

Pipeline plan cut back

Section canceled over lack of market interest

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CORTLAND — Millennium Pipeline's plan to build an extension pipeline through Cortland County will likely be revised to stop short of Onondaga County, given lack of market interest, according to the company.

Millennium spokesman Steve Sullivan said the company did not receive interest from companies in Syracuse to extend the pipeline there, but the company is still evaluating the southern part of the proposed route in Cortland County.

"We are still looking at the area in Cortland County," Sullivan said Tuesday.

Millennium Pipeline stretches 200 miles from west to east from Corning to Rockland County. The company had planned to build a 60-mile extension from Union in Broome County to the town of Onondaga in Onondaga County. It would connect to the Dominion Pipeline in Cortland and the Tennessee Gas Pipeline 2000 in Onondaga, but it is unclear where the revised route would go.

The company held an "open season" earlier this year to gauge interest from companies looking to contract out for the ability to move gas through the line.

"And based on that initial response there was not sufficient demand to move forward with the development all the way to Syracuse, so we are still evaluating the southern part of that line," Sullivan said.

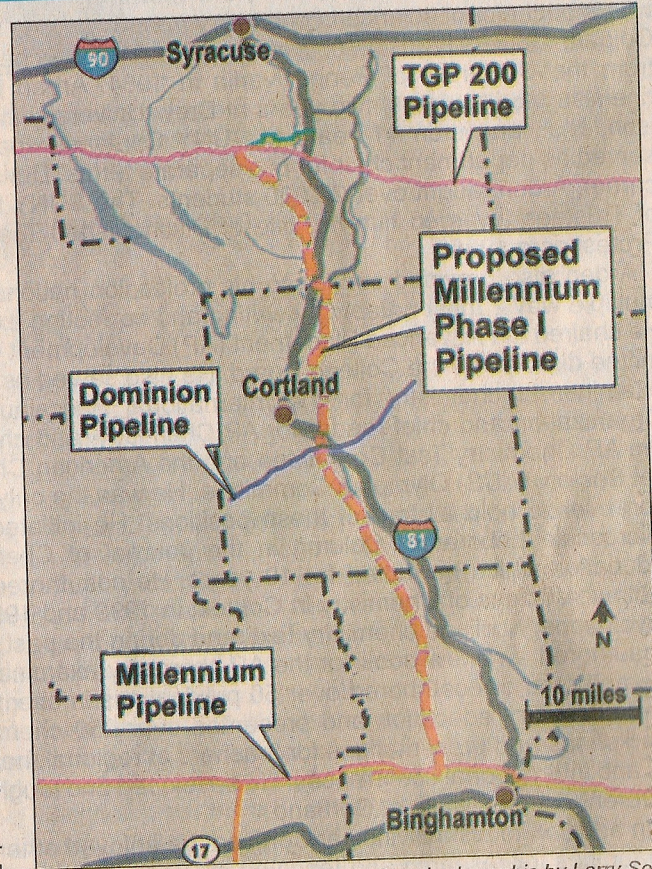
Preble attorney Joe Heath, a member of the anti-gas drilling group Gas Drilling Awareness of Cortland County, has been concerned about the plans to run a pipeline through Cortland County since the beginning.

He said there is the potential for explosions, shifting soils that could create disturbances to the pipe and the dangers to the unique kettle lakes and other natural formations.

The pipeline is proposed to go through Preble, Homer, Cortlandville, Virgil and Lapeer in Cortland County, and Heath says that the line would cross through unstable and constantly shifting soils and be near environmentally sensitive areas that should not be disrupted.

But Sullivan says incidents of pipeline explosions are very rare and that the company would work closely to alleviate concerns about accidents.

He says an important aspect of the plan is the potential for economic development since the



Cortland Standard graphic by Larry Seil

This graphic shows the new Millennium Pipeline as it was proposed in September. A Millennium spokesman said Tuesday the line will now likely stop short of Onondaga County, and the Cortland County section is still under evaluation.

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pipeline will be providing local companies the opportunity to hook into the line and use natural gas, an inexpensive form of cleaner energy.

“When you have inexpensive energy costs, that attracts business,” Sullivan said. He said the use of natural gas is also having a positive impact on the air in the Northeast as natural gas is increasingly used in favor of oil or coal.

“And whenever a conversion takes place, you are reducing emissions dramatically,” he said.