

BNNY Business

A Watertown Daily Times/
Malone Telegram production

Daily updates: NNY360.com July 2026

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NNY Business honors 20 Under 40 class for professional, community achievements



The NNY Business 20 Under 40 Class of 2026 after receiving awards at the Paddock Arcade on June 2. Alec Johnson/Watertown Daily Times

Times staff report

WATERTOWN — Time was taken from many busy schedules Tuesday evening to recognize young professionals who are making their mark on the north country — and will continue to do so for years to come.

NNY Business magazine ac-

knowledged its annual “20 Under 40” recipients during a gathering at the historic Paddock Arcade. The 2026 class was cited not just for professional achievements, but for things such as volunteer activities in their communities that help better those communities overall.

Honorees included doctors, educators, accountants, entrepreneurs, restaurant owners, chiropractors, real estate professionals, small business owners, nutritionists, social service professionals, municipal leaders, bankers, engineers, development specialists and many

others.

“NNY Business has hosted this awards program for well over a decade,” Alec Johnson, president of Johnson Newspaper Corp. and editor and publisher of the Watertown Daily

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*Professional Connection
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Watertown celebrates opening of new downtown building

By Craig Fox
cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — Now in a wheelchair, Dan Green could not return to his second-floor apartment of 25 years after being discharged from a three-week hospital stay earlier this spring. He was headed for a hotel until a staffer from THRIVE Wellness and Recovery pulled a few strings and he was able to move immediately into an apartment in the new 63-unit affordable housing facility at Main Avenue and Mill Street.

He's been in his new apartment since Tax Day, April 15.

"I absolutely feel like this is home," he said.

On a sunny spring afternoon, more than 80 people gathered June 3 outside the Main and Mill Apartments affordable housing building for a ribbon-cutting that culminated a five-year effort to get it built.

City, county and state officials and community leaders joined staff members from THRIVE and Neighbors of Watertown Inc., the partners that worked through the funding and construction process that began in 2021. Neighbors of Watertown — which has preserved several old buildings and renovated hundreds of apartments over the years — is not normally involved in creating new structures, said Neighbors' Executive Director Reginald Schweitzer. Neighbors took on the roughly \$20 million project to help address a growing homeless problem in Watertown.

Located at 160 Main Ave., the block-long building is split between 31 units for people who are unhoused and 32 apartments for low-income residents.

Maureen Cean, THRIVE's chief operating officer, recalled when the community was first becoming aware of the homeless issue: a local motel used for temporary housing burned down and an apartment build-



The Apartments at Mill and Main in Watertown, a collaboration between Neighbors of Watertown and Thrive opened officially on June 3. Alec Johnson/ Watertown Daily Times

ing at 661 Factory St. was abruptly condemned, worsening the situation.

"So it's a major milestone for the community to provide the first permanent housing facility for the homeless," she said. "I'm hoping an annual 10% growth is a thing of the past."

Of the 31 units for people who are unhoused, 16 will serve those with mental health issues and 15 will serve those with substance use disorders. Between 40% and 60% of people experiencing homelessness fall into those categories.

THRIVE is providing assistance with being a good tenant, getting medical and behavioral

care, obtaining employment and educational opportunities, and accessing social services. Services will help residents move into the building and prevent them from returning to the street; residents could begin in the homeless units, move to other apartments in the building and, over time, find other housing in the community.

People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or have mental health or substance use issues are eligible to live there. Four THRIVE staff members will be on site daily. All units are one-bedroom apartments. The other 32 units require tenants to meet income-level criteria.

RuthAnn Visauskas, commissioner and CEO of the state's Homes and Community Renewal, credited Gov. Kathy Hochul for launching a massive housing program five years ago to create 100,000 units across the state; 80,000 have been generated so far. She called the new building "a symbol" for people who needed housing and can now call Main and Mill their home.

So far, 14 of the 31 units for people who are unhoused are occupied, said Mark Waterhouse, THRIVE's assistant director of housing programs. THRIVE hopes to fill all of those units by the end of summer.

Green, who was forced to leave his apartment near Eastern Boulevard after he became ill, thanked everyone involved in helping him and other residents move into their homes.

"I really appreciate starting over again," he said.

In 2024, Neighbors secured \$13.4 million in state funds for the project through Homes and Community Renewal. THRIVE also will receive \$773,243 annually from the state Office of Mental Health to provide mental health and substance use services through the Empire State Supportive Initiative program.



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Potsdam Chamber celebrates business excellence, community history and downtown progress at 2026 Spring Luncheon



Albert Hanson, Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Board President; Haylee Jacco; Taylor Swamp, owner of 3TK Potsdam and recipient of a 2026 Business on the Rise Award; Casey Swamp; and Rob Bicknell, Potsdam Chamber Board Member.

POTSDAM, NY — The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce welcomed a full house to the Potsdam Town & Country Club on May 28 for its 2026 Spring Luncheon.

The event brought together business leaders, community members, and local organizations to celebrate business achievements, recognize milestone anniversaries, and learn about Potsdam's past and future.

The program featured presentations by Village Historian Hunter Crary and David Thurlow, Director of Planning & Development for the Village of Potsdam. Crary shared the story of downtown Potsdam's evolution over the past 220 years, highlighting the industries and businesses that helped shape the community. He also discussed upcoming historical programs, including

a new museum exhibit commemorating the nation's 250th anniversary and the upcoming Living History Weekend planned for June 27–28 in Ives Park.

Thurlow provided an update on downtown revitalization efforts, including progress on the Village's \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative projects. Improvements include new sidewalks, curbs, benches, landscaping, decorative lighting, public gathering spaces, and the future Fall Island skatepark. He also discussed ongoing efforts to secure funding for a pedestrian bridge connecting Fall Island and Garner Park.

The Chamber presented its 2026 Business on the Rise Awards, recognizing businesses that demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, and commitment to the communi-

ty. This year's recipients were 3TK Potsdam, owned by Taylor Swamp, and Noco Superior Exterior, owned by Jordan Robert.

The luncheon also included recognition of Chamber members and organizations celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2026. Honorees included SUNY Potsdam (210 years), Clarkson University (130 years), Potsdam Town & Country Club (105 years), A.W. Collins Corp. (95 years), Morgan Stanley (70 years), Snell Equipment Inc. (50 years), Bertrand's Construction (45 years), St. Lawrence Supply, McDuff's Bar & Grill, and Bronson Service Corp. (40 years), Advanced Business Systems (35 years), GardenShare Farmers' Market (30 years), Hazel's Ice Cream (20 years), Canton Apple & Cider LLC, Finen Maple Products, and Nikki Coates



Albert Hanson, Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Board President; Jordan Robert, owner of Noco Superior Exterior and recipient of a 2026 Business on the Rise Award; and Rob Bicknell, Potsdam Chamber Board Member.



Norfolk Concert Series was recognized for reaching its five-year milestone anniversary at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Spring Luncheon on May 28. Since its founding in 2021, the organization has enriched the North Country through live music performances and cultural programming. Pictured from left are Chamber President Albert Hanson, Christine Paige of Norfolk Concert Series, and Chamber Treasurer Rob Bicknell. Provided photo

& Associates LLC (15 years), Porch, Jobs R Us, and Cortech
Potsdam Orthodontics, North
Country Winds, The Front

See POTSDAM T5

Potsdam Chamber celebrates milestones



Potsdam Town & Country Club was recognized for reaching its 105-year milestone anniversary at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Spring Luncheon on May 28. For more than a century, the club has been a destination for recreation, special events, and community gatherings, welcoming generations of members and guests. Pictured from left are Chamber President Albert Hanson; James Theodore, Brian Fairchild, and Larcie Wiley of Potsdam Town & Country Club; and Chamber Treasurer Rob Bicknell. Provided photo



Clarkson University was recognized for reaching its 130-year milestone anniversary at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Spring Luncheon on May 28. Founded in 1896, Clarkson has played a significant role in education, research, workforce development, and community engagement throughout the North Country. Pictured from left are Chamber President Albert Hanson; Jessica Carista, Marketing Director; Jake Newman, Director of Media Relations; President Michelle Larson; Kelly Chezum, Vice President of Government, Corporate & Foundation Relations; and Chamber Treasurer Rob Bicknell. Provided photo



Morgan Stanley was recognized for reaching its 70-year milestone anniversary at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Spring Luncheon on May 28. Founded in Potsdam in 1956, the firm has provided financial guidance and services to generations of North Country residents and businesses. Pictured from left: Chamber President Albert Hanson, John Voce of Morgan Stanley, and Chamber Treasurer Rob Bicknell. Provided photo



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Potsdam

From T4

LLC (10 years), and Frog Acre Farms, Old Market Coffee, Midwife Sunday Smith Wellness and Birth Center, Summit SHRED LAB, and Norfolk Concert Series (5 years).
The Potsdam Chamber ex-

tends its thanks to all attendees, sponsors, presenters, award recipients, and milestone businesses for helping make the event a success and for their continued contributions to the Potsdam community.

For more information about the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce and upcoming events, visit www.potsdamchamber.com.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Building the next era of north country journalism

Watertown Daily Times opens office space for lease while investing in future of local news

WATERTOWN — The Watertown Daily Times is making office space available for lease inside its downtown headquarters as part of an ongoing effort to adapt its facilities to the changing needs of modern publishing while continuing to invest in local journalism, printing operations and digital growth.

The newspaper's headquarters was constructed in 1961 during an era when producing a daily newspaper required significantly more employees, equipment and office space than it does today. Advances in technology, changes in workflow and the continued growth of digital publishing have reduced the amount of space needed to operate the organization.

As a result, Johnson Newspaper Corp. is consolidating its operations within the building and making unused office space available for lease.

The move will not affect newspaper production. The Watertown Daily Times will continue printing its publications and commercial printing products at its downtown Watertown facility, and the company will remain headquartered in the building.

"We're not leaving downtown, and we're not leaving print," said Alec Johnson, President of Johnson Newspaper Corp. and Editor & Publisher of the Watertown Daily Times. "We're making better use of a building that was designed for a different era of newspaper publishing while continuing to invest in both our print operations and our digital future."

The office space initiative comes as the company prepares to launch significant upgrades to NNY360 this summer.

The redesigned website will bring together local reporting from across Northern New York into a single digital platform while preserving the identity and legacy of each

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The leasing sign that will be seen by the public outside 260 Washington St. in Watertown.

publication. Readers from Malone to Watertown will be able to access the news that matters most to their communities while also gaining easier access to reporting from neighboring counties and regions.

Coverage from the Watertown Daily Times, Malone Telegram, Advance-News and Journal & Republican will be integrated into the new platform. Dedicated local pages and publication brands will remain in place, allowing readers to continue engaging with the news organizations they know and trust while benefiting from expanded regional coverage.

"Readers will continue to see the Malone Telegram, Advance-News, Journal & Republican and Watertown Daily Times brands they know today," Johnson said. "What will change is how easily they

can move between communities and discover reporting from across the north country."

"The north country is connected in ways that don't always stop at county lines," he said. "Readers in Franklin County may care about what's happening in Jefferson County, and vice versa. The new NNY360 will make it easier for readers to access trusted local reporting from across the region while maintaining the local focus that makes each of our publications unique."

The organization traces its roots to The New York Reformer, a weekly newspaper founded in Watertown in 1850. As demand for news grew, the publication became The New-York Daily Reformer in 1861, providing daily coverage during the Civil War era. In 1870, the newspaper adopted the name Watertown Daily Times, a title

it has carried ever since.

Over the course of more than 175 years, the organization has adapted to changes in printing technology, communication, transportation and the ways readers consume news. Today, Johnson Newspaper Corp. publishes the Watertown Daily Times, Malone Telegram, Advance-News, Journal & Republican and other regional products serving communities throughout Northern New York.

The company also operates the region's only newspaper printing facility, producing not only its own publications but also newspapers and other printed products for publishing partners and commercial customers throughout the region. The operation ensures that local newspapers continue to be printed locally.

Johnson said the goal is

straightforward: ensure the organization remains strong and sustainable for future generations of readers.

"From a weekly newspaper in 1850 to a daily newspaper in 1861, to the Watertown Daily Times in 1870, and now to a regional network of print and digital news products, this organization has continually evolved to meet the needs of its audience," he said. "Our mission remains the same: providing reliable local journalism for the communities we serve. These changes help position us to continue doing that for decades to come."

Office space is currently available for lease, with inquiries being accepted through BellCornerstone Commercial Real Estate.

St. Lawrence County Chamber celebrates tourism

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2026 Tourism Excellence Award Winners - Best to the Guest Award: Applewood Orchards of Rensselaer Falls; Andrew and Alicia Brice, Sheila and Sean Conklin; STLC Tourism Team: Kathryn Puleo, Destination Manager and Tiffani Amo, Director of Tourism; and Best Destination Marketing Award: Basswood Lodge of Rensselaer Falls; Mandi, Cyera and Brielle McNamara. St. Lawrence County Chamber photo

More than 70 tourism businesses, community leaders, elected officials, and destination partners gathered at the Ogdensburg International Airport on June 11 for the 9th annual STLC Tourism Dinner, an evening focused on destination development, collaboration, and celebrating excellence within St. Lawrence County's tourism industry.

Hosted by the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce tourism team, the event explored how tourism, recreation, arts, heritage, and quality of life initiatives work together to strengthen the county as a destination.

In her remarks, St. Lawrence County Director of Tourism Tiffani Amo championed the concept of a destination development strategy built on collaboration and elevated by competition.

"Our competition isn't the neighboring town. It isn't the community down the road. It isn't the business offering a similar service. Our competition is every destination trying to earn the attention of the same traveler," Amo said. "When we collaborate around a shared vision, we become more innovative, more resilient, and more competitive."

Echoing the night's theme of regional unity, destination stewardship consultant Josiah Brown, known professionally as the "New York Sherpa," served as the evening's master of ceremonies, urging St. Lawrence County to seize a historic opportunity for rural growth. Brown spoke about changing demographic trends and the opportunities facing rural communities, emphasizing that long-term success depends on collaboration among businesses, municipalities, organizations, and residents.

The evening's featured speakers went on to highlight examples of collaboration already taking place throughout the county.

Erica Kelso, Executive Director of the St. Lawrence County Arts Council, discussed the role arts and culture play in creating memorable visitor experiences and vibrant communities, noting that authentic local experiences help destinations stand out in a competitive travel marketplace.

St. Lawrence County Multi-Use Trails Coordinator Deb

ABM Boat Shop open in Clayton



The George C. Textor Jr. boatshop at the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton opens today. Contributed photo

Times staff report

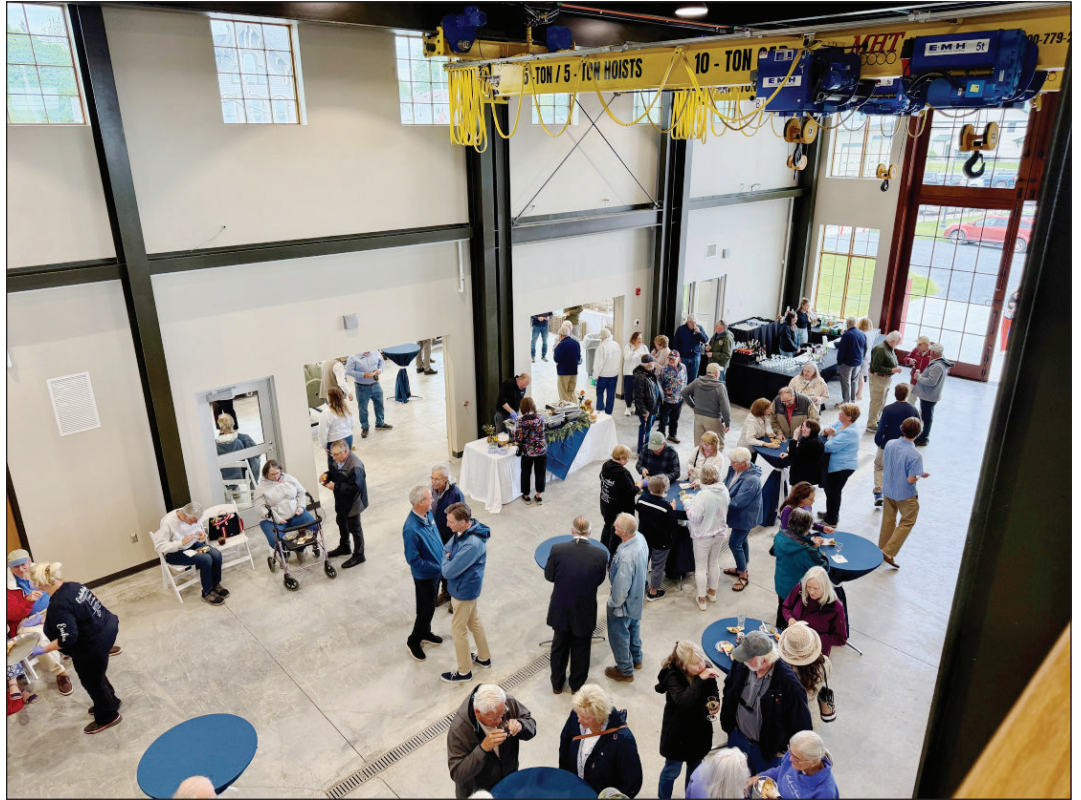
CLAYTON — The Antique Boat Museum has opened the George C. Textor Jr. Boat Shop, a new facility for the care, maintenance and preservation of the museum's permanent boat and engine collections.

Designed with BCA Architects & Engineers and ConTech Building Systems, the boat shop provides dedicated space for professional repair, maintenance and preservation work to ensure the collection is cared for and displayed to museum standards. The facility also will expand the museum's educational programming, offering hands-on learning for novices, professionals, students and lifelong learn-

ers, the museum said.

"As a chartered institution through New York State's Education Department, we are committed to providing exceptional learning opportunities for our community," said Rebecca Hopfinger, Antique Boat Museum executive director. "The boatyard will allow us to expand our educational impact significantly, creating an environment that fosters hands-on learning through year-round classes, potential apprenticeships and partnerships with higher educational institutions."

Charles Crow, chairman of the museum's board, said the shop "is the keystone to museum objectives in many



The opening of the Antique Boat Museum's Boat Shop in Clayton was well-attended. Guests toured the shop. Alec Johnson/ Watertown Daily Times

dimensions. It enables the museum to provide educational opportunities in the varied disciplines associated with marine science, whether an individual's interests are of a vocational or avocational nature. ... The activities in the boat shop will allow for the in-house care and preservation of the en-

tire collection, including the in-water fleet."

Hopfinger credited donors for making the project possible. "Many contributed above and beyond their annual membership and Friends giving, demonstrating a deep commitment to the museum's future and to the preservation of boating

history," she said.

The museum said the new shop will let visitors observe preservation work, learn about the craftsmanship behind historic boats and connect more deeply with freshwater boating history.

For more information, visit www.abm.org.

Tourism

From T7

Christy shared how more than two decades of partnership among municipalities, volunteers, businesses, and neighboring counties has helped create a trail system that supports more than a dozen trailside businesses and increases tourism activity across the region, impacting local businesses far beyond the trail corridor itself.

St. Lawrence County Historian Nancy LaFaver highlighted the growing impact of heritage tourism and the success of the county's new Open Doors to History program, which has introduced hundreds of visitors to local museums and historic sites through coordinated local partnerships. The program is part of wider America 250 celebrations supported by the

County's board of legislators through the 250th Commemorative Commission and the County Chamber's tourism team.

The evening concluded with the presentation of two Tourism Excellence Awards.

Applewood Orchards in Rensselaer Falls received the 2026 Best to the Guest Award, recognizing exceptional hospitality and visitor experiences. Since purchasing the orchard in 2023, owners Sheila and Sean Conklin and Andrew and Alicia Brice have expanded programming, attractions, and events while continuing to create a welcoming destination for families.

"They have poured their family values into the business," said Kathryn Puleo, STLC Destination Manager. "Their pride in the orchard is evident in every detail. Whether greeting visitors, planning new attractions, or hosting events, they have created an atmosphere that feels welcoming, authentic, and genuine."

Basswood Lodge in Rensselaer Falls received the 2026 Best Destination Marketing Award. Since taking

ownership in 2012, Nick McNamara has spent more than a decade promoting the lodge as a destination for hunters and conservationists through national media exposure, trade shows, partnerships, and events that attract visitors from across North America.

"Basswood demonstrates that great destination marketing is not about slogans or campaigns," Puleo said. "It is about building trust, creating authentic experiences, and giving visitors a story worth sharing."

The annual STLC Tourism Dinner serves as an opportunity for tourism stakeholders to connect, share ideas, and continue building a stronger, more competitive destination through collaboration.

The 2026 event was held in partnership with the Ogdensburg International Airport and programming support from St. Lawrence Federal Credit Union.

With grid at crossroad, reliability is narrowing Operator likens moment to post-WWII buildout

By **ALEX GAULT**
agault@wdt.net

ALBANY — The group that runs New York’s electrical grid is warning that the energy system is at its next crossroads, facing a multitude of challenges at one time with a narrow path to meeting all expectations.

This week, the New York Independent System Operator released its annual power trends report, which analyzes the electrical grid from producers to users and tracks the international energy markets that set prices. In a foreword to the report, the nonprofit corporation’s president and CEO Rich Dewey compared the current moment to the original construction of the energy grid at the close of the 1800s, or the massive build-out that revolutionized the system after World War Two.

“Those decisions were not made in response to immediate needs alone,” he wrote. “They reflected foresight about the demands of future generations. As a result, New York built one

of the most robust and reliable electric systems in the nation, enabling sustained economic expansion and supporting the health, safety and prosperity of its residents. Today, we face another moment of comparable significance.”

Dewey said that the combination of technological enhancements, economic development efforts and public policies promoting increased reliance on electricity for basic utilities previously served by other energy sources have all pushed the existing electrical grid in New York close to capacity.

“The NYISO’s recent planning studies and operational experiences tell an emerging and consistent story; reliability margins are tightening, and the system is becoming more sensitive to uncertainty,” he said.

According to the report, New York’s system is operating with the narrowest reliability margins it has seen in years.

He noted that most of New York’s existing power plants are

aging, coming close to their retirement ages with a significant amount more than 50 years old. As these facilities age, some get taken offline permanently or have their production capacity capped to prevent failure. According to the report, since 2019 the state has added 2.9 gigawatts of capacity to the grid, while deactivating 4.4 gigawatts of production capacity.

The result is a narrower gap between how much energy the state can produce to how much it needs to operate. When challenges like fuel shortages, extreme weather or sudden spikes in demand arise, Dewey said it makes it harder to meet needs.

In the past two years, cold spells in the wintertime have pushed the system near to its capacity, forcing producers to unexpectedly reactivate shutdown power plants or use other extraordinary emergency measures. At the same time, the kinds of facilities that New York relies on to respond to sudden spikes in demand rely on natu-

ral gas or oil, products that are sensitive to international events and can either increase in price or become unavailable with little to no warning.

Wintertime now presents a more consistent challenge than the summers, with more and more buildings across the state relying on electric-powered heating.

And in the summers, as demand for electricity to drive air conditioning goes up, the gap between how much power can be generated and how much is being demanded has dramatically dropped. According to the NYISO’s report, the summertime baseline capacity margin in 2018 was more than 2,200 megawatts, where as this year it’s projected to be a mere 417 megawatts.

Another challenge posed by the aging fleet of power plants is their environmental and health impacts; older machines produce more nitrogen oxide, a toxic gas that is produced by older steam and simple-cycle combustion turbine power plants. During the heat wave in June of last year, a study found that while New York City was relying on its oil-powered peaker plants to meet just 2.5% of its power needs, those plants were emitting 28% of the nitrogen oxide detected in the region.

And while the system suffers from more inconsistent and diminishing electrical supplies, demand for energy is only going up. Between the state mandates that new construction must be fully electric, the increased use of electric vehicles and the wave of new, energy-intensive factories planned or already going up across the state, Dewey said the system is in a pinch-point.

“These trends are reshaping how and when electricity is needed, shifting risk toward winter months and increasing the need for resources that can respond flexibly and perform reliably under sustained stress,” he said.

To address that need, Dewey said New York needs more newly built power plants with technology that is flexible, reliable

and capable of running through sustained periods of high energy demand without failing.

The NYISO report said that especially in the wintertime, renewables like solar and wind simply do not meet those needs as they rely on beneficial weather conditions that are often absent for extended periods of time, especially during severe cold weather when more energy is needed.

But the report does support an “all of the above” approach as laid out in the state’s own energy master plan. The NYISO report says that renewable energy must be central to the renovation of the electrical grid because they are relatively low-cost with free fuel and no carbon emissions.

But additionally the report calls for investment in brand-new, cutting edge natural gas technologies that utilize the low-emissions fuel in even more efficient ways while maintaining a standard of quick-to-activate, responsive and reliable operation.

The operator is also supportive of efforts to build out the state’s nuclear power base, which is a long-term plan that can meet the needs of reliability, affordability and decarbonization.

Dewey said the NYISO’s management of these markets incentivizes power producers to be reliable, stable partners and to invest in better technology for all fuel types. At the same time, he said the markets as managed now encourage investors to take on the risks of new development themselves without passing costs on to the utility ratepayers who foot most of the bill for New York’s electrical grid.

“The challenges before us are real, but so too are the tools available to address them,” Dewey said. “By aligning market structures, policy objectives and investment decisions, New York has the opportunity, once again, to evolve our electric system to support economic growth, protect public health and safety, and strengthen the Empire State for generations to come.”

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Thousand Islands Arts Center's 'transformative' investment readies for opening

By **CHRIS BROCK**

cbrock@wdt.net

CLAYTON — The Thousand Islands Arts Center on June 22 will unveil its massively expanded footprint in the community, and some of the steps to make that happen are front and center at the 321 James St. complex, helping to reflect a transformative investment in the future of arts and culture in the Thousand Islands region.

"This is part of our 'Step Up for the Arts' paver campaign," TIAC Executive Director Mia Ramseyer said at the entrance of the new TIAC site, which on Tuesday, was still bustling with workers doing everything from painting to installation.

The paver campaign is a fundraising initiative supporting the project and where supporters can cement their legacy by purchasing personalized engraved pavers that line the new downtown facility's outdoor walkways.

"I just love this — seeing supporters front and center," Ramseyer said. "This was the first wave. Pavers are still being sold. This is the first 91 people who signed up."

The arts center is moving from a 1,500-square-foot, 1870s-era building at 314 John St. to 13,000 square feet at its new site, literally in its backyard on the adjacent James Street. The \$7.7 million project was announced in June 2023 after a \$2 million grant was received from the New York State Council on the Arts Large Capital Improvement Grants for Arts and Culture program. The grant required a 100% match, and that was made by an anonymous donor.

"We raised over \$5 million in private donations in just over a year," Ramseyer, who was hired as executive director last fall, said. "That tells you how strong people support this organization in the community."

A MATCH FOR AMBITION

"This is a building that can sustain our growth," Ramseyer said before leading a tour of the new TIAC exclusively for the Watertown Daily Times. "That was one of the problems next door. Our ambition was outpacing what our building could allow. This will give us the opportunity to provide an adequate home for all we want to do."



A worker puts a finishing touch Tuesday on the entrance to the new Thousand Islands Arts Center, 321 James St., Clayton, which will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 22.

Photos by Chris Brock/Watertown Daily Times

Upon entering the three-story building, its bright main gallery welcomes visitors. Nearby is a reception desk and gift shop area. Ramseyer noted the space has "flex wall capability," where displayed art can be moved or separated to allow for more than one exhibit. But the upcoming "Along the River's Edge" will take up the entire space.

The annual and cornerstone "Along the River's Edge" is June 24 through July 25, with an opening reception 5 to 7 p.m. on June 24 — welcoming artists, patrons and community members to celebrate both the artwork and the opening of the new space. All artwork will be for sale to benefit the artists and the Arts Center.

A record-breaking number of entries was received for the 2026 exhibit — over 325, compared to 120 entered last year.

"We accepted about 160 pieces, and that's also record-breaking," Ramseyer said. "I attribute that to all the buzz surrounding what is happening here."

The additional space will also give more breathing room for visitors to such events as exhibit openings. "It's nice to have the ability to have this room for people to view art without being on top of one another," Ramseyer said.

She noted that at the old building, opening receptions would attract up to 300 people. "An overflow area was set up outside."

The first floor will also include an arts center shop focusing on regional artists.

"Our goal is to populate the gift shop with as many local wares as possible from artists who support the organization," Ramseyer said.

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Arts

From T10

HANDWEAVING MUSEUM MORE APPARENT

The first floor will also include space to transform the mission of TIAC’s Handweaving Museum, and make the full name of the nonprofit, Thousand Islands Arts Center — Home of the Handweaving Museum — much more apparent. The Sonja Wahl Weaving Gallery will house permanent displays about weaving.

“We are the only handweaving museum in the U.S.,” Ramseier said. “We have a 20,000-piece collection. This space will have pieces that rotate from our own collection that our curator will pull. It will also have permanent exhibits that will focus on the actual art of weaving, such as the tools used.”

A special exhibit, “Weave Across America,” will open the space.

The TIAC initiative was created to celebrate America’s 250th anniversary and the nonprofit’s 60th birthday by inviting fiber artists nationwide to handcraft a massive, contemporary coverlet representing the American flag. The completed collective piece will be displayed in the Sonja Wahl Weaving Gallery and accessioned into the permanent collection. TIAC calls the piece a handweaving time capsule for future generations.

As Ramseier and Katherine Lake, TIAC’s education and communications coordinator head to the basement level, Ramseier calls the level “our truly transformative space” for the handweaving museum.

“Right now, our collection is on the second floor of our old building. It’s not easily accessible,” Ramseier said. “It’s a game-changer for us. Right now, the collection is in drawers and boxes.”

The new space will allow for displays and storage. “We’ll have furniture where people can sit at, pull collections out, research and look at patterns and designs.”

The weaving collection will be housed in “high-density” shelves. The movable shelves are on rails, which can be adjusted by a manual mechanism. The space is climate-controlled, key to preserving the collection.

“They are one-of-a-kind pieces,” Ramseier said. “They can be from the early 1900s up through. Many people donate pieces to us that are very valuable. Also, the idea is to have space where we can grow the collection. Right now, everything is carefully thought about: Can we have it? Can we store and keep it? This allows us to bring new pieces into the collection.”

Volunteers, Ramseier said, have been key to the weaving display area. “None of this could be done without the volunteers we have from the weaving world. It’s endless hours of logging and documenting. It’s a big task and they have risen up to help us in the last two years to get prepared for this move.”

MORE CLASSROOMS, STORAGE

On the way to the second floor of the building, Ramseier and Lake point out the available



Thousand Islands Arts Center Executive Director Mia Ramseier discusses one of the mosaic mirrors in the new building crafted by area artist Sarah Ellen Smith. “People donated beautiful plates that were broken. She was able to piece them together to make the mirrors that speak to the passion of artists in this community,” Ramseier said.



Left: The pottery studio, part of the expanded campus of the Thousand Islands Arts Center, will soon be getting a new roof.

storage. “It may not seem exciting, but we are,” Ramseier said. “Right now, we have storage as in ‘everything is all over the place.’”

One room includes a chest freezer. “Each piece that comes in from the outside that’s donated has to be put into a freezer to kill any bugs, because you don’t want to compromise the rest of the collection,” Ramseier explained.

Climbing the stairs, the executive director paused to point out the wide staircase and wall space — providing even more area to display art.

The second floor is dedicated to three classrooms and office space. “Currently, everybody sits in one room,” Ramseier said of TIAC staff, which consists of four employees. “We’ll be adding a fifth member over the summer to support

our front-of-house visitor experience and retail management side of things,” she said.

The old building has one classroom. One of the three new classrooms at the new site is the Mary and Ted Mascott Children’s Classroom. It will be completed with child-sized furniture. All classrooms have room for 16 students.

“Each classroom has the ability to do virtual programming, which is something new to the organization,” Ramseier said. “We are working toward that year-round programming.”

Between classrooms, Ramseier and Lake paused to point out a peculiar piece of art.

“One of our long-time artists, who is also a

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Amazon center in Pamelaia on track for fall opening



The north country's first Amazon distribution center — expected to be in operation this fall — sits between Interstate 81 and the UPS facility behind the Caprara Honda dealership in the Bradley Street Commerce Park. Construction of the 77,400-square-foot facility 'is essentially done,' according to Byron DeLuke, development director for the Montante Group. Craig Fox/Watertown Daily Times

By BRIAN KELLY

bkelly@wdt.net

PAMELIA — The north country's first Amazon distribution center is slated to be in operation this fall.

Construction of the 77,400-square-foot distribution facility in the Bradley Street Commerce Park "is essentially done," said Byron DeLuke, development director for the Montante Group.

Furniture and equipment soon will be brought in for the facility, he said.

"It's in great shape," DeLuke said.

On Friday, paving of the parking lot was the only activity happening at the site. The new building looked idle otherwise.

The developer, Montante Group, the Buffalo company

that designed the facility, will lease the building. Construction began late summer last year.

The property sits between Interstate 81 and the UPS facility behind the Caprara Honda dealership.

The company has been mum about the operations and its workforce. Amazon distribution centers of this size are typically considered regional facilities.

Amazon spokesperson Glendwyn Thames could not be reached for comment.

Pamelia Town Supervisor Scott Allensaid he hadn't heard anything about the Amazon facility for the past 18 months, although it will be a job creator for Pamelaia and Jefferson County. He was told back then the facility would employ more

than 150 workers.

"It's a total positive for the county," he said.

Cheryl Mayforth, executive director of the WorkPlace, has been wondering what was going on with the facility, but isn't surprised that Amazon hasn't released any information about it.

"They're a huge company. They know what they're doing," she said.

Blue Rock Construction Inc., a private company with offices in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Burlington, New Jersey, is the general contractor for the project.

The land was owned by Purcell Construction, the Watertown company that started developing the corporate park about 10 years ago, until Amazon acquired it this summer.



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Craig Fox/Watertown Daily Times

Owned by the Montante family, the developer has built two Amazon distribution centers, one in Tonawanda, near

Buffalo, and the other in Salem, Massachusetts. Both of those facilities are at least twice as big as the Pamelaia project.

Jefferson Launches Health Sciences Degree

Jefferson Community College has launched a Health Sciences Associate in Science degree program. Fall semester classes begin August 24, 2026. Prospective students may start the admissions process now. Applying to Jefferson is free!

Jefferson's Health Sciences A.S. degree is particularly well suited for students who are interested in healthcare careers but

may not yet have selected a specific profession. Through coursework and advising, students can explore multiple career options while building credentials that transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Health Sciences A.S. degree provides students with a strong academic foundation in biology, chemistry, mathematics, and liberal arts while preparing them to transfer

into bachelor's degree programs in nursing and other health-related fields. The four-semester degree pathway is designed for completion in two academic years. In addition to serving recent high school graduates and traditional college students, the Health Sciences A.S. degree is also aligned with SUNY Reconnect, a statewide initiative that supports tuition-free communi-

ty college access for eligible adult learners ages 25–55. Through this opportunity, adults seeking a career change or advancement in healthcare may be able to pursue the degree with tuition covered, expanding access to high-demand workforce pathways.

"Healthcare continues to be one of the fastest-growing employment sectors in New York State and across the nation," said

Daniel J. Dupee, II, President. "Our new Health Sciences degree provides students with a flexible pathway that prepares them for transfer and helps them explore the many opportunities available within the health professions."

Applications being accepted. Applying to Jefferson is free. To learn more, visit www.sunyjefferson.edu/academicprograms.

Arts

From T11

past trustee, Sarah Ellen Smith, made these mirrors around the arts center from bits and pieces of old plates that people donated to her," Ramseier said. "She spent all winter making these beautiful mosaic mirrors. People donated beautiful plates that were broken. She was able to piece them together to make the mirrors that speak to the passion of artists in this community."

Off the second floor, a balcony overlooks James Street.

"Reinman's Department Store graciously donated patio furniture for out here," Ramseier said. "This can be used as a meeting space, collaborative space, and you get the most beautiful views of Bartlett Point and you can see Grindstone Island."

From the balcony, Ramseier pointed overhead to the TIAC lettering on the building. "This sign, at night, is beautifully back lit. That's the number one

thing people have been commenting on — that it is striking."

Below, bustling James Street makes the TIAC much more visible, which should vastly increase foot traffic, Lake and Ramseier said.

A 'LIVING MUSEUM' AREA

The third floor includes more studio space — a "living museum," for weavers.

"There will be space for 13-plus looms on the outside perimeter of the room, or however they want to set it up," Ramseier said.

There will also be space for warping boards: rectangular wooden frames lined with evenly spaced pegs used by handweavers to measure lengths of yarn and organizing threads before transferring them to looms.

There's also lots of shelf space for books on the topic of weaving owned by TIAC.

"We have over 2,000 books in our collection," Ramseier said. "The idea is when people come to research, they can pull one off the shelves and sit in the conference room. It's nice because our books now are almost impossible to get to,

NNY Business

and we have a lot of valuable one-of-a-kind books."

The third floor will also be able to be used by community groups for things like meetings, social gatherings and receptions. Ramseier said a meeting by the board of the Northern New York Community Foundation will soon inaugurate the community space.

PLANS FOR OLD BUILDING

TIAC will retain ownership of its building at 314 John St., as the nonprofit's campus expands. Finders Keepers, a resale and consignment shop at 313 James St., will be moving to the old headquarters. The current Finders Keepers building will eventually be razed to make room for the center's outdoor art park, a "forever green" space for public art that will be accessible to all, with the new building and park part of the vision of the Mascotts: a "multi-generational opportunity to change the direction of the visual arts by establishing a major arts center and program that will benefit the river communities and their



A sampling of the "Step Up for the Arts" fundraising initiative at the new Thousand Islands Arts Center. The pavers are still being sold.

residents, as well as the entire north country."

Between the new center and the old center and also part of the campus sits TIAC's pottery studio, which hosts classes, events, and open studio time to potters

of all skill levels. It will soon be getting a new roof.

"The anticipation mounts each day," Ramseier said. "And every day we see the goal posts move closer to completion. Things are coming together."

Potsdam Chamber to Host Unique Living History Day Business Mixer

The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce invites Chamber members, business professionals and prospective members to attend a Living History Day Business Mixer on Saturday, June 27, 2026, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. at the Ives Park Pavilion in Potsdam.

Presented in partnership with the Potsdam Public Museum, the mixer offers a unique opportunity to network in the midst of the Revolutionary War Encampment, one of the featured attractions of Living History Day.

Attendees will enjoy live music by Johnny Dropper, light refreshments from Katie's Kitchen, and specialty beverages from The Happy Hive Mobile Bar while connecting with fellow community members in a relaxed outdoor setting.

A special feature of the evening will be exclusive after-hours access to meet and mingle with Revolutionary War reenactors and experience the encampment in a more personal setting. Registered mixer

attendees will also have access to a dedicated networking area featuring food and 21+ refreshments.

"This mixer combines networking, local history, and community engagement in a way that is truly unique to Potsdam," said Melanie Flack, Executive Director of the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce. "Whether you are a Chamber member, a business professional, or simply someone who enjoys being involved in the community, we encourage you to join us."

Guests are welcome to bring family members, coworkers, friends, and prospective Chamber members.

Registration is requested by June 23.

For more information or to register, visit the registration link or contact the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce at (315) 274-9000 or director@potsdamchamber.com.

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20 under 40

From T1

Times, which publishes NNY Business, told the gathering. “Reviewing this year’s nominations was one of the most rewarding experiences we’ve had because this class of emerging leaders represents one of the most diverse groups we have ever recognized.”

“Collectively, you represent nearly every corner of the society that allows our community to function, grow and thrive,” Johnson said.

The NNY Business Class of 2026 “20 Under 40” recipients includes: Nicole Hudson, 36, Clayton, practice manager at Clayton Dental Offices PLLC; Trenton Macaulay, 30, Brier Hill, owner of Macaulay Trucking; Yen Maine, 35, Parishville, CEO and co-owner of Adirondack Farm in Parishville and Nature’s Storehouse in Canton; Shawnea Hull, 35, Philadelphia, business specialist for the Child Care Resource Center, a program of Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County; and Jessica Olney, 28, Watertown, a

state-licensed real estate salesperson with Bridgeview Real Estate.

Also, Madison Draper-Perri, 28, Watertown, a teacher with the Watertown City School District and assistant company social media director at Rhonda’s Footeworks; Lisa Marshall, 37, Chaumont, chief clerk at Jefferson County Surrogate’s Court; Emma Slate, 36, Gouverneur, vice president of training for Fresh Start Franchising, the parent of Jreck Subs, and franchise owner of the Jreck’s location in Clayton; Kelsey Blackwell, 34, Watson, owner of Blackwell Bookkeeping & Tax; and Isabelle Gates-Shult, 39, Potsdam, village of Potsdam administrator.

Additional recipients are Melissa Shova, 35, Adams Center, preventive services manager with the Children’s Home of Jefferson County; Lauren Prentice, 36, Potsdam, St. Lawrence Region director of food and nutrition services, Rochester Regional Health; Meade Piercey Lent, 39, Ogdensburg, family nurse practitioner and lead advanced practice provider at St. Lawrence Health System’s Emergency Department; and Russell A. Reeves, 38, Watertown, interventional radiologist and medical direc-



The Paddock Arcade was filled with family and friends of the 20 Under 40 recipients on Tuesday. Alec Johnson/Watertown Daily Times

tor of radiology with Samaritan Medical Center.

Also, Brandon Sparacino, 39, Watertown, associate/civil engineer at BCA Architects and Engineers; T. Joseph Murphy Jr., 36, Dexter, principal law clerk to state Supreme Court Judge William F. Ramseier and town of Brownville justice; Marc Piche, 33, Watertown, banking officer at Watertown Savings Bank; Paige Yousey, 30, Sackets Harbor, manager of content

development, Enterprise Education, at The Institutes; Dr. Morgan Stevens, 33, Watertown, self-employed chiropractor at Treating the Root; and Dr. Nathan Thompson, 38, Belfort, owner/manager of Thompson Veterinary Services PLLC.

“The talent in this room, the commitment represented here, and the willingness to serve others gives me tremendous confidence in the future of our communities,” Johnson told the class

Tuesday. “One day, the people who built the organizations, businesses and institutions we depend on today will pass those responsibilities on. And when they do, they’ll be handing them to people like you.”

“Based on everything I’ve read about this year’s class, I can say with confidence that our communities will be in good hands,” Johnson said.

When Life Changes, Your Plan Should Too

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