and related retail development—rather than abandon the issue in lockstep with the notion that we already have too many of them.

The board is correct, of course, in its understanding of the American free enterprise system, where the market, not the government or special interests leaning on the government, determines what we will have and what we will not.

Projects must still meet local planning and code requirements, and local boards have every right and responsibility to ensure that happens. But whether it’s the 75th pizza parlor or the 17th gas station, there is no room, or at least there shouldn’t be, for political pressure or personal perspectives to shape the outcome.

A more legitimate question is whether a town move to open up zoning for more service station development would endanger the environment, specifically, the county’s underground water supply.

The town has done some excellent work to get answers to that question, and the case to move forward is perhaps best found in this observation by Pat Reidy, a water quality specialist with the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District: “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 in groundwater. I don’t think Cortlandville’s adoption of this law would be irresponsible or unreasonable.”

Reidy’s comments were somewhat lost in initial public criticisms of the proposal, but they are powerful if you believe that professional assessments should trump hand-wringing in the decision-making process. Here, the town can rely on the facts if it decides to pursue new gas station/retail development opportunities and all of the capital investment, tax revenue, and employment we will enjoy as a result.

That’s good government.

On the cover: Rubble is all that remains of the 123-year-old Clocktower Building, which was demolished by Contento’s in 2006 after the structure was damaged by fire. The entire demo was completed in a day.

150

The age
of the
Cortland Standard

33

The age
of its
editor and publisher

5

Generations
of his family
to run the paper



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Main Street Music

The annual Cortland Main Street Music Series gets underway. Scheduled in July are:

- **Friday, July 7:** Old Boy Records Night featuring Digger Jones, Los Blancos, Nate & Kate, Quona Hudson, and Red Brunette;
- **Friday, July 14:** Small Town Shade takes the stage with Tribal Revival;
- **Friday, July 21:** The Rods will appear with The New York Rock; and
- **Friday, July 28:** The final show of the year will feature Charlie Bertini and the Ronnie Leigh All-Stars plus the JazzHappens Band.

Now in its 12th year, the Main Street Music Series brings top local and regional acts to the Marketplace Mall stage. Admission is free, refreshments are available, and lawn chairs are welcome. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. and the music begins at 6:00 p.m.

Park in Progress

The Cortlandville Town Board is moving forward with its plans to build a new multi-sport athletics complex on property it owns next to Byrne Dairy in south Cortland.

Supervisor Dick Tupper says the town is considering borrowing for a portion of the \$15 million project, and is looking to other public and private partners to get the job done.

A feasibility study has been completed for the project, showing the town could reliably attract events and visitors to make the park a showcase in the region. When completed, the park will feature four baseball diamonds, eight multi-purpose fields and a host of other amenities.

Phase one of the project, the replacement of the former Citizen's Park at the new location, is expected to begin later in 2017.



Money for Downtown Cops

For the second consecutive year, the City of Cortland will receive state funding to help underwrite the cost of added police presence on Main Street.

The \$195,000 SUNY Impact Aid awarded to Cortland and Oneonta is meant to help subsidize the costs of being SUNY host communities, said Sen. Jim Seward in announcing the grant at a Coffee with a Cop event at Bru 64 in downtown Cortland.

“Our SUNY schools are a real asset—educating our future leaders and helping drive the local economy,” Seward said. “However, there is a financial trade-off that goes overlooked and local taxpayers should not be left holding the bag. The SUNY Impact Aid funding is genuine mandate relief.”

While developing legislation to deliver aid to all SUNY host communities, Seward was able to start the process by instituting a “pilot program” beginning with the 2016-17 state budget and continuing this year in Cortland and Oneonta.

“Coffee with a Cop is an inspired use of the SUNY Impact Aid that will have a ripple effect. The outreach program helps boost public safety and enhances economic development, a combination that will certainly equate to growth throughout Cortland,” Seward said.

Cortland County BDC Executive Director Garry VanGorder agreed. “Cortland’s downtown is experiencing a significant private sector reinvestment with ongoing projects and new ventures that will come on-line shortly. It is essential that the downtown core is safe if we want to continue this positive trend.”



At a recent event Sen. Jim Seward, with Mayor Brian Tobin and members of the Cortland Police Department, announces financial support for downtown beat patrols.

Demolition Men

Family-run Contento's provides the Central New York region with professional demolition, hauling, and material processing and recycling services.

Since 1950, the name Contento has been synonymous with clearing away the old to make way for the new—whether it be residential structures destroyed by fire, commercial buildings no longer fit for function, or motor vehicles that have outlived their usefulness.

Contento's is a family-run business serving all of Central New York State with professional demolition, hauling, and material processing and recycling services. It was founded by the late Jerry Contento Sr. and is now run by Jerry Contento Jr., 57, and his son, Anthony Contento, 23.

“The original business was primarily based in Homer, with a secondary location in Cortland,” Jerry Contento Jr. says. “The focus was on general demolition, with a chunk of the business dealing in old vehicles and auto parts. Eventually we got away from the auto side, went big guns with demolition, metals

recycling (*see related story*), and container rentals. We also gave up the Homer site in 2000 and consolidated operations in Cortland.”

Contento's is quite an operation. During the peak season, the company can have from 20 to 30 demolition projects lasting from a few days to a full year. “Demolition jobs range from pulling down and clearing an entire building to demoing the interior of a building but leaving the main structure standing,” Anthony Contento says.

Contento's has a core crew of 15 to 20 members and can draw in up to 20 more workers and sub-contractors as projects demand. The company has built a reputation for personal service and quality work, performed quickly and at a competitive price. As a result, bidding on the majority of projects comes by invitation from contractors and other clients familiar with their work.

Major projects in Cortland County have included taking down the 123-year-old Clocktower Building which burned in an electrical fire; demolition of the Wickwire Building, also destroyed by fire; and the partial demolition and gutting of the massive Buckbee-Mears facility, a highly complex

This 44,000 lb. excavator is used at Contento's to load and unload scrap tin and steel as it comes into the yard.

Photo by Roger William Theise



What is the DEC?

The role of New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is to conserve, improve and protect natural resources and the environment and to prevent, abate and control water, land and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well-being.

The DEC accomplishes this through the simultaneous pursuit of environmental quality, public health, economic prosperity and social well-being, including environmental justice and the empowerment of individuals to participate in environmental decisions that affect their lives.



Jerry (foreground) and Anthony Contento stand with the newest addition to their company fleet—a clean emission diesel truck used to haul 20, 30 and 40 yard roll-off containers to and from job sites.

Photo by Roger William Theise

project due to Environmental Protection Agency concerns over on-site contaminants.

“Environmental contracting is an important part of our services,” says Jerry Contento, “and includes underground fuel tank removal, contaminated soil removal, fuel-spill cleanup and asbestos abatement.”

Contento’s also strives to salvage as much debris as possible from demolition sites. “Scrap metals, I-beams, clean concrete, bricks—our goal is to divert as much away from the landfill as possible,” Anthony Contento says.

Roll-off container rentals is another big part of the business. Huge Contento’s red steel dumpsters—some up to 22 feet long—can often be seen loaded to the brim with construction debris at worksites throughout Cortland, Tompkins and other counties. Contento’s drivers deliver the containers to customer sites and haul them away when they are filled. “Container rentals and recycling have become a really big part of our business, and where we’ve experienced a lot of our growth,” Anthony Contento says.

Recycling in particular is an area in which Contento’s is investing significantly for the future. “Right

now we are developing plans to erect a state-of-the-art recycling facility to sort and process materials,” Anthony Contento says. “We’ve begun by applying for the necessary permits required through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (*see related story*) and hired an environmental engineer. If all goes according to plan, the facility will be able to handle 250 tons of recycled materials a day.”

The Contentos’ goal is to have the recycling facility built and operational by the end of this year. “A lot depends on funding, permits and other factors,” Anthony Contento says. “When the facility is finally up and running, it will be an incredible opportunity for us and a real benefit to the region.”

Giving Metal a Second Life

Contento’s collects, processes and recycles ferrous and non-ferrous metals.

Ferrous metals are those that contain iron. They can be a mixture of other metals or elements, but all ferrous materials contain some form of iron, which gives them a magnetic quality and makes them prone to corrosion. Ferrous metals include many types of steel and cast iron.

Non-ferrous metals are the opposite of ferrous—they don’t contain any iron. They will not have a magnetic quality and typically resist corrosion much better than ferrous metals. The category of non-ferrous metals also includes raw materials/pure metals. Aluminum, copper, aluminum alloys, lead and gilding metals are all considered non-ferrous metals.

Show Me the Money

Demolition is not without its occasional surprises.

In 1992, Contento’s was hired to demolish Hedges Furniture and Gift House in Cortland, which was destroyed by fire. Prior to demolition, anything salvageable was removed from the premises, while contents damaged by water, smoke and flames—including a mountain of old books—were left behind.

One afternoon, Jerry Contento Jr. was at the controls of an excavator, demolishing the retail store and attached residence. As the excavator was breaking through a room filled with damaged books, a breeze kicked up that sent a cloud of paper floating through the air. Contento assumed it was just pages from the old books, but did a double-take when he realized that mixed in with the fluttering paper were a lot of \$20 bills.

“The \$20s must have been stashed in the pages of the old books and came loose when the room was demolished,” Contento says.

He and his work crew quickly spread across the worksite, grabbing up the cash before another breeze had the chance to blow it away.

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.

County Seeks Business Grant

The Cortland County Legislature has agreed to seek a \$200,000 state Microenterprise Assistance Program (MAP) grant that could aid new and existing small businesses across the county.

MAP grants have already proven successful in assisting business growth and development in the city of Cortland and the Village of Homer. The county, working with the BDC, now seeks to offer similar assistance to businesses in other parts of the community.

Select businesses with fewer than five employees will be eligible for up to \$35,000 in grants to facilitate their business growth and job growth. The BDC is marketing the program's potential to local small business, and the county will work with a consultant to administer the program if the application for state dollars through the Consolidated Funding Application process is successful.

"We've seen this program work in Cortland and Homer, and we thought it made sense to expand it if we could," said BDC president and CEO Garry VanGorder. "It made sense to the legislature, too."

Thoma Development Consultants will be preparing the application on the county's behalf. If funded later this year, the county will have two years to administer the program for qualified participants.

DRI Application Submitted to State

A city application for \$10 million in funding has been submitted to the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council for scoring.

This is the city's second Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) submission in as many years, with last year's entry falling just short of last year's winner (city of Oswego).

Numerous stakeholders have been working on this year's application since a second round of funding was announced by Governor Andrew Cuomo. Together, they created a realistic and exciting proposal that could push downtown over the top with the aid of new resources. Winners will be announced later this summer.

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 Standard' Editor and Publisher Evan Geibel Looks to the Future

This July, Evan Geibel, 33, celebrates his fourth year as editor and publisher of the *Cortland Standard*, an anniversary that at face value seems to pale in comparison with another that occurred just a month earlier—the 150th anniversary of the newspaper's founding. But Geibel's anniversary is, in fact, very much part of the larger story of the *Cortland Standard*: He is the fifth generation of his family to sit at the helm.

Geibel is descended from William Clark, who purchased a small local newspaper business in 1876 that would evolve into the *Cortland Standard* of today. Originally founded in 1867 as the weekly *Cortland County Standard* by Francis Kinney, it was bought by Wesley Hooker in 1872 and by William Clark four years later.

Clark served as editor and publisher for nearly 52 years until his son, Edward Clark, took over in 1928. Edward Clark ran the paper until his death in 1973, at which time Paul Geibel, his son-in-law, became editor and publisher. Kevin R. Howe was named publisher in 1986 and president in 1999. In 2013, Evan Geibel, William Clark's great-grandson, took charge.

"There was no plan as far as me being raised to run the place," Geibel says. "My father was not involved with it; there were many other relatives that could have stepped in. I just kind of fell backward into it."

Geibel actually spent close to a decade making that backward fall. As a student at Bucknell University from 2002-06, he spent college breaks earning money working as an editorial department intern and writer. "I guess I showed an aptitude for writing, because one day my uncle called me into his office and basically said I should consider taking over and running the paper one day," Geibel recalls.

After graduating from Bucknell with a degree in political science, Geibel returned to the *Cortland Standard* and began gaining experience working in various departments. In 2013, he became editor and publisher.

What does his position entail? "Basically, I run the place," Geibel says. "As editor, I shape our editorial position, track news and write columns. As publisher, it's my job to get the paper out the door, make sure people get paid, do a little HR, a little sales ... I even refilled the paper towels the other day."

Not surprisingly, much of Geibel's business focus is driven by how dramatically the print news industry has changed in recent years.



Evan Geibel is fifth-generation editor and publisher of the Cortland Standard, which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. He is shown here in front of a section of the newspaper's press.

"I'm trying to figure out what a newspaper of the 21st century needs to be," he says. "Our flagship print publication is still the most valuable, but we're also in the process of ramping up our online presence. We have a more modern and mobile-friendly online platform. We've also upgraded our technology with a new inserting machine and a digital-to-plate system to eliminate the need for film."

The *Cortland Standard* is the second oldest continually published, privately owned newspaper in New York State and the eighth such paper in the country. And according to Geibel, this independence has its pluses and minuses.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Cortland Standard.

"Autonomy as a news gatherer is important," he says, "and so is having the owners and managers living right here in the community, which makes the paper a true reflection of the community."

"Of course, we are left on our own to solve certain problems and keep up with technology," Geibel continues. "But on the other hand, we don't have to contend with corporate edicts. This leaves us free to strive for accuracy and fairness with our news coverage and do what we see as best for the newspaper, our staff and our community."



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A Taste of Downtown Cortland: Annual Event Showcases Some of the Best in Local Cuisine

Historic Downtown Cortland's signature summer celebration, A Taste of Downtown Cortland, returns for its 11th year on Saturday, July 8. Running noon to 4 p.m., the event will once again showcase the variety and creativity of Downtown Cortland's restaurants in a self-guided tasting tour combined with live music, vendors, circus-style entertainers, and other attractions.

A Taste of Downtown Cortland has grown to become more festival than tasting tour, encouraging people to explore downtown and experience live music and street entertainment, enjoy a unique dining experience, and acquaint themselves with the many shops and boutiques which dot the area.

More than 20 stops will be included on this year's tour map as restaurants compete for the honor of being selected as 2017's "Favorite Flavor." The friendly competition between restaurants has become a bit more intense due to the opportunity for added media exposure, a cash prize and a winner's trophy awarded to the top-voted food sample.

The Favorite Flavor Trophy—a logo-branded, five-foot-long steel fork—is currently on display at The Community Restaurant, which took top honors last year. The Community Restaurant's winning gyro sample was featured in a TV segment on WSTM Channel 3,

along with samples from the other top winners—Whole Heart Café of The Local Food Market & Café, Cortland Elks Lodge 748, Frosted, Hairy Tony's, and Pita Gourmet.

Online ticket packages for A Taste of Downtown Cortland will be available for \$15 beginning June 26 at hdc.yapsody.com. Beginning July 3 in-person cash or check purchases may be made at Cortland Beer Co., 16 Court Street or The Local Food Market and Café, 37 N. Main Street



Evan Souzas, proprietor of The Community Restaurant, holds the giant fork trophy his restaurant won for offering 2016's top "Favorite Flavor."

in Cortland. Ticket packages include a tasting guide and map, 20 food sample tickets, three adult beverage sample tickets, and a commemorative pilsner tasting glass to the first 500 customers.

Visitors will find plenty of free parking in public lots and on-street throughout downtown.

A Taste of Downtown Cortland is produced by the Cortland Downtown Partnership's (CDP) Promotions Committee, a group of volunteer community members who are working to make Historic Downtown Cortland a better place to live, work and celebrate.

For additional information and updates, visit the CDP's Taste of Downtown Cortland event page on Facebook. You may contact the CDP for more information or to get involved by phoning 607-299-4682 or online through info@cortlanddowntown.com.



\$15 ticket packages for A Taste of Downtown Cortland include a tasting guide and map, 20 food sample tickets, three adult beverage sample tickets, and a commemorative pilsner tasting glass to the first 500 customers.