

GUEST VIEWPOINT

Colleges feed economy by the millions

By Anthony Hopson, Stephen Johnson and Bruce Ryan

A new report outlines the local economic impact of Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College. The story it tells is compelling and important. It's a story of hard data and open doors for the future, as this report will eventually assist higher education and area businesses and organizations in their recruitment and retention efforts.

It's also about the economic activity related to higher education, ranging from the consumer spending of 14,475 employees and 30,000 students per year to millions of dollars to educate, house, feed and transport them.

Some highlights:

► In 2007, Cornell, Ithaca and TC3 spent \$787 million locally on payroll and \$182 million on goods and services, the latter figure excluding construction. Each dollar the institutions spend in the local economy is re-spent by employees using their paychecks for housing, food, transportation and other necessities and by businesses that hire area residents to service their college accounts. This additional activity contributed to a total impact of nearly \$1.5 billion in 2007.

► The majority of Cornell and Ithaca College students are from outside Tompkins County, and TC3 draws a third of its students from outside the Tompkins-Cortland service area. Most of these students live in Tompkins County nine months of every year and depend on area businesses for a host of needs. Off-campus student spending was worth an estimated \$145 million in 2007.

► In 2007, Cornell spent \$179 million on primary contracts for construction on its Ithaca campus, not including projects under the New York State University Construction Fund, creating an estimated 726 jobs in Tompkins County. Ithaca College spent more than \$19 million on construction that year. Although the current recession has dampened construction in general, demand for new and modernized facilities continues, and will be met as recovery takes hold.

► Collectively, the three institutions attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to the area each year, including commencements, reunions, athletic events, parts of the Discovery Trail, college tours, hundreds of programs, lectures, and concerts, and an endless list of other reasons. The benefits to our local businesses, governmental tax coffers and the economy at large are substantial.

► Expanded, individual campus economic analyses also yielded important data, including TC3's study on social benefits. Because people with higher education are less likely to smoke or abuse alcohol, draw social services or commit crimes, the study found that the state benefits from nearly \$1 million in avoided costs because of TC3's presence, with most of that savings occurring locally. Other campus analyses profiled a healthy return on public funding investments in higher education.

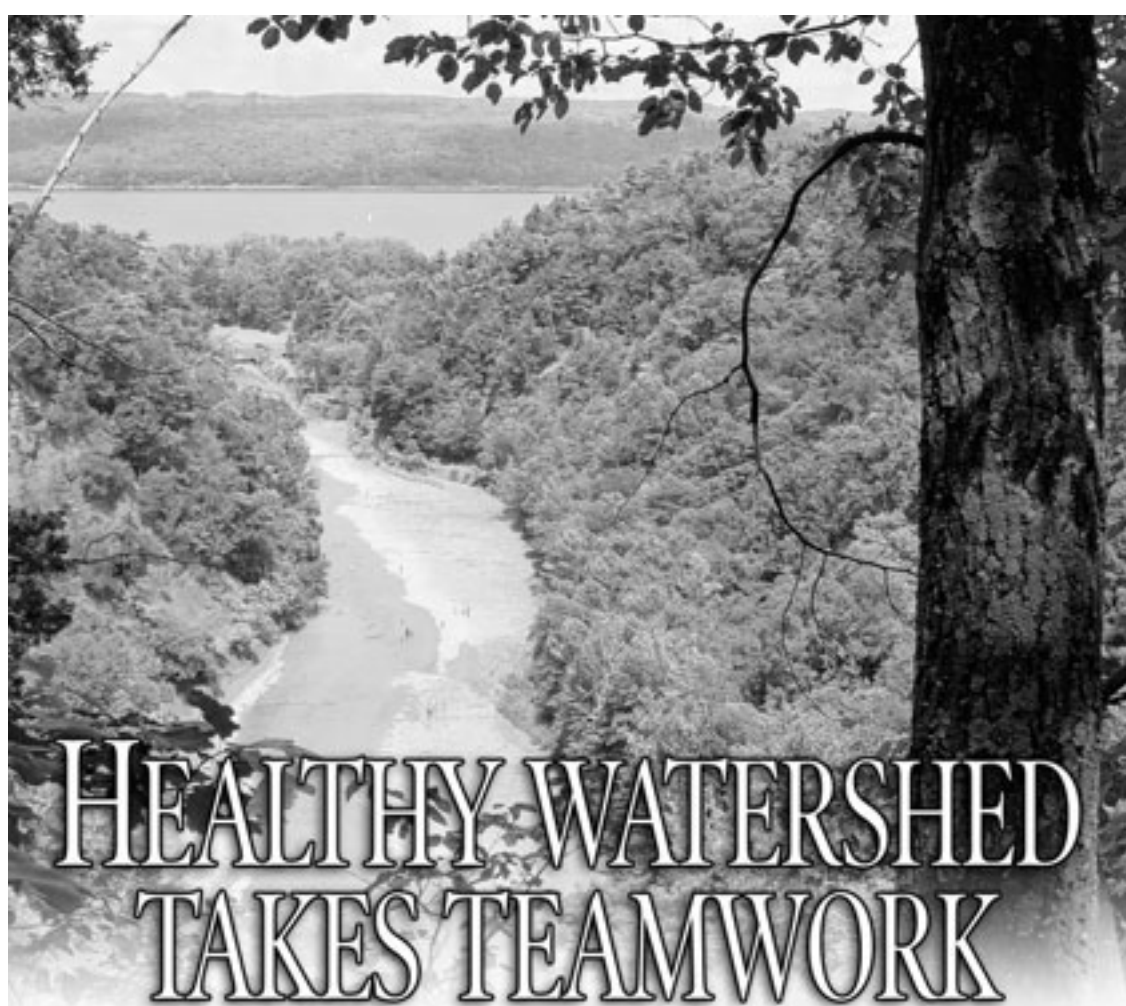
The CU-IC-TC3 joint economic impact statement on higher education touches on the intangibles too, like cultural activities, student volunteerism, and a greater proactivity on environmental issues. We're proud of this first-time effort and encourage you to access more details and data on our joint economic impact statement at www.govrelations.cornell.edu.

Anthony Hopson is assistant vice president for community and government relations at Ithaca College. Stephen Johnson is vice president of government and community relations at Cornell University. Bruce Ryan is dean of external relations at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

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Municipal alliance protects water resources

By Darby Kiley

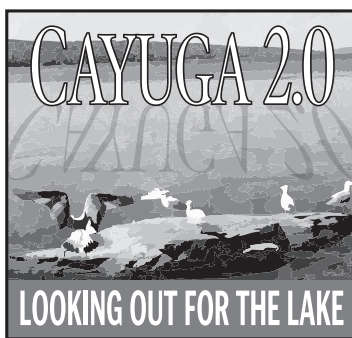
We are fortunate to have a seemingly limitless supply of fresh water here in New York, but what if one day you couldn't trust the glass of water from your kitchen faucet? With the impending gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale, the unknown effects of climate change and chemical inputs, such as pharmaceuticals and pesticides, reliably clean water is not a given. That is why watershed management is so critical.

What is a watershed? It is generally defined as the land area that drains water to a common water body — a stream, river or lake. The Cayuga Lake watershed, in which many of us live, includes Taughannock Creek, the Inlet, Six Mile Creek and many other streams. The Cayuga Lake watershed includes portions of six counties and 43 towns and villages and one city. In addition, there are regulations passed down from many state and federal agencies that influence land use and surface and groundwater quality.

How do policy makers and residents work together to protect water quality in Cayuga Lake and its tributaries? To answer that question, we first need to know what are the water quality issues, threats and current conditions.

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Characterization, a document completed in 2000, includes a description of the watershed, potential sources of contamination, lake characteristics, the regulatory environment and gaps in necessary data. The information from the Characterization was shared at public meetings, where residents and municipal officials voiced their concerns and opinions on water quality issues. From there, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan was developed. The Plan lists strategies and management recommendations geared toward local, state and federal efforts that impact the watershed. The implementation of the Plan is the mission of one organization: the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization — known as the IO.

Since it was formed in 2001, the IO applied for and received more than \$500,000 in direct



ABOUT THIS SERIES

Cayuga 2.0 is a series of monthly guest viewpoints about the health of the Cayuga Lake watershed and the challenges and opportunities related to it. The viewpoints are provided by the Tompkins County Water Resources Council.

► Next month's installment: How lake sediment affects swimming near Stewart Park.

ON THE WEB

- Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization: www.cayugawatershed.org.
- Cayuga Lake Watershed Network: www.cayugalake.org.
- Community Science Institute: www.communityscience.org.

funding from New York State. The projects include \$195,000 for stream restoration projects in the towns of Caroline and Dryden, \$54,000 for road bank stabilization projects in the towns of Genoa and Romulus, \$75,000 for hydroseeding services throughout the watershed area, \$75,000 for habitat restoration along the lake shore, \$15,000 for flood protection measures in the Village of Interlaken and \$90,000 for a watershed assessment specifically for Fall Creek.

Outside of grant dollars, the IO is funded annually by member municipalities. The majority of the annual budget goes toward the Floating Classroom to provide low-cost learning experiences for students. The IO has contributed approximately \$50,000 in the past six years to the Floating Classroom. The IO also co-sponsors events and presentations with other local watershed organizations, such as the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network.

Emerging issues, such as climate change and water with-

SIMON WHEELER / Staff Photo
Taughannock Creek is part of the watershed feeding Cayuga Lake, seen in the background.

drawals for gas drilling, have prompted the need to evaluate the Plan's accomplishments for the past 10 years and develop new recommendations and strategies in an updated Plan. This updated document will also recommend actions and projects to address the current threats and will target the project leaders for such actions.

If you are interested in watershed policy and management, here are some ways to get involved:

► Ask your municipal board if they are active members in the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization. Membership includes an annual financial contribution as well as representation at meetings. If no one from your municipal board is able to attend meetings, volunteer to be the representative. The IO typically meets every other month at different locations throughout the watershed. For more information, go to www.cayugawatershed.org.

► Participate in watershed meetings. Once funding is secured for the watershed management plan update, we will hold public meetings to gather input. Keep an eye out for meeting announcements.

► Participate in other water-related groups. The Community Science Institute organizes water quality monitoring in a number of local streams (www.communityscience.org). The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network is a community organization working to protect and enhance the ecological health of the watershed (www.cayugalake.org).

Why do we need the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization? Because we need to work across municipal borders, and the IO provides an opportunity to share in the common goal of protecting and conserving our local water resources.

Darby Kiley is a member of the Tompkins County Water Resources Council, coordinator for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization and planner for the Town of Ithaca.

DARTS AND LAURELS

Fundraiser for watershed network

Laurel: From Hilary Lambert of Aurora to those who helped celebrate Cayuga Lake. The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network held a sparkling dinner-dance fundraiser at the Lakewatch Inn on Sept. 26. We were delighted with the outpouring of enthusiasm and high spirits from those who love our lake. Thanks especially to our sponsors: Tompkins Weekly, Karen Philip, Heather Philip and Carmel Schmidt, and to our many donors (listed at www.cayugalake.org) who made the evening fun and who helped us raise money to support programs that help keep our lake healthy.

Thanks for help with local meats fair

Laurel: From Matt LeRoux and Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension to everyone who helped to make the first Local Meats Tasting & Education Fair on Oct. 25 a great success.

More than 200 people visited the fair to meet some of our regional livestock producers and learn about their farms and products. Special thanks to Chef Sean O'Brien and Serendipity Catering for donating their time and talents to prepare 12 special dishes from a variety of meats from participating farms.

Thanks also to Cornell Dining, Cornell Orchards, LittleTree Orchard and Razorback BBQ and to participating farmers from Angus Glen, Autumn's Harvest, Bird-sall Beef, Capricorn Hill, Ellis Hollow, Ever Green, High Point, Kingbird, Laue, Lakeview, Orchardland, Ort Family, The Piggery, Porkchop Valley, Quinn's Irish Hill, Sabol's and Straight-Way farms. Also to Karma Glos of Kingbird Farm and to the event's volunteers. We plan another fair next year.

Ithaca DPW staff

Laurel: From Roger Yonkin of Ithaca to the men and women of the City of the Ithaca Department of Public Works who understand that savings, safety and efficiency come from totally rebuilding a street once they undertake the task of repair. Pavement, curbs, utilities, driveways, crosswalks, trees are all brought up to current standards. The public benefits from this unusual forward thinking by a city.

Write notes of thanks

What do you have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving? A special moment or memory? Send in your thoughts in 150 words or less by Wednesday, Nov. 18. We will publish as many of the notes as possible on Thanksgiving Day. For where to write, see the "Write to Us" box below. E-mailed letters are preferred.

WRITE TO US

We welcome letters no longer than 200 words. Please include your name, address and a daytime telephone number. We edit for brevity, accuracy, clarity and grammar. Edited letters should address a single idea. We reject anonymous letters, poetry, Internet pass-alongs and form letters. Writers are limited to one letter within 30 days. Letters and articles may be published in print, electronic media or other forms. We regret we cannot return or acknowledge unpublished letters.

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Fax: 272-4248
Mail: c/o Ithaca Journal, 123 W. State St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

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► TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Saturday, Nov. 7, 2009. On this date:

► In 1874, the Republican Party was symbolized as an elephant in a cartoon drawn by Thomas

Nast in Harper's Weekly.

► In 1940, in Washington state, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, nicknamed "Galloping Gertie," collapsed during

a windstorm.

► In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a bill establishing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

DOONESBURY

