

# PROGRESS CHENANGO

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## Village of Sherburne faces challenges and marks accomplishments

**SHAWN MAGRATH**  
EVENING SUN

SHERBURNE – In spite of the budgetary and personnel concerns plaguing essential departments, including police, fire, and emergency medical services, Village of Sherburne officials are keeping an air of optimism as they navigate ways to meet challenges head-on.

The last year has been pivotal for the village. It made headway in a proposal to update its wastewater facility, continued efforts to address its housing issues, and wrapped up a multi-million dollar undertaking to create an open municipal internet service – the first of its kind in rural New York State.

Having internet infrastructure now in place is a game changer for Sherburne, according to Village Mayor William Acee, who calls the project Sherburne’s “crowning achievement” of the year. “The completion of our fiber optics system has by far been our biggest accomplishment,” said Mayor Acee. “We



**Sherburne’s new municipal fiber-optic internet service, the first of its kind in rural New York, now serves over 700 residents and continues to expand. (Photos by Shawn Magrath)**



feel that that’s a piece of the infrastructure now that sets us apart from other municipalities. With work from home becoming more popular, we feel we’re poised for all kinds of economic growth so we can continue to focus on economic development and jobs.”

The village’s fiber optics system creates an open internet service, meaning that other internet providers would be able to use the system with village consent. More than 700 Sherburne residents have signed up for the service, Acee noted, and more are added daily, creating competition with large area internet providers such as Frontier Communications and Spectrum. The system runs fiber optic cable on Sherburne’s existing utility poles to provide broadband internet access to homes and businesses in the areas that are covered by the village’s municipal electric service.

The fiber optics system is the culmination of years of funding requests to state and federal agencies. Federal

funds were awarded for the project in 2021 followed by a wave of New York State funds in 2022 through the state’s ConnectALL initiative, a state-wide effort which seeks to build digital infrastructure and internet access in rural regions.

Village officials are currently working with town boards in Sherburne and Columbus in a \$7 million undertaking to expand fiber optic access to areas of those townships by utilizing their NYSEG utility poles. The two townships were earmarked for state funding for the project in the ConnectALL initiative in 2024. Hopes are to have town residents online within the next year.

Having the fiber optics system in place is undoubtedly a boon to the Village of Sherburne. The village is now offering one gigabyte of speed for residents, although it’s capable of increasing to 10 gigabytes as demand rises. Combined with the village’s low-cost municipal electric service, it could be a major

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### Chenango Story

#### ASSEMBLYMAN ANGELINO OFFERS MONTHLY UPDATES IN NEWSPAPER COLUMN

*Starting in March, Assemblyman Joseph Angelino (R,C-Norwich) will launch a new monthly column in The Evening Sun, providing regular updates on legislative matters and key issues affecting the region. Readers can look forward to his insights on public safety, economic development, affordability, and other pressing concerns.*

*A familiar voice to many, Angelino previously wrote a weekly column for The Evening Sun before taking office.*

*A first installment appears in this special Progress Edition. The regular column, “Updates from Albany,” will be published in The Evening Sun during the first week of every month. Readers are encouraged to follow along for legislative updates and insights into the work being done on voters’ behalf.*

### Updates from Albany: New York Assemblyman Joseph Angelino

This year, I am entering my fifth year serving you as your assemblyman and your voice in Albany. It is an honor to represent our shared upstate values in the Legislature. I also want to thank the Evening Sun for allowing me to discuss “progress” this upcoming year

and what it means for the region.

Some of you may remember I wrote a weekly column for The Evening Sun for a few years before being elected. While my time now is hectic, representing 133,000 constituents over five counties, I would like

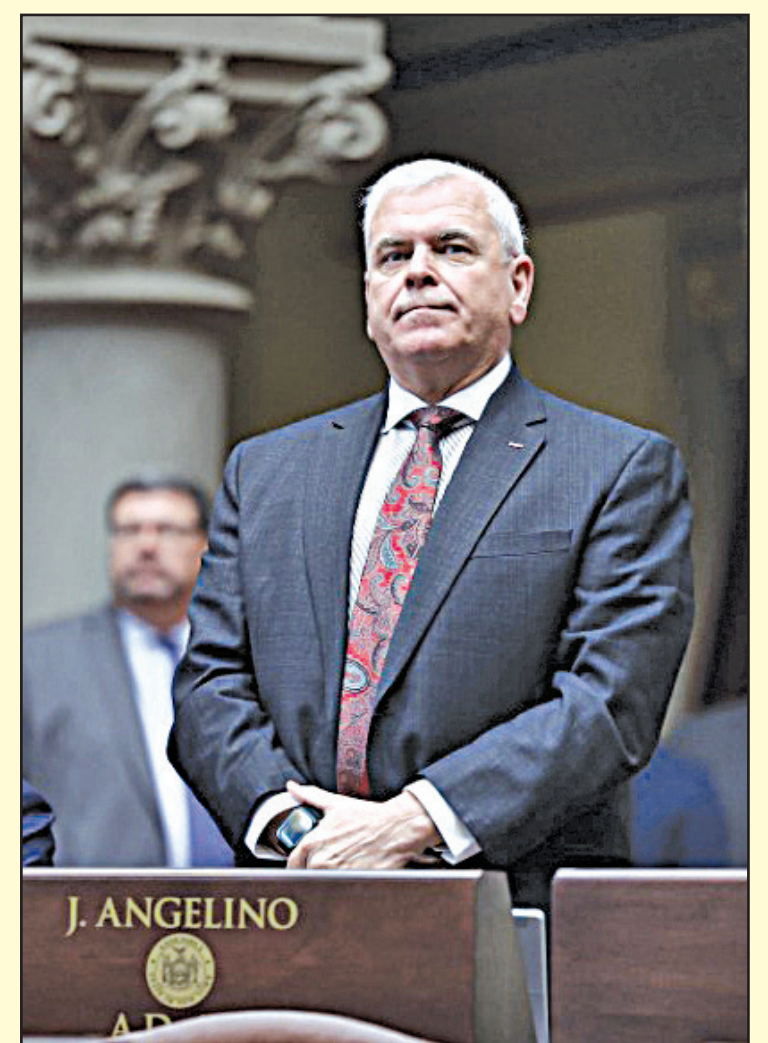
to announce I’ll again be writing a monthly column piece for this newspaper. A monthly piece is much more manageable for me because I would prefer quality over quantity.

While the definition of progress can mean different things to different people,

for me, moving this region forward means making New York more affordable, safer, and a better place to both live and raise a family. We need to work to stem the tide of population loss across upstate New York.

The facts couldn’t be more

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**The 248th Session of the New York State Assembly took place at the start of the year with Assemblyman Joseph Angelino (R,C-Norwich) pledging to represent District 121, which spans portions of Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Madison, and Otsego counties. (Submitted photo)**



# ChenTAC Chenango Threat Advisory Committee

## WHO WE ARE

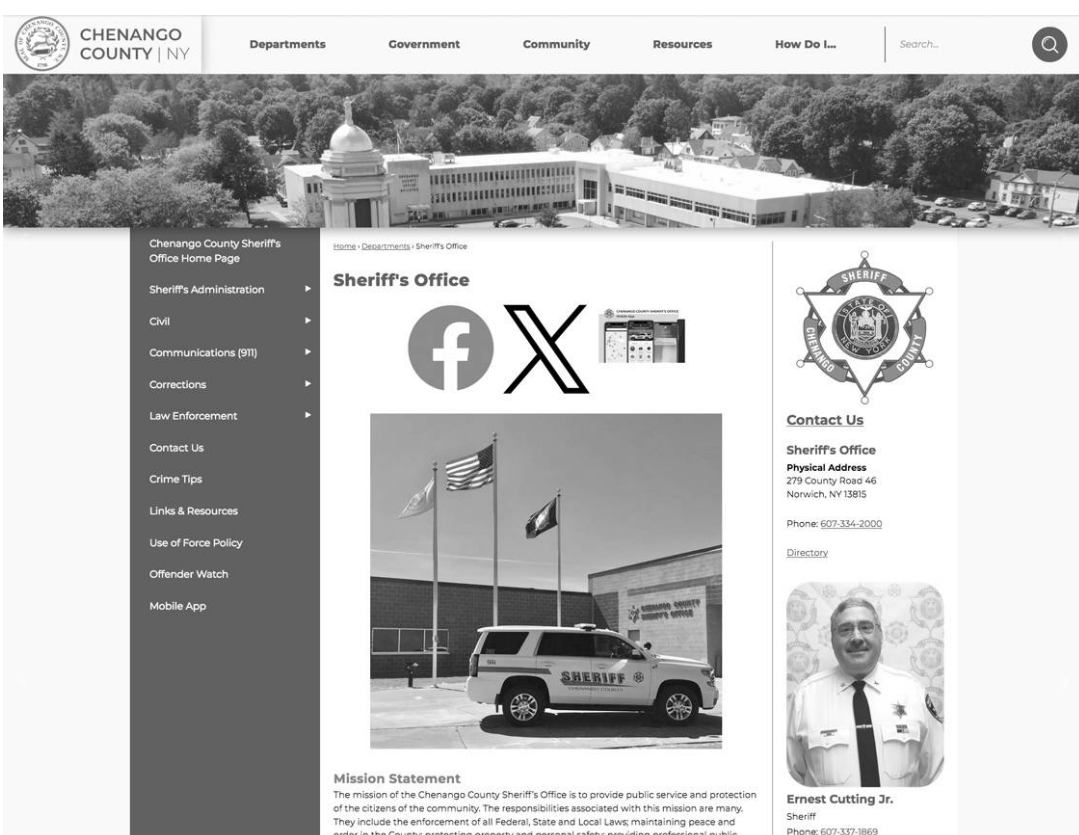
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# Chenango Valley Home expanding care and services for seniors



CVH Board Secretary Mary Davis, CVH Board Member Mary El Emerson, CVH Board President Byron Harrington, CVH Executive Director Jennifer Randall, and CVH Board Member and Capital Campaign Chairperson John Antonowicz. Not pictured: Vice President Peter DeRensis; Treasurer Rosemaria Cole; Board Members Allison Gunther, Lisa Natoli, Esq., and Cathy Perry; and CVH capital campaign committee members Robert Nassar, Virginia Lee, and Kathy Glavin. (Photo by Sarah Genter)

## TYLER MURPHY

EVENING SUN

NORWICH - For more than a century, Chenango Valley Home (CVH) and Apartments has been serving seniors in Chenango County and the surrounding region.

"As times have changed, CVH has changed as well," said CVH Assistant Administrator Randy Palmer.

Since its founding in 1896, the independent nonprofit organization has met the changing needs of the community's elderly population. The home currently operates as a licensed Adult Care Facility, offering both independent living in its apartments and assisted support in its residential home.

Chenango Valley Home and Apartments (CVH), located at 24 Canasawacta Street in Norwich, launched their "Empowering Seniors: Expanding Care Access" capital campaign in May to assist them in changing their licensure from a New York State Adult Home to an Assisted Living Residence (ALR).

This change will allow the facility to provide increased services and support to both current and future residents. In addition, the organization has plans to establish the area's first dedicated Memory Care Unit to serve those with

cognitive impairments, filling a crucial gap in local senior care.

"The decision to pursue an ALR licensure allows us to expand our ability to care for seniors who need a bit more assistance, while still maintaining the independence and dignity that our residents value," said Palmer.

CVH Board President Byron Harrington said as an adult home, the facility can provide meals, assist residents with getting dressed or bathing, and things of that nature. However, adult homes are not allowed to provide any type of nursing care, such as applying band-aids or ointments, wound care, or taking a resident's temperature.

"Assisted living will get us more care. [We can] take care of people longer," he said. "We figure about 50 percent of our discharges could have stayed here had we been assisted living. We've had to turn away 20 people [because] we weren't the level that they needed."

CVH has spent more than \$200,000 on feasibility studies, consulting, and preliminary architectural opinions over a three-year period. These explorations into the scope of the project determined approximately \$3 million worth of renovations needed to get the existing

building up to New York State ALR codes, including new fire doors throughout the facility, the installation of American Disability Act-compliant bathrooms not required under the current license, upstairs laundry to prevent the spread of disease, and more.

Perhaps the largest part of the project is the need to replace the 1950s-era elevator with a larger one that can accommodate stretchers, which Harrington said will probably cost close to \$1 million.

## Significant Transitions for Increased Care

Another key development for the nursing home in 2024 was the application for the New York State Department of Health (DOH) Statewide Transformation Grant. If awarded, the funding would assist in the transition to an ALR and support the construction of a Memory Care Unit.

"Our major plans for 2025 are to 'break ground' on phase one (new licensure) in early October," said Palmer. "This will mainly include renovations to our existing facility to meet the requirements the NYS DOH has to be licensed as an ALR. If we are fortunate enough to

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NYS Senator Peter Oberacker speaking with CVH Executive Director Jennifer Randall. Oberacker visited the facility on July 22 to learn about their goal of upgrading their licensure to an Assisted Living Residence, and the potential for state support. (Photo by Sarah Genter)



# Chenango Valley Home expanding care and services for seniors -



A patio area and vegetable garden at Chenango Valley Home and Apartments, located at 24 Ganasawacta Street in Norwich. (Photo by Sarah Genter)



A seating area and waterfall at Chenango Valley Home and Apartments. The facility includes 30 private rooms, 12 independent apartments, outdoor seating areas, a library, a beauty salon, a sun deck, a large dining room, and more. (Photo by Sarah Genter)

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receive a grant award from the state, phase two (Memory Care Unit) will be incorporated into our major plans for 2025.”

In addition seeking state funding for the home Capital Campaign Project, to secure funding for the first phase of the transition. “We have been fortunate to receive many donations from local foundations, businesses, and individuals,” Palmer said. “Their support is helping us move forward in ensuring that seniors in our community have access to the best

possible care.”

Over the years, Chenango Valley Home has consistently adapted to better serve the senior community.

“Over the course of Chenango Valley Home’s 128-year history, we have evolved multiple times to better serve the needs of the senior community. Most notably is our current commitment to gaining licensure as an ALR, and our further plans to build a Memory Care Unit.”

The transition to an ALR will allow seniors to remain in their home while receiving additional services that support aging in place. The future Memory Care Unit

will provide specialized care for residents suffering from cognitive decline, a growing need in the region.

“For Chenango Valley Home, the biggest change we have experienced has been due to COVID, which resulted in more seniors choosing to remain in their homes (aging in place),” Palmer explained. “As we have exited the COVID years, we have begun to see an uptick in seniors showing interest in moving into our facility.”

### Workforce Challenges and Community Commitment

Like many healthcare facil-

ities, the home faces challenges in hiring and retaining qualified staff.

“Finding the right employees is absolutely a challenge,” Palmer said. “Retention is a challenge as well, but once the right employee is found, retention becomes much less of an issue. Personal Care Aides are the hardest positions to fill.”

To attract new talent, the nursing home uses hiring platforms such as Indeed and emphasizes the benefits of working in a close-knit, community-oriented environment.

The home remains deeply

connected to the Chenango County community, recognizing both the advantages and challenges of operating in a rural area. “Being in a rural area has its benefits, such as a lower crime rate and a strong sense of community,” Palmer said. “But at the same time, the area is economically challenged compared to other regions.”

The nursing home has ambitious plans for the coming year, with the goal of making significant progress on its transition to an ALR and its potential Memory Care Unit.

“Our focus remains on

expanding services and enhancing the quality of care we provide,” Palmer said. “If we receive the grant funding we’ve applied for, it will be a game-changer for both our residents and the broader community.”

Beyond structural and service expansions, the nursing home is also committed to strengthening engagement with the local community.

As Palmer put it, “Always look to the future - our industry is always changing.”



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# Village of Sherburne faces challenges and marks accomplishments -

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incentive for homebuyers and businesses to relocate, said Acee.

Nevertheless, the village is faced with a slew of challenges not necessarily unique to rural communities. And no other challenge is more daunting than Sherburne's ambulance service. Like thousands of municipalities its size, Sherburne struggles to keep its EMS service afloat due to higher operational expenses, fewer volunteers, and smaller Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. All things considered, it's the "biggest challenge" worrying local lawmakers, explained Acee.

"In rural New York State, and really all across the country, EMS is struggling because of Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement being very low," said Acee, noting how important essential EMS is to the community and the economic vitality of the village. "We're not sure where it's going to go, but it needs to be jump started. We're spending a lot of time on it."

Likewise, the village has started seeing similar trends with its police and fire departments. As a part-time agency, its police department has trouble recruiting qualified applicants while its fire department, driven entirely by volunteers, currently oper-



Sherburne faces staffing shortages in its police, fire, and EMS departments, as officials struggle to recruit and retain personnel in key emergency services. (Photo by Shawn Magrath)

ates at a minimum. "We're losing personnel and people are busy with different lifestyles. We don't see that high level of volunteerism that we saw 30 years ago," Acee said. "The candidate pool is shrinking and we're losing people. And like every other business, we have people aging out. The workforce is changing, so continuity and succession planning is always something that we're working on. We want to keep people trained to transition from one generation to the next. There's a lot to running a small community like ours, so as people age out, we have to constantly train new people."

Personnel worries aside, there's reason to remain hopeful, Acee pointed out. With plans underway for Micron Technology to construct the nation's largest chipmaking complex near Syracuse, Sherburne hopes to capitalize on its low-cost municipal and internet services to attract businesses that may contract with Micron. Micron has received billions of dollars in federal funding under the 'Chips Act,' and has promised to create 9,000 jobs, 4,500 construction jobs, and 40,000 indirect jobs in New York alone. Micron aims to break ground on the facility by November.

"If Micron is as big as

they're saying, we're probably going to see some overflow of some of the benefits in our area," said Acee. "We want Sherburne to be a place that can attract some of the businesses that work with Micron in the future."

For the dream to attract new residents and spur economic growth to come to fruition, the village has turned its attention to bolstering its infrastructure, namely its wastewater facility. Its current wastewater

plant has been operational for half a century and is well past its prime, said Acee. What's more, the village is facing pressure from environmental agencies to reduce the amount of chemicals the facility is releasing into the Susquehanna River basin.

The village has taken on efforts to upgrade its wastewater system, a \$32 million project that Acee said is already at 89 percent grant funding from state and federal sources.

"To be at 89 percent grant funding is really high," he said. "After this project, I believe we'll have an infrastructure that is second to none."

Housing has also become a priority for the municipality. With the growing presence of multi-family rentals and short-term lodging in houses throughout the Village of Sherburne, officials are pushing developers to restore or build new single family housing in an attempt to spur economic development.

"Like every older community, we have properties that are run down. We're trying to take those and rehabilitate them where we can," said Acee.

Past successes and future challenges in mind, the Village of Sherburne appears to be moving forward with a sense of cautious optimism.

"It will really depend on where inflation goes, where we'll be in the future," said Acee. "If inflation stays contained, we think we'll be in good shape for several years."



Village officials are working to secure funding for a \$32 million wastewater facility upgrade, with 89% of the project already covered by state and federal grants. (Photo by Shawn Magrath)

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## Updates from Albany: New York Assemblyman Joseph Angelino -

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clear, most New Yorkers feel the state is on the wrong path. They don't feel safe in their neighborhoods, and taxes are too high making our home state so unaffordable New York leads the entire country in outmigration. Too many of our friends and neighbors have moved to states with more freedoms, less taxes, and where their dollars go further.

As a former police officer, my passion is public safety, and it pains me deeply to see the rising crime in our state and the demonization of my brothers and sisters in law enforcement who put themselves between the good citizens and those with evil intent. The solutions are right in front of us, we need to repeal bail reform, which has led to criminals being left to roam our streets. Judges have their hands tied and cannot keep them behind bars.

New York is the only state where a judge cannot consider an offender's danger to the community when contemplating pretrial confinement. We must also put the defund the police rhetoric in the rearview mirror, a police force with a high morale is the most effective thing we have to fight crime. Officers should know their represen-

tatives in Albany have their backs.

Progress for our region means making life more affordable for families so they stay in the area and do not flee to other states where the cost of living is much lower. This is accomplished by lowering taxes, encouraging businesses to stay here, and making it easier for them to hire and retain talented and trained employees. Affordability isn't a singular issue. It stems from years of poor decisions in energy, healthcare, insurance, taxes, and business regulations. Making New York affordable won't happen in one legislative session it will require undoing years of policy missteps.

A step toward progress in the City of Norwich may come through legislation I authored at the request of the City's Common Council and Mayor to help with housing and boosting the tax base. I am proud to have sponsored and passed legislation (A.5898-E) to allow the City of Norwich to exempt new home construction from having to pay property taxes during the construction of a residential building. During construction, the property will be tax-exempt and once completed, reduced taxes for four years. This will help encourage the development



The State Capital building in Albany. (AP file photo)

of vacant land in our neighborhoods and increase the city's tax base. Most of the homes in the city limits were built before World War II, and many others in the 19th century. We've all seen a house on a block become run down, and even abandoned, eventually being torn down. Many streets have at least one vacant lot where a home once stood. The hope is this tax exemption will help facilitate investment in new homes being built and attract more people to the area.

In the area of education of our workforce, I'm happy to hear the Governor is planning a tuition-free opportunity for folks to achieve

micro-credentials at SUNY Broome and other community colleges. This is a kickstart for people to obtain good employment and remain in the area and a use of our tax dollars that will benefit all of us. Micro-credentials are something businesses in our area have told me time and again is needed to help maintain their workforce. Micro-credentials in areas of healthcare, technology, computer programming, and even stenography will open the door for people to get good-paying jobs right here at home. It will also help local businesses such as Amphenol, Raymond, Chobani, hospitals, nursing homes, and the

New York State Veterans Home in Oxford, all desperately in need of new employees. There is also a need for many local manufacturers for tradesmen and women such as welders, linemen, and electrical workers. These micro-credentials should help local businesses identify, hire, and retain hard-working employees.

I also want to touch on something that should be done to help businesses, and that is the repeal or delay of the mandates found in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). The mandate for electric vehicles, particularly school buses is a great idea,

but now is not the time. A phased-in approach is what is needed. We need time for upgrades to the electrical grid and battery technology to make this a feasible transportation alternative to fossil fuel. It is not just businesses that are impacted, but local municipalities as well. There is a municipality within the 121st Assembly District that ordered a diesel-powered dump truck but because of regulations cannot receive it until the company that manufactured the truck sells an electric heavy-duty truck in New York. Listen, we all want cleaner air and water, but New York is trying to save the world at the expense of the state's economy, and it is simply not realistic, especially when you consider New York contributes less than a tenth of 1% of global carbon emissions. The fact of the matter is: if New York became completely carbon-neutral, global emissions would virtually remain unchanged thanks to the pollution coming from places such as China and India, so why would we decimate our economy for essentially no benefit to the planet?

Let me end by saying how proud and humbled I am to be the assemblyman for the 121st District.

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# Chenango Story



Golden Artist Colors CEO Mark Golden, Carter Brightman of Rentals to Go and Commerce Chenango President and CEO Sal Testani. (Submitted photo)



Small Business of the Year: Julia Miller and Jared Bartle of Blueox. (Submitted photo)



Rachel Flanagan, Eric Larsen of Loral Management, Commerce Chenango President & CEO Sal Testani. (Submitted photo)



Sal Testani, Preferred Mutual Chairman of the Board John Mitchell, Commerce Chenango Chairman of the Board Luke Hess-Murphy. (Submitted photo)

## Businesses of 2024: Rentals to Go, Blueox, Loral Management and Preferred Mutual

**SOPHIA ROOT**  
EVENING SUN

NORWICH – This summer Commerce Chenango, Assemblyman Joseph Angelino and the community recognized four Chenango County businesses, Rentals to Go, Blueox, Loral Management and Preferred Mutual.

Commerce Chenango President and CEO Sal Testani presented awards as follows:

Entrepreneur of the Year: Rentals to Go.

Small Business of the Year: Blueox.

Commitment to Community: Loral Management.

Member of Distinction: Preferred Mutual.

The Entrepreneur of the Year award, also known as “The Sammy” was presented by Golden Artist Colors CEO and Co-Founder Mark Golden. Golden, an entrepreneur himself, gave the background of Rentals to Go and the RTG Ranch: a Texas Longhorn Ranch in upstate New York.

Carter Brightman of Rentals to Go accepted the award for his family business. Brightman explained that some of his fam-

ily members were in Alabama conducting business, providing an example of Rentals to Go’s national reach.

Blueox President Jared Bartle and Senior Vice President Julia Miller accepted the Small Business of the Year award for their business, Blueox.

Miller took a moment in her acceptance speech to acknowledge some of her staff members because, to her, a small business is nothing without their employees. Each Blueox employee in attendance was recognized by their name, their position in the company and their years of service.

Eric Larsen of Loral Management was presented the Commitment to Community award.

“If you want a better community, go make it one,” said Larsen expressing gratitude for the community members in the room. He claimed that Chenango County’s best days are ahead of it, as so many people are excited to make change in this community.

Finally, Preferred Mutual Insurance Company was awarded the Member of Distinction Award, accepted by Preferred

Mutual Insurance Company Chairman of the Board John Mitchell.

This award is presented to a Commerce Chenango member who supports their employees, community, and Commerce Chenango.

Mitchell read a statement from company President and CEO Benedikt Sander about the role of Preferred Mutual in the community.

Mitchell also acknowledged the employees that were present at the Gala and provided some insight on the long history behind Preferred Mutual Insurance Company and Commerce Chenango, including the establishment of Commerce Chenango and Leadership Chenango.

With the help of the Canasawacta Country Club staff, The Trophy Guy, and Letizia and the Z Band, the event was a success.

Commerce Chenango thanked each attendee and all the winners for their contributions to the community and for making it such a special night.



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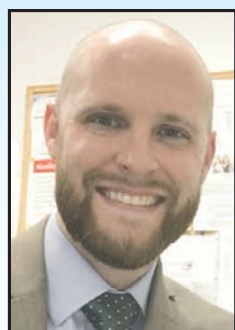
**Cindy Tiley**  
Newsroom Coordinator



**Russ Foote**  
Sales Manager



**Tyler Slater**  
Sales Representative



**Nate Foote**  
Sales Representative



**Scott Voss**  
Sales Representative



**Onalee Sanford**  
Sales Representative



29 Lackawanna Ave., Norwich, NY 13815

[news@evesun.com](mailto:news@evesun.com)

607-334-3276



# Our Customers Are Our First Priority

## Our Pledge...

Our Customers are our first priority. Reese-Marshall is here to serve you with your heating and cooling needs. We Pledge to constantly reaffirm this with our actions, which we have built our reputation on.

## We Offer...

- Free estimates for all installations
- Automatic delivery with a guarantee
- 24-hour emergency service, 365 days a year
- A variety of budget and burner service plans
- People who care about providing quality service

## Our Area of Service...

Reese-Marshall Co. Inc.'s office and storage facility is located on County Road 32, in Norwich. Our service area extends to Norwich and the following areas:

- Oxford - McDonough - Guilford - Preston
- Mt. Upton - Gilbertsville - Morris
- South New Berlin - New Berlin - Edmeston
- South Edmeston - West Edmeston - Pittsfield
- Sherburne - North Norwich - Earlville - Columbus Smyrna
- Otselic - South Otselic - Pitcher - Plymouth
- Sidney - Bainbridge
- Hamilton - Madison - Morrisville - Brookfield

## Quality Products...

Reese-Marshall Co. Inc. carries a full line of quality fuels including B-10 Heating Oil, Diesel, Gasoline and Propane Gas.

Our Burner Service Department is fully equipped to handle any repair or installation.



## Safe Quality Heating Systems

**Thermo Pride**

**Buderus**

**Rinnai**

**Thinking of a new heating system?  
Don't hesitate to call for a free written estimate.**



**REESE-MARSHALL**

*We make warm friends and keep you cool.*

since 1942

6254 County Road 32, Norwich, NY 13815

**PHONE (607) 334-3633**

www.reesemarshall.com • Email: info@reesemarshall.com