



2022 INITIATIVES GUIDE TO
Fulton County, NY
Your Business' Next Step In A Changing World

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Board of Supervisors

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Dear Readers:

The 2022 *Initiatives Guide to Fulton County* is the right place to find out what is going on in our region's business community. Our county has an excellent team of professionals that will make working here and living here a great experience and this year's edition illustrates that.

Our region is the southern gateway to the Adirondack Mountains and the perfect nexus to the great outdoors from points east, south and west. You can experience beautiful landscapes and exceptional outdoor recreation along with the Mohawk Valley's convenient market access. Our Industrial Development Agency and Center for Regional Growth have established a strong tradition helping businesses and business owners. Step by step, they will work with local government leaders to take your project from potential, to ground breaking, and beyond. The County Board of Supervisors recently launched *Destination: Fulton County*, a strategic plan to expand the area's tourism and hospitality sectors. With everything that's going on here, it has become the "new frontier" of New York's capital region.

Read up. Visit. Take it all in. You will find that Fulton County is a great place to call home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Callery".

Jack Callery
Chairman of the Board



WELCOME TO FULTON COUNTY!



The Center for Regional Growth should be the first stop for any business that’s coming into the area and looking for economic development assistance.

– Ron Peters

Initiatives
Guide
2021/2022

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BENJAMIN MOORE

Painting Fulton County Fantastic

Montvale, New Jersey-based paint giant Benjamin Moore, the sixth-largest producer of coatings in North America in 2019 with \$828 million in sales, operates five manufacturing plants in the United States, including one in Fulton County. “Johnstown currently is our largest plant by production volumes,” said manufacturing director Paul Connelie.

The physical plant is scheduled to nearly double in size on its 75-acre site.

The company’s growth strategy, coupled with an increased demand for its products from contractors and do-it-yourselfers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic to expand its production capabilities. Company executives considered all five of its manufacturing locations for the expansion, and Johnstown won out.

To encourage the company to select Johnstown, the Fulton County Industrial Development Agency offered sales and property tax benefits.

It took two months to have conceptual approval to start the project from the time Benjamin Moore executives



There could be a chance
that the paint on your
walls was manufactured
right in Fulton County,
New York.



chose Johnstown for the expansion. “We had pretty quick agreement and support from the County IDA, City of Johnstown, and Center for Regional Growth and their support to proceed very quickly,” Connelie said.

Benjamin Moore plans to add 150,000 square feet to the Johnstown plant. The expansion will provide space for additional manufacturing capacity, more bulk liquid storage, and employee facilities.

The project, which has a budget of \$17.8 million for the first year with continued investment over the next three years, will allow the company to augment its existing manufacturing technologies. “We’ll introduce some new technologies as to how we make our paint,” Connelie said, noting that this will allow the Johnstown plant to support Benjamin Moore’s other manufacturing facilities in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Alabama, and Texas.

The company, owned by Berkshire Hathaway, will be investing in state-of-the-art equipment in the Johnstown location. This includes the latest technology that exists in the paint manufacturing industry, Connelie said, noting that this expansion project does represent one of the company’s single largest investments at any of its sites.

The expansion will create 35 new jobs. If the past serves as precedent, the company will be able to easily fill those job openings. When the company was deciding where to open a new manufacturing facility in the early 1990s, one of its main considerations was an available workforce, and it found that in Fulton County. The plant operates three shifts, seven days a week.

A steady, skilled workforce has remained constant. “There’s a pretty strong work ethic in the folks we interview and bring on board,” Connelie said. “They come to us with the technical skills based on previous experience. That’s helpful.”

Another factor the company took into consideration when it first opened the plant in 1991 was close

proximity to some of the company’s largest markets, namely, New York, Boston, and Chicago. Johnstown is a one-day or less transit time to those cities.

A third consideration was close access to the New York State Thruway. The Johnstown location is less than five miles away from Interstate-90, the longest interstate highway in the United States.

In an era where employees are looking beyond just a paycheck, being in Fulton County is an advantage. “Our folks in Fulton County love the region because of the opportunities they have to recreate in the outdoors,” Connelie said. “They love the region from that perspective.”

The Johnstown expansion project is expected to be mostly complete in 2022, with new equipment commissioning at the end of that year and into 2023.





FULTON COUNTY
CENTER FOR
REGIONAL GROWTH

GENERATING GROWTH IN A **NEW YORK** MINUTE

The CRG's model is straightforward, efficient, and effective: assess needs, assemble a team to assist with all aspects of a project, facilitate the project through its completion, and provide whatever assistance is needed in the future to improve businesses' processes and enable growth and expansion.

What is the first stop for any business investigating Fulton County?

The CRG helps businesspeople from solopreneurs all the way to executives of global corporations. The center's staff, with its statewide network of financial, workforce development, marketing, infrastructure, government, and high-tech industry contacts, finds the best resources to meet the needs of any company moving to Fulton County to do business.

Ken Kearney, president and founder of the Kearney Realty & Development Group, is a case in point. He had never been to Gloversville before CRG President Ron Peters invited him. Based on his company's projects, Peters knew that the county would be a perfect location for Kearney's next development, Glove City Lofts, a combination of artist housing and retail space designed to be a catalyst for downtown rejuvenation.

The trip was worth it.

After a meeting with CRG staff and Gloversville mayor Vincent DeSantis, they took Kearney to see two properties they had identified as those that could meet the developer's needs. Kearney liked one of them, and the CRG began working with the lender and the property owner to gain site control so that his project could proceed. "It was a complex process to get site control of this property, and it takes time," Kearney said. "Ron and his staff did a great job on both sides, working with the bank and working with the owners."

In the meantime, the CRG's Gloversville Downtown Development Specialist James Hannahs connected Kearney with the Glove City Arts Alliance to generate excitement for the project.

The answer is simple: The Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (CRG).

CRG staff continues to work with Kearney as he seeks funding for the development. "We're hoping that the Glove City Lofts will be the centerpiece of a successful Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)," Kearney said. "For this project to be as impactful as we want it to be, we need it to be the anchor of a successful DRI application," he said, noting that that means \$10 million will come into Gloversville. "That's the goal."

Kearney is not doing this work alone. He is assisted every step of the way by the CRG, with its intimate knowledge of the area's resources. "Fulton County Center for Regional Growth has its fingerprints on Glove City Lofts from the very first day to today," Kearney said.

Here's a summary of what companies can expect when working with the Center for Regional Growth:

Efficiency. With its extensive knowledge of the region, the CRG provides top-notch efficiency in all processes, from site selection and approval to financing and staffing. "We assess what a company's needs are, in

"We build that team ahead of time, so when we have our first initial meeting with a business, we have all the players together right from the start," said CRG Economic Development Specialist Ken Adamczyk. "We put everybody at the table at the same time so that it's one-stop shopping."

terms of location logistics, supply chain, workforce development, and financing," said CRG President and CEO Ron Peters. From there, CRG searches for suitable sites and brings the complete economic development team for implementing the process.

Team members include the Fulton County Industrial Development Agency which provides tax incentives, power industries such as National Grid, grant writers, workforce development specialists, and lenders.

Once a site has been selected, the CRG expedites the approval process so that it is completed in 60 days, a feat made possible by the CRG's excellent working

relationships with local, state, and federal government officials. "We fast-track the development process and assist companies with their needs and working with the municipalities through their planning process," Peters said.

For example, when paint company Benjamin Moore wanted to double the footprint of its Johnstown plant, the CRG was on hand to assist. "The CRG facilitated some good connections with other folks to get the process started in a pretty short time frame," said manufacturing director Paul Connelie.

Financing plans. The CRG specializes in navigating the plethora of funding opportunities available for business development and expansion. CRG staff creates a comprehensive financial package. Staff seeks out available federal, state, and local grants, interested lenders, and other financial assistance. In order to provide better economic opportunities for clients, the CRG takes a regional approach, working with other economic development organizations in the Mohawk Valley and beyond. Any companies looking to commit to the region can depend on the CRG to guide them to the most advantageous financial resources, discounts on utilities, and tax incentives and savings as well as assist them in obtaining the most competitive bids for their projects.

Continued support. The CRG continues to work with companies all the way through the development process. "We follow them throughout the whole process so that if there are any hiccups along the way, we can help them with any situation that comes down the pipeline," Peters said. The CRG is also available for existing companies desiring to expand.

High-tech resources. Located in the Technology Triangle formed by Global Foundries to the east, SUNY Polytechnic College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering to the south and Marcy Nanocenter at SUNY Polytechnic Institute to the west, Fulton County is particularly well-suited for high-tech companies for several reasons. The CRG has identified sites within the county that can be developed into industrial parks, as well as shovel-ready sites. The CRG has relationships

CRG

with several institutions that focus on workforce development and even tailor-made custom training programs for high-tech companies. Fulton County is just minutes from the Interstate 90 highway, making it just hours from major East Coast and Midwest cities and ports.

Assistance in difficult economic times. When the economy changes, the CRG is there. “We played a major role during the pandemic with business retention and assistance,” Adamczyk said. The CRG assisted businesses with applications for Small Business Administration Express Bridge loans, debt relief, the Payroll Protection Program, Economic Industry Disaster loans, and Mohawk Valley Economic Development District Cares Act loans.

Marketing assistance. The CRG assists companies in creating a marketing strategy to help their businesses grow and thrive in the region.

Workforce development. The CRG partners with several entities in the region to assist employers in finding and/or training the staff they need to prosper. For small businesses, the CRG also offers a business training program associated with its administration of the New York State Community Development Block Grant Program for microenterprises.

Collaboration with the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth is a winning proposition for businesses large and small. Contact the center at 518-725-7700 or visit www.fccrg.org. Like Ken Kearney, you’ll be glad you did.




NEW YORK STATE'S

NEW FRONTIER

FULTON COUNTY






4 SHOVEL-READY SITES

- Tryon Technology Park
- Crossroads Industrial Park
- Johnstown Industrial Park
- Crossroads Business Park



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CHANGE AGENTS

SOMETIMES THE COST OF INACTION IS MUCH GREATER THAN THE COST OF

MAKING CHANGE!

While staying put offers security, consider this: Fulton County’s Economic Development’s financial incentives feature commercial and industrial lease rates that are less than half of the New York State average, and include project financing, loans, and grants. Plus, our commercial space offers architectural gems that simply don’t exist in most communities!



MEET THE PEOPLE WHO ARE HERE TO HELP YOU. AND ASK WHAT FULTON COUNTY CAN DO FOR YOU.



Contact our **PRESIDENT & CEO** and **FINANCE SPECIALIST** for assistance with financing, grants and the site selection process.
RON PETERS

Contact our **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST** to walk you through the process and get you started.
KENNETH ADAMCZYK

VISIT CAPITALREGIONSNEWFRONTIER.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION OR CALL TODAY TO FIND OUT MORE DETAILS **518-725-7700**



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FULTON COUNTY IS THE WHEY TO GO!



For manufacturers who require an abundant supply of water, Fulton County has it.

Water abounds in Gloversville, which has four reservoirs providing 710,000,000 gallons of storage capacity. Equally as important as the water supply is the wastewater that is produced during the manufacturing. Fulton County expertly handles that issue in the most cost-efficient and environmentally friendly ways possible through the Gloversville-Johnstown Joint Wastewater Treatment Facility (GJJWTF), one of the top wastewater treatment facilities in the nation.

In addition to being able to handle residential wastewater, the GJJWTF is specifically designed to meet



the high-volume needs of manufacturers now and in the future, with the capacity for handling much more than its current intake. The GJJWTF has a designed capacity of 13.8 million gallons per day of residential and industrial wastewater.

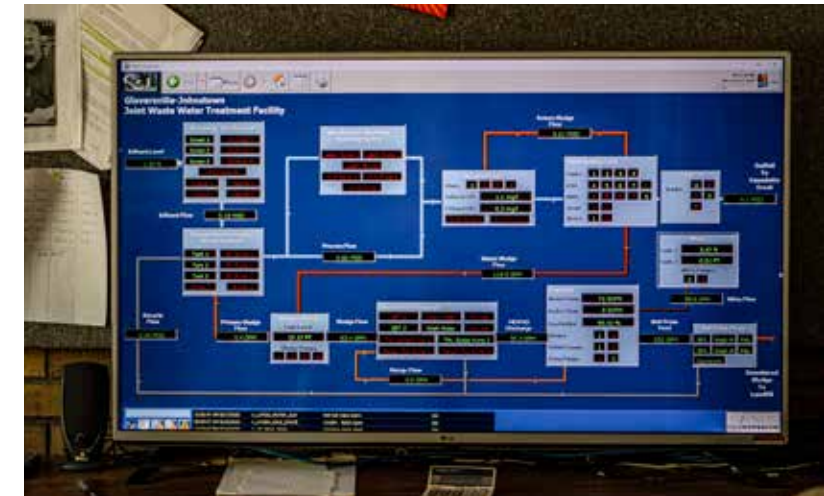
In 2020, the facility processed 347,223,197 gallons of wastewater from industrial sources, including 211,414,295 from dairy manufacturers. Since the dairy industry represented most of the industrial load, the GJJWTF designed and constructed a unique wastewater processing unit to handle the dairy's problematic washwater, a combination of cleaning agents and dairy product residues.

Fulton County manufacturers that produce whey have no need to go through the costly process of pre-treating this byproduct before it goes to the wastewater treatment facility. Manufacturers can pump whey from their factories through pipelines installed by Fulton County directly to the GJJWTF, where it is pre-treated before going through the normal wastewater treatment system. This benefit saves manufacturers hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars per year. Currently, Fulton County is expanding these specialty wastewater treatment lines to the northern parts of the county to accommodate future economic growth.

In addition to being cost-effective for manufacturers, the GJJWTF's system is designed with sustainability in mind, so manufacturers can know that they are engaging in eco-friendly processes.

When manufacturers pump their high-strength whey to the GJJWTF, it goes directly to the mesophilic anaerobic digesters that produce the methane that runs the plant's combined heat and power generators, converting the whey to fuel.

GJJWTF's state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant is the first and only wastewater treatment plant in the





United States that produces 100 percent of its own electrical power needs and sells excess electrical power to the grid.

To make the facility even greener, Fulton County is in the planning stages of acquiring thermal sludge dryers that would eliminate roughly 80 percent of the solid waste that would otherwise be transported to landfills, eliminating much of the cost of transportation as well as environmental impact. Sludge-drying transforms sludge into useful products or green fuel.

“In terms of green, we’re very green,” said Wallace Arnold, manager of the GJJWTF. “You’re not going to find a wastewater plant that generates more power than it uses.”

With an abundant supply of water and the facility to process wastewater, Fulton County is well-positioned to welcome new companies that have high water demands and wastewater discharges, all with sustainability in mind.

www.g-jwastewater.com



ALL IN THE FAMILY

The close-knit community in Fulton County has proved to be a great place to have a small business. The connections between family and friends create a supportive atmosphere that allows small-business enterprises to thrive.

Three Mayfield businesses are a case in point.

When Carly Lansburg moved back to the area where she grew up after living in Wyoming, she wanted to open an ice cream shop, as she had worked in the ice cream industry growing up.

She engaged the service of a local real estate agent, who directed her to the area around the Great Sacandaga Lake. “We had snowshoed where our building is,”

Family and friends foster business opportunities in Fulton County

Lansburg said. “We looked at it a couple of times and decided this was a great area with the lake just a mile away.”

In 2018, she opened Zippy’s Ice Cream, which operates from May to October. She seeks to make her business stand out by having some unique offerings like family-size sundaes, sampler cones for ice cream, and an extravagant milkshake that she calls a “freakshake.” There is a covered patio and a firepit with Adirondack chairs where people can enjoy their frozen treats.

Lansburg worked with economic development specialist Ken Adamczyk of the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth and is applying for a microenterprise grant to expand the inside of her ice cream shop and her product line.

She finds the business climate encouraging. “People are definitely always trying to lend out a helping hand,” Lansburg said. “I found it to be like a snowball effect. You talk to one person, they refer you to another and another, and you eventually find your way.”



continued

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Lansburg uses small local businesses in order to support them. For example, she purchases t-shirts for Zippy's from the nearby Creative Tees & More in Mayfield, and she uses Derby Office Equipment in Gloversville for advertising materials.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

When Lansburg's father, Dave Webber, learned that he was eligible for a microenterprise grant, he took his life savings and opened Higher Ground Distillery in an outbuilding that he rents from his daughter and her husband, Jed Lansburg.

The building had formerly been a snowshoe making facility. Webber worked with Mayfield's building department. "They were fantastic—very accommodating," he said. He renovated the property to suit his own needs. As an Air Force veteran and former owner of his own construction company, the work came easily.

Webber relocated from Guilderland in order to open the business in November 2020. "We wanted to provide something the community didn't have," Webber said.

Local residents responded. "We were doing the business of a three-year-old distillery in the first eight months," Webber said. "The community just accepted us so well. We definitely exceeded our expectations."

In those first fall and winter months, Webber built up a local following. It allowed him to get to meet the area's residents before the onset of the summer tourism season.

In 2021, Webber worked with the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce to develop a craft beverage trail that invites people to sample craft beer, cider, and spirits from four establishments in the county.

In Higher Ground's taproom, he features not only the products he makes himself, but other beer, wine, cider, and nonalcoholic beverages from around the state.

FRIENDS SINCE KINDERGARTEN

Owning a small business became a reality for two of the Lansburgs' longtime friends, Mo Conte and Josh Guntert, owners of NACs Meat Market, located in the same building as Zippy's Ice Cream.



Conte and Guntert had been friends with Jed Lansburg since kindergarten. "We were born and raised in Fulton County," Conte said. "We wanted to be a part of it." When they found out there was a space for another business in the back of the ice cream shop, they decided to open NACs Meat Market in August 2019.

Conte's previous employer, whose family had been in the grocery business for over a century in neighboring Herkimer County, mentored the new business owners. The pair used their own funds to start the business, fully renovating the space with the help of Frasier Builders in Gloversville.

Both had full-time jobs when they started the business, but as they were able to grow it, utilizing billboards, Facebook, and Fulton County-based radio station WENT for marketing, they were able to leave their other jobs to be at NACs full time.

"I love the people, the way of life, the sense of community that you don't get in a lot of the suburban areas,"

They would like to hire more employees and have reached out to the State University of New York at Cobleskill to see if they can find an intern who is interested in the meat industry.

Guntert likes that the combination of two businesses in one building makes it easy for customers. "It's a one-stop thing," he said. "We like that people can stop here and get their dinner and their ice cream all at the same time."

Webber sums up what has made the trio of businesses so successful—the small-town atmosphere of Fulton County. "I love the people, the way of life, the sense of community that you don't get in a lot of the suburban areas," he said. "The rural area tends to have much more of a family feel to it."



NACs
meat market



Breathing Life into a Community



Picture a building of Manhattan-style loft apartments, occupied by artists who collaborate and share their creative expression with the community, drawing businesses and residents to a once-again vibrant downtown.

The award-winning development company Kearney Realty & Development Group, based in Baldwin, NY, plans to make that happen with its newest project at 52 Church Street in Groversville, NY. The company is investing \$20 million in the city, constructing 75 loft style apartments, with high ceilings and large windows, giving them a hip, NYC vibe. Of the 75 units, 54 will be reserved for tenants from the arts community, and the remaining 20 will provide middle-income housing for individuals and families through the Middle Income Housing Program (MIHP) administered by the NYS Homes and Community Renewal agency.



The company has discovered a path to success for downtown revitalization and has already proven it works in three other cities in New York, with a fourth site under construction. Two more projects in the Mohawk Valley are in the funding phase. Glove City Lofts will be the seventh project.

Ken Kearney, president and founder of the Kearney Realty Group, does not take credit for the idea that led to these revolutionary projects. Sean Kearney, the Kearney Group's vice president and Ken Kearney's son, came up with the vision to build mixed use buildings that provide affordable housing for artists, dancers, writers, musicians, and other creatives, combined with units of middle-income housing. Paired with his father's 30 years of experience as a developer, the father-son team has implemented a winning formula for urban renewal.

Ken Kearney is no stranger to breathing new life into deteriorated areas of town. That is how he began his career in Beacon, NY. However, over the years, he took on more traditional projects of affordable, senior, and



Kearney said. "As part of that and the synergy that you create, there are so many ancillary benefits when these projects are properly located and developed correctly," he said.

The Church Street site will connect Groversville's Main Street to the area of Trail Station Park that is adjacent to the creek near City Hall. "We hope to see a restaurant involved in one of the historic buildings close by," Kearney said. "We feel that if we take our model and develop it in this location, we will have similar success that we've enjoyed with our previous projects," he said.

The idea is that the artists' community will be a catalyst for change in the entire downtown area. "The positive energy that will start on Church Street and spread in a couple of different directions—once it impacts Main Street, the hope of course is that Main Street becomes a destination again," Kearney said.

Kearney emphasizes that his company does not go into a community to monopolize development. "There's a lot of property owners that have been up there for years that I think would welcome this new synergy," he said. Kearney Realty & Development Group will be reaching out to other property owners to share information, ideas, and concepts that have worked well in other locations, all with the goal of fostering a strong sense of community that will bolster the revitalization of the area.

After selecting the property, Kearney Realty & Development Group will secure all the approvals it needs, do a detailed study of any environmental hazards, and then submit an application to the NYS Division of Housing for funding. Kearney has high praise for the NYSDOH and actually finds the process a pleasurable one. "I credit NYS Division of Housing and their staff in working with me on every level—design, marketing," he said. "There were a lot of nuances to be worked out, but it was all worked out with positive dialogue back and forth," he said.



The idea is that the artists' community will be a catalyst for change in the entire downtown area.

supported housing. Sean's idea has taken Kearney full circle, back to his roots of restoring downtowns. "We combined his concept with what I had learned 30 years ago, and we took a chance," Ken Kearney said. It paid off, and now other upstate communities are benefiting from the Kearneys' expertise and creativity.

Kearney searched for a long time to find the perfect property that would have the impact that he wants it to have on downtown Groversville. It is not just about finding a property, but choosing one that will connect other parts of the city and have a reach far beyond the single property. "There is motivation to create unique, evolutionary projects that revitalize downtowns,"

Kearney uses a combination of funding sources in addition to funds from the state, including tax credit equity from Raymond James Tax Credit Funds, private funding, banks, and low-interest loans from the MIHP. The 18-month construction process will create 250 to 300 jobs for the region. After the project is completed, it will take about two months to lease out the apartments. “Then we cut the ribbon,” Kearney said. The building is specifically designed to foster collaboration between artists and to help artists develop their skills and trades. The Lofts will offer common areas for artists to gather, performance space with walls mirrors, ballerina barres, rubber flooring, and upgraded soundproofing. A “maker’s/innovator’s” space will house a slop sink, drafting tables, and workbenches for fine artists and crafters to work together.

To make the project even more attractive, The Lofts will be a green building, compliant with the Green Building Initiative of New York State and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified, along with other sustainable development qualifications.

Other amenities include laundry facilities, an internet café with complimentary access to high-speed internet, and exterior and interior bicycle storage. The Lofts will have an onsite superintendent living in the building and a management office. Kearney sees his company’s loft-style apartments as even more appealing now given the COVID-19 pandemic. “Prior to the COVID crisis, and even more so because of the COVID crisis, the small urban centers are going to be more attractive,” he said. “People still want that

urban feel with a sidewalk, and due to the crisis, I think you’re seeing an outflow of population to some of these urban centers. There’s an opportunity for some of these smaller centers to recreate themselves, to redefine themselves,” he said. The Kearney Realty & Development Group intends to do just that in Fulton County, continuing its past success in upstate New York. In 2019, the company received the Upstate Project of the Year Award from the NYS Association for Affordable Housing for its Queen City Lofts in Poughkeepsie. Another building, The Lofts on Main, won the city of Peekskill a Planning Achievement Award from the Westchester Municipal Planning Federation. www.kearneyrealtygroup.com



Christmas Trees – Wreaths

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Gloversville: A Start Up Ecosystem

You won’t get far into a conversation with Kevin Chamberlain, owner of Upstate Coffee in Gloversville, before you discover that a key part of his business strategy is collaboration. Gloversville turned out to be the perfect place for Chamberlain to launch and grow his company, and he is taking full advantage of the startup ecosystem that exists in the Gloversville area. Even before he decided to open his own business, Chamberlain partnered with Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market, where he began roasting coffee beans for the co-op’s café. “The co-op was the perfect unique opportunity to be able to try new things, learn more about the industry, be engaged in the community, and hear people’s opinions on things,” Chamberlain said. When he got ready to start Upstate Coffee, Chamberlain joined the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce. “They’ve helped me with guidance on my business line when I was really just hashing out the idea,” he said, noting that the chamber prepared him to work with the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (CRG). The CRG serves new and existing businesses as a clearinghouse of sorts, working with everyone from solopreneurs to large multinational corporations to facilitate and grow business in the county. The staff has a vast toolbox of resources and easily assesses those that would best help a business succeed. In Chamberlain’s case, the CRG helped him obtain a \$25,000 microenterprise grant. “That allowed me to jumpstart everything,” Chamberlain said.



continued



Photo credit - Primary Teeth Pediatric Dentistry

Pediatric dentist Jake Fried, who chose Gloversville as the location for his solo practice, Primary Teeth Pediatric Dentistry, also worked with the CRG to obtain a microenterprise grant that helped with the interior renovation of the building he rents, which required gutting the place. Dr. Fried’s current location has the added advantage of space for expansion right in the same building for when his business grows.

The CRG points business owners to other sources of funding also, whether that means connecting them with local bankers or suggesting loans or grants for which they might be eligible. Dr. Fried received a loan under the CARES Act, administered by the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Inc. Chamberlain took advantage of a loan from the Gloversville Loan Fund.

This loan was especially helpful for Dr. Fried, who had to delay the opening of his business because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than a 2020 start, he was forced to wait until April 2021 to open his doors to patients.

The CRG also has close ties with the New York Business Development Corporation that offers business training and microloans to entrepreneurs and small business owners through its Small Enterprise Economic Development program. Other funding sources—loans or a hybrid of loans and grants—include the Community Loan Fund, Gloversville Economic Development Corporation, and Pursuit, a community-focused lender.



Photo credit - Primary Teeth Pediatric Dentistry



BEYOND FUNDING

It is easy to find a place to begin in the substantial startup ecosystem with the CRG’s guidance.

“Ken Adamczyk and his supervisor, Ron Peters, were invaluable assets to getting my practice started,” according to Dr. Fried. “They gave me connections within the town. They went with me to the various locations that I was looking at. They provided their insights and their experience,” Dr. Fried said, noting that he was largely unfamiliar with Fulton County because he came from the Westchester area before working in the central Capital District.

The CRG keeps an up-to-date list of available buildings and shovel-ready sites so that a company looking to locate in the county does not have to search them out. It also has office and incubator space in its building.

“Along with this, many developers adopting an adaptive reuse model are incorporating coworking space into their operations,” said James Hannahs, the Gloversville Downtown Development Specialist at the CRG.

“Currently, the Gloversville Public Library serves as a perfect starting point for equity-restricted startups.”

Another important part of the startup ecosystem is the area’s educational institutions, which include Herkimer Fulton Montgomery (HFM) BOCES, Fulton Montgomery Community College, and the Advanced Institute for Manufacturing (AIM) at Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) in Utica. There are programs at these institutions that focus on workforce development, catering to the needs of the region’s businesses.

Chamberlain has had interns from the PTECH program at HFM BOCES. “I really like having the interns because through PTECH, they find students that are a good fit,” he said. “Faculty comes in and assesses what I’m doing and what I need, and then they find the appropriate candidate or candidates. That makes hiring an intern much easier and also sets the internship up for success.”

Chamberlain involves his interns in all aspects of the business so that they get a well-rounded experience. “When they leave, they really know a lot about e-commerce and small business,” he said. “Because they’re a good fit, they learn really fast because they’re interested, and they’re helpful right away. Having the local interns coming from PTECH is a really great community support system.”

The business climate and culture of Gloversville and other Fulton County cities and towns is one of cooperation, support, and collaboration. Business owners routinely network and team up to help each other’s business. Chamberlain works with Mitch Rogers of Rogers Family Orchards and Matt Sherman of Stump City Brewing. “We work together a lot and just kind of work things out,” Chamberlain said. “It’s really important to get connected with like-minded business owners to work out ideas and problems, vent, and have a good time with it all. Really, what it comes down to is: Don’t do it solo. Create a team. Create business friendships and have mentors.”

Chamberlain cites the new location for his roastery as an example. The space already had gas lines, electrical



Gloversville

outlets where he needed them, good lighting, a floor drain, and a ventilation system that vented through the roof—everything he needed in a space. “I would not have been able to find that without having a team, the CRG, and having business relationships,” he said.

Other “team members” come from his years as a student. His former academic advisor serves as a mentor, and some friends from college who now create websites professionally showed him how to have a good website created in the most cost-effective way. “Instead of just going and hiring a big firm for \$100,000 to make a website, they taught me how to utilize some online resources and connected me to the right people to do the job really, really well and reasonably priced,” he said.

From the idea stage all the way through business opening and beyond, the CRG connects businesses with the resources in the startup ecosystem that help them thrive. Upstate Coffee and Primary Teeth Pediatric Dentistry are just two examples. “I think people are unaware of how helpful the CRG can be,” Chamberlain said. “I think a lot of business owners are flying solo when they could really benefit from the things that the CRG offers.”

This ecosystem of resources and assistance in accessing them makes people want to do business in Fulton County. “I love being an owner of my own practice,”

said Dr. Fried. “I love treating the children in the county. Everyone is so appreciative and grateful that I’m here, and everyone has been extremely helpful. We are proud to be here serving all the children of Fulton County and beyond, and we look forward to a very long and healthy relationship going forward.”

To learn more about these businesses, visit upstatecoffee.com and primaryteeth.com.



Linda Finch: Painting the Town A Visual Story of the Sacandaga

Linda Finch of Northville is a versatile artist. She works with a variety of media, including metal, wood, resin, plaster, clay, and paint with various techniques. Her work also demonstrates a wide range of styles. Her latest works speak not only to art, but to the history of the region in which she lives.

Finch grew up in the southern Adirondacks and Mohawk Valley, and her family has a long history here. She herself has lived in several places, including California, the Southwest, Maryland, St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Dauphin Island, and New York’s Southern Tier. It wasn’t until she moved home in 2018 that she truly began to appreciate the vibrant history of the area as well as her family’s own personal history here. Even though she was born and grew up in the area, Finch said that she somehow missed “what a phenomenally historic place this was.”

Finch believes that documenting this history is extremely pertinent in a time when things are changing so rapidly as a result of the pandemic bringing an influx of new residents from outside the area.

With fresh eyes and a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts just as the COVID-19 pandemic set in, Finch set about documenting the region’s history with a series of eight folk art paintings. However, when the pandemic lockdown continued, Finch just kept painting, even though she had fulfilled the grant’s requirements. She now has a collection of over 18 works telling the story of the area. “It was so strange,” Finch said. “Just because I was so quarantined, instead of living a normal life, I was just painting every day,” she said.

Research became an extremely important part in the process of accomplishing her goal of preserving the area’s history with accuracy, and she spent months researching each painting. For example, Finch interviewed a 101-year-old friend who visited the park as



a child to find out where various attractions had been located, such as the carousel, animals, and “Shoot the Shoot” toboggan slides. She also had a collection of family stories and photographs, as well as the resources of local historical societies that provided maps and background information about the area’s architecture, planning, and other history. “Everything is totally accurate, nothing is made up,” she said of what she painted on the canvases. This was an important element of the process, as evidenced by the months she spent researching each painting.



Photo credit - Fulton County Historical Society Museum

Finch's husband, Henry, found a map of the original Sacandaga Park, which inspired a triptych of paintings depicting this much-loved place for recreation and relaxation from the mid-1800s through the early 1900s. The centerpiece of the painting, "The Station," is the FJ&G railroad station that promoted the Sacandaga Park and later the Sacandaga Amusement Company that it built to attract thousands of visitors to the area. In this work, Finch painted in other details of the park's activities, as well pieces of her own and friends' personal family histories.



A second piece of the series, "The Midway," depicts the park's burro rides, the "Red Devil" experimental plane, and the High Rock Hotel, among many more activities, businesses, and attractions. Finch's grandfather used to drive passengers in a stagecoach from the station up to the hotel. The third painting in the triptych is "Sport Island," which showcases the park's sporting events, water activities, and miniature railway. As friends and neighbors learned about her work, they would tell her stories, and Finch would add them into the paintings. "All these little teeny stories were in there," Finch said. With so many details and pieces of history, the paintings invite the viewer to discover the significance of each element that ended up in the painting. Finch came to realize that what she had become with the creation of these folk-art paintings was a visual storyteller.



*This column photo credits -
Fulton County Historical Society Museum*

The folk-art style of painting lent itself well to the high level of detail and color that Finch wanted to use. "The colors are just fabulous," she said. "That's why a lot of people purchase prints. There's action, activity, and color." However, this once-vibrant Sacandaga Park that Finch depicted with such color and detail is no longer. It was one of the areas that was moved or destroyed so that



New York State could build the Conklingville Dam and flood the Sacandaga basin to an elevation of 771 feet above sea level to create the Sacandaga Reservoir, known today as the Great Sacandaga Lake. The government deemed the building of the reservoir essential because of the yearly flooding of cities along the Hudson River, as there was no way to control the snowmelt coming down from the Sacandaga River. Each spring, the flooding caused millions of dollars of property damage and loss of life. One particular storm that began on Easter Sunday in 1913 dumped the equivalent of four-to-six weeks' worth of normal rainfall in just five days, flooding many communities and most tragically, the Albany Pump Station. The resulting contamination of the Prospect Reservoir and an outbreak of typhoid fever in Albany. That sealed the state legislature's decision to pass a law that allowed for the building of dams to create reservoirs. One painting in Finch's folk-art series documents this sad and sometimes controversial piece of the region's history. The reservoir's creation meant the destruction of 10 communities along the Sacandaga River. Residents could either sell their homes or move them. Workers burned any buildings still standing. "Our family was one of the ones that was moved to the valley to make way for the flooding of the Sacandaga," Finch said. The process of clearing the area also included relocating 3,872 graves, which Finch depicts in her work, "Boneyard Gang." The government paid workers \$5 for each grave they dug up, and the government permitted family members to be present for the exhumations. In some

cases, there were no caskets, and workers bagged up bones and numbered them for relocation. Finch's great-grandmother's grave was one of those that had to be moved, and she still has the metal plaque that workers removed from the casket, mounted on a piece of wood. In the background of this painting are other details of the process of clearing the land, including a family loading its furniture into a wagon and fires burning, producing big billowy clouds of smoke that hang over the entire haunting scene. Today, the Great Sacandaga Lake, with its 125 miles of shoreline, is the largest reservoir in New York State. The lake has a booming tourist economy and has become an Adirondack paradise for locals and visitors alike, with beaches, boating, fishing, swimming, and other water sports. Finch is one of those locals who enjoys the nearby lake. She and Henry purchased a home on the water in Northville, where she also has her artist studio. "My business happened by accident," said Finch, who taught art for many years at the primary, secondary, and college levels. "My whole goal wasn't making money. All of a sudden, people wanted prints and paintings." Finch said that the folk-art series documenting history never would have happened without the pandemic. "It's so unique to have this horrible thing happen and have it turn into one of the most productive times in my entire life," she said. "What I'm really doing is painting the town."

www.finchfinearts.com

ROBUST AGRICULTURE FROM FARM TO TABLE



Fulton County has a rich agricultural history, and today, that translates to robust agribusiness for the county. A variety of businesses, from small, family-owned startup farms to large multinational corporations such as yogurt manufacturer Fage and feta cheese manufacturer Euphrates, are keeping the county's agricultural business thriving and making it a major economic driver.

"Historically, Fulton County used to be, for the most part, a dairy county," said Lee Hollenbeck, president of the Fulton County Farm Bureau. For example, in 1860, Fulton County farmers produced 665,684 pounds of cheese and 717,095 pounds of butter from the milk that came from 9,398 cows. In addition to having a variety of different livestock, Fulton County farmers also grew various crops, including wheat, rye, oats, and potatoes, to name a few.

As the dairy industry slowly declined over the decades, successor farmers shifted and adapted to the changing times in order to maintain Fulton County's strong agriculture business. Hollenbeck ran a dairy farm until 1989, and now he produces hay. "In place of dairy farms, vegetables came on," Hollenbeck said. Lately, as New York's craft beverage industry grows, farmers are producing hops, barley, apples, and grapes.

Hollenbeck points out that each farm stimulates the economy in multiple ways. "For every one farmer, you've got truckers, processing plants, distributors, stores, truck drivers, packaging, machinery dealers, and fertilizer," he said. "People don't realize. It will surprise you for every dollar on the farm how much is generated. It's a ripple effect." These are just a few ways that agriculture supports economic development.

The following are examples of agribusiness in Fulton County.

JOHNSON FAMILY FARM

"This was a dream of ours," said Brad Johnson, of owning a farm with wife Anne-Marie. "We wanted to have the security of having control of our food chain and grow with organic practices."

After working at another local organic farm for 11 years, Johnson decided to open his own farm on 40 acres in nearby Hamilton County.

The Johnsons and their six children started out selling the farm's vegetables and fruits right from the farm in Hope and also at farmers markets in the region. "The



Photo Credit - Johnsons Family Farm

weather was challenging," Johnson said. "It would severely affect the income at that market."

It was a challenging decision, but the couple decided to open a store on Main Street in Northville where they could sell their own produce as well as that of 40 other local producers. "That is how we navigated what is the present of agriculture in the area," Johnson said.

In addition to fresh, locally grown crops, the Johnson Family Farm Store offers soups made from the family's yields, sandwiches, health foods, bulk grains, and prepared foods. The store is a favorite for locals and tourists alike.



Currently, the Johnsons grow row crop organic vegetables on four acres and potatoes and corn on one acre. They also have four 96-foot-long high tunnels where they cultivate cucumbers, tomatoes, melons, Swiss chard, lettuce, and arugula.

In the fall of 2021, they began experimenting by putting two small tunnels inside the larger tunnels to create a climate similar to that of Virginia. "Our goal is to go all year round," Johnson said. "We're continuing to try new techniques." They planted microgreens in some of the smaller tunnels, supplementing with heaters to increase the temperature inside. "It's a trial to see if we can do it. If it works out, we'll have microgreens all winter."

In addition to shopping at the store, customers can purchase a farm share that allows them to enjoy fresh produce from June to mid-October.

The business has grown to include 13 people on the payroll.

"My overall thing is to encourage people to go and support their local farms and businesses," Johnson said. "All of the local producers have plenty of stuff."

MOHAWK HARVEST COOPERATIVE MARKET

Twelve years ago, impressed by the bounty of goods produced in Fulton County, a group from the community got together to form the Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market in Gloversville to connect producers with consumers. "We wanted to create an opportunity for people to access local and regional foods with a mission to help be a connection to local producers and have a consistent source for people to be able to access that," said the co-op's board president, Wally Hart.

The co-op is member-owned and operated, and its board always makes sure that there is a producer



serving on the board who is connected to local agricultural businesses. "That helps us keep focused on the importance of their businesses to the community and also their needs as we make decisions on what to bring to the store and how to work with our farmer producers," Hart said. "We've just always been focused on partnering with local producers."

Open six days a week, the co-op provides a location where producers can sell their goods, and from the



consumer perspective, there is a place where people know they can always shop for locally produced foods.

The co-op also works with commercial vendors in order to provide local and regional products year-round. One

FARM TO TABLE

company is Regional Access, an Ithaca-based firm that distributes ecologically produced local products on a consistent basis. “They work with local producers who package their products,” Hart said. For instance, products might be canned, thus giving them a longer shelf life. This way, consumers can have local products year-round, not only when they are available seasonally.

Mohawk Harvest is dedicated to supporting the county’s agricultural businesses. “Agribusiness is more than farms,” Hart said. “We have a wide range of producers that we represent at the co-op, agri-related businesses that certainly help benefit both the co-op and the producers by offering their goods at our store.”

A PERFECT PLACE TO FARM

With its rich agricultural history and vibrant present day agribusiness environment, Fulton County is an ideal place to farm. To encourage farmers, the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth became a Job Development Authority (JDA) approved lender.

“Agriculture people sometimes struggle to find lending institutions,” said Kenneth Adamczyk, Economic Development Specialist at the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (FCCRG). “It’s very difficult to get an agriculture loan,” he said, noting that the FCCRG is changing that not only for Fulton County farmers, but also farmers in Hamilton, Essex, Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties.



Photo credit - Fulton County Historical Society Museum



“We as the JDA approved lender, get to set the rates,” Adamczyk explained. “We make sure the loan is collateralized and that it’s a smart decision. We’re very successful in the program.” In 2021, the FCCRG loaned \$200,000 to farmers in the region.

“It helps Fulton County but also the other counties,” Adamczyk said. “There’s more collaboration between and across county lines rather than these old-school borders.”



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VIREO IS FLOURISHING IN FULTON COUNTY

New York’s legalization of marijuana for recreational use has opened up a world of potential and increased revenue for Vireo Health, Inc., a manufacturer of cannabis products with a facility in Fulton County.

In 2015, just a year after New York State legalized the medical use of cannabis, Vireo Health opened a 60,000 square-foot facility at Fulton County’s Tryon Technology Park in Perth and began supplying cannabis products for medical use the following year.

Vireo had been anticipating the legalization of cannabis for recreational purposes in New York State, which took place on April 30, 2021. The company made plans to purchase 96 acres adjacent to its current facility at the Tryon Technology Park in Perth and began the construction of a new building. The new facility will afford the company 300,000 additional square feet of cultivation and processing space to meet the demands of the changing marketplace in New York.

“We’re definitely expecting a large increase in production,” said Kaitlyn Nedo, General Manager of Vireo’s facility in Perth. “We have the potential for different production lines that haven’t been allowed in the medical market. The traditional whole flower is one of the more popular products on the recreational market.”

Nedo noted that there are other products, such as resin, pre-rolls, and extract types that the company may be able to explore producing in New York, but management is waiting for the official regulations to be handed down from the newly formed New York State Cannabis Control Board. Waiting for the rules to be defined does not seem to bother Nedo. “We’re used to regulations changing and being flexible and working with the market as it evolves,” she said.



Photo credit - Vireo Health



Photo credit - Vireo Health

The company has also been expanding its offering of cannabis products for medical use. Vireo planned to launch a new ground flower product line with four strains in fall 2021 and wants to expand this to over 20 strains. The product is available in 3.5 g and 7g jars. The New York State Department of Health approved the use of the ground cannabis flower for medical patients to vaporize. “Allowing the sale of medical cannabis in its natural form—as a dry flower—is the most effective way to reduce the cost of medical cannabis,” said Vireo’s Chairman and Chief Executive Office, Dr. Kyle Kingsley. “By offering dry flower, we can increase patient accessibility, affordability, and greatly expand our product offerings.”

The company has been increasing its workforce as demand for its products grows. Currently, it has 53 employees and will be looking to add more once construction of its new facility is complete in the first half of 2022.

Kingsley also emphasized the availability of a skilled workforce. “We have found that the greater Albany area has a tremendous amount of talent and human capital,” he said. “We’ve been able to hire scientists and are very impressed with the talents in the area.”

Nedo said that some of the job duties can be specific for lab and cultivation workers. For example, Vireo will hire production technicians who will focus solely on the production of cannabis flower products. “We can help train a local workforce,” said Nedo, noting that the company recently started an internship program with Fulton Montgomery Community College. The Fulton County native started her career with Vireo as a lab technician and learned the business as her career there progressed.

Fulton County’s long history of agribusiness brings some applicants who have experience with growing, such as farmers, greenhouse and nursery workers, and those who have worked at hydroponics supply stores.

Vireo Health, headquartered in Minneapolis, is one of 10 cannabis companies in the state. It operates four dispensaries in Albany, Queens,





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Programming provides specialized assistance to agribusinesses and manufacturers. The Agribusiness Program funds productivity improvements, energy efficiency, and renewable solutions.

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A portfolio of urban revitalization, brownfield restoration, vacant building redevelopment and site development programs help make Upstate NY more competitive and "shovel-ready" for new investment.

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Renewable Energy and Economic Development Programs support a limited number of projects that demonstrate advances in new technology (gas or electric) and deliver significant economic benefit.



VIREO

White Plains, and Binghamton as well as a home delivery service. The new facility in Fulton County will allow the company to produce many tons of cannabis per year for Vireo's dispensaries as well as for wholesaling to other companies in New York.

The company found Tryon Technology Park to be a desirable place for growth for several reasons. "Specifically, where the park is located, it provides manufacturing companies with access to affordable space, to state-of-the-art infrastructure, and most importantly, access to the talent that comes from both Fulton County and the adjacent region," Kingsley said. "Being in Fulton County where the land is affordable and where the infrastructure—water, power, and broadband is available—that is something that was very attractive to us," he said.

Vireo purchased the 96 additional acres to build its new facility for \$1.3 million.

The most striking aspect of Tryon Technology Park is the flexibility that it has to offer incoming businesses, and Vireo is a case in point. Fulton County's Industrial Development Agency is open to entertaining offers on various sized parcels of land as well as bids on any of the buildings that remain, such as the former administration, maintenance, and tech class buildings. "We're largely looking at this mostly as empty land," D'Amore said. "We are willing to reconfigure the lot size as needed, and we're more than willing to adjust appropriately based on the needs of the companies that are coming in," he said, noting that the land is listed at \$27,000 per acre. "The cost of land is advantageous."

Another benefit of doing business in Fulton County is the ease of working with the local government. "It's not a place with a lot of



red tape," Kingsley said. "It's a place that truly supports businesses and their desire to grow."

Vireo is flourishing in Fulton County. In 2020, the company saw revenues of \$49.2 million, up 64.3 percent from 2019.

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Empowering People & Nurturing a Community



Photos on this page credit - The Arc Lexington

The Arc Lexington is one of Fulton County's largest employers, providing 1,300 jobs in the county and another 500 in neighboring Schoharie and Albany Counties.

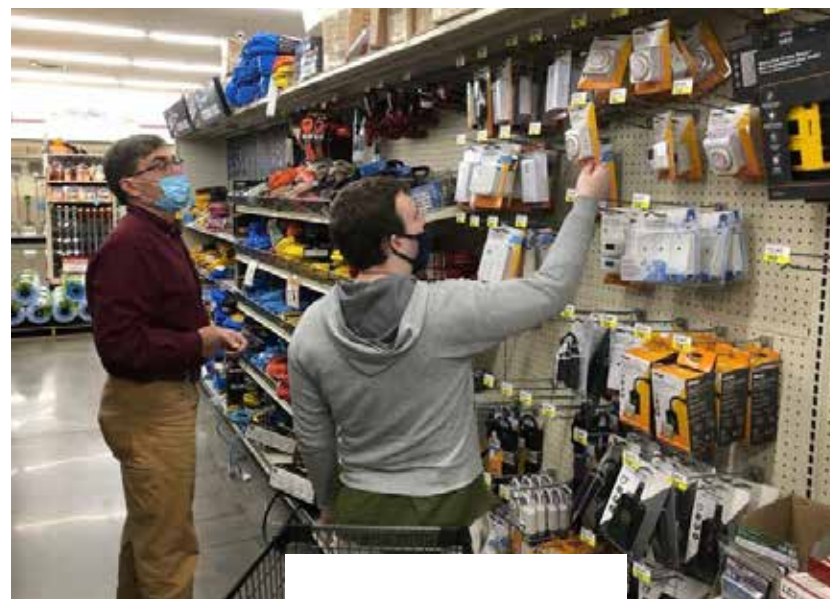
The organization has been working in the community since 1953, providing services and opportunities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism, mental illness, cerebral palsy, physical disabilities, epilepsy, and traumatic brain injuries.

Based in Johnstown, Lexington partners with the community to provide job opportunities for those it serves as well as opportunities for creative expression through the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts located in Gloversville

Its corporate culture is one of the things that sets Lexington apart. "Lexington's mission and core values are at the forefront of what we do—we empower people with autism and disabilities to live their best lives, every day, by partnering with their families, our employees, and our community," said Elizabeth Karis, The Arc Lexington's Division Director for Human Resources. "Our employees are what make us such a great agency. Yes, we are led by exceptional leaders, but it's the Fulton County employees who truly make Lexington an amazing place."

There are accolades that substantiate this. Employees rated the company as one of the top workplaces in the Capital Region for the Albany Times Union's workplace recognition, and in 2014, Lexington was named the #1 Large Workplace. In 2017, it was awarded the distinction of being one of the 24 top large workplaces in the state by The Best Companies to Work for in New York State, a program that evaluates and ranks workplaces based on employee satisfaction and engagement and workplace practices and policies.

In addition to honors like these, employees reflect their love of Lexington in the way they interact with the individuals they serve as well as their community partners. "Because of the nature of the



Empowering People

work supporting people, our workforce is very caring, very nurturing, and very supportive," said Terry Swierzowski, who is the Director of Communications for Arc Lexington and is also the Director of the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts. "We have some amazing employees that go above and beyond every day making a difference in people's lives," she said, noting that Lexington has a substantial number of long-tenured employees, many having worked at the organization for 25, 30, or even 40 years. Most of Lexington's staff work in its day habilitation, family support, and residential programs.

To foster its nurturing environment, Lexington has open monthly forums for all employees as well as the clients it supports and their families. Here, people can discuss ideas and best practices and give feedback. A committee takes what participants voice in these forums and follows up, incorporating ideas and practices into every department's goals and activities. "That sets our company culture," Swierzowski said.

One way that Lexington shows how much it values its employees is through educational programs. Lexington, in a collaboration with Fulton Montgomery Community College (FMCC) and the New York State Department of Labor, developed a two-year apprenticeship program that combines job-related instruction and job training, with free tuition. "That has been life-changing for some of our staff," Swierzowski said. "They can earn a free associate degree or a hefty amount of credits toward a bachelor's degree," she said, noting that these educational opportunities help employees get promoted and also serve as a recruitment and retention tool for Lexington.

Lexington also started a human services paid internship program to introduce high school students to working with people with disabilities. The program has 75 interns across three counties. A number of interns have gone on to work as support staff in the organization after their internships.

Lexington also provides educational and professional opportunities to the people it serves. For example, its Transitions program, operated in partnership with FMCC, offers a Certificate



Photo credit - The Arc Lexington



Photo credit - Paul Nigra Art Center



Photo credit - The Arc Lexington

& Nurturing

of Completion in Career and Life Studies, a program which prepares teens and young adults with autism and learning differences for college, careers, and life in general. Another example is the Canine Companion Program, run in collaboration with Jennifer DeCuyke of Paws Up. This program trains people to become certified dog handlers. “They learn dog-handling skills, obedience, and canine communication,” Swierzowski said.

By partnering with over 40 businesses and agencies in Fulton County, Lexington created its Employment Resources program, through which those whom the organization serves can find employment. For example, they prepare and deliver Meals on Wheels for Fulton County Office of the Aging.

They also work at other area businesses, including Price Chopper, McDonald’s, Glove Cities Veterinary Hospital, Century Linen, Ruby & Quiri, and the Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market.

“The Gloversville Runnings store is very happy to partner with Lexington and the men and women they support to work in our store,” said Will Bullis, store manager at Runnings. “These workers are very capable and dedicated, and they have a job coach who collaborates with us to make sure we are all on the same page regarding job duties and expectations. We think it is a perfect relationship, and we are proud to be a community partner with Lexington.”

Lexington’s success has spread to other Capital District counties. In addition to serving those in Fulton County, Lexington merged with the former Schoharie ARC and also started a program in Albany County.

In addition to employment and life skills, Lexington encourages creative expression through its Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts. This center hosts entertainment, special events, exhibitions, and classes.



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The center also has its own world-famous rock band, Flame. “They’re an internationally known rock band with a group of very, very talented musicians who happen to have disabilities,” said the center’s director, Terry Swierzowski.

The band was the brainchild of lead singer Michelle King, who suggested the idea after she won a Lexington talent contest in 2003. So far, the band has released six CDs and three singles, with a body of work that encompasses original songs written by band members as well as cover songs. The group includes vocalists, drummers, guitar players, and dancers.

Performing over 70 times a year, the band has brought its message of hope and inspiration to audiences at an impressive array of venues. These include the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, New York’s Apollo Theater, and the Parthenon in Athens, Greece. The band has been on Good Morning America and featured in People magazine. King even sang at the funeral of Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

In 2020, Flame was awarded the National Honor for the National Historic Recognition Program. This program honors individuals and groups that have contributed to the transformation of the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities over the past two decades.



Photos on this page credit - The Arc Lexington

Fulton County Airport - Beyond the Horizon

In the 1980s, Fulton County's government recognized the importance of having an airport to fuel economic development, and the county made that a reality when it opened the Fulton County Airport, a publicly owned, public-use general aviation airport with a 4,000-foot runway in Johnstown.

Located within New York's Technology Triangle, the airport is no more than an eight-minute drive from five industrial and business parks that are suited for a wide variety of industries, with shovel-ready sites and in some cases, buildings. These parks are ideal for high-tech, manufacturing, healthcare, food processing, biomedical research and development, electronics, and renewable energy, to name just a few.

“There is quick access from the airport to those parks,” said Scott Henze, planning director for Fulton County.

The Wesson Group LLC, a multifaceted company that specializes in heavy civil construction that focuses on the renewable energy markets, is just one Fulton County firm that benefits from having the airport located just two miles from its Johnstown location. “Senior management is able to spend their time on more productive tasks because they aren't traveling [50 minutes] to Albany to catch a flight,” said Ashley Delaney-Olson, the company's director of human resources. When executives need to be somewhere quickly, they charter a flight with pilot Mike Ezzo of Air Charter Express, saving themselves the drive, security lines, and pre-flight wait time required at Albany International Airport. Over the past decade, Wesson's executives have used the airport to fly to



meetings in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maryland.

The 195 Factory, LLC, serves as the airport's fixed base operator. This company is globally known for its servicing and restoration of Cessna 195 and 190 aircraft. “People from other parts of the world will fly their Cessnas in to have work done,” Henze said.

The airport is also home to other businesses, including R&R Aviation that owns two hangars where it stores planes and performs aircraft maintenance.

The Fulton County Airport is an affordable option. “At some of those airports that are located more in the central Capital District, prices for hangars and hangar space are pretty expensive,” Henze said. “With a little farther traveling distance, a facility would be constructed for a lot less money,” he said.

Fulton County continues to improve the airport. The county's 2021 capital plan provided for a \$1.25 million main apron reconstruction project which it plans to begin this year.



Construction of an additional hangar is currently underway with expected completion in October 2021. This hangar will house a new business to the county, LifeNet of New York, a company owned and operated by the Englewood, Colorado-based Air Methods Corporation.

When LifeNet was outgrowing its facility at Glen, New York, where it began operating in 2004, management scouted out a new location and chose the Fulton County Airport. LifeNet has a pilot, nurse, and paramedic at the airport at all times to respond to



Fulton County Airport - Beyond the Horizon

scenes where people have been critically injured and medevac them to hospitals for treatment. “It’s a great project for us here, because it will bring a 24/7/365 presence to the airport,” Henze said.

In addition to rapid-response calls, LifeNet also provides transport for patients from smaller hospitals to larger ones in big cities including Albany, Boston, and New York City. The county is also refurbishing a building that will serve as crew quarters for those on duty. “We broke



ground on June 1, 2021, and anticipate being finished the first of November,” said Stephen Konold, the company’s area manager for the Tri-State New York and Northeast Region.

Flight instruction also takes place at the airport, and many pilots fly in for recreational purposes. A potential business opportunity exists for a Restaurateur to open an eatery at the airport, as the diner that used be there closed. “Pilots from all over would fly into this airport, have lunch in the diner with some friends, and fly out,” Henze said.

There is space for other business opportunities as well. “In our airport master plan, we do have sections of the airport that we have identified as potentially supporting some other type of



commercial site—development that would support aviation,” Henze said. “There are other opportunities for experimental kind of aircraft—something that could possibly be on the horizon if we found the right company,” he said.



BROADALBIN MANUFACTURING

When you need it made- They make it!

When one of his client’s turbine-driven generators breaks down, Scott Bresney, an engineer with AGT Services, an Amsterdam, New York-based company that provides generator service for power plants, turns to Broadalbin Manufacturing Corporation in Broadalbin. He sends over a blueprint and requests that the company fabricate the part as quickly as possible. “When a company is down, they lose hundreds of thousands of dollars per day,” Bresney said.

“Typically, everything we’re looking for is as soon as possible.” Bresney knows he can count on Broadalbin Manufacturing to complete the job quickly. It is not uncommon for Bresney to call shop foreman Ryan Sowle with an order that he needs the following day. “They really work with us on that speed and obviously high quality. They jump through hoops for us whenever we need something.”

That level of service, expertise, and quality has kept Broadalbin Manufacturing’s business strong for the past 51 years. The company has a reputation for its tailor-made, precision metal fabrication work for all sizes of jobs for a wide variety of customers, commercial, governmental, and residential. “We do everything from taking care of local people that need steel—any sort of work done as far as the fabrication of metal and machining, all the way up to General Electric,” Sowle said.

For example, the firm crafted a rear bumper for a box truck for Skiff’s Dairy LCC in Johnstown. “If I need something made, they make it,” said Jim Skiff. “They can pretty much fabricate anything that you need for anything at a really reasonable price.” The company has crafted parts for snowmobiles, plow frames, patio furniture, gates, handrails and architectural metal pieces upon request, to name just a few items.

Sowle and the company’s 11 other machinists can work from customer’s rough sketches or make new pieces using the dimensions and design of an existing piece.



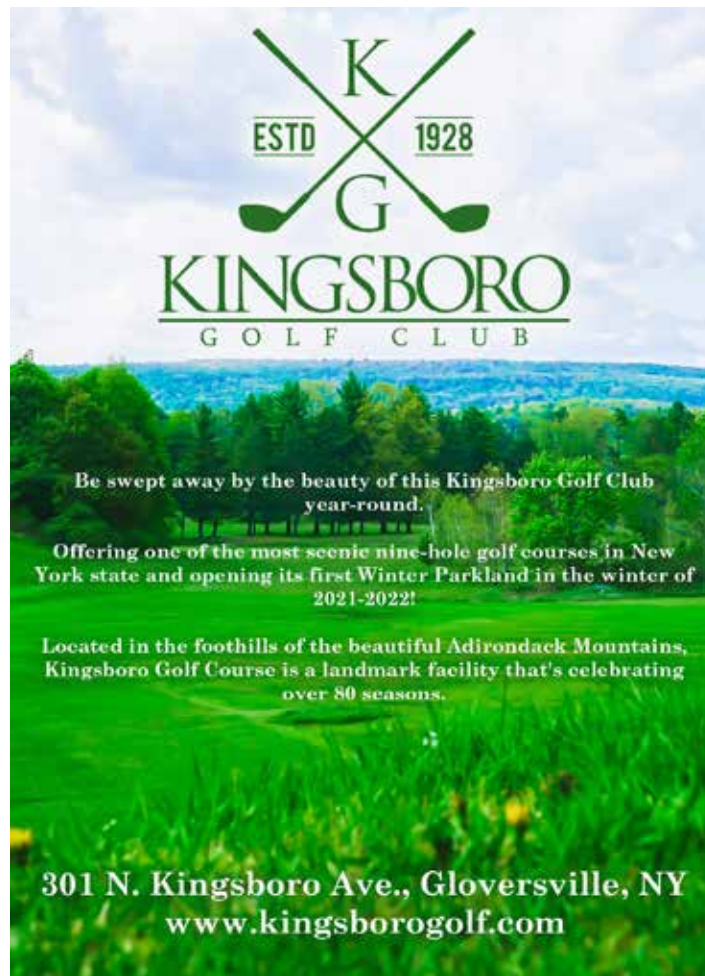
When the Fulton County Sheriff’s Department wanted to replace the wooden box it used to house the agency’s sonar equipment with metal, they contracted with Broadalbin Manufacturing to do the job.

On the other end of the spectrum, are large corporations like Plug Power and General Electric that use Broadalbin Manufacturing’s services for the manufacture of metal parts according to an engineer’s blueprints.

BROADALBIN MANUFACTURING

In addition to small custom jobs, Broadalbin Manufacturing also manufactures items in bulk according to customers' specifications.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company remodeled its 16,000 square-foot machine shop which houses a 1.75-inch-thick plasma cutter and computer-programmable fabrication equipment, among other items. For added safety that would isolate machinists from customers for health and safety reasons, they renovated their space to include an office for the three office workers where customers could collect their items. The exterior of the facility at 8 Pine Street also got a facelift. Broadalbin Manufacturing remained open for business during this time, as its services were deemed essential.



The firm trains its workers on the job, teaching them how to program the machines that do the actual cutting of metal.

Half of the company's employees have been employed there for over 20 years. Sowle, who has been working at Broadalbin Manufacturing since 1993, is a prime example. "I graduated [from high school] on a Saturday

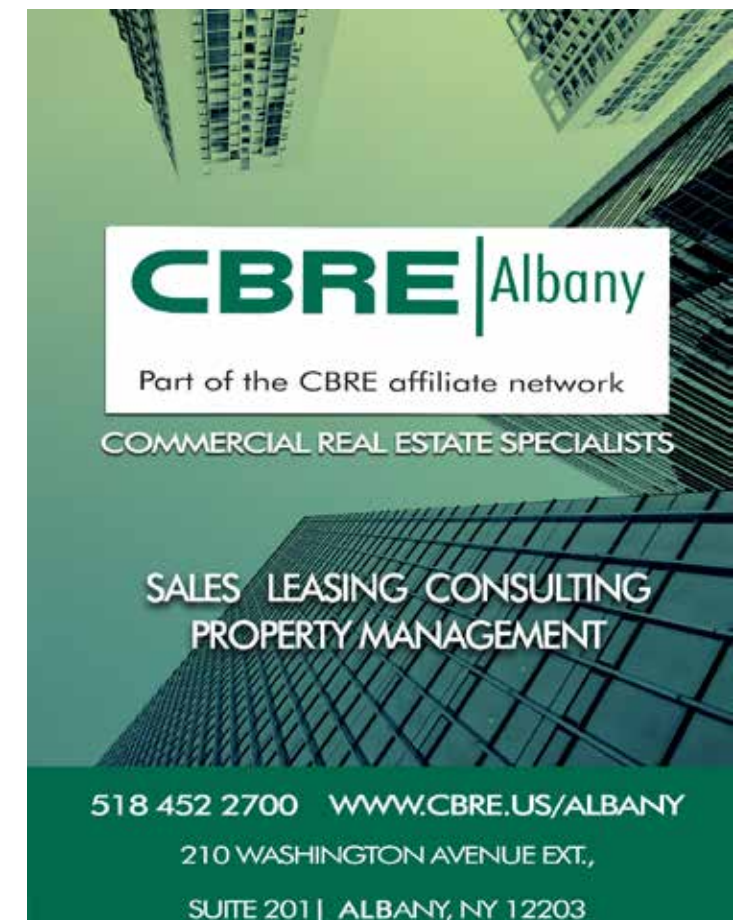
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morning and started here the following Monday not knowing a thing," he said. "I learned through the years and worked my way up the ladder."

Broadalbin Manufacturing's investment in Sowle has paid off, as he clearly enjoys his work. "I love the everyday challenges," Sowle said. "It's different day to day. The thought of something that's made by us that's going to go halfway around the world and be used in a power plant, it's amazing to me. It kind of makes you proud when you get done with it." He also enjoys the business relationships he has made through the years with local business owners.

Broadalbin Manufacturing does its part to help the Fulton County community as well. Recently, it donated some metal bins it fabricated to the Girl Scouts. Sometimes, it hosts after hours tours for high school technology class students. New in 2021, the company brought in an intern from Broadalbin High School.

Michael Deuel purchased the company in 2004, and after his unexpected death in 2020, Deuel's wife, Karen, took over the company. "Even through the tough loss of Michael, his wife is a really amazing woman," Sowle said. "She's taking the company to another level."



FEEDING THE ECONOMY WITH A **FAMILY** FLAIR

Gaetano Lanzi graduated from Providence College with a marketing degree and a job offer from a New York City firm. Instead of moving to the Big Apple, he chose to return to Fulton County to work in his family's restaurant business, carrying on the family tradition of offering authentic Italian cuisine, while at the same time, expanding and moving the business forward with innovation and creativity.

Gaetano, his siblings, and his cousins are the fourth generation of the Lanzi family to work in the restaurant business. From talking to Gaetano, they wouldn't have it any other way. "I wouldn't want to be working with anybody else but my family," he said. "That's what makes us stronger than most," he said, noting that a fourth-generation restaurant business is a rarity. "Most people either sell out or fail, but we keep expanding as our family grows."

Members of the Lanzi family work together in various aspects of the business. Gaetano's older brother Giuseppe works in management,



The family's first restaurateur was Luigi Lanzi, who opened his establishment in 1920. Luigi had emigrated to the United States from a town near Rome. He worked on the railroad and in the carpet mills before striking out on his own, first buying a small store and eventually operating a Prohibition-era speakeasy and banquet house in Amsterdam.

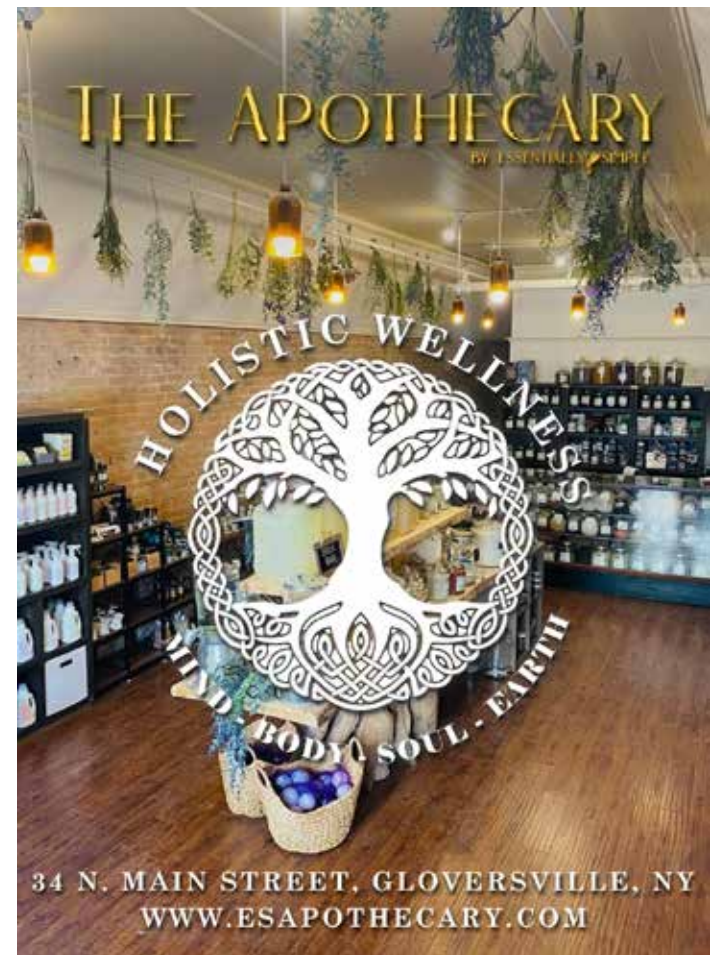
Luigi's son, Lorenzo, learned the restaurant business from his father and opened the restaurant Lorenzo's, which operated from the early 1950s until 1998. Third-generation restaurateur Joe Lanzi learned the restaurant business from his father, just as his father had learned from his grandfather.

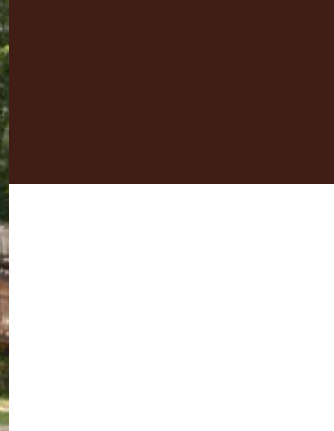
Joe opened Lanzi's on the Lake in Mayfield in 1993. Just four years later, the family built the Sport Island Pub in Northville, followed by Partner's Pub & Grill in Johnstown in 2009. Yet another expansion followed when the family opened Lanzi's Lakeside Tavern & Marina in Gloversville in 2013, followed by Lorenzo's Southside in 2020, just two weeks after the COVID-19 lockdown began. The family's latest expansion pays homage to Gaetano's grandfather, who operated a restaurant just one block away from where Lorenzo's Southside stands today.

The two newest restaurants are compelling illustrations of how the Lanzis seamlessly combine the old with the new, building on what has made the family successful thus far while innovating for the present and the future.

Gaetano has his eye on what will make his family's business stand out. For example, Lorenzo's Southside specializes in Neapolitan pizza and homemade pasta. Members of the Lanzi family traveled to Italy to do research before they opened the restaurant. Then Gaetano and two brothers, Giuseppe and Giacomo, studied the 300-year-old tradition of Neapolitan pizza-making, training with Roberto Caporuscio, president of the Associazione Pizzaiuoli Napoletani

continued





The idea for the Channel Bar came from the family’s annual trip to Aruba. They were enjoying an outdoor bar and thought, “Why can’t we have this concept at home?” They took into consideration the upstate New York fall and winter weather, and they built the outdoor bar so that it can be enclosed in the colder months, bringing the island feel to the

continued

in New York City, and the Italian World Pizza Champion from Naples, Michele D’Amelio, leading to Lorenzo’s Southside’s certification as a Neapolitan Pizzeria. Some customers have even commented that the pizza they serve at Lorenzo’s is on par with New York City restaurants.

“We wanted to go back to our roots and bring back our old world with a new spin influenced by our generation,” said Gaetano, who oversees the Neapolitan pizza part of the restaurant.

They have made the cooking as authentic as possible, using an imported Valoriani wood-burning Italian oven that cooks the pizzas at 900 degrees F for 60 to 90 seconds, giving the pizza a crisp, soft, raised crust that distinguishes the Neapolitan pizza from any other. The family imports from Italy many of the ingredients, including preservative-free Italian flour for the crust, mozzarella di Bufala, other Italian cheeses, San Marzano tomatoes, and extra virgin olive oil.

The pasta is always freshly made by Giacomo, who was trained by his father at what Gaetano kiddingly refers to as “Lanzi University.” Joe Lanzi remains the head chef for all the establishments. “He’s the one who taught my brother everything he knows, and he still cooks at Lorenzo’s,” Gaetano said.

A special machine produces egg-based pastas like angel hair, gnocchi, fettuccine, linguini, and cavatelli at 60 to 70 pounds per hour.

Customers can also order from a beverage menu that features imported Italian as well as local craft beers, including its own IPA, “GSL Juice,” which it brews at Artisanal Brew Works in Saratoga Springs. (GSL stands for Great Sacandaga Lake.) “It’s the number one seller at all of our locations for beer,” Gaetano said, noting that the beer is distributed as far



away as Los Angeles. Lanzi’s brews the beer every two weeks, and it sells out, he said.

The other example of how the fourth generation brings innovation to the family business is The Channel Bar at Lanzi’s Lakeside Tavern & Marina, which opened in May 2021. Gaetano saw great opportunity there. “The Great Sacandaga Lake is a gem in the rough,” he said. “A lot of people don’t know about it, but it’s getting very popular post-pandemic because we have a lot of people moving to the area that we haven’t seen before, particularly from downstate and from other areas.”



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FAMILY FLAIR

Great Sacandaga Lake in warmer months. In summer, the enclosure is taken down, and customers have their choice of inside seating where there is another bar, or outside seating on the lake.

The Channel Bar has a decidedly tropical feel, with its décor and the breeze blowing in off the water. “We wanted to create a resort feel,” Gaetano said. The televisions around the bar, which works on a hydraulic system so that it can easily be put away at closing time.

“We’re used to outdoor dining, so we know the concept pretty well,” Gaetano said. “It’s right on the lake, and there’s nothing that compares to it in this area.” There’s island music playing on the weekends, and they recently built a bamboo stage on the lawn outside for a steel drum band and other musicians to play. “You feel like you’re on vacation,” he said.

The Lanzi family’s five establishments make the business a major employer for the area, providing jobs for about 180 people. “We treat everyone like family,” said Joe Lanzi.

Gaetano credits his father and uncles for seeing the area’s potential when they originally invested in Fulton County in 1993. “They saw a vision, and they risked everything,” Gaetano said. It has paid off as they continue to experience success in Fulton County and again in Montgomery County.



That, and the strong work ethic ingrained in the Lanzi family, has made the business prosper.

In addition, the new generation demonstrates that a fusion of tradition and innovation make for good business. “Our generation is bringing new ideas to my father and my uncles, and we’re expanding their business,” Gaetano said, pointing out that his father and uncles did the same for their father. “We’re always reinvesting in the business and doing what we can to make it better,” he said. That turns out to be a good deal for locals, improving the quality of life with fun places to hang out and relax with friends and family, and it provides tourists with great vacation dining and entertainment experiences.

Lanzi’s is definitely one to watch, as more growth is now in the works. However, the details are not yet ready to be made public. “The next generation is going to expand,” said Joe Lanzi. “They will continue to expand and keep the legacy going.”

www.lorenzossouthside.com

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CATCH A BIG FISH CALLED



Photo credit - Anne Boles

Tourism is a major economic driver in Fulton County.



Photo credit - @brian_hikes_all_day

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce works diligently to promote the destination, helping local businesses thrive. During the COVID-19 pandemic, much of that was related to the county’s natural beauty and businesses that help vacationers and locals alike to enjoy it.

With 44 lakes and 74,832 acres of wild forest, there is a cornucopia of activities to suit every taste. Fulton County houses 59 percent of New York State’s famed Adirondack Park, providing 533 square miles to explore. “I focused on promoting fishing, biking, boating, hiking, camping, rail trails, and outdoor historical sites—every outdoor activity that promoted natural social distancing,” said Anne Boles, Tourism Director for both Fulton and Montgomery Counties.

“I worked with many shops, lodging, and restaurants to

see how we could help them,” Boles said. This included social media promotions and adding them to a list of open businesses with specifics on hours and offerings.

Boles also created a Bingo Card promotion for the chamber’s Facebook page and website, encouraging people to patronize local eateries, thus supporting them during the shutdown.

The chamber organized several events to get people out to various recreational sites and establishments throughout the county.

One of these was “Fulton County Outdoor Adventure Day,” inviting people to out and pursue activities like hunting, fishing, antiquing, biking, and other outings on the Route 20/Route 29 Corridor, with exhibits, vendors, crafters, food, and beverages along the way.

continued

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FULTON COUNTY



Photo credit - Royal Mountain

The chamber also inaugurated a Farmer's Market at the Fulton County Visitor Center in Broadalbin. It met with so much success that the chamber repeated it in 2021.

In June 2021, Boles created the Fulton County 44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail, working with local brewers, cider makers, and distillers to promote the sampling of local craft beverages, giving exposure to new businesses.

Boles stressed that the attractions followed social distancing guidelines and employed the safest cleaning and sanitizing measures to ensure the well-being of visitors and residents of the local community.

NOT JUST FOR TOURISTS

While the local economy benefits from the chamber's tourism efforts, the promotion of recreational activities and establishments benefits the local population as well.

At a time when there are more jobs available than people to fill them, those looking for employment are

considering not only their wages, but also the overall quality of life that would come with a job.

Fulton County employers offer their employees an excellent, affordable quality of life with a vast wealth of recreational and cultural opportunities to suit a wide range of interests.

The county provides year-round, high-quality experiences for local residents as well as tourists. Here is a small sampling of activities to try in Fulton County.

Hike your heart out... or just get out for a leisurely stroll in nature. The Adirondacks boasts 46 high peaks and dozens of easier hikes. In addition, Fulton County is home to many hiking trailheads that lead hikers on short hikes to multi-day treks. The Fulton County Tourism Department also hosts the Fulton County Five Hiking Challenge, which includes a hike up to Kane Mountain where there is a fire tower that affords visitors a stunning view of the mountains and nearby Caroga Lake.



The Willie Wildlife Marsh trail, also part of the challenge, is an easy walk across the marsh on a boardwalk, and one new trail is a short, accessible trail that leads to a viewing platform and picnic area.

Get out on (or in) the water. Fulton County is home to the Great Sacandaga Lake, a 29-mile-long reservoir with 115 miles of shoreline covering 25,000 acres. In addition, Fulton County boasts 43 other smaller lakes as well as ponds and streams where people can experience the water while swimming or on a vessel—anything from personal watercraft like kayaks and canoes to larger pontoon boats, sailboats, and motorboats.

Catch a big fish... or some smaller ones. Fulton County is high on the list of the best places to fish in New York State. For example, Caroga Lake has distinct east and west sections. East Caroga is where fishermen find warmwater varieties like largemouth bass, pickerel, crappie, panfish, and bullhead, as well as the brown and rainbow trout with which the lake is stocked, according to fishing expert Captain Stephen George. The deeper West Caroga has a good population of splake, perch, and smallmouth bass. This lake is a year-round destination, as people can ice fish there in the winter. Nearby Canada Lake is known for its trout fishing, and Peck's Lake, part of a resort and accessed by Peck Marina, offers a chance to catch trout, walleye, rock bass, smallmouth bass, and northern pike. Fulton County is also the place where thousands of fishermen gather from around the region each winter for the Walleye Challenge Ice Fishing Derby.

continued



FULTON COUNTY



Photo credit - @daspgs.jpg

Experience a hunter's paradise. Fulton County encompasses both the southern and northern zones for hunting in New York state. Hunters flock to the area each year to hunt for deer, bear, pheasant, turkey, waterfowl, and other migratory game birds and small game mammals.

Bike Thru History. If you're looking to combine some exercise with a history lesson, the website <https://www.mohawkvalleyhistory.com/bike-thru-history> is a great place to find an itinerary. Routes range from a few

minutes ride to an hours-long trek. A 1.4-mile roundtrip route takes cyclists from Johnson Hall, the 1763 estate of Sir William Johnson, to the Johnstown Historical Society and back. The moderate, 10.6-mile ride from the Fulton County Museum to Johnson Hall follows the old FJ & G Rail Trail. For serious cyclists, there is a 45-mile route starting from the Caroga Historical Association and ending at the Paul Bradt Museum in Northville on the shores of the Great Sacandaga Lake.

Walkers can get their history on, too, with a tour of Johnstown's Historic Quadrangle Corner or a "Walk in the Footsteps of Elizabeth Cady Stanton," the famed 1800s women's rights leader who was born in Johnstown.

Hit a hole in one. Fulton County's historic golf courses offer the opportunity to golf right in the splendor of the Adirondack Mountains at courses with affordable prices for beginners to seasoned golfers.

Spend winter outdoors. Fulton County is home to two ski areas accommodating both downhill and cross-country skiers. Royal Mountain makes its own snow and offers 13 trails suitable for all skill levels. Lapland Lake Nordic Vacation Center is a prime place for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Fulton County is also a snowmobiler's delight with 400 miles of groomed trails maintained by local snowmobile clubs.

Relax after a great day of recreation. After hiking, biking, fishing, golfing, or skiing, relax with a beverage handcrafted right in Fulton County. The new 44 Lakes Craft Beverage Trail is where visitors and locals can sample locally made beers, spirits, and ciders at various locations.

Tourists flock to Fulton County for vacation, but those living in Fulton County do not have to go far to take part in a wide range of quality recreational experiences, just minutes from where they live and work. "Our folks in Fulton County love the region because of the opportunities they have to recreate in the outdoors—hunters, campers, hikers, and snowmobilers," said Paul Connelie, manufacturing director for paint company Benjamin Moore, which has its largest plant by production volume in Johnstown.



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Got People? – Yes We Do!

FULTON COUNTY DEPLOYS HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE AND COOPERATIVE STRATEGIES TO ENSURE THAT AREA EMPLOYERS HAVE THE SKILLED WORKFORCE THEY NEED.

The Amsterdam-based Fulton Montgomery Schoharie Workforce Development Board, Inc. (FMS) serves as a convener of economic development organizations, educational institutions, and community-based organizations that are dedicated to helping employers hire qualified employees to grow their businesses. The board's executive director, Gina Papa, points out that various organizations throughout the county have different resources that they can contribute to preparing the workforce and fueling the local economy. "We're charged with bringing all those entities together so we can provide for current businesses and businesses coming into the area," she said.

FMS assembles the various resources together in a package and presents them to employers. "There are so many agencies that have little pieces of things they can help with, like tax credits and training employees," Papa said. Teaming up with the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (FCCRG), the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Fulton Montgomery Community College (FMCC) enables FMS to present employers with the options available to address their workforce needs.

In workforce development brainstorming sessions, the FCCRG works with local business leaders and educational institutions to identify the overlapping areas of workforce development concern so that it can bring forward laser-focused solutions to any challenges facing area businesses.

CREATING A QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

The Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery Board of Cooperative Educational Services (HFM BOCES) ensures that students enrolled in its programs start preparing to enter the workforce as early as their freshman year in high school. The Pathways in Technology Early College High School (PTECH) program is a hybrid between college and the workplace that begins in 9th grade and ends after a student's sophomore year in college.



From their freshman year, high school students are considered college students with the goal of earning their associate degree by the end of the program. Funding is provided for tuition, lab fees, and books, making the program highly accessible to any interested student. There are career development paths in advanced manufacturing, business, computer science,



exploration and hands-on learning with the opportunity to earn college credits in high school. CTE's 16 different pathways encompass training for a variety of different fields, from engineering and digital media to skilled trades such as electrical, HVAC, and plumbing. In some fields, like environmental conservation, construction, and cosmetology, students leave the program with an industry credential, ready to work.

CONNECTING JOB SEEKERS WITH FUTURE EMPLOYERS

In 2013, to enhance the effectiveness of its vocational programs and meet the needs of local employers, HFM BOCES collaborated with the Fulton Montgomery

continued



medical/health science, and agriculture, with 20 different degree options. Over the course of the six-year program, students not only take classes, but they have mentors from the business community, participate in workplace experiences, and complete in-depth, project-based learning assignments. Some of these assignments take place in the form of "workplace challenges," working in collaboration with local employers to solve technical problems facing their businesses.

In the BOCES Career & Technical Education (CTE) program, students in 11th and 12th grades spend half their day at CTE and half at their local high schools. In their CTE experience, students focus on career



Got People? – Yes We Do!

Regional Chamber of Commerce to create the Business Education Partnership (BEP).

Besides learning marketable skills that equip them to enter the workforce, students are exposed to what businesses in the community have to offer in terms of employment. This exposure takes place through guest speakers, mentorships, guest judges who evaluate students’ final presentations, job shadowing, workplace tours, and internships. “The goal is to prepare a talented workforce, and these students have had business interactions and mentoring with professionals since day one,” said Nicole Walrath, Director of Workforce Development for the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Providing highly qualified candidates and training opportunities is a priority of Fulton County’s workforce development efforts.



The BEP also helps to meet the needs of local employers by working with them to determine what courses and pathways will provide the qualified workforce they need. For example, CTE added its Cybersecurity & Computer Technology pathway in response to input from local employers. “Whatever the need, HFM BOCES can partner with a community college to bring an instructor in and create a program where students are trained to work in a particular industry,” said Matt Davis, PTECH’s principal.



CREATING AWARENESS

Fulton County organizations assist employers by creating awareness of job openings. FMS Workforce Development opens its offices for employers to hold recruitment events and do on-the-spot interviews. FMS and its partners handle the advertising for these events, getting the word out to job seekers.

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FMS has also been ramping up its job fairs, looking into unique ways to draw job seekers. For example, the organization has hosted events at local businesses such as restaurants and breweries, as well as hosting virtual job fairs, said Pamela Goldswir, Chairwoman of the FMS Workforce Development Board.

FMCC operates a job search assistance website where employers can post job openings for free. In addition to several opportunities for employers to come to campus to recruit students, FMCC hosts an annual job fair.

FMS also visits students in the PTECH program of local high schools, making them aware of the employment that area businesses can offer.

Goldswir said that FMS sees a lot of people who want to retrain for a new career or re-enter the workforce. In addition to creating awareness, FMS offers onsite training for employees who are looking to enhance their skills to advance their careers.



MEETING EMPLOYERS’ NEEDS

The sole job of FMCC’s Daniel Fogarty, Director of External Partnerships and Applied Learning, is to speak to area employers about what they need in terms of employees. From there, the college’s Business and Community Partnership Team evaluates programs offered by the college to fit those needs. If there is not a program currently in place, faculty and staff create a

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Got People? – Yes We Do!

tailor-made program to meet an employer’s specific needs. “We’re trying to be the campus that fits the needs of the employers and tries to be flexible with what we have here,” said Christie Davis, Academic Advisor and Workforce Development Specialist.

For example, in the college’s automation labs and clean room, over 300 employees from 24 employers have taken classes developed by Jeremy Spraggs, assistant professor of electrical technology, to meet employers’ specialized needs.

The college also offers an individual studies program that is a mix of classes and on-the-job training. In this program, area employers have the opportunity to train their own workers while these employees are earning college certificates in a related field. “It’s real-life skills, not just coursework,” Davis said.

If an employer needs employees in a field where there is not already a related individual studies course in place, FMCC staff creates one. “We can develop a certificate program just for an employer,” Davis said. This individualized approach makes the program highly appealing to employers.

For example, FMCC created Individual Studies Certificate programs for a quality assurance lab technician position for the cannabis, and a dispensary manager job, responding to the growth of the cannabis industry in New York State due to the legalization of cannabis for adult recreational use in 2021. In the middle of a major expansion of its Fulton County facility, Vireo Health brought on its first FMCC intern as a result of this program.

Another institution that works closely with employers to meet workforce needs is the Advanced Institute for Manufacturing (AIM) at Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica, just an hour from Fulton County. AIM is part of the 11-center statewide network of the New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership. The goal of this Empire State Development (ESD) program is to provide growth and innovation services to businesses, and AIM’s staff stands ready to boost the growth of manufacturing companies.

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consulting, training, and technology development services to the small- to medium-sized manufacturers in the six-county Mohawk Valley region,” said Cory Albrecht, AIM’s director. In addition to Fulton County, AIM serves Herkimer, Oneida, Montgomery, Otsego, and Schoharie counties.

AIM provides a wide array of services to promote business growth, including training and classes for a company’s employees. It offers a range of courses such as Lean Six Sigma Certification, Website Development, CNC Training/ Shop Math, Safe Quality Food, OSHA Safety Training and Environmental Compliancy. Other available training and services address process improvement and quality. Like FMCC, AIM also does customized workforce development training.

Partnering with local community colleges in the region, including MVCC and FMCC, provides additional classes and other resources for employers. For example, AIM’s clients have access to MVCC’s FABLab, where they can use design engineering and prototyping equipment, including 3D printing in metal.

FUNDING

Money to address workforce development issues is available in Fulton County. “We receive federal and state funding to oversee workforce development in Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie counties,” Papa said. Funds are available for employers looking to train employees for in-demand jobs as well as individuals who want additional training to advance or change their careers.



Davis points out that the New York State Department of Labor has different funding streams that employers can tap into in order to develop the skilled workforce they require. For example, if an employer has the need for an employee to pursue a substantial number of college credits, there is an apprenticeship program that provides \$5,000 for an employee to use at any institution in the State University of New York (SUNY) system.

SUNY’s apprentice programs are a case in point. Backed by \$9 million in state funding, the SUNY Apprenticeship Program is developing 2,000 pre-apprentices and Registered Apprentices in the fields of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology/ cybersecurity/artificial intelligence and other non-construction, high-need fields. Another 3,200

continued

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apprentices receive training through the New York College Apprenticeship Network, which is federally funded with a \$7.9 million grant.

Employers benefit from having apprentices through the Empire State Apprenticeship Tax Credit and the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant. In addition, having apprentices lowers an employer’s hiring costs.

FMCC works with employers to make taking classes as easy as possible for their employees. For example, when GlobalFoundries, a leading semiconductor manufacturer based in the Capital Region, wanted some of its employees to earn their associate degrees, the college instituted a tuition reimbursement program where employees do not have to pay up front, facilitating the acquisition of new professional skills.

COLLABORATING WITH EMPLOYERS

FMS collaborates with employers to help them understand the issues that are facing today’s workforce and how employers can collaborate with employees to create solutions that work for both parties. For example, with the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers are finding childcare challenges with hybrid school schedules and quarantine periods. “We’re rethinking what the day looks like,” said Goldswer, who also serves as the Human Resources Director for Townsend Leather in Johnstown. “We have to be flexible in our scheduling in ways we never were before.”

Transportation is another issue for some workers. Employers who have instituted shuttle services for workers have seen a great deal of success in attracting and retaining workers when they have a reliable way to get to and from work.

The FCCRG’s Workforce Development Program’s sessions continue to be a place where employers can voice their needs and develop collaborative solutions with the FCCRG. For example, recent meetings identified the need for student awareness of workforce opportunities and a New York State program that will be implemented by 2024 to address this.

The group is also focusing on ways to develop career competencies and professional skills for students and



adults after high school and advanced education. Other focus areas include connecting businesses with students and higher visibility for available jobs in Fulton County. The FCCRG is planning to create videos that introduce students and parents to employment opportunities in the area.

Economic development organizations and educational institutions in the county have a “can-do” attitude when it comes to addressing the needs of the county’s employers. It remains a top priority, and the FCCRG is ready to assist in finding workforce development solutions.



Fulton County Loves Nano

If your business supplies the high-tech industry, then Fulton County is the place to be.

The county is situated in the heart of New York’s nanotechnology triangle. NY Creates, a world-leading organization for research, development, and commercialization, is the southeastern point. GlobalFoundries, a leader in semiconductor design, development, and fabrication, represents the northeastern point. Completing the triangle an hour west of Fulton County is Wolfspeed, a global leader in silicon carbide technology and production. As these three organizations expand, so do the opportunities for suppliers. Fulton County is ripe with shovel-ready sites and buildings to accommodate businesses that provide the infrastructure for this growing segment of the global economy, and the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth’s team of specialists is there to assist through the whole process.



“Fulton County is right in the middle,” said LaMar Hill, who works in the NY Creates president’s office. “The supply chain of this industry usually locates close in proximity to where research and

development happens. I believe there’s a tremendous opportunity to provide supply-chain support for this industry in our region.”

According to the Semiconductor Industry Association, the industry is projected to generate \$452 billion in revenue worldwide. The U.S. market’s share of that is about 47 percent.

Hill describes NY Creates as “a giant research and development mecca to support the semiconductor industry,” as it works collaboratively with countries across the globe in support of their work in the industry.

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Fulton County Loves Nano

“All companies that build integrative circuits can come and do research. It’s the only facility of our kind in the United States,” Hill said. NY Creates has an annual operating budget of \$300 million and 500 employees who manage the research facility.

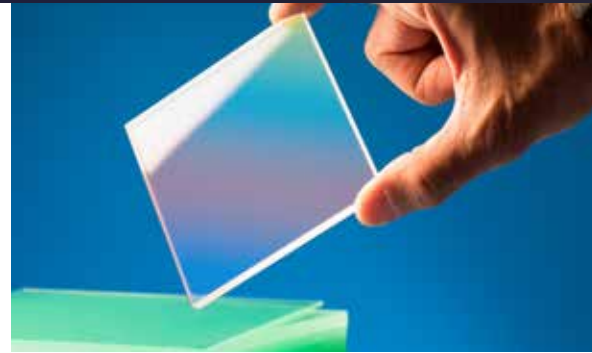
That facility is about to get bigger, as NY Creates recently invested \$15 billion in its Albany site. The organization has been growing rapidly over the past three decades and continues to do so, drawing high-tech companies to the region.

“Wolfspeed, Inc. in Utica, next to the State University of New York Polytechnic Institute’s Oneida County campus, is a leader in the production of silicon carbide chips, which will drive the next generation in power semiconductors”, according to Wolfspeed’s CEO Gregg Lowe.

The company has expanded significantly in its leading-edge role in the shift from silicon to silicon carbide. It has a device pipeline total of over \$15 billion and plans for an increased production capacity 30 times larger than its previous facility.

GlobalFoundries is also expanding. In July 2021, the company announced that it would invest \$1 billion in the expansion of its most advanced manufacturing facility in upstate New York. According to Peter Benyon, Fab 8 Vice President and General Manager of GlobalFoundries, the expansion will address the global chip shortage and expand manufacturing capacity by providing new tools and equipment to fill out existing space in its Fab 8 clean room. “This new capacity will serve the growing demand for secure, feature-rich chips needed by high-growth markets including automotive, 5G connectivity, and the Internet of Things,” Benyon said. “The facility will also support national security requirements and ensure a secure supply chain.” Leadership at GlobalFoundries also decided during 2021 to move its headquarters from California to New York State. This move brings CEO Tom Caulfield back to his roots where he spent 16 years in East Fishkill, NY.

The expansion at GlobalFoundries will create over 1,000 new high-tech jobs and indirect jobs, including high-paying construction jobs, Benyon said. A Georgetown University study on the economic impact of GlobalFoundries Fab8 on the Upstate



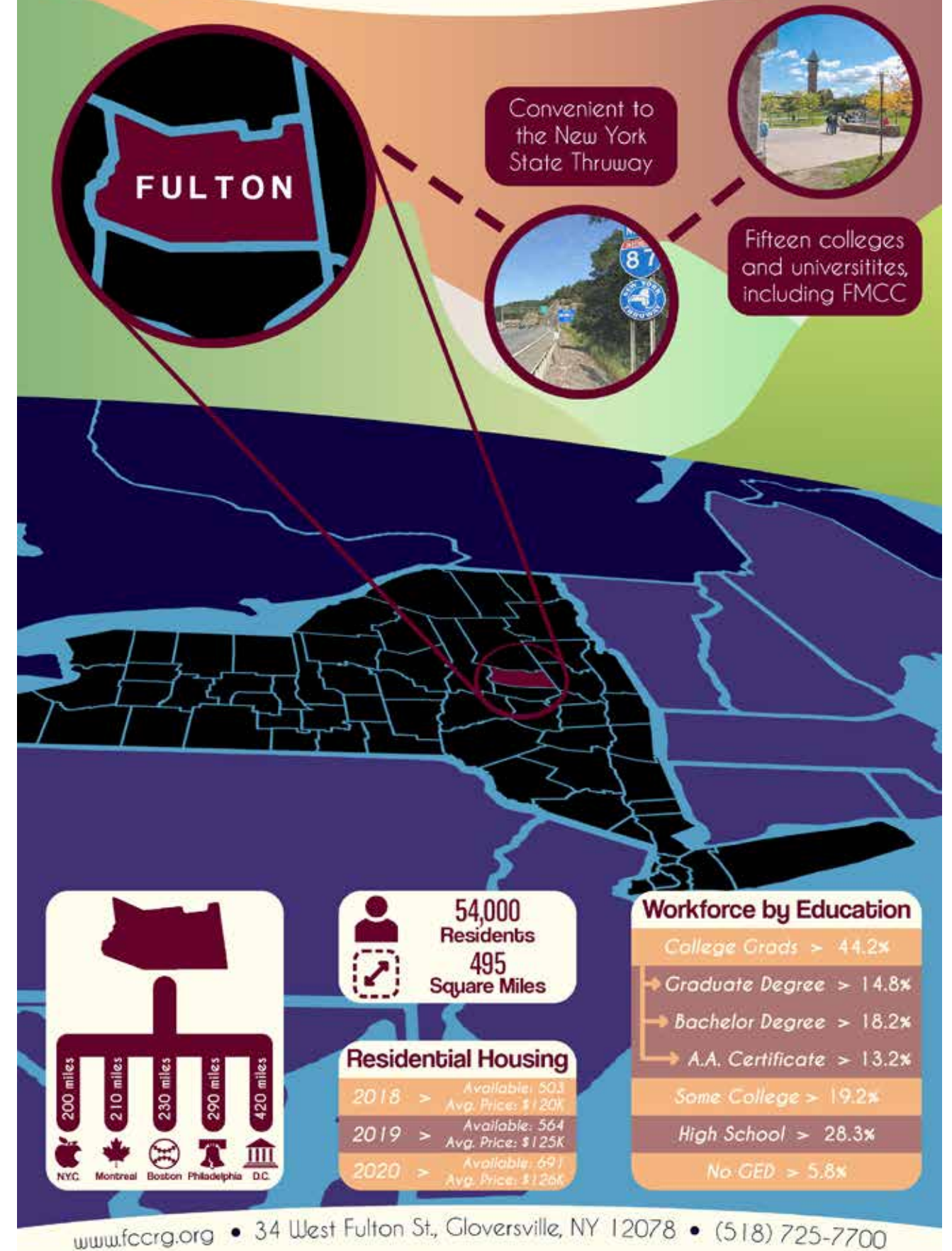
New York Region concluded that the company created over 20,000 induced and indirect jobs. “We are confident that Fulton County shares in that economic success with more opportunity to follow in the coming years,” Benyon said.

Expansion in the high-tech industry surrounding Fulton County positions the county as a prime place of opportunity for businesses that produce goods and offer services that high-tech companies need to complete their work. “I believe the entire region, if it chooses to enable itself, could be part of supporting the supply chain necessary to support the primary industry,” Hill said.



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