

2018 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

By George Borrello, Chautauqua County Executive
April 25, 2018
Chautauqua Lake Central School
Mayville, N.Y.



Thank you Mr. Chairman, and the County Legislature, for allowing us to move this month's meeting to Chautauqua Lake High School's auditorium. Thank you also to everyone that worked so hard to make this possible, including the school.

I'd like to also thank everyone in the audience tonight for coming out this evening.

In the audience are members of my team and my fellow county co-workers along with many of the great people we visited with in my first 100 days in office.

I'd also like to welcome the businesses and organizations that make up the fabric of Chautauqua County... private sector, public sector, not-for-profits, educators, healthcare professionals, volunteers and concerned citizens.

I'd also like to welcome and thank my fellow elected officials. Thank you very much for coming here to show your support and the unity our county needs.

Thank you all for being here. I am truly grateful and humbled by your presence.

It was an amazing journey! I could not have done it without the support of some key people that made it all possible.

First, and foremost, my Executive Assistant Dan Heitzenrater, who documented and directed each visit and was always by my side. Also, Carm Catanese, who kept us on track and on schedule, and Amanda Gallagher, who made sure I stayed in touch and worked hard to ensure that business still got done whether or not I was in the office.

A special thanks also to the IDA team.

Thank you Sue Casel and Jeanette Lo Bello for doing so much of the outreach and scheduling of these visits.

Thank you so much to Mark Geise, Rich Dixon, Carol Rasmussen, and Kristine Morabito for traveling along with us and making these meetings productive and informative. Rich, I owe you two new pairs of shoes!

Part I
Our Story: 100 Businesses in 100 Days

FIRST 100 DAYS...

FIRST 100 DAYS...
12,997 Miles
1,398.5 Hours
107
Businesses Visited

In my first 100 days, we covered 12,997 miles and I put in 1,398.5 working hours (Don't worry, I'm a salaried employee).

We visited with 107 different businesses and organizations that spanned the county in almost every sector of business from small start-ups to our largest employers. From restaurants and gift shops to advanced manufacturing facilities and the latest in cutting-edge technology.

This has been an amazing journey that has filled me with pride in our county and energized me.

Business is dynamic and ever-changing so we are continuing on and visiting businesses regularly. Also we are following up and following through with the relationships and ideas that developed in these first 100 days.



Often people like to talk about what used to be made here . . . that's the wrong narrative. Let's talk about the things that are being made here, because it's a long and amazing list.

From frozen French bread pizzas to bunker buster bombs. From award-winning beer and wine to windows and doors in use in some of the most iconic buildings in the world. From miles of custom-created wall units inside the Pentagon to elegant dining furniture inside the White House.

Every day amazing products are produced right here in Chautauqua County.

I met hundreds of great people and saw so many amazing things that it filled me with pride in our county. I wish I had time to talk about each company I visited. But let me give you just a little taste of just a few of the companies that are quietly doing some amazing things here in our county...



Truck-Lite is the worldwide leader in LED lighting for commercial vehicles. They recently launched a new technology to track trailers nationwide using state-of-the-art patented technology that allows trucking companies to know exactly where their trailers are located get real-time, vital information including tire pressure and cargo information.

El Greco Woodworking, Inc.

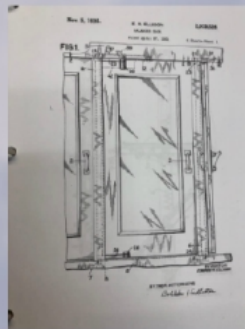
Jamestown, NY
Est. 1975



Located in Jamestown, El Greco makes hand-crafted children's furniture and cribs. They are the sole supplier of wood children's furniture for the high-end national furniture retailer Room & Board. My wife Kelly and I visited one of the showrooms in downtown Chicago, where we saw many of El Greco's items on display.

Ellison Bronze

Falconer, NY
Est. 1927



Dawson Doors

Jamestown, NY
Est. 1946



Also on our trip to Chicago we saw many buildings with entry doors produced in Chautauqua County including the Burberry building, which features the Balanced Door design of Ellison Bronze in Falconer. The Ellison Brothers patented the special design back in the 1930s and it is still the standard for entry doors, especially in large buildings, throughout the world. Not far away from Burberry in downtown Chicago are doors made by another Chautauqua County company at Tiffany & Co. Their entry doors were made by Dawson Doors of Jamestown.



The Resource Center has locations in the north and south county. In addition to the great service they provide to those facing challenges, they also employ many people, at all skill levels to assemble and produce items for many high-profile customers. From packing mixed cases for Southern Tier Brewery to manufacturing and assembling critical items used by our military in combat zones.

Fieldbrook Foods, Inc.

Dunkirk, NY
Est. 1914



Fieldbrook 
The complete treat company **Foods**

Fieldbrook Foods is a national producer of ice cream and frozen desserts. Located in Dunkirk, it makes private label products that are household favorites. From SpongeBob SquarePants push-ups to ice cream bars and sundae cones, millions of ice cream novelties are produced each year right here in our county and are shipped all over the nation.

Fancher Chair

Falconer, NY
Est. 1807



Chautauqua Institution Benches 2017
3880' of benches built and finished in 21 days



Fancher Chair is one of the nation's oldest manufacturing companies with production dating to 1807. Fancher makes high-end wood furniture and has produced chairs that are in the White House. They even came to the rescue when the Chautauqua Institution needed to complete the benches needed for the new Amphitheater. Fancher designed, built and installed 3,860 linear feet of benches in less than three weeks' time.



Besides operating a fantastic market and deli featuring fresh produce, prepared foods and a garden center, Brigiotta's also operates a wholesale produce business out of their Jamestown location. Brigiotta's is truly unique in our area because they bring containers of bananas in directly from Central and South America and have their own climate-controlled ripening operation on site. They are one of the only ones in Western New York to have these advanced ripening rooms.

Jamestown Plastics, Inc.

Brocton, NY
Est. 1957



Located in Brocton, Jamestown Plastics is a custom manufacturer of thermoformed products for over 50 years. In addition to doing work for major Fortune 500 companies, they have also patented an amazing innovative technology for a closure design on plastic containers, called Click-it Clam, that is revolutionizing the industry.

Bailey Manufacturing Co., LLC

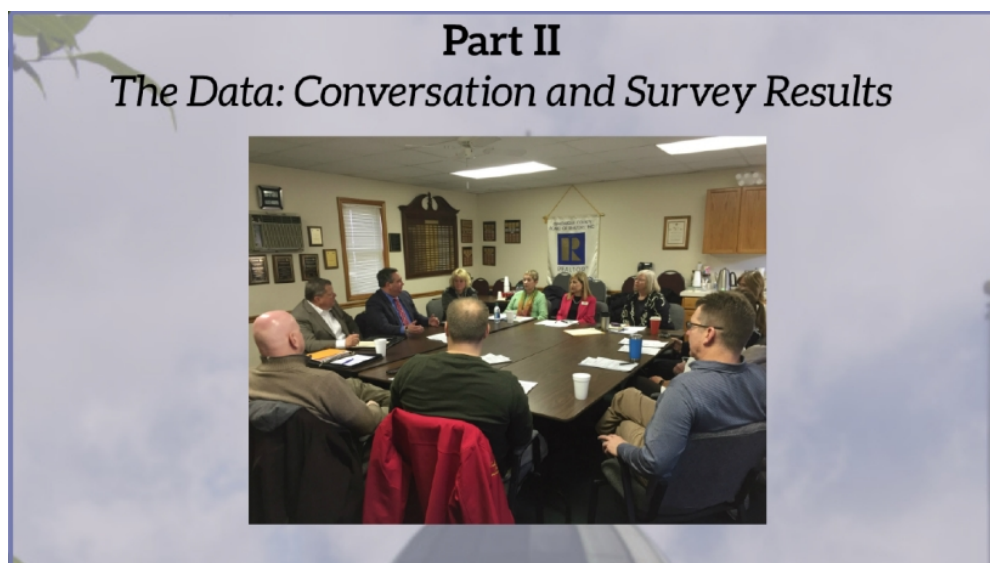
Forestville, NY
Est. 1948



In business since 1948, Bailey Manufacturing supplies custom fabricated metal components to many companies including major automotive manufacturers like General Motors and Continental Tire Company. Their parts are shipped all over North and South America and can be found in many automobiles models both foreign and domestic. All shipped out of their location in Forestville.



Growers' Co-Op in Westfield has been in business since 1929. It is a grape-grower-owned organization that is made up of 81 growers and 3,000 acres of grapes. The juice concentrates are used in many products including wine, fruit juices, jellies and more. The juices made here are shipped as far away as China!



So many people have asked me what I have learned in my first 100 days during these visits. That's what I'm going to talk about tonight. But, overall, what I have learned is this...

Most businesses in our county are doing well. In fact, many have more business than they can handle. They would like to expand and grow. What is stopping them is not so much taxes or regulations. What's truly holding them back is the lack of a qualified workforce. We will talk about that a little later.

Having owned and operated my own business, I can tell you that one of the worst days in your professional life is the day you learn you are losing an important customer. You then have to ask yourself, "Was I being a good partner? Did I understand their business and was I in-tune with their needs?"

Of course, things always happen beyond your control, but having a good relationship where your customer values your partnership is a critical component to success.

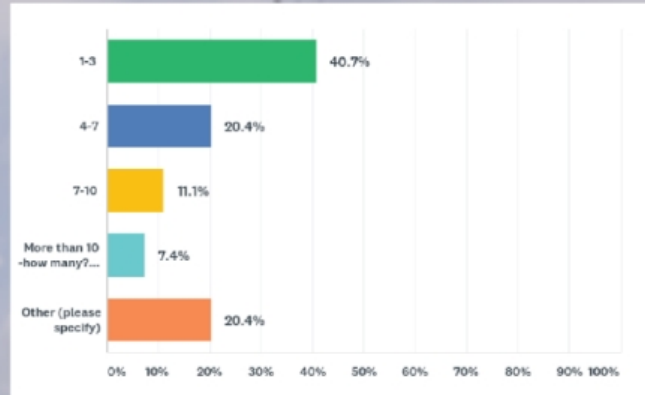
As County Executive, I consider the businesses of the county to be my customers. So understanding their needs and being a good partner is vital to a successful relationship.

Visiting with these businesses was an important part of building relationships and gathering data. These visits were not dog and pony shows for just a photo-op. These were in-depth meetings to discuss real issues and the current state of their business as well as what they see for the future. Also, we conducted a survey to gather and quantify the data in order to tailor our economic development strategy around helping the businesses that are already here to thrive and succeed.

So let's take a look at some of that data.

First of all, the political rhetoric on the state of business in Chautauqua County is not the reality that I found. Like I said before, overall business is good and we have jobs. Most of the jobs are full-time, year round jobs that pay above the average wage for our county.

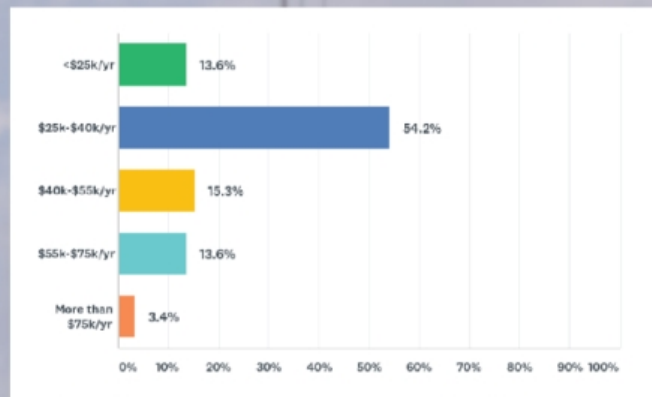
Over 75% have currently open positions.



767 Total Positions!

Of the 107 businesses we visited more than 75% have open positions. A total of 767 open positions. This number does not include jobs that will be created by Athenex.

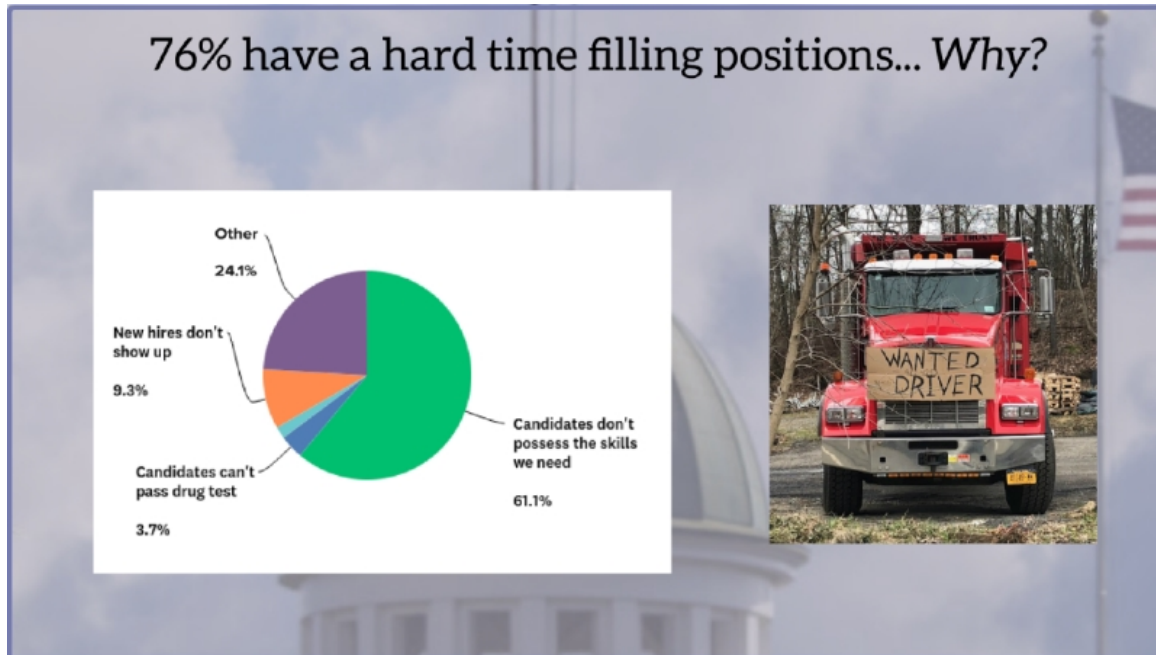
Salary ranges for open positions:



Despite the fact that the jobs pay well. . .

76% of respondents said they have difficulty filling positions.

So what's the issue?



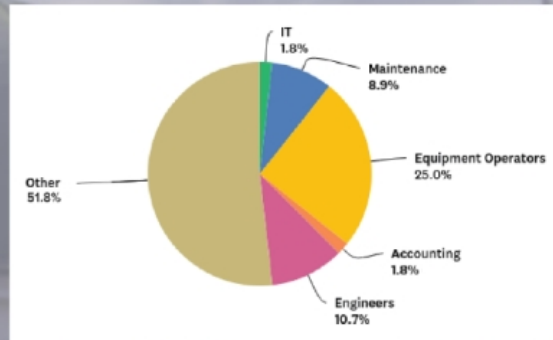
First and foremost is the lack of a skilled workforce. More than 60% of the respondents in our survey said, “Candidates don’t possess the skills we need.”

Also, they have the problem of people not passing a drug test and showing up to work every day. Even though the survey results don’t reflect this, because they were asked to choose one answer, virtually every business and organization I visited brought these up as major problems. I will address that a little later also.

Skills Required:

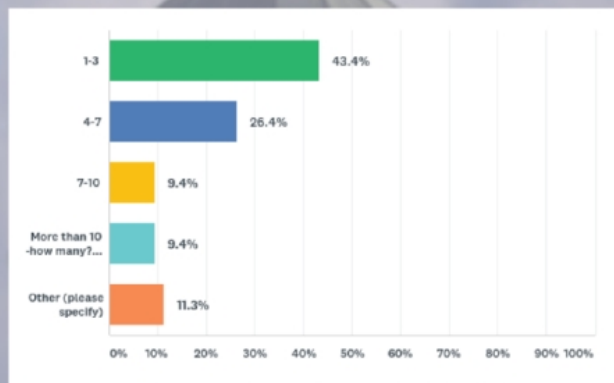
"Other" skills including:

- CNC Operators
- Welders
- CDL Drivers
- Nurses/EMTs/Aides
- Management
- Marketing/Design
- "All Disciplines Needed!"



The skills that are needed are: welders, CNC machine operators, mechanics, plumbers, electricians, and CDL Drivers. Also, skills are needed in advanced manufacturing including CAD designers and software engineers. Healthcare companies also need nurses, nurse practitioners, aides, doctors of all kinds, lab technicians and many others.

Retirement openings forecast within 5 years:



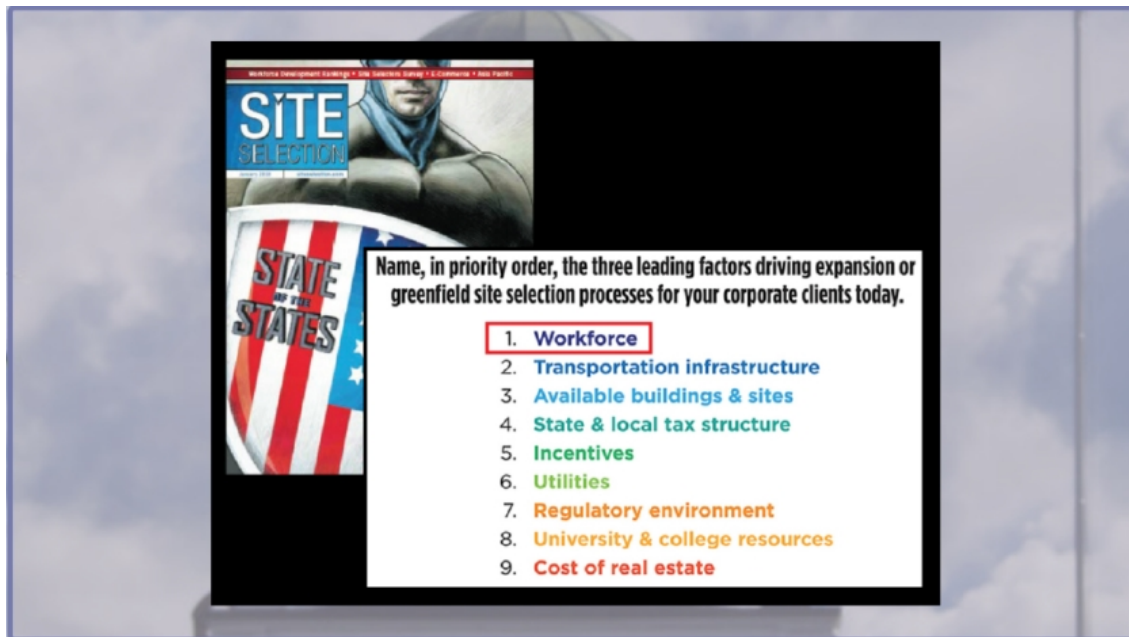
As a result, most employers we surveyed are concerned about retirements in the next five years. It has been referred to as the, "Gray Tsunami."

We have been telling our kids, since I have been in high school, over 30 years ago, that in order to achieve your full potential you must attend a four-year college.

We have judged the success of our schools on how many kids they send to college instead of how many have created successful careers.

We have been sending our kids into a future that may lead to underemployment or having to leave the county to find work; all while not supplying the businesses here in our county with the most crucial part of their supply chain, their workforce.

Not only is workforce critical for the survival of the businesses that are already here in Chautauqua County it's also critical for us to be able to recruit new businesses.



Site Selection Magazine is a trade publication for companies that are in the businesses of finding new site locations for companies. Every year they do a survey to find out the most important factors in choosing locations for businesses that are relocating or expanding. The survey results in the January 2018 issue show that the number one issue is workforce.



But despite the challenges, when we asked in our survey about the future of their businesses, most companies reported that the future looks bright and they expect to grow.



The issues and challenges they brought up led back to one recurring theme ... communication.

The first step is to do a better job of communicating and networking. We need to connect job seekers with companies that have open positions and connect our educational institutions with local companies to ensure we are producing qualified graduates.



As part of the survey follow-up, we had 42 companies request a meeting to discuss their business and how the County can assist them. We will continue following up on those in the coming weeks.

Also, we will be actively reviewing all county policies to ensure that whenever legally allowed by New York State, Chautauqua County Government is giving preference to local companies by offering an opportunity for them to match the lowest quote. We should be doing business with the companies that are located here in our county and paying those taxes and employing our neighbors.

Part III

Our Future: Plotting our course forward



Here's what we need to do:

Realigning our Resources and Working Together

Deputy County Executive for Economic
Development

Chautauqua County Director of Planning and
Community Development



We need to realign our resources to focus first on supporting the businesses that are already here. The businesses that are already here and have been contributing to our economy deserve to be the first priority.

We are restructuring our economic development resources. We started that by creating the Deputy County Executive for Economic Development. We brought Mark Geise back to fill this important role. This new position sends the message that we are serious about economic development and carries the full weight of the Office of the County Executive.

Also in this role, Mark will head up the Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency. His focus will be on working with the IDA to create a more focused, open and transparent structure.

We also created the Department of Planning and Community Development, which I named Don McCord the director.

Our focus will be on working better with municipalities and other community stakeholders. By better engaging our communities we will hopefully stop living in silos and instead have all communities working together to what's in the best interest of economic development for the entire county.

Both positions report directly to the County Executive to ensure that we are laser focused on economic development and community development. Also, to better mitigate the potential for economic development opportunities that could conflict with our other focus areas of the countywide comprehensive plan and other plans to protect and preserve our natural assets and the things that make Chautauqua County truly unique and special.

Realigning our Resources and Working Together



We need to work together by creating an Economic Development Alliance.

This Alliance would draw together all of the stakeholders that are working on Economic Development so they can maximize our resources and make sure we are sending a strong, cohesive message to the businesses in our county and to business looking to locate or expand in our county.

The Economic Development Advisory Council would be made up of local business leaders and will work with me and the economic development team to help develop the overarching economic development strategy for our county.

In order to create this new structure, we are hiring an independent, third-party consultant.

We have a lot of groups working independently. If we don't come together with a cohesive strategy and common goals then we will only continue to hit singles and doubles but never hit any home runs.

Change the Narrative for Economic Development Incentives



We need to change the narrative for economic development initiatives. In the past, we have put more emphasis on recruiting new businesses and not enough on retention and growth of our existing companies.

We are going to balance our approach to increase efforts to preserve and expand the existing business that already understand the challenge of operating in New York State and are doing well.

Shift Education Pathways and Training Initiatives

Industrial Equipment Technology Certificate				
Suggested Course Sequence				
The certificate will require a minimum of two semesters to complete.				
REQUIREMENTS				
WT 1200: Student Success Seminar	2	WT 1200: Mechanical Administrative Control Logic	4	
ELC 1200: Fundamentals of Electricity	3	ME 1200: Control Motors and Control Systems	3	
ENG 1200: English Composition I (1st year)	3	MCT 1210: Applied Pneumatics/Hydraulics	3	
MAT 1218: Applied Math for Technology I	3	MCT 1200: Computer Numerical Control/Machine Tools	3	
or MAT 1220, MAT 1230, MAT 1230 or higher		MAT 1240: Applied Working	3	Elective Hours
MCT 1200: Engineering Drawing with AutoCAD	4			
MCT 1210: Machine Theory and Operations	3			
				33 credit hours
Course descriptions and prerequisites can be found at http://www.cuny.edu				
Industrial Equipment Technology Certificate				
Emerging Schedule - Cortland County Campus				
Introduction to new plan				
Fall				
Module	Course	Credits	Prerequisites	Notes
1	WT 1200	2		Required for all students
2	ELC 1200	3		Required for all students
3	ENG 1200	3		Required for all students
4	MAT 1218	3		Required for all students
5	MCT 1200	4		Required for all students
6	MCT 1210	3		Required for all students
7	MCT 1240	3		Required for all students
8	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
9	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
10	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
11	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
12	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
13	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
14	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
15	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
16	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
17	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
18	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
19	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
20	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
Spring				
Module	Course	Credits	Prerequisites	Notes
1	WT 1200	2		Required for all students
2	ELC 1200	3		Required for all students
3	ENG 1200	3		Required for all students
4	MAT 1218	3		Required for all students
5	MCT 1200	4		Required for all students
6	MCT 1210	3		Required for all students
7	MCT 1240	3		Required for all students
8	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
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17	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
18	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
19	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students
20	MAT 1230	3		Required for all students



Grow Communication Among Stakeholders



The key to addressing our skills gap and having training that is more in line with the demands of our employers is better communication between our employers and educational training institutions. We have a good head start on this thanks to the work of organizations like the Education Coalition.

Local Business Networking Event

"As a small company it is difficult for us to gain exposure for our products."

"Bring in services (vendors) to augment our needs; we send parts out as far away as Florida, Michigan, Connecticut, etc."

"Local government should be fostering relationships between the larger companies who get incentives and the smaller local companies who can supply what they need."

"If a new project has a government component, there should be a list of products to buy locally."

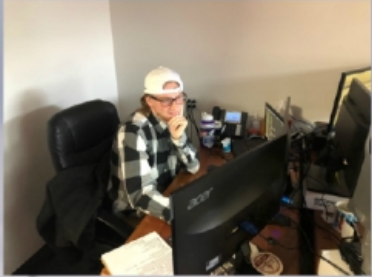

"The County could possibly exert pressure on other local businesses to keep as much of their work in Chautauque County as possible."

As I traveled around the county and spoke with businesses, I was impressed with number of them that are working together and doing business together. We want

to make sure we are maximizing those opportunities and keeping local companies connected in the ever-changing business world so we are working with the IDA to put together a business-to-business networking event this fall.

This will give companies an opportunity to meet with each other in short, scheduled meetings, very much like speed-dating, to see where there is more opportunity to do business together. Local companies collaborating together strengthens our economy and our community.

**Connecting Employers with Job Seekers:
ChautauquaJobs.org**



If we filled those 767 Positions with currently unemployed job seekers?

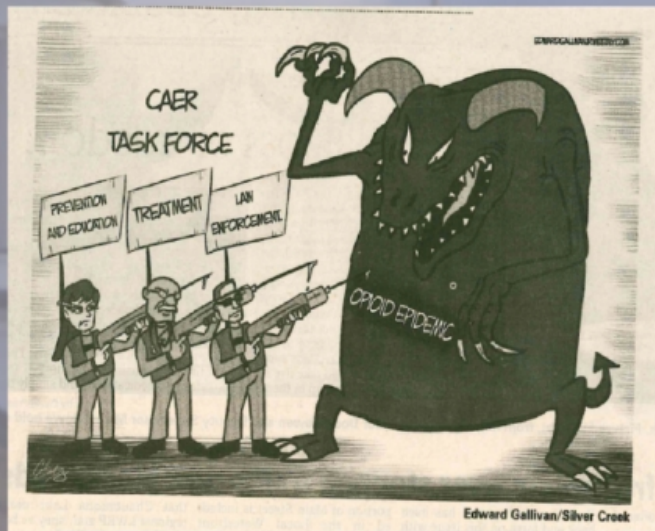
- 5.4% Average unemployment rate Upstate NY
- 6.1% Average unemployment rate in Chautauqua Co.
- 3,400 Average unemployed - 767 filled positions =
- 4.7% **New unemployment rate in Chautauqua Co.!**

Another need that we heard from employers and those seeking jobs is a comprehensive one-stop location for all job listing and for skills of people seeking to be employed in our county. So we are creating a site called **chautauquajobs.org**.

We want to make sure everyone in our county who is looking for work has that opportunity. This is so important because if we could fill those 767 open positions with currently unemployed job-seekers, Chautauqua County's unemployment rate would drop from 6.1% to just 4.7%, which is well below the 5.4% average for Upstate New York.

Once again, we need to be able to fill the open positions in order to ensure that existing businesses grow and prosper. Businesses having the confidence that they can fill open positions will also help to attract new business.

CAER Initiative



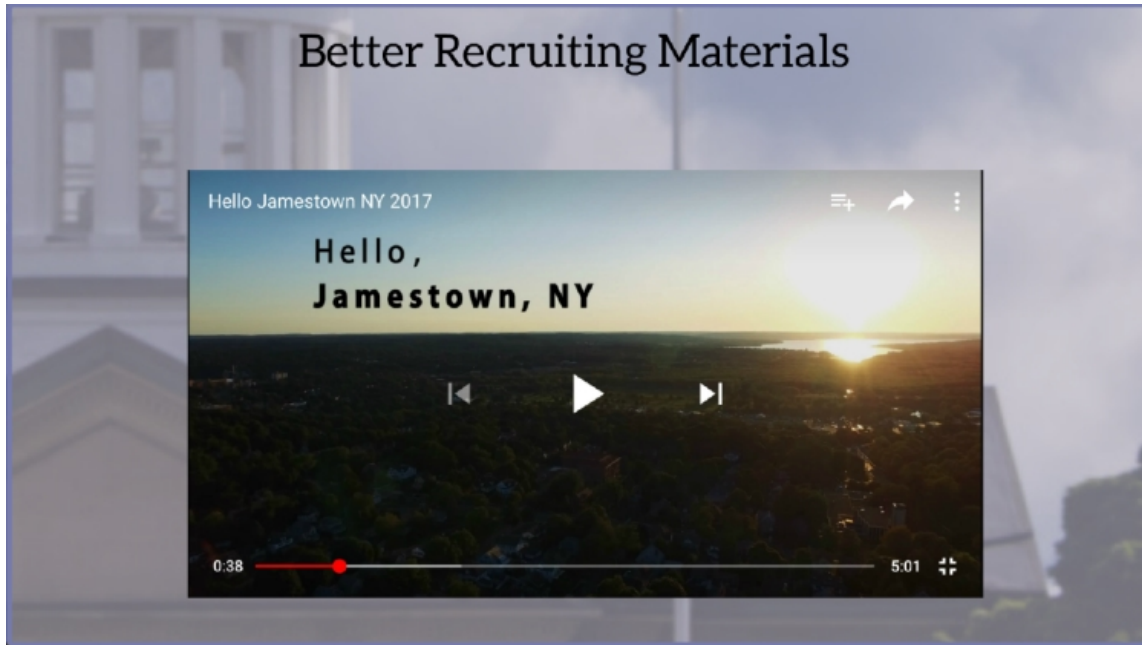
Courtesy Dan Kirk Observer

We must address the drug epidemic as an economic development issue as well as a community health issue.

Drug addiction has a negative impact on our workforce and our quality life. People addicted to drugs are not productive members of our society. The crime and poverty associated with drugs is a strain on our resources, damages property values and increases blight in our communities.

This is why we have created the Countywide Alliance for Enforcement and Rehabilitation, the CAER Initiative. This initiative brings all of the stakeholders who are working on this drug epidemic together in one group. This includes our education and prevention, law enforcement, healthcare, and rehabilitation and recovery stakeholders. All working together to maximize our limited resources and work toward common goals. I'd like to thank retired narcotics detective Tom Tarpley for taking on the massive task of coordinating the group.

Better Recruiting Materials



We also need to recruit talent to our county. Several companies told us that it's very hard to attract talent from outside our county because of the negative perception of our communities. Other areas are successful in recruiting people to relocate by controlling the narrative and better communicating their assets.

We are going to create a countywide recruitment package that focuses on the positive aspects of our community like our affordable cost of living and diverse quality-of-life options.

Many of you may be familiar with the Hello Jamestown video, which gives a positive portrayal. We are working on creating a similarly-themed recruiting video that can be used countywide by our employers.



Most of us live here because we know how special of a place Chautauqua County is. We have wonderful natural assets, we have affordable living. You can live on

or near a body of water reasonably. We have good schools. We are located in a good region that is close to many major metropolitan areas.

The missing piece of the puzzle is self-confidence. **We cannot expect others to believe in us when we don't believe in ourselves.**

We should celebrate our successes and face challenges in a positive manner.

We need to stop telling our children they should move away. Instead let's prepare them for the jobs that are here. Let's also retrain displaced adults with the skills to meet the needs that our employers must have to prosper and grow.

If we express that collective self-confidence it will become infectious and others will join us. But I need your help! Our county is too small and the stakes are too high. We all need to work together. We need to set aside partisan politics and personal agendas.

Together we can Elevate Chautauqua County to the next level.