

## **Business Organizations & Current Economic Development Activity**

In order to get a clear picture of the business climate in the Waterfront Villages, it is important to note the business organizations that represent local business. At present, there is no single organization representing the business community in and around the three Waterfront Villages. While the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce has a service area covering all of Cayuga County, it is based out of Auburn and draws a majority of its members from in and around the Auburn area. It does have several members from the Union Springs area, and a handful from in and around Cayuga and Aurora, many of whom also participate in the local business organizations described below. As the largest of the business organizations, it offers a number of member services, a website and member brochures, as well as paid staff to support its operations.

The Union Springs/Springport Chamber of Commerce represents numerous businesses in the Union Springs and Springport area, as well as several from the Village of Cayuga and the Town of Aurelius. The Union Springs/Springport Chamber of Commerce is presently working to develop a website to promote the area and its members.

The Aurora Arts and Merchants Association has a broad-based membership of businesses, non-profit organizations, and attractions in and around the Village of Aurora. They have an active website, and distribute brochures promoting both their members and the Aurora area.

It is also important to note the significant economic development activity currently underway in the three Villages. In the Village of Cayuga, Beacon Bay Enterprises has made significant progress in the redevelopment of the Beacon Mills industrial site. The site was purchased in 1982 by the Mills family, and rezoned as a Lakeshore Development District. Demolition activities necessary for site development were undertaken in the first twelve years of ownership. In the last eight years, Beacon Bay Marina has been privately developed into winter storage for more than 65 boats and other recreational vehicles. The renovated buildings within the marina are currently home to several other businesses, including Midlakes Navigation Canal Tour Boats, Mahaney Canvas, and Cayuga Wooden Boat Company. Additional plans for the marina include dock space for up to 60 boats, a store with groceries and marine supplies, and haul out and launch facilities, including gas and mechanical repair services.

Notable public development activities in Union Springs focus on improvements in and around Frontenac Park. While much of the work in and around the park has been completed, including improvements to the boat launch, picnic pavilions, and landscaping, additional improvements to be made include expansion of short-term boat dockage, creation of a walking trail and lake overlook, and sidewalk improvements between the park and the downtown. Additionally, redevelopment of the site of the former Astoria Hotel into a landscaped parking area will benefit the downtown, where parking is a concern. Development of this lot for parking will also provide overflow parking for the park, thus creating a link between the park and downtown.

In Aurora, most of the potentially developable commercial property in the Village is owned by Wells College and is currently undergoing significant private redevelopment through a limited liability corporation, the Aurora Foundation, a joint venture of Wells College and the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation. Properties included in this redevelopment effort include the Aurora Inn, the Fargo building, the French House, the Wells College Golf Course, the Gratitude shop, the Market Building (next to the Inn), and the Wallcourt Building. Renovations of the Aurora Inn are currently underway, and when the Inn reopens in 2003, it will offer overnight accommodations (10 guest rooms), and a small restaurant offering fine dining. Additionally, the Fargo, the Old Post Office, and the Village Market are currently undergoing renovations. When it reopens, the Fargo will offer casual dining, and a new pizza parlor on its ground floor. Vintage Lighting has recently relocated to newly renovated space in the old Post Office. The Aurora Foundation has plans to open the Village Market in the Market building when renovations are completed. The store will offer fresh produce, meat, fish and baked goods, in addition to convenience store items.