



# The Littleton Weekly Record

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

**NORTH COUNTRY**  
Fire, EMS Mutual  
Aid Districts  
Undergo Revisions

**FREE**



## Schools Become Nationally Certified As Bicycle Friendly

- ◆ Parking Dispute Stalls \$3M Whitefield Library Expansion
- ◆ Bethlehem Faces Renewed Debate Over Landfill Expansion
- ◆ School Board Repeals Transgender Protections Policy



# Fire, EMS Mutual Aid Districts Undergo Revisions

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
Staff Writer

Three mutual aid districts in the North Country are being revised as they take shape and train personnel.

Developing are a swift-water rescue team, which will be used for not only northern rivers but major flood events; an incident management team, consisting of senior fire chiefs leading long-running major incidents; and a hazardous materials mutual aid team, which is ready to be deployed for such incidents as crashes involving significant oil and other spills.

"The swift-water team is still in the process of training personnel and getting organized," Sugar Hill Fire Chief Allan Clark, who has served as president of the Twin State Fire Mutual Aid Association and has been involved in fire/Emergency Medical Services regionalization efforts, said Friday.

There are currently two

swift-water teams in the area, one based at Littleton Fire and Rescue and the other in Bath.

Once a dozen or so team members are trained, the plan is to merge the two, he said.

"But right now, they're both in the process of being developed," said Clark. "It is moving forward, but it hasn't been finalized in a format yet. But the personnel and equipment are available at both locations."

The HAZMAT team was originally going to include both the Twin State Fire Mutual Aid Association and NORPAC, the mutual aid association that serves towns in Coos County, said Clark.

But the NORPAC departments didn't have a strong interest in joining, so now it will be a function of Twin State and be based in Littleton, he said.

"That is essentially up and running," said Clark. "There's an agreement between the town of Littleton and Twin State that's in draft form, but that will finalize that team."

The HAZMAT team is predominantly comprised of Littleton firefighters, but also includes firefighters from other departments.

Vermont towns have a statewide HAZMAT team and won't be paying HAZMAT dues through Twin State.

The draft agreement, when finalized likely next week, will in essence have the other Twin State towns contribute to the financial cost of the HAZMAT, said Clark.

"The equipment is all there," he said. "Training is ongoing. Under the grant that bought most of the equipment, Littleton needed to be the grantee partly because Twin State at that time had a Vermont address."

As for the third mutual aid district, although the initial plan had been to develop a formal incident management team, the shift now is to have an informal team.

"We had done some preliminary work on that, but the interest among the departments was

lacking," said Clark.

The informal team will do two things, one of which is providing the leadership during major incidents when several fire chiefs will serve.

"But we're also in the process of updating all of our run cards — they're called cards, but they're all on computer now — to make certain that once you start going into a first, second, or third alarm, you have adequate chief officers to help manage the incident under the direction of wherever the host departments. Not to take over management, but to provide additional manpower, because every department is short manpower. They would serve as logistics or safety officers or aid to the incident commander. The thought was that would be a much more formal team, but now it's more of an informal team, but the same services will still be available."

In Grafton County, fire/EMS regionalization is being explored, but Clark doubts the recommendation will be a

countywide model, which he said wouldn't work.

Currently, Littleton Fire Rescue provides EMS to three towns, Franconia, Easton and Sugar Hill, through contracts in which the towns pay Littleton for EMS.

Today, the expansion of services anywhere is dependent on personnel, and many towns continue to face shortages, said Clark.

"Staffing is a huge issue that we continue to watch," he said. "That's one of the reasons we're changing our run cards. If you go to first alarm mutual aid, you're going to get five different departments. The hope is that you're going to get adequate manpower."

Recent trainings have focused less on the equipment needed at an incident and more on personnel.

"It's the manpower," said Clark. "So instead of Lisbon asking for two of my engines, they're going to get one and they will go to Franconia for the sec-

ond one, with the goal being my engine is coming with four people on it, which I can always do, but if you ask for my second engine, I'm probably not going to get four interior firefighters into that truck. By reorganizing our whole dispatch process, we're reaching out to more towns. We want them to come with manpower, not just the apparatus."

As summer winds down, Clark also noted what has been a seasonal anomaly.

"Interestingly, mountain rescues are somewhat down, at least in our area, because of the lack of rain," he said. "The drought conditions are having an effect because [hikers] are not slipping on those slippery rocks and ledges. We had a rainstorm a month ago that came through, and the same day that the rain came through, about an hour or two later, we had two rescues."

Outside of that, mountain rescue crews haven't been quite as busy as they had been, even though there have been just as many hikers, he said.

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## OBITUARIES

## DAVID COOLEY



After a period of declining health, David Franklin Cooley died peacefully at his residence, The Summit, in Whitefield, N.H. on Aug. 20, 2025; he was 100 years old.

David was born Nov. 12, 1924, in Springfield, Mass. David was the oldest and only remaining child of Don and Florence (Mason) Cooley; he was predeceased by his three brothers, Chandler, Arnold, and John.

In his early years, David's family moved to Sharon, Vt. and then Royalton, Vt. where David graduated high school in 1943. As a youth David played and then worked on his grandfather's farm in Sharon; in high school he worked for farmer Frank Brown and at Tracy's Garage in Sharon.

In 1944 David was drafted into the U.S. Navy and worked as a photographer's assistant on the Cruiser USS Los Angeles in the Pacific. Upon discharge from the Navy, David began a career with New England Telephone (later Nynex) and worked as a telephone installer and repairman in Burlington, Vt. It was in Burlington that he met his wife, Lois Jane Jenkin; the couple married on June 3, 1950, and celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary this year. David and Lois raised five children, David, Carol, John, Sarah and Elizabeth. Sarah predeceased her father in 2008.

David remained with Nynex for 38 years until he retired as a Network Manager in 1984. Never one to be idle, in retirement David volunteered at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and installed LifeLines around the Upper Valley. Additionally, he was active with the Telephone Pioneers and served as the VT chapter President for several years.



David and Lois lived in six homes over the years and at each residence David had flourishing flowers and vegetable gardens. David was a keen photographer and had pictures published in Vermont Life and Yankee magazines. David also had an impressive wood shop and made countless bookcases and other pieces of furniture, picture frames, wooden puzzles and toys over decades; he especially enjoyed teaching wood-working skills to his grandchildren.

David loved to tell stories about his family's life and self-published a book recounting his grandfather's life on Beaver Meadow Road in Sharon in the early 20th century.

David was a man of deep faith and was an active member and leader in churches wherever he lived, including Baptist churches in Brattleboro and Burlington, Vt., and Whitefield, N.H.; United Methodist Church in White River Junction, Vt.; and West Lebanon Congregational Church.

David's surviving family members include his wife, Lois, children: David (Nancy), Carol Peters, John (Sue) and Elizabeth Cooley (Stephen Buzzell). David was devoted to his 11 grandchildren: Timothy, Kristi, Andrew, Daniel, and Joshua (D. Cooley); John (Peters); Alec, Mei, and Jamilla (Buzzell); Thomas and Laura (J. Cooley) and seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial service is planned for Saturday, October 11, 2025, at 11 a.m., at the Whitefield, N.H. Community Baptist Church, with a reception to follow.

To view David's Online Tribute, send condolences to the family, or for more information, visit [www.phaneuf.net](http://www.phaneuf.net).

## JACQUELINE MAHER



Jacqueline Hamilton Maher, 87, of Whitefield, New Hampshire, passed away on Monday, Sept. 15, 2025. Jackie was born to William & Anne (Carty) Hamilton on Oct. 13, 1937 in Port Gamble, Washington in a logging mill on an Indian Reservation. The doctor came by canoe to attend to the birth.

Jackie grew up in Newport, R.I. and moved to Baltimore, Md. as a young teenager. She attended Hamilton Elementary in Newport, R.I. and graduated in 1955 from Eastern High School in Baltimore, Md. Jackie enjoyed going to Gooseberry Beach in Newport as a child and loved sharing her favorite childhood memory of accompanying her grandfather who was the gardener at Belcourt Castle on Bellevue Avenue in Newport. After High School, Jackie went on to earn degrees from Baltimore Junior College, Massasiot Community College, and Bentley College. Additionally, she studied at John Hopkins University & Bridgewater State College.

After a long battle with Alzheimer's Disease, Jackie passed peacefully, surrounded by her family. Jackie spent her final years living at The Summit. The Summit is a facility filled with loving, compassionate health care workers who are all masters of their craft: Helping those living with Alzheimer's live a full and happy life filled with activities, companionship, and love. Our family is forever indebted to everyone at The Summit as they are all truly in the right profession!

Her children remember a dedicated and loving mother who encouraged reading, continuous learning, and independence. Jackie was a fiercely independent woman who knew how to stretch a dollar and passed on the finer points of home economics to her children. These qualities she showed by example-raising six children while working as a waitress and attending college to further her degree. Jackie loved to travel and has been all over the world as part of a dance troupe. She shared her love of travel with both her children and grandchildren. One memorable trip is when she took the Amtrak Sunset Limited across the country with her son Martin. Other memories include summer trips driving for hours from Brockton to Baltimore and Grand Manan Island in Canada in their 1969 Dodge Polara with vinyl seats and no air conditioning, going into downtown Boston via train to shop at Filene's Basement or to see Santa Claus at Jordan Marsh, deciding on a moment's notice to take her girls on an Amtrak train to New York City to shop, and flying to the British Isles with her granddaughter Bridgette to research her Irish and English roots.

Prior to retiring, Jackie worked as Department Head of Information Systems at Brockton (Mass.) Hospital. During her time, she helped build the first Meditech electronic medical record system in the country. In years prior, she notably worked at Johns Hopkins University, Ballistic Analysis Laboratories Project THOR analyzing data from experiments at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Jackie had an esteemed career, and was one of only 10 professional women in the country who won a national contest through Clairol Loving Care, honoring women executives. Prize package included a monetary award, a four-

day all-expense paid trip to New York City, and conferences with nationally known women executives as keynote speakers.

Jackie loved toe dancing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and dancing. She also enjoyed gardening & horticulture, where she won a blue ribbon in the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's Flower and Garden show which hosted thousands of entries. As an avid reader, Jackie read thousands of books over her lifetime. Jackie was

passionate about sewing and passed these skills on to her daughter Kate who is a professional seamstress. Jackie had a deep passion for genealogy and dedicated many years to researching her family's heritage. Her commitment took her across the Atlantic to England where she explored archives and found that her great-grandfather, Alexander James Hamilton, worked for Queen Victoria and her grandfather, James Alexander Hamilton, rose to the rank of Captain in the English Army while fighting against Napoleon.

Jackie was preceded in passing by her husband of 41 years, the late Charles Maher. As a devoted mother, she leaves behind six children: Martin and his long-time partner Cedric of San Francisco, Calif.; Dennis and his wife Cindy of Upton, Mass.; Thomas of Lancaster, N.H.; Christine Gangi and her husband Charles of Somerville, Mass.; Kate Balch and her husband Randy of Gilman, Vt.; and Robert and his wife Katya of Somerville, Mass. She was also a proud grandmother of 12 and is survived by: Christi, Matthew, Brian, Bridgette, Kaylin, Emily, Anastasia, Caroline, Max, Natasha, Peter, and Fiona. Jackie was an adoring great-grandmother of Evan and was patiently awaiting the birth of her second great-grandchild, Addy. She also leaves behind her loving sister Nancy, beloved brother William and his wife Jeannine as well as brother-in-law Edward Maher Jr. and his wife Judy of Marblehead, Ohio and sister-in-law Donna Maher of Stratham, N.H. Jackie is reunited in eternal peace with her parents Anne (Carty) Hamilton and William Charles Hamilton of Newport, Rhode Island; brothers Robert Hamilton of Port Gamble, Wash., Steven Hamilton of Baltimore, Md., and Jimmy Hamilton of Baltimore, Md.; and brother-in-law Roy of Baltimore, Md. as well as brother-in-law Philip Maher of Stratham, N.H.; and mother-in-law Mary Maher of Stratham, N.H. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins, and countless friends.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated in All Saints Church, 161 Main St., Lancaster, N.H., on Monday, Sept. 22, at 11 a.m. Relatives and friends are invited to share their memories and stories about Jackie on Sunday, Sept. 21, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Bailey Funeral Home, 210 Main St., Lancaster, N.H. Family and friends are welcome to a Celebration of Life which will be held on Sunday, Sept. 28 from 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at The Chateau Restaurant located at 1165 Park St., Stoughton, Mass. Since Jackie was an enthusiastic horticulturalist, flowers are encouraged. Another option for remembrances may be made in Jackie's memory to the Alzheimer's Association or The Summit by Morrison, 56 Summit Dr., Whitefield, NH 03574

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## NEWS BRIEFS

## Parking Dispute Stalls \$3M Whitefield Library Expansion

WHITEFIELD — A \$3 million expansion of the Whitefield Public Library has been delayed after state officials ruled the project cannot use a long-standing driveway entrance on Route 116.

At Monday's Select Board meeting, New Hampshire Department of Transportation representatives said the library lacks sufficient frontage on Route 116 because most of the property line falls within a state-owned rail corridor. Interim district manager Alan Hanscom said the library's frontage is too narrow to support a new driveway.

The library had hoped to reuse a century-old curb cut that once served the former town hall. It was used by municipal offices and emergency vehicles until the building was demolished in 2013, and nearby apartment residents still park there. But DOT withdrew support for that entrance in August, citing its proximity to the rail line, where Vermont Rail System plans to restore freight service.

Library director Courtney Vashaw said engineers had previously been told the Route 116 access would not be an issue. "Then that changed somewhere in the middle of last week," she said.

Alternative access points must now be considered from Route 3 or Jefferson Road. Options include a new curb cut, reconfiguring the existing entrance, or negotiating with St. Matthew's Church for rear access. All would involve safety, design, or property hurdles.

The expansion, funded entirely through federal grants and private donations, would renovate the 119-year-old building to improve energy efficiency, accessibility, and code compliance. Plans include a two-story, 4,100-square-foot addition with a community room, maker spaces, and small-business support areas.

The project has been in development since 2018 and was designed with the expectation that the adjacent rail corridor would become part of the Twin State Rail Trail. Vermont Rail System's 2024 decision to reactivate the 21-mile Twin State Railroad has complicated those plans.

## Bethlehem Faces Renewed Debate Over Landfill Expansion, Local Control

BETHLEHEM — With the North Country Environmental Services landfill nearing closure in 2026, residents and officials are again grappling with the question of expansion and the possibility of losing local authority over landfill decisions.

On Monday, former Selectman Richard Ubaldo urged the Select Board to consider another town-wide vote on expansion. Ubaldo argued the community risks losing revenue from Casella Waste Systems, which owns the landfill, including roughly \$143,000 in 2024 host payments, along with property tax income. He warned of

higher disposal and transportation costs if Bethlehem must operate its own transfer station after closure.

Bethlehem's landfill, acquired by Casella in the mid-1990s, has grown through multiple expansions, often amid lawsuits. A 2012 settlement allowed a 10-acre addition in exchange for free trash and recycling services and a ban on further land purchases for expansion. Casella nonetheless purchased 123 acres in 2015 and later proposed a 100-acre expansion, which voters rejected in 2017 and 2018.

Resident Rich Southwell pushed back on Ubaldo's figures, noting that payments from Casella are not tipping fees but compensation for land use. Casella recently mailed residents a fact sheet asserting that 87 percent of waste disposed at the site in 2024 came from New Hampshire, though state data show out-of-state waste historically accounted for 30 to 40 percent.

Meanwhile, town leaders are bracing for renewed legislative efforts to remove local authority over landfill expansions. A budget amendment introduced in June by Sen. Howard Pearl, R-Loudon, would have shifted control to the state and voided municipal agreements. Though it was defeated, Select Board Chair Nancy Strand said lawmakers may revisit the issue and urged the board to restate its opposition.

The landfill is projected to reach capacity and close after 2026.

## School Board Repeals Transgender Protections Policy

WHITEFIELD — The White Mountains Regional School Board voted 5-2 on Sept. 18 to repeal its policy outlining protections for transgender and gender nonconforming students.

Policy JBAB, adopted in 2021, addressed the use of names and pronouns, access to facilities, and other support measures. Attorney Barbara Loughman advised repeal, citing a new state law limiting diversity, equity and inclusion policies. Although enforcement of that law is on hold pending a federal court challenge, Loughman recommended rescinding JBAB and its related guidance document.

Board Chair Bob Loiacono of Whitefield and member Kristen Van Bergen Buteau of Lancaster opposed the repeal, saying the district should wait for the lawsuit's outcome. "It feels like we're leaving a gap," Van Bergen Buteau said, noting the absence of a replacement plan.

Students and staff remain covered by the district's general anti-discrimination policy, but Loughman cautioned against expanding it with transgender-specific language. Instead, administrators are drafting new building-level procedures.

The board had delayed a vote in July to seek legal advice. Earlier this year, it revised JBAB to bar transgender girls from competing in girls' sports to comply with a 2024 state law and evolving Title IX rules. Officials said the change aimed to avoid the risk of losing federal funds, which account for about 5 percent of the district's budget, and to maintain eligibility under New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association standards.

Loiacono warned that aligning with the state law while litigation continues could erode protections beyond transgender students.

"They're coming for transgender [students] now, but they're going to come for everybody else as we go along," he said.

## Littleton Approves \$90K for Remich Park Drainage Fix

LITTLETON — After years of flooding and mud, drainage improvements are finally coming to Remich Park.

On Monday, the Select Board voted 5-0 to accept \$90,988.60 in grant funds that will be directed toward underdrainage and grounds repairs at the town-owned recreation area, which has been in use since 1902. The money stems from the closeout of a New Hampshire Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant awarded more than seven years ago.

Town Manager Troy Brown said the funds were secured by documenting prior spending, volunteer hours, and non-cash contributions as matching funds. "We want to keep the money at Remich Park," he told the board.

Most of the funds will go toward drainage projects, including work behind the green building, which is slated for demolition in 2026, and the area from the baseball backstop toward Oak Hill Avenue. Additional work may be possible if the ground remains unfrozen long enough for fall construction.

"It's long overdue," said Selectman Ed Hennessey. Board member Kerri Harrington added that last year's heavy storms worsened the problems. Brown said specialized contractors will handle the work to ensure proper grading and tie-ins to the stormwater system.

The board also voted unanimously to close out two InvestNH demolition grants. In 2023, Littleton received \$120,000 for approving a 12-unit housing project on Bronson Street. In 2024, it secured \$442,670 for demolition work at the Rail Trail Village apartments.

A third InvestNH grant, \$175,000 to demolish the Remich Park green building, has been extended. The structure will continue to serve ice rink operations through one more winter before demolition in 2026.

## Balsams Developers Seek C-PACER Financing Option

DIXVILLE NOTCH — Developers of The Balsams Grand Resort are exploring a new financing tool that could require Coös County Commission approval within months.

County Administrator Mark Brady told commissioners Sept. 10 that the development team, through Clean Energy NH, requested information on the state's Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACER) program. The program, overseen by the New Hampshire Business Finance Authority, allows private lenders to finance up to 35 percent of a project's costs for energy efficiency, resiliency, and related improvements.

To participate, the county must vote to establish a C-PACER district. Loans stay with the property rather than the owner, and advocates say municipalities face no financial risk. Commissioner Ray Gorman of Colebrook said he is optimistic. "We'll do our due

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50-50  
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ANTIQUE  
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BREAKFAST  
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| SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 |                                                                          | SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 |                                                                         |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30-12 Noon           | Registration & Parade Formation at Varney-Smith Field, 807 Meadow Street | 8:00-10:00 AM        | Lion's Pancake Breakfast<br>Varney-Smith Field, 807 Meadow Street       |
| 10-3 PM                | Littleton Arts Festival - Main Street                                    | 8:30-11:30 AM        | Late Registrations                                                      |
| 12:30 PM               | Parade Departing Varney - Smith Field                                    | 9:00 AM-2:30 PM      | Show & Spectator Viewing<br>(Admission: \$3 by donation, Under 12 Free) |
| 1:30 PM                | Parade Through Main Street, Littleton                                    | 11:30 AM-12:45 PM    | Judging                                                                 |
| 2:45 PM                | 40-mile Scenic Tour                                                      | 2:30 PM              | Award Presentations                                                     |
| 9:30 AM-2:45 PM        | Food Concession                                                          | 8:00 AM-3:00 PM      | Food Concession and Show                                                |

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## NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from Page 6

diligence,” he said. “We’ll certainly work with Les to get it done, like everything in the past.”

Lead developer Les Otten has proposed a more than \$300 million first phase to revive the resort, which closed in 2011. Plans include a 400-room Lake Gloriette House hotel and convention center, quadrupling the Wilderness Ski Area to 2,220 acres with a gondola and ski-back bridge, a revitalized golf course, retail and dining, shared-ownership condominiums, and a Planned Unit Development of nearly 5,000 lodging or residential units.

Otten has said the project will employ hundreds of construction workers and create over 1,000 permanent jobs. In January, the county planning board extended prior project approvals through 2030.

The county commission could consider establishing a C-PACER

district as early as its October meeting.

## WREN, Coös EDC Receive \$200K for Small Business Aid

BETHLEHEM — Two North Country nonprofits will share more than \$200,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to help small business owners access training, counseling, and equipment.

The Women’s Rural Entrepreneurial Network (WREN) in Bethlehem was awarded \$161,865 to support 19 qualifying micro-enterprises. The funds will provide workshops, classes, and one-on-one technical assistance aimed at helping entrepreneurs expand their skills and grow their businesses. WREN will also coordinate with other micro-program partners where service areas overlap.

The Coös Economic Development Corp. (CEDC) in Lancaster received \$60,060 to serve 10 micro-enterprises through in-depth counseling and mentoring. The money will also be used for loan qualification support, direct grants for equipment, and down payment assistance for business-related property.

“Regarding access to support for local businesses, both WREN and Coös EDC are accepting new clients as part of the Community Development Block Grant Micro-enterprise Program,” said Melissa Latham, spokesperson for the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority, which oversees the grants. “This grant funding provides ... a wide range of free training and business coaching to local small businesses and start-ups with fewer than five

employees.”

Under the program, micro-enterprises with five or fewer employees and low- to moderate-income households may qualify for up to \$2,500 annually in services for up to three years. One-time direct grants of up to \$5,000 are also available for equipment or supplies.

The awards are part of nearly \$2 million in statewide CDBG micro-enterprise funding.

## NH Leaders Tout Cross-Border Business Ties on Canada Trip

LITTLETON — Despite political tensions and trade disputes, New Hampshire officials say business relations with Canada remain strong, with new opportunities emerging for the North Country.

District 1 Executive Councilor Joe Kenney, whose district includes Coös County and shares 58 miles of border with Quebec, recently joined state trade delegations to Nova Scotia and Quebec. He said Canadian companies continue to show interest in New Hampshire.

In Quebec, Kenney toured the Prevost bus plant in St. Claire, which employs more than 1,200 workers and supplies vehicles for Concord Coach Lines and Dartmouth Coach. He also reported discussions with a company considering expanding into Berlin.

“They export a lot to our state,” Kenney said. “There are many opportunities on both sides of the border. We want to maintain that relationship and continue it.” He urged creating a permanent trade office in Quebec, similar to Vermont’s presence, to recruit Canadian businesses to New Hampshire.

Kenney noted Quebec’s proximity — Sherbrooke is just 90 minutes from Coös County — and said Canadian firms may be more willing than southern New Hampshire companies to invest in the North Country, given challenges such as energy costs and distance.

Gov. Kelly Ayotte, who led the trade mission, said the goal is to strengthen partnerships in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and logistics. “New Hampshire and Canada share a deep economic and cultural bond,” she said. “This trade mission was about turning that shared history into future opportunity.”

In 2024, New Hampshire businesses exported \$1.2 billion to Canada, underscoring the importance of the cross-border relationship.

See News, Page 10

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## NEWS BRIEFS

## Water Main Break Highlights Risks Of Aging Infrastructure

LANCASTER – Town crews quickly repaired an overnight water line break on Main Street early Monday.

The break was reported shortly before 1 a.m., and within an hour, crews located a three-inch leak near the Post Office.

“All hands were on deck with Lancaster’s Water and Highway Departments. Service was restored by 5 a.m. A 10-foot piece of ductile iron pipe was replaced,” Town Manager Jessica Cyr said.

Water service was temporarily affected, and traffic was reduced to one lane during repairs and cleanup.

“While it was a significant leak, service was restored quickly and the impact was minimized,” Cyr said.

The 10-inch cast-iron water main running through Lancaster's business district is approximately 125 years old.

In May 2024, workers spent nine and a half hours fixing a sewer line break on Main Street near Dunkin' Donuts. At the time, Selectman Shane Beattie called the incident a wake-up call, noting that the town's aging infrastructure will eventually require more extensive work or replacement.

“This is just another knock at the door saying ‘here I am, I’m not going to last forever,’” Beattie said.

In December, town officials [drafted a Water Asset Management Program](#) update, anticipating \$38 million in capital spending over the next decade for six projects. Main Street was not included in that plan.

To improve the department's finances and address deferred

maintenance, the Select Board in October 2024 raised the water rate from \$3.75 to \$6.50 per 1,000 gallons for the first million gallons. The rate for consumption exceeding 1 million gallons increased from \$0.30 to \$0.50 per 1,000 gallons.

The new rates took effect in April 2025, marking the first increase in consumption rates in 14 years. The Select Board plans to review the water department's financials in late 2025 or early 2026 to determine whether a second increase to \$8 per 1,000 gallons is necessary.

The board has noted that the water and sewer department has operated at a deficit for years due to insufficient rates, forcing it to tap reserve funds to meet expenses and making it difficult to maintain and replace aging infrastructure.

The water system has about 934 connections and 25 miles of distribution piping, serving a population of roughly 2,500 residents and businesses.

## Another Warrant Issued For Accused Police Cruiser-Ramming Fugitive

A new arrest warrant has been issued for a habitual offender accused of using her car to ram a New Hampshire State Police cruiser in 2024, and who remains on the lam after repeated failures to appear in court, subsequent arrests, and then releases.

On Monday, Abigail J. Ordway, 39, whose last known address was in Littleton, was scheduled to appear in Grafton Superior Court for an arraignment and bail hearing on a Class B felony count of methamphetamine possession.

In August, Ordway was indicted by a Grafton Superior Court

grand jury for the charge, which alleges she possessed the drug on March 23, the same day police were called to Littleton Regional Healthcare, where she was arrested.

Ordway was later released on bail with a requirement that she participate in the court's pre-trial services.

Soon, though, she failed to keep in contact with the services and disappeared, said authorities.

In September 2024, Ordway was indicted by a grand jury on Class B felony charges of reckless conduct with a deadly weapon, criminal mischief, driving after being certified a habitual offender, and possessing fentanyl.

She is also charged with Class A misdemeanor counts of aggravated driving under the influence (including an attempt to elude police), disobeying a police officer, and unlawful conduct after an accident.

On Aug. 21, 2024, NHSP responded to County Road in Haverhill to assist Haverhill police in finding the driver of a Hyundai Elantra who evaded a motor vehicle stop.

Responding was NHSP Trooper Jawara Conde, who observed the Hyundai approaching in the southbound lane.

Conde activated the cruiser's emergency lights in an attempt to stop the car, which police said continued to be being recklessly, moving in about of both lanes, and ultimately struck the police cruiser, causing several thousand dollars in damage.

The driver, soon identified as Ordway, then attempted to turn the car around and flee, but instead went off the road and the vehicle became lodged in a ditch.

In Bath, less than two weeks before, Ordway was arrested on a Class B felony count of driving after being certified a habitual offender, a misdemeanor count of driving after suspension, and on violations for misusing license plates and driving an uninspected and unregistered vehicle.

Failures to appear in court for those charges have also resulted in arrest warrants, as well as a warrant for failure to appear on an April 2024 felony drug charge and a March 2024 felony count of driving after being certified a habitual offender.

## Fallen Tree, Mischievous Critter To Blame For Internet Outages

NORTH COUNTRY, N.H. — A fallen tree and an animal chewing through a cable caused multiple internet outages over the weekend, according to Charter Communications.

"Over the weekend, we experienced two separate fiber service interruptions caused by environmental factors," a Charter spokesperson said. "The first occurred when a large tree came down in a remote wooded area off North and Meadow Roads in Gorham, N.H., damaging critical fiber lines. The second, in a different location on Sunday morning, was the result of an animal chewing through a fiber cable that delivers our service."

The outages, which began Saturday and continued into Sunday, left some businesses unable to process credit card transactions without an internet connection.

Charter apologized for the disruption and described the difficulty of making repairs in rural areas.

“Repairing fiber in rural areas is challenging. Crews must first pinpoint the exact damage, often in hard-to-reach locations, and then carefully splice and reconnect hundreds of individual fiber strands to restore service,” the spokesperson said. “Despite these obstacles, our teams were able to identify the exact sites of the damage and worked around the clock to complete repairs. Customers should have received proactive notifications when the outages occurred and updates as progress was made.”

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## Schools Become Nationally Certified As Bicycle Friendly

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
Staff Writer

In a regional first, two local schools have been certified bicycle-friendly by the League of American Bicyclists, a national designation that opens up grant opportunities to launch new programs, build on existing programming, and expand them into the greater community.

Two weeks ago, following a six-month application process, Littleton High School, which offers students a Project Bike Tech class, and Bethlehem's Profile High School, which offers a "Bik-ology" program teaching safety, mechanics and bicycle skills, received notice of certification.

Excluding the three towns of Littleton, Bethlehem, and Franconia that previously received the same bicycle-friendly certifications, the schools' designations now make 17 League-certified bicycle-friendly businesses and organizations in the three communities that comprise the nonprofit Tri-Town Bicycle, also known as Bike the North Country, which promotes bicycle safety, education, accessibility, and awareness.

"That's a concentration within New Hampshire that doesn't exist anywhere else," said Bruce Caplain, of Bethlehem, founder of Tri-Town Bicycle.

Statewide, outside of the North Country, there are eight other bicycle-friendly certifications.

The grant component is vital, he said. "Both schools do a lot of grant work for bikes, for the bike tech program at Littleton and the Bik-ology program at Profile, where they have a fleet of bikes and a class on bikes," said Caplain. "This will help fund those programs and help expand them as well. It also gives them national recognition, and I think that's good for the schools, it's good for the community, and it's good long term when people are looking for communities where they might want to live. Outdoor resources are the really big thing, and when you see that these schools are bike-friendly, it's going to be a real positive thing to help attract families and young people to the area."

The League bestowed a "silver" certification on the two schools, one that could be elevated to gold status in the future.

"If they get certified for four years, the

As Littleton High School and Profile School become nationally certified as bicycle-friendly schools, a recreational rail trail in Littleton, pictured here, is being resurfaced to give cyclists in the schools and the greater community a better riding experience. (Contributed photo)

League will then provide some feedback and say here's some things you can think about doing to increase your rating," said Caplain. "And then when they reapply in four years, if they can show improvement they get bumped up a level. But for the first time, silver's fantastic."

Both schools do a lot with their current programs, he said.

"In the bike tech, they get kids out in the field to volunteer," said Caplain. "They might do trail work, they might teach them how to build bridges. They'll do work for fleets of bikes at other schools for other communities. They'll get out and do a bike class, teach people bike mechanics or bike safety. They use these programs to get out there and do more with it."

Profile School, which has a fleet of 14 bicycles, does similar activities to engage its community on bicycle safety and skills, he said.

At LHS, Brent Detamore, who for the last two years has taught the Project Bike Tech class, currently has nine students coming from Littleton, Profile, Lin-Wood, and White Mountain Regional High Schools.

"This designation helps to promote our program and shows that we are supporting the local bike community," said Detamore. "The time we spend working on community bikes helps to bring grant money to the local trail associations. We maintain bikes for several groups and schools in our local area, and this allows for many learning opportunities for the students. Our future plans include working more with e-bikes and other emerging advancements in the

bike industry." Assisting Caplain with writing the application to the League of American Bicyclists was Josh Goyette, a senior at LHS who last year completed two years of Project Bike Tech.

Profile School principal Brandon Ray said the designation recognizes his school's bicycle-related endeavors.

"We're proud to have active students and staff who take advantage of the wonderful outdoor opportunities in our area for both recreation and healthy living," said Ray. "In addition to making use of local trails, we have quite a few Profile Patriots, both students and staff members, who have contributed to designing and building them. It's great that these efforts have been recognized. We also appreciate the efforts of Bruce Caplain in promoting this recognition, and for what he does in promoting bicycling in the area."

Meanwhile, in Littleton, the 4.5-mile ledgepack surfacing project began along the Ammonoosuc Recreational Rail Trail, beginning from Industrial Park Road in Littleton and extending northward to Oxbow Drive at the Bethlehem town line, is finishing up.

As of Wednesday, the surfacing project team, Romik Developers, of Berlin, had completed more than two miles and is accomplishing about a half-mile of surfacing per day.

There have been more than 200 truckloads of ledgepack surface material delivered, said Marianne Borowski, founder of the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail, which uses the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail as part of its total trail network through the Granite State.

Caplain and Bike the North Country have also painted crosswalks along the streets that intersect bicycle trails in Littleton and other tri-town communities.

"It's all coming together," said Caplain. For those seeking to borrow bicycles and accessories at no charge, Bike the North Country has a gear library in Bethlehem at the elementary school, a new gear library in Littleton on property owned by the Little Grille that is across Cottage Street from the restaurant and beside the rail trail, and a new library opening in Franconia.

Fat-tire bikes, which enthusiasts ride when the snow flies, will also be part of the libraries.

## ON THE COVER

Along with Profile School, Littleton High School has been certified a bicycle friendly school by the League of American Bicyclists. Here, in June, members of Littleton High School's Project Bike Tech class rebuild a 60-foot-long bridge at PRKR MTN trails in Littleton. (Courtesy Photo)

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