



Outlook

Building the Future **2022**



Cortland County
Business Development Corporation

Recovering From COVID, Building for the Future



The Cortland County Business Development Corporation is offering grant opportunities for businesses set back by the Covid pandemic. The funds, allocated through the county's American Rescue Plan Act allocation, are available through three separate programs:

- The Downtown Business Assistance Grant Program;
- The Sign, Façade, and Street Frontage Program; and
- The Small Business Expansion Assistance Program

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INFRASTRUCTURE

The bones on which a better future is built

By YUNER GAO
Staff Reporter

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Clinton Avenue in Cortland was a mess in 2021, but the work tearing it up, replacing the water and sewer mains, then repaving it will be completed this year.

A project to do the same to Main Street from Clinton to Tompkins Street starts this year, too. And that one will convert the one-way portion of Main Street to two-way traffic.

And a third project would, if funded, replace water, storm sewer and sanitary sewer pipelines, rebuild the road, replace curbs and sidewalks, plant new trees and add a bicycle path to Homer Avenue.

Travelers will notice smooth roads and maybe prettier sidewalks. But the real work is underneath – the infrastructure. Water and sewer services, sometimes communications – the bones a community builds on.

Infrastructure goes beyond water and sewer mains, of course. It can encompass communications infrastructure, workforce development, livable neighborhoods and policies to attract and keep both employers and employees.

To community planners and leaders, infrastructure is an ongoing effort to keep up with a community's needs, so they're always looking to the next challenge, and the next solution. Here's what they say some of those challenges are.

Downtown Projects

"Infrastructure work in the city of Cortland over the past few years has been pursued with several goals in mind," said Garry VanGorder, executive director of the Cortland County Business Development Corp. and the Industrial Development Agency.

Half of the \$10 million awarded to Cortland in 2017 through the state Downtown Revitalization Initiative program is being invested in rebuilding Main Street and the infrastructure below. Former mayor Brian Tobin said last December that the construction was expected to start this spring.

"The Main Street reconstruction, scheduled to begin this spring, has similar goals: rebuild the underground infrastructure for the first time in a generation and improve the street's appearance," VanGorder said. "The infrastructure work improves reliability and efficiencies for water and sewer services and the surface work makes the downtown district more attractive and vital for residents and prospective residents, alike."

Clinton Avenue is a gateway to the downtown district from Interstate 81, VanGorder said, and community leaders "wanted to improve Clinton Avenue aesthetically for our visitors and functionally for our residents."

The street will look markedly different above ground when it's completed this year, and below ground, new water and sewer lines will replace century-old mains to ensure reliable service for decades.

VanGorder said the project can affect businesses already in the district as well as those considering locating there.

"An attractive gateway can drive more customers and reliable infrastructure along the street may provide a springboard for future capital investments in the properties, some of which are pretty run down, and also incentivize new residency there," he said.

Bob Haight, executive director of the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce, is looking forward to the changes, too.

"There is going to be some pain to get there but once we're there, it's gonna be wonderful



Yuner Gao/staff reporter

Developer David Yaman works in his office at Cortland Crescent Commons on south Main Street, Cortland. Among the community's infrastructure needs, he said, is residential housing.

and it will be great for businesses," he said.

Almost as important as water and sewer is electricity, said Cortland Mayor Scott Steve.

"Our high quality of water and abundance of water is the good selling point. But the high utility rate makes it expensive to do business here."

High-speed internet

Internet access is another concern in Cortland County, Haight said.

"A huge issue is a high-speed internet in our rural areas," he said. "That's still an issue here."

Haight said it is vital to the survival of the business.

"All the things that we take for granted when we have high-speed internet, he said. "When you don't have it, it will put you at a disadvantage."

And he does know people who have been pushed to the margins by the lack of Internet.

"I am pretty familiar with one business who just got high-speed internet and he is in a rural area and just got it last year," Haight said. "It's going to help his ordering, both people's order from him and when he orders supplies in."

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative includes \$386,000 to install fiber-optic cable and improve high-speed broadband internet service to provide free wi-fi access downtown.

Housing stock

As a developer with more than 50 years of experience, David Yaman is focused on residential needs.

"An industry needs good labor, and therefore they need good housing because they bring in their employees and employees will look for good housing," Yaman said.

"If you improve the housing stock, that helps you bring industries into town," he said. "It helps the retailers because the more homes in good shape, the better the quality of the occupants."

The crux of the problem, from his perspective,

lies in the housing stock.

"Statistically, more than 50% of the homes in Cortland are non-owner occupied. So people who live in there don't own them, they rent them, including the student housing," he said.

He has precedents to draw on.

"South Main Street's here, you can look at the eight new houses that are fairly in good shape," he said, gesturing outside his Crescent Commons office window. "About 10 years ago, a non-profit organization came in and bought eight of them. And improved them."

"What they did is they improve the houses and people began to invest more in this area because it was a nice area," Yaman said. "So that stabilized the neighborhood and we need to do that in other areas in the community."

That's where Yaman wanted to roll up his sleeves. "I want to do that in a big way," he said. "It's hard to explain but that's one thing that I look at."

But building homes is just one facet, he said. "So as a developer, and as diversified as I am, what I need is a good quality community. So I need a good downtown, which has good restaurants and good entertainment and I need an environment for people to come to and they want to live here," Yaman said. "We need a robust economy to support the residential. It's a very holistic thing that I do."

Several years ago, Yaman helped to found Cortland Repertory Theatre as well as the Center for the Arts in Homer.

"I did those because I think that helps the quality of life, people want the arts and entertainment and that's really important for communities," he said. "I value a community that takes care of itself. I value a community that pays attention to all the details, to improve the quality of life."

Staff shortage

Staff shortages have been a long-standing problem. The COVID-19 pandemic made it worse.

"This is a systemic problem statewide as well," Steve said. We are enticing people to return to work."

"A lot of people just changed their lives during the last pandemic. They decided not to do the same thing and they wanted to do major changes to their life and I guess the pandemic has created a lot of anxiety and stress on people," he said.

Steve's idea is to take advantage of people who are currently not in the right position.

"Maybe for someone who has limited mobility, we can work with businesses to try to get them an opportunity because they want to be productive," he said.

More businesses

Finally, we come back to the question, that is, how do you attract more businesses?

"We do have a lot of companies here. You know Microbac in Cortlandville," Steve said. Bob Haight agrees.

"Byrne Dairy came to town and were able to supply them with a large volume of good water, and be able to remove the waste," Haight said. "And the town of Cortlandville is working closely with the city of Cortland to make that happen."

They are hoping for more than that. "We've got keep doing marijuana legalizing and we are excited about it. There are high-tech jobs for the chemical industry We don't want to leave out as well," Steve said.

The mayor's vision extends beyond Cortland.

"We are in communication with the city mayor in Binghamton, Syracuse mayor and trying to communicate to figure out anyways we could work together," he said. "We have and we will continue to try to work at possibilities, utilizing our local BDC, who is trying to generate more businesses within our community."

"My door is always open to any new businesses or existing businesses that need attention or expansion," Steve said.

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Building the future: Child care, workforce development and so much more

By BOB HAIGHT
Contributing Writer

What a wonderful theme and so fitting with all the newness happening in our communities.

The city of Cortland is the obvious choice to begin with, because of the reconstruction of Clinton Avenue and Main Street. What a long process but necessary when you realize all that will be happening under our streets. Water, storm water, wastewater, electricity, broadband, and room for additional technologies we don't even know about yet.

How do we turn a centuries old Main Street into a modern business center while still maintaining the beautiful character we love? I believe this is it, and is one step toward building our future.

We're looking forward to a brand-new gateway into our city and new Main Street to serve all of us. Our new location at 83 Main St. gives us a front row seat to witness it all.

Cortland isn't the only area with newness. Recent improvements in Cortlandville, Homer, Marathon, McGraw, Cincinnatus, Tully, Dryden, Groton and our more rural areas are noticeable and will continue. Broadband to rural areas is happening and will allow better access to businesses there and for residents there to reach services more efficiently.

The chamber's most recent strategic plan addresses the building of our future for the business community. I'll say it again, "show me a healthy community and I'll show you a healthy business community," they go hand in hand. We have six causes we focus on to strengthen our business community:

1. Workforce development.
2. Childcare for working families.
3. Local referrals/recognition.
4. Diversity and inclusion.

5. Small business resource center.
6. Cortland area promotion.

When you look at our work, at least one of our causes will shine each time, and sometimes more than one. I could write an entire article on each, and maybe the *Cortland Standard* will allow me to, but for today let me focus on one.

Workforce development is a hot topic recently because we have local businesses turning down work, shutting down machines and limiting hours, all because we don't have enough qualified people to run at full capacity.

At the same time, we're seeing candidates telling us they can't find valuable work. How could those two scenarios possibly exist? According to the Harvard Business School, one reason is that companies aren't looking for or considering "hidden workers." Hidden workers are those who may be automatically eliminated because they don't have credentials, even though they can bring capabilities to a position.

How can we help? The chamber has a couple of trials we're looking at. One is to look at our work environment to see what makes a business a place of employment people seek out? A second is to look at our hiring practices to see if we can tap into those "hidden workers" who are here but being overlooked.

I could go on and on but one thing at a time. We've been her for over 120 years and plan to be part of building our future. Want to learn more about the causes of the chamber or get involved in our work, we're just a phone call, email, or visit away.

Bob Haight is president and CEO of The Cortland County Chamber of Commerce.



A new norm in buying a home?

By JASON HAGE
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Throughout the pandemic these past couple of years, a new normal has been cultivated when buying and selling homes. No one could have predicted what the housing market would do and what changes were made as we are, hopefully, nearing an end to the pandemic.

The national real estate market, especially the local market, has stayed very strong during the pandemic despite what we may have thought two years ago when it first hit. Before the pandemic, we were experiencing a higher than average number of buyers and a lower than average inventory of homes available — perhaps the Baby Boomer generation prefers to stay in their homes rather than selling and down-sizing. This was compounded by the fact that historic low interest rates became even lower during the pandemic.

Also, buyers realized that they are able to work from home and even move away from their busy lives and continue their careers locally to be with family. The upper price range, especially, are the homes that met most of these buyers' needs, such as having more living space in order to have in-home offices. These homes became the scene of bidding wars as selling prices rose above asking prices and values. Also, these homes sold quickly.

Today we still experience homes selling quickly. However, most current buyers are less willing to overpay for their new homes, so prices are beginning to adjust and cap at still higher levels than before March 2020. The real estate market remains very active and has proven healthy for sellers. This should remain the trend throughout 2022. Interest rates are starting to creep up and may even rise higher by this spring. Even

with the higher rates, they are still lower than rates of the past.

The real estate process has changed somewhat as a result of the pandemic as well. Buyers have become accustomed to reviewing more homes and starting their search online. These buyers find it easier to rule out houses before they visit a home in person. The use of photos and online presentation became very important when advertising a home for sale. Closings have become less personal, with most buyers and sellers signing contracts at separate times and not sitting around a table together. Real estate offices have become less occupied with more Realtors working from home. Contracts for buyers and sellers have frequently been signed through online signing software, taking away from personal explanations.

With all of this being said, there is still a very important personal touch and connection when buying and selling houses. Despite the virtual showings, buyers still go inside houses before making offers. They still need to see them for themselves before their final decision is made. This personal aspect of buying will, most likely, never change. I believe we have arrived at our new normal and houses will still be viewed personally with a larger emphasis on online viewings. Realtors will continue to work from home and use online signing software, but, at some point, we hope our offices will be full of Realtors again and full of smiles as a result.

Just remember, no matter the new normal, buying and selling your home will always have a personal touch from your local and favorite Realtor.

Contributing writer Jason Hage is a Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker at Hage Real Estate.

The local business outlook for 2022

By GARRY VanGORDER
Contributing Writer

Cortland County checks a lot of boxes when it comes to its attractiveness to business.

Its central location, proximity to major transportation infrastructure, easy access to major metropolitan markets, competitive real estate costs, membership in a growing and innovative regional economy, and a high quality of life are just a few of them.

But we are also challenged by population loss, a shrinking and somewhat indifferent workforce as we recover from the pandemic, knee jerk opposition to change, and sometimes overzealous activism that often makes Cortland County business development much more difficult than it needs to be.

We do our best to address all of these challenges, but another one — the limited supply of green and developed spaces to accommodate growth — rises to near the top of the list.

It is with this in mind that the Cortland County Industrial Development Agency has taken such a keen interest in the former Apex manufacturing site on the east side of the city. The property, which was home to heavy industrial operations for better than a century, now sits vacant and strewn with debris after demolition of its massive production facility was completed.

The IDA is working to acquire the property from the current owner, with a top-of-mind intent to immediately remove that debris and then to begin assessment and removal of any contaminants that may be

found in the ground there. Once that work is complete, the agency will market the site for productive re-use.

None of this will occur overnight, but when complete, the project but will have returned to the Cortland County market an appropriately zoned development site within a stone's throw of the interstate. Ultimately, that will mean capital investment and jobs.

A similar project was undertaken a few years back with the former Buckbee Mears manufacturing facility on Kellogg Road, a sprawling 250,000-square-foot complex that was abandoned when its owner couldn't keep pace with the evolution of television manufacturing. The pull-out was disastrous, with hulking empty buildings more a lure for local vandals than investors, and with ground contamination so bad that it ultimately prompted federal Superfund remediation.

Years later, a cooperative effort among the IDA, the city of Cortland, the Bank of India and the Environmental Protection Agency facilitated new, local ownership of the site, and the resultant work there to rehabilitate the space for new business development is now showing positive results.

Gleaming new buildings are great to see, but building for the future in Cortland County also requires us to think imaginatively and collaboratively about how to use old spaces in new ways, whether for business, residential, or mixed-use.

Garry VanGorder is president of the Cortland County Business Development Corp. and Industrial Development Agency.



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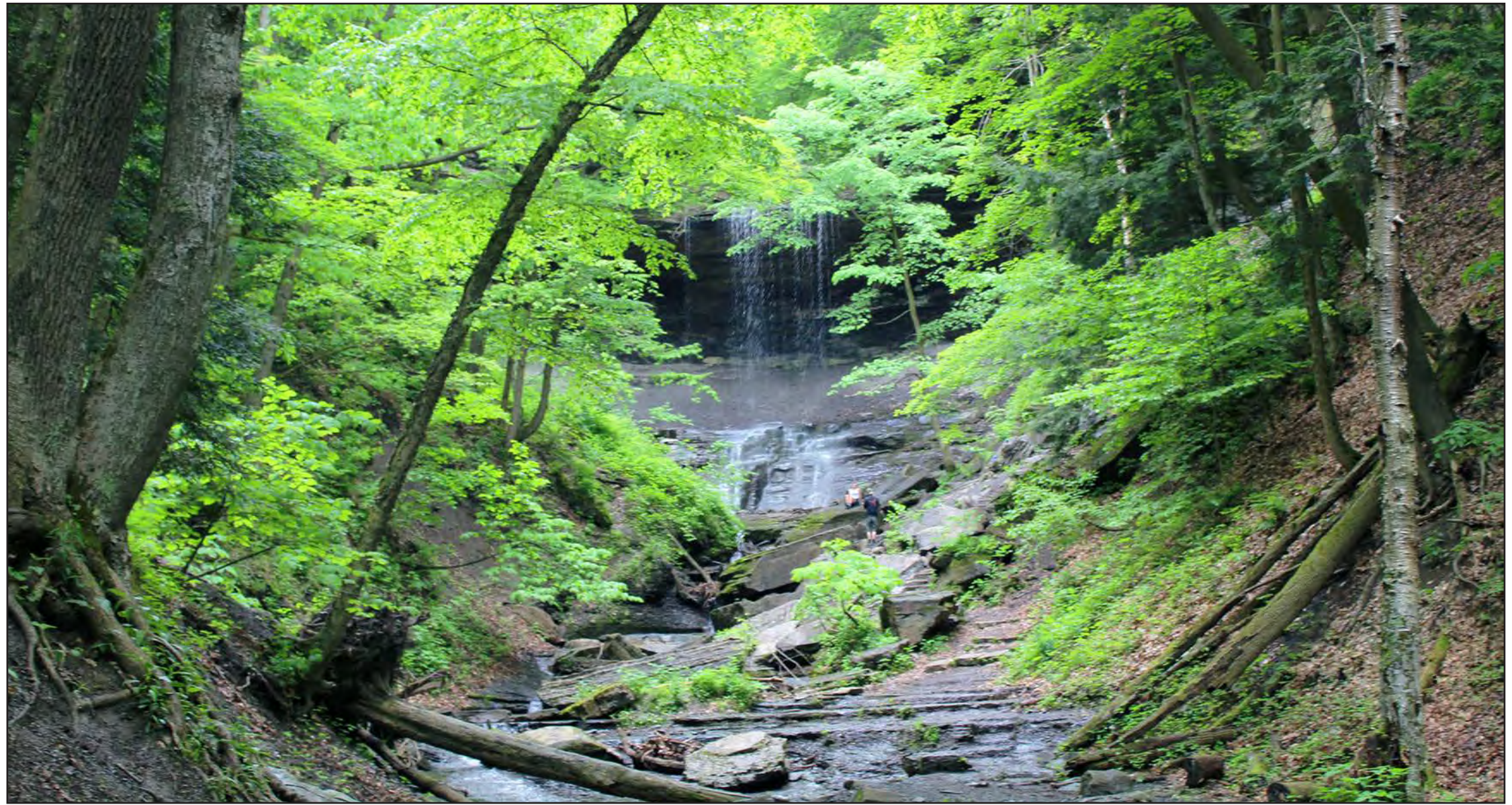
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Cortland Standard file photo

Tinker Falls is part of the Labrador Hollow area in Fabius and is a pleasure to visit.

QUALITY OF LIFE: Cortland certainly has it. Here's what might make it even better

By KATIE KEYSER

Living and Leisure Editor
living@cortlandstandard.net

When Ty Marshal first started at the Center for the Arts of Homer seven years ago, he was surprised at how vested people were in the music and art scene.

The executive director at the 72 S. Main St., Homer, center has brought in countless Grammy-winning musicians to the stage over his tenure. The center has thrived with the support of a volunteer network to raise funds and take on assorted jobs.

Marshal, asked about the area's quality of life, pointed to its natural surroundings, with its pumpkins, maple festivals and hiking areas like Labrador Hollow, and its accessibility to local food and a vibrant music scene.

But what could make quality of life even better here?

A commitment to the local food, music and art scene and an emphasis on small businesses, greater Cortland area leader said. And doing the work.

"You can always improve on the quality of life, Marshal said. "That takes a community. People need to come together to ask: 'What do we need to do? What do we want?'" Marshal said.

Brainstorming

"I would like to see more music



Cortland Standard file photo

Molly Reagan Andrejko sings at Seedstock in prepandemic times.

venues," said Marshal, whose theater can seat 400 people. "I want to give a shout-out to bars and clubs that book live music."

And he is happy that Rose Hall at 19 Church St., Cortland, will stage

live music, as his center does.

Chris Merkley, chairman of the Main Street Music Series and director of American Vintage Productions that stages shows at Rose Hall, agreed. Merkley, also an orga-

nizer of Seedstock at his home on Route 215, Cortlandville, is a musician who's played here, in the region and in Europe.

"We have a great foundation for building more of a scene here,"

Merkley said. "The Center for the Arts of Homer has done an incredible job of putting Homer on the map and consistently bringing in high level talent and Cortland Repertory Theatre has been a theatrical staple in Cortland for a long time."

Cortland Repertory Theatre Downtown at Port Watson Street has been another venue for music, theater and comedy, providing shows nine months of the year besides its summer theater at Little York Pavilion.

More venues

"In an ideal world, our music scene would be best served with venues to accommodate local, regional and national talent and bring more people to downtown Cortland," Merkley said. "There's a fun bar scene for music downtown but we're still lacking in a venue with a capacity over 200 people that can properly produce shows for larger acts. Rose Hall has the potential to be that venue, with a smaller stage on the first floor for local/regional acts and a larger performance space on the second floor for national touring acts."

"Renovations are necessary to make that happen but we're working toward that and the Dan and Rose McNeil Foundation has a great vision for realizing those goals," Merkley said. "Beyond that,

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BETTER

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there's still more room to build up the downtown infrastructure with a large outdoor performance space. The Marketplace Mall parking lot, where we host the Cortland Main Street Music Series, has the potential to be that location and ideas are being discussed. That would give Cortland an outdoor venue with the capacity for hosting bands that can bring in up to 1,200 to 1,500 people, making Cortland a regional destination for music. That kind of activity downtown would have huge economic and cultural benefits."

More small business

"What I see in Cortland County is 'different' industries taking the place of factories. Instead of a lot of factories, we have education ... and medical industries that help drive our economy," said Tabitha Scoville, director of the Cortland Historical Society. "We also have a tourist industry that supports many destination spots, hotels, gas stations, small shops and restaurants. People enjoy escaping from bigger cities to relax in the beautiful areas we have here."

Scoville said she'd like to see more small businesses and independent restaurants for a richer quality of life.

"I would love to see arts and music supported to an even higher degree. I think that it's important to protect our natural resources, too. I would really like to see smaller farms become the norm again instead of large-scale productions being the model. More encouragement for places like Trinity Valley or Main Street Farms."

Marshal agreed, wanting to see more art galleries in small towns and villages. A greater awareness of the farm-to-table process is on his wish list, and he'd like easy access to nature, like being able to dip his toes in the Tioughnioga River.

"Make it more accessible and welcoming and inviting for all of us," he said.

Marshal said economically, it would help the community to support local art, music and food.

"If you support Walmart, money goes out of the community. Spend money on a local level and that money stays in the community ... Buy beef, vegetables and art from the local area. That contributes to quality of life ... That would make a bright spot for a future."

In the works

Lee Benson, a board member for the 1890 House, has been a tour guide at the Victorian museum at 37 Tompkins St., Cortland, the former home of Chester Wickwire, an industrialist in the late 1800s, early 1900s.

"The future is bright. We have guests coming to the museum. They come in awe inspired," Benson said. "There really isn't anything else like that in Cortland. The Central New York Living History Museum is a whole different museum."

"I have been excited to hear from people," Benson said. "One of the first questions I ask people: 'Where are they from?' They're from out of state."

The 1890 House board has started renovating its Carriage House barn on its grounds with grant money to install restrooms and a kitchen so it can accommodate events.

"It will be a resource to us ...Cortland lacks banquet facilities for wedding receptions, family events, graduation, anniversary parties," Benson said.

In the meantime, board members are revamping a maid's room, stripping off wallpaper and creating an exhibit of working class people at the house. "We are basically restoring the room and a bunch of rooms in the museum that are closed



Head start teachers walk with children in their classroom at Suggett Park in Cortland.

Cortland Standard file photo

off," Benson said.

The museum has also raised \$30,000 in the middle of a capital fund campaign, Benson said. "I am totally invigorated."

Interconnectedness

John Zelson is chairman of the Cortland ReUse board of directors. He and a handful of others opened the non-profit store on McLean Road this summer, selling donated items to keep products in use and out of the landfill. The board just hired Alex Aloï as manager. Before that, volunteers made the store happen.

Zelson said family brought him to Cortland.

"All my work has been around anti-poverty and community development, but I always seem to gravitate to technology. In Philadelphia, late 1990s, it was plain to see that the internet would be critical to effective community work and could create opportunities in low-income communities," Zelson said. "I helped develop a computer reuse project where volunteers learned to rehab computers, the computers would go to non-profits and then we'd help them get online."

"It's only recently that I've gotten involved in the 'community' here in Cortland. One thing I keep noticing is that once people know a little about your intentions and your perseverance, they will be tolerant of your flaws and try to help," he said.

"One thing that fascinates me about Cortland is how the networks of people and relationships are so intertwined," he

added. "The size and interconnectedness of Cortland could be a huge asset for the community."

Established recreation

Andrea Piedigrossi, recreation supervisor at the Cortland Youth Bureau, said staff are planning for a full slate of summer events in Cortland's parks.

Activities for kids will take place at Suggett and Beaudry parks with an open building, staff and equipment. The Arts in the Parks program will return in association with Cortland Free Library. That serves 200 to 300 kids.

Expect a free weekly summer music series at Courthouse Park. And there will be youth softball, Crown City Little League, lacrosse, arts and crafts camp, Cortland County Youth Soccer Association, the fishing derby and Easter Egg Hunt – "Pretty much everything we did before COVID-19," Piedigrossi said.

She is excited to see Suggett Park's basketball court completed, with plans for a mural of a topographic map of Cortland by a local artist. The center court on the map will be the city of Cortland, she said.

"I think the programs we offer are great for the community. We can always do better. For the future, pickleball is becoming very popular. And box lacrosse. More facilities for those athletics would be great for our community," Piedigrossi said.

The youth bureau is looking at proposals to renovate Randall Park. It is considering box lacrosse and pickleball courts.

"I think right now, we are pretty good," Piedigrossi said.

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Accessible infrastructure: Better for everyone

By ERIN VALLELY
Contributing Writer

Infrastructure is the foundation of accessibility and inclusion in America. Without it, people cannot get where they need to go or access opportunities. Bad infrastructure can even hurt or kill people. Disabled individuals, the quickly growing senior population, people with strollers and small kids, business owners and tourists are just a few of the groups that benefit from accessible communities.

As Cortland looks to the future, Access To Independence is working to help ensure improvements also increase the accessibility of the city, and county, for everyone. Some of Cortland's biggest infrastructure issues are limited public transportation, dangerous walkways and limited internet service.

◆ **Transportation** — Limited bus routes and hours of operation make it hard to get around town. Private taxis and rideshare services are expensive and unreliable in our area.

When people do not have access to transportation, they have trouble getting to work, buying fresh food, getting medicine, and going to appointments and social opportunities.

As a member of the Transportation Advisory Committee, Access to Independence is supporting Cortland Transit's efforts to increase routes and the hours the buses are available. Additionally, in partnership with Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Access to Independence provides transportation for wheelchair users in the accessible van it owns.

◆ **Walkways** — Uneven and bumpy sidewalks are dangerous and make it difficult to use strollers, walkers and wheelchairs. Broken and missing crosswalk buttons put people at risk of being hit when trying to cross streets. Similarly, people can get stuck in the road due to damaged and inaccessible curb cuts.

These problems cause shops to lose potential business because people are not walking around.

As the city plans to renovate Main Street, Access to Independence is working with the SUNY Cortland Community Innovation Lab class to map accessibility problems in that area so they can be fixed during construction.

◆ **Internet** — Estimates show at least 1,500



The Access To Independence office on North Main Street in Cortland.

Cortland Standard file photo

households and 120 small businesses in Cortland County cannot access internet services. Without access, people cannot do homework, search for jobs, work from home, see their doctors or participate in virtual community activities.

Internet access has become a necessary service rather than a luxury.

To help people access the internet, Access to Independence has a public computer lab, and a dedicated private room people can use for

online appointments. It also supports plans to expand internet cables around the county to create a community internet system.

In America, everyone has the right of freedom. However, with limited transportation, unsafe business areas and no internet service, people cannot access the services and opportunities they are entitled to.

Good infrastructure means people can meet their needs, support local businesses and stimulate the economy. It also decreases

emergency costs from unmet needs.

When more people can fully participate in their community, everyone benefits. Infrastructure makes or breaks everyone's quality of life — from mine, as a wheelchair user, to yours — and Cortland must prioritize it in the coming months and years for our county to prosper.

Erin Vallely is an advocacy specialist at Access to Independence in Cortland.

Mental health needs up 239% — before COVID

By LISA HOESCHELE
Contributing Writer

Between 2009 and 2020, Cortland County has seen a dramatic increase in the need for mental health and addiction services.

Overdoses are skyrocketing; distribution of Narcan is soaring; the number of individuals presenting at the emergency room and at both Cortland County Mental Health and Family & Children's Counseling Services for mental health treatment has reached crisis proportions.

And this was before COVID hit our communities. Now, acuity levels of those seeking services at FCCS is higher than ever; wait lists are long.

Why? Because while we may pay lip service to the need for high quality mental-health and addiction services, we don't want to pay for them.

The demand for child mental-health services highlights what is happening in our communities as a whole. Since 2009, FCCS has seen an increase of 239% in the need for services among our children. Significantly more children we serve are expressing suicidal thoughts or ideas leading to a 125% increase in the number of youth requiring safety plans. Our children are suffering.

When the county Community Services Board identified a need for school-based ser-



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VICES in 2012, Family Counseling was there. We started providing services in two rural school districts. We quickly recognized the need for additional services and expanded programming to include every single school building in Cortland County.

This school-based model allowed children and their families to access services where they needed them, without having to think

about how to fill their gas tanks to get into the city or take time off from work to help their children access supports.

To ensure access and address socio-economic variables, no child is denied treatment regardless of their family's ability to pay for services. Thus, FCCS often provides those services at a fiscal loss because we do not actively dun parents for co-pays or deductibles.

The COVID-19 pandemic made these services even more challenging to provide. Children exhibited increasingly severe mental-health symptoms during lockdown. Family dynamics in isolation wreaked havoc on the mental health of many of our children.

We actively sought out these children and their families, often providing supports at no charge when we could not engage children on the phone long enough to be able to bill for telehealth services under insurance or Child Health Plus insurance.

We wrote grants for funding for families who often had no money for phone minutes, internet or other access for telehealth for their children.

Our staff literally had to track down children, who, because of the pandemic's child-care challenges, were often hard to find. They might be with grandma, a neighbor or even home alone.

But FCCS continues to do our best to ensure that children receive the vital services they need.

My dream for our community is access to care. It's a recognition that mental health is "health" and that we have to pay for these important services. We have to understand that ignoring these issues costs us in the long-term: in loss of family, in death, in addiction.

Lisa Hoeschele is executive director of Family & Children's Counseling Services.

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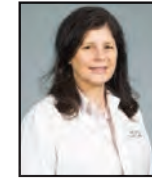
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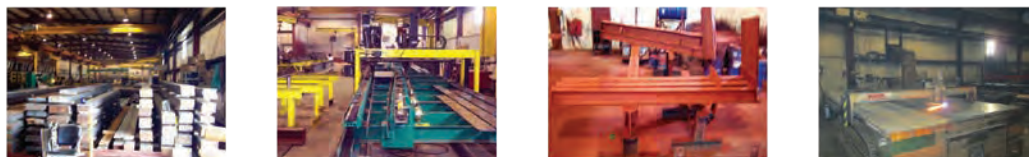
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Experts: Cortland's health needs include intensive care, mental health services

By VALERIE PUMA
Staff Reporter

vpuma@cortlandstandard.com

Although the coronavirus pandemic has been the focus of healthcare for the past two years, Cortland County health experts are setting goals in medical care, mental health services and overall community health this year.

As the only hospital in Cortland County, Guthrie Cortland Medical Center is a go-to for patients of all needs and backgrounds. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Paula Brooks said the future of health in Cortland is to be able to provide great care locally and remotely for patients at home.

"Guthrie has been looking at how we do medicine because the pandemic has shown us that small community hospitals can stabilize critically ill patients, but if they don't get better in a couple of days, then we ship them to major medical centers," Brooks said.

But larger hospitals haven't always had the beds available for incoming patients during the pandemic.

"So we're looking at how we can develop our ICU and leverage technology – whether that's telemedicine or working within our system to ship patients wherever they can get the best care," Brooks said.

Telehealth visits have made appointments easier for patients and healthcare professionals alike, she said.

"I had a 6-month-old whose mom was worried," Brooks said. "And (on a video call) I was able to show what she needed to do, and we did the exam completely remotely in the middle of a huge COVID outbreak. Those types of things are going to be very helpful for places like Cortland, where a lot of our patients might have transportation problems."

In addition to the hospital's technological goals, Guthrie is encouraging preventive measures, like vaccinations, and has turned a focus to mental health.

"We're working hard to come up with solutions to keep people mentally healthy," Brooks said. "So we're renovating some rooms in our ER and our inpatient psych floor, which will help us better support our patients so that we can keep them close to home."

Mental health

Demand for mental health services has increased exponentially over the past five years, said Lisa Hoeschele, executive director and CEO of Family & Children's Counseling Services.

"It's very challenging, and oftentimes every practitioner or clinic is full," she said. "Significant waitlists across the board."

A number of private practitioners may accept private or commercial insurance, but often-



Photo provided by Guthrie

Janice Stafford, a patient-care technician, works in the emergency room at Guthrie Cortland Medical Center.

times may not, and there are only two licensed mental health clinics in the area, Hoeschele said – Family & Children's Counseling Services and the Cortland County Mental Health Department, which accept Medicaid, Medicare, and just about all commercial insurances.

But the average salary the county and FCCS can offer has not been sufficient to recruit and retain well-qualified therapists, Hoeschele said.

"We have about a 25% vacancy rate right now on all of our positions – that's more than we've had in the past – and my staff is spectacular. They are the most vital first responders in the mental health field and are willing to do just about anything for their clients," Hoeschele said. "But we oftentimes can't pay them what they're worth."

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced a \$21 million program in October to help recruit and retain mental-health practitioners and improve access to services.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an enormous strain on all New Yorkers," Hochul

said then. "This funding will support our behavioral health workforce and increase access to care, helping to ensure that everyone in our state who needs assistance and treatment can get it."

Her 2022 budget proposal would also establish the Mental Wellness Community Workforce, lay people trained in mental health, to provide care in places with little or no access via a digital platform. The program would link healthcare providers to patients through places or worship, senior centers and social service agencies.

Still, Hoeschele said she hopes to see the governor and the state legislature advocate for increased funding for mental health services.

"Even before the pandemic, we were seeing unprecedented demand for mental health services, but in the past two years, I would say we've seen about a 300% increase just since COVID," Hoeschele said.

Public health

When Nicole Anjeski first started to pursue

an education and career in public health, she knew she wanted to help improve the health of communities.

Anjeski was appointed to the role of Cortland County Public Health Director in November and says the health department continues to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the goal is to provide education and recommendations, work with partners and medical providers and adapt the county's COVID response as the pandemic changes.

Anjeski said the pandemic has proven that emergency preparedness planning is critical – not only to understand how to effectively deal with a public health emergency but to understand the needs and limitations of the resources available, of following evidence-based science and the importance of proper messaging.

"The focus of public health needs to be broad, and a necessary focus is on the social determinants of health," Anjeski said. This includes mental health, substance use, housing quality and access to transportation. "Social determinants of health have to be a priority and public health cannot effectively address these alone."

Expanding beyond the focus of COVID this year, the county Health Department will seek input from residents regarding health problems, unmet health needs, physical activity, mental health, food security, healthy eating and substance use.

Sharon MacDougall, director of community services for the county, said the mental health department is part of Columbia University's HEALing Communities study of the opioid crisis across New York.

"We're actually very excited, because it's been in the assessment stage of that project, and we're finally moving into the intervention stage," MacDougall told county legislators at a recent Health and Human Services Committee meeting. "We're waiting for the contract from Columbia, and we're expecting a significant increase to start in April to really address that, especially opioids."

MacDougall said her staff works closely with the health department, especially now that the county is updating its five-year health assessment.

The decline in local COVID-19 cases has allowed the health department to focus on providing a more meaningful survey for the community, Anjeski said, and she plans to work with community partners and create significant objectives and strategies to improve the health of the community.

"We are looking for more community feedback and encourage everyone to take an active role in voicing their thoughts about what they feel is important for the community's health priorities moving forward over the next three years," Anjeski said.

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Photo provided by Cayuga Health

Coming this spring will be a new location for an expanded Cayuga Physical Therapy program at 2 N. Main St., Cortland. The program will move from 1129 Commons Ave., Cortland, to the Bailey Place Insurance building next to Vine Health and Fitness.

Cayuga Health adds to medical care and physical therapy in Cortland County

By JOHN TURNER
Contributing Writer

Improving the health and wellness of Cortland County residents is a top priority for the Cayuga Health.

For over three decades, we've supported that mission with a growing number of primary-care providers, specialty-care physicians, therapists and medical technicians at convenient locations in the Cortland area and equipped them with sophisticated medical technology that enhances patients' care.

Residents now have dozens of advanced care choices delivered in Cortland County by the Cayuga Health System. Since 1999, when the Convenient Care opened at our Cortland medical campus, services have grown to include care in oncology, orthopedics, neurology, surgery, cardiac and vascular disease and women's health, among others. We bolstered those programs with advanced diagnostic imaging, state-of-the-art laboratory services, comprehensive physical therapy

care, patient education and counseling services.

Coming this spring will be a new location for an expanded physical therapy program at 2 N. Main St., Cortland. The program will move from its current location at 1129 Commons Ave., Cortland, to the Bailey Place Insurance building next to Vine Health and Fitness. Adolescent to senior patients will have a 2,000-square-foot facility for equipment and therapy sessions, far more space than the program has had at its Commons Avenue location.

Two physical therapists will provide appointments weekdays at the newly renovated site, which adds natural light to the space, a comfortable waiting room and a relaxing environment. The program will offer patients rehabilitation and physical therapy care following their care from Cayuga Medical Associates' orthopedics, sports medicine and primary care providers.

Patients seeking to improve their fitness after physical therapy can be

referred to trainers at Vine Health and Fitness in the adjacent suite.

They join seven other locations in Cortland and Homer, on Commons Avenue, Euclid Avenue, Kennedy Parkway, North Main Street and North West Street in Homer.

Advancing local medical technology

Our diagnostic services in Cortland have seen major upgrades with new 3-D mammography technology at the Commons Imaging Center provide clinically proven breast cancer exams that detect cancer early. The out-patient laboratory at 1129 Commons Ave., Cortland, provides testing in cytology, molecular microbiology, pathology, urinalysis, hematology, coagulation, blood banking and all major areas of clinical laboratory chemistry. Cayuga Health's sports medicine physicians and trainers provide clinical care for patients at 1122 Commons Ave., and work with athletic teams at Cortland public schools and SUNY Cortland.

The Internal Medicine Residency program at Cayuga Medical Center in partnership with NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center brings medical school graduates to our region for their residency training. The initiative will attract new primary-care physicians to Cortland County and nearby communities that face a shortage of these doctors.

Serving complex medical needs

Expanding the network of primary and advanced health-care services is a critical challenge for our region's future. Some care can be provided locally, but patients with complex medical needs may need the sophisticated care available at larger medical centers.

Cayuga Medical Center has expanded its advanced medical care programs and developed affiliations with some of the nation's best medical research hospitals to treat patients needing the highest level of care.

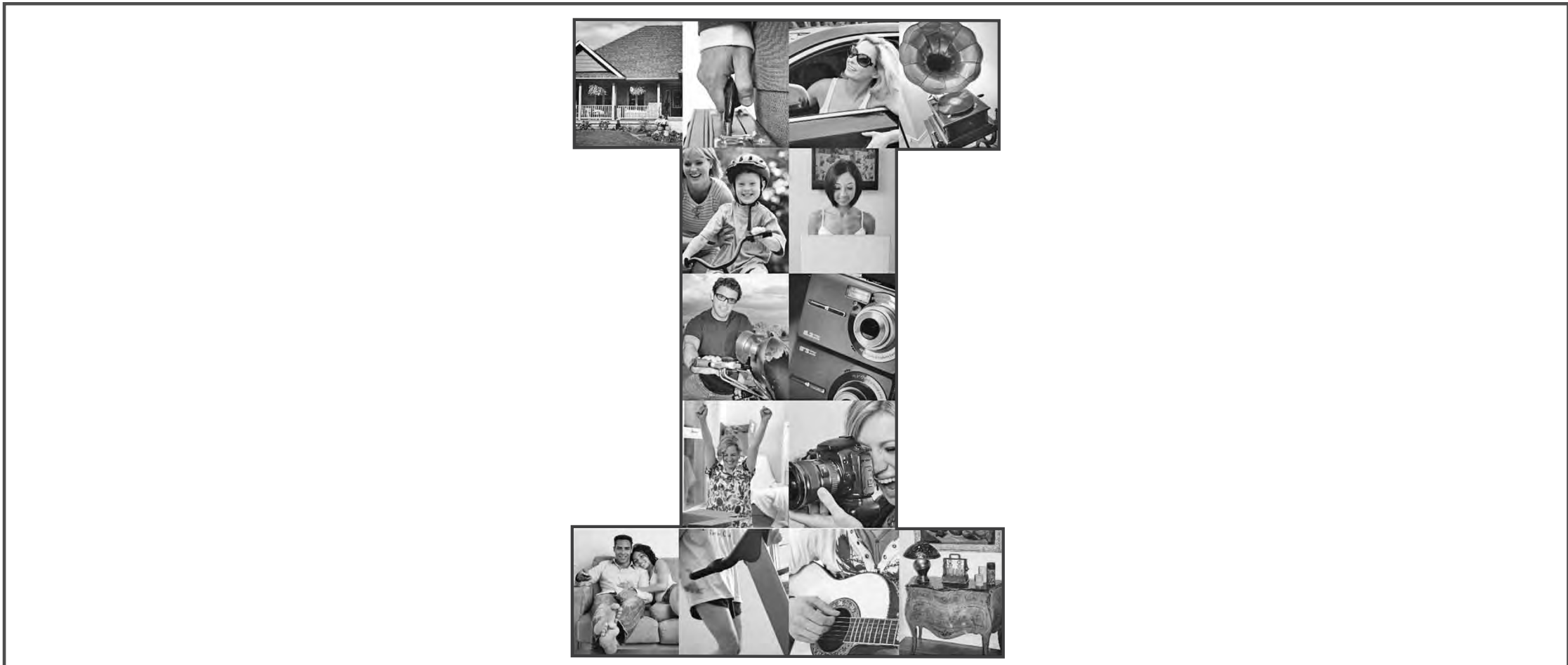
Our network includes the Roswell

Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo for advanced cancer care, UR Medicine in Rochester for neurosciences, Rochester Regional Health System and Cleveland Clinic for cardiac care and Mayo Medical Laboratories for advanced laboratory diagnostics.

Many of the specialists in the Cayuga Health System are also on the staff of those major medical centers and collaborate with their researchers.

Years of cooperation between physicians and high-speed digital links between the Cayuga Health System and research hospitals allow most patients needing high-level care to have their diagnostic tests and follow-up care done at medical offices in Ithaca or Cortland. The future of health care will include more of these collaborations between hospitals and physicians across the nation, so patients get the best care when and where they need it.

John Turner is vice president of public relations for Cayuga Health.



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Guthrie Cortland Medical Center



Photo provided by Guthrie

Hometown hospital adds to its focus on stroke care, mental health

By JENNIFER YARTYM
Contributing Writer

At Guthrie Cortland Medical Center, we are deeply committed to providing patients with the care they deserve within our community. This means working hard to make sure our facilities are able to help us deliver high-quality care.

We were thrilled to open the Renzi Cancer Center in 2021 because it successfully fulfilled a need for comprehensive cancer care, close to home. To further meet that need, the hospital is currently completing renovations to its imaging and radiology department, adding new technology to aid in the early diagnosis of cancer and other medical conditions.

We will add the region's only PET CT later this year, a key component in the move toward stroke center designation, adding another layer of quality health care, locally.

The community will see additional changes at the hospital in the months and years ahead, delivering on the promise Guthrie made in 2019 when it affiliated with Cortland Regional Medical Center, to invest in the health care needs of the community.

Guthrie's commitment to technology is also greatly enhancing the patient experience, from tablets in patient rooms for better communication with family and in-house caregivers to access to information that helps patients make well-informed health care decisions before walking through our doors.

Our online portal, eGuthrie.org continues to grow, putting the power in the patient's hands, with the



ability to schedule appointments, access health records, request prescription refills, message care teams and more, ultimately adding to patient safety and privacy.

Guthrie Cortland Medical Center is also actively working to embrace the members of our community whose needs go beyond physical ailments. Our emergency department regularly treats patients with behavioral health needs.

To protect their privacy and keep them safe, we are building additional private rooms in the ED, specifically for patients who require specialized care.

We also understand that mental-health concerns can't be solved with one visit to the ED. That's why we have obtained grant funding that will allow us to completely renovate our inpatient behavioral health unit. The project will enhance the overall experience for our patients while maintaining much needed beds within the region.

COVID-19 has been a challenge and we are grateful for the community's support over the last two years.

Rest assured that during this time, Guthrie Cortland Medical Center has continued to work behind the scenes to meet the challenges ahead so we can continue to provide high quality care to the community we call home.

Jennifer Yartym is the president of Guthrie Cortland Medical Center and a senior vice president for Guthrie.

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Lessons from the pandemic

Colleges, schools pivot as COVID uncovers new needs

By KEVIN CONLON
City Editor

kconlon@cortlandstandard.net

The COVID-19 pandemic strained the education system – both in how college students are prepared to become teachers and how graduates lead classrooms. It also presented opportunities to overhaul how young people are prepared for life and future jobs.

“We saw a lot of cracks in the system,” said Andrea Lachance, dean of the School of Education at SUNY Cortland. “So much innovation happened. We will be able to say we learned a lot. We innovated and let’s see what we can take forward.”

Technology became a lifeline for school districts that were forced to quickly shift to remote education to help stem the spread of COVID-19.

The shift forced teachers to adapt the ways they taught, parents had to become more involved and some students thrived while others struggled, Lachance said.

The value of technology as a learning tool was evident, but it quickly became clear that there are shortfalls that need to be addressed, such as access to devices and internet service that make remote learning possible.



Photo provided by Groton Central School District

Students in Groton Junior-Senior High School’s science, technology, engineering, arts and math program’s building trades cluster work in October on a greenhouse at the school, built next to the district’s bus garage

See LESSONS, page D2

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LESSONS

continued from page D1

Tompkins Cortland Community College expanded how it teaches its students based on lessons from the pandemic, offering not only in-class programs, but more classes online and recorded classes so that students can view them when their schedule allows, said Anna Regula, a TC3 early education professor.

“Traditional education may not be a thing anymore,” Regula said. During the pandemic, educators have had to solve short- and long-term problems, such as limited or nonexistent internet service in rural areas of the county and teachers who had little or no previous experience teaching remotely.

Limitations of remote learning were a reminder of the importance of teaching face-to-face in a classroom, Regula said.

Teachers had to learn to make classes more engaging and to involve students in discussions.

“I got the opportunity to find new ways to do that,” Regula said. “I want to prepare future teachers. I don’t want to just talk to them (students). That’s not how you get critical thinkers and leaders.”

In addition to the upheaval caused by the pandemic, schools have had to face longstanding challenges.

Shortages of teachers, teacher aides and bus drivers worsened during the pandemic while wages remained low, Lachance said.

The state requires teachers to obtain a master’s degree and additional certifications are needed for advancement into administrative jobs. SUNY Cortland is working to make teacher education programs more streamlined and affordable, Lachance said.

While technology offers new ways of teaching, the content remains largely the same.

Schools need to teach life skills, Lachance said.

“In the business world, they want people who can adapt and are flexible,” she said.

Businesses have training programs to teach the specifics of a job, but people need to develop basic communication skills, both written and spoken, that can be applied to any job, Lachance said. Building relations, collaborating and working with others are important in the workplace.

“No matter what job you are in, that is what they are looking for,” Lachance said.

Schools continue to deal with competing demands to train students to work immediately in a trade or other jobs when they graduate from high school and to prepare them more broadly for life, which includes work.

“It is a constant balance,” Regula said.

TC3 works with businesses to determine what graduates need to know to begin work, and many courses are tailored toward those goals, she said.

Groton School District Superintendent Margo Martin said her district is working to provide students the skills they need to get good paying local jobs in professions that desperately need workers, such as health care, information technology and building trades.

Better jobs will have many benefits, such as improving the quality of life in the community and helping to convince people to remain in Groton, Martin said.

Reading and comprehension skills, for example, are important for many jobs, especially as people advance in their career, Regula said.

“I work on a lot of anti-bias education, critical thinking, and

Groton schools hope to rebuild community

By KEVIN CONLON
City Editor

kconlon@cortlandstandard.net

GROTON – When Superintendent Margo Martin looks around the Groton school district, she sees an impoverished community that lacks pride, hope and job opportunities.

“When you drive down Main Street, we are pretty impoverished,” Martin said.

She has a plan to change that.

The school district began a pilot program this year to expand lifelong learning for the entire community.

“We have an educating-for-the-future plan here at Groton,” Martin said. “We see this as a K-99 system,” referring to kindergarten through a lifetime.

There is much work to do, Martin said.

The town of Groton lacks back basic services, such as a supermarket or urgent care facility.

Challenges include adult and child obesity, unemployment, a 49% poverty rate and an inadequately skilled workforce. Only 24% of residents have an education beyond high school. Census data show nearly 37% of people have an education beyond high school.

A survey found that an alarming number of students have a poor view on life, that they are depressed and give up easily when facing challenges, compared with children of similar backgrounds, Martin said.

The district’s program is designed to boost community pride, revitalize neighborhoods, educate residents for good paying, skills-based jobs in the region and encourage them to remain in Groton to raise families.

“We need to stop the brain drain in the state,” Martin said.

The loss of manufacturing jobs in the town and

region has hurt the community.

District officials discussed the program with Assembly Member Anna Kelles (D-Ithaca), state Sen. Peter Oberacker (R-Schenenbus) and state Education Department officials.

The district plans to train the community for jobs in communications and graphic design, computer science, agriculture technology, building trades and health sciences, all professions that are lacking employees and pay a living wage.

That means teaching public school students during the day and adults in the evenings.

Nursing is a first emphasis, as the district helps to fill a projected statewide need to fill 50,000 jobs by 2030, although the COVID-19 pandemic may move up that target.

The first job-training program recently began, an emergency medical technician course for students during the day and a similar program at night for adults to fill a need for such jobs. There were 52 students from across the region trained in the fall and another 22 signed up for the course in the spring.

The district’s pilot program will be implemented more broadly next school year, said Martin, who said it could also serve as a pilot program statewide for using school districts to redevelop rural communities.

The effort is an expansion of the district’s Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math, or STEAM program.

The district has an agreement with the Southern Tier Carpenter’s Union to accept graduating students into the apprenticeship program after they have completed training while in school.

The district plans to work with Tompkins Cortland Community College on job education programs.

empowering students as learners and citizens,” she said.

“What you need to do is prepare students to think and have good communication skills, good problem solving skills,” Lachance said

Regardless of the difficulties of the past two years, they have

presented the education field with new tools to accomplish timeless goals.

“We are trying to provide the best environment and the most engaging environment,” Regula said. “That doesn’t change. But we have to present it in a variety of ways.”

TC3 works to build new programs, credentialing

By PAUL REIFENHEISER
Contributing Writer

DRYDEN — Tompkins Cortland Community College is excited for the future. The college still offers a robust list of programs designed to lead you to either transfer to a four-year college or university or create a pathway for you directly to employment.

While the pandemic certainly impacted us, it also allowed us to think of new ways to serve our sponsoring counties. Community colleges across the country are looking at new ways to assist with the changing economy and are poised to be key players.

Soon we will be expanding offerings in civil engineering, electrical engineering and health care to meet the demands of local, regional and national employers.

Employers tell us that meeting the needs of the future requires credentials and course offerings with specific goals that are shorter and easier to obtain. The college now offers microcredentials, which can be completed more quickly than an associate’s degree, while still counting as college credits — assisting with the vital first steps towards a diploma.

Students can now learn valuable job skills in a short time, while still working towards their long-term educational goals.

We also know that college is hard for so many, and we are adapting to our changing environment to help students succeed.

For example, many struggle with math and English, but we’ve revamped our curriculum to support our students in these gateway



Photo provided by Tompkins Cortland Community College
Ogoumi Real checks samples in a laboratory at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

course. The results have been impressive.

The global pandemic has changed the way we deliver instruction to our students, and these new flexible course options have proven especially beneficial for those with family and work responsibilities beyond the classroom.

Much that we used to of-

fer only in-person, such as tutoring and mental health support, is now available live online.

Whether it is increasing applied learning and experiential experiences earlier in a student’s career, or expanding internship opportunities, the college is working to create more hands on experiences inside and out-

side of the classroom. Those changes lead to greater student success over time.

We are upgrading our facilities, thanks to ongoing support from our local counties, SUNY and the state of New York. We’ve received a grant totaling close to \$ 3.5 million to develop new curriculum and renovate outdated facilities to be more responsive to the workforce needs of the future. We aren’t just reacting to our changing world; we are building a better future on our beautiful Dryden campus.

We are proud of our community and of our students. Of course, challenges remain, especially as we work to improve our aging infrastructure. However, we are honored to have the support of our community as we rebuild and improve our nearly 50-year-old campus, develop new and exciting course offerings and utilize technology to support students better.

A lot is changing at TC3, but our core values remain. We will always offer quality courses at affordable tuition costs. We will always have caring and devoted faculty and staff to help students meet their goals. We will always embrace the diversity of our community and strive to create an inclusive environment for all.

But most importantly, as a TC3 student you are never just a number or a face in an over-crowded classroom. You will always be a valued part of an ever-changing community.

Paul Reifenheiser is provost and administrator in charge at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

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A focus on high-growth programs, environmental effort and child care

By ERIK J. BITTERBAUM
Contributing Writer

SUNY Cortland's mission has always been focused on the future.

Each fall, thousands of students arrive on campus to continue their education, prepare for careers and develop skills that will last a lifetime. Their time in Cortland makes their prospects brighter.

This university could not accomplish that mission without the support of the Cortland community and its people, its businesses and its local government.

As I look ahead, I believe these relationships will be strengthened by the university's continuing commitment to expand its impact and by the talented people who currently live in, or will be drawn to, this community.

SUNY Cortland's foundation is built on providing a quality and affordable education for all. We do so through cultivating excellent faculty and staff, ensuring our students have engaging and transformative experiences and caring for the physical, emotional and cultural well-being of the university community.

Gov. Kathy Hochul's vision of transforming the State University of New York into the nation's top public college system mirrors SUNY Cortland's long-term aspirations. SUNY will emphasize expanding enrollment and protecting the access to education that is vital to today's young adults. We will do this by recruiting and retaining top faculty, many of whom will choose to live in this community.



Students walk on the SUNY Cortland campus.

Todd R. McAdam/file photo

SUNY has reconfirmed its commitment to child care centers on its campuses. SUNY Cortland's Child Care Center has served countless

families in this area since it opened in 1993. The Center for Speech, Language and Hearing Disorders and the Sensory Integration/Mo-

tor Sensory Movement Exploration Center deliver crucial services to people in need.

Our academic priorities include

high-growth programs and those that contribute greatly to society, particularly education. Faculty and students are engaged in important and groundbreaking research and receive significant grant support, including a recent \$2 million grant to encourage underrepresented students studying science and nearly \$1 million to prepare teachers for success in urban classrooms.

The campus will also continue to be a national leader in sustainability and environmental consciousness, particularly when it comes to energy. SUNY Cortland has been using 100% renewable sources for electric energy since 2013 and is working to become completely carbon neutral by 2050.

This success hasn't happened overnight. Since a college was established in Cortland in 1868, it has moved forward thanks to the efforts of the faculty, the staff, the students, the alumni and its partners in the community.

A key moment in the history of this city and this university happened when the Cortland Normal School's original building downtown was destroyed in a fire in 1919 and the university relocated to the top of the hill. When Old Main opened its doors in May 1923, a new chapter of Cortland's history began.

Cortland and its university have built so much together. I fully expect SUNY Cortland and this community will enjoy a future that is as bright as the past.

— — —
Erik J. Bitterbaum is president of SUNY Cortland.

LIBRARIES: A repository of creativity

By JEN GRANEY
Contributing Writer

When you think of the library, what comes to mind? Books, probably. Librarians, maybe. The library is an integral part of our community, and I mean this in many ways.

In one of the most traditional, it's part of our community's information infrastructure. At Cortland Free Library, we facilitate the creation, use, transport and storage of information, a big chunk of one of the most standard definitions of information infrastructure.

How do we do this? Let's think about creation, use and transport first. Free access to collections of all types, physical and electronic — everything from local history to poetry to ecology — support these endeavors, and in myriad forms: hardcover and paperback books, movies, music, audiobooks, magazines, newspapers. By reading, watching and lis-

tening, consumers soon become creators. Inspiration and creativity flourish at the library, and that stems from access to information from all of our diverse resources.

The library also transports information, through the mail — physically, providing items to those who can't make it to the library — and through our website and social media. We also do this by providing public computers and open wifi.

Maybe most importantly, though, we do this through people. Through programs such as regular book clubs and storytimes, and initiatives such as the Community Read (the next one is coming in April, in collaboration with Cortland Area Communities That Care) we promote the exchange of ideas and the expanding of horizons.

There's a chess club that meets every Thursday, and a social knitting group that meets Mondays — what better way to learn or improve a

skill than to engage with others in the activity?

We also store information. We're a repository for various projects and for microfilm of local newspapers such as the *Cortland Standard*. These newspapers are being digitized so that more people can have easier access to them, and not just from the library.

Visit cortland.advantage-preservation.com to see what's been done so far — 1867 through 1892.

If you haven't been here in a while, or maybe ever, please stop in, or visit us online at CortlandFreeLibrary.org to see all that we have available for you to borrow. When you use the collection — your collection — it helps strengthen our foundation so that together we can build a better future.

— — —
Jen Graney is the director of Cortland Free Library.



Valerie Puma/file photo

Jen Graney, director of the Cortland Free Library, reviews the inventory of books available for sale at a recent fundraiser.

The First National Bank of Dryden: Celebrating 120 years of building financial futures in our community

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The First National Bank of Dryden was founded in 1902 when J.B. Wilson, then-Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for Tompkins County, met with local business leaders and farmers about starting a bank in Dryden. Each interested party pledged to purchase stock at \$100 a share and raised a total of \$25,000 to successfully organize the new, national bank. There were 58 original stockholders.

That same year, Teddy Roosevelt was president of the United States and the automobile was relatively new. The most common way to get back and forth to the bank was on horseback, walking or by horse and buggy. Having a bank close by in the village of Dryden was very desirable.

In October of that same year, the stockholders met and elected seven directors for the bank and drafted the

by-laws for approval and adoption. Hours were set for 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with the doors closed for one hour at noon. Subsequent meetings progressed with the election of C.S. Williams as the chairman of the board, M.E. Tripp as the bank's first president, and F.H. Cuykendall as the original cashier. Board member George Cole was tasked with 50% of the capital for a new building and had two weeks to do it. A safe, furniture, fixtures, books, stationery and a sign were purchased and by the end of October, pledges were confirmed and the Articles of Association were executed. Preparations continued through the following month and by November 20, the Board of Directors authorized the bank to open its doors on Monday, December 1, 1902.

Nearly three decades later, the bank constructed a new building at 15 West Main

Street in Dryden and installed the vault door that is still in use today. In 1964, the First National Bank of Dryden built a second location at 7 West Main Street. Another branch office opened at 120 North Street in Dryden in 1987 and in 2003, the bank expanded and built a new location on Rt. 13 in Cortland. Once again responding to requests from the community, the bank opened the Homer office at 12 South Main Street in 2017.

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— — —
Article contributed by The First National Bank of Dryden



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To learn more about The Renzi Cancer Center at Guthrie Cortland Medical Center, visit www.Guthrie.org/RenziCancerCenter.