

# Growing Greene

A newsletter from **Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning**

**Winter 2010**

## New York Spring Water to Double Capacity of Halcott Center Bottling Plant

**W**ith increased demand for its innovative line of pure, natural spring waters, New York Spring Water plans to double the capacity of its bottling plant in Halcott Center. A low-interest \$300,000 Quantum Fund loan from Greene County will assist in the acquisition and installation of a second production line at the 12,000-square-foot state-of-the-art bottling and warehouse facility the company built in 2005.

"We are building a world-class plant in Greene County that promises to generate jobs and opportunities for residents of the area," said Richard Zakka, Founder and President of the company. "Our brand is very unique and we're always working to make it as fresh as possible. There's nothing like our products out there, which is why we've been continually expanding in Greene County."

New York Spring Water currently offers four different product lines. The most recent addition is VBlast, a vitamin-enhanced water that has no calories, no sugar and no carbohy-

drates. What also distinguishes the product is that the vitamins are stored in the cap in a concentrate form, rather than being diluted in the water where they can lose their potency over time. The consumer decides when to release fresh, liquid vitamins into the pure spring water with a simple twist of the cap.



Another novel product is the "Cup-A-Water," which was inspired by the need for smaller portions and an environmentally friendly package. Available in 140 ml, 200 ml and 300 ml sizes, the lightweight, foil-topped plastic cups are ideal for lunch boxes, a quick drink or for taking medications.

New York Spring Water products are sold through a growing network of licensed distributors, as well as on the company's website – [www.newyorkspringwater.com](http://www.newyorkspringwater.com). The company, which currently employs 13 people and expects to double that number when the new line is up and operating, recently shipped its first container load of product to Japan.

## Longest, Highest Zipline in No. America to be Built at Hunter Mountain

**C**onstruction of the longest and highest zipline in North America is expected to get underway soon at Hunter Mountain. Built by New York Zipline Adventure Tours in a location just east of the ski resort, the tourist attraction will feature nearly three miles of ziplines. The cables are strung between trees and special platforms that allow participants wearing custom-designed safety harnesses to zip from tree to tree through forested canopies.



"New York Zipline Adventure Tours will be the biggest attraction to hit Greene County since our ski resorts opened. We expect it to catch on quickly because there's nothing like it in the New York metro area," said Warren Hart, Director of Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning.

Noting that the zipline attraction is expected to attract 30,000 people during its first year and double that amount by its third year of operation, Mr. Hart added: "We expect the attraction to have tremendous spin-off benefits for the tourism industry in Greene County."

"Greene County was the ideal location for a major new zipline," said Jay Bialsky, co-owner of New York Zipline Adventure Tours, which is developing the Hunter Mountain attraction and owns similar ziplines in New Hampshire and Jamaica. "It's the perfect combination of incredibly beautiful terrain and easy access by a huge population base in the metro New York area."

Mr. Bialsky also noted the support he received from Hunter Mountain, the Town and Village of Hunter, Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning, Greene County Industrial Development Agency, New York State Office of Community Renewal and numerous other organizations. "Everything came together very smoothly in terms of financing and approvals," he noted.

New York Zipline Adventure Tours received a \$200,000 low-interest Quantum Fund loan from Greene County, as well as a \$200,000 grant from the NYS Office of Community Renewal. The Town of Hunter, under the direction of Supervisor Dennis Lucas, is the municipal sponsor of the grant.

Slated to open by Memorial Day 2010, the zipline will offer three separate tours: the Zipline Tour at the top of the mountain; the Canopy Tour, which is a family-oriented mid-mountain tour; and the Challenge Course at the bottom of the mountain, which is suitable for all ages. Nearly 50 people are expected to be employed by the zipline once it is fully operational.

## Athens Opera House to Get Second Life as Brew Pub

**T**he former Athens Opera House will soon have a second life as a micro-brewery, restaurant and live music venue. With the help of \$200,000 from the New York State Office of Community Renewal and a \$240,000 low-interest Quantum Fund loan from Greene County, Crossroads Brewing Company purchased the historic building and will renovate it over the next few years. The building, built in 1893, is in dire need of repair and the new owner intends to bring it back to its former glory as the jewel of the community.



The Crossroads Brewing Company project is the brainchild of Ken Landin, an experienced contractor and business owner, and partner and co-owner Janine Bennett. Mr Landin, who currently contracts with a small brewery in southern New York to produce Crossroads' first ale, expects to install the brewery during the first six months. Once the brew house has been installed, creating a source of revenue in the form of a tasting room and "beer to go," work will begin on the restaurant and pub. Exterior work is already in progress and the facade restoration will begin in the spring. The final phase of the project will be to restore the theater on the second floor of the building as a live music venue.

"It's difficult to sum up this journey in just a few words. It was a long road to get to this point, and we are so fortunate and grateful to have so much support, financially and friendly, from Greene County," Mr. Landin commented.

"This is an exciting project for Athens and the people of Greene County," said Assemblyman Pete Lopez. "From advancing the adaptive reuse of a historic structure, to promoting job creation, greater tourism, and the value-added processing of the beer itself, this project offers much to the community."

"With its beautiful waterfront, historic architecture, restaurants and inns, Athens has the potential to draw even more visitors," said Warren Hart, Director of Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning, whose office worked in close partnership with Greene County Industrial Development Agency on the project. "We believe the opening of the Crossroads Brewing Company could be transformative for the village."

## Hunter, Windham and 3 Other Ski Areas in the Catskill Region Team Up on CATS Card to Offer 20% Discount On Lift Tickets

Hunter and Windham Mountains – along with Belleayre Mountain, Holiday Mountain and Plattekill Mountain– are collaborating with the Catskill Association for Tourism Services (CATS) on a new CATS Card offering skiers and snowboard-

throughout the tri-state area. The campaign is being paid for by a combination of county and private funds, with CATS utilizing I Love New York regional matching funds as well as private funding from the ski areas.



ers 20% off the retail price of lift tickets throughout the 2009-2010 ski season. The cards, which cost \$25 each, can be used an unlimited number of times at any of the five ski areas for the purchase of full-day tickets for seniors, adults or children.

The CATS Card promotion is an expansion of the successful March 2009 marketing campaign conducted by the regional tourism association and ski areas to promote spring skiing in the Catskills. The new card is being promoted through outdoor advertising, with billboards strategically placed on highways leading to Vermont ski areas and at rail stations

### Did You Know?

CATS recently launched an iPhone application for the Catskill Region. The “app,” which is available as a free download at the Apple iTunes online store, allows users to view up-to-the-minute information about events, lodging, attractions, camping and other details on their mobile phones.



CATS is the regional destination marketing association comprised of the tourism promotion agencies in Greene, Delaware, Sullivan and Ulster Counties. With tourism a key economic driver of those four counties, the collaboration works to boost visitors and market share by promoting outdoor recreation, golfing, camping, hunting and fishing, lodging, dining and other activities and events in the Catskills.

The CATS Card is available for purchase online at [www.mycatscard.com](http://www.mycatscard.com) or by calling 1-800-NYS-CATS (1-800-697-2287). Each purchaser will receive a personalized card and must show a driver's license or photo identification at the ski areas to purchase lift tickets at the discounted rate. The card is not valid on holidays, cannot be combined with other offers and is not transferrable.

on a grant application to secure nearly \$1.1 million in funding from RESTORE NY to help with restoration of the buildings. The municipal sponsor of the grant was the Village of Tannersville, under the direction of Mayor Lee McGunnigle. The rehabilitation project is creating 14,000 square feet of new retail space on the ground floors, offices on the second floors and loft apartments on the third floors of the buildings.

## Two Historic Buildings in Tannersville Theater District Being Restored

Two historic buildings located on Main Street in Tannersville are undergoing multimillion-dollar renovations thanks to collaborative efforts involving New York State, Greene County and the Hunter Foundation.

After the Hunter Foundation bought the buildings – which most recently served as the Aspen and Slopes ski bars – Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning worked with the foundation and the Village of Tannersville



Both buildings are in the immediate vicinity of the Orpheum Theater, which is undergoing its own multimillion-dollar renovation and is expected to become a major visitor attraction. To support the ongoing renaissance of downtown Tannersville, the Catskill Mountain Foundation is also renovating a downtown apartment building with the assistance of RESTORE NY funding that will be used to house actors and artists performing at the Orpheum.

## Purling Landmark to be Reopened as Log Cabin Café and General Store



Zoe, Paul, Erin and Noah Alfeld

A log cabin that has been a landmark in Purling for half a century and has largely stood vacant since 2003 is on the verge of coming back to life as the Log Cabin Café and General Store. Paul and Erin Alfeld purchased the property in July 2008 and set about renovating the building.

With the assistance of \$25,000 from Greene County's Microenterprise Assistance Program, the Alfelds are creating a 20-seat café and deli, along with a convenience store that will offer high-demand items like milk, breads, eggs, cold cuts and beer to local residents and tourists year-round. The new business is scheduled to open this winter.

“The building was in pretty bad shape when we bought it and was a bit like opening a can of worms,” recalled Paul Alfeld. “We learned about the low-interest loans available from Greene County through our local legislators and took advantage of the Microenterprise Assistance Program to help us get the work done,” he said. The funds helped pay for a new front deck and handicap ramp to replace the deteriorating stoop, along with new kitchen equipment and other improvements.

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–PAUL ALFELD  
OWNER,  
LOG CABIN CAFE AND  
GENERAL STORE



## Festivals are a Hit

With the 400th Anniversary of Henry Hudson's historic voyage up the majestic river that now bears his name, Greene County hosted an unusually large number of blockbuster events and festivals this summer and fall.

Cat 'n Around Catskill was back, bigger and better than ever with a Quadricentennial theme, and Cairo's new Bears & Butterflies exhibition was a hit with its "Explore with Henry Hudson" treasure hunt added to the mix.

The River Day celebration on June 11 welcomed a parade of historic ships to Historic Catskill Point with speeches, a flyover by antique airplanes, performances by the original cast of the musical "River of Dreams," book signings by Hudson Talbott and Richard Philp, and a performance by the Catskill High School Band.

Next up was the 5th Annual Rip Van Winkle Wacky Raft Race on August 16. Some 18 rafts raced from Athens to Catskill and raised approximately \$6,500 for Community Action of Greene County to help replenish local food pantries.



On September 18-19, a fleet of 18 traditional Dutch sailing ships stayed in Greene County as they made their way up the Hudson River to Albany. The Village of Catskill, along with the Town, County and HOCA/Catskill Chamber of Commerce pulled out all the stops to welcome them.

Over Columbus Day weekend, Historic Catskill Point was hopping once again with The Great Northern Catskills Heritage Festival. The Agroforestry Resource Center of Cornell Cooperative Extension organized this festival to celebrate 400 years of food, agriculture and nature in Greene County. During the festival, the Greene County Council on the Arts also unveiled the "Wall of History" on the south wall of the Catskill Point warehouse. Ten artists were commissioned to paint great moments in Greene County's history and the paintings now hang as a permanent exhibition.

## Southside Restaurant & Cantina Opens

For more than 30 years, the Logsider restaurant was a favorite of tourists and residents alike. The owners of Southside Restaurant & Cantina hope the new Southwestern eatery they opened in the space in December will prove to be equally popular. Located just off Exit 21 next to the Rip Van Winkle Motor Lodge, the restaurant will serve lunch and dinner, as well as breakfast on weekends during the summer.

"It's a great, rustic space and has lots of cozy charm with a fireplace for the cooler months and a patio for the warmer months," said Susan Womack, who



Steve and Susan Womack with Southside Restaurant chef John Ustike.

owns the restaurant with her husband Steve. Steve and his partner/chef John Ustike formerly opened the popular Dockside Grill in Athens. Mrs. Womack said the new restaurant will be family-run with eight children between the two families playing active roles in the business.

Commenting on the \$25,000 low-interest Microenterprise Assistance Program the Womacks received to help renovate the space and purchase equipment and furnishings, Mrs. Womack commented: "Greene County was great to work with. They went out of their way to make sure we got this enterprise off the ground. They gave us good guidance and made things easy for us."

## Residents Were Urged to Think BiG for the Holidays

Through a county-wide newsletter mailing and television ads, Greene County urged its residents to "Think BiG" for the holiday season to support the local economy and help keep the county's Main Streets alive. The buy-local campaign pointed out that shopping in Greene County for gifts and decorations, dining at local restaurants, and buying services locally all help keep our communities vibrant.

Just walk into any local store or business and ask the owner if it makes a difference if Greene County residents Think BiG. Paul Fisher, owner of RPM Auto Supply in Coxsackie, observes, "Buying local keeps sales taxes here in Greene County. A bigger tax base benefits everyone."

Donna Capulli, who has owned Donna's Hair Shed on Main Street in Cairo for the past 14 years, says: "People have to realize that it causes a ripple effect if they don't patronize their local businesses. One by one, stores or businesses close and before long there is nothing left. It's important to keep our little towns growing."



Tina Gagliardy, who opened Mahalo gift shop on Main Street in Catskill last April, concurs. "It's all the little things that add up that make shopping at a local store so much better. It's the personal attention, it's having a wish list that helps husbands buy gifts for their wives, it's the fun boxes and bags, it's knowing that presents can be

exchanged." Pleased with the Think BiG promotion, Gagliardy adds: "It's wonderful when the community comes together and supports each other."

Now that the holidays have come and gone, check out [www.BuyinGreene.com](http://www.BuyinGreene.com) for countless ways you can stay close to home and get everything you need year-round!

**"It's wonderful when the community comes together and supports each other."**

—TINA GAGLIARDY  
OWNER,  
MAHALO GIFT SHOP

## Fast Facts

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) formally adopted Greene County's All-Hazards Mitigation Plan, which was previously adopted by the Greene County Legislature. This makes the county and 19 participating municipalities eligible for future mitigation funding in case of flooding, severe storms, earthquakes and other natural disasters. **For more information, visit [www.greengovernment.com/hazmit.htm](http://www.greengovernment.com/hazmit.htm).**

- Greene County's new Workforce Homeownership Program is starting to have success. Aimed at helping income-eligible people who either live or work in the county to purchase their first homes at a significantly reduced cost, the program has awarded loans to three families and several other loans are in the pipeline. The deferred-payment loans of up to \$30,000, which are forgiven after 15 years if the home buyer is still living in the house, may include up to \$3,750 in closing costs, as well as down payment assistance. **Call the Catskill Mountain Housing Development Corporation at 943-6700 to learn more about the program.**



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## Rip Van Winkle Statue Complete at Summit of Hunter Mountain

A life-size sculpture of Rip Van Winkle – one of Greene County’s most enduring icons – is now finished at the summit of Hunter Mountain. The massive figure was carved out of eight tons of blue sandstone by Custom Sculpture’s Kevin Van Hentenryck, with help from David Slutsky, Hunter Mountain’s head of snowmaking operations, who came up with the idea.

Work on “Rip” – the old man from Washington Irving’s classic short story who took a nap in the woods and awoke decades later – began in 1995. The lengthy carving process attracted flocks of onlookers during the mountain’s many festivals. Now that it’s finally done, the statue is destined to become one of Greene County’s premiere visitor attractions as people will be drawn to the place to witness the spectacle of the reclining figure of Rip Van Winkle at the exact moment he awakens from his deep sleep and his predicament dawns on him.

## Port of Call to Extend Season with Help of Quantum Fund

Frank Guido’s Port of Call, the popular waterfront restaurant overlooking Catskill Creek, is aiming to be open eight months of the year after the non-winterized building is insulated and a new HVAC system is installed. Greene County recently awarded the restaurant owner, Frank Guido, a low-interest Quantum Fund loan to help with the improvements, as well as to help buy out his other two partners in the restaurant.



Although a good deal of the restaurant’s business comes from outside seating on the deck overlooking Catskill Point, Mr. Guido wanted the dining room and bar to be able to remain open from April to the end of November.

“I’ve always owned riverfront restaurants and I believe Catskill is really going to become a popular spot in the next few years. We intend to make the Port of Call a destination,” said Mr. Guido, who has more than 40 years of experience in the restaurant business and owns Frank Guido’s Little Italy and Mariner’s Harbor restaurants in Kingston. Mr. Guido took over the operation of Port of Call in May 2009 after a nine-year hiatus when it was leased to other operators.



## Greene County Bluegrass Festival and Microbrewery Win Top Awards

Music and microbrews have proven to be a winning combination for Greene County, with two of the area’s top tourism attractions being awarded top prizes for their offerings during the past few months.

Cave Mountain Brewing Co., which opened on Main Street in Windham last year, won “Best Brewery” at Hunter Mountain’s Microbrew and Wine Festival. Serving just a small selection of its offerings, the brew pub won out over much larger competitors like Saranac, Samuel Adams and Sierra Nevada for the tastiness of its English Nut Brown Ale, Irish Red Ale and other hand-crafted beers.



The Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival was named “Bluegrass Event of the Year” at the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) at its annual awards ceremony in Nashville, Tennessee on October 1. Grey Fox, which is held in Oak Hill each summer and attracts thousands of fans from across North America, Europe and Asia, beat out events in Japan and Indiana for the most prestigious award worldwide for bluegrass events.

For details, visit [www.greyfoxbluegrass.com](http://www.greyfoxbluegrass.com) and [www.cavemountainbrewingcompany.com](http://www.cavemountainbrewingcompany.com).