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SUNDAY TIMES

SUNDAY, JAN. 15, 2012

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—Sports, Page 1B



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Also inside
today ...



Life by the Lakes

The men who turn out two or three nights a week at the St. Mary's School gym share a love of basketball — some have been playing together for more than 30 years.

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Another new winery

The Lake Street Filling Station Winery in the works for Geneva.



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Eye on Government

It'll take delicate maneuvering to enact mandate relief and Medicaid reform without the state's poorest residents taking a hit on medical care.



— Page 3A

IN MONDAY'S EDITION

A Conversation With ...



Jim Richmond, former chairman, Geneva chapter of the NAACP

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TIMES

POLL

In his recent State of the State address, Gov. Andrew Cuomo proposed amending the state constitution to allow full casino gambling in the state, a move he said could generate \$1 billion in economic activity. What do you think?

Go to www.fltimes.com and scroll down to answer. A new poll runs each week with the answers the following Monday.

Farm Bureau backs fracking

Letter urges Cuomo to speed approval, cites promise of jobs and economic boon

By **HEATHER SWANSON**
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While expressing a pro-hydrofracking stance, the New York Farm Bureau is urging the governor to speed legislation allowing gas drilling in the state.

In a recent letter to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, state Farm Bureau President Dean Norton urged that

gas drilling in Marcellus and Utica shale be given the green light.

"New York Farm Bureau believes that high-volume hydrofracking is critically important to the future of the economy in New York State," Norton wrote in the letter.

However, the Farm Bureau is insistent that protective measures are put in place to prevent adverse environmental impacts.

"The state must have the needed staff and the strongest permit requirements for HVHF drilling operations to ensure that farmland, water resources and our communities are not negatively impacted," Norton wrote.

The most recent draft Supplemental Generic

■ See FARM on Page 4A

BONADENT SETTLES IN

Former Wal-Mart now the 'nicest dental lab in the world'



Spencer Tulis photos / Finger Lakes Times

BonaDent Dental Laboratories recently completed the renovation of the former Wal-Mart on Routes 5&20 in Seneca Falls, moving into the 83,000-square-foot building just after Thanksgiving. Above, employees grab a bite to eat in the new facility's cafeteria, Angelo's. Angelo Bonafiglia founded the company in 1949 and still comes to work every day. At right, technicians work on BonaDent products in the expanded production area.



Business of the year

SENECA FALLS — The Seneca County Chamber of Commerce will honor BonaDent Dental Laboratories with its Business of the Year award for 2011.

BonaDent will receive the award at the Chamber's annual dinner, which is scheduled for Jan. 20 at the Holiday Inn.

"It's nice to know that people think we're a good business," BonaDent President Bruce Bonafiglia said. "That's always nice to hear from the outside."

By **JIM MILLER**
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SENECA FALLS — Even as he watched the snow accumulate Friday outside his new office, BonaDent President Bruce Bonafiglia harbored no regrets about deciding to stay here instead of moving the company to Florida.

"I'm extremely happy and excited about staying in New York, regardless of the weather," Bonafiglia said.

With good reason. Last fall, BonaDent Dental Laboratories completed the renovation of the former Wal-Mart on Routes 5&20. The company moved from its old facility into the 83,000-square-foot building just after Thanksgiving, giving it the extra manufacturing space it needed as well as fresh facilities and room to grow.

■ See BONADENT on Page 6A



Main St. School's future is in board's hands

If you go ...

What: Waterloo school board meeting
When: 7 p.m. Tuesday
Where: High School auditorium, Stark Street

By **DAVID L. SHAW**
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WATERLOO — The school board will discuss and vote Tuesday on closing the Main Street Elementary School.

A committee formed last year to study the elementary school configuration recommended in December that one of the district's three elementary schools close, saying three schools is no longer financially sustainable.

The committee has since recommended that the Main Street school close

June 30, keeping LaFayette and Skoi-Yase elementary schools open.

"We've talked to the faculty and staff of the three schools about the recommendation to close Main Street. People know about it and now it's up to the board to endorse that recommendation or not," said Terry MacNabb, school superintendent.

The reasons why closing Main Street is being recommended will be discussed Tuesday night.

Main Street was built in 1928 as

Waterloo High School. The stately, three-story school served as the high school for many years until a new high school was built in 1964.

Then, it served as a junior high school and middle school until another new high school was built and the old high school was converted to a middle school some 10 years ago.

The district had housed a multi-age elementary school program at the Border City School until a decision was

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Above: The fitness and workout facility at BonaDent's new facility has expanded and features new equipment.

Upper right: The main foyer and reception area.

Far right: A technician focuses on the job at hand.

Below: The on-site day care center, which is larger than the previous center and has been upgraded.



BONADENT

Continued from Page 1A

A little work remains to be done here and there, but Bonafiglia and his employees have settled in after the 11-month construction process.

"The project went very well," Bonafiglia said. "When you start a project of this magnitude, there's always some unknowns, but actually, they were minimal."

Bruce Bonafiglia's father, Angelo, founded BonaDent in 1949. It remains a family business today, with several generations involved in the company and Bonafiglia children attending the on-site day care.

"My Dad still comes in every day," Bruce Bonafiglia said. "He's 84."

In recent years, BonaDent's old, 40,000-square-foot facility on BonaDent Drive became too cramped. Bruce knew he would have to move — he just wasn't sure where.

Local officials wanted him to remain here; Bonafiglia said he valued his family's roots in the community. However, officials in Melbourne, Fla., where BonaDent has a satellite facility, tried to lure him.

Seneca Falls won out, thanks to substantial aid from state and local fund-

ing. "The county, the state, the town — honestly, everyone stepped up to help us stay," Bonafiglia said, giving particular credit to Industrial Development Agency Director Robert Aronson, former town Supervisor Peter Same and state Sen. Michael Nozzolio, R-54 of Fayette.

The result? "This is the nicest dental lab facility in the world right now," Bonafiglia said. "It has that distinction."

The building includes new employee amenities like an on-site laundry



Spencer Tulis photos / Finger Lakes Times

Bruce Bonafiglia, president of BonaDent Dental Laboratories, speaks with a reporter in his office Friday. Bonafiglia called the company's new facility in Seneca Falls • the nicest dental lab facility in the world right now.

area. Others features, including the day care, salon and fitness center, were expanded and energized with new equipment.

Bonafiglia said the reason for the extras is simple: They help him attract and retain workers. He values the local workforce, but he tries to bring skilled workers in from across the nation too.

"We just moved someone up from Texas that's now settled in Seneca Falls," he said.

BonaDent first expressed interest in the former Wal-Mart building in August 2010. The site is adjacent to BonaDent's old facility, making it a convenient move — but a costly one as well.

The \$11 million project included a \$1.5 million building acquisition cost, plus renovations, site work, new equipment and other expenses.

Help came from several sources:

- A \$750,000 convertible loan from the Empire State Development Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund for equipment, building renovations and site work.

- A \$200,000 grant from the town of Seneca Falls' Community Development Block Grant program.

- A \$300,000 grant from Seneca County's CDBG program.

- Aid from the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency, including acquiring the fee title or a leasehold interest in the old Walmart for the dental lab expansion; acquisition of equipment, machinery and other tangible property for manufacturing; an exemption from sales and

use taxes for project-related purchases and rentals; an exemption from the mortgage recording fee; a payment in lieu of taxes agreement.

Aronson sees it as a good investment.

"BonaDent has become one of our most significant employers, [offering] above-average jobs paying above-average wages," he said. "It's an employer that has contributed to many local people. They pulled them up [with jobs] and training. It's an upward, mobile track for the young people of Seneca County and the region."

By keeping BonaDent here, the county retained 138 jobs. The company pledged to create another 90 — 18 a year for five years.

Bonafiglia believes he can do it.

"We've already added somewhere in the neighborhood of 25 jobs, give or take," he said.

He returned to the topic of jobs later in the interview as he reflected on his father's devotion to the company.

"We really want to be job-building here," Bruce Bonafiglia said. "I want to be able to give people the same opportunities my father gave me 35 years ago."

In addition to job growth, the renovations improved the building, which had been vacant since Walmart moved to North Road. Window towers now break up the facade, and there's little or no sign of the old, big-box-store look inside or out.

"This used to be the sporting-goods section,"

Bonafiglia said, standing in the main foyer, where wave-shaped metal grilles hang decoratively from the high ceiling and lights play off a wave design on the main wall.

The room where BonaDent makes partial dentures used to be the sub shop.

Each space looks custom-built — and, with help from designers and local contractors, each was.

"When I walk into the new building, I don't just see a business," Aronson said. "I see a culture for BonaDent employees, with all the various amenities for people to take advantage of. It's a family culture. There's a family spirit built into that company."

The new building gives BonaDent the ability and equipment to make dental implants on-site.

BonaDent technicians, divided into teams, use digital images of patients' mouths to customize each implant. Machines make the substructure, but people shape the visible part of the implants so they look like real teeth.

The facility is gigantic by industry standards. Bonafiglia said 90 percent of dental labs have five or 10 employees, something he sees as a source of opportunity for the future.

"The long-range plan is to get some of those five- to 10-person facilities to join our organization," he said.

That would mean more good news for Seneca Falls.

"I can see us investing in other areas only if it benefits Seneca Falls, the flagship," Bonafiglia said.

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Social Media Workshop for Local Businesses- 3 Hour Workshop

An Entry Level workshop designed to assist participants in understanding the benefits of utilizing social media in relationship to marketing, PR and recruiting talented employees

A collaboration of Seneca County Workforce Development, Finger Lakes Community College, Seneca County Chamber of Commerce, Geneva Area Chamber of Commerce, and The Finger Lakes Times

Thursday, January 26, 2012 from 1:00-4:00PM

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- 2. Twitter - "Micro-blogging"**
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 - Live updates on events or conferences
 - Promote blog articles, webinars, interesting news and more
 - Create followers
- 3. Facebook - Over 400 million active users = great marketing for your business**
 - Learn how to utilize the wall
 - Show events including sales & specials, sweepstakes, release dates and physical events
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Seneca County Business & Workplace Exchange
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\$50.00 -- \$5.00 Discount for Chamber of Commerce Members
Please call for registration information!

Joint Center of the Finger Lakes

SM

Open House

Please join us at the Joint Center of the Finger Lakes open house and ribbon cutting ceremony.

Location: Geneva General Hospital, 2nd floor
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2012
Time: 4 - 6 p.m., ribbon cutting at 4:45 p.m.

Meet the dedicated surgeons and staff members, take a tour of the beautifully renovated, state-of-the-art orthopedic unit, and enjoy refreshments and door prizes.

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