Overview: Dr. Bugh took advantage of a proposed railroad spur development project in his community to involve students in his existing Land Use and Planning course in an EIA project. Through a series of guided laboratories, students wrote a report given to County Planners.

Introduction

The State University College at Cortland offers a program of study in the liberal arts and a number of professional fields. The College views both liberal and professional education as integral to its mission and believes that all study which teaches students to think prepares them for earning a living as well as living a full life. The College is committed to excellence in all that it undertakes: teaching, research, and service to the community. The College also aims to help students develop the skills and attitudes needed to pursue personal excellence.

At the State University College at Cortland we recognize the value of outdoor and environmental education. Opportunities for study and field work have expanded greatly, and many of the College’s academic departments, and this course in particular, now make use of three adjunct campuses which the College has developed to support outdoor and environmental education programs.

Huntington Memorial Camp forms the major portion of the College’s Outdoor Education Center at Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks. The center, 150 miles from the main campus, provides an outstanding natural setting for more than 2500 resident students to participate in instructional programs each year. These programs emphasize the use of the out-of-doors in ecologically constructive ways.

The College’s 170 acre Hoxie Gorge campus, only a 15-minute drive from Cortland, is a nature preserve used principally for short term field work in the natural sciences and outdoor education. Field station facilities accommodate up to 45 students at a time. Hoxie Gorge has a variety of characteristics, including hills, forests, and abandoned farmland, and is bordered on two sides by 2,600 acres of State Forest lands.

State University College at Cortland has the only major geological field facility in the State University of New York system. The Brauer Memorial Field Research Station, located on the famed Helderberg Escarpment, is an area known to geologists as a classic region of fossiliferous limestone and shale formations of Devonian age. The 33-acre site contains classroom, dining and sleeping accommodations for 48 students and is used by the geology departments at Cortland and other State University Colleges as a base for studies of the Catskill Mountains, Mid-Hudson Valley, and Taconic Range.
The three adjunct campuses allow Land Use and Planning students to study several major land-use categories and observe the impact of change on the land. At the Raquette Lake setting, in the middle of New York State’s Adirondack “forever wild” Park, students see first hand the impact that humans have on a wilderness environment from acid rain deposition to overuse of mountain trails. At the Hoxie Gorge campus, we observe encroachment of nature on abandoned farms and, in contrast to the Brauer Memorial Field Research Station, Albany’s urban expansion across the Hudson lowlands.

**Land Use and Planning Course**

During the environmental movement of the 1970s, members of the Department of Geology developed several courses in the field of applied geology; one was Land Use and Planning. This course was designed as an elective for students in any concentration, but was recommended for students majoring in environmental science, urban studies, and geography. Since the first offering, the enrollment has increased from less than ten per semester to closed sections with every seat filled. Many of the students enrolled today are majoring in geography (the course is required for the B.S. in geography) or recreation and leisure studies. Course materials are included in Appendix 1.

The College encourages departments to offer new courses under a “topics” heading until the course demonstrates enrollment. The Department of Geology offered Land Use and Planning for several years under the topics heading before applying for more permanent status. The Curriculum Committee rejected it as a geology course because “it was too interdisciplinary” and should not be taught by geologists. The course outline was revised so that the lecture headings reflected the geological basis of each lecture and the materials were re-submitted to the Curriculum Committee. The second submission was successful. The course has evolved from a seminar format to basically a standard lecture course.

Land Use and Planning attempts to demonstrate that land is a fragile natural resource and the role of the planner is to identify constraints as well as opportunities for development offered by the landscape. The ultimate goal of planning is to provide a quality environment in which to live, good food to eat, clean air to breathe, and clear water to drink. The goal of the course is to acquaint students with methods of planning and provide real problems to be solved using these methods. In the last three years, I have used the “guided design” method for the students to work in teams and be responsible for more of their own learning. Wales and Stager (1977, p. 1) state “that the student who works through an ascending order of well designed problems, the student who is actively seeking solutions to problems rather than passively assimilating knowledge, will emerge not only better educated, but far stronger intellectually.”

Land Use and Planning is divided into four units:

- **Tools of the planner**: topographic and geologic maps, and aerial photos,
- **Earth materials**: rocks and soils,
- **Events**: floods, earthquakes and similar processes, and
- **Regulations and evaluation**: laws and results.

The first few weeks of the semester are used to view films of planned and unplanned developments and the procedures of planning. During this time, students learn or review the nature of rocks because our dependence on rock is so basic that safe and efficient land use requires a quantitative knowledge of rock properties. Soils are collected on a field trip where the class observes soil-related hazards, limitations and opportunities. Soil samples are analyzed and classified in the laboratory. The analyses are later applied to the semester’s project.

Weather, as it relates to land use, is considered because one goal of the planner is to protect structures from cold in the winter, heat in the summer, adverse winds and floods. Storms occur
on fairly regular intervals related to atmospheric circulation, but destruction resulting from such storms is increasing because of a general disregard of sound land-use planning. The class examines hydrographs and computes flood frequency.

Land ownership does not give owners actual control of all uses of the land, but Hawaii is the only state that has statewide zoning. Many reasons are normally cited for enactment of land-use laws, but the class learns that the main reason can be traced to the Hawaii’s physical setting: volcanic mountains, fragile slopes, northeasterly trade winds, limited water supply, and the impact increased population would have on the land, water supplies and agriculture.

Human potential for producing changes in the environment is growing at an amazing rate, but we have shown little awareness of the consequence of our activities. Our record on Earth shows a greater tendency to destroy than to improve the environment. Several examples of problem awareness and program implementation to improve the environment are examined. Examples range from citizen group action to county government buying of development rights.

Course Modifications

Land Use and Planning, GLY 292, was modified in the fall 1992 semester to incorporate some of the techniques introduced at the Great Lakes Research Consortium’s Ecosystem Dynamics program. During the summer of 1992, a rail spur project was announced to the community and a series of newspaper articles presented information to the residents and interested parties (Appendix 2). Concerns were raised about environmental problems that might result from such a project and these problems were discussed in the newspaper articles. On the other hand, the project’s supporters saw economic opportunity resulting from the project's successful completion. Copies of the newspaper articles, topographic maps of the area where the project was to happen, and samples of the soil where the rail spur was to be were given to all of the students (Appendix 2).

In many ways this course followed a traditional format. The instructor lectured and examined and the students completed tasks which answered questions about the environmental impact of a single topic of timely interest and significance to the community.

Cortland County legislators agreed in late June of 1992 that an environmental impact statement was needed for the project. Students in GLY 292, Land Use and Planning, were responsible for preparing such an impact statement to complete requirements for the course. In doing so, many students made on-site visits, interviewed some of the most likely impacted neighbors, and met with County planners.

Evaluation

Student response to the course modification has been favorable, but I am concerned because some of the students came into the course with a minimum background in the sciences and these students could only attain limited success. I do believe that the real-life project in the region where the class could see potential environmental impacts first hand motivated and stimulated interest for the duration of the class and beyond.

In the future, I will continue with the 1992 format but will consider at least two other features. First, I want to expand the writing aspects of the course to include a one-page report that discusses the planning factors necessary for the proposed development project. This report is to be written in class, and upon completion students will exchange papers and write comments to expand upon their classmates’ ideas. This assignment will be fairly early in the data gathering stages in order to push students who have been slow in starting and also to share ideas while time remains to organize data presentation and interpretation. Second, I want to
introduce the “Public Hearing” on the EIS so that each student takes a stakeholder’s role. I was so taken by the “Public Hearing” role playing that we did in Oswego that I want to introduce it as a major component of the course in the future.

I did not use the “Public Hearing” in the 1992 class because of the class size. Next semester, I hope to have two different projects divided among the students. This should allow for a manageable size “hearing” for each topic. I may decide to videotape the “Public Hearings” but at this time I am not sure about the educational merits of the tapes, who would see the tapes, or even when the class would be able to see the tapes.
Appendix 1
Great Lakes Research Consortium
National Science Foundation Practicum

Environmental Impact Assessment

Airport Rail Spur

GLY 292  Land Use and Planning

Term Project

1992
Project

Background

During the spring of 1992, a Cortland County Legislature committee recommended granting an easement for a proposed mile-long rail spur, part of which would run parallel to the Route 222 airport’s only runway.

Local environmentalists are up in arms over the proposed rail spur which the New York Susquehanna and Western Railway plans to build. They fear that the project could contaminate the Otter Creek-Dry Creek Aquifer since it would be located directly over the critical recharge area of the aquifer where the city’s approximately 20,000 residents get their drinking water.

Pilots contend that the rail spur is “an accident waiting to happen.” If the project goes ahead as planned, it will bring railroad cars only 175 feet from the centerline of the runway near the critical area where planes take off and land.

However, supporters of the rail spur see the opportunity of millions of dollars pumped into the local economy in the form of new business and new jobs. Richard Elliot, current executive director of the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee, believes that $100 million could be pumped into the local economy.

The Problem

Because of the debate about the possibility of a significant environmental impact arising from the operation of the rail spur, you, each student in GLY 292, must prepare an environmental impact statements (EIS) which assesses the impact of the rail spur. A scoping checklist of items to be included in the assessment follows. At the conclusion of your EIS you are to include a statement, based on your EIS, as to whether the project should be permitted.

Gather Data

You, as informed members of the community, are to compile the necessary data during the early weeks of the semester. If you examine the course outline, you will discover that we shall consider rocks and topography and their relationship to the project. We shall then visit the site and collect soil samples for laboratory analysis. Following the soil analysis, a consideration of the water-bearing properties of the area will round out the basic data needed for the EIS.

In addition to the basic data, we shall attempt to determine the optimum use of the land as well as how weather may influence any land-use decision. The final report (EIS) with your recommendation is due on November 23, 1992.

Geologic Materials: Rocks

Our dependence on rock is so basic that safe and efficient land use requires a quantitative knowledge of rock properties. A rock is an aggregate of minerals and may consist of many or only a single one. The identification and classification of rocks is based on texture and mineral content.

Rocks that are crystalline aggregates of mainly silicate minerals cooled from a molten condition are called igneous. Rocks composed of minerals derived from previously existing rocks by weathering processes and transported to a depositional basin are called sedimentary rocks. Metamorphic rocks are those which have become modified by heat and/or pressure from their original sedimentary, igneous, or other metamorphic character. The processes of metamorphism generally include recrystallization that recombines the ions of the minerals in the rock, and, sometimes has injected magmatic fluids.

Each of the three classes of rocks has its own characteristics that determine not only its identification, but also its strength, resistance to weathering, and suitability for use.
Ten samples are to be identified before our next class and the emphasis will be directed to specific characteristics of each sample relative to the construction of the proposed rail spur.

**Topographic Maps**

Topographic maps present a detailed record of a land area and show geographic positions and elevations for both natural and human-made features. Such maps show the shape of the land by means of brown contour lines (lines of equal elevation above sea level). These maps clearly show the topography to the map reader, whether he or she is standing in the area or sitting at home or in the office a thousand miles away. Topographic maps have many uses as fundamental tools for planning and executing projects that are necessary to our modern way of life. By knowing a little about the geology of an area and having a topographic map at hand, many land usage problems of an area can be quickly and accurately determined.

Using the topographic map, construct a topographic profile of the area where the rail spur is proposed.

**Geologic Materials: Soils**

Soil surveys are made for many different users. They can help a homebuyer or developer determine soil-related hazards or limitations that affect homesites. They can help land-use planners determine the suitability of areas for housing or on-site sewage disposal systems. They can be used to determine the suitability and limitations of soils for pipelines, railroads, highways, and landfills, as well as many other uses.

We will visit the project site and collect samples of the soil for laboratory analysis as well as measure the thickness, color, and texture of the surface soil and the subsoil.

Land disturbances associated with changes in the use of land result in erosion, silted ponds and reservoirs, damaged water supply systems and increased flood hazards. Analyses of soils will identify soil limitations so that construction can be planned and undertaken with a minimum of soil-related problems.

In the laboratory, sieve 500 ml of the project-site soil and determine the percentages of sand, silt, and clay. Be sure to record all data on the data sheet.

Our laboratory analyses have provided quantitative data that will allow us to determine the engineering characteristics of the soil by referring to the data sheets provided.

**Hydrogeology**

Water is fundamental for life to exist and only 29 percent of our precipitation is available as runoff and ground water storage. Many monitoring wells tap the Cortland aquifer. Water levels are recorded in these wells and samples are collected to determine the water quality. Figure 1 shows the location of the monitoring wells and Table I lists the land-surface elevation of the wells as well as the depth to water on March 5 and September 29.

Your assignment is to calculate the water table elevation and plot this information on one map for March 5 and one map for September 29. Show on each map the way the ground water is flowing.

You have now been exposed to all of the physical data necessary to prepare an EIS. Using your corrected reports, you should be able to write the basic report; by this, I mean that independent research will also be necessary to generate the EIS that will merit a grade above average.
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<td>Remote sensing — a rapid means of acquiring information about the land from measurements made at a distance.</td>
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<td>Flood frequency analysis — storms occur on fairly regular intervals but destruction from such storms is increasing with increasing regularity.</td>
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<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>Multiple and sequential land use — planning helps to allocate land, resources and uses to meet the nation’s needs in the best way but decisions are made through legislative, judicial and administrative ways.</td>
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<td>Residential mobility: The image of the city — cities have been the land of opportunity and excitement but now they are wasting away.</td>
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<td>Pedestrian city — from young to old, we are all pedestrians once we step out of the car, off the subway, or in the mall.</td>
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<td>Dec. 14</td>
<td>Metropolitan forest — Plants have virtues for alleviating social and physical environmental problems in the city.</td>
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<td>New Towns — Cities have been seen as a place of opportunity and excitement but mobility has allowed people to work in the city but live elsewhere. Cities have lost taxes and talent. New Towns are a constructive alternative.</td>
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WHY WRITE?
Writing improves learning...
Writing is a learn-by-doing skill…
Keep content at the center of the writing process...

A REPORT
Is prepared in response to a perceived need…
Requires research…
Contains a collection of facts organized and analyzed to arrive at conclusions…

AN OUTLINE
Is the first step…
Research is vital…
Good notes = good outline = good report

BASIC ELEMENTS OF A REPORT
Introduction…
Body…
Conclusion…
Appleart Rail Spur Supported

BY CONNIE NOGAS

Despite serious safety and health concerns, the Cortland County Legislature committee has recom-

mended granting an easement for a controversial railroad spur proposed to be built at a lumberyard next
door to the county airport.

At issue is a proposed mile-long rail spur, part of which would run parallel to the Route 233 airport's
only runway.

New York Susquehanna & Western Railway plans to build the $1.3 million spur which would lead to Bestway Enterprises, a lumber company on nearby Luker Road.
The project is being sponsored and promoted by the Cortland County Industrial Development Agency
which owns the existing railroad right of way.

The Transportation Committee voted four to one Monday to recommend to the full legislature a 100-
foot-wide, 2,200-foot-long easement through the airport property, which is owned by the county.

Since the resolution promoting the easement involves some legal research on the part of County At-
torney John T. Ryan Jr., legislators likely won't be voting on the issue until May 27. Even if the easement


gains the approval of the full legislature, the project will still need numerous permits from town of Cortlandsville officials.

Committee Chairman Frank Barbieri, R-McGraw, was the sole
dissent.

"It's not a small little thing we are giving away. It's taxpayers' land," Barbieri said.

"Secondly, it's right over the aquifer," he said, referring to the Otter Creek-Dry Creek Aquifer

which supplies drinking water to most county residents.

County Groundwater Management Coordinator Nancy Jarvis agreed with Barbieri's concerns.

Making the problem worse is that the proposed railway spur would be located in the same area from

where city residents get their drinking water.

"The threat from this project would really impact the city more than the town," Jarvis said.

They're (project backers) promoting industrial development in an area where it shouldn't be occur-

ring," Jarvis added. "There are areas of the aquifer that would be more suitable for this.

Jarvis also worried that the proj-

ect would open the door for unsuitable development over the aquifer in the future.

"This is setting a precedent for everything else to follow," she said.

"Once there's a rail line out near Luker Road, what comes next?"

At Transportation Committee meetings held in January and March and again Monday, local pilots expressed their fears that the project isn't safe because the spur

would be located about 135 feet away from and parallel to the run-

way. It's also located near the critical area of the runway where planes takeoff and land.

Bill Waite, a Cortland pilot and aerial photographer, previously said that if a plane moving at approxi-

mately 117 mph were to have an engine failure or lose a tire, it could travel 99 feet or more in

seconds and crash into the rail spur.

"The chances of our surviving would be slim," he said.

However, Ed Horn, project engineer for Standard Engineering Corp. of Albany, the consulting engineer for the project, previously said that Federal Aviation Ad-

ministration officials approved the project and declared it safe Feb. 22.
Rail Spur Project Raises Fears of Spills, Water Contamination

By CONNIE NOGAS

Local environmentalists are up in arms over a proposed mile-long rail spur which the New York Susquehanna & Western Railway plans to build near the Cortland County Airport on Route 222. They fear the project could contaminate the Otsego-Cortland Creek-Aquifer since it would be located directly over the critical recharge area of the aquifer where the city's approximately 20,000 residents get their drinking water from. About 90 percent of Cortlandville's 8,000 residents or 7,200 residents also get their drinking water from this aquifer.

Since part of the rail spur would run through airport property, county lawmakers must grant a 100-foot-wide, 200-foot-long easement through county-owned airport property in order for the project to move ahead. If the easement is granted later this month, then the fate of the project rests in the hands of the Cortlandville planning and town boards because several permits would be needed from those boards.

County health officials have warned the proposal and fear there is already too much development in the Laker Road area. If this project goes through, it could cover the area for all sorts of harmful development over the aquifer, they fear.

"It's just the wrong area to be promoting heavy commercial industrial activity," said Nancy Jarvis, county groundwater management coordinator.

What really bothers county health officials is the fact that Bestway is already treating lumber with copper chrome arsenic, and this potentially dangerous material is being trucked to and from the facility. The rail spur project would only serve to increase production by 30 times and then positing 10 times the risk to the aquifer, county health officials said.

However, only raw, untreated lumber will actually travel over the spur, said Michael Armanni, an attorney for the New York Susquehanna & Western Railway, a subsidiary of the Delaware Osage Corp. Richard Elliot, executive director of the county Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee (EDC) said the plan is restricted to lumber only under the terms of the lease.

While the IDA will own the spur and is exempt from paying taxes on it or making payments in lieu of taxes, it will be up to New York Susquehanna & Western Railway to maintain and operate the project, said Richard Elliot, executive director of the county Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee (EDC).

Despite the fact that only raw lumber will travel over the line, Federal Aviation Administration officials are requiring an environmental assessment to be conducted before it can consider granting final approval. FAA officials made this requirement in response to concerns raised by groups like the Cortland Water Board. FAA officials said in a Feb. 26 letter to County Legislature Chairman Richard Cooper, R-Cortlandville.

"We will follow any guidance set by the FAA," Armanni said. "Bestway President Karl Ochs could not be reached for comment."

He did not return repeated telephone calls placed to his office over a period of weeks and did not acknowledge a reporter's written request for an interview.

There is a health risk to the public even if the rail spur is never built because tracks are already being cleaned chemicals over the aquifer, said County Health Director James Feuss. Effects of such heavy metals as copper, chromium and arsenic are cumulative, meaning they build up over a long period of time. Since monitoring is already being done near the site, any problems would show up quickly, but city residents have a chance to be in any danger. But the serious problem would come in treating such a problem.

"The impact upon health would be very small because it would be able to monitor the impact on the health of the future would be very small," Feuss said.

Cleanup of a spill could cause nightmares for county taxpayers since it would be expensive, Feuss said.

"In a worst-case scenario, you're talking about millions of dollars," Feuss said. However, it's unlikely that the whole aquifer could be contaminated, and the problem may be taken care of by pumping up to wells from a different part of the aquifer.

Even that could be expensive, Feuss said.

"There would be a large expense to try to keep on moving with the area to get out of harm's way," he said.

Should the entire water supply be contaminated, county officials would have no choice but to use another water supply, an expensive proposition, Feuss said.

Since the nearest one is Shakeheese Lake which is already private property after getting an easement or right of way.

Armanni noted the property would have gone through prior private property which is owned by Fred Kraft Jr., Thomas and Michael Gallagher, Shaw Cummings, Douglas and Sally Haws, and Brian Cummings but the topography of the land is better at the airport. The IIDA would have the right to use Bestway or the railroad company if public access were denied although he claims that's not likely happen, Elliot said. IIDA officials also aren't happy with the location of the current team track on South Avenue which is to expire in 1998, Elliot said.

The project causes heavy truck traffic through a residential area while the new one will be in a more industrial area and would be very close to the aquifer.

"That's right across the aquifer," he said.

What about that?" he challenged a reporter. "Also, it's a "remote possibility" that an accident would happen involving the rail project.

Elliot explained why the controversial project was being built today columnists. Local businesses on private that happen to be the rail spur project could be located right over the aquifer. IIDA officials said county officials weren't able to find any even lead to the eventual closure of public property near the tracks.
Railroad Project
Concerns Pilots

Second of three parts

By CONNIE NAGAS

A proposed team track near the county airport on Route 222 is an accident waiting to happen, local pilots fear.

"To me it's pretty ludicrous to jeopardize men and machines at this airport for the sake of lumberyard," said airport manager Eugene Vanoota.

That's because the rail spur will require a 100-foot test run, 2,300 feet east from the county airport. If the project goes forward as planned, it will bring rail cars only 175 feet from the center line of the runway near the critical area where planes takeoff and land.

County legislators are set to vote tomorrow on whether to consider granting the easement and to begin an environmental assessment of the project. They will vote on actually granting the easement at a later date.

Why will the spur run parallel to the runway practically close enough for pilots and engineers to carry on a conversation with each other? Opponents in the project speculated that it was cheaper to ask county legislators for an easement in a deal where no money will exchange hands rather than buy privately-owned land or begin eminent domain proceedings against property owners.

The spur could have been routed through land owned by Karl Ochs, who is president of Bestway Enterprises, and by Fred Kraft, V. Thomas and Michael Gallagher, Duane and Sally Hawks, Brian Cummins and Christopher Cummins.

Michael Armanu, an attorney for New York State and Western Railway, which will operate and maintain the county Industrial Development Agency-owned spur, denied that simple economics determined the proposed route.

He said factors like topography and slope were what convinced Standard Engineering Corp. of Detroit that the airport route was the best way to go. Edward Hein, project engineer for Standard Engineering of Albany, consulting engineer for the project who works for the railroad, wouldn't comment and referred all questions to Armanu.

Meanwhile, many pilots are concerned about the proposed rail spur. "Some of them pilots will find themselves in trouble, such as blowing out one of the plane's tires upon takeoff," Vanoota said.

Landings are the most dangerous situation, he said. On a day with good weather and ideal flying conditions, anywhere from 120 to 150 airplanes land and take off there.

"If he引用 the plane to veer off this way, he would have no place to go," said Fred Kraft, a member of the FAA.

"I think the chances of that railroad contributing in any way, shape or manner to a serious accident are extremely remote," he said.

Max Steiner, who chooses the IBA and represents the towns of South and Preble on the county legislature, disagreed. "I can't think of anything that's more serious than a railroad," he said.

Steiner noted the FAA has already given plans for the project conditional approval.

Conditions that must be met include: not blocking the railroad track any closer than 12 feet high and 10 feet wide. The FAA requires a 20-foot wide clearance for airplane takeoff and landings.

The FAA said the line will be shipped on flat cars which are only 7 feet wide and 10 feet high.

"Therefore, we are considering the noise as an accident," the FAA said. "The FAA said it is a safe hazard for planes."
Some Businessmen Oppose Rail Spur

Last in a series

By CHARLES DOGAS

Area businessmen fear they won't be able to use the county airport for business purposes and that the airport might eventually close if a proposed rail spur were built.

But Eugene Viscatha, airport manager, believes the timing of the withdrawal of the proposal is a matter of a few days. He said it was in January when the rail spur issue began to heat up even though the project had been in the works since at least 1986.

But the airport's problem is that it is not visible to anyone except the people who use it. The county bought the airport from the city for $10,000, more than $1 million has been spent there.

Most of the money comes from the Federal Aviation Administration which reimburses most projects at the airport, including the original $10,000 spent to purchase the property. Over the past 27 years, the FAA has spent $2,100,000, the state Department of Transportation has spent $250,000, and the county has spent $300,000, according to county legislative journals. However, some of the records dating back to the 1970s and 1980s were not complete so even more money may have been spent there.

In the event of the $1 million mile-long rail spur money at the hands of opponents and any tax break would be a great boon in area business. It could also pump millions of dollars into the local economy, supporters say.

But the funding of the airport by the FAA may be jeopardized by the rail spur project, local businessmen fear. And they worry that they may no longer be able to continue using the airport for business travel since the FAA earlier this year has removed the so-called instrument approach.

When the weather is clear and pilots can depend on their own eyes for takeoff and landing, they use the visual approach. But when the visibility is less than three miles and there is a ceiling of 1,000 feet, they must use the instrument approach to land. Pilots need to depend on a signal transmitted out of little white boxes along the runway and with the FAA and from the FAA.

In January, FAA officials withdrew the instrument approach

But in an April 27 letter to former county Planning Director R. C. Smith, Augenstein warned that the county will ultimately have to decide whether it wants an airport used for business and recreational purposes or one solely for recreation by granting or not granting the rail spur easement.

"It should be emphasized that the decision of the future of the airport is up to its owner, namely the Cortland County Legislature. These policies may determine the evaluation of future applications for airport improvements which may be seen as inconsistent with the policies," Augenstein wrote.

"It's possible that they might not get federal funding for certain types of improvements," said Augenstein.

The FAA recently approved the purchase of the property but the project still has to pass through the Southern Tier Regional Planning and Development Board which may not grant the project.

"If the two can go forward and co-exist, if you will, successfully," one business, be it Bestway or any other business, at the expense of another business in the community," Elliot said.
Project's Supporters See Economic Opportunity

By CONNIE NUGAS

A controversial rail spur project which would pass through county airport property could pump millions of dollars into the local economy, one of the project's promoters claims.

"It's a tremendous boom for the community," said Richard Telchman Jr., former executive director of the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee (EDC).

Telchman told a Cortland Standard reporter on Monday that he was not working on the project on behalf of the railroad, the New York Susquehanna & Western.

Michael Armani, an attorney for the railroad, said on Monday that Telchman was still involved in the project through his company, Economic Development International. EDI does consulting work for the railroad, including the rail spur project, Armani said.

Neither party would reveal exactly what kind of consulting EDI does for the railroad nor how much money is involved.

Prior to resigning his chamber position in September 1989, Telchman spearheaded the attempt to build the $1.3 million mile-long spur to Bestway Enterprises Inc. on Luker Road parallel to the airport's runway. The railroad plans to build the project which is being promoted and sponsored by the Cortland County Industrial Development Agency.

There is a real need for the project since Bestway is growing rapidly, Bestway President Karl Ochs said in an Aug. 9, 1991, letter to Richard Elliot, current EDC executive director.

Bestway receives more than 200 rail cars of lumber annually at the South Avenue team track plus 1,500 trailer truckloads at the Luker Road plant. If all raw lumber moved in by rail, more than 600 rail cars of lumber would be shipped to Bestway annually. The transfer of lumber from the South Avenue team track to Luker Road adds another 600 truckloads to the equation.

Funding for the project includes $800,000 in public monies and $500,000 in private monies and comes from the following sources: a $400,000 state legislature member item sponsored by Sen. James Seward, R-Milford; $250,000 from the state Department of Transportation (DOT); $150,000 from the federal Appalachian Regional Commission through the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board; $200,000 from Bestway and $250,000 from the railroad.

Telchman was quick to chastise opponents of the rail spur who believe the project will only benefit Bestway. He said the project is really a public team track which can be used by any local business wanting to ship or receive goods by rail. A lease for the county's current team track, located on South Avenue, is due to expire by 1998 so county officials are shopping around for a new location, Telchman said. Elliot confirmed this.

It's not unusual for a public team track to be built on private property since most railroad property runs through private property with the help of leases and rights of way, Elliot said. Besides, there is no public property around Cortland County that is anywhere near the railroad, he said.

Without a reliable team track, local industries will suffer, Telchman said. "Rail service is critical to this community," he said.

However, Kenneth DeMunn, owner of JTS Lumber and the person from whom the IDA now leases the South Ave. team track for a token dollar a year, disagreed. With the exception of True Value Hardware, which ran a car or two across the line, only Bestway, ironically DeMunn's biggest local competitor, has ever used the South Avenue team track, he said.

Max Stoker, who chairs the IDA and represents the town of Preble and Scott on the county legislature, agreed with Telchman and Elliot.

"We certainly would reconsider our position with this new information," he said. "But Elliot, DOT assistant traffic engineer based at the regional office in Syracuse. DOT officials generally believe it's better to have a team track near the Luker Road area because it would eliminate an estimated 80 truck trips per year that Bestway trucks now take through city streets from South Ave."

Sal Rizzo, DOT regional rail coordinator, speaking from the Syracuse office.

The lack of a team track could also discourage new industries from moving into Cortland County, Telchman said.

"It's a very, very negative thing for the community," said Robert Share, a member of the IDA who represents the city's 6th Ward on the county legislature.

"Bestway is a very viable and important part of our local business community," Share said.

"Without that public team track, you will be off anybody's list who's shopping for new industry in Cortland."

Yet another benefit of the project is the creation of at least 50 new jobs at Bestway in addition to the 72 current employees there, according to project plans released last year. No public official could say exactly where or what kinds of jobs would be created.

Ochs, Bestway's president, did not return repeated telephone calls seeking his comments.

"The net economic benefit to the community is $250 million" over a 10-year span, Telchman said, using the so-called multiplier effect which measures extra money added to the local economy as workers buy homes, buy food and otherwise spend money in the Cortland County area.

But Elliot believed that Telchman's figures were extremely optimistic and believed $100 million could be pumped into the local economy.

No matter how much money enters the local economy because of the project, it will still benefit the community, said Robert Share, a member of the IDA who represents the city's 6th Ward on the county legislature.
Airport Rail Spur Debated

By JON BLACKWELL

The merits and drawbacks of a proposed railway siding which would pass through county airport property were debated last night by the Cortlandville Town Board.

The planned rail spur, which would cross Luker Road and run parallel to Route 281 north of McLean Road, is perceived by some as a threat to business and the environment in the region. Yesterday’s board meeting was marked by the same controversy the project has aroused since it was proposed three years ago.

Although the town board has yet to vote on an aquifer protection permit for the rail spur and won’t do so until the county legislature gives its own approval to the project, town councilmen took sides on how the spur might affect the airport, town aquifer and landscape.

Cortland County Attorney John Ryan Jr., standing in for Town Attorney Philip Rumsey, told board members that the county may not vote on granting an easement for the rail project “for months.”

Before taking action, the county must have the results of a State Environmental Quality Review, or SEQR.

Town councilmen, who have previously voted not to be the lead agency in the SEQR process, reaffirmed that vote last night, saying they don’t have the information to make such an environmental review.

However, board members were clearly opinionated on the issue as they discussed it with county Industrial Development Agency Executive Director Richard Elliot.

Elliot, given the privilege of the floor, told the board “there seem to be three issues that are hot” in the rail spur debate. Opponents have charged that the project may endanger the airport’s planned purchase of property along Route 222 to be used for a new hangar, may have forced withdrawal of a safety signal for pilots and further endanger airport safety, and may pose safety risks on its own, Elliot said.

Councilman Ronal Rocco, the only board member to voice criticism of the project, pointed out that the presence of a railway might also attract more industry, with consequent pollution, to the Luker Road area.

Elliot dismissed an objection such as Rocco’s, describing it as “a Field of Dreams’ attitude — if you build a railroad, the businesses will come.” He noted that the rail branch to which the planned spur would be added has existed for over 50 years “and we haven’t been overwhelmed by a heavy influx of business.”

Rocco, who has also voiced fears that the development of a retail store strip along Route 13 in South Cortland consisting of Walmart and Cortlandville Crossing might become a blot on the landscape, held that the rail addition would spoil open land near the airport.

“Five to 10 years from now, I can see Luker Road dotted with industry,” he said. “I don’t see it remaining virgin territory.”

Town Supervisor Raymond Thorpe broke in, saying, “That’s already a business district.”

Thorpe added that most criticism of the rail project “is pure speculation ... ultimately, all that land (off Luker Road) is going to be for sale and with high property values.”

The land will be developed by business regardless of the rail project, Thorpe said, “unless the town board declares you will never be able to use this land for anything — in which case the town will have to buy the land.”

7-2-92
Rail Spur to Get Environment Study

By CONNIE NOGAS

Cortland County legislators narrowly agreed yesterday to conduct a state-required environmental assessment before deciding whether to grant an easement that would allow New York Susquehanna & Western Railway to build a controversial mile-long rail spur through county-owned property on Route 222. Legislators won't vote on granting the 100-foot-wide, 2,200-foot-long easement until the environmental review is completed. It's not clear yet how long the review will take or what municipality or agency will act as lead agency for the review.

At issue is a proposed mile-long railroad spur to Bestway Enterprises on Luker Road in Cortlandville. The project would require an easement from county legislators since it cuts across county-owned airport property. Opponents to the project have raised a number of objections ranging from environmental issues to the project's effect on future funding at the airport. The Cortland Standard examined the controversial project in a three-part series which concluded yesterday.

The resolution keeping the project alive for now was approved by a weighted vote of 258 to 211 with 245 votes needed to pass.

Tom Williams, R-Homer, abstained from voting due to a possible conflict of interest since Bestway Enterprises owns some stock in Williams' Homer company, Wibedone. Only one Republican, Frank Barbieri of McGraw, voted no.

All seven Democratic legislators voted against the project, including Russell Teeter, 1st Ward; Everett "Skip" Boise, 2nd Ward; W. Stephen Harrington, 3rd Ward; Mary Harnett, 4th Ward; Ronald Van Dee, 5th Ward; Mary Contesto, 7th Ward; and Minority Leader Sandra Price, Virgil and Harford.

Van Dees, who was appointed by the city Common Council to replace the late Eugene Leumbruno who died last month, attended his first legislature meeting yesterday.

Had legislators not approved the resolution, the project would have died, forcing the railroad company to find another route, County Attorney John T. Ryan Jr. told legislators before the vote.

Legislators who expressed opposition to the rail spur seemed most concerned that the project could pose a threat to the Otter Creek-Dry Creek aquifer which supplies water to the city's 20,000 residents plus another 7,200 in the town of Cortlandville. They fear copper and chromium arsenic used in Bestway's lumber treating operation could spill into the aquifer and contaminate the drinking water. However, nothing but raw, untreated lumber will travel across the spur, railroad officials have said.

"We are very lucky that we have the water that we have, and we should not take risks for this very important resource that we have," Price said.

But former Majority Leader George Poole, R-Solon, Cuyler and Truxton, noted Bestway has already been treating lumber using copper-chromium arsenic for several years. And he claimed the environmental assessment was a good idea since it would hand legislators with the facts needed to make a sound decision.

"I think you need to enter into this thing with your eye open and find out the facts and deal with the facts," Poole said.

Contesto was concerned there was already too much industrial development in Cortlandville that posed a threat to the aquifer.

"But you put in a rail spur and you don't know how much other development would go in there," she said.

There were some supporters of the project, including Williams who said he was speaking as a citizen, not a lobbyist. He began by explaining his possible conflict of interest and then defended Bestway, calling the company environmentally responsible. He said Bestway has already taken several steps toward protecting the environment such as building a shelter to protect lumber from the rain and preventing chemical runoff from getting into the water supply.

But Williams' real message was to tell legislators their only role in the project was to decide whether to grant the easement.
PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS

General Considerations
   Purpose
   Use of maps, tables and charts

Project Description
   Clear definition of proposed action
   Phased development

Project Purpose
   Need for the project
   Initial alternative consideration

Project Setting

Background Information

Probable Impacts

Alternative
   General considerations
      Timing
      Level of investigation required
      Types of alternative

Short-term/Long-term Tradeoff

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources
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## Engineering Interpretation of Soils

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Soils and Development

Engineering Interpretation

Soil Erodibility

Descriptions, Limitation and Capabilities

Suitability of the soil as a resource material for topsoil, gravel, sand for highways, dams and levees.
Fig. 1.--Mean annual precipitation in New York State exclusive of Long Island. (Modified from Mordoff, 1949; U.S.D.A., 1941.)

Fig. 2.--Mean annual snowfall in New York State, exclusive of Long Island. (Modified from Huller, 1960.)
Fig. 3--Mean annual runoff in New York State, exclusive of Long Island. (Data from U.S.G.S. Water-Supply Papers.)

Fig. 4--Forest types of New York State, exclusive of Long Island. (Modified from Stout, 1938.)
Figure 1. Data collection sites (wells, Otter Creek-Dry Creek basin.)
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--Bedrock in New York State exclusive of Long Island. (After Cline, 1955.)

--Watershed management problem areas of New York State, exclusive of Long Island.