

# 1980—Progress In The Making

## County Picks Itself Up, Moves Ahead In '79

BY JIM KENNEDY

The smoke that rises anew from the smokestack at the St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper plant is a symbol of St. Lawrence County's progress in 1979.

It was as William Cook, county economic developer, describes it, "a banner year."

From Massena to Ogdensburg there was nothing but encouraging news in the field of economic development. In 1979, the county picked itself up, shook off the blows of the previous year, and began to grow again.

Lest we forget just how far we have come, here are some of the setbacks the county suffered in 1978:

—The Diamond International plant at Ogdensburg, the single largest industrial employer in the city, shut its doors, idling some 285 employees.

—The Jones and Laughlin mine facility at Star Lake remained closed, with 355 out of work.

—And finally, the St. Joe mines at Balmat were shut down by a labor dispute that lasted for 13 months, well into 1979. The walkout left over 300 miners without work.

### Hopeful Signs

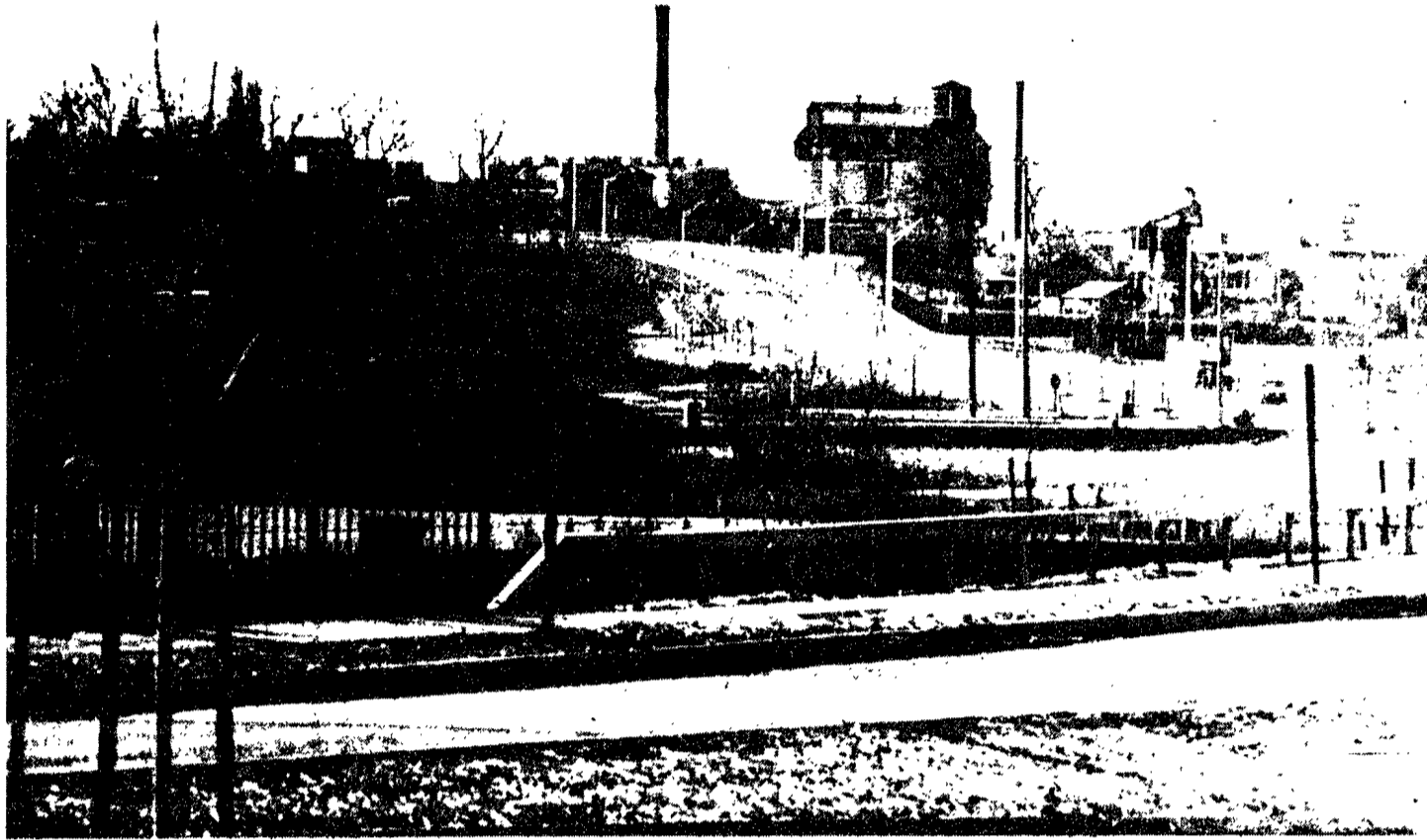
By January of 1980, however, there were these positive developments and hopeful signs for the future:

—The former Diamond plant was transferred to St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper Co., through the work of a special task force and the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency (IDA). The deal put 40 persons back to work immediately with the prospect of expanded production to a level of 225 employees.

—The IDA completed a deal to market the J&L mine facility through an industrial real estate developer. The firm expects to renovate the facility and resell it by May of 1981. The developer, the Park Corporation, will be hiring approximately 25 persons to assist the marketing venture.

—Finally, in the most hopeful sign of all, the St. Joe Zinc Co. of Pittsburgh, Pa., confirmed that it was seriously considering expanding its mining facility at Balmat and building a new electrolytic zinc refinery in the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority's medium-heavy industrial park. The \$200 million project, if it becomes a reality, would create 1,300 construction jobs and 1,150 permanent jobs between the Ogdensburg and Balmat facilities.

John Dyson, the chairman of the state Power Authority, which is negotiating a possible sale of cheap power to the St. Joe company to accommodate the project, called the proposal "one of a dozen best" business opportunities the state has seen in the past several years.



**SIGNS OF REVIVAL** — The smoke that rises from the stack at the new St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper plant is in many ways symbolic of the revival the county has undergone in the last 12 months. Several projects are underway and others are on the

drawing board. Above, the paper plant can be seen from a position on the new downtown arterial, also finished in 1979. (Cloonan Photo)

**Other Developments**  
In addition to these, the county also saw the opening of an industrial park at Massena, continuing efforts to develop the Potsdam Industrial Center, renovation of power facilities at the Kraft plant at Canton.

To the south, preliminary plans were drawn up for an industrial park at Gouverneur under the supervision of the Greater Gouverneur Local Development Corp.

The county Economic Development Office and the IDA played key roles in all of these success stories during the past year, and the man who directs both

of those entities, Cook, is obviously pleased with his 1979 track record.

**Hard Work, Experience**  
Cook credits "hard work" and the experience his office has gained in the past four years as the principal reasons for the successes of 1979. The Economic Development Office, established by the county in 1976, has now become one of the most important departments in all of county government and has developed a network of individuals and groups throughout the county who all contribute to the cause of industrial development.

This well-oiled machine has not only earned the praises of those who worked hard to build it, but has also won the

respect of top-ranking officials in the business world.

The leaders of the contingent from St. Joe Zinc who toured the county this month to study the feasibility of locating a new plant here were greatly impressed with the industrial development organization in the county. Peter Neff, director of planning for St. Joe and the leading member of the contingent who came to the North, called the local organization the best he had seen since the company had begun investigating sites for a new refinery.

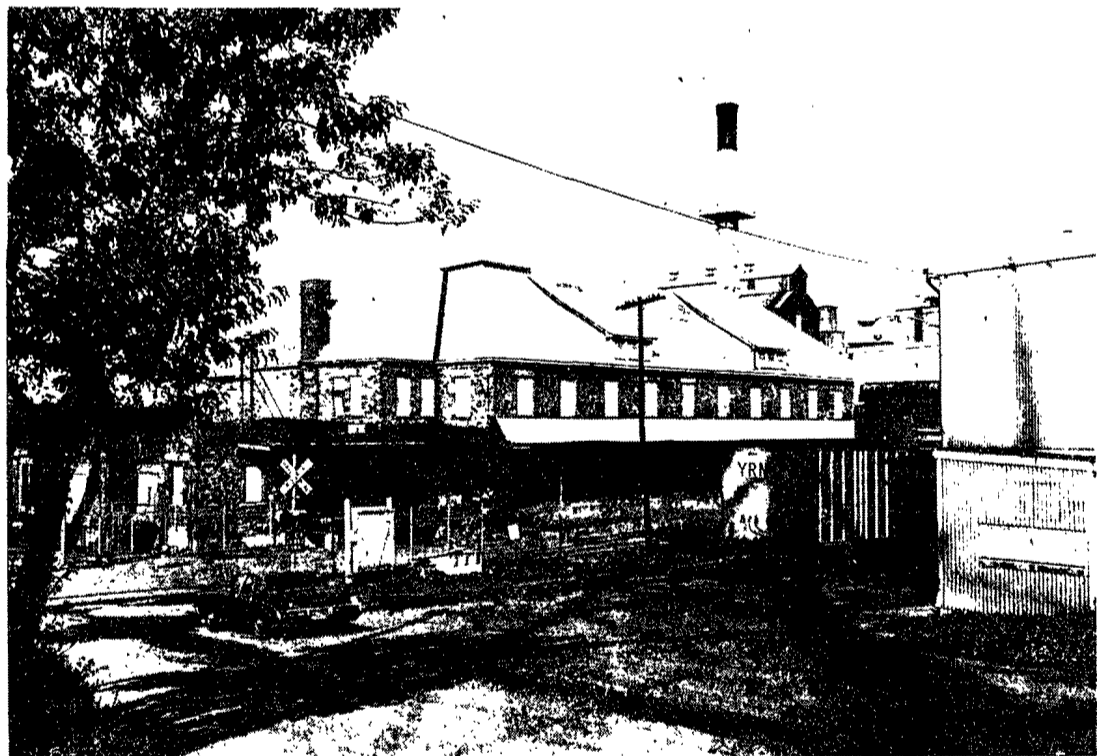
Neff said the county's organization surpassed those he had seen in locations all the way from Canada to Mississippi.

**Infrastructure In Place**  
"When we first set up the office (of Economic Development) we felt it would take a couple of years to get going," Cook said in his review of the year's activities.

"Now the infrastructure is established and the expertise has been developed. Now we will begin to see some progress," Cook predicted.

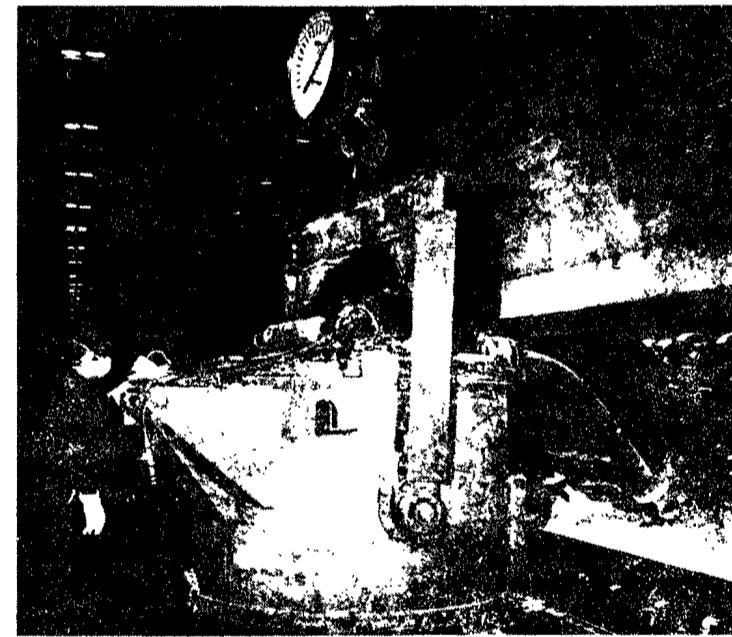
The infrastructure to which Cook refers is a closely knit organization of private citizens and public agencies who have been drawn together for a common purpose.

A perfect example of this arrangement is the deal that brought the



**OPENED AGAIN** — The former Diamond International plant at Ogdensburg, seen in a state Commerce Department photo above, was reopened in 1979 as the St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper Co. The plant could employ up to 225 in a five-year plan. Some 40 people have been put back to work already. See story below.

Success  
Noted  
Across  
County  
In 1979



**REYNOLD'S MILESTONE** — The Reynolds Metals Corp. celebrated its 20th birthday in the North Country in 1979 and also produced its 4,444,444,444th pound of aluminum, noted above.

## Reynolds Metals Co. Celebrated 20 Years

**MASSENA**—The year 1979 was of special significance to Reynolds Metals Company's St. Lawrence reduction plant, because it marked 20 years of continuous operation in the North Country. During the year a milestone was reached when the 4,444,444,444th pound of aluminum was produced.

According to C. D. Alexander, plant manager, the plant in 1979 contributed more than \$45-million to the local economy, up more than \$4-million from the previous year.

"We were able to set gross and net production records for aluminum, as well as increase total plant shipments by nearly one million pounds over 1978," Mr. Alexander said.

The plant's employment remained stable totaling 835 at the end of the year. "Our company has made excellent progress in energy conservation, and we continue to take advantage of every practical means to reduce energy consumption in our plant, and to encourage our employees to conserve energy both on the road and at home," he said.

The plant's energy conservation program has lowered the amount of energy used per pound of aluminum product by more efficient use of recycled aluminum scrap, supplied by the company's national recycling efforts.

Modernization of the cast house has resulted in several energy saving advantages over the older system. Two small adjacent holding furnaces have been combined to make one larger and more energy efficient furnace. Another similar furnace replacement project is now underway. Older homogenizing furnaces will be replaced with more efficient electric and gas fired furnaces.

The automatic control system for reduction cell operation will be replaced in 1980 with a second generation digital controller. This will enable the plant to improve its operating efficiency in the production of aluminum while using the same amount of electrical energy.

The plant's ingot casting and processing facilities are being improved to permit the plant to alter its product mix resulting in greater participation in the company's business.

"We think that our recent modernization and cost improvement measures will enable our plant to continue its role as a leading supplier of aluminum in the North Country," Alexander said.

According to Alexander, Reynolds recently reenergized the last of its idled potlines at its seven domestic primary aluminum plants, marking the first time that these facilities have all been in operation at the same time in more than five years.

## Diamond Transfer Bolstered City

BY MIKE CLOONAN

Without a doubt, the transfer of the former Diamond International plant to the St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper Corporation, an affiliate of the Potsdam Paper Company, was the most positive event that occurred in the city of Ogdensburg in 1979.

The former Diamond plant was idled for over a year following the pullout of the New York City-based firm, and with the closing of the plant, Ogdensburg lost 300 jobs and an annual payroll of some \$2.5 million.

Concerned citizens of Ogdensburg as well as city and county officials refused, however, to let the plant die a slow death and a Diamond Task Force headed by Charles W. Kelly worked diligently to find an occupant for the vacated plant.

Through the efforts of the Task Force along with the outstanding cooperation of the Diamond International Company, which donated the plant to the Industrial Development Agency of St. Lawrence County, St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper

decided that the former Diamond plant would be their home.

Even before final negotiations were complete, Wilbur W. Krueger, president of the St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper Company, announced that Edward A. Norris would serve as general manager of the plant and would have the responsibility of starting up the idled plant.

Finalized Nov. 20  
The transfer of the plant was finalized Nov. 20 of this past year with members of the Task Force, Diamond International and St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper officials partaking in the ceremony held in New York City.

Since Nov. 20, St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper officials have been busy in preparing the plant for production.

According to Thomas LaRose, administrative manager, there are now some 35 to 40 people on the St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper payroll.

LaRose said the firm is aiming at a Feb. 20 date for a trial production run. If there are no problems and all the

systems work as planned, LaRose said the plant would open for regular production shortly afterwards.

**Production Plans**  
St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper moved into the Diamond Plant with a five-year game plan.

At the end of that plan, the plant could employ up to 200 to 250 people with employment totaling between 200 to 250 persons after five years.

President Krueger speaking before a city civic organization in October told the audience that "there will always be a pulp market if somewhere, someone is converting it into paper."

The opening of the St. Lawrence Pulp and Paper will be comprised of a five-year, three-phase plan with phase one consisting of the production of pulp from recycled fiber.

During phase one, company officials have stated that employment should reach 75 persons and the company is pumping some \$2 million into equipment

and renovation.

Of that total, \$1½ million will be spent for new equipment and installation of that equipment, while some \$350,000 to \$500,000 is being spent on refurbishing the plant.

Phase two of the production will consist of the production of paper at the plant.

Phase three, according to company officials will be the production of additional pulp whose type will be dependent upon what grades of paper are being produced in phase two.

According to Krueger, once phase three is instituted, employment should reach 200 to 250 people with the plant operating six to seven days a week 24 hours a day.

Production at the plant should reach 125 tons of waste paper coming into the plant and 100 tons of recycled pulp leaving the plant.

By the completion of phase one, sales volume should total approximately \$12 to \$14 million.