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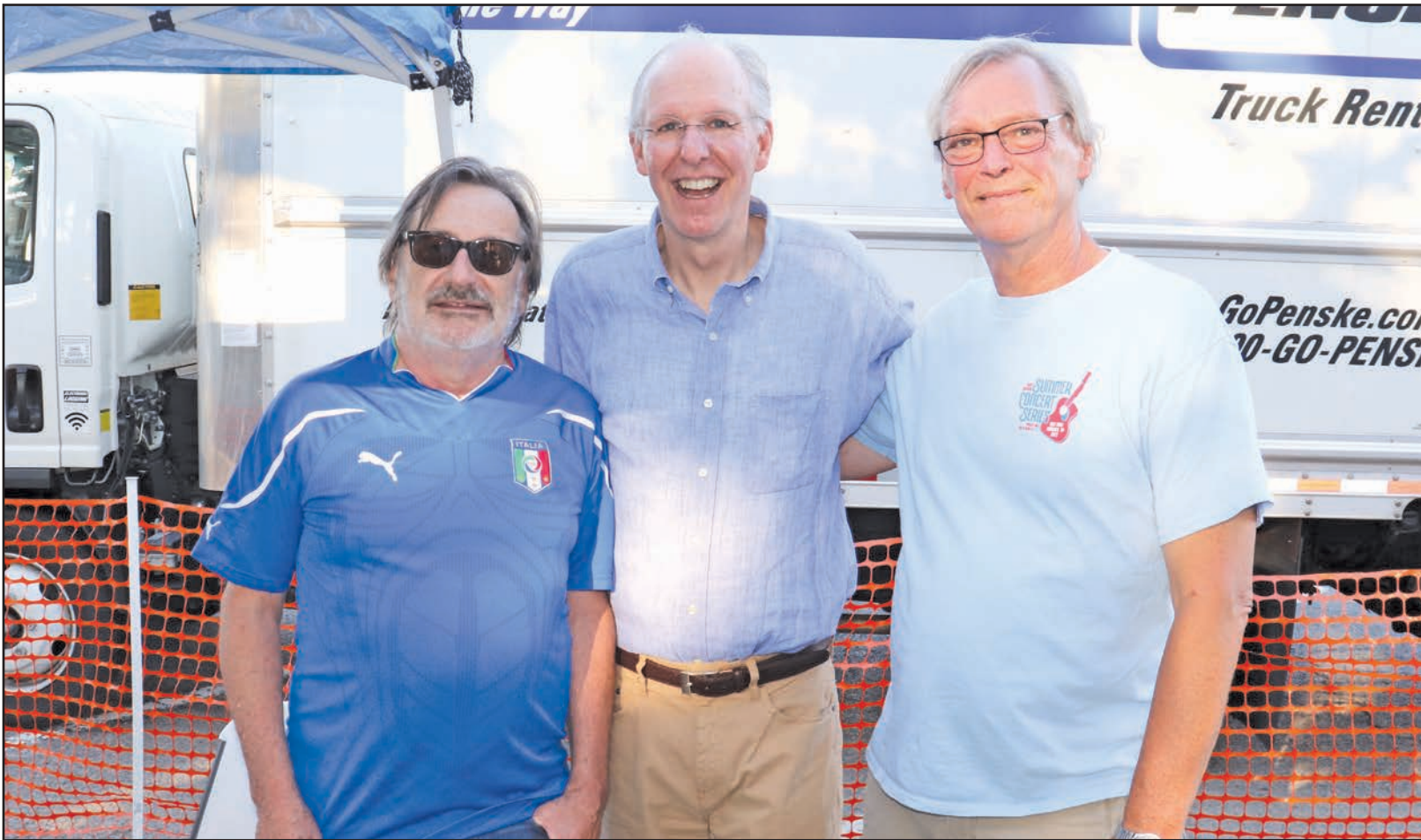
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VOL. 10 AN EVENING SUN PUBLICATION FEBRUARY 10, 2023

## NBT Bank's inspiring success adds to the value of our local community



John Lyon, aka Southside Johnny, catches up with NBT Bank President & CEO John H. Watt, Jr. and Chenango Blues Association representative Eric Larsen before the Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes performance on July 21, 2022. (Submitted photo)

### Tyler Murphy Evening Sun Editor

CHENANGO COUNTY – NBT Bank is one of the area's most successful, oldest and influential businesses.

The bank has a history as long and rich as the Norwich community itself and the two have grown together since the mid-1800s.

Today, NBT Bank remains based in the City of Norwich and a vital employ-

er, but in many ways its successes have inspiringly grown far beyond Chenango County.

According to a December 30, 2022 report, NBT Bancorp had assets of \$11.74 billion.

In 2022, NBT Bank was

again named on the Forbes World's Best Banks list, earning the highest-ranked bank based in New York and the highest-ranked bank in Connecticut and Vermont.

The company was also

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### SUCCESS STORY

## Norwich Unison celebrates 75 years of success as a market leader in ignition systems

NORWICH – GE Aerospace/Unison Industries has been a leader in ignition systems and technology dating back to when they introduced the world's first solid-state turbine ignition system. The business continues to thrive after 75 years of business in Norwich.

According to Unison Norwich Site Leader Shannon Slack, Unison's large product portfolio continues to support the space and defense industries – most recently announcing a long-term agreement with Blue Origin to design, manufacture and support ignition systems for their engines.

"This agreement will allow the Norwich site to have substantial growth over the next 10 years," said Slack. The LTA for Space in addition to steady demand for our mature product lines in alternators, temperature sensors, switches, and bellows will

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## Leadership Chenango: Empowering the leaders of tomorrow



The class session focusing on the judicial system was so impactful, class members invited the Hon. Joseph McBride to speak at the class' graduation on November 10, 2022. (Submitted photo)

### Melissa Stagnaro Evening Sun Contributor

NORWICH – The ballroom at Canasawacta Country Club was full on an evening in early November, as Chenango County's premier leadership development program graduated its most recent crop of budding leaders – and honored the previous class, which had been interrupted like so many things by the COVID pandemic.

"The footprint left by Leadership Chenango is monumental," said Braderick Morrison, who was selected to speak on behalf of the Class of 2022 at their commencement.

Morrison and his classmates represent the eighteenth group of leaders to graduate from the program since 1988, when it was first launched by The Chenango Foundation. Some 350 business and community leaders have since com-

pleted the program which, prior to the pandemic, was offered bi-annually.

"We are very proud of the Leadership Chenango program and the foundation that it has created in developing leaders in our community over the past 40 years and in the future," said Luke Murphy, Chair of the Chenango Foundation and 2002 alumni as he congratulated the graduates of the Class of 2020 and 2022.

Despite a pause in in-person gatherings, the Class of 2020 finished its planned program, albeit a few months behind schedule and with an online graduation which lacked the long-held tradition of a formal dinner and ceremony. Which is why, when the Class of 2022 planned its own graduation, they felt strongly about including the previous class in the festivities.

Their own class was

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# Leadership Chenango: Empowering the leaders of tomorrow -

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also impacted by the lasting effects of COVID-19.

According to Melissa Stagnaro, who now facilitates Leadership Chenango, developing the curriculum for the Class of 2022 required a greater degree of flexibility than previous years.

At its core, Leadership Chenango is a ten-month program designed to develop future leaders in the hopes of both preparing them to assume roles of responsibility in political, civic, and charitable organizations

“The curriculum is designed to give participants a greater understanding of all facets of the greater Chenango community, as well as enhance and develop their leadership skills,” she explained. “In the process, we help them make meaningful connections within the community and with each other, to help guide their future growth and development.”

To accomplish this, the class begins with an orientation and retreat designed to help them get to know one another – and themselves. From there, they meet twice monthly with each session focusing on a different aspect of Chenango County. That includes deep dives into local government, agriculture, education, social services, the non-profit sector, judicial system, economic development, business and entrepreneurship, tourism, and health care – and intimate looks and behind-the-scenes tours of some of Chenango’s largest and most diverse employers.

“Class members come to the program with a desire to serve the community as well as grow personally and professionally,” Stagnaro said. “We do everything we can to give them the tools, skills and connections to do so effectively, so they can take an active role in shaping the future of Chenango County.”

According to Stagnaro, the applicants who applied to be a part of the Class of



The Class of 2022 interviewed local agricultural producers, spent a day at the Chenango County Fair, and visited Marshman Farms in Oxford as part of their deep dive into Agribusiness. (Submitted photo)

**“Class members come to the program with a desire to serve the community as well as grow personally and professionally,” Stagnaro said. “We do everything we can to give them the tools, skills and connections to do so effectively, so they can take an active role in shaping the future of Chenango County.”**

2022 were a unique group.

“They included residents of five counties. Some were born and raised in this area, and others relocated here within the last two to three years,” she said. “They came from diverse backgrounds and industries, each was incredibly engaged and curious, and it was clear from the beginning that they shared a passion for making this

community and the world a better place.”

The question was, with the world still reeling from COVID, would Leadership Chenango be able to deliver the same experience for which it was so highly regarded?

“Traditionally the class has started in the fall and concluded with graduation in late spring. But by early 2021, we knew we’d need to look at something different if we were going to proceed with the program,” Stagnaro said.

And so a new schedule was born, which started in February of 2022 and continued through November. While challenges still presented themselves, so did opportunities.

“We decided to forgo the usual kick-off dinner, as we knew people were still leery about public gatherings,” Stagnaro said. “And at times we were planning

month by month, as we judged the comfort levels of the different organizations and businesses which so

Continued on Page 62 →

## The Leadership Chenango Class of 2022

- Sara Alger, NBT Bank
- Kyli Anderson, United Way of Mid-Rural New York
- Michael Asma, Preferred Mutual Insurance Company
- Dawn Bagnall, Golden Artist Colors
- Laura Beard, NYCM Insurance
- Melissa Beers, Teasers and Deja Brew
- Kevin Gilley, Golden Artist Colors
- Matt Gladstone, Chenango County Planning Department
- Jessica Henninge, The Bartle Homestead
- Jacob Lepcio, Norwich Pharmaceuticals
- Matthew Masse, UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital
- Heather McShane, Canasawacta Country Club
- Kathy Mikalunas, NBT Bank
- Brianna Miner, Commerce Chenango
- Braderick Morrison, Chenango Health Network
- Marci Riddell, Norwich Wealth Management Group
- Alexis Savidge, Family Planning of South Central New York
- Adam Stoutenburg, Casella Waste Management
- Jerri Webb, Frontier
- Allison Yacano, Chenango County Planning Department
- Melissa Stagnaro, Facilitator

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# Leadership Chenango: Empowering the leaders of tomorrow -



In July, the Leadership Chenango Class of 2023 visited Gladding Braided Products in South Otselic and Mid York Press in Sherburne, as well as Golden Artist Colors and Chobani in the Town of Columbus. (Submitted photo)

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graciously open their doors to us.”

At times, a session had to be rescheduled or new speakers invited in the eleventh hour. And when transportation fell through, the class members chose to car pool - something that proved so popular, they opted to do it for each of the ‘Leadership Express’ excursions that allowed them to explore such gems as Gladding Braided Products; Mid-York Press; Golden

Artist Colors; Chobani; Norwich Pharmaceuticals; Marshman Farms; Gallery 3-2-1; Solitude Farmz; The Bartle Homestead and more.

The added flexibility paid off in unexpected ways, as well.

“For the first time ever we were able to hold our Agribusiness Day at the Chenango County Fair,” Stagnaro said. “It was such a wonderful opportunity to see our county’s rich agricultural heritage in action.”

Due to a last-minute

schedule change, the class was also able to shoe-horn in a Leadership in Action project which saw them undertake both a cleanup effort along the Chenango Greenway trail adjacent to the Chenango River and a service project at Roots & Wings.

According to Stagnaro, the Leadership Chenango experience is as much of a personal journey as a professional one.

“It’s been amazing to see their growth,” she said. “Some have embarked on

new career directions, others have started new businesses. They have become homeowners, gotten married, started families. They’ve found causes and organizations they have felt compelled to join forces with. And they have all made connections that will help them professionally and personally throughout their lifetimes.”

While the bi-weekly class sessions may have ended, those relationships remain.

“People hear about the

sessions held, the businesses visited, the lectures we sat through and even the volunteer projects we all participated in. What they don’t see is our personal connections, the bonds we built amongst ourselves, and the support this group continues to show one another,” said Kevin Gilley, an Oneonta resident whose participation in the class was sponsored by Golden Artist Colors.

Sidney resident Brianna Miner said she applied for Leadership Chenango

because she was looking to find and surround herself with like-minded individuals looking to make a difference.

“This class has left an everlasting impression on my way of thinking, my memories, and my heart. We cannot and will not forget this most incredible journey and those of us who made it all that much more special,” Miner said.

“We knew starting this journey that the class aims

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# Leadership Chenango -



Members of the Leadership Chenango Class of 2022 were treated to a pottery throwing demonstration at Gallery 3-2-1 and Strong Stone Pottery in Oxford. (Submitted photo)

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to inspire and empower the leaders of tomorrow, and now that it has served its purpose, we must go out and, well, lead. We are each a smaller part of a bigger picture, but we will always have started off from the

same roots.”  
Stagnaro said it was an honor to facilitate the Class of 2022.

“Anyone who has completed this program will tell you that it’s life changing. It opens your eyes to what’s possible and gives you insight into how you

can apply your unique energy and efforts to making a difference in your own life and for our community,” she said.

“The fact that I’ve been able to help others on their own journey of discovery has been the gift of a lifetime.”

## SUCCESS STORY

# Norwich Unison celebrates 75 years of success as a market leader in ignition systems -

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require the need for skilled labor for many years to come.

The Norwich team manufactures approximately one million parts a year, servicing more than 140 global customers.

She said Norwich’s site has a phrase which is “locally grown, globally known,” which is possible due to our people and our technology, here in rural upstate New York. She added that technology and innovation form the foundation of our company, while employee teamwork and dedication, derived from this community, are the driving force in what we do. The culture this community has provided continues to be our competitive advantage.

### Celebrating 75 Years of Progress

Slack said in 2022, Unison celebrated its 75th anniversary of the Norwich business.

She said the 160,000 sq foot Unison facility in Norwich employs about 350 skilled manufacturing and support employees and design engineers. She added that Unison has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade.

“The Norwich site is part of the Unison business which now has more than 2,000 employees across five global manufacturing locations,” said Slack. “Unison is best known in the aerospace industry where it is a supplier to nearly every aircraft engine and airframe in service today.”

“Unison is focused on technology advancement as well as increased product offerings to move further into adjacent markets like space and aftermarket services.”

Slack said a major accomplishment for the site in 2022 was getting parts made locally into a rocket launch.

“Unison’s team in Norwich and Jacksonville FL had content on the RL-10 rocket launch at Cape Canaveral in 2022. Unison’s ignition system is on the upper stage engine for this launch. This is an Air Force payload Space-Based Infrared System.

If you want to learn more about Unison you may visit its website at [www.unisonindustries.com](http://www.unisonindustries.com) for additional information.

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## NBT Bank's inspiring success adds to the value of our local community -

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recognized as a best place to work by the Central New York Business Journal and Albany Business Review – the result of an internal effort by the bank to create a strong focus on having a positive environment that attracts the best employees in the community banking industry.

### Banking for a community

In 2023 the company had about 1,951 employees in New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Connecticut. Nearly 500 of them work in Chenango County.

“Supporting the communities we serve is one of NBT’s core values and a key component of the employee experience. We encourage and support employees here in Chenango County and across our seven-state banking footprint in playing an active role in organizations and causes that are important to them where they live and work. We find that community involvement comes naturally to our team members, because that’s who we are. It’s the NBT spirit,” said NBT Bank President and CEO John H. Watt, Jr.

Watt said one of his favorite local community events is the NBT Bank

Summer Concert series, “Especially when Southside Johnny comes to town!”

“Last summer, Eric Larsen and the Chenango Blues Association arranged for Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes to perform, and it was a summer highlight for me. I love seeing the community come together to appreciate great music and the arts,” said Watt.

NBT is deeply involved with the local community and coordinated nearly 150 volunteer engagements by the bank’s Norwich-based employees in 2022.

The employees volunteered at Chenango County events and organizations, including the United Way, Helping Hands, Saturdays in the Park, the annual Gus Macker basketball tournament and many more. In addition, numerous employees volunteer their personal time to coach local sports, support booster clubs, deliver Meals on Wheels, and serve as board members.

NBT Bank sponsored a number of community events throughout the year. The bank enjoyed another great season of the NBT Bank Summer Concert Series produced by the Chenango Blues Association.

In recognition of Cybersecurity Month in October, NBT partnered with ConfiDATA to host a free document shredding event in Norwich to help community members dispose of personal paperwork.

During the holiday season, NBT was honored to take second place for the Best Float award at the 2022 Holiday of Lights Parade. Team members served free hot chocolate and cookies in front of the headquarters at 52 South Broad Street.

NBT Bank also continued supporting local nonprofit organizations, including local school districts, Chenango Arts Council, Norwich Family YMCA, Norwich Dollars for Scholars, Colorscape Chenango and more.

NBT Insurance Agency’s Contract and Compliance Administrator Jamie Burchill helped raise more than \$50,000 for the St. Baldrick’s Foundation to aid childhood cancer research.

### Looking at opportunities ahead

NBT Bank has taken a number of successful steps in recent years. The company navigated the pandemic well, coming out stronger than it was before and helping a number of customers, many of them community

residents and businesses, remain financially sound.

NBT Bank has continued to find success in 2022 and provided key financial advice for all kinds of challenges relating to inflation, disruptions in the supply chain and other uncertainties.

The bank made a major expansion in 2022 and is looking ahead at opportunities in 2023.

“NBT is preparing for continued growth on many fronts in 2023 and beyond. Transformational investments are being made in Upstate New York with the growth of the chip fabrication industry, including the recent announcement of Micron Technology’s \$100 billion investment over the next 20 years in Onondaga County,” said Watt.

“From greater Syracuse to Utica and the Capital Region, NBT’s branch network is perfectly positioned along the Upstate New York Chip Corridor to serve the customers and communities that will benefit from this historic growth,” said Watt.

NBT Bank started the year opening a new permanent location in nearby DeRuyter and ended the year with an agreement to merge with another institution, Salisbury Bank.

“Our recent announcement in December of the agreement to acquire Salisbury Bank is also in line with our growth strategy. This all-stock transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2023, pending the required regulatory and Salisbury shareholder approvals,” said Watt.

“We are excited about this partnership with a like-minded community bank that will expand our footprint to include 14 additional NBT Bank offices in the Hudson Valley region of New York, north-west Connecticut and western Massachusetts. This demonstrates the strength of our organization—as does the milestone we reached in 2022 of providing our shareholders with 10 consecutive years of annual dividend increases,” said Watt.

He said the bank was also pleased to welcome Rick Cantele, Salisbury’s President and CEO, to become a member of NBT’s Executive Management Team.

“We are proud to become part of a long-standing, high-performing franchise like NBT Bank,” said Salisbury President and CEO Richard J. Cantele, Jr. in January. “We believe this combination will create sig-

nificant value for Salisbury shareholders, both immediately and longer term.”

NBT Bank delivers a broad range of banking services for personal and business banking, commercial banking and wealth management. Additionally, NBT Insurance Agency offers protection for a wide range of personal and business insurance needs.

“We are constantly enhancing the digital experience we provide to our customers at both the bank and the agency,” said Watt. “Examples include the new digital services we recently rolled out for small businesses, including a new online loan application and the ability to open checking accounts online.”

NBT Insurance Agency also has new digital capabilities, including the myLifeApp to assist customers with their life insurance needs.

“Enhancing our digital services enables us to meet customers where they are and provide them with the omni-channel experience they are seeking,” said Watt.

“In the last two years, we’ve seen consumer digital adoption soar with 94 percent increase. At NBT, we pair those capabilities with our commitment to

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# NBT Bank's inspiring success adds to the value of our local community -



NBT Bank employees volunteer at the merchandise table at the NBT Bank Summer Concert Series. (Submitted photo)



NBT Bank's 2023 Parade of Lights float volunteers take a break from construction to pose in front of their work. (Submitted photo)

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relationship-based community banking so that customers also have access to the knowledge and experience of our team members. We've also seen this validated in the high marks we receive from organizations like Forbes and J.D. Power for the positive experience we provide to our customers."

In June, NBT also marked a milestone for the company's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts

by naming Karen Sastri as its first full-time Chief Diversity Officer.

As Chief Diversity Officer, Sastri provides continuity for NBT's established initiatives and works with leadership to establish new programs and best practices, focusing on recruitment, retention and development. Sastri joined NBT Bank in 1996 and is a local Norwich resident.

### Recognizing the challenges

What does NBT Bank predict for the financial future in the coming months?

According to NBT Chief Investment Officer and Chief Economist Kenneth J. Entenmann, CFA, "This past year has been a volatile one for the economy and the financial markets. The main factors that drove uncertainty in 2022 remain the same as we enter 2023—the stubbornness of infla-

tion and its effect on the Fed's interest rate policies, and the looming threat of economic recession and its impact on corporate earnings."

He said many factors are interrelated.

"The direction of the economy and the financial markets will ultimately be determined by inflation," said Entenmann.

"If recent trends continue and wage pressures abate, inflation may decline toward the Fed's 2 percent target. This would allow the

Fed to complete its interest rate hiking cycle. With the fear of further rate hikes over, the economy would be poised for renewed growth. With stable rates, corporate earnings may begin to grow again."

"However, the main risk for 2023 is that inflation will remain stubborn. That would require the Fed to raise rates further and keep them higher for longer, something the economy and the markets are not anticipating," Entenmann said.

Reflecting those fears, he said there was a general consensus in the economic forecast expecting a possible modest recession in the first half of 2023.

"Hopefully, any recessionary activity will be muted by strong corporate and consumer balance sheets. The expectations are for a rough start to 2023 as the economy works through the challenge of tight labor markets and persistent inflation," said Entenmann.

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# Our Customers Are Our First Priority



Left to right is Sue Bigford, Justine Tumilowicz, Tom Kelly, Mary Sanford and Brooke Pierce



Lisa Colabelli  
Division President      Jim MacDuff  
Service Manager

## Our Pledge...

Our Customers are our first priority. Reese Marshall is here to serve you with your heating and cooling needs. We Pledge to constantly reaffirm this with our actions, which we have built our reputation on.

## We Offer...

- Free estimates for all installations
- Automatic delivery with a guarantee
- 24-hour emergency service, 365 days a year
- A variety of budget and burner service plans
- People who care about providing quality service

## Our Area of Service...

Reese-Marshall Co. Inc.'s office and storage facility is located on County Road 32, in Norwich. Our service area extends to Norwich and the following areas:

- Oxford - McDonough - Guilford - Preston
- Mt. Upton - Gilbertsville - Morris
- South New Berlin - New Berlin - Edmeston
- South Edmeston - West Edmeston - Pittsfield
- Sherburne - North Norwich - Earlville - Columbus Smyrna
- Otselic - South Otselic - Pitcher - Plymouth
- Sidney - Bainbridge
- Hamilton - Madison - Morrisville - Brookfield

## Quality Products...

Reese-Marshall Co. Inc. carries a full line of quality fuels including No. 2 Fuel Oil, Diesel, Kerosene, Gasoline and Propane Gas.

Our Burner Service Department is fully equipped to handle any repair or installation.



## Safe Quality Heating Systems



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