



GOVERNOR
KATHY HOCHUL

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Governor Hochul Announces Great Lakes Cheese Breaks Ground on \$518 Million Manufacturing and Packaging Plant in Cattaraugus County

Family and Employee-Owned Company to Retain 228 Employees, Add 215 Jobs in Western New York

Rendering of Facility Available [Here](#)

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced that Great Lakes Cheese broke ground on a new, state-of-the-art manufacturing and packaging plant in Franklinville and Farmersville. With a capital investment of more than \$518 million, the project is the largest infrastructure investment in the company's history and the largest economic development project in the history of Cattaraugus County. Great Lakes Cheese will retain 228 jobs in the region, while adding an additional 215 employees. It will also double its milk consumption to 1.42 billion pounds annually, which will directly benefit New York dairy farmers. The new plant will replace the existing facility in Cuba, New York, upon project completion in 2025. See a rendering of the new facility [here](#).

"New York's economic comeback is stronger than ever and the new state-of-the-art Great Lakes Cheese manufacturing and packaging plant is a historic win for Western New York," **Governor Hochul said**. "The new facility - the largest economic development project in the history of Cattaraugus County - will provide an extraordinary boost to the region's economic growth, nearly double the company's workforce, and increase the stability of our state's dairy farms. I have never been more hopeful for the future of Cattaraugus County and Western New York as we continue to make historic investments to better the lives of hard-working New Yorkers."

Great Lakes Cheese CEO Dan Zagzebski said, "Great Lakes Cheese was uncompromising in its search for a site that worked for our employee-owners, our business, and the local community. Franklinville checked every box. The community has understood and embraced our vision of, 'Together, for generations to come.' They have partnered with us on this historic investment so that generations of employee-owners can thrive in Western New York."

Great Lakes Cheese is a national manufacturer and packager of natural and processed bulk, shredded and sliced cheeses. The company has eight existing plants, including two New York manufacturing plants in Cuba and Adams. The company is also constructing a new facility in Abilene, Texas, which is set to open at the end of this year. The expanded capacity and capabilities of the new 500,000-square-foot facility in Cattaraugus County will support the growing Great Lakes Cheese network of facilities. The new facility and the company's processing facility in the North Country will together make use of about 14.4 percent of New York's total milk production.

Empire State Development, the state's economic development agency, provided an award for a \$3.7 million grant and up to \$14.6 million in performance-based New York State Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits in exchange for creating 215 new jobs. ESD's Excelsior Jobs Program encourages businesses to expand in, and relocate to, New York while maintaining strict accountability standards to guarantee that businesses deliver on job and investment commitments. Additionally, the New York Power Authority (NYPA) will provide more than 5.3 megawatts of low-cost ReCharge NY power to support the facility.

Empire State Development Acting Commissioner and President & CEO-designate Hope Knight said, "As Great Lakes Cheese breaks ground on an impressive, new manufacturing plant and nearly doubles its local workforce, the company is securing its long-term future in Western New York. We are thrilled to support Great Lakes Cheese as it embarks on its next chapter in New York State."

New York Power Authority Interim President and CEO Justin E. Driscoll said, "NYPA is proud to support Great Lakes Cheese's expansion, which will create 200 jobs and make a significant impact on the Cattaraugus County economy. NYPA hydropower is the backbone of economic development in Western New York and our support for this project builds on the tens of thousands of jobs already supported by the Niagara Power Project."

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, "This is great news for New York dairy, the largest sector of New York's agricultural industry. Great Lakes Cheese has a long-standing tradition of producing some of our State's finest dairy products, and we are excited to see them continue to expand, increasing demand for New York dairy farmers' milk and creating over 200 new jobs - all great news for our dairy industry. This expansion will help solidify Great Lakes Cheese's future and ensure New York State remains a leader in dairy nationwide, and we look forward to our continued partnership with them."

County of Cattaraugus IDA Executive Director Corey R. Wiktor said, "We are honored to warmly welcome Great Lakes Cheese to Cattaraugus County! This is the largest private economic development project in the history of this great County. We now have a golden opportunity to combine an industry-leading, family- and employee-owned business with the dairy and farming heritage and industry in Cattaraugus County. Our partners at Empire State Development played an absolute critical role in helping this project come to fruition in Farmersville."

Family- and employee-owned, Great Lakes Cheese celebrated its 60th year of business in 2018. The company's longstanding record of investing in thriving communities is tied directly to the company operating under an ownership culture. Through its Employee Stock Ownership Plan, all employees have a stake in the business and share in the rewards.

State Senator George M. Borrello said, "Today's groundbreaking for the new home of Great Lakes Cheese represents a transformational moment for this valued New York State company and the culmination of years of effort, planning, problem-solving and collaboration. My congratulations and gratitude are extended to the Epprecht family, the company's leadership team, and the wide coalition of state and local partners who shared our determination that this region was the best place for Great Lakes Cheese to fulfill its vision for the future. I was proud that my team and I were able to advocate for keeping this project in the district, protecting jobs and ensuring dairy farms will

benefit from an expanded market. This project will be a game changer in the very best sense, and I look forward to the great successes that lie ahead."

Assemblymember Joe Giglio said, "This groundbreaking is the start of wonderful things to come for our region and for Great Lakes Cheese. I am so happy that the company has chosen to stay in Western New York and that their leadership has recognized the value of this part of the state. We have a skilled and dedicated workforce, and bountiful resources for the dairy industry. It is gratifying that months of negotiations will result not only in keeping hundreds of jobs here, but in adding even more. This successful plant relocation is the result of the hard work, diligence and cooperation of the management team at Great Lakes Cheese and numerous state and local government officials and agencies."

Town of Farmersville Deputy Supervisor Mark Heberling said, "This is a historic moment for our town to return to its cheese making roots. With the majority of the facility located in Farmersville, we know this will positively impact our residents and the surrounding community for generations to come. We could not be more pleased and hopeful for the future. We would like to thank all of those involved, the Epprechtfamily, the Cattaraugus County Legislature, the Cattaraugus County IDA, and the landowners including Kody Sprague and Jason Schwab for their foresight and perseverance."

Village of Franklinville Mayor Michael Sikora said, "We are excited to be a part of the biggest project in Cattaraugus County's history - one that is keeping jobs local and bringing in even more jobs. That being said, we're also seeing additional business interest in Franklinville picking up. It's promising for Franklinville and for small-town America. It's all welcomed."

About Great Lakes Cheese

Great Lakes Cheese is an award-winning, premier manufacturer and packager of natural and processed bulk, shredded, and sliced cheeses. The country's largest natural cheese packager, Great Lakes Cheese serves grocery, club, and super stores, as well as restaurant chains and foodservice distributors. The company has a national footprint with facilities in Ohio, New York, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, and one under construction in Texas. Family- and employee-owned, Great Lakes Cheese celebrated its 60th year of business in 2018.

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