

## SHADE TREES MAKE A DIFFERENCE



We often write about how landscaping and trees can add to community character. The before and after photos above show how a vacant commercial lot can be enhanced with the addition of trees and sidewalk. The lot, located on South Avenue in the City of Cortland, received a facelift this summer with funding provided by a 2007 comprehensive Community Development Block Grant.



34 TOMPKINS STREET CORTLAND, NY 13045

"Partnering with Communities For a Better Tomorrow"

- Community Visioning
- Community Surveys
- Comprehensive Planning
- Downtown Revitalization
- Economic Development
- Feasibility Studies
- Grant Accounting
- Grant Administration
- Grant Writing
- Historic Preservation
- Housing Rehabilitation
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Lead Clearance Testing
- Lead Risk Assessment
- Loan Portfolio Management
- Market Studies
- Microenterprise Assistance
- Parks & Trail Development
- Records Consulting
- Recreation Planning
- Strategic Planning
- Zoning/Code Revisions

34 Tompkins Street  
Cortland, New York 13045  
607-753-1433  
tdc@thomadevelopment.com

Bernard Thoma,  
Senior Consultant



A newsletter of Thoma Development Consultants

October 2009

### OCR REVISES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The State Office of Community Renewal, which administers the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, recently changed its economic development program. Instead of a single program, there are now three funding categories: economic development, small business, and microenterprise. These are summarized below:

**Economic Development** – This program is aimed at larger projects including business attraction, expansion, and relocation. Permanent private sector jobs must be created, which principally benefit a low-to-moderate income person or household. The construction of public infrastructure necessary to support job expansion is also eligible. Funding is in the range of \$100,000 to \$750,000 for up to 40% of the total project cost and one full-time job must be created for every \$15,000 in assistance. NYS CDBG funds should be used as a gap to induce project completion.

**Small Business** – This is targeted for smaller businesses, with award amounts ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000. The company must have 25 or fewer full-time equivalent employees at the time of the application. One full-time job must be created for every \$25,000 in assistance. Assistance must not exceed 40% of the total cost. A minimum 20% owner equity contribution is required. The equity contribution will be lowered to a minimum of 10% if it is certified as a Green Building project.

**Microenterprise** – The maximum allocation is \$200,000 to the community, which then re-grants the money to eligible microenterprises. A microenterprise is defined as a company with five or fewer full

time equivalent employees, one or more of whom is the principal and owns the company at the time of the application. Individual assistance can range from \$5,000 to \$35,000. The CDBG Program can fund up to 90% of the program cost with a minimum owner equity contribution of 10%. Certified completion of an entrepreneurial/small business training program is required. The CDBG Program can cover this expense.



Jim and Elizabeth Cosimo flank employee Kathy Welch (center) at Cosimo's Italian Carry-out in Cortland. This South End business qualified for grants and loans through the City which enabled them to expand their catering business, purchase new equipment, and hire new employees. This allows them to remain competitive in a tough market. An added bonus was that with the new equipment, they became qualified to provide breakfast and lunch for the Head Start Program.

These funds can be applied for throughout the year by the sponsoring municipality. All funds need to be expended within a 24-month time period. We are currently working on three CDBG economic development projects. Livingston County has secured funding

on behalf of Kraft Foods in Avon to expand Kraft's Lunchables product line in New York State. The Village of Waterloo secured funding for Gharana Industries, which occupies the former Cadbury factory. It produces vegetarian cookies, specialty flour, and homemade cheeses. The City of Cortland has initiated two pilot microenterprise programs as part of comprehensive CDBG awards for the downtown and the South End Neighborhood.

#### INSIDE THIS EDITION...

CLOCKTOWER REDEVELOPMENT...	2
CDBG & HOME FUNDING...	2
RESTORE NY AWARDS...	3
SHADE TREES...	4





## TIMELY COMPLETION OF CLOCKTOWER REDEVELOPMENT

As reported in previous editions of *Thoma's Developments*, one of downtown Cortland's most prominent and historic buildings, the Squires Building, also known as the Clocktower site, succumbed to fire in April of 2006. This building was located just one block from our offices, so we watched the drama unfold. Thoma worked with the City of Cortland in securing \$2M in Restore NY funds to rebuild the \$4M building for commercial and residential use. Building owner John Scanlon celebrated the completion of the project by holding a community open house in August.



## COMMUNITIES RECEIVE CDBG AND HOME FUNDING

Five of our customers applied for and received six grants through the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Programs. These successful communities and their projects include:

**Village of Owego** – This Tioga County community received \$400,000 to rehabilitate 15 single family, owner occupied structures located on a community-wide basis.

**City of Cortland** – The City of Cortland captured both CDBG and HOME funds for its East End Neighborhood. \$400,000 in HOME funds will be used to rehabilitate 14 single family, owner occupied homes in the neighborhood. CDBG funds in the amount of \$400,000 will rehabilitate 21 units of income property.

**Village of Parish** – The Village was awarded \$601,932 to replace aged pump stations with new package pump stations as part of its wastewater treatment system upgrades. Parish was eligible for this funding because more than 51% of its residents have low-to-moderate household income.

**Village of Waverly** – The Village received \$400,000 in CDBG funds for a Downtown Revitalization Program to

rehabilitate 26 units of both single and multi family income property units in the heart of the Village's downtown.

**Town of Colesville** – The Town received its third CDBG housing rehabilitation grant since 2001. This year's \$400,000 will be used by the Town to rehabilitate 14 homes owned and occupied by lower income households.

Thoma Development is happy to share in the success of our customers. We have already started the income survey process for 2010 HOME and CDBG applications. Please call our office today to discuss your potential project.

## DID YOU KNOW...

Over the last 10 years, Thoma has secured over \$31.2 Million in CDBG funds for 86 different projects.

## RESTORE NY AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Thoma partnered with four municipalities to capture over \$1.3M in Restore NY funds. This funding focuses on demolition, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of vacant commercial or residential sites. Successful projects include:

**Town of Cortlandville** - \$300,000 award to the Central NY Living History Museum (Brockway Museum) to rehabilitate a vacant department store and transform it into a new museum and regional attraction.



Brockway Museum

**Village of Whitney Point** - \$410,000 to rehabilitate three vacant, or nearly vacant, historic buildings in its downtown: the Oakland Hotel, the Johnson Building, and the Reporter Building. These building improvements will

pave the way for expanded business and residential opportunities including Lourdes Hospital's intentions to develop a regional health care facility in its downtown.



Oakland Hotel

**Village of New Berlin** – The Village was awarded \$131,750 to demolish a condemned building in its commercial district. A developer is interested in purchasing the site after demolition and has plans to construct a new commercial building.



2-10 N. Main Street

**Village of Mount Morris** – The Village owns the unique New Family Theater, a 1936 Art Deco building. It has been working for years to save the local landmark. With \$433,477 in Restore NY funds, the Village will demolish and reconstruct the rear portion of the building. It will also restore the front façade and marquee. This will create new, quality commercial space in the downtown.

Additional Restore funds are not slated for the future. We will inform our customers of any changes to the funding status.



New Family Theater Building

"The money from Restore NY will have a far reaching impact on our community. When completed, these projects will provide additional employment opportunities and services in our community. I could not be more pleased. This is a great day for Whitney Point. Thanks to Thoma Development Consultants for their assistance!"

- Gerald Whitehead, Mayor of Whitney Point

