

# Linda's 30th Anniversary

As noted in previous editions of Thoma's Developments, our company recently surpassed three decades in business. Linda Armstrong was Thoma's first employee, having come on board at the inception of our firm.



Linda was originally hired to assist with the administration of a grant for the City of Cortland. Since the staff included only two persons, including Bernie, she also filled the role of receptionist, bookkeeper, typist, and grant writer.

As our staff has grown to 12 persons, each of our job responsibilities has become more specialized. Linda has developed a particular expertise in navigating the banking system for prospective homeowners, administering our infrastructure grants, and working with small business owners on grant opportunities.

We thank Linda for her dedication and service to our company and congratulate her on achieving this milestone.

## UPCOMING GRANTS...

New York Main Street Grants –  
April 29, 2011

HOME Program Grants –  
April 29, 2011

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) –  
May 27, 2011



- 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
- Market Studies
- Microenterprise Assistance
- Parks & Trail Development
- Records Consulting
- Recreation Planning
- Strategic Planning

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A newsletter of Thoma Development Consultants

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## TOWN OF LAFAYETTE UNDERTAKES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Town of LaFayette is located in the southern area of Onondaga County along Interstate 81 just south of the City of Syracuse. While much of the County is highly suburbanized, LaFayette retains its rural character. Its small town sense of place is highly prized, yet residents realize that growing its tax base is necessary for survival. This has prompted the Town to undertake the Comprehensive Plan process so that changes to the community are thoughtfully managed.

Some of LaFayette's unique challenges include a centralized hamlet area that lacks municipal water and sewer, the perception by many that the community is a long commute to the City of Syracuse, the loss of open space to residential development, and the concern that Interstate 81, which bisects the community, could bring incompatible development.

The planning process is being completed in phases. We recently completed the first phase, including several public visioning sessions designed to gauge the sentiments of residents about Town issues.

We are happy to discuss your planning needs. Please call us.

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## Whitney Point & Homer on the Move

The Village of Whitney Point in Broome County and the Village of Homer in Cortland County are beginning to implement 2010 New York Main Street (NYMS) programs. Commercial building owners can take advantage of the program for building improvements, and interior and exterior rehabilitation, including residential renovations. As a bonus, each community is also undertaking streetscape improvements.



Homer IGA owner Kevin Williams is seeking funding from the Village of Homer for his property.

Thoma has been hired to administer both of these grants. We have accepted applications from 11 interested property owners in Whitney Point and nine in the Village of Homer. These projects cover all the funds available in each

community. We are in the process of ranking the projects according to predetermined priorities. A local committee has been appointed to review each application and decide the disbursement of funds. We will follow each community's progress in future editions of *Thoma's Developments*.

We are presently working on 2011 NYMS applications which need to be submitted by April 29.



34 TOMPKINS STREET CORTLAND, NY 13045

"Partnering with  
Communities For a  
Better Tomorrow"



## WHAT'S HAPPENING TO STATE & FEDERAL FUNDING?

At a time when local, State, and Federal governments are having difficult budget years, it is easy to assume that grant programs might be curtailed. For the immediate future, we don't anticipate drastic cuts to the most popular programs. The current 2010-11 budgets are in place and, for the most part, grant programs will be available as originally budgeted. At the time of this writing, the 2011-12 State and federal budgets have not been approved. We anticipate there will be funding reductions to grant programs but hopefully those will be minimal. For example, the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) is funded by federal dollars that are administered by New York State. President Obama's budget for 2011-12 proposes a 7.5% cut, the House of Representatives proposes over a 50% cut, and the Senate proposes no cut at all. If the President's budget is approved, we estimate the impact on New York State will be to reduce the number of grants awarded in the competitive round by an estimated four to six applications.

At the State level, the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is a grant opportunity which funds parks improvements and historic preservation projects each year. The 2011-12 State budget includes approximately \$16 million for the EPF program, which appears to be a 50% cut from last year. However, in 2010 the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation used the majority of funds to keep NYS parks open rather than approving grants to municipalities and not-for-profits. Thus, the budget reduction from last year is not really that large.

Until budgets are finalized, it is hard to predict the impact on local communities. It is likely that each program,

whether State or federal, will be addressed separately. We will monitor the situation and try to keep our customers informed. Should you have any questions about specific grant programs, please don't hesitate to contact us.

### MEET ANNALENA DAVIS



Annalena Davis has joined Thoma as a Community Development Assistant for our Grant Writing and Planning, and Administrative Teams. Annalena (pronounced *Ah-na-layna*) is originally from central Pennsylvania and is a 2005 graduate of Penn State. In May 2010, she received her Masters in Landscape Architecture with a Community Design and Planning focus from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF).

Annalena's work experience includes community educator on food, renewable energy, and environmental issues such as invasive species, stormwater management, and water quality. She has facilitated workshops on Main Street revitalization, and community landscaping and design, and has assisted municipalities in developing rain gardens and planting trees.

In her new role at Thoma, Annalena assists the Grant Writing and Planning, and Administrative Teams with research, data collection, GIS mapping, and the administration of infrastructure grants. We welcome her to Thoma and look forward to utilizing her talents to grow our capabilities.

## City of Cortland East End Neighborhood Plan is Completed

The City of Cortland has completed its East End Neighborhood Strategic Plan. Funding for the project was secured by a technical assistance grant from the NYS Office of Community Renewal.

The City's Mayor appointed a local Steering Committee to guide the process and our work. A series of neighborhood meetings was held to gather public input. Business owner and resident surveys were conducted via mail. In the end, the East End Neighborhood's opinions helped to shape the goals and implementation measures included in the plan. Some of those measures include:

- Preserving the East End housing stock.
- Improving Dexter Park.
- Making sure sidewalks and roadways are in good condition.
- Zoning should control the spread of commercial development into residential areas, although business and industrial development is encouraged.
- More landscaping and greenspace would soften the transition between business and residential areas.
- A public/private partnership should be forged to deal with the vacant gas station property in front of the Ramada Inn.

Strategic Plans are tools that help to shape the future of targeted areas such as the City's East End. Please call us to help empower your local neighborhoods.



*"Once again Thoma Development did an outstanding job by working with the City of Cortland on the soon to be adopted East End Strategic Plan. I commend the Thoma Team for their thoroughness and expertise in guiding the committee during the process."*

*- City of Cortland Mayor Susan Feiszli*

## WELCOME NEW CUSTOMERS!

We welcome several new customers including:

- City of Geneva
- City of Oneonta
- Village of Waterville
- Geneva Business Improvement District (BID)

We look forward to a long and fruitful working relationship!

## Village of Marathon Playground Transformation...



The old Marathon playground in Lovell Field was barely passing State safety standards, did not accommodate very many children at the same time, and only appealed to a younger child. The Village included funds for a new playground in its successful Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) grant request.



The Village interviewed several vendors on the State bid contract and decided on a Burke Co. playground through Empire Recreation.



Groundbreaking Day - From left to right: Village Trustee Pat McConnell, Mayor John Pitman, Village Engineer for the project, Ken Teter, Ann Hotchkin of Thoma, and installer, Patrick Votra of Marathon.



Children enjoy the playground at the 2011 Marathon Maple Festival.

