



# TODAY: Cortland County

*Photo courtesy of Kris Reynolds*

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

November/December 2017  
Volume 3 Issue 5

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**CORTLAND COUNTY NY**  
Business Development Corporation

Months of hard work on a variety of initiatives prompted some exciting announcements in Cortland County recently.

Governor Cuomo's visit to the city October 6 announced Cortland's winning entry into the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative sweepstakes. Hundreds of locals gathered at downtown's Repertory Theatre to hear the news, celebrating that Cortland had beat out a handful of other communities for the Central New York region's top prize.

A few weeks earlier, Cortland Regional Medical Center made its long-awaited announcement on its selection of a partner to provide ongoing medical services to the community. That partner, Guthrie Clinic, will ensure a vital and viable hospital presence

in Cortland County for a generation to come, ending real concerns about CRMC's ability to sustain itself in a volatile healthcare environment.

And on the city's south side, an official groundbreaking ceremony marked the beginning of a \$15 million rehabilitation of the former Crescent Corset factory into commercial space and loft-style market-rate housing.

Three announcements for three distinct and different projects, but each with potential to shape the local landscape in a positive way moving forward. Thanks for reading, and as always don't hesitate to call with any comments or questions!

*The BDC is Cortland County's principal economic development organization working for economic and community growth.*



Garry L. VanGorder  
Executive Director/CEO

that Cortland Regional Medical Center had signed a letter of intent to affiliate with Guthrie Clinic of Sayre, Pa.

That announcement was the result of months of exhaustive work by a “blue ribbon” committee tasked with identifying the best choice for the hospital’s future in this community.

Foundational to the committee’s thinking was to select a partner that provided CRMC the best opportunities for:

- Program and physician network growth;
- Financial sustainability;
- Preparedness for healthcare reform; and
- A governance model that allowed for continued local input.

Also crucial were a potential partner’s history and experience with affiliates and how well that institution might fit clinically and culturally in Cortland County. Guthrie checked all the boxes.

The committee’s recommendation to proceed with Guthrie was heartily endorsed by hospital trustees and all affiliated boards, and the belief is strong among all involved that this new partnership, the details of which are still being developed, will preserve the hospital as a vital and vibrant contributor to the Cortland County economy and the health of its residents for the next 150 years.

More than 700 people work at Cortland Regional Medical Center and the affiliated Cortland Regional Medical Practice, and through this affiliation, employees may now take some comfort in knowing that the hospital will remain a solid employer here and that prospects are good for employment growth in the days ahead. That hasn’t been so clear over the past two years, as our hospital, like so many others, struggled with profitability amid a fast-changing and challenging national healthcare environment.

A great deal of work remains as CRMC and Guthrie settle on details of the new partnership, but the days ahead look bright for quality healthcare and the sustainability of a major employer in Cortland County.

*On the cover: A capacity crowd at Cortland Repertory Theatre Downtown applaud Governor Andrew Cuomo’s announcement of the city’s winning a Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant.*

# 10

Number of  
DRI awards out of  
104 submissions

# 26

Number of potential  
projects in winning  
DRI proposal

# 6

Months to refine the vision;  
consider proposed  
or new projects

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## DRI Award in the Books; Work Begins on Project Development

A local planning committee has begun work with a New York engineering firm to assess potential projects to be funded through the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant to the city of Cortland.

*"This funding will bring new life to downtown Cortland and assist in its transformation into an economic engine for the entire region."*

*— Andrew Cuomo*

Co-chaired by Mayor Brian Tobin and BDC executive director Garry VanGorder, the committee comprises local residents with a variety of skill sets and perspectives. The group has been meeting with Cameron Engineering & Associates, a Woodbury, NY firm assigned to the community as part of

the grant award. The firm's services are valued at \$300,000.

"We have a lot of work to do as we settle on projects with the greatest potential to positively impact the downtown district," said VanGorder, a member of the original DRI planning committee and a Cuomo appointee to the Central New York Regional Economic Council, which vetted the competition's applications. "We've put a good group together and Cameron brings a lot of talent to the table, too. This is a rare opportunity and we're going to do our best to get it right."

Cuomo announced Cortland's win during an October 6 visit to the Cortland Repertory Theatre Downtown. Submitted in late summer, the city's entry won out over submissions from Auburn, Cazenovia, Fulton, and Syracuse. Statewide, 104 communities vied for one of just 10 awards intended to help with transformational downtown

projects boosting the local economy and improving quality of life.

"New York continues to invest in our communities to attract the next generation of leaders and spur business development in downtowns across the state," Cuomo said. "This funding will bring new life to downtown Cortland and assist in its transformation into an economic engine for the entire region."

Cortland now joins the City of Oswego, which was the Central New York region's winner in the first DRI round last year.

"It is an honor to accept this award on behalf of the City of Cortland," said Mayor Brian Tobin. "We will take this opportunity and find community partners to expand on what we've already accomplished. I appreciate the great work being done by the Regional Economic Development Council, and everyone here in Cortland who constantly works to ensure Cortland continues to be a great place to call home."

The strategic investment plan for Cortland will examine local assets and opportunities and identify economic development, transportation, housing and community projects that align with the community's vision for downtown and that are poised for implementation.

"People should know that Cortland didn't win this competition because its downtown is in such desperate shape," VanGorder said. "It's quite the opposite. Cortland won because it's been headed in the right direction, and because these resources can put us over the top."

Final projects will be announced the summer of 2018.



Governor Andrew Cuomo visited the Cortland Repertory Theatre on October 6 to announce Cortland's selection as Central New York's 2017 DRI winner. The \$10 million grant will assist impactful projects in the downtown district.

Photo courtesy of Kris Reynolds

# success story

## Ames Linen Service

**This local family laundry has grown into a major regional linen supply company.**

For close to half a century, Donald F. Ames ran a small family laundry in Cortland which he had taken over from his father, Harry Ames, in the 1930s. After growing the laundry from a walk in, front counter operation to one that included pickup and delivery services, Ames retired in the 1970s and sold the business to his son, Donald "Bud" Ames.

Bud Ames recognized that the family laundry industry was changing, and set out to transform the business into a full service, textile rental company with a focus on the healthcare and hospitality industries. The service area was expanded to include the Ithaca, Binghamton, Syracuse and Auburn markets.

Ames Linen Service is currently run by Johanna Ames, a fourth generation member of the Ames family who began work with the company in 2001 and took over as president in 2007. "My father recognized that running a family laundry was very inefficient," she says. "You had many small batches of work coming in that required repeated use of equipment which was getting more and more costly to operate and maintain."

By converting to a textile rental company, Ames was able to boost efficiency in two ways—through ownership of the textiles they supplied to customers, and through laundering the linen in larger, more cost-effective quantities.

The new business model was so successful, in fact, that the company outgrew its two-building downtown location, which shared a driveway with the fire department and required repeated trucking back and forth across Court St. between buildings to move the linen. The issue was resolved in 2006 when Ames purchased and retooled the former Tuscarora Plastics building on Huntington St., giving it a 43,000 sq. ft. plant and 26,000 sq. ft. warehouse in which to operate. (The Court St. location is now home to Cortland Beer Company.)

**Ames' Route Service Representatives drive 4,600 miles a week or 2.4 million miles a year.**



*Johanna Ames is the fourth generation of her family to head Ames Linen Service. She took over as president in 2007.*

*Photo by Roger William Theise*

Today, Ames Linen Service is thriving, with 85 employees and gross annual revenues of \$5 million to \$10 million. The company operates \$7 million in laundering machinery—made up of highly automated sorting, processing, washing, drying and finishing equipment—and is always on the lookout for new ways to slash some of its biggest operating expenses: water, electric and gas utility bills. Ames invests over \$1 million a year in new textiles to keep its massive inventory of the highest quality. The company is also open to promising expansion opportunities, such as its recent acquisition of Cornell Laundry in Ithaca, which added 35 employees to the Ames Linen Service team.

The majority of Ames' roughly 900 customers falls within two categories—hospitality, food and beverage, which makes up 60 percent of business; and healthcare, which makes up 40 percent. The company maintains a fleet of 13 box trucks and step vans to handle customer pickups and deliveries.



"Currently, we operate in a 100 mile radius and are working to expand our footprint," Johanna Ames says. "There is still lots of opportunity for us."

Since assuming leadership of the company, Ames has taken the added step of attaining accreditation through the Textile Rental Services Association of America (TRSA), whose members specialize in providing and managing quality textile goods for business locations and are experts in determining the most hygienic and cost-effective laundering solutions for facilities and workplaces. "We are the only TRSA-Hygienically Clean Healthcare accredited facility in the region," Ames says. "The accreditation process uses third-party testing to verify that the textiles cleaned in our facility meet the highest standards and that we follow best management practices."

Ames is also the inaugural chair of TRSA's Women in Textiles Services, a group focused on recruiting and retaining more female leaders and encouraging business owners not to overlook women in the ranks for mentoring and leadership opportunities. "Historically, the workforce in our industry is female dominated, while management is predominantly male," Ames says. "Our goal is to encourage more women to join the industry, share innovative ideas through networking, mentor the next generation of emerging leaders, and serve as a resource for education on industry issues."

Closer to home, Ames is very active in the community by serving as a board member of the Cortland County IDA and BDC, president of the Cortland Regional Medical Center board of

trustees, vice chair of the SUNY Cortland college foundation board, chair of Colgate University's CNY alumni admissions program, as a TC3 investment committee member, and contributing her time and talents to other organizations and activities besides.

"Ames Linen Service may not be the biggest employer in Cortland County," she says, "but we are proud to be part of this community and happy to be creating jobs and growing our business in the region."

## Fast Facts

- Family owned for four generations
- More than 80 years in operation
- Gross annual revenue: \$5 million to \$10 million
- 85 employees
- 69,000 sq. ft. facility

*Ames' longest customer relationship—71 years—is with the Brae Loch Inn in Cazenovia.*



Washroom operator Patrick Duffy loads a massive washer with rugs which are in-house for cleaning.

Photo by Roger William Theise

In the last 12 months, Ames Linen Service has provided customers with:

701,000  
Tablecloths

775,000  
Sheets

2,600,000  
Bar towels

4,800,000  
Napkins

550,000  
Pillowcases

# resources

## Rural Pitch Competition Names Winners

Three local residents took home a share of a \$1,500 prize after a recent Rural Pitch Competition hosted by the Small Business Development Center at Onondaga Community College and sponsored by the Cortland County Business Development Corporation.

Several weeks of classes concluded with final night business pitches that were judged for their effectiveness. Winners were:

- David Limbouris, TurtleMesh—\$1,000
- Martha (Marty) Harrington, Harrington Concierge—\$500
- Jane Witty, Witty Events & Marketing LLC—\$250

## CNYREDC Releases List of Priority Projects for Round 7

Randy Wolken, President and CEO of the Manufacturer's Association of Central New York, has been appointed co-chair of the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council (CNYREDC).

Wolken will replace Robert Simpson, president of the regional economic development agency Centerstate CEO. Simpson has served as business co-chair since the Council's inception in 2011, and he will continue serving as a member of the CNYREDC after his term ends in December.

Wolken will join academic co-chair Dr. Danielle Laraque-Arena, President, SUNY Upstate Medical University, as the CNYREDC continues its work to grow the economy in the five-county Central New York region comprising Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Oswego and Onondaga counties.

"Randy Wolken has already been a great partner in our efforts to build a new Central New York economy," said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, statewide chair of the Regional Councils. "He is an outstanding choice to succeed Rob Simpson and will be an important voice as we continue to create new jobs and opportunities through the CNYREDC and the Central New York Rising Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI) plan."

Wolken said he is "honored and humbled" to assume the new role. He has been a member of the CNYREDC since its formation.

Simpson says he is proud of his work helping lead the CNYREDC for Central New York, which has leveraged nearly \$1 billion in state resources since 2011. "(Governor Cuomo) has empowered our region to define a vision for our future and engaged partners throughout the public, private and academic sectors to get things done. I am grateful for the partnership and involvement of all our CNYREDC members throughout the years who have worked tirelessly to engage the public, set strategies and review thousands of projects that have sought funding from the Council."

Over the past six years, the Central New York region has received \$906.8 million through the CNYREDC process, including \$500 million through the URI for its strategic plan, Central New York Rising.

"I don't think it's possible to overstate how impactful Rob's work has been over the past seven years," said BDC executive Director Garry VanGorder, a council member. "He's a true leader."

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](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)

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

# resources

## CRMC Announces Intent to Affiliate with Guthrie Clinic

Cortland Regional Medical Center's (CRMC) announcement of a non-binding letter of intent to affiliate with Guthrie Clinic leaves the institutions in a period of due diligence to research and assess how to grow and strengthen access to community-based healthcare for the Cortland County region.

The hospital's late September announcement capped more than 20 months of work by CRMC's Collaboration Task Force to identify a preferred partner. Chaired by board president Johanna Ames, the task force worked with president and CEO Mark Webster, senior leadership, physician leaders, the Board of Trustees, and with a strategic healthcare consulting firm to develop and issue a formal request for proposals last December.

"Throughout this very competitive and data-driven process, the Collaboration Task Force has focused on identifying a future partner that's both financially and strategically committed to preserving and expanding access to high-quality healthcare services in Cortland," said Webster. "After carefully evaluating each proposal, Guthrie has emerged as the best possible partner to support the lifelong healthcare needs of our region, and to help our organization grow and thrive in a rapidly changing, consumer-driven healthcare market."

Webster described, for example the \$41 million commitment Guthrie has indicated would be required to convert CRMC's technology infrastructure.

"Like Cortland Regional, Guthrie understands the challenge of delivering quality healthcare in a rural setting," said Guthrie President and CEO Joseph Scopelliti, MD. "It is my firm belief that people living outside of an urban area deserve reliable access to quality



Courtesy Cortland Regional Medical Center

Main entrance of Cortland's hospital. The hospital has recently announced its intention to affiliate with Guthrie Clinic of Sayre, Pa.

care. Guthrie has historically been committed to this concept. The signing of this letter of intent continues the discussion—but now more formally—about how Guthrie and Cortland Regional can work together to ensure reliable, local access to high quality care for the Cortland community."

### CRMC Collaboration Task Force

Johanna Ames, Chair; Julie Campbell; David Hempson; Christopher Moheimani, MD; Gary Nelson; William Pomeroy, Esq.; Douglas Rahner, MD; Jeffrey Seibert; and David Wirtz, MD. Management who provided support to the task force: Mark Webster, Anne Farrell, Tracy Gates and Denise Wrinn.

### About Guthrie

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 institute; home care/hospice; hospitals in Sayre, Pa., Corning, N.Y., Towaanda, Pa., and Troy, Pa.; as well as a multi-specialty group practice of more than 300 physicians and 190 advanced practice providers in a regional office network encompassing 45 sub-specialty and primary care sites in 21 communities throughout Pennsylvania and New York. Guthrie offers a wide range of services and programs designed to enhance the health and well-being of those it serves.

For more information visit [www.guthrie.org](http://www.guthrie.org).





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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.

④ Printed on recycled paper

## \$15 Million Crescent Corset Factory Redevelopment Gets Underway

**A**n October 6 groundbreaking ceremony at the former Crescent Corset factory on south Main Street has kicked off a \$15 million mixed-use redevelopment at the site.

The project by local developer David Yaman and Syracuse neighborhood revitalization company Housing Visions Unlimited, Inc. will mean new commercial space as well as 45 new loft-style, market-rate apartments. The project has been assisted with a state grant through the Empire State Development Corp. as well as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with the Cortland County Industrial Development Agency. The City of Cortland, National Grid, and other partners also played a critical role in pulling the project together.

Crescent Corset had been held in recent years by an out-of-country owner who had allowed the building to fall into disrepair. Officials worried about an eventual collapse, leaving a potentially difficult situation for a city already walking a financial tightrope.

Cortland County IDA Executive Director Garry VanGorder lauded the developers and said the project is important to the community in a number of ways. "It stabilizes a largely vacant building in danger of further deterioration, it will provide for top new commercial space near the downtown district, it will provide badly-needed market-rate housing, and it brings some needed vitality and energy to the south end neighborhood," VanGorder said. "This is impactful in so many ways."



Housing Visions Unlimited's President and CEO Rebecca Newman and Cortland developer David Yaman were joined by company, local and state officials September 13 for an official groundbreaking at Crescent Commons. Pictured here, left to right, are: Dave Nutting, chairman and CEO, VIP Structures; Newman; Garry L. VanGorder, president and CEO Cortland County IDA; Ben Lockwood, vice president for business development, Housing Visions; Yaman; R. Daniel McKay, state deputy commissioner for historic preservation, parks, and recreation; State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton; Cortland Mayor Brian Tobin; and Andrew D'Agostino, Community Preservation Corporation.