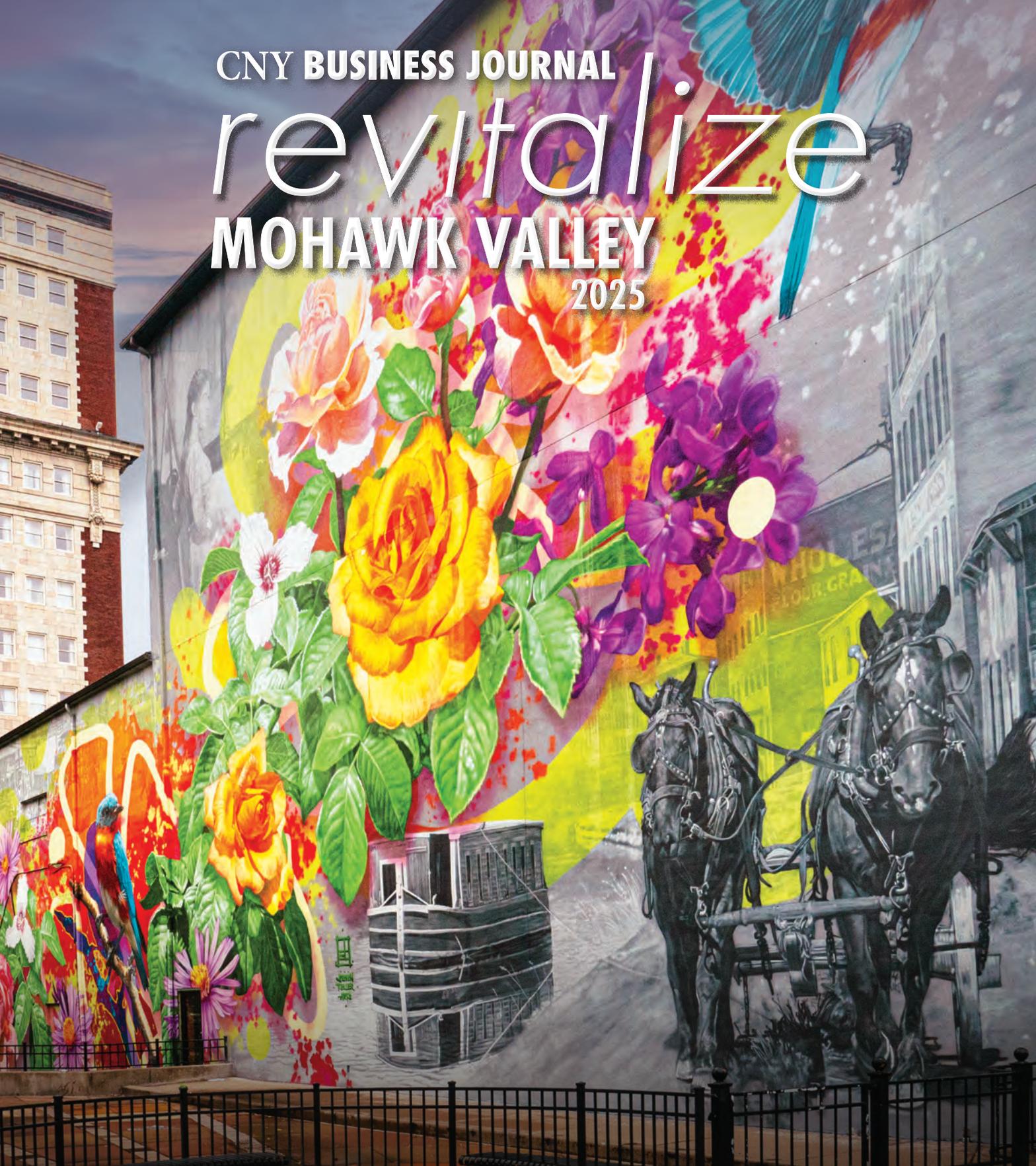


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As we continue to grow, ANDRO is deepening its roots in the Mohawk Valley and expanding outward into regional, national, and global markets. Our mission remains sharply focused on developing "Beyond 5G" (B5G) capabilities, next-generation wireless technologies that are poised to redefine the telecommunications landscape. Our commitment to B5G development is not only reshaping what's possible in wireless communications, but is also catalyzing efforts to establish a new, federated regional center for B5G research, testing, and commercialization at Griffiss Park. This effort reinforces our belief that innovation thrives through collaboration, and that our region can and should be a driving force in the next telecommunications revolution.

Equally important to our technological mission is ANDRO's dedication to STEM leadership, education, and workforce preparedness. We believe that the success of the future lies in the talent we cultivate today. That's why we actively support and participate in programs that inspire young minds, empower students with real-world experiences, and prepare our workforce to meet the demands of tomorrow's emerging industries. Whether through partnerships with educational institutions, mentorship programs, or hands-on learning initiatives, we see our role as both innovator and educator.

ANDRO also embraces a forward-leaning business model that integrates artificial intelligence, smart manufacturing, the semiconductor industry, and quantum science into its long-term strategic vision. These emerging technologies are not only reshaping global markets; they are transforming the way we communicate, compute, innovate, and create. What we do today in advanced, secure telecommunications technologies is the bedrock upon which we build future capabilities across these scientific and technological frontiers.

Our success is steady, but never insular. We want the Mohawk Valley and the greater Central New York region to grow with us, to benefit from the jobs we create, the innovations we produce, and the partnerships we foster. As I said last year, our continued growth and reinvestment in this region, working hand-in-hand with our strategic partners in business, academia, and government, remains our roadmap for success. At ANDRO, we do not just imagine the future. We engineer it and we invite our community to be a part of it.



Dr. Andrew L. Drozd, President/CEO
ANDRO Computational Solutions, LLC



At Nascentia Health, the Mohawk Valley isn't just part of our service area, it's home. Many of our team members, myself included, have raised families here. We've built careers, friendships, and roots in this community, and we're proud to continue growing with it.

For more than a decade, we've delivered in-home nursing, therapies, and supportive care to residents across the region. Our mission has always been centered on helping people live independently and with dignity and now, we're expanding that vision.

The Nascentia Neighborhood Project represents our largest investment in the Mohawk Valley to date and with it, a deep commitment to helping this region grow and thrive. It's more than a development; it's a reflection of our belief in the future of this community and the people who make it special. We're excited to be part of this next chapter, creating spaces and services that support health, connection, and continued momentum across the region.

We believe in this place. We believe in its people. And we're here to stay, investing in a stronger, healthier Mohawk Valley for generations to come.

Kate Rolf
President & CEO
Nascentia Health





Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) is proud to be one of the catalysts in the resurgence of the City of Utica and the Mohawk Valley region.

In addition to providing medical care and treatment, MVHS is a major economic driver for our region – generating more than \$2 billion in economic activity in 2024.

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 - Generated \$151 million in tax dollars by MVHS spending and payroll.
- Invested \$134 million in community initiatives to keep our neighbors healthy and well.

We look forward to continuing our contributions to the Mohawk Valley's progress.



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On the cover: A view of the mural in downtown Utica. Photograph courtesy of Zoey Advertising

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Officials on April 22 formally break ground on the new \$1.2 billion Chobani manufacturing facility in Rome, which promises to create more than 1,000 jobs.

PHOTO CREDIT: DARREN MCGEE/ OFFICE OF GOV. KATHY HOCHUL FLICKR



A Moment of Momentum: Building the Future of the Mohawk Valley

As we advance into the second half of 2025, our region finds itself at a pivotal moment, characterized by both challenges and opportunities. At Mohawk Valley EDGE, we are working with urgency and optimism to ensure that our region not only navigates at this moment but also emerges stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive than ever. Our team is dedicated to redeveloping sites and launching innovative workforce-development initiatives. We are committed to building the necessary infrastructure — both physical and human — that will drive the Mohawk Valley’s next chapter of growth.

Chobani at Griffiss: A \$1.2 billion catalyst for regional growth

One of the most significant developments in the recent history of the Mohawk Valley is officially underway. Chobani is set to begin construction on a \$1.2 billion, 1.4 million-square-foot natural-food manufacturing facility at the Griffiss Triangle Site in Rome. This project represents the most significant investment in natural-food production in American history and is expected to create more than 1,000



VIEWPOINT: SHAWNA PAPALE

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high-quality jobs.

The new facility will have the capacity to produce more than 1 billion pounds of dairy products annually across up to 28 production lines, processing more than 12 million pounds of milk each day at full capacity. Chobani plans to purchase an es-

timated 6 billion pounds of raw milk annually from New York dairy farms, up from the 1 billion pounds it currently sources. This expansion will provide a significant boost to the state’s dairy economy.

The Oneida County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) continues to be a driving force in the region’s economic development, playing a key role in major projects like Chobani’s expansion at Griffiss. In addition to supporting industrial growth, the IDA is also addressing the region’s housing needs by backing mixed-use redevelopment and exploring innovative financing tools to expand workforce and housing options.

For nearly three decades, the Griffiss Local Development Corporation (GLDC) has led the transformation of the former Griffiss Air Force Base into a thriving business and technology park. With more than \$1 billion invested to date — and more on the way — Griffiss stands as one of the nation’s most successful base-reuse projects.

► MOHAWK VALLEY EDGE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 43



A group of kids enjoying their time visiting the new Utica Children's Museum.

PHOTO CREDIT: UTICA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

New Utica Children's Museum welcomes kids of all ages

BY ERIC REINHARDT
Journal Staff | ereinhardt@cnybj.com

UTICA — More than three months after opening to the public, the new Utica Children's Museum provides activities and educational opportunities for the region's youngest citizens.

Besides its galleries and exhibits, the museum currently has a weekly garden club that started July 23 and continues through Aug. 27 with sessions on Wednesdays at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

"We're going to have a different topic every week," says Meghan Fraser McGrogan, executive director of the Utica Children's Museum. "It's just a great way to educate kids on how they can connect with nature, and we'll be talking about all different types of gardening and planting topics."

McGrogan spoke with CNYBJ in a July 9 phone interview.

Located within the Integrated Community Alternatives Network (ICAN) Family Resource Center at 106 Memorial Parkway, the "completely reimagined" museum includes a 4,000-square-foot rotunda and a renovated 10,000-square-foot second floor, which has six galleries and 60 custom-fabricated exhibits, the office of Gov. Kathy Hochul said in an April 29 announcement about the museum's opening.

The new museum is part of a larger project of ICAN — the development of a first-of-its-kind Family Resource Center that houses ICAN family-based programs, a community room available for other organizations, and the museum.

With more than 60 years of history, the Utica Children's Museum is one of

the oldest children's museums in the country.

The new \$8 million Utica Children's Museum is part of an overall \$14 million ICAN Family Resource Center project, Hochul's office said.

In addition to the governor's grant of \$750,000 from state capital-funding sources to support the Utica Children's Museum, Empire State Development provided more than \$1 million in capital funding through the Market New York program. The New York State Council on the Arts also provided a \$300,000 capital grant.

New York State Assemblymember Marianne Buttenschon (D-Marcy) also secured an additional \$125,000 in funding through the fiscal year 2024 state budget,

► MUSEUM, CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

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Rome Health's capital project continues after opening of new ICU, surgical center

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

ROME — Rome Health has completed two components of its capital project with its new, 9-bed intensive-care unit (ICU) and the opening of the new Kaplan Center for Surgical Services.

The new surgery center opened ahead of schedule, following final approval from the New York State Department of Health (DOH) on July 3. Rome Health also received final approval from the DOH to open its new ICU on June 18.

Phases II and III of the capital project — which include the renovation of former operating rooms and construction of modern clinical support areas — remain on track for completion in 2026, Rome Health said in the June 18 announcement about opening the ICU.

The health-care provider saw the opening of the ICU as “marking a major milestone in the hospital’s continued transformation of community-based healthcare.”

The new ICU is part of the hospital’s \$45.7 million capital-improvement project to modernize surgical and critical care services. The new main entrance also opened June 18 with expanded parking for patients and visitors.

About the ICU

All patients were successfully transitioned June 18 from the hospital’s previous ICU —constructed in 1969 — into the “modern, purpose-built” facility designed to support advanced critical care, Rome Health said. The health system conducted a tabletop exercise in advance to ensure a smooth transition for patients and team members.

“Replacing our aging ICU was the next capital investment needed to ensure local access to high-quality critical care services for patients and their families,” AnneMarie Czyz, president and CEO of Rome Health, said in the announcement. “We are incredibly grateful to the City of Rome and the generous donors whose support brought this vision to life. Together, we are delivering the best care out there — right here.”

Besides her role as CEO, Czyz is also a registered nurse.

The new ICU has private rooms equipped with the latest

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Registered nurse Maureen Fischer, Rome Health robotics coordinator, prepares for the opening of the Kaplan Center for Surgical Services, which opened July 7, ahead of schedule. PHOTO CREDIT: ROME HEALTH

critical-care technology, including ventilators, IV pumps, monitoring systems, and specialty beds to reduce the risk of pressure injuries.

Each room has “family-friendly” accommodations, including sleeper sofas

and seating to encourage family involvement, which research shows can “significantly improve patient outcomes,” Rome Health contended.

The unit also has private, handicapped-accessible restrooms in each

room, which is an upgrade from the shared facilities in the previous ICU, per the announcement.

The new ICU also has specialty rooms to meet the needs of patients of size and those with behavioral-health challenges, along with advanced ventilation systems to support infection control and protect vulnerable patients.

In addition, Rome Health says the new unit has natural daylight and “thoughtful design to support a comfortable and calming healing environment that may reduce length of stay.”

“At Rome Health, we are transforming community-based healthcare to ensure that patients have convenient access to the highest level of care in facilities that match the exceptional quality our team delivers,” Czyz said.

About the Kaplan Center

The Kaplan Center complements the hospital’s new 9-bed ICU, Rome Health said in a July 7 announcement.

The Kaplan Center for Surgical Services is named in honor of Charles and Florence Kaplan, whose landmark \$5 million gift stands as the largest donation in Rome Health’s history.

► ROME HEALTH, CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

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Grant program benefits Oneida County small businesses

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

ROME — Mohawk Valley EDGE, in cooperation with Oneida County, offers a Microenterprise Grant Program to help new and existing small businesses take on projects that lead to job creation.

Available to Oneida County businesses outside of the cities of Utica and Rome with five or fewer employees, the program provides reimbursable grants of up to \$35,000. Projects must create at least one new full-time job.

“It’s best used for investment in new equipment, perhaps inventory, or if your business is looking to implement a new technology,” says Mohawk Valley EDGE VP of Economic Development Tim Fitzgerald.

The grants can be used to cover up to 90 percent of the cost of projects, with the remaining 10 percent coming from an equity contribution from the grant recipient.

“That can be a sticking point,” Fitzgerald notes, as some businesses may not have the capital to invest. Fortunately, there are options for funding to help out such as the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District. “One of their programs is bridge lending for programs just like this.”

While businesses in all industries are eligible if they meet the criteria, the program prioritizes businesses in manufacturing and agribusiness. In the last funding round, which awarded \$170,000 to six businesses, five of those businesses were farming related, Fitzgerald notes.

One of those businesses went on to create just over two full-time jobs from the funding, exceeding the one-job goal. “It’s nice when you have those overperformers,” Fitzgerald notes.



Collins Farm and Creamery in Rome is one of the businesses that have utilized the Microenterprise Grant Program from Mohawk Valley EDGE and Oneida County. The program awards grants of up to \$35,000 for projects to help small businesses grow. Collins Farm used the grant to add milk processing, packaging, and refrigeration equipment to the farm.

PHOTO CREDIT: COLLINS FARM AND CREAMERY FACEBOOK PAGE

In addition to creating that job, businesses that receive funding must stay in business for two years after receiving the grant. Other businesses that have benefited from the Microenterprise Grant Program include a music studio and a business creating a technology platform to connect refugee/immigrant chefs to opportunities.

“There are really neat things this program has been able to facilitate,” Fitzgerald says.

Oneida County applies for the program funding from the New York State Office

of Community Renewal, and Mohawk Valley EDGE administers the program on behalf of the county.

EDGE is now accepting applications for the sixth round of funding through the program, and the funding must be committed by May 2026. The funding is awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Mohawk Valley EDGE works closely with other organizations, such as the Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center, to make sure businesses and entrepreneurs are aware of the funding. ■

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Arc Herkimer plans for first leadership change in 20 years

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

HERKIMER — Arc Herkimer will have a new leader in the new year when Kevin Crosley retires after leading the organization for 20 years.

Lorene Bass, a 26-year employee, will take over the top slot in 2026 with a focus on building upon what Crosley began and continuing to grow the organization, which provides an array of services to people with disabilities.

“What we’ve done has been great,” Bass says. Arc Herkimer has made tremendous strides in promoting inclusion and breaking stereotypes. “I truly believe our community is more accepting than ever.”

She’s excited to continue that mission as Arc Herkimer’s first female leader in more than 40 years. “I know I have some creative, innovative people [on staff],” she says. “I’m excited to be able to grow with that team and grow in our community.”

Bass has already notched some achievements in her current

► ARC, CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

◄ Arc Herkimer President/CEO Kevin Crosley, left, will pass the reins to Lorene Bass when he retires at the end of this year.

PHOTO CREDIT: ARC HERKIMER

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The Keys to the Mohawk Valley's Resurgence

I am often asked what happened that transformed the Mohawk Valley or more specifically what was Oneida County's role in its resurgence. While there are many factors that have impacted our growth over the past several years, there are some significant projects and actions that played a major role in our growth.

The one area that I constantly point to is the financial strength of our government. The ability to borrow only when necessary and to build up a solid fund balance allows flexibility and investment in community improvement. Without a strong credit rating no government or business can properly move forward.

Our financial vigor, as well as our economic effectiveness, received a huge lift when we completed the historic agree-

ment with the Oneida Indian Nation. The 2013 agreement set the stage for wide-ranging economic development and established a new revenue source to provide relief to our property taxpayers. This pact allowed us to hold the tax levy at the same amount for the last 12 years. Coupled with spending restrictions and improved management efficiencies, our county's financial health improved substantially.

In the same time frame, working with Robert Esche and his investors we were able to attract an AHL (American Hockey League) franchise to locate in Utica at the historic Memorial Auditorium (now Adirondack Bank Center) that immediately charged the area with new energy. Hockey had taken on a resurgence in our area because of Utica University's



ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.
ONEIDA COUNTY EXECUTIVE

team that was attracting great crowds and made the move even more exciting. The two complemented each other and showed the community that we could compete in this marketplace across larger metropolitan areas such as Syracuse and Albany and injected a new vibe into the county. It is amazing what a successful sports/entertainment enterprise can do

► PICENTE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 41

An advertisement for Birch Wealth Management. On the left, three women are smiling and posing together. The woman on the left is standing with her arms crossed, wearing a black dress. The woman in the middle is standing behind her, also in a black top. The woman on the right is sitting in a chair, wearing a black top and brown pants. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting. On the right side of the ad, the text reads: "LIVE BOLDLY TODAY, Plan wisely for tomorrow." Below this is the Birch Wealth Management logo, which consists of a stylized green leaf icon and the text "BIRCH WEALTH management". At the bottom, there is a dark purple banner with white text: "Wealth Management | Investment Management | Financial Planning" and "Call for a FREE CONSULTATION BirchWealth.com - 315-795-2005". Below the banner, the address "205 West Court Street, Rome, NY 13440" is listed.



New York Gov. Kathy Hochul (center of photo) on Feb. 6 announced three regions, including the Mohawk Valley, to help lead the ON-RAMP program. ON-RAMP is short for One Network for Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships. Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) in Utica will lead a regional ON-RAMP workforce-development center. MVCC President Randall VanWagoner (right of and behind Hochul) attended the announcement in Albany.

IMAGE CREDIT: MIKE GROLL VIA HOCHUL FLICKR

MVCC to lead ON-RAMP workforce-development center

BY ERIC REINHARDT

Journal Staff | ereinhardt@cnybj.com

UTICA — Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) will lead a regional ON-RAMP center by redeveloping the Science and Technology building at MVCC's Utica campus.

Gov. Kathy Hochul on Feb. 6 announced that the state selected Mohawk Valley, Capital Region, and Finger Lakes to advance to the planning stage of the \$200 million One Network for Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships (ON-RAMP) program.

The center will offer training for in-demand skills on low-cost, no-cost, and work-and-learn models; retention strategies to engage marginalized and underserved populations and support completion; and employer integration to facilitate direct job placement. MVCC will lead a consortium of six core organizations with a "proven track record" of workforce innovation.

MVCC's Free Fast Track program and MACNY's Real-Life Rosies and Advanced 2 Apprenticeship programs, both successful direct-placement programs, will be housed at the ON-RAMP center and provide additional capacity for these programs to increase enrollment.

"We are so grateful to the governor and her staff for this

incredible opportunity to work even more closely with our workforce partners in the region to significantly scale opportunities that connect people to quality jobs and enhance the overall vibrancy of the communities we serve," Randall VanWagoner, president of MVCC, said in the state's announcement.

The new facility is "strategically located" near major employers Danfoss, Indium and Wolfspeed; across the street from the city's high school; and directly adjacent to a "high-diversity" neighborhood, Hochul's office said.

In addition to MVCC, The Center for Economic Growth (CEG) will lead the Capital Region's ON-RAMP center, while Monroe Community College will lead the Finger Lakes ON-RAMP center in partnership with RochesterWorks.

The regions join Central New York, in which Syracuse was established as the program's flagship location. They'll create a network of "high-impact" workforce-development centers to connect New Yorkers with careers in high-growth, advanced-manufacturing industries.



► MVCC, CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

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Staff from the New York UAS test site exhibited at AUVSI XPO 2025, which was held in Houston, Texas back in May. AUVSI, which is short for Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International, was the host for the event, which attracted those in the autonomous-systems industry.

PHOTO CREDIT:
AX ENTERPRIZE

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New York UAS test site exhibits at key industry trade show

BY ERIC REINHARDT

Journal Staff | ereinhardt@cnybj.com

ROME — The New York UAS test site announced that it was among the exhibitors and participants at AUVSI XPO 2025, described as the “premier gathering” for the autonomous-systems industry.

The Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) hosted the event, which was held from May 19-22 in Houston, Texas.

The New York UAS Test Site at Griffiss International Airport in Rome is one of just

seven Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-designated unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) test sites in the country — and the only one operating on an active airport. A UAS includes a drone and equipment used to control its flight. A drone is also referred to in the industry as an unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV.

This year’s AUVSI XPO 2025 theme, “Converging Autonomy: Systems, Safety, and Scale,” “strongly” aligned with the mission of the New York UAS test site, the announcement said. In its exhibit, the New York UAS test site highlighted its

facilities, airspace, and BVLOS (beyond visual line of sight) flight corridors for UAS and advanced air mobility (AAM) applications.

Mary Carol (MC) Chruscicki, co-founder and chief technology officer at AX Enterprize, LLC, of Yorkville, also spoke on several conference panels including, “Your Best Test Option: FAA-Designated UAS Test Sites” on May 19. The New York UAS Test Site is owned by Oneida County and operated in collaboration with AX Enterprize

► UAS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 41



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Rome preps for Legacy Center

Named in honor of Rome native, fallen Syracuse police officer Michael Jensen

BY ERIC REINHARDT

Journal Staff | ereinhardt@cnybj.com

ROME — After completing a feasibility study, Rome is moving forward with plans for the Michael E. Jensen Recreation and Civic Center on Floyd Avenue.

The facility will be named after Rome native Michael Jensen, a Syracuse police officer who killed in the line of duty in during an incident in the Onondaga County town of Salina in April 2024.

Rome Mayor Jeffrey Lanigan outlined plans for the new center during his State of the City address on Tuesday, May 27 at the Griffiss Institute.

Plans call for building the center on property that many thought would become a new Rome YMCA until the organization's board of directors scrapped

the plan in favor of renovating its existing building.

"Their decision not to proceed leaves a major gap in services and opportunities that our residents were counting on, a gap we're now determined to fill," Lanigan said in his remarks.

The new center — which will also be known as the Legacy Center — will serve as a "lasting tribute" to those who have shaped and served the City of Rome.

"At its heart will be Legacy Hall where community members will have the opportunity to honor individuals whose knowledge, talent, and service have left an enduring mark on the City of Rome," Lanigan said.

Kimberly Rogers, Mayor Lanigan's chief of staff, told CNYBJ in a July 9 email, "We are currently working with



a consultant on a preliminary design for the project and have not yet selected a contractor."

The Legacy Center will include the largest, single indoor turf facility in the region, capable of supporting 11-on-11 soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, and other

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A rendering of the Legacy Center, which will be named in honor of Rome native Michael Jensen, a Syracuse police officer who was killed in the line of duty in April 2024.

IMAGE CREDIT: MRB GROUP VIA CITY OF ROME



field sports in all four seasons, “solidifying Rome’s position as a premier regional recreation community,” Lanigan contended.

The Rome mayor also noted that Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente, Jr. had announced in his State of the County address the development

of the Runway, a major indoor complex at Griffiss Business & Technology Park, which will be designed as a large scale, regional tourism destination.

“County Executive Picente and I are united in our commitment to ensure that these two exciting projects complement

and support each other with each offering unique programming and strengthening the other,” Lanigan said.

The Legacy Center will be a multi-purpose facility that provides the Rome community with “premier” field space for local organizations to use year-round. It will ensure accommodation for all types of sports and events, making the new facility a “greater asset to the community while encouraging success and financial stability,” Lanigan said in his remarks.

Sports is a major focus for the facility, but it will also be a place for indoor movies, fairs, game nights, and civic events. It will feature many amenities that residents have requested, including an indoor walking track, a fitness center, and community space for public use.

Through discussions with both ICAN and Oneida County, the City of Rome sees the “critical need” for child-care services in our area. So, in addition to providing typical programming and services, Lanigan also said the Legacy Center will be home to a 10,000-square-foot child-care center.

“This is going to continue to help to serve the diverse needs of Rome families. Forward-thinking investments like this place Rome in the best possible position for the future,” Lanigan said. ■

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St. Luke's reuse plans slowly but surely moving forward

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

NEW HARTFORD — It's been almost two years since St. Luke's Hospital closed and the new Wynn Hospital opened.

While people may be wondering what is to become of the former hospital's campus, government and economic-development officials are still hard at work figuring out those next steps.



Dubbed Reimagine St. Luke's, the project is a cooperative effort between Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS), which still owns the former St. Luke's Hospital property, along with Oneida County, the town of New Hartford, and Mohawk Valley EDGE.

Throughout 2024, organizers held a series of workshops with the community and various stakeholders to gather individuals' ideas for reusing the property, which spans 128 acres.

"We had a ton of engagement from the public meetings," CJ Hanrahan, VP of marketing and business engagement at Mohawk Valley EDGE, says. Working with Fu Wilmers

Design, organizers took in all that information and evaluated community wants versus community needs.

The result was a master concept plan, presented last October.

"The master plan outlined a diverse type of neighborhood that had mixed-use housing, green space, park space," Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. says. It also included space for light manufacturing, retail, or even a hotel, with much of the development focusing on the 53 acres where the hospital and multiple other buildings sit.

"The layout of the site presents a lot of opportunity," Picente says. The location is also a prime one, situated near several major roadways with easy access into Utica, Rome, and neighboring suburbs. It's also right across the street from Utica University.

Currently, Reimagine St. Luke's is finalizing a facilities study that took a look at the existing buildings and evaluated whether they could be reused or torn down.

Unfortunately, the county executive says, the best course of action appears to be tearing the buildings down to make way for new development.

"We're looking at upwards of \$10 million to \$15 million in demolition costs," he adds. "There's not a lot of money out there for demolition."

While the main hospital isn't viable for reuse, there are

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three other buildings that are feasible, Hanrahan notes. Mohawk Valley EDGE is also exploring funding sources for demolition costs including U.S. Environmental Protection Agency loans or grants as well as U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grants.

Oneida County is working to develop initiatives and incentives for new housing development, which Picente hopes will make the property attractive to developers. The plan calls for 450 housing units, which will help Oneida County begin to address its need for 6,000 units over the next decade, according to a housing inventory study conducted last year.

The goal is to have all necessary studies completed so any potential developer has all the necessary information, Hanrahan says.

“It’s an exciting opportunity for our generation to build the next thing,” he adds. ■

► **Reimagine St. Luke’s, the cooperative effort to outline reuse potentials for the former hospital site, features a master concept plan drafted after a series of meetings with the community and various stakeholders. The plan calls for a mix of housing, commercial space, and park space.**

PHOTO CREDIT: REIMAGINE ST. LUKE’S WEBSITE



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The Utica University Nexus Center, while designed as a sports venue, also hosts a number of other events, including The Home Show, held annually.

PHOTO CREDIT: THE HOME SHOW

Nexus Center fulfills promise of drawing crowds, boosting economy

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

UTICA — If you build it, they will come. That was the premise behind the Utica University Nexus Center, and it has more than proven true.

The 169,440-square-foot facility at 400 Oriskany St. West opened in November 2022 with a goal to attract sports tournaments. It has done that in spades, including hosting the 2024 International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) Women's World Championship. The international ice-hockey tournament, which included 10 national women's hockey teams and spanned 12 days, drew total attendance of more than 68,000 across the 29 games played. The event was the highest-ever attended IIHF Women's World Championship in the United States.

The tournament generated an estimated \$3.4 million in spending around the area by those who attended.

The Utica University Nexus Center,

which features three 200-foot by 85-foot multipurpose playing surfaces that can be utilized as ice sheets or turf, hosts more than just hockey, says Chief Revenue Officer Keith Veronesi. "It's a multi-function recreation space, not just hockey."

The Nexus Center is also attached via walkway to the Adirondack Bank Center at the Utica Auditorium next door, adding a fourth surface.

"We just held the American Cornhole League here," Veronesi says. That event drew more than 600 people and aired on ESPN.

The Nexus Center has also hosted a number of expos including The Home Show and an antique clock show.

"The building is just about at capacity most of the time," Veronesi says, with the summer months being especially busy with events like indoor soccer.

It's a good problem to have but can come with challenges, he notes. The Nexus Center will continue to work with

USA Hockey for events, which means the organization books venue time far in advance to guarantee the location. That makes the venue less available for other events.

"We're becoming a destination to these types of events," Veronesi says. The facility itself is a draw, but so is its location, situated near the NYS Thruway and easy to get to. It offers lots of hotels, restaurants, and other nearby activities that help make the Nexus Center a popular choice.

Located in downtown Utica, the Nexus Center joins other recent projects including the Wynn Hospital and the City of Utica's Harbor Point development that are revitalizing the downtown district.

"I think the Nexus Center has been pivotal to the revitalization," Veronesi contends.

The center employs a small full-time operations team and brings in more staff to turn over the building before and after events. ■



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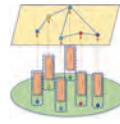
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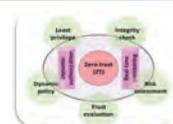
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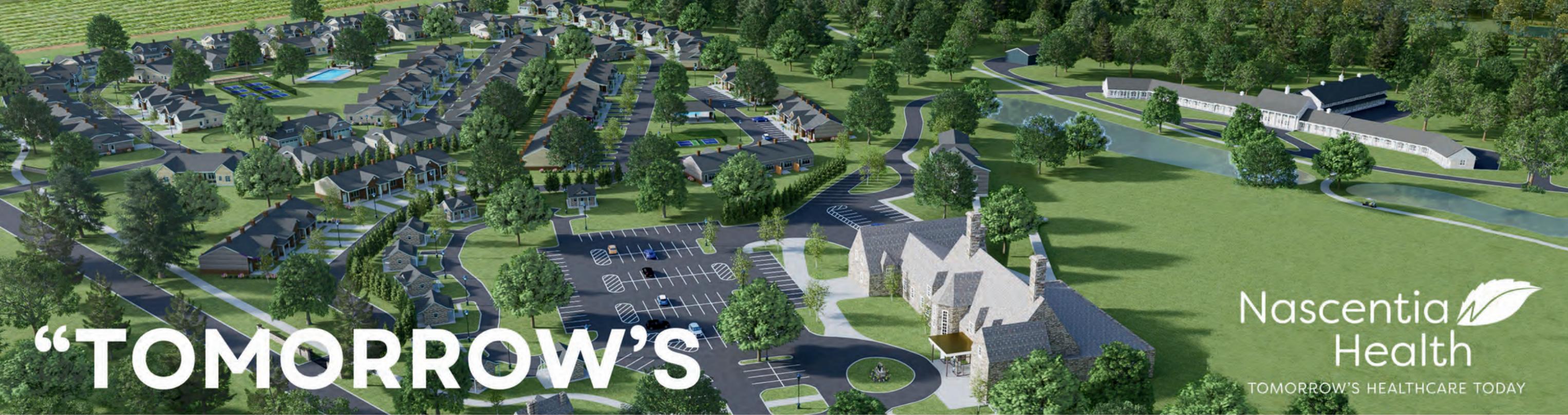
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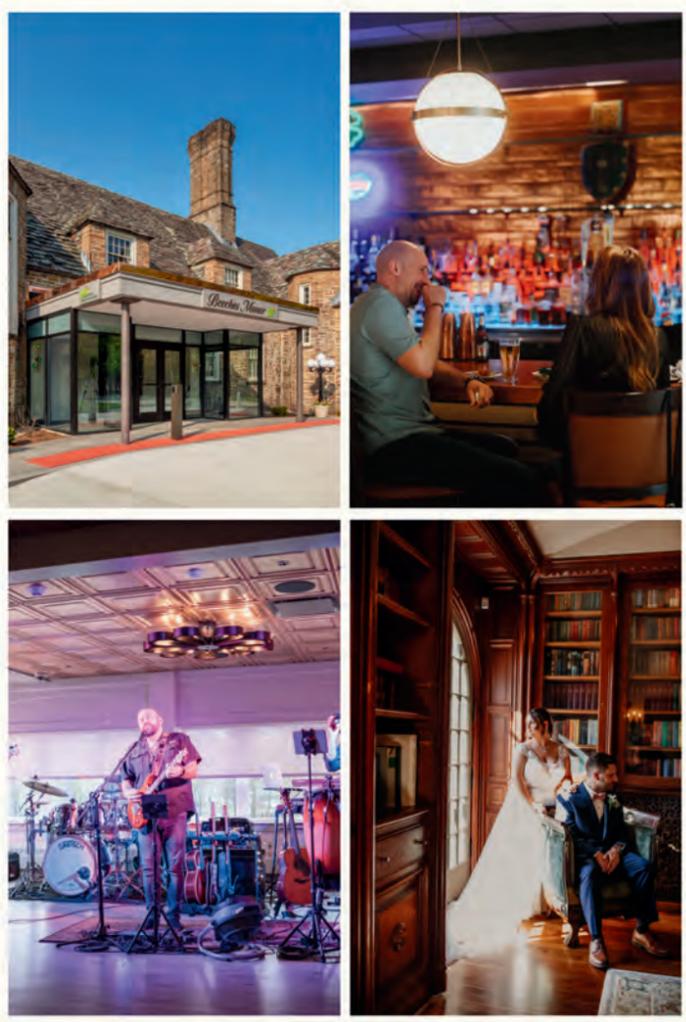


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Retiring leader reflects on MVHS tenure

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

UTICA — The main thing that drew Darlene Stromstad to Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) as its new CEO seven years ago is also one of the accomplishments she's most proud of from her time leading the regional health system with about \$650 million in annual revenue and more than 3,000 full-time employees.



That signature accomplishment was opening the new Wynn Hospital in downtown Utica in October 2023.

During her first health-care job in North Dakota, Stromstad had a front-row seat as the CEO of that organization was planning to build a new hospital. "Being part of that transformation, I knew I would always be involved in transformative health care," she recalls.

While she feels privileged to be part of that process in the Mohawk Valley, the journey was not without its ups and downs.

"Some of the obstacles, you expect along the way," she says. "You expect you're going to find them. It was a little more personal in the attacks here."

Despite the negative feedback from some, MVHS and Stromstad successfully oversaw construction of the new Wynn Hospital during the COVID pandemic and celebrated its opening nearly two years ago.

"That gives us the opportunity to look up and out, to make progress and improve health-care delivery," she says of the new hospital.

Now, Stromstad is looking ahead in a new direction — retirement. She announced earlier this year that she will retire at the end of 2025.

With retirement ahead of her, Stromstad reflects on some of the things she's most proud of during her tenure at MVHS besides opening the Wynn Hospital.

During the pandemic, while the Wynn was under construction, MVHS's St. Elizabeth Medical Center and St. Luke's Hospital served as hub hospitals to serve the community. That meant on top of dealing with pandemic illness, MVHS also served in other ways during the pandemic, including as a vaccination site.

"People really stepped up here," Stromstad says of the staff. "I was really proud of how our people in the health system behaved."

Stromstad pointed to growth in the organization's residency program, which is crucial for training new providers.

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She's also proud of how hard MVHS has worked to embed itself in the community in order to best serve that community.

Stromstad is also proud of the progress the organization has made since opening the Wynn, which involved merging two separate facilities — each with their own staff and own way of doing things — into one unified facility.

“Those first few months were rough, really, really rough,” she recalls. Things were so rough, in fact, that MVHS made it a priority to focus on improving things in 2024.

“It feels very, very positive in here,” Stromstad says of today's environment within Wynn Hospital.

Other highlights of her tenure include becoming a heart care center, implementing a system-wide electronic medical-records system, and even introducing artificial intelligence transcription to help doctors take notes so they can focus on the patients.

“There are constantly innovations that change the way we work,” Stromstad says.

She feels confident now that the hospital and MVHS as a whole are in a good place where she can turn the reins over to someone new.

“I will miss the energy that you get in a hospital that's different than any other building you walk into,” she says of her impending retirement. While she won't miss the early mornings, she'll miss in-



Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) President/CEO Darlene Stromstad, third from right, celebrates the grand opening of Wynn Hospital in October 2023. Stromstad will retire at the end of this year.

PHOTO CREDIT: MVHS

teracting with a diverse community daily.

Stromstad has some advice for those looking to fill her shoes — or those of any health-care administrator.

“If you let people hijack your focus, then you're not doing your job,” she says. “Not everybody likes change. They are going to take a swipe or two at you, but you can't let it distract you. You've got to have thick skin and rise above it.”

The search for her replacement is already underway and going well. While not involved in the search, Stromstad confirmed that the search committee is reviewing candidates with an eye at final interviews toward the end of summer.

“I think health care is the most interesting place to work,” she says. “The jobs are varied. The work is very meaningful. There's really important work to be done.”



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Construction of the new parking garage at Turning Stone Resort Casino is about halfway complete. The garage is part of the \$370 million Turning Stone Evolution project.

PHOTO CREDIT: ONEIDA INDIAN NATION

Work progresses on \$370M Turning Stone Evolution project

VERONA — The Oneida Indian Nation's \$370 million Turning Stone Evolution project is forging full-steam ahead, on target to open in 2027.

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

The effort includes the new 258-bed Crescent Hotel; a new conference center that doubles the resort's existing conference space with eight new meeting rooms, two new ballrooms, an outdoor courtyard and three outdoor event spaces, and a new 2,000-space parking garage; the new Salt Seafood & Raw Bar; and an onsite medical center for employees and guests.

Some elements of the project, such as

the transformation of the former Lava Nightclub into NY Rec & Social Club, are already complete while work continues on the rest. The Crescent celebrated a topping ceremony in April, marking significant progress on that part of the project.

"It's moving along on time, on budget, slated to open in 2027," Oneida Nation VP for Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Joel Barkin says. "Now, it's really taking form."

Also moving ahead is construction of the parking garage, which is about half-

way complete, he adds, while the Grand Expo 165,000-square-foot conference and events center is being framed out.

"We're already starting to prospect for business," Barkin says of the Grand Expo. Staff are already meeting with event and meeting planners interested in the space and will soon be taking reservations for the hotel and Grand Expo.

The additional space is needed based on current demand, especially for weddings, which is expected to grow. "There's more interest and demand than supply," Barkin says of Turning Stone's event space.

The new hotel will bring the total number of rooms close to 1,000, while the expanded meeting space provides options to host more events. “We are able to go after much larger meetings and events,” Barkin adds.

Once complete, the project will put Turning Stone in competition with major convention venues, he says. Turning Stone will be the largest event venue in upstate New York and one of the three venues of the same size in the state.

“It opens up an entire universe of potential new partners and prospects to us,” he says.

The project is expected to generate a \$616 million one-time economic impact, create 3,600 one-time jobs, and generate \$22.1 million in state and local tax revenues.

“We think everything we’re offering complements what we’re building,” Barkin says of the Turning Stone Evolution project.

Turning Stone Resort Casino already includes five hotels, two spas, five golf courses, more than 20 dining options, a 125,000-square-foot gaming floor, a sports-betting lounge, The Showroom concert venue, a 5,000-seat arena, and



Work is continuing on the new Crescent Hotel at Turning Stone Resort Casino. The hotel, part of the Turnign Stone Evolution project, is slated to open in 2027.

PHOTO CREDIT: ONEIDA INDIAN NATION

several nightlife venues.

The Oneida Indian Nation has also been busy renovating its Point Place Casino located in the hamlet of Bridgeport, in the town of Sullivan. That project, coming in at \$50 million, is doubling the existing gaming floor, adding a 100-room hotel with event space and a lobby café, adding a full-service restaurant, reimagining the Fireside Lounge, doubling parking, and

adding new retail space.

The first phase of the Point Place project, which includes the gaming and retail expansion and café, will open later this summer, followed by the hotel, restaurant, and other amenities later in the fall.

The Oneida Indian Nation will also open its fifth Verona Collective cannabis dispensary in Bridgeport later this summer. ■



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The Triangle site is located at Griffiss International Airport in Rome. Oneida County in early January closed on its purchase of the adjacent Mohawk Glen Golf Course.

PHOTO CREDIT: MOHAWK VALLEY EDGE ANNUAL REPORT



Picente says county purchase of former golf course helped secure Chobani

BY ERIC REINHARDT
Journal Staff | ereinhardt@cnybj.com

ROME — Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente, Jr. believes the county's purchase of the former Mohawk Glen Golf Course was a big factor in Chobani's decision to build a 1.4 million square foot, \$1.2 billion facility on the Triangle site at Griffiss International Airport in Rome.

The golf course, which previously served the former Griffiss Air Force Base, is situated adjacent to the Triangle site.

Oneida County bought the 160-acre golf course at 880 Perimeter Road W. in Rome for \$1.4 million from owner Michael DeSalvio. The Oneida County Board of Legislators authorized the purchase during the Nov. 13, 2024 meeting, and the transaction closed in early January of this year.

"So, I do envision at least right now that any development there ... would be focused on Chobani's desire to add a second phase. Now, could that change? I suppose it could," says Picente, who spoke with

CNYBJ in a phone interview on July 10.

Prior to Chobani's interest and subsequent major announcement, Oneida County had envisioned developing the site into a semiconductor supply-chain campus. The county had even secured a \$23.6 million award under the state's Focused Attraction of Shovel-Ready Tracts New York (FAST NY) grant program.

The FAST NY grant doesn't apply to the golf course property, the Oneida County executive noted.

Oneida County has also applied for second round of FAST NY, which also would be just for the Triangle parcel because of its size, which is larger than the golf course property, the county executive says.

Picente said the initial vision for a semiconductor supply-chain campus came about "because we were hearing so much about it," referencing both Micron Technology Inc.

(NASDAQ: MU) in the town of Clay in Onondaga County, as well as Wolfspeed (NYSE: WOLF) in Marcy.

"In economic development, a lot of times, when you're courting companies

of that size or looking at that large of footprint, they look for some buffer space and other areas for not just staging but for future development, so that's where the focus is right now," Picente says.

He went on to say that Oneida County had been in discussions with the golf course owner about the property even before the talks with Chobani started and before the state awarded the county the grant to help develop the Triangle site.

Even if Chobani hadn't selected the Triangle site for its project, Oneida County still wanted to purchase the golf course property because "the benefit of that Triangle [site] is greater with the golf course property."

"Because everything in that area is somewhat landlocked to a degree, it makes it all the more important that those parcels that are connected remain connected," he says.

Picente told CNYBJ that Chobani had reached out to Oneida County in the middle of 2024 about the Triangle site but the discussions got "more serious" in September of last year.

"It culminated when [Chobani founder and CEO Hamdi Ulukaya] himself came to meet with me in October," says Picente. "We were moving toward an agreement." ■



Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente, Jr.

PHOTO CREDIT: ONEIDA COUNTY

Jazz at Beeches Manor to benefit Nascenia Neighborhood capital campaign

BY ERIC REINHARDT

Journal Staff | erinhardt@cnybj.com

ROME — Nascenia Health says it has scheduled an exciting community event called Jazz at Beeches Manor for Aug. 10 with an all-day lineup of jazz performances, free of charge, from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 7900 Turin Road in Rome.

It benefits the Nascenia Neighborhood capital campaign, which supports the renovation of the 72-acre Beeches property in Rome into an aging-in-place community for adults 55 and older.

The completed project will offer independent-living units, integrated health care, and wellness-focused amenities to “promote independence, vitality, and connection.” The campaign is now in its public phase and recently received a \$4 million donation from The Griffin Charitable Foundation.



Beeches Manor in Rome.

PHOTO CREDIT: NASCENTIA HEALTH



Jazz at Beeches Manor is described as a “family-friendly” event that is open to the public and will have food, refreshments, and merchandise for purchase.

The 2025 Jazz

at Beeches Manor music lineup includes talented artists from across Central New York. The headlining act is Gap Mangione and the New Big Band.

The lineup also includes the CNY Jazz Youth Orchestra; The Hot Club of Syracuse with Joe Davoli, Joe Ferlo, Tyrin Conti & Matt Vacanti; The Octobermen with Paul Dowd, Bill

▶ JAZZ, CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

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“Delivering Our Promise”

Cornhill Empowerment Center operating under new ownership

BY ERIC REINHARDT

Journal Staff | ereinhardt@cnybj.com

UTICA — The Cornhill Empowerment Center is now operating under the leadership of the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties.

Formerly known as the Empowerment Center and previously managed by the HomeOwnershipCenter, the facility is offering programming for residents led by local non-profit organizations.

Community members, nonprofit partners, and local leaders gathered together on June 18 for the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the newly reintroduced Cornhill Empowerment Center.

The event, held at 230 James Street in Utica, “marked an exciting new chapter for the neighborhood and was a major success,” per a June 23 summary from the Community Foundation.

The Cornhill Empowerment Center’s key partners — the Community Foundation, Mid-Utica Neighborhood Preservation Corporation (MUNPC), and the City of Utica — hosted the event.

Besides the ribbon cutting, the event

included an open house allowing attendees to explore the space and learn about upcoming programming opportunities. It concluded with a guided neighborhood walk highlighting key sites included in the broader Cornhill Revitalization Project.

“It’s essential that we continue working together, talking, and communicating openly to keep this project moving forward,” Oneida County Legislator Evon Ervin said in the announcement. “I’ve seen this neighborhood at its best, its worst, and everything in between. When I see community members

of all backgrounds walking past my home in Cornhill, it reminds me of what’s possible. That’s how this revitalization should move forward — hand-in-hand, growing together, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or background.”

The Cornhill Empowerment Center launched its inaugural program this summer with the STEMpowerment Series — a free, hands-on STEM camp for youth ages 8 to 15. STEM is short for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. It started July 7 and continues through Aug. 14. SUNY Polytechnic Institute is presenting the series with support from Mohawk Valley Community College.

The STEMpowerment Series is a program designed to “ignite curiosity, build confidence, and inspire youth through engaging STEM experiences.” Participants have been exploring science, technology, engineering, and math through interactive experiments, team-based engineering challenges, and leadership-building activities.

The Cornhill Empowerment Center is set to serve as a model for future neighborhood projects, the Community Foundation contends. The Community Foundation, MUNPC, People First, The Collective Impact Network, Oneida County, and the City of Utica are leading a long-term investment of more than \$77 million in Cornhill over the next 30 years, per the announcement.

The effort includes the future West Street and James Street Impact Centers, which will “act as anchor institutions in this transformation.”

“We were thrilled to welcome the community into this space and celebrate the start of this exciting new chapter,” Tyler Hutchinson, director of strategic initiatives at the Community Foundation, said in the announcement. “The Cornhill Empowerment Center represents a collective commitment to unlocking opportunity, preserving the neighborhood’s history, and building a bright future for everyone who calls Cornhill home.” ■



Community members, nonprofit partners, and local leaders on June 18 gathered for the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the newly reintroduced Cornhill Empowerment Center at 230 James St. in Utica

PHOTO CREDIT: NANCY L. FORD PHOTOGRAPHY

MV EDGE initiates dairy roundtable as Chobani plans Rome processing facility

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

ROME — Chobani’s April announcement that it will build a \$1.2 billion plant in Rome at Griffiss Business and Technology Park isn’t just good news for people looking for a job or those who like the company’s Greek yogurt.

It’s also good news for the hundreds of farmers in the Mohawk Valley who will have an opportunity to provide milk and other products to the facility, which will house up to 28 production lines designed to process 12 million pounds of milk per day.

That’s why Mohawk Valley EDGE is working now to bring the industry and other stakeholders together to make sure farmers can benefit.

MV EDGE had internal discussions in early June, outlining how to bring together stakeholders from the agriculture, workforce, education, and policy sectors



Marc Barraco

PHOTO CREDIT: MV EDGE WEBSITE

to talk about not just now Chobani’s new plant will impact the region but also how to address the needs of New York’s dairy industry.

“We just want to support them in every

way possible,” MV EDGE Chief of Staff Marc Barraco says.

Those initial talks outlined six core areas: Chobani’s expansion and supply-chain readiness; event planning and stakeholder engagement; workforce challenges, upskilling, and education; policy and program gaps; and actionable next steps.

The goal, Barraco says, is to ensure that not only is Chobani successful but also the whole upstate dairy industry prospers.

“We want to broaden this outreach as much as we can,” he says. Talks may involve more than just how much milk Chobani needs and include topics such as the trucking industry and farm-worker protections.

“If we want the biggest bang for our buck, this is the perfect time to be having

► ROUNDTABLE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

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YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley focuses on building renovations

ROME — It was March 12, 2020, and the YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley was enjoying its best year ever.

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

The organization had a robust membership of 9,200 and operated 27 before-school and after-school programs. It also had the opportunity to plan for an even better future on available land on Floyd Avenue that would bring the Y's offerings close to the 7,000 people work-

ing in the nearby Griffiss Business and Technology Park, recalls CEO Hank Leo.

"We explored what that might look like," he says. In the works since 2018, the organization had planned to build a new 42,000-square-foot building on Floyd Avenue to replace its aging building on West Bloomfield Street.

On March 12, the outlook was bright. "The next day, the whole thing changed,"

Leo recalls.

First, schools closed, which shuttered the before- and after-school programs, which supported 400 children and generated \$1 million in revenue.

"Then the next day all the businesses closed," Leo says. The YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley closed along with them for a short time before reopening as an essential child-care center for five months. It furloughed 250 of the 260 people on staff.

The YMCA gave its 9,200 members a choice — keep their membership, put it on hold, or terminate their membership, and 5,200 of those members chose to end their YMCA membership.

"But 4,800 stayed with us," Leo says. They even brought lawn chairs and held socially distanced gatherings in the parking lot, craving that interaction with others.

For Leo, who always knew the value of the organization, that really drove home its importance to the community it serves.

That's why when the cost of building a new facility kept rising, from an initial \$16 million to \$23 million as the pandemic continued, he and his fellow leaders at the organization knew that building a new facility was not the best path forward for an organization so vital to the community.

In September 2024, the YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley announced it would no longer move forward with the project. While it had raised some funds from generous donors, it learned it would not receive a hoped-for \$2 million New York State Home and Community Renewal grant.

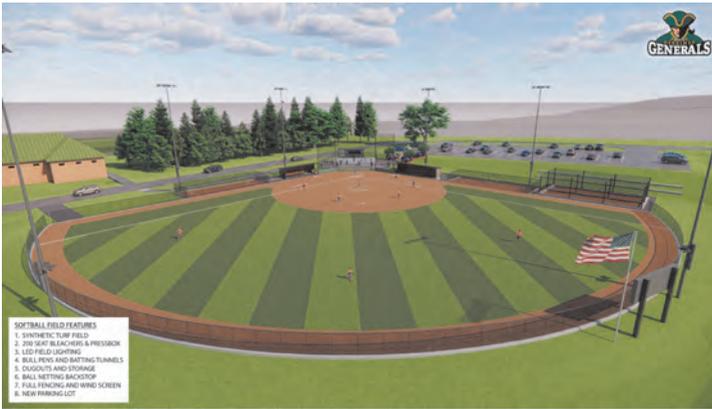
"That's when we kind of shifted gears,"

► YMCA, CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

◄ **Members enjoy the freshly painted gym at the YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley in Rome. While the organization hoped before the pandemic to build a new facility, it had to pivot and is now focused on renovating its existing building to best serve its members.**

PHOTO CREDIT: YMCA OF THE GREATER TRI-VALLEY





Herkimer College recently announced a series of projects to upgrade and modernize its athletic facilities. Work will include new locker rooms and renovated bathrooms inside and new fields for both baseball and softball, shown here.

RENDERING COURTESY OF HERKIMER COLLEGE

Herkimer College launches projects to upgrade athletic facilities

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

HERKIMER — Herkimer County Community College recently announced it has formally broken ground on a series of projects to transform the college’s athletic facilities to elevate the experience for student athletes, officials, and fans.

The project will modernize existing spaces, enhance accessibility, and create “top-tier” competition venues with an expected completion by the end of this year. Herkimer College did not disclose a price tag for the project, nor other financial details.

“This project is a major step forward for Herkimer College athletics,” Dean of Students/Director of Athletics Don Dutcher said in the announcement. “These upgrades will not only provide our student-athletes with the resources they deserve, but will also enhance the experience for our fans, visiting teams, and the entire campus community.”

Work to renovate existing locker rooms has already begun. The initiative will create 11 new team locker rooms that will accommodate interactive coaching presentations and provide individual lockers for each athlete. Additional upgrades include two officials’ changing rooms, an expanded athletic-training room with a dedicated hydrotherapy space, and fully renovated bathrooms and showers on each floor. The work will also ensure all areas are fully ADA-compliant.

Herkimer College is also making improvements to its outdoor athletic venues including overhauling its storm-prone baseball field and creating a companion softball stadium of equal caliber. The modern fields will address recurring game cancellations by providing a “state-of-the-art, all-weather home field” on campus. The design plan includes the complete repositioning and rebuilding of both diamonds using synthetic turf, LED lighting systems, elevated bleacher platforms, press boxes, dugouts, batting tunnels, scoreboards, and flagpoles.

The Herkimer Generals have 19 intercollegiate athletic teams that participate in NJCAA Division III. ■

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MANUFACTURERS, MOHAWK VALLEY

Ranked by No. of CNY Employees

| Rank | Name Address Phone/Website | Employees: CNY Companywide | Annual Revenue | Products Manufactured Locally | Parent Company Headquarters | Key Local Executives | Year Estab. |
|------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|---|----------------|
| 1. | Indium Corporation 301 Woods Park Drive Clinton, NY 13323 (315) 853-4900/indium.com | 1,000 1,400 | NA | materials for electronics assembly, semiconductor packaging and assembly, and thermal management, such as solders, fluxes, thermal-interface materials, indium, gallium, and germanium inorganic compounds, and metal alloys | N/A Clinton | Gregory P. Evans, Executive Chair Ross Berntson, President and CEO Mike McKenna, CFO Tim Twining, VP of Sales, Marketing, and Technical Service Brian Reid, VP of Global Operations Dawn Roller, Associate VP of Human Resources | 1934 |
| 2. | ConMed 525 French Road Utica, NY 13502 (315) 797-8375/conmed.com | 500 4,000 | \$1.3B | medical devices and equipment for orthopaedic, general surgery, gynecology, neurosurgery, gastroenterology, cardiac monitoring, and critical-care specialties | same Largo, FL | Patrick Beyer, President & CEO | 1970 |
| 3. | Giotto Enterprises 161 Clear Road Oriskany, NY 13424 (315) 736-2206/ giottoenterprises.com | 425 425 | NA | communication fiber-optic connectors, fiber-optic cable and test equipment; safety relays, injection-molded plastic components, CNC machining, sheet-metal fabrication | Giotto Enterprises Oriskany | Frank Giotto, President & CEO Kirk Donley, SVP of Sales Susan Grabinski, Exec. VP & CFO Mark Cushman, VP, Org. Dev./HR | 1985 |
| 4. | Delorio Foods Inc. 2200 Bleecker St. Utica, NY 13501 (315) 732-7612/deorios.com | 323 323 | NA | frozen pizza dough, pizza, gluten free, organic | same Utica | James Viti, VP of Marketing & Product Development Bob Horth, VP of Business Development John Tackabury, VP Client Services | 1924 |
| 5. | Human Technologies Corporation 2201 Dwyer Ave. Utica, NY 13501 (315) 724-9891/htcorp.net | 180 350 | \$50M | commercial sewing, embroidered and screen printed products, retail assembly and packaging, warehousing and distribution, facilities management, custodial, landscaping | Human Technologies Corporation Utica | Timothy Giarrusso, CEO Carl Reistrom, President | 1954 |
| 6. | 2nd Ave Lighting 55 Oriskany Blvd. Yorkville, NY 13495 (800) 843-1602/2ndave.com | 60 100 | NA | custom lighting, decorative lighting, stained-glass lamps & windows, chandeliers, wall sconces, outdoor lanterns, custom lighting, table/floor lamps, and other home accessories and decor; indoor and outdoor lighting | Meyda Tiffany Yorkville | Robert Cohen, President & CEO Max Cohen, Sales Manager Chester Cohen, Production Manager | 1979 |
| | Meyda Tiffany Lighting One Meyda Fine Place Yorkville, NY 13495 (800) 222-4009/meyda.com | 60 100 | NA | custom lighting, Tiffany lighting, decorative lighting, stained-glass lamps & windows, chandeliers, wall sconces, outdoor lanterns, custom lighting, table/floor lamps, fireplace screens, ceiling pendants and other lighting fixtures, stained-glass windows and home decor | Meyda Tiffany Yorkville | Robert Cohen, President & CEO Max Cohen, Sales Manager Chester Cohen, Production Manager | 1974 |
| 8. | Hartman Enterprises, Inc. 455 Elizabeth St. Oneida, NY 13421 (315) 363-7300/ hartmanenterprises.com | 30 30 | NA | precision CNC milling and turning; 5-axis machining, Swiss-type machining, large turning; AS9100D-certified, HUBZone | same Oneida | Jaime A. Sweet, President/CEO | 1973 |
| | Hale Manufacturing 11206 Cosby Manor Road Utica, NY 13502 (315) 894-5490/halemfg.com | 30 30 | NA | manufacturer of wood library, courtroom, office and home-furniture products | same Utica | Erika Romeo, VP Brooke Benson, Marketing Manager | 1907 |
| 10. | Rome Electronics Custom Cables, Inc. 222 Erie Blvd. East Rome, NY 13440 (315) 337-7574 /romeelectronicscustomcables.com | 18 18 | NA | custom cable assemblies, electromechanical assemblies, custom RF and coaxial cable, prototyping, design, long and short run, one-offs | same Rome | Rocco Garro, President | 1957 |

THE LIST

Research by Vance Marriner
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ABOUT THE LIST

This list was drawn from the list of Manufacturers in the overall Central New York region that was originally published in the January 27, 2025 edition of the *Central New York Business Journal*.

Information was provided by representatives of listed organizations and their websites. Other groups may have been eligible but did not respond to our requests for information. While *The Business Journal* strives to print accurate information, it is not possible to independently verify all data submitted. We reserve the right to edit entries or delete categories for space considerations.

DID YOU GET LEFT OFF THE LIST? EMAIL VMARRINER@CNYBJ.COM

Rooster's Smash Burgers serves up burgers and a welcoming environment

BY TRACI DELORE

Journal Staff | tdelore@cnybj.com

UTICA — Focus on one thing and do it well. That's the goal of Rooster's Smash Burgers owner Javon Pratt.

His restaurant, open for nearly four years, focuses only on burgers with the goal of making the best burger around.

Pratt used to own a pizzeria before selling it in 2019. He also worked for a while at Upstate Cerebral Palsy (Upstate Caring Partners), but says, "I just had the itch to go back into business for myself."

Pratt thought about opening another pizzeria but couldn't find a suitable space. Then he saw a space available on Charlotte Street he thought would be a good location, but he needed to figure out what to serve if it wasn't pizza.

The idea came to him after he got "stuck" for a while in a fast-food drive-thru waiting for a burger.

"There's a market



Employees at Rooster's Smash Burgers in Utica are hard at work at the grill.

PHOTO CREDIT: ROOSTER'S SMASH BURGERS

for burgers," he says, and he liked the idea of serving only burgers. "If you go to Philly, you have places that just sell cheesesteaks. If you go to Chicago, you have places that just serve hot dogs."

So, Rooster's Smash Burgers was born in November 2021. The name honors a

former employee from Pratt's pizzeria, and the menu features about a dozen different burgers along with fries. The lone exception to the burger-only menu policy is chicken nuggets.



► ROOSTER'S, CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

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Ranked by No. of CNY IT Consultants on Staff¹

| Rank | Name Address Phone/Website | No. of CNY IT Consultants No. of CNY Employees | Services | Key Executives | Year Estab. |
|------|---|---|--|---|----------------|
| 1. | M.A. Polce 401 Phoenix Drive Rome, NY 13441 (315) 338-0388/mapolce.com | 24 43 | strategic implementation of managed IT, cybersecurity, and governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) solutions, ensuring these services align with their specific needs and goals. M.A. Polce's team also provides virtual Chief Information Security Officer (vCISO) expertise, offering tailored security leadership and direction; consults on cloud deployments, network architecture, and the development of effective policies and procedures | Michael A. Polce, President | 1998 |
| 2. | Total Solutions I.T. Inc. 8057 Seneca Turnpike Clinton, NY 13323 (315) 724-9410/totalsolutions.com | 6 14 | outsourced IT services for small- to mid-sized businesses | Michael Morrill, President | 1998 |
| 3. | Quanterion Solutions Incorporated 266 Genesee St. Utica, NY 13502 (315) 732-0097/quanterion.com | 5 30 | cloud migration/managed-services, Internet of Things (IoT) security, network architecting and security monitoring, cybersecurity assessment/penetration testing, desktop and server support | Eric MacDiarmid, President Alex MacDiarmid, VP | 2000 |
| 4. | Connecting Point Computer Center 4522 Commercial Drive New Hartford, NY 13413 (315) 768-8151/connectingpointny.com | 4 6 | authorized Apple service provider; authorized Apple dealer; full-service dealership; HP and Dell computer systems; in-house and onsite service; iPhone service; networking installations and maintenance | Frederick Griffin, Owner Phil O'Gurk, Owner | 1991 |
| 5. | MV Cioni Associates, Inc. P.O. Box 779 New Hartford, NY 13413 (315) 734-1168/mvcioni.com | 2 2 | consulting that optimizes business decisions, operations, and performance | Mark V. Cioni, President | 2005 |

THE LIST

Research by Vance Marriner

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ABOUT THE LIST

This list was drawn from the list of Computer/IT Consultants in the overall Central New York region that was originally published in the July 7, 2025 edition of the *Central New York Business Journal*.

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MOHAWK VALLEY ECONOMIC-DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Ranked by No. of Paid Staff

| Rank | Name Address Phone/ Website | No. of Paid Staff | Services Offered | Key Executives | Year Founded |
|------|---|----------------------|---|---|-----------------|
| 1. | Mohawk Valley EDGE 584 Phoenix Drive Rome, NY 13441 (315) 338-0393/mvedge.org | 12 | a vertically integrated resource for businesses in Oneida and Herkimer counties, providing solutions for project financing, packaging, alongside business outreach, retention, and attraction initiatives | Shawna Papale, President | 1997 |
| 2. | Herkimer County IDA 420 East German St., Suite 101A Herkimer, NY 13350 (315) 866-3000/herkimercountyida.org | 4 | exemption from sales taxes, mortgage-recording taxes, real-property tax exemption, low-interest loan financing | V. James Bono, Board Chairman John J. Piseck, Jr., CEO | 1969 |
| 3. | Madison County IDA 3215 Seneca Turnpike Canastota, NY 13032 (315) 697-9817/madisoncountyida.com | NA | site location, business recruitment, business retention and expansion, business startup, and financial assistance; nonprofit bonding | Kipp Hicks, Executive Director | 1975 |
| 4. | Oneida County IDA 584 Phoenix Drive Rome, NY 13441 (315) 338-0393/oneidacountyida.org | NA | sales-tax exemption, mortgage-recording exemption, real-property tax exemption, bonding | Stephen R. Zogby, Board Chair | 1970 |
| 5. | Griffiss Local Development Corp. 584 Phoenix Drive Rome, NY 13441 (315) 338-0393/griffissldc.org | NA | promotes, facilitates, and oversees the redevelopment of the former Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome | Elis DeLia, Board Chair | 1995 |

THE LIST

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ABOUT THE LIST

This list was drawn from the list of Chambers of Commerce in the overall Central New York region that was originally published in the November 11, 2024 edition of the *Central New York Business Journal*.



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these discussions,” Barraco says.

Agriculture remains Oneida County’s top industry by volume, Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. notes. “That’s still a large part of this county’s industry,” he says. And it’s not just dairy, he adds. Chobani may also need fruits from some of the region’s many producers.

Along with requiring all that milk, Chobani also expects to create more than 1,000 full-time jobs once the Rome facility opens.

That’s why workforce development is one of the planned topics for the roundtable. MV EDGE and Chobani are already talking with colleges and universities, as well as others, about how to create that workforce.

EDGE is eyeing a late summer or early

fall date for the roundtable event, and Barraco wants people to come prepared.

“We want to task everyone that’s invited ... to come with resources at the ready,” he says. MV EDGE wants more than just ideas at the table. It wants resources and tools, plans to overcome challenges, and identified actionable opportunities.

“It’s a big endeavor, but it’s worth it,” Barraco says. ■

Leo says. YMCA leadership met with members at several town halls to talk about a new plan. The focus now is on renovating its existing building at 301 West Bloomfield St., which serves a current membership of 7,100.

“We’re going room by room, and we’re repurposing each of the spaces,” Leo says. The organization has enough funds to cover renovations underway on the second floor. Work has included updated electrical infrastructure and equipment for the cardio room, transforming the former personal training room into a spin studio, and converting golf-simulator space into a multifunction area for personal training and cross training.

A donation of both paint and labor from Sherwin-Williams helped transform the facility’s gym into a brighter, more inviting space, Leo adds. The YMCA will refinish the gym floors and install a new curtain divider later this summer.

The building will get a new roof and HVAC system, thanks to \$3.4 million in state funding secured by Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon.

Leo is hopeful the YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley can begin tackling first-floor renovations next spring. The first floor includes the swimming pool, locker rooms, and childcare wing.

While it wasn’t easy backpedaling from the announcement of a new building, the



YMCA’s membership has been supportive of the decision, he notes.

Samantha Petschauer joined the YMCA as its Rome branch executive right as it was switching gears away from a new building, but that didn’t phase her.

“I didn’t come for a building,” she says. “I came for a mission.”

Recalling how much the YMCA has meant to her family personally, she is confident the renovated building will have that same impact on generations to come.

“We are much more than a gym and swim,” she says. “We are trying to help families grow. We are trying to help our community thrive.” ■

Scranton, Jeff Ruzich & Evan DuChene; The 10th Mountain Army Division Jazz Combo; and The John Rohde Tribute Band with Andrea Miceli, Jeff Stockham,

Rick Montalbano, Jimmy Johns, Ronnie France & Joe Carello.

Nascentia Health and the Nascentia Neighborhood Capital Campaign Strategy Committee on April 17 announced the public phase of the Nascentia Neighborhood Capital Campaign and recognize The

Griffin Charitable Foundation for its \$4 million donation for the project.

In recognition of the foundation’s “transformative” gift, Nascentia Health said the Nascentia Neighborhood’s future on-site medical building will be named The Griffin Charitable Foundation Medical Complex. The organization called it a “lasting tribute to Dorothy and Bill Griffin, whose selfless giving continues to shape the Copper City and beyond.”

“We are incredibly grateful to The Griffin Charitable Foundation for choosing to invest in this project,” Kate Rolf, president and CEO of Nascentia Health, said in a statement. “This gift will help our company continue delivering exceptional healthcare, creating strong communities, and executing a vision designed to meet the needs of aging adults. I am honored that the Nascentia Neighborhood Capital Campaign has already been propelled forward by a transformative donation.”

Phase one of the project is already complete with the renovation and reopening of Beeches Manor as an event venue and restaurant/pub open to the community for lunch and dinner. ■

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“Exhibiting at AUVSI XPO 2025 provided the New York UAS Test Site with a strategic opportunity to showcase its advanced testing capabilities, discuss regulatory developments, and build upon critical industry partnerships,” a spokesperson for AX Enterprize told CNYBJ in a July 11 email. “With direct access to FAA officials, defense leaders, and commercial stakeholders, we had the opportunity to be at the forefront of key conversations, including BVLOS rulemaking, UTM integration, and safety validation.”

The spokesperson went on to say, “Additionally, through AX Enterprize’s speaking engagements at XPO 2025, we fostered collaboration across the network and educated stakeholders on test site capabilities. Moreover, we furthered



CNYBJ FILE PHOTO BY ZOEYADVERTISING.COM

the visibility of the New York UAS Test Site collaboration with the other FAA-designated test sites. And, together with organizations such as AUVSI, we are pioneering the future of aviation technology.”

About AX Enterprize

Established in April 2011, AX Enterprize is a New York State-certified woman-owned and ISO 9001 certified

small business specializing in the development and integration of UAS and AAM technologies.

Its expertise includes secure UAS traffic management and air-domain awareness solutions, detect and avoid systems, trustworthy remote ID, and counter-UAS solutions. AX describes itself as a “trusted partner” of Oneida County since the inception of the New York UAS test site in 2014, overseeing daily operations and providing safety and technical support.

About the New York UAS test site

The New York UAS Test Site at Griffiss International Airport provides advanced testing, engineering, and flight-support services for unmanned aircraft systems. It plays a “critical role” in supporting FAA integration efforts and serves as a hub for innovation and commercialization in the uncrewed aviation sector. ■

to stimulate not just overall enjoyment but also the belief that more is possible.

We began a venture into uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), better known as drones, with one of the seven approved FAA test sites in the United States at Griffiss International Airport. We built the largest indoor testing center by converting one former hangar, helping our area become a leader in UAS research and testing.

We achieved the long-held dream of expanding in the world of nanotechnology, building with Wolfspeed the largest silicon-carbide chip manufacturing facility in the U.S. in the town of Marcy.

Another transformational project was the construction of a new state-of-the-art hospital, Wynn Hospital, which opened in downtown Utica in the fall of 2023. Wynn Hospital was the first new hospital facility built in New York state in over a quarter century. By building it in downtown Utica we were able to remove blocks of blight and address a serious health-care need in the community. Oneida County also built a 1,300-space parking garage attached to the hospital for public and hospital use.

The expansion of our sports facilities grew with the building of the Utica University Nexus Center; three additional rinks of ice attached to the Adirondack Bank Center that can be converted to soccer and lacrosse and can be used for numerous events. Already Nexus has

exceeded expectations with tournament play nearly every weekend of the year.

During the emergence of our hockey revival, we have hosted two AHL All Star games (broadcast across the world) with sponsorship from the Oneida Indian Nation’s Turning Stone Enterprises; and the IIHF Women’s World Hockey Championship with 10 national teams from across the globe, including the United States.

The 2024 men’s and women’s World Lacrosse Box Championships were also held in the Utica region with a total of 38 international teams participating. More signature events are also planned for the immediate future.

Our most current success story is the acceptance of Chobani to build a 1.4 million-square-foot production facility at Griffiss Business and Technology Park (Triangle site). Chobani’s announcement of adding more than 1,000 jobs to the existing economy, coupled with investment of well over \$1.2 billion to build the largest natural-food facility in the nation, is still reverberating throughout Central New York.

During this same period, Turning Stone Resort Casino is undergoing yet another major expansion, called the Turning Stone Evolution, a \$370 million initiative. The project includes the new 258-room Crescent Hotel, as well as a new conference center that will be largest convention space in all of upstate New York.

Further investment at Griffiss includes the conversion of our largest hangar into

a multi-faceted sports facility. A portion of the building will be transformed for a variety of indoor sports, like basketball, softball, volleyball, pickleball and so much more. In addition, other amenities for food, drink, and other areas of entertainment will be built to complement the site for families and all individuals to enjoy.

The bottom line is Oneida County looks significantly different today than it did several years ago. The reason is we began to believe in ourselves and after years of economic downturn, we turned the page from negativity and focused on possibility. By doing, that we were able to join in partnership with others — private investors, state and local governments, regional economic-development agencies, and more — who believed in our potential and saw a county that was growing. Much of this renaissance was built during the pandemic, further showing the world and our residents that we could accomplish anything.

The future of the Mohawk Valley is bright, and a big piece has been the light that is shining here in Oneida County where we believe in the possible. Stay tuned because there is much more to come. ■

Anthony J. Picente, Jr. is the 13th Oneida County Executive. He is the longest-serving county executive in Oneida County history. Picente was appointed to the position in January 2007 and subsequently won five straight elections to four-year terms in 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023.

Hochul's office noted.

The organization generally serves elementary school kids, or ages five through 12, McGrogan says, but she also notes the museum includes a toddler forest for children up to three years of age.

"There's definitely something for every kid regardless of age to engage and interact with," she says.

McGrogan says the museum considers itself an extension of the classroom. "The whole museum has been designed very much with New York State education standards in mind."

Reservations to visit the museum are recommended but not required, she adds.

Museum galleries, exhibits

The 14,000-square-foot museum includes exhibits designed as exciting play-based experiences with many benefits for children, per Hochul's office.

The museum has six galleries with more than 60 exhibits, McGrogan tells CNYBJ. The galleries include Build it Up, which exposes kids to the trades; the World Market is a cultural area that highlights all the cultures in the Mohawk Valley; the Let's Experiment gallery is a STEM-based (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) gallery with activities and challenges that focus on inventions, such as race cars.

In addition, the Seasons gallery focuses on the four seasons in the Mohawk Valley; the Cove area, which has low lighting, soft furniture, and calming colors to "create a sense of peace and relaxation throughout" for children and adults with sensory needs, per the museum's website; and the Climber, which McGrogan describes as a "showstopper" when people walk into the



The new Utica Children's Museum is again welcoming parents and kids after its opening in the spring, the office of Gov. Kathy Hochul announced on April 29.

PHOTO CREDIT: NEW YORK STATE

museum, is a two-story, enclosed jungle gym that the website says provides "physical challenges and safe risk-taking to build confidence."

As the Utica Children's Museum website says, "Children's Museums show our youngest citizens that they are valued and important. We create a space for connection, exploration, cultural awareness, and growth."

"The opening of the new Utica Children's Museum marks an exciting milestone for our community and for families across Oneida County," Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente, Jr. said in the state's announcement. "We are proud to have invested \$500,000 in the museum's incredible climber exhibit — an innovative space that will spark curiosity, encourage hands-on learning, and inspire the next generation. This facility will be a cornerstone of childhood development, offering opportunities for school readi-

ness, career exploration, and meaningful family engagement. I applaud ICAN and all our state and local partners for bringing this extraordinary vision to life."

Recent history

On March 4, 2020, ICAN and the Utica Children's Museum announced the museum would be moving and rebuilt at 106 Memorial Parkway in Utica. A week later, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the former museum closed sooner than expected. Virtual programming was created and provided to the community's children, per the history page of the museum's website.

In October 2021, ICAN and the Utica Children's Museum held a groundbreaking event for the new location. The Rotunda on the new building was completed in 2023, and the new museum opened to the public on May 1 of this year, the website says. ■

"This is more than just a new space — it's a major investment in the health and well-being of our community," Czyn said. "The Kaplan Center for Surgical Services is built for the future of surgery, combining clinical excellence, innovative technology, and a healing environment that puts patients first."

The new center is part of Rome Health's \$45.7 million capital-improvement project to modernize surgical and critical-care services.

Rome Health sees the new facility as "ensuring that patients in the Mohawk Valley have access to high-quality care in a state-of-the-art setting close to home."

"Thanks to the close collaboration between our construction team, the New York State Department of Health, and the incredible agility and flexibility of our staff, we were able to accelerate the transition to our new facility," Ashley Edwards, chief nursing officer and VP of clinical services at Rome Health, said. "This move comes at a critical time, as we've recently experienced inconsistencies with heating and humidity in the existing ORs that have disrupted case flow. Transitioning sooner ensures we continue caring for our patients in the safest possible environment."

Rome Health says it funded the new surgical center through a mix of public sup-

port and private philanthropy. The public support included a \$26 million New York State Healthcare Facility Transformation Grant, \$3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the City of Rome for the ICU and \$500,000 in ARPA funds from Oneida County.

The campaign also received "enthusiastic" support from more than 400 donors, Rome Health said.

Designed to improve both patient experience and staff efficiency, the Kaplan Center includes four operating rooms designed to accommodate advanced surgical procedures, including minimally invasive and robotic-assisted surgeries, and two procedure rooms. ■

Convening for Agriculture: A regional vision for dairy growth

As upstate New York experiences a surge in dairy demand driven by transformative investments from companies like Chobani, HP Hood, and others, Mohawk Valley EDGE is actively working to bring together stakeholders from across the agricultural, workforce, education, and policy sectors. Our goal is to develop a unified, regional response that ensures farms of all sizes — especially small and mid-sized operations — can participate in and benefit from this growth.

We are currently in the process of organizing a Dairy Roundtable that will serve as a platform for collaboration, innovation, and action. This event will focus on building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready agricultural ecosystem across the Mohawk Valley and beyond. Key areas of discussion will include workforce development, housing, immigration reform, and education — critical components for the long-term sustainability of the dairy sector.

Details of the roundtable will be announced soon, with plans to convene stakeholders later this summer. This marks the beginning of a long-term, coalition-driven initiative to elevate agriculture as a strategic growth sector and ensure that upstate New York farmers are well-equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly expanding dairy economy.

Preparing the Next Big Site

As the Mohawk Valley gains national recognition in advanced manufacturing and agribusiness, EDGE is preparing the next wave of development sites to sustain this momentum. We're focused on locations that are infrastructure-ready and aligned with the needs of high-tech industries like semiconductors, clean energy, and food production.

With support from New York State's FAST-NY program, EDGE has secured

major funding to accelerate development at two key sites: expanding infrastructure at the Marcy Nanocenter for future semiconductor growth, and transforming the Triangle Site at Griffiss into a premier hub for advanced food manufacturing — to be home to Chobani's \$1.2 billion facility.

These achievements wouldn't be possible without strong collaboration at every level of government. I want to especially recognize Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente for his unwavering commitment to the Griffiss Triangle and the leadership of his team. Their partnership has been vital as we work together to shape the next chapter of growth at Griffiss.

Reimagining St. Luke's: A new chapter for a historic site

As part of our commitment to revitalizing legacy properties, Mohawk Valley EDGE is leading the transformation of the former St. Luke's Hospital campus in New Hartford. This 53-acre site is being reimagined as a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood that reflects the region's values and future needs.

In partnership with Oneida County and Mohawk Valley Health System, we've developed a bold, community-driven vision that includes housing, parks, trails, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings. As we move forward with environmental reviews and developer outreach, we're laying the foundation for a connected, wellness-focused district that honors the site's history while embracing its potential.

Navigating Industry Headwinds: Wolfspeed and Semikron Danfoss

While the Mohawk Valley continues to attract transformative investments, we are also navigating the realities of a shifting global economy. Two recent developments — Wolfspeed's Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing and Semikron Danfoss's decision to scale down operations at its Utica facility — highlight the volatility of the advanced manufacturing sector and the importance of regional resilience.

Wolfspeed filed for bankruptcy in July,

as part of a prepackaged restructuring plan to reduce its debt by \$4.6 billion. Despite this, the company remains committed to its operations in the Mohawk Valley. The Marcy-based 200mm silicon carbide fab continues to ramp up production. Hiring activity remains strong, and the facility is on track to significantly expand capacity through 2026.

Meanwhile, Semikron Danfoss has begun a controlled ramp-down of production in Utica due to declining demand and changes in federal policy on electric-vehicle incentives. The company has offered severance, job placement, and career counseling to affected employees.

Mohawk Valley EDGE is working closely with Empire State Development, New York State, and regional workforce partners to support impacted workers and connect them with new opportunities. Our goal is to retain talent and minimize disruption to families and the local economy.

These moments remind us that progress doesn't always follow a straight line. Economic development can be unpredictable — it takes flexibility, strong partnerships, and a long-term focus on innovation and workforce strength. At EDGE, we're staying the course. Even when the road gets bumpy, we're committed to supporting advanced manufacturing and keeping the Mohawk Valley moving forward.

A Vision for Transformational Growth

At EDGE, we believe economic development is about people. Whether it's supporting workers in the dairy sector, helping small manufacturers enter the semiconductor supply chain, or revitalizing long-neglected neighborhoods, our goal is the same: to build a Mohawk Valley that works for everyone. The road ahead will not be without challenges. But with strong partnerships, a clear vision, and a deep commitment to our communities, we are confident that Mohawk Valley's best days are still to come. ■

Shawna Papale is president of Mohawk Valley EDGE.

These workforce centers will equip New Yorkers with the skills they need and create an "on-ramp" to training, internships, apprenticeships and permanent employment and capitalize on the State's success in attracting and expanding advanced manufacturing com-

panies such as Micron Technology, Inc. (NASDAQ: MU) in the Onondaga County town of Clay and GlobalFoundries in the Saratoga County town of Malta in the Capital Region.

"By adding centers in the Capital Region, Mohawk Valley and Finger Lakes to connect with Central New York, the ON-RAMP network will connect New Yorkers to new opportunities all along the

upstate semiconductor corridor," Hope Knight, president, CEO and commissioner of Empire State Development, said in the state's announcement. "Today's announcement represents our latest investments in workforce training under Governor Hochul, and supports our continued efforts to reshore manufacturing jobs and build out the advanced manufacturing ecosystem." ■

role as executive VP of support and services at Arc Herkimer including bringing all the agency's services together under one umbrella.

"I've never really been afraid to take on a challenge," she says.

As the newest president and CEO, Bass will take on the organization's planned event center project at its Mohawk Valley Golf and Event Center. She expects the project to break ground next year, and she will oversee getting the center off the ground and profitable.

The project got its start under Crosley, who joined the agency in 2005 — a time when it was more service-based and less

entrepreneurial.

"When I came, it was time for a culture change," Crosley says. He joined Arc Herkimer from an agency in Cortland that was very entrepreneurial and brought that spirit with him. He likes to say that not-for-profit is a tax status, not a business model.

Under Crosley's leadership, Arc Herkimer opened a number of entrepreneurial ventures including the golf and event center and the Arc Mall in Ilion, both made possible by donations, as well as the Arc Herkimer Goods Store.

"It's been great for the community and the people we serve," Crosley says of those ventures. The golf and event center alone provides employment or services for more

than 50 people that Arc Herkimer serves.

Other ventures haven't been as successful. The agency opened the Copper Café in its Arc Mall in Ilion, providing jobs for people with disabilities and tasty coffee and treats for the community. However, when Slocum-Dickson vacated its space in the mall and nearby Remington Arms closed, business volume dropped, and the café closed.

But he doesn't view it as a failure. "We see them as learning experiences," Crosley says.

Looking ahead to retirement, he isn't sure what is on the agenda just yet.

"I think I just want to chill and figure out what my next step will be," says Crosley. "I'm just looking forward to changing the pace a little bit." ■

At first, Pratt was the sole employee with a streamlined system that allowed him to work the entire restaurant by himself.

"Then we just slowly grew," he says.

Eventually, Rooster's transitioned to a new location on North Genesee Street, where Pratt took over the restaurant side of Kookie Q's, which still operates a seasonal ice-cream business there. The

businesses share prep space.

"We do a lot more volume," Pratt says of the new location, which Rooster's Smash Burgers moved into last October. His old space had seating for 19 people, while he can seat 40 people inside at his new location, which also offers outdoor seating.

The Rooster's employee count grew as well, from about four employees on Charlotte Street to about 14 employees now, Pratt says.

He prides himself on the homey,

welcoming feel of Rooster's, along with use fresh-baked buns from Salvatore's Bakery and meat that's ground fresh at Chantry's daily.

Pratt trains his employees to focus on quality service and products. "I want you to make this burger like it's for your mom," he says.

"I think the thing I'm most proud of with Rooster's is what people have to say about the way we make people feel," Pratt concludes. ■

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2025 Honorees pictured left to right: Utica Coffee & Roasting Co., Sovena, Nascentia Health, ICAN



2024 Honorees pictured left to right: Delorio's, Holland Farms Bakery and Deli, Human Technologies, and Kris-Tech Wire



2023 Honorees pictured left to right: Giotto Enterprises, Utica Zoo, Mohawk Valley Community College, and Assured Information Security



2022 Honorees pictured left to right: Bagg's Square Brewing Company, Hale Transportation, Oneida Indian Nation, Feldmeier Equipment, and Mohawk Valley EDGE



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