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Broad Street United Methodist Church halfway to completing repairs

SARAH GENTER

EVENING SUN

NORWICH — The Broad Street United Methodist Church has stood as a community icon for nearly 150 years, and a massive restoration project on the historic structure is now halfway done.

During a Methodist revival in the 1820s, 100 new members found their way to a small group of Chenango County Methodists, led by Rev. Reuben Reynolds. In 1827, this group organized a board of trustees and formed the First Society of the Methodist-Episcopal Church of Norwich, and voted in favor of building a church.

Seven years and \$3,000 later, a 38 by 50-foot church was built on the corner of Mitchell Street and North Broad Street, and was dedicated in the summer of 1836. Over the years, the church went through several changes, including enlarging the space, moving the main door, moving the altar, constructing an indoor staircase, and installing a pipe organ.

In January of 1872, Rev. Henry Wheeler was assigned

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A stained glass window in the chapel of the BSUMC. Church officials began looking into preserving the windows in 2018, and discovered leaks inside the walls, as well as damage to the bricks and limestone. They embarked on an approximately \$2 million renovation project, which is now halfway completed. (Photo by Dustin Genter of 5th Dimension Photography)



The Broad Street United Methodist Church is located at 74 North Broad Street in Norwich, where it has stood for nearly 150 years. The historic building is now halfway finished with repairs that began in 2020. (Photo by Dustin Genter of 5th Dimension Photography)



Unison Industries, a GE Aerospace company in Norwich has been serving the aerospace industry for over 30 years (Submitted photo)

Unison Industries: Creating aerospace performance parts in Norwich

KELLI MILLER

EVENING SUN

NORWICH — Unison Industries, a GE Aerospace company in Norwich, has been serving the aerospace industry for over 30 years.

It is a supplier to nearly every engine and airframe program that provides the most advanced performance solutions including aviation, space and defense, power, oil and gas, and transportation.

Unison Operations Manager Shannon Slack said, “We build alternators that create power for commercial and military engines and build temperature sensors that are used for a multitude of reasons to take temperatures throughout the engines and supply signals to the pilots.”

Recent product portfolio expansions include off-engine harnesses and radiation free ignition systems for large industrial power turbines.

Other key projects from the last six months included building carts which allowed sensors to be safely transported between departments and creating foam inserts to better optimize the space available and protect the delicate parts.

Slack said the company is recognized in the industry for specialization in advanced materials, design, technology, and systems integration.

New agreement with major airline

In April, Unison Industries announced it will extend its mechanical support of the C-17 Globemaster III aircraft through a new, five-year repair agreement with Boeing.

“We are thrilled to be elevating the relationship between Unison Industries and Boeing with this repair agreement, which touches upon many products in the Unison portfolio,” Unison President and Ceo Tom Hoferer said.

Boeing delivered the first C-17 in 1993 and now provides sustainment and maintenance for global fleet of 275 aircraft in eight U.S. allied countries.

Unison Industries will be the repair source for multiple components on the aircraft’s four PW2000 engines. The agreement covers repairs for harnesses, exciters, rotors, and stators at Unison’s Norwich and Jacksonville, Florida sites.

“We look forward to working closely with Boeing over the

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Unison Industries will be the repair source for multiple components on Boeing aircraft. (Submitted photo)

UHS Chenango Memorial proves to be a lifeblood of Chenango County

SHAWN MAGRATH

EVENING SUN

NORWICH — Having wrapped up the first phase of its strategic Chenango Medical Neighborhood Plan, UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital (CMH) is moving ahead with phase two, its sights set on bolstering primary and specialty care in 2024.

UHS Chenango Memorial announced last year that it secured \$20.6 million to forge ahead with its years-long multi-phase plan to reconfigure, redesign and redeploy CMH resources in a way that increases access to specialty care while ensuring continued access to essential services. The ultimate goal, according to UHS heads, is to boost services while assuring its viability as a rural hospital.

“Having flexible, modern space is important because it sets the stage for the high-quality care we strive to provide in all of our settings, whether it’s for hospital-based services or outpatient care,” said Chris Kisacky, vice president of service coordination and development at CMH. “Very importantly, it also helps us recruit and retain the medical providers, caregivers and other staff who are our greatest asset.”

CMH launched phase two of its plan in February, alongside the one-year anniversary of its newly constructed emergency department and walk-in center.



UHS Chenango Memorial celebrated the one-year anniversary of its newly renovated emergency department and walk-in center in 2023, alongside the launch of phase two of its years-long multi-phase strategic plan to boost health care services and ensure operational and financial sustainability. (Photo from UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital)

The hospital also closed out phase one of its plan, which largely focused on ambulatory services.

“The capital improvements outlined in the plan replace aging and dysfunctional infrastructure with state-of-the-art, versatile and multifunctional spaces that may be reconfigured based on emerging needs and changing medical practices,” explained Kisacky. “This versatility improves the quality, safety and efficiency of care

delivery and ensures CMH’s operational and financial sustainability.”

With phase two of its strategic plan now underway, focus has shifted from ambulatory care to primary and specialty care. And with that comes strategic staff shake ups. UHS CMH has appointed people to two critical positions in the past year: Sri Poranki, director of strategic initiatives; and Dr. Thomas Genese, vice president of medical affairs and commu-

nity health.

The hospital looks to reach a milestone in phase two of its Chenango Medical Neighborhood Plan by late February, with the anticipated completion of its new outpatient laboratory.

But in spite of the optimism surrounding its strategic plan, UHS CMH faces an onslaught of challenges that are all too familiar to rural hospitals. Those challenges are expected

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Broad Street United Methodist Church halfway to completing repairs -

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to the Norwich church and tasked with “building a church worthy of the congregation in Norwich.” On May 28, 1873, the cornerstone for the new church was laid. Once completed, the church was dedicated on January 14, 1875.

The new church was described as being 110 feet long, with a width of 64 feet in the front of the building and 76 feet in the rear, built from brick and limestone, with two steeples reaching 115 and 190 feet in height, respectively. It included a sanctuary and balcony that seats a total of 1,000 people, a circular gallery, a basement, and a large lecture room.

Today, the Broad Street United Methodist Church (BSUMC) still has those same towering steeples, and three floors on the interior. The first floor includes a fellowship hall, a small dining room, a kitchen, a chapel for the 8:30 a.m. Sunday services, offices, bathrooms, a lounge, and an educational wing with classrooms.

The second floor houses more classrooms for Sunday School, TLC preschool, and an after school program; a choir room; a history room; and the church’s stunning sanctuary for their 10:30 a.m. Sunday services, complete with a balcony seating area and original stained glass windows.

Although church members say the original structure was built rather robustly for its era, the BSUMC has not been immune to the test of time, and in 2019 the church administration began planning for a massive repair project.

The six phases

The repair project initially began on a smaller scale in 2018 when church officials were looking into restoring the stained glass windows, and in the process found leaks inside the walls of the sanctuary.

They also discovered bowing rafters, splitting shingles, and bricks inside the steeples being expelled from the building. The steeples are accessible through the church’s attic, but BSUMC Grant Writer Bernie Windsor said traversing the space was a dangerous task.

“It was just dark up there, it was dangerous up there. There were old rafters and beams that the guys had to go up and walk on, and it was very difficult,” she said.

This added on attic renovations into the project. In total, the project grew into a nearly \$2 million restoration, which will take several years to complete. The church hired contractors Imhoff and Company of Dover, New Jersey, and Brian Biggs Engineers of Clifton Park, New York to complete all of the renovation and repair work.

Renovations began in 2020, and were broken into six phases. Due to the danger and difficulty in accessing the areas in need of repairs, the restoration project



The Broad Street United Methodist Church sanctuary, where 10:30 a.m. Sunday services are held. (Photo by Dustin Genter of 5th Dimension Photography)

first focused on installing safety measures, such as scaffolding and catwalks, hand rails, and safety wires in the attic.

As work continued, more areas in need of repairs or reinforcement were found, leading to additional walkways being installed.

“Much of the work in 2022 was centered on creating safe work access. Areas between trusses, below the walkways, had ladder-type workways constructed. Upper ends of these workways were attached to the main walkways, while the bottoms rested on the outer brick walls of the church,” explained Allan Strong, BSUMC Building and Maintenance Team Member and liaison between the church and contractor.

“When adequate lighting was available, it was noticed that the main roof ridge over the transept on the east end of the building was sagging. Additional walkways were built at that end of the building, on both sides, to gain access to areas where supports would have to be placed,” he added.

Although the church faced some challenges along the way, including delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sweltering heat in the summers, and frigid temperatures in the winter, by the end of 2023 Phases 1 and 2 were completed.

Work completed in the first two phases included lighting, platforms between the two steeples, and walkways spanning the length of the church were added to the attic area. Windsor said the contractors also added blocking between the rafters of the roof where it was sagging, to strengthen and stabilize the structure, and masonry in all four corners of the main roof were rebuilt to match the engineer’s specs.

Although it’s only two out of the six phases, Windsor said it accounts for about half of the work included in the project.

Now that all of the work underneath the roof is completed, contractors were ready to get started on the final four phases,

which will cover the steeples and roof. Unfortunately, they found some unexpected problems.

“During this past year or so we ran into a problem that we consider an emergency. The contractor found the very back wall of the church, the east wall, was badly deteriorating. Bricks were falling, mortar was breaking,” Windsor explained. “That’s where we connect onto the addition that came in 1958. That whole back wing, which is our education wing, our offices, we’ve always seemed to have problems in that connection between the old building and the new building.”

She said the church had to go into an emergency fund to cover these repairs, as they were not included in the grant funding awarded for the six-phase restoration project. Work has already begun on these additional repairs, but are paused until the winter weather eases around March or April.

Windsor said because the contractor will already be working on the back of the building, once emergency repairs are completed they will be switching the order of the phases. They will begin with Phase 6 and work their way down through Phases 5, 4, and 3.

She said Phase 6 will include replacing the entire east edge with new, treated wood; replacing gutters on the back end of the church; and replacing the east edge of the main roof. Contractors will then keep working across the center and some of the front side of the roof for Phase 5.

Phase 4 will replace the roof on the smaller north steeple, and the project will wrap up with the roof replacement on the larger south steeple in Phase 3.

Funding

With the start of the next phase comes the need for funding. Windsor said the church has been extremely lucky so far: they were awarded grant funding from several founda-

tions in the area, and were able to raise enough money to keep the project moving forward over the past two years.

“We have had grants, we had applied for grants [and] received grants from the various foundations in Norwich, and in the last two years, because of the timing and as everything flowed, we did not have to go for grants in ‘22 and ‘23 because we were moving a little slower because of COVID and the weather,” said Windsor.

“And through some of the money brought forward that was left over from the beginning, and through donations, through memorials, through fundraisers, we were able to, on our own, earn over \$100,000 in the two years that we could go forward without having to ask for more grants.”

However, they are now seeking funding for Phase 6. The church has spent about \$1 million on the project so far, and Windsor said they have another \$1 million to go, with half of that going toward Phase 5, the replacement of the middle of the roof.

“It’s going to be when we get to the middle of the roof, that’s really the biggest lump sum expense of all, because it’s the biggest part of the roof on the outside,” said Windsor. “They have to be able to hoist materials up to the roof, and it’s a large square footage to cover. There’s a lot to cover.”

Fortunately, she said they have a five-step payment plan with the contractor, so they don’t need to have full funding for each phase before it gets started, and can pay for the work as it goes on.

To fund the rest of the phases, Windsor said she has begun working on grant requests, and she’s hopeful the foundations will see the church is putting in their own efforts to raise money as well.

“They see that we are doing so many things on our own,” said Windsor. “We have so many fundraisers. They know that we are not just sitting back

waiting for money to be handed to us, we really are trying to do our part.”

To do their part, BSUMC Fundraising Committee Chair Sharon Fleming will be organizing fundraisers throughout the year, including Doug’s Fish Fry, Give Back Nights at Nina’s Pizzeria and Gilligan’s Island, bake sales, an ongoing bottle drive, and rummage sales. Windsor said they’re also open to fundraising suggestions from community members.

Additionally, church supporters both locally and out of the area can support the church’s efforts with donations. Checks may be sent in the mail to 74 North Broad Street in Norwich, with an indication the donation is for the repair project. Donations can also be given to church members, or by calling the BSUMC main office at 607-334-2895.

Windsor said they have already seen significant support from community members, as well as individuals who have moved away from the area, other local churches, and even friends of church members who are visiting town.

“The community has really been wonderful. Other churches have been very helpful to us, which is a beautiful gesture between churches, it really is. And individuals from other churches in the community have helped us, and certainly the foundations have helped us. So we pray that that will continue,” said Windsor.

“If your heart has any attachment at all, or you recognize that we’re a focal point of the community, that we’re a historical, significant part of the community, and if you have something that you’re able to contribute, it’s wonderful,” she added. “Anything, any contribution, is appreciated. It doesn’t matter how much, because it adds up.”

Serving the community

Although they’re looking for support from the community, the Broad Street United Methodist Church continues to serve the City of Norwich and surrounding communities in a myriad of ways. In addition to weekly services on Sundays, the BSUMC also provides Sunday School classes for children, an adult Sunday School via Zoom every Sunday morning, a youth group, and a confirmation class.

There is a men’s group that meets occasionally for breakfast, as well as a women’s group known as United Women, who hold a Christmas bazaar every other year, frequent rummage sales, and work to support various things in the church.

A TLC Preschool program is also housed within the church, and Windsor said church space is rented by the Children’s Home of Wyoming Conference after school program, which also uses their kitchen to provide meals to the students in their care every day.

Other groups and organiza-

tions are able to use the church for meetings and events as well, such as the Boy Scouts, AA, the Red Cross Blood Mobile, the Colorscape Breakfast for Vendors, and the Bullthistle Model Railroad Museum November show. The Chenango County Health Department has also used the church as a vaccination site.

Windsor said the BSUMC also makes sure to chip in to community efforts by supporting Helping Hands, a local nonprofit that provides food, hygiene items, and cleaning supplies to individuals and families in need; and The Place, a local nonprofit that provides childcare and programming for kids and teens.

The church also provides free dinners to the community every month, and Windsor said they are now serving between 150 and 170 people each month. They also provide supplies to individuals and families affected by fires and other hardships, free food vouchers at Christmas time, and free coats, boots, hats, and gloves on their community coat rack.

“Families that have a fire or something, we’ve got supplies, all kinds of things, that we give out to people. We have a coat rack right in our hallway right outside the office, winter coats and springs coats and jackets for people who just need a coat, they come and get it,” said Windsor.

Throughout all of their community outreach, the Broad Street United Methodist Church will continue to work on the remaining four phases to restore the historic structure. Individuals who are interested in seeing work that has been completed on the interior of the church can contact the BSUMC main office at 607-334-2895 to set up a tour with Building and Maintenance Team Member Allan Strong.

“We welcome anybody who would like to go up into that attic and see what’s been done. We welcome that,” said Windsor. “He goes up there often and he takes people up and gives tours up there now. We invite people to contact us and the church, contact the office and make an arrangement, and Allan will take you up there. We want people to see it.”

As the work continues, Windsor urges the community to be patient; while completing the project may take a long time, it will be worth it in the end.

“We knew in the beginning that this was a multi-year task, and because of the money, because of the weather, circumstances, we have to be patient and ride it out,” she said.

“Over the years we’ve had a lot of patch work done, and it hasn’t held,” she added. “This is a bigger job, a bigger cost, but in the end it’s going to last for years and years.”



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UHS Chenango Memorial proves to be a lifeblood of Chenango County -

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to linger for years to come.

"Health care today exists in a constantly changing environment, and small rural hospitals like CMH must constantly adapt to changing regulations and reimbursement pressures – all while never losing sight of its mission to provide exceptional care to the community it serves," said Kisacky. "These pressures were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which stressed hospitals and health care systems – particularly rural facilities – even further."

Amplifying the challenges of changing regulations and reimbursements for Chenango Memorial was a decision in January to close the long-term care unit on the hospital's second floor, ending more than fifty years of assisted living services to Chenango County seniors. The hospital worked with the 19 seniors who called the unit "home" to ensure those people would have placements in other long-term care facilities.

"Providing the highest quality of care for our long-term care residents has been a point of distinction for our hospital for many years," Dr. Drake M. Lamén, president and CEO of UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital, said in a statement when the decision was publicized late last year. Even so, long-term care is "outside of our core mission," he added, and a slew of factors, including long-term care regulations, staffing shortages, and insuffi-

cient reimbursement rates contributed to a service that has "not been able to support itself financially for a number of years."

"As a non-profit hospital, we can no longer justify allocating additional resources to sustain it," Lamén said.

"Sharing the news with the residents and their families, as well as those staff members, was very difficult," said CMH VP of Clinical Services David Finney. "We did everything that we could to ease the transition for them and to treat them with the compassion and respect they deserved throughout the process."

Since the closure, all former residents of UHS CMH have found placement in a long-term care facility; and while some staffers have pursued opportunities elsewhere, the majority stayed with CMH and were designated to other areas.

"I am still in awe at the strength and compassion our staff showed for both the residents in their care and their colleagues throughout it all – and for the support and kindness they received from all of our hospital staff," Finney said. "For me, this has been an example of the special culture we have here at Chenango Memorial. No matter the challenge in front of us, we rise to meet it for the good of our patients, colleagues and community. It isn't always easy, but we're committed to our mission of service."

Attracting a qualified workforce has also been a challenge for CMH in recent years, placing it among the ranks of thousands of hospitals nationwide dealing with a shortage of healthcare workers. Consequently, CMH – following suit of other hospitals – has relied on outsourced labor to fill critical roles, including nurses and physicians, which in turn has added more than \$5 million of unexpected expenses in 2023 alone, according to Finney.

"We don't begrudge nurses who have the family flexibility

and support structure to take on these 'traveler' roles – and we are grateful to those who have taken assignments here in Norwich because they've supported our ability to continue providing high quality care despite our vacancies," explained Finney. "But this isn't sustainable. It is the staffing agencies who are benefiting above all. FEMA funding was the only thing keeping many hospitals whole."

In the hope of filling the gaps in the healthcare workforce, CMH is working closely with educational institutions in the area, including DCMO BOCES, Morrisville State College, Mohawk Valley Community College, Hartwick College, SUNY Broome, and Binghamton University. The hospital's aim is to groom existing and potential employees for open positions, knowing there's better chances of keeping people local than attracting employees from outside the area. The hospital presently employs roughly 380 full-time equivalent workers and an additional 102 workers through affiliated service contracts, making it one of Chenango County's largest employers.

CMH is the sole hospital in Chenango County and operates the only emergency department, which sees an average of 18,000 visits each year. CMH also has five satellite offices in Norwich, Oxford, Sherburne, and Sidney, and maintains the only labor and delivery/maternity unit serving this rural region at its central campus in Norwich.

UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital is a member of United Health Services, a locally owned not-for-profit 916-bed hospital and health care system serving the Greater Binghamton region from more than 40 locations around New York's Southern Tier.



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Alvogon is a privately owned US-based company and operates a large manufacturing facility in Norwich. (Submitted photo)

Once a year, Alvogon colleagues around the world reach out to their local communities to provide support. The day is called Alvogon Day. The Norwich facility worked with about 20 to 25 different organizations to spruce up the downtown area. (Photo by Kelli Miller)

Business SPOTLIGHT

Norwich Pharmaceuticals – An Alvogon Company

KELLI MILLER
EVENING SUN

NORWICH – Alvogon is a privately owned US-based company that focuses on the development of in-licensed manufacturing and marketing pharmaceutical products. They are headquartered in Morristown, New Jersey with their in house manufacturing capacity in Norwich.

The company is built on a strong foundation of the U.S. Norwich Pharmaceutical Services which has a 130 year history and an unsurpassed regulatory track record.

According to the Alvogon website, Chairman and CEO Robert Wessman stated, “Social responsibility is something that is part of our mission statement as a company and very much a part of how we think and who we are. Together we can use the power of our brand to promote positive values and each of us can contribute to making this world a better place and have a sustainable impact in the communities where we live and work.”

Human Resources Associate Director Luke Murphy said, “Over the last ten years Alvogon has invested over \$60 Million to enable the continuing expansion of the facility, inclusive of the equipment to maintain and broaden our portfolio and continued business offerings.

“Alvogon’s leadership team is dedicated to meeting the needs of their customers and making a difference for patients,” he added.

The company fosters a true purpose of making peoples lives better by producing high quality medicines to enable a longer healthy life and assure medicines are more accessible to those who might not be able to afford them. Alvogon employees are quick decision makers, enabling the company to provide medicine quickly and safely to market.

Along with the Norwich based manufacturing, their companies include: Alvogon generic business, Almatica brand products, and Almaject injectables.

“In the US, we have 600 employees, with 300 based at the Norwich Facility – all 300 are full time employees and work within the three shifts available,” Murphy said.

Murphy explained that in 2023 they partnered with the North Norwich Community to upgrade the Galena Park Ballfield Project and also raised \$33,000 to donated to the 2024 United Way Campaign.

“The company received recognition from the Norwich YMCA for the Corporate Volunteer Award,” said Murphy. “And and we also won third place in the Norwich Holiday Parade of Lights, making it their second year in a row.”

Murphy explained once a year their colleagues around the world reach out to their local communities to provide support. The day is called Alvogon Day. The company closes down their facilities and brings all employees into their community.

He said the Norwich facility worked with

about 20 to 25 different organizations to spruce up the downtown and get things ready for fall and the holiday season. This year marked their 10th annual Community Event.

“We do it every year to give back to the community and as a team building event for employees,” he added.

Challenges

Murphy said being in a rural setting has it challenges based on location when it comes to attracting and retaining workforce.

“It’s hard to find the right workers in our scientific/technical roles,” he said.

He explained employee retention can be a challenge depending on the person, if they don’t have ties to the community or if they don’t relocate and commute a long distance daily.

He added, “Local Government could help with continuing to lead and develop opportunities for people to stay within the communities in terms of retention and attraction.”

2024

“Capital Investment in the facility & equipment and investing in supporting local organizations and development in the community are the ways Alvogon is investing for a better future,” said Murphy.

According to their website, Alvogon is continually growing their portfolio of high value and complex products which include inhalation, injectables, and strategic 505 (b) (2)

products.

They have over 50 products currently on market and extensive R&D capabilities fueling its growing pipeline.

Murphy explained the Norwich site has a designated training department that not only includes general introduction and annual training, but also focuses on training applicable to the employees’ job function and career development.

“We work with Commerce Chenango and the career development programs they have with local school’s districts and the schools of pharmacy at Suny Albany and Binghamton University,” he said.

Murphy added the benefits of being based in the local area are community driven, quality of life, and a strong employee longevity.

He said the Government and Community support in aiding for continuous economic & community development of businesses and resources remains important along with updates to infrastructure related to high-speed internet, utilities, roads, transportation, community day care center, and community safety.

Murphy said it’s also imperative to encourage schools to develop readiness programs to better prepare students after high school and secondary schools.

For further information contact Luke Murphy, Associate Director Human Resources -Norwich Pharmaceuticals – An Alvogon Company, at luke.murphy@alvogon.com.

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Unison Industries: Creating aerospace performance parts in Norwich -

Continued from page 37 ▶

coming years and continuing to support the critical missions of this aircraft as it enters its 30th year in service," said Hoferer.

Slack said, "Our overall business grew by 20 percent and we specifically had a large amount of growth in our space admission business."

She said between salary and hourly roles the company has 400 employees.

Slack explained they recently kicked off a new lean process, which is an improvement tool to develop and prove concepts before they are fully implemented across the business.

These concepts either come from employees or a management team who work to identify areas where they can improve

production or mitigate safety concerns.

She said they partnered with BOCES as they have a welding program and one of their welders goes to BOCES to find students and inform them about the work they do at Unison.

"We've had some really impressive turn out with them," she added.

She said Commerce Chenango does a lot of connecting with different businesses and has some really great programs to help high school students prepare for the work force, supplying basic skills they may need to go into the production environment.

Slack said they received recognition from their space customers by building an ignition system for a rocket, that enables

space travel for humans to go the furthest distance from earth.

"The trial was unmanned to make sure everything was safe enough," said Slack.

Finding the right people

"We have had some challenges in hiring and retaining all of the individuals we need to support the growth that we have," Slack said,

"We've also had some challenges with our supply chain in terms of getting the material on site that we need to build and support our customers," she added.

She said the suppliers may have gone through changes after COVID by letting some employees go during that time when volume was low. Now demand has returned but not the



New technologies are expanding and one of Unison's ignition systems, made in Norwich, will help take people into space and travel far from Earth. (Submitted photo)

employees, so companies are seeking to fill the gap.

Slack said many found new jobs outside of the industry.

Employee retention was difficult in 2023. The company is working to attract new employees with updated offers.

Slack said higher level production roles are difficult to fill as they require technical experience; usually three to five years worth of machine experience. She said hiring people with five years or more experience was a challenge, but companies are finding workers with one to two years of experience.

She said, "Because we are in a smaller community, and a couple of other big employers are about a half hour away, we are working with the same pool of talent."

Made in Norwich but out of this world

Slack said new technologies are expanding and one of Unison's ignition systems, made in Norwich, will help take people into space and travel far

from Earth.

"We're having a pretty big impact on the space companies to go further and further," she said.

Slack explained they are growing an additional 20-25 percent this year and year-over-year they have achieved double digit growth. They are also in the process of setting up trainings to develop their team internally.

She said the company wants to offer further individual growth in current development opportunities to their team and currently are setting up flow lines in the alternator part of the business to help support the increase in demand.

"Commerce Chenango is so involved with many local activities and they really work on Chenango County as a place where people want to come and for us to have a bigger presence in the local community," said Slack.

"It's also very important to me personally, as a female leader, to help support other female

leaders," she added.

"Commerce Chenango has great programs where they specifically work on helping female workers and leaders and that will be something to help to bring a lot more visibility and value as to what we do in this building," she said.

Slack said their big focus is on building the right culture that attracts and retains employees.

"I care a lot about the business and invest in people, she added. "Regardless of business metrics, it is how we care about our people that makes us a success."

Unison's large product portfolio has been supporting missions both near and far for decades. Unison ignition systems have ignited rockets and helped bring astronauts home safely on space missions.

For further information, visit unisonindustries.com or contact.us@unisonindustries.com

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