

# Byrne Dairy to invest \$25 million in Cortlandville plant

BY JOURNAL STAFF

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CORTLANDVILLE — Byrne Dairy, Inc. announced on Nov. 9 that it is making another major investment in its dairy-processing facility in Cortlandville.

Originally built in 2014, Byrne says it will invest \$25 million to retool the facility to produce extended shelf life and shelf-stable dairy products. It will install new

processing and filling-equipment lines and expand the building footprint.

The 88-year-old family-owned business will start expansion of the facility in January. Work is expected to wrap up in October.

"We're excited by the growth in our extended shelf life and aseptic platforms,"

**BYRNE DAIRY**

Since 1933

Carl Byrne, president and CEO of Byrne Dairy, said in a release. "This investment in our Cortlandville facility will have an instant positive impact on our

ability to serve these markets."

Byrne currently employs 80 people at the Cortlandville plant. The company will reduce its Cortlandville workforce during

construction and installation of the new filling lines. The project is expected to create 50 construction and installation jobs during the retooling process. Byrne Dairy is expected to employ more than 80 people as production fully resumes in late 2022.

Byrne Dairy employs about 600 people in its Central New York dairy plants and warehouses. The Byrne Dairy and Deli convenience stores employ about 1,300 people throughout Central New York. ■

## N.Y. Employers Now Must Provide Notice of Electronic Monitoring

**O**n Nov. 8, 2021, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul signed a bill amending New York's Civil Rights Law by adding a new section that requires employers to give prior written notice of any electronic monitoring to employees upon hire. The law takes effect on May 7, 2022. The law applies to all private-sector employers in New York, regardless of the size of the employer.

The law requires notice for any employer who monitors or intercepts telephone

conversations/transmissions, emails, or internet access or usage. The law necessitates the notice to be given in writing, in an electronic record, or in another electronic form. Further, employers must receive a written or electronic acknowledgement from employees of receipt of the notice. Employers must also post the notice in a conspicuous place so that employees who are subject to electronic monitoring can readily review the notice.

The law does not apply to processes that are designed to manage the type or volume of email, voicemail, or internet usage; that are not targeted to monitor or intercept employee communications; and that are performed solely for the purpose of system maintenance and/or protection.

Regarding the content of the notice, the law provides as follows:

For purposes of written notice . . . an employee shall be advised that any and all telephone conversations or transmissions, electronic mail or transmissions, or internet access or usage by an employee by any electronic device or system, including but not limited to the use of a computer, telephone, wire, radio or electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical systems may be subject to monitoring at any and all times and by any lawful means.

The law does not provide for a private right of action. The New York State attorney general is responsible for enforcement of the law. Employers found to be in violation of the law may be subject to a

maximum civil penalty of \$500 for the first offense, \$1,000 for the second offense, and \$3,000 for the third and each subsequent offense.

Employers should determine if any new hires will be subject to the notice provisions of this law and determine the manner in which they will provide such notice.

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## A Unicorn, an Acquisition, & Millions in Investments

These are worth celebrating in CNY's startup ecosystem

**O**ver the past few weeks, several significant announcements have placed a spotlight on the strength of our innovation ecosystem, serving as categorical proof that Central New York is a place where tech companies and startups can grow and thrive.

Among the most exceptional, CenterState CEO member and Tech Garden anchor tenant Density announced a \$125 million capital raise led by Kleiner Perkins (<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/density-secur...>). This investment brings

the startup's valuation to \$1.05 billion, officially making it the first "unicorn" — a privately held startup company valued at more than \$1 billion — to come out of the Tech Garden. With just over 900 "unicorns" worldwide, and fewer than 450 in the U.S., this is truly a remarkable accomplishment.

Density's people-counting, AI-powered sensors, manufactured within the Tech Garden's hardware center, anonymously measure how people use space, allowing customers to build better workplace experiences. In addition to this Series D raise, the company also announced it acquired HelixRE, a technology that creates a digital representation of buildings to streamline data collection. Since March 2020, Density has experienced more than 500-percent growth, and expanded its employee base by 300 percent since the start of 2021, with plans to double its headcount in the next year.

Just down the road from the Tech Garden, TCGplayer is also experiencing explosive growth, expanding its workforce by more than 81 percent in the past year — creating hundreds of jobs in downtown

Syracuse and adding nearly 100,000 square feet of office space. The company, which is the leading technology platform for the collectibles industry and operator of the largest online marketplace for trading card games, announced earlier this month that it has acquired Roca Robotics Inc. (<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/tcg-player-acquires-roca-robotics-301416101.html>). [That Colorado-based company] has produced the world's leading robotic card-sorting machine for the trading-card market. The acquisition will allow the company to better support its customers and clients, and continue its significant growth.

Our GENIUS NY teams have also announced recent investments. Over five rounds, 26 unmanned-systems startups have used \$15 million invested to date to leverage more than \$75 million in follow-on funding, and have contributed to more than 70 new jobs in upstate New York.

Anyone who has watched the evolution of this innovation ecosystem over the past two decades knows how truly incredible these benchmarks are. It speaks to the positive trajectory of a region that once lagged so

many of its peers in resources, investment opportunities, public and private-sector support, and the collaborative partnerships needed for startups and entrepreneurs to excel. Today, the speed of growth for these young firms is accelerating. They are job drivers, contributors to the vibrancy of our community, and integral to the vitality of our 21st century regional economy. As we celebrate these companies and their milestones, we remain committed to supporting the environment that will ensure similar success for others within this ecosystem.

Please join me in congratulating these companies on their progress and success. To learn how you can mentor and support companies in our innovation ecosystem, please contact Jeff Fuchsberg, CenterState CEO's VP of innovation and entrepreneurship, at [JFuchsberg@thetechgarden.com](mailto:JFuchsberg@thetechgarden.com). ■

*Robert M. Simpson is president and CEO of CenterState CEO, the primary economic-development organization for Central New York. This article is drawn and edited from the "CEO Focus" email newsletter that the organization sent to members on Nov. 18.*

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