

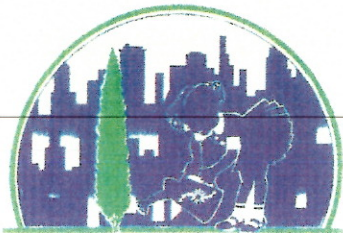
CHENANGO COUNTY'S

2020 VISION

*Summary Report
of the 2020 Vision
Commission on
the Future*



Anticipating the 21st Century



CHENANGO COUNTY 2020 VISION COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE

CHENANGO COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

5 COURT STREET • NORWICH, NEW YORK 13815

(607) 337-1640 FAX: (607) 336-6551

January 1992

To the Chenango County Community:

We are pleased to present this *Summary Report of the Chenango County 2020 Vision* to the people of Chenango County. This report represents the major conclusions of work done by the Commission on the Future and the 2020 Teams over the past two years.

The Commission's charge from the Board of Supervisors — to develop a community-based plan to guide public and private policy and decision making into the 21st Century — has been fulfilled. We believe our report will stimulate future decisions that will shape the County's future.

The 2020 Vision began in January 1990 with our first Commission meeting. We have seen this project grow and develop into a major grass roots effort. 2020's success is due to the tremendous momentum generated by over 200 volunteers, including a number of students in our secondary schools, as well as the encouraging and thoughtful response by over 2,500 Chenango County residents who took the time to complete the Citizens' Survey.

The Commission spent over 3 months studying and discussing the findings and recommendations of our 7 Planning Teams. While we have tried to be creative in our approach, many of these recommendations are of a "Here and Now" nature. Our report is well-grounded in reality and includes only those futuristic notions that seemed attainable within our time frame. We feel that our VISION of the future will be realized if we begin today to carry out the 2020 Plan.

This summary report, highlighting our major conclusions, has been prepared for the whole community of Chenango County. A larger report includes all of the background information collected and analyzed by the Planning Teams, as well as the complete range of Team recommendations.

On behalf of the Commission, the Planning Team leaders and the many volunteers that have worked so hard on the 2020 Vision, we want to thank the Board of Supervisors for its continued support for this important project. We hope that it will become a guide for public decision making in the years to come.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John", written in a cursive style.

John C. Mitchell, Chairman

HOW THE

V ISION

BEGAN...

Like communities across the nation, Chenango County is faced with an increasingly complex set of problems and issues as we approach the 21st Century. Many of these pressures originate outside the County, in the decisions of state and federal government and in the realm of technology and global economics. Mandated environmental and public health problems create havoc with local budgets. Educational requirements of doubtful relevance for local school districts are bankrupting taxpayers. Major shifts in national and international economic forces affect key sectors of our local economy. These are just a few of the challenges we face now and in the years ahead.

We must begin to address many of these pressures locally, at least to the extent possible. The need to maintain and replace aging infrastructure... the need to provide more and better housing choices for our residents... the need to improve job opportunities for local workers while ensuring that these workers have the skills needed by local business and industry... the need to halt rapid increases in the cost of local government in the face of decreasing state and federal economic support. All of these concerns, and many others, are increasingly the responsibility of local governments. Action is necessary — there is little choice for those who are concerned about the future.

These circumstances prompted a group of Citizens and County officials to convene in August 1988 to discuss the possibility of creating a commission on the future of Chenango County. This group, which was to become the core of the 2020 Commission, knew that the County needed to work with its citizens and businesses to deal with the issues and develop a plan of action.

With enthusiasm for this approach, the Board of Supervisors created the 2020 Commission on the Future, made up of 16 interested and geographically dispersed individuals from government, industry, commerce, youth and the general public, to work on the development of the 2020 Plan — a “shared vision” of the future for our Chenango County communities.

The Commission guided the efforts of seven planning teams of Chenango County residents who explored the County's future and established specific

goals. The teams studied, researched, analyzed and documented information regarding seven interrelated areas: Economic Prosperity... Environment... Infrastructure... Quality of Life... Land Use, Housing and Agriculture... Government Services... Education.

The activities of the Commission were made possible by grants and contributions from government, industry, foundations and individuals. Through total involvement of our citizens, a plan emerged to guide Chenango County into the future.



Organizing the 2020 project.

“We can't get there if we don't know where we're going.”

CHENANGO COUNTY

TODAY...

Rolling hills, green fields, timberlands, river corridors with magic names — Otselic, Suquehanna, Unadilla, Chenango — farms, picturesque villages, main streets lined with historic old homes, friends, family. This is Chenango County now. This is the Chenango County we want to preserve and strengthen for tomorrow.

A major percentage of the County's 900 square miles of land remains in a natural state, not significantly altered by those who have chosen to settle here. We live in an area carved into an intricate pattern of hills and valleys by the last great Ice Age glacier as it plowed into the slopes of the Allegheny Plateau. When the glacier receded, a series of uplands divided by ice-scoured depressions were left behind. These hollows, eroded over the centuries into a complex pattern of drainageways, have shaped the landscape and influenced our development pattern.



Located centrally in New York State's Southern Tier, we are part of a vital economic region. On a steady track, our population is expected



to grow from 51,700 today to about 60,000 by the year 2020. Manufacturing accounts for more than a third of our personal income with about two-thirds of these jobs provided by six major employers. Government, service industries and wholesale/retail trade are also important contributors to our economy.

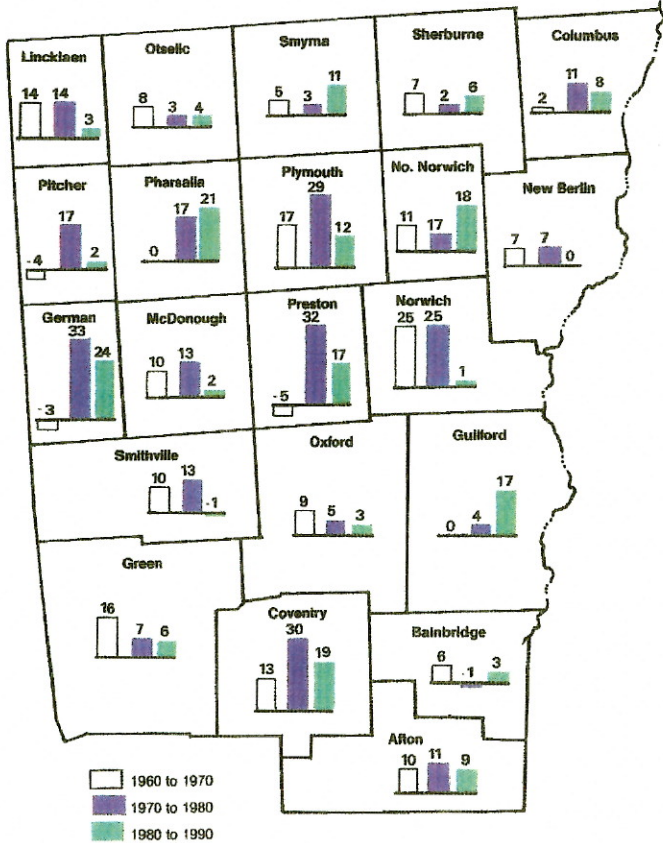
Agriculture is a cornerstone of Chenango County — both economically and socially. Employment in agriculture is double the regional average and our rolling hills are dotted with farm enter-

prises. The importance attached to this agricultural heritage was evident whenever the 2020 Commission met with local groups. We heard from all corners of the County the importance of maintaining and strengthening this vital activity.

Despite this positive picture, not everything is perfect in Chenango County. We have people in need of assistance so that they and their families can become healthy, contributing members of the community. We need to expand our employment base to better insulate us from dramatic swings in the national economy. We have environmental problems that concern us and demand solutions. We have roads and bridges in need of improvement and other infrastructure needs that must be addressed. We must continue to expand housing opportunities for all of our residents. We are plagued with institutional systems that promote bureaucracy and are not responsive to today's needs, let alone those of the next century. We must grapple with these issues if we are to see a Chenango County 30 years hence that reflects our vision of what can be.

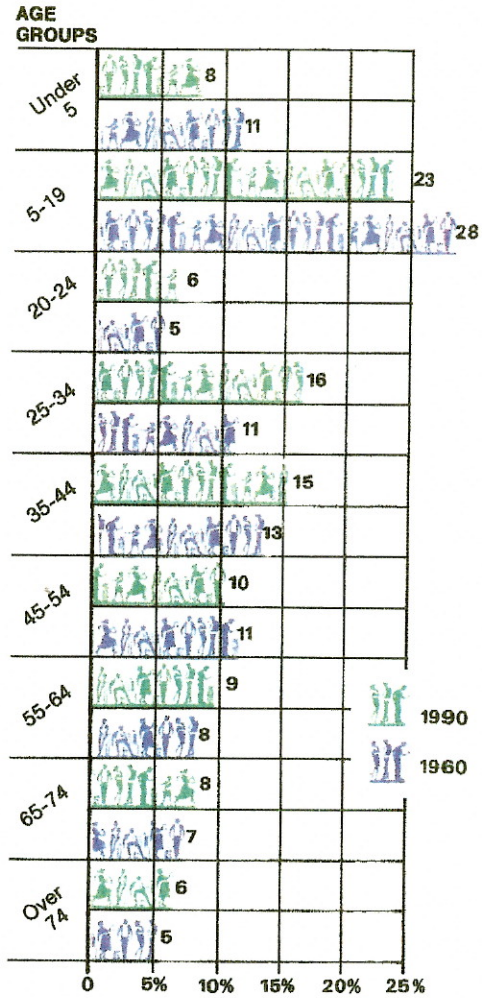
Population Trends 1960-1990			
	1960	1990	% Chg
Chenango County	43,243	51,768	19.7
6-County Region	447,134	489,753	9.5
New York State	18.0 m	17.9 m	-0.5

**Percentage of Population Change by Town
(Town figures include Villages)**

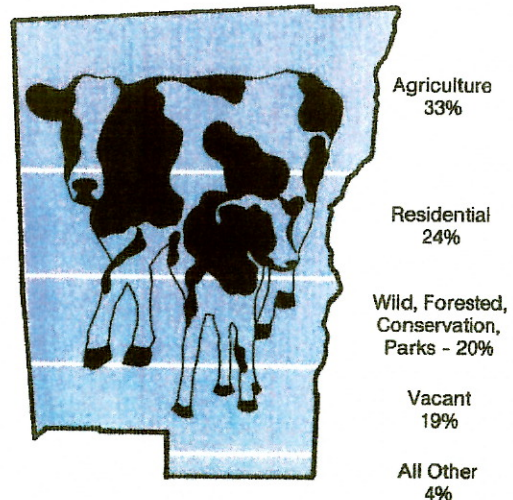


- Changes in age distribution have important effects on education, housing, employment and support services.
- All of the County's villages have declined in population from 1960 to 1990.
- Greene is the only village to increase in population from 1980 to 1990.
- The City of Norwich has lost 1,562 persons over the past 30 years, a decrease of 17 percent.

**County Population Distribution
by Age Group, 1960-1990**



How Chenango County's Land is Used



THE

VISION

OF
TOMORROW...

As the year 2020 arrives, we see a healthy, well educated, involved and informed citizenry participating fully in all aspects of community life.

We see government structures, at both the County and municipal levels, that are models of efficiency and effectiveness.

We see a County that has grown and developed in a way that is compatible with its natural resources because it has followed environmentally-sound principles.

We see a landscape that includes open space and farmland interspersed with quality residential environments and vibrant urban centers.

We see adequate shelter for all of our people in homes they can afford. We see a network of human services that supports those who cannot care for themselves while engendering self-sufficiency and greater productivity among those who can.

We see a diverse economy, with business and industry in a true partnership with government and the educational system to provide challenging lifelong opportunities for work and learning.

Our 2020 Vision shows us a County to be proud of; a place of viable opportunities in a setting that preserves our cherished rural quality of life. We must hurry if we are to get there by 2020.

"Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered."

- Daniel Webster -

TOWARD THE
21ST

CENTURY...

Our VISION is ambitious. Some would say “unrealistic,” “too romantic,” “unreachable.” And so it is, if we do not seize the opportunity and do what must be done to bring about our better tomorrow.

The 2020 Planning Teams, together with the Commissioners, have sorted through a myriad array of facts, opinions and ideas to arrive at the recommendations that follow. Some require financial commitments from government and the private sector. Many do not. All require the will to see the 2020 Vision accomplished and to follow through on proposals that may sometimes be unpopular. We believe that they include many of the tools we will need for our journey into the 21st century. We offer them in that spirit.

Let us begin...

“Our wish is a clean environment, good jobs, comfortable homes, a quality education for all, no toxic waste problems, no crime, no drugs.”



RECREATING

THE PIONEER SPIRIT...



"Our vision is to create and sustain a viable system of opportunities accessible to all."

The human condition is at its peak when individuals have high self-esteem, dignity and personal integrity. These qualities, or states of mind, are the elements that make up a healthy, happy and productive population. They are also the keys to halting an ever-expanding network of social services that, in some instances, have the unwanted effect of creating additional dependency.

The 2020 Commission supports programs and services that strengthen individual initiative and create a climate where greater self-sufficiency can flourish. Our goal is to have a population that has less need for services when 2020 arrives. In order to reach this point, we must invest in people in ways that maximize their capacity for independence.

■ A philosophy that emphasizes life long learning and places a high priority on educating students to become successful members of the work force should be embraced and promoted. Chenango County educational institutions must take a leadership role in this effort, reinforced by active support from government, business and industry.

■ The County should promote development of a self-sufficient citizenry. Social service providers should ask themselves "What individual self-help skill does this expenditure foster?"

■ Opportunities should be increased for the growing population of elderly residents, at all income levels, to remain independent. This effort must involve both the public and private sector with a goal of providing a continuum of housing and health care options. Innovative housing arrangements, home care, adult day care, increased nursing home capacity and the development of multi-service geriatric care campuses are all ideas to consider.

■ The County should work toward a comprehensive and cost effective system that will provide needed health care to all people. Increasing access to

prenatal care, immunizations, multi-purpose clinics and other primary and preventive health care procedures combined with programs dealing with nutrition, fitness and overall health, will contribute significantly to the ability of County residents to be self-sufficient members of the community. This is a monumental challenge to the County, as well as the State and Federal governments, but one that must be met before we leave the 20th century.

■ The County should work with the private sector on creative ways to provide a sufficient amount of high-quality affordable day care. This will allow parents to pursue viable employment while providing a safe day care environment for those who will become the work force of 2020.

■ Local governments should promote programs emphasize self-help and voluntarism in their communities. Community clean-up days, fund raisers for special and small scale beautification projects, such as adopt-a-planter programs in downtown areas, are types of activities that illustrate local participation potential. The degree to which Chenango Memorial Hospital is supported by volunteer efforts is an outstanding example of this philosophy.



People who live in Chenango County like the surroundings. We enjoy the rural setting with its valleys and hills, its rivers and streams. We value clean air and pure water. We appreciate open space and an abundance of wildlife. Looking to the next century, we are concerned about protecting these things we like about our County and sometimes take for granted. We believe that it is a primary responsibility to safeguard our countryside, our communities and our world.

Environmental sensitivity is the watchword of the future and Chenango County must take this challenge seriously. At stake is maintaining the quality of the water we drink, protecting our forests, wetlands and streambank habitat and, ultimately, preserving the way of life we prize.

■ Aquifer recharge areas must be protected from development that could pollute ground water or prevent natural replenishment of these reserves. Municipalities that contain aquifers or use wells as a source of public water should take the initiative to develop land use plans and regulations related to the extreme environmental sensitivity of these ground water resources.

■ Communities that have water supply systems dependent on surface water sources must take those measures needed to minimize pollution in the watersheds. Programs aimed at erosion reduction, pest management without excessive use of pesticides and similar responsible management practices affecting surface water should be strongly supported and broadly applied.

■ The County should provide leadership for the extension or development of public water and sewer systems in areas seriously in need of these services.

■ Early consideration of environmental impacts should be incorporated into the decision-making process of County and local governments. Environmental consequences of proposed actions should be fully considered when evaluating alternatives and costs.

■ In addition to full implementation of the County's Solid Waste Management Plan, County officials should investigate interest in, and potential for, regional approaches to solid waste management. In the long run, an alliance of contiguous counties might provide the most cost effective and environmentally safe method of treating and disposing of society's waste products.



"The Chenango County environment may become a major plus in economic development.. an environmental green spot."

STREAMLINING

FOR THE LONG HAUL...

MAJOR UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TOWNS

Afton	Norwich
Bainbridge	Otselic
Columbus	Oxford
Coventry	Pharsalia
German	Pitcher
Greene	Plymouth
Guilford	Preston
Lincklaen	Sherburne
McDonough	Smithville
New Berlin	Smyrna
No. Norwich	

VILLAGES

Afton	New Berlin
Bainbridge	Oxford
Earlville	Sherburne
Greene	Smyrna

CITIES

Norwich

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Norwich City
Afton
Bainbridge-Guilford
Georgetown-South Otselic
Greene
Mount Upton
New Berlin
Oxford
Sherburne-Earlville
So. New Berlin

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS

Afton	Norwich
Bainbridge	Oxford
Greene	Sherburne
Guilford	Smyrna
Mt. Upton	So. New Berlin
New Berlin	So. Otselic

PUBLIC SEWAGE SYSTEMS

Bainbridge	Oxford
Greene	Sherburne

Norwich

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Afton	Norwich
Bainbridge	Oxford
Brisben	Pharsalia
Coventry	Plymouth
Earlville	Preston
Greene	Sherburne
Guilford	Smithville
McDonough	Smyrna
Mt. Upton	So. New Berlin
New Berlin	So. Otselic
No. Norwich	

Local governments and school boards must anticipate less state and federal financial support in the future. If we in Chenango County do not want the local tax burden to become unbearable, it will be essential to identify areas where efficiencies and cost savings can be achieved without seriously diminishing important services. Outdated management practices, needless duplication of services, ineffective use of available resources and inequitable assessment procedures are conditions that must not be carried into the 21st century.

Both County Government and the Educational System need an overhaul. The current educational system, not only in Chenango County, but in New York State as a whole, is hostage to the various grant-in-aid programs that supplement local property taxes. Inappropriate mandates, unreasonable requirements and rigid administrative guidelines make it impossible for school boards and their constituent communities to have any real control over the education of their children. This situation will continue to exist unless local school boards and district administrators protest and follow their protests with actions that will allow them to deliver quality education related specifically to local conditions.

■ The Board of Supervisors should create a Charter Commission to develop a plan for restructuring county government. This Commission should consider establishment of a County Manager/Administrator with control over the budget function subject to legislative oversight and veto power. The 2020 Commission feels that the establishment of this appointed managerial position would provide the Board of Supervisors and its Chairman with an additional level of professional administrative leadership and coordination.

■ The Charter Commission should also consider the benefits of establishing a separate audit department under the direction of a full time professional auditor. This would remove the audit burden from the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors making it possible for this

officer to act solely as Board Clerk, focusing on liaison activities between the Supervisors and the Chairman.

■ As these and other structural changes are effected, the current thirty-plus County departments could be reduced to a manageable number, headed by Commissioners with broad areas of responsibility, in line with professional management practices. Details of the streamlined system should be worked out by the County Manager/Administrator working with the Board of Supervisors.

■ The number of municipal units in Chenango County should be reduced to achieve greater efficiencies and increased cost effectiveness. This would streamline delivery of services, reduce costs to tax payers and permit more

effective economic and community development. Among the array of possible amalgamations, none holds more promise for the County's long term well-being than consolidation of the City and Town of Norwich. City and Town officials, aided by community leaders who have an objective viewpoint, should begin a dialogue on the range of options available. Discussion should proceed without preconceived opinions about the end result.

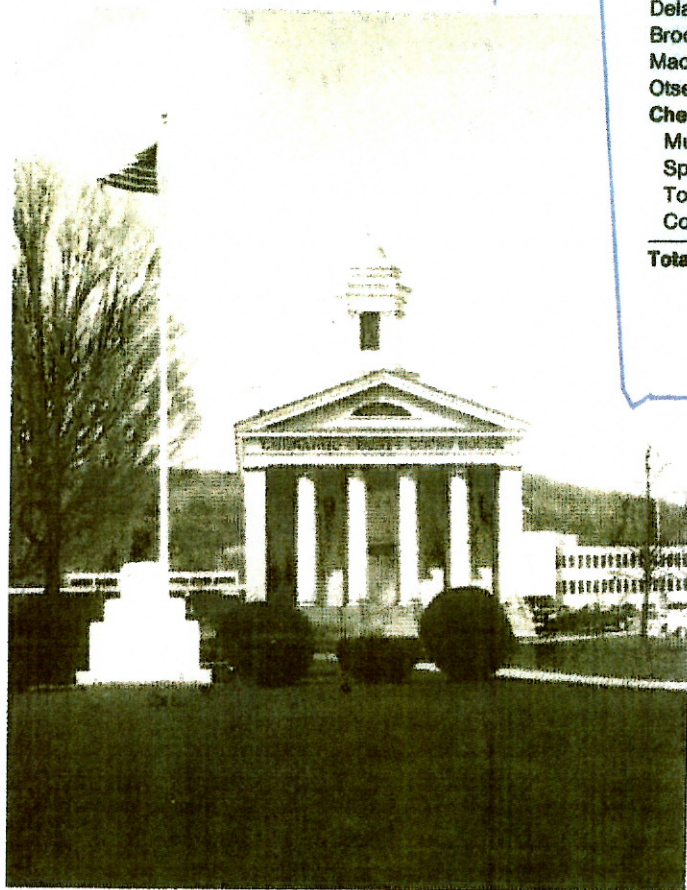
As an interim measure, local officials and community leaders in all of the urban centers should investigate the economic feasibility and benefits offered through intermunicipal agreements. Such agreements could result in improvements such as regional water and sewer service districts, for example.

■ A County-wide real property assessment system should be established to make current assessment practices more equitable.

■ Chenango County school districts should form the core of a state-wide alliance of small community school districts to identify and lobby for necessary legislative and administrative changes in state laws that impact education. An alliance of this type could spark the revolution in education that is so badly needed if we are to regain local control of our school systems.

UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cortland County	56
Delaware County	114
Broome County	253
Madison County	127
Otsego County	140
Chenango County	
Municipalities	40
Special Purpose Units	12
Town Special Districts	51
County Special Districts	4
Total	107



As we approach the year 2020, the key words in government services will be cooperation and consolidation.

PRESERVING

OUR RURAL ATMOSPHERE...

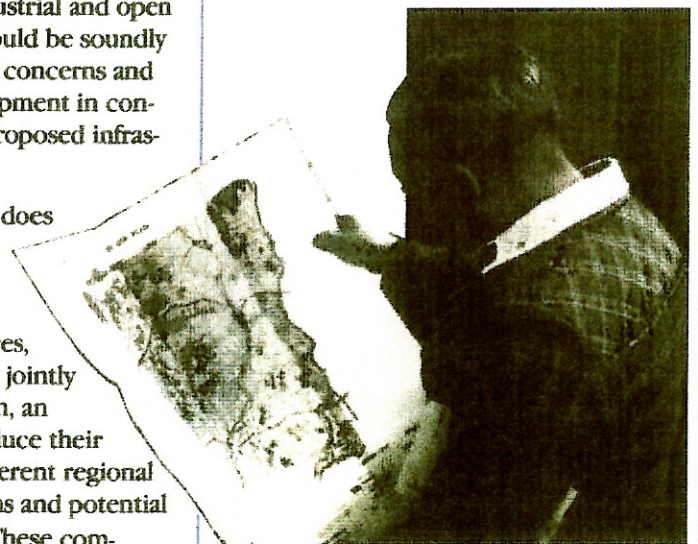
Chenango County's rural landscape, clean air, relaxed life style and sense of tranquility, combined with a relatively small amount of automobile traffic, create an atmosphere that is attractive to new residents and natives alike. In the Citizens' Questionnaire and the many 2020 Commission gatherings throughout the County, residents emphasized the importance of preserving these characteristics which can easily be lost if we do not take action now. The rural, small town agricultural profile so cherished can only be protected by planning for the wise use of land in our communities and countryside.

Many localities have not established guidelines for future land use and development decisions; some see planning as a process to be avoided. Most towns in the County have not used their authority to control the subdivision of land within their borders. This situation has potentially disastrous effects on the County, particularly on the agricultural resources that provide the context for much of the County's appeal and economic base. Continued production of forage, fiber, livestock, timber and other farm products is critical to the long term social and economic viability but prime farmland will continue to experience increasingly intense competition from nonagricultural land uses.

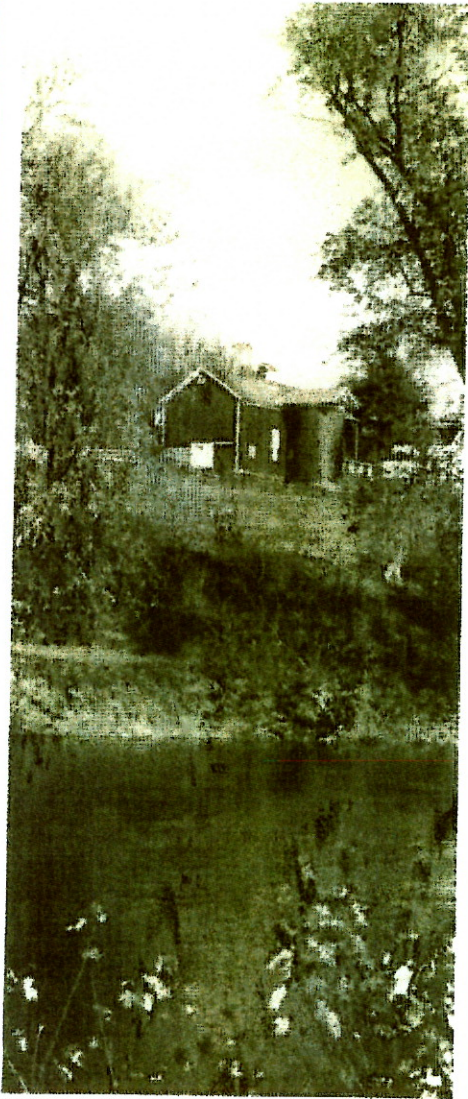
■ The County should develop broad brush generalized development policies and a County plan identifying areas best suited for agricultural, residential, recreational commercial, industrial and open space uses. The plan should be soundly based on environmental concerns and promote rational development in concert with existing and proposed infrastructure resources.

■ Each community that does not have a long range land use development plan should move to fill this gap. In some instances, towns and villages could jointly develop an areawide plan, an approach that would reduce their costs and produce a coherent regional approach to the problems and potential of future development. These com-

munity-based plans would form the basis for locally-adopted land use regulations to protect community character and environmental quality.



Chenango County's small communities maintain their present character, they will be our greatest asset in 2020.



■ Comprehensive strategies to prevent further loss of farmland should be developed. These strategies could include encouraging the adoption of agriculturally-oriented local land use regulations to supplement the limited protection provided by the NYS Agricultural District Law. Mechanisms for purchase or transfer of development rights, to provide compensation to farmers for permanently maintaining farmland, could also be investigated along with the potential for use of conservation easements, tailored to the specific resources the landowner wishes to protect.

■ The Commission strongly encourages local acceptance of limited subdivision control in some of the more rural areas. General Municipal Law allows the County Planning Board, upon approval by the Board of Supervisors, to review subdivisions in predetermined areas. To this end, the Board of Supervisors should direct the County Planning Board to identify areas where such control would be appropriate and to formulate the regulations to be applied to future land subdivision activity in those areas.

■ Municipalities should be encouraged to undertake programs that provide important environmental and aesthetic benefits and enhance rural landscapes. For example, planting shade trees along rural roadways should be supported when this can be coordinated with above ground utility installations.

■ The County Planning Board should spearhead the formation of a County-wide federation of local planning boards, and other interested individuals and groups, to serve as a focus for citizen education and discussion of land use issues and concerns.



"Land use planning is the lever through which the delicate balance of County priorities can be achieved."

Every town says it wants to preserve its agricultural base, but it has to be protected.

INVESTMENTS

FOR A HEALTHY ECONOMY...

If Chenango County is to raise per capita income and generally improve the economic condition of its residents, economic development efforts must be given a high priority. A major component of these efforts must be attention to those businesses that already exist in the County. We must create a climate of partnership, working hand-in-hand to build a better community and expand economic opportunities. We must let our businesses know, on an on-going basis, that they are valued members of the Chenango County community.

The combination of a number of factors can create a positive climate for business development. Suitable development sites must be identified, critical support services such as transportation, water supply and waste disposal must be provided, there must be adequate housing and programs for training the labor force, governmental reviews must be simplified, political and territorial turf battles need to be resolved. Capital investment opportunities in creative projects that can enhance existing business, foster new development, create jobs and build a feeling of community pride must be explored and pursued.

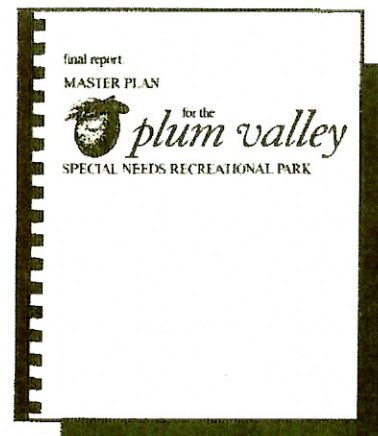
- The primary thrust of the County's economic development policy should be the retention and expansion of existing businesses. In addition, efforts should be directed toward the attraction or promotion of new businesses that can capitalize on the County's strong dairy and agricultural base or provide jobs oriented to changing technologies.

- A forum of business, government and education leaders should be established to promote on-going discussion of a broad range of economic issues and serve as a liaison between these groups.

- County economic development organizations should continue a strong combined effort to complete the development of the Airport Industrial Park. Suitable sites for other industrial parks should be identified and promoted.

- County government and private industry should make a commitment to the Plum Valley Project and exert maximum effort toward implementation. This proposed recreational area for people with disabilities is a unique concept that would gain national recognition for Chenango County and bring with it new, related businesses and jobs.

We have a window of opportunity to set the stage for future growth. We want to plan for alternatives.



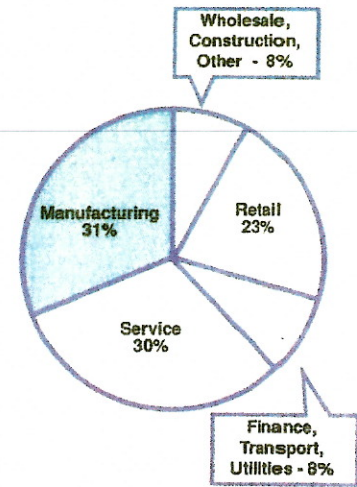
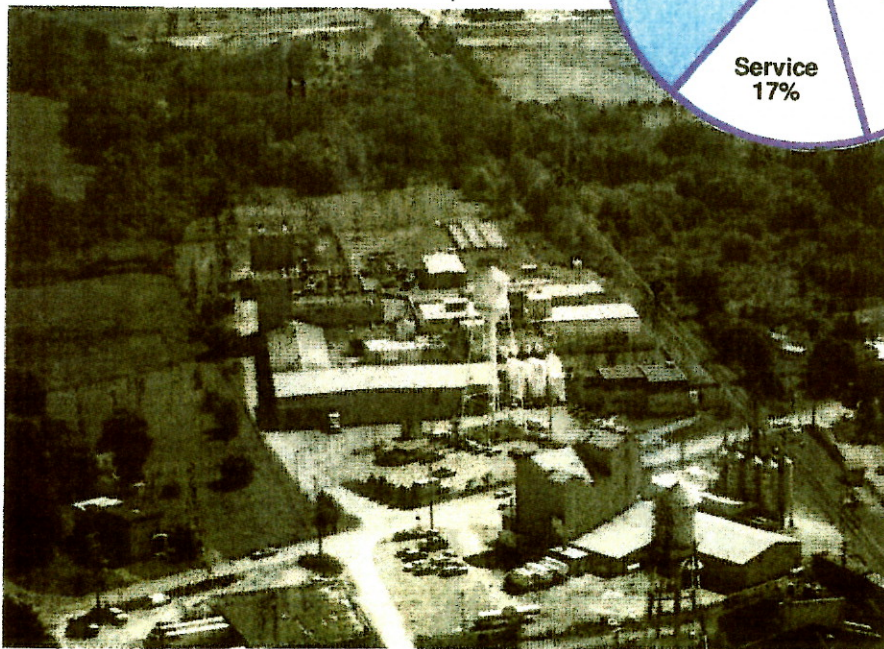
■ To facilitate business and industry operations, air and rail service should be upgraded as necessary and major highway improvements should be made. Airport improvements should be completed, in accordance with the Airport Master Plan, and this important facility should be protected from incompatible development of adjacent land. County and City officials and the private sector should unite to lobby the State for needed road improvements. Specifically, an east/west highway connecting Chenango County with Interstate Routes 81 and 88, and a truck route avoiding residential neighborhoods and the commercial core of the City of Norwich.

■ County officials should take the lead in establishing a procedure for extending public water and sewer systems to potential industrial development areas. The advantages and disadvantages of County-operated systems, or several smaller, intermunicipal systems, should be investigated.

■ A County civic center should be developed to accommodate cultural,

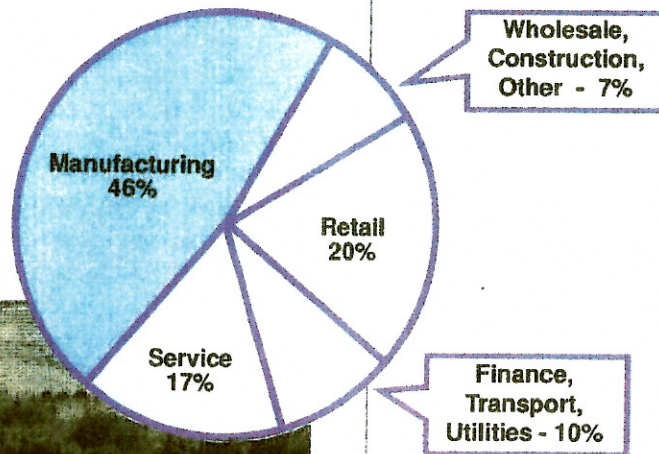
commercial and governmental events and serve as a focus for the community as a whole. A facility of this type could spark the development of, and provide support to, businesses that offer accommodations, meals, entertainment and personal services. It could also provide an important center for artistic and cultural activities.

■ Post-secondary/lifelong learning opportunities should continue to be addressed. Efforts to develop a physical facility to accommodate an educational center at this level would provide opportunities to upgrade the quality of the present and future work force, increase the County's ability to attract and retain business and generally enhance the quality of life.



Non-Farm Employment in the 6-County Region...

...in Chenango County



"We have a strong manufacturing sector, compared to the region as a whole."

SHELTER FOR TOMORROW

STARTS TODAY...

Chenango County has made progress in upgrading housing, particularly in rural communities, through a program of assistance to property owners for improvement of deteriorating housing. The Norwich Housing Authority and Opportunities for Chenango have also made major contributions in the form of rental assistance payments and the direct provision of housing for low and moderate income families and the elderly.

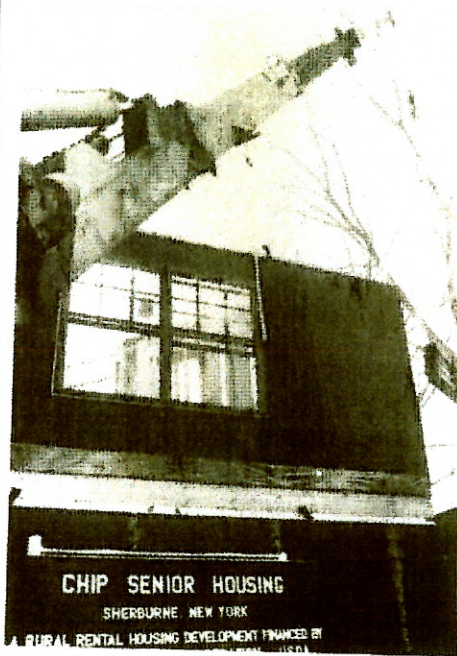
It is important that these efforts continue and be supplemented with activities that address the needs of low and moderate income renters and first time home buyers. Many households continue to live in substandard housing while paying more than 50 percent of their total income for rent. Increasing prices, coupled with interest rates and down payment requirements, put home ownership beyond the reach of many young families. These are problems that will require a commitment from the entire community, not just government, if adequate solutions are to be found.

■ The County should establish a Housing Council with membership from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, all of which have a role in providing solutions to housing problems. This housing "umbrella" function could be placed with a not-for-profit community-based group, organized for this specific purpose, or assigned to an existing agency or organization. Whatever the structure, the group must be prepared to help the County address housing needs on a broad front with a wide range of activities.

■ The Housing Council, once established, should develop a comprehensive strategy for the County to follow including a community profile describing housing needs and a long-range plan for housing investment by both the public and private sectors.

■ The County and its municipalities should continue to compete for federally-funded Community Development block grants. This program has

supported a number of worthwhile housing activities in the City of Norwich and throughout the County.



Using community-based organizations to meet housing needs

"We must develop an active public private partnership, if we are to provide a range of housing opportunities."

MASTERING TECHNOLOGY

FOR A
BETTER
TOMORROW...

The telecommunications infrastructure in Chenango County is of critical importance, especially in the increasingly competitive business world that relies on effective management and transmission of information. The new dimensions offered by fiber optics and constantly evolving computer technology also have broad implications for the public sector. In the next 30 years, County residents will see tremendous change in technology. Consumer needs will be greatly expanded and expectations will be high. If Chenango County is prepared to take advantage of this technological revolution, the benefits can be enormous.

■ The County and the State should begin the process of expanding access to services using electronic and fiber optics networks. Electronic connections to County data bases and the maximum use of computer technologies could accomplish this goal. Residents could be better served through a series of electronically-connected service centers that would increase access while decreasing administrative costs, travel time and expense, and staffing requirements.

■ The County Planning Board should work with the County Data Processing Unit to establish an electronic information management system that can be extended to each municipality as local budgets permit. A system such as this could result in a more effective and efficient development review process and reduce paperwork. The Planning Board should also work with the Data Processing Unit to put in place a geographical information system that can provide needed information at both the County and local planning board level.

■ The County should assist community-based fire companies and emergency medical squads to acquire state-of-the-art communications equipment, so necessary for the provision of adequate services in rural areas.

■ Educational institutions serving the County should identify ways in which use of technology can further expand educational programs and services making them more effective and accessible.

■ County leaders at all levels should keep informed about technological changes. Emerging opportunities to use telecommunications and electronics effectively in government, agriculture, commerce, industry, education, health care, entertainment and social services should be fully considered and pursued whenever possible.



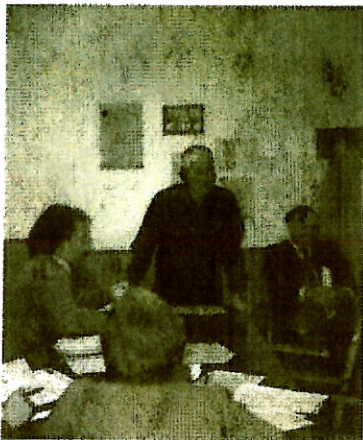
Developing a 21st century work force.

"The area needs new money, new faces and, most importantly, new development opportunities."

POOLING OUR RESOURCES

PULLING TOGETHER...

"We cannot continue to provide services people want at a price they are willing to pay. We must look toward shared services and shared costs."



Creating a blueprint for the future.

Units of local government and school districts must come to grips with the problems posed by a limited resource base and an ever growing demand for services. Some programs and services can be delivered more effectively and efficiently by cooperating, combining and sharing. The practicality of this approach is evidenced by the number of informal arrangements that already exist. Formalizing these arrangements and expanding them, as appropriate, could reduce duplication of effort and result in a more cost effective use of resources.

■ Towns, villages, the City of Norwich and the County should develop mutually beneficial shared service agreements. These agreements could cover services generally performed by government such as code enforcement, water testing, snow removal and other activities. Services delivered by private contractors to a consortium of communities could also be considered.

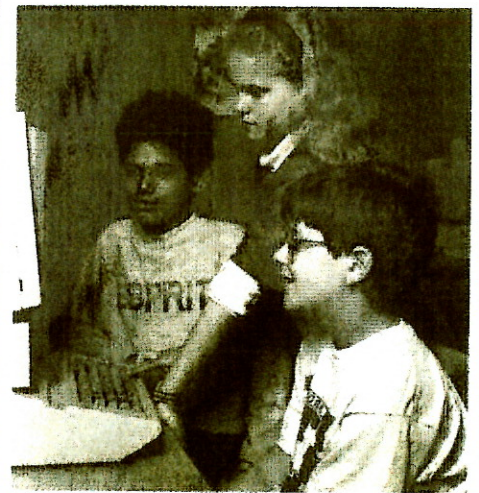
■ School districts serving Chenango County should further develop a plan for increasing shared instructional and non-instructional programs and services. Such a plan could cover a broad spectrum of activities — sharing of teachers, sharing of technological resources and other joint activities that could result in a more effective system of delivering educational programs and services.

■ School districts should develop a plan to standardize equipment and supplies and consolidate bidding and purchasing. Opportunities for including the needs of local government with those of school districts should not be overlooked in developing a consolidated approach.

■ A Central Business Office to serve all school districts providing services in the County should be established. Consolidation of administrative functions such as this could result in savings that could be channeled into educational efforts.

■ Local governments and school boards should remove impediments to multi-purpose use of community-based buildings such as schools, library buildings, and village and town halls. These facilities, often under used, can provide sites for day care, recreation programs, cultural events and other community activities on a shared basis.

■ The County should take the lead in moving toward a unified transportation system that would utilize a pool of vehicles currently operated independently. School buses, Town and Country buses and vans, formal carpool arrangements, taxi services — all could serve as pieces in a County-wide transit system for both rural and urban areas.



Sharing services and equipment works well in our schools.

Follow through... follow through... follow through...

These must be our watch words as the plan development phase of the 2020 Vision Project comes to an end. The thousands of hours of volunteer work and the local and state funds expended on the project will be wasted if we do not follow through on the Commission's recommendations. Not all will prove to be feasible. Some will be modified as time and events change the context in which they were made. We owe it to ourselves, however, to consider each aspect of the Commission's work and do all that we can to make the VISION a reality.

Throughout the Commission's deliberations, we noted the importance of a strong educational component that would inform the public on a wide range of topics. Water quality issues. . .infrastructure problems. . .new technologies. . .the governmental decision making process. . .population changes affecting the County. These are just a few of the areas where a heightened level of public awareness must be developed if the Commission's recommendations are to be accepted. This is a challenge and an opportunity, not only for the educational professionals but also for government and the private sector. All have a role to play if we are to meet this challenge and make the most of the opportunity.

Who will be responsible for ensuring that the vast amount of work invested in the 2020 project bears fruit? The 2020 Commission has debated this question throughout the course of the project. Our conclusion is that the Chenango County Planning Board appears to be the logical body to keep us on track. We suggest this, recognizing that the Planning Board is not responsible, in most cases, for direct implementing actions. This falls to the Board of Supervisors, school boards, local government officials and the business community, for the most part. The Planning Board can, however, provide the level of effort required to keep us moving and to refer specific recommendations to the appropriate implementing body. The Planning Board can also undertake a yearly evaluation of progress made on the various recommendations and an identification of problem areas as they arise.

In last analysis, however, through their persuasiveness, involvement and continued interest, it will be the people of Chenango County who implement the 2020 plan just as it was the people who created it.

"There has to be a lot of give and take in implementation of the 2020 plan. I don't think we can expect this to be easy."

The following "fantasy" letter is written in the year 2020, looking back on changes in Chenango County during the period 1990-2020.

Board of Supervisors of Chenango County



Glenn Angell, Chairman-Retired
Chenango County Board of Supervisors

10 January 2020

Dear Glenn,

You probably don't remember me. Thirty years ago, I was one of the high school students who participated in the Chenango County 2020 Vision project. Excitement about that project was high in our school back then. I remember how pleased most of us were to be included in the massive effort you and the Board of Supervisors, and so many citizens, made to collectively plan for the County's future.

At a school assembly that fall, I can still hear one of the 2020 speakers remark that some of us sitting in the audience might well be the County's decision makers thirty years hence. Sounded intriguing at the time but I never dreamed it might happen to me! So here I am, sitting in your old seat, marvelling at all the changes that have occurred since 1991 and anxious to tell you about them.

Lets start with something dear to your heart — County government itself. Since you were Chairman, Glenn, there have been dramatic changes in the way the County does its business. Things got impossibly tough in the late '90's. Budget pressures finally forced the Board to find ways to increase efficiency and eliminate duplication. Major change was inevitable — there was little choice. That was the challenge and they met it head on.

I wasn't in government then, but I remember there was a lot of concern over the "whys" and "how tos" of the new ideas that were presented. You 2020 planners predicted it wouldn't be easy and it certainly wasn't. But a determined majority finally bit the bullet and did what had to be done — Chenango County entered the 21st Century under the strong leadership of a first rate County Administrator. How did you ever get along without one? By 2010, government was completely modernized and streamlined; predictably, the quality of services to our taxpayers improved.

Following the County's lead a number of local governments got into the streamlining act. Community leaders began looking for ways to work together and, believe me, the benefits have been tremendous. Our "pooled purchasing" program — for the County, local governments and school districts — is a perfect example. We can hardly believe the savings! A rather obvious approach, you might say, but it took a while for us to get there.

Here's something that might amaze you: through the gradual process of phased consolidation, the number of municipalities in the County has actually been reduced by three. Quite an accomplishment, you'll agree!

The combined City/Town of Norwich was born on January 1, 2005 and has since blossomed into an impressive County seat with new housing, more jobs, a highway bypass for through traffic and a successful shopping district. The crown jewel of this remarkable rejuvenation is a Civic Center. Big national attractions or local gatherings; we can handle them all!

Travelling around our 18 towns, I see impacts of the 2020 project everywhere. Sewers have been extended in those areas where ground water quality was a concern; most municipalities have long range plans and effective land use controls to preserve farm land and protect the environment; a network of child care centers provides quality affordable care for children of working parents, and we now have an excellent County-wide computerized system for gathering and distributing all types of information. I could go on, but you get the idea. . . now, let me tell you about our economy.

Over the past 25 years, we've really worked on the 2020 recommendation to capitalize on the County's existing economic resources. The payoff has been great! Take telecommunication, for example. Building on existing strengths, a consortium of local businesses was formed that creates and delivers quality educational programs to schools throughout the northeast.

Telecommunication is also playing an important role at the Plum Valley Recreation Park. Since Lincklaen was part of that first study, 32 years ago, you probably won't be surprised to hear that Plum Valley was well ahead of its time. After national attention was focused on problems of persons with disabilities, Plum Valley began to take off. Now, in addition to a range of barrier-free recreation opportunities, the park contains facilities for basic research, new products design and testing, biofeedback learning and national conferences on medical and therapeutic treatment. Needless to say, the positive economic impact on the County and the area around the park has been rewarding in many ways.

We still have some problems, of course. Transportation connections to the rest of the world are not the best, even though many 2020 recommendations have been followed. On the bright side, you'll be pleased to hear that the Lt. Warren Eaton Airport now provides regular commuter service to many major airports. We're still struggling with an effective County-wide preventive health care program and, try as we might, we still face problems managing our solid waste. On another front, our teen pregnancy rate has dropped dramatically — school-community partnerships fostering self-esteem and focus helped there — but we can never do enough to help kids through these rough growing-up, fast-changing times.

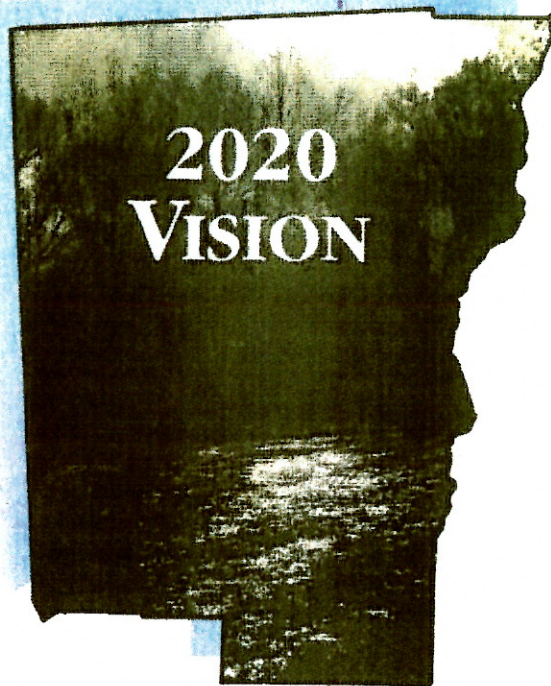
Time to sign off now and get ready for the County Board meeting. To sum up, Glenn, it's fair to say the 2020 Vision project has been a major catalyst as well as a great challenge. The Plan has been updated many times over the years but we're now thinking it might be time to convene another Commission on the Future to help us steer through the next 30 years.

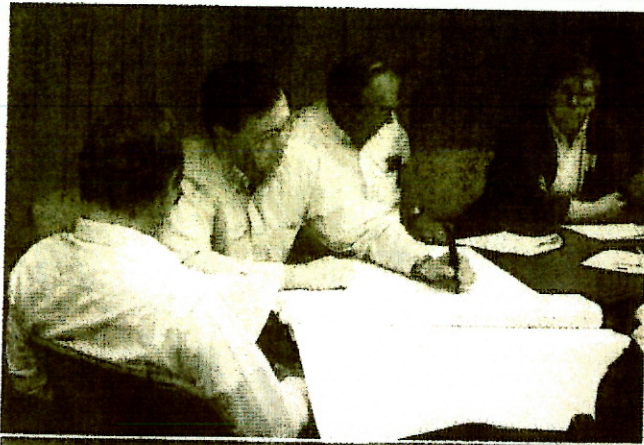
2020 VISION was a perfect name for what we did back in the '90's. As I think about all this now, it's clear that the foresight, imagination and courage of that effort — our 2020 Vision — was responsible for much of what we think, do and prize in the County today.

With hope for the future,



Chris Talball, Chairperson





MANY THANKS... *to all who helped shape the Vision*

The strength of the 2020 Commission's work lies in efforts of the many volunteers who gave of their time and energy throughout the planning process. As the seven planning teams worked to develop sound ideas based on solid information, the Commission held 22 meetings in the County's towns and villages to acquaint the public with the project and elicit comments and concerns. Over 7,000 volunteer hours were logged over an 18 month period. Without this grass roots effort, 2020 could not have happened.

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES WHICH MADE THE PRINTING OF THIS DOCUMENT POSSIBLE:

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Jean Eastman

Edward Newman

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Pete Maynard

(S) High School Students

(Y) Youth Project Advisors

Additional information on this project may be obtained by contacting the Chenango County Department of Planning and Development, County Office Bldg., 5 Court St., Norwich, NY 13815-1676, (607) 337-1640.



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Throughout the 2020 project, the support of the business community played an important role. One of the most critical examples of this was the "Loaned Executive" partnership that provided professional leadership for the program. Don Lee, Norwich Eaton Pharmaceuticals, provided the startup momentum and structure so critical to the first year. In January of 1991, Ted Hogan, GTE, came on board to take the project into the final stages of development of recommendations, presentation to the public, and documentation and wrapup.

We gratefully acknowledge the commitment Norwich Eaton and GTE made to the 2020 project and the guidance and support provided by Don and Ted over the course of two years. Their willingness to balance the demands of 2020 as well as their "regular" jobs was no small task and they took it on willingly.

It is this spirit of sharing resources and working toward a common goal that has made the 2020 project a success.

Don Lee, Executive Director 1990
Ted Hogan, Executive Director 1991
Nancy Root, Assistant Director
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And to all others who so willingly gave of their time and resources to support this project.

