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Bert Gray acknowledges a bidder during an auction on Jan. 4 as staff members prepare the next items to be auctioned. Richard Rosentreter/Malone Telegram

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1950s ice cream shop opening in Watertown

By **CRAIG FOX**
cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — Bill Voodre remembers hearing the 1950s song “Sh-Boom” on an episode of “Happy Days” when he was a teen.

The song, by the one-hit wonders The Chords, stuck with him.

And now he and his wife, Amy, are opening a nostalgic 1950s-themed ice cream shop — that they’re naming Shaboom’s — in Washington Street Plaza.

“Happy Days’ was the first time I heard it,” he recalled about the 1954 doo-wop song.

The name of the ice cream parlor will fit with the motif the Voodres are planning. The place will feature an Elvis Presley figurine, old pictures from that era, a jukebox and Coca-Cola decor that he’s gone looking for in Syracuse.

“We just want to make it a fun place,” Bill Voodre said.

The ice cream shop is moving into the space most recently occupied by Pie Zano’s pizzeria in the Washington Street Plaza. Piggly Wiggly, Chrissy Beanz and Gateway Liquor are among the plaza’s tenants.

On Wednesday morning, the Voodres appeared before the Watertown Local Development Corporation’s Revolving Loan Committee to talk about their project.

The committee approved a \$40,000 loan that will be used to purchase and lease equipment. The loan was approved by the full board on Jan. 16.

The storefront is going through extensive renovations with new black and white checkered flooring and bright pinkish and blue painted walls. They plan to add ta-



Bill Voodre and his wife, Amy, are opening a nostalgic 1950s-themed ice cream shop in Washington Street Plaza. Craig Fox/Watertown Daily Times

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Fort Covington auction house a family affair



Bert and Elora Gray moments before the start of an auction on Jan. 4. Richard Rosentreter/Malone Telegram



Attendees inspect some of the items that were about to go up for auction on Jan. 4 at Gray's Auction Service in Fort Covington. Richard Rosentreter/Malone Telegram

By **RICHARD ROSENRETER**
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FORT COVINGTON — “Sold!” was the word called out dozens of times in a large room full of people eager to place a bid and hoping to find a treasure — that was the scene Jan. 4 during an auction at Gray’s Auction Service in Fort Cov-

ington, a family-run operation that opened its doors in 2013.

The auctions are currently run by Robert “Bert” Gray III, who took over the business just before his father, Robert Gray Jr. passed away in 2022. These days, Bert organizes and operates the auctions, which take place every couple of

weeks, along with his wife Elora, mother Tammy Gray, aunt Karen (Gray) Wilkins, and several other family members and friends.

Bert has been involved in the auction, antique and collectible world for years, and

his interest was sparked mainly due to his father, who took him to auctions when he was a youngster.

“We were always into antiques and went to auctions since I was 10 years old. We always bought and sold at auctions,” Bert told the Telegram.

“It’s a family affair,” Bert’s mom Tammy said with a beaming smile. “I love it. I love seeing the people.”

His aunt Karen, (Robert’s sister), said she has been into collecting and antiques her whole life, and likes the fact that she works with family — and the auctions attract people from across the region.

“My aunt was an antique dealer and I used to go to her place in the summer and help her set up,” Karen said, adding she became involved with the “family business” from the start. “I really enjoy it — it’s the people that bring things in, it’s nice seeing new faces and joking around with the regulars. We have people come from Plattsburgh and Vermont, and some people even called from Texas because they were interested in what we had.”

According to Bert, who also has a full-time job working at the Salmon River School District, most of the auctions are well-attended as people travel for miles to be there.

“They come from all over. It’s pretty cool. I have people come up from Albany. I had one guy travel from New Hampshire. There are a few local people, but it seems like a lot of them are from 50 miles-plus away,” he said, adding that some people from out-of-state participate by placing online bids. “At the last auction there were some boxes shipped to Arkansas. It was pretty cool to see that our stuff goes everywhere. I wish we would have kept track of all the states we sold to.”

A HELPING HAND

According to Bert, his father always had an interest in auctions, and according to his mom Tammy, the senior Gray wanted to supplement his income after retiring from the Department of Corrections.

“He enjoyed ‘junk,’ and grew up with antiques and old stuff,” she said.

According to Bert, his father starting the auction service was about more than gaining additional income. It also had something to do with helping others, mainly when someone lost a family member and were left with their many possessions.

“My dad started the busi-

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Shapiro award winner has ‘ability to see beyond present challenges’

By **CHRIS BROCK**

cbrock@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — Before the recipient of the 71st annual Israel A. Shapiro Citizenship Award was announced last month at the Noon Rotary Club, the Watertown High School Select Choir performed a few holiday tunes, including “Do a Little Good” from the 2022 film “Spirited.”

“So try to do a little good/Maybe give a little more/Work a little harder than you did the day before,” the choir sang — a perfect preamble for Greater Watertown North Country Chamber President and CEO Kayla Jamieson, who then took the podium at the Italian American Civic Association to announce that Beth A. Linderman is this year’s Shapiro Award winner.

“Outstanding community leadership starts with a clear, compelling vision, and Beth exemplifies this perfectly,” Jamieson said. “As Suzie Renzi-Falge (executive director of Flower Memorial Library) highlights, Beth has the ability to see beyond present challenges and imagine a future where our community is thriving. She has the foresight to identify problems before they escalate into crises and the strategic mindset to devise solutions that benefit all members of the community.”

Linderman’s vision, Jamieson said, is never self-serving.

“Instead, it is focused on the collective welfare, aiming to create a lasting, positive change. For example, her work with Planned Parenthood, Rotary, and her church showcases her advocacy for education reform, sustainability initiatives, and healthcare access. She understands the importance of a long-term commitment to

progress. By uniting our community around shared goals, Beth motivates people to invest their time, skills, and resources toward achieving those goals.”

Jamieson shared other accolades about Linderman from others, including the Rev. Andrew Long, pastor of First Presbyterian Church: “Beth is a powerful and important voice at decision-making tables because of her ability to listen, discern carefully, and consider who a given decision will impact.”

Jamieson said that Denise Young, retired Watertown Family YMCA director, echoed that praise by telling her, “Every service that Beth provides is with a clear and heartfelt purpose to improve the quality of life of others through service.”

“Her leadership is not driven by personal gain, but by a genuine desire to improve the lives of others and our community as a whole,” Jamieson said. “Beth is a selfless leader who often works behind the scenes, organizing events, securing resources, and encouraging others to contribute in any way they can. She shows up when needed, whether it’s helping with a community cleanup, volunteering at church, or offering mentorship to a young person. Her dedication is infectious, inspiring others to join in and contribute.”

Linderman has been a Rotary member for nearly 20 years and has been heavily involved in Rotary International’s End Polio Now campaign.

She spent eight years on the Watertown City School District board of education and has served as president of the Watertown Family YMCA board of directors. In 2014, she became president of the New York State



Beth A. Linderman will be formally presented with the 71st annual Israel A. Shapiro Citizenship Award on Feb. 27. Chris Brock/Watertown Daily Times

chapter of Philanthropic Educational Organization. She is a former executive director of Family Counseling Services of Northern New York.

Linderman, a licensed clinical social worker, holds a bachelor’s degree in social work from Cornell University, Ithaca, and a master’s degree in social work from the Fordham University School of Social Service, Manhattan.

The Shapiro Award announcement was designed to be a surprise for Linderman, and she was. Following the applause at the announcement, Linderman told the gathering, “I have no words.”

She found more words later as the Noon Rotary meet-

ing broke up and she was approached by others who offered congratulations.

“I was super surprised, totally blown away,” she said. “When I see the awardees for the Shapiro Award, the Athena Award, whatever, I think, ‘Oh yeah, well of course that’s why they received it. I don’t do this or this or this.’ So whatever they put in the plus column for this, I appreciate it.”

The award will be formally presented at a dinner hosted by the Greater Watertown–North Country Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, Feb. 27 in the Banquet Room at Faichney Drive Business Complex. Reservations can be made online at www.watertownny.com or by

contacting the GWNC Chamber of Commerce at during business hours at (315) 788-4400.

The Shapiro Award is presented by the GWNC Chamber of Commerce and was established by Arnold I. Shapiro to honor the memory of his father, a long-time business leader in the community. A director of the Chamber at the time of his father’s passing in 1952, Shapiro sensed a need in Watertown for a symbolic annual recognition of exceptional leadership on behalf of Watertown. The award is made on the basis of outstanding citizenship, achievement, leadership, dedication and motivation.

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Hochul sets affordability agenda

By ALEX GAULT

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Gov. Kathleen C. Hochul outlined a broad plan to make New York more affordable, safer and future-focused in her State of the State address in Albany on Tuesday Jan. 14.

From an egg-shaped theater on the Empire State Plaza, Hochul said she plans to do things like push \$3 billion in state revenue back into taxpayers pockets with “inflation rebate checks” funded by the state’s sales tax collections, increase the number of state troopers at the northern border, expand agricultural opportunities and invest in the state’s dairy industry with investments in research and development programs.

The governor’s speech, which comes at the start of the 2025 legislative session, sets the scene for the next six months of lawmaking in the state capitol — in concert with the governor’s budget proposal expected in early February it marks her position on a number of key issues lawmakers will address this year.

The word on everyone’s lips in Albany has been affordability this year — lawmakers are taking a lesson from the national Republican electoral victory last year that’s swept Donald J. Trump back to the White House, and Republicans into uniform control in Washington. Even New York, a predominantly Democrat state, swung to the Republicans by 11%.

“As we reflect on the state of our great state, the Empire State, two things are very clear to me,” Hochul said. “Our future depends on the ability of every family to afford the essentials of life, and our ability to protect the safety and security of our residents.”

She referenced the work she and her office have done over her three years in office — raising the minimum wage, passing a statewide program to increase housing stocks, protecting young New Yorkers



Gov. Kathleen C. Hochul delivers her 2025 State of the State address Tuesday Jan. 14 in Albany. Alex Gault/Johnson Newspapers

from predators and addiction on social media, and ending copays for insulin for those on state-sanctioned health plans. But she said, as she has in her previous two State of the State addresses, that more work needs to be done.

Her first plan includes a call to cut state income taxes for those making less than \$323,000, expected to impact 8.3 million New Yorkers. The Governor did not share how much she wanted to cut taxes by.

“The tax cut I propose today and will fight for in the coming months will deliver the lowest tax rates in seven decades and save hardworking taxpayers \$1 billion.”

The Governor said that cut would complement her inflation refund, which will also go out to people making less than \$300,000 — \$300 for individual taxpayers, \$500 for families, and her proposal to boost the Empire State Child Tax Credit, expanding it to include families with kids under age 4 and raising the maximum benefit to \$1000 annually per child, and \$500 per child age 4 to 17. Hochul has outlined a plan

to provide free breakfast and lunch in every public school in the state — expanding the current program from covering about 90% of schools to 100%.

The governor also wants to put \$110 million aside to help child care providers build new facilities or expand their existing spaces, with a goal of adding more child care spaces to New York.

“Everything I’m talking about all adds up to nearly \$5,000,” she said.

Beyond affordability, Hochul said she wants to address public safety in New York — she outlined a few NYC-specific ideas like a cop in every subway train between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. every day for the next six months, and also proposed a change to the state’s involuntary commitment laws.

“We need to expand involuntary commitment into a hospital to include someone who does not possess the mental capacity to care for themselves such as refusing help with the basics: clothing, food, shelter, medical care,” Hochul said on Tuesday. Advocates and others have

expressed concerns for years over calls to change involuntary commitment rules — they worry that a move to put more people into hospitals against their will is reminiscent of the “bad old days” of mental institutions, and could be used to criminalize mental illness or poverty.

“I say that is flat out wrong,” Hochul said. “This is about having the humanity and the compassion to help people incapable of helping themselves.”

It didn’t get a mention in her speech Tuesday, but Hochul also wants to devote more state resources to the northern border — in her State of the State book, which includes over 200 policy proposals at varying degrees of specificity, she lays out a goal of increasing the number of New York state police assigned to the northern border region, as well as more counterterrorism investigators and a sophisticated network of surveillance technology as well. Hochul framed the push as addressing “transnational criminal networks” in the SOTS book.

Other priorities not included in the Governor’s speech include a commitment to supporting the state agriculture sector and dairy farmers specifically with research and development funding, a state-funded Excelsior Broadband Network that would help provide web connectivity in rural areas of upstate New York, reliant on a new fiber-optic installation along the full length of the New York State Thruway, and a commitment to making it easier for land conservation groups and the DEC to preserve wild, undeveloped lands.

On housing, a topic that got a lot of attention last year, Hochul said she wants to bar private equity groups from bidding on buildings in New York in the first 75 days of it being on the market, and ban landlords from using price-setting algorithm programs that help them raise rents.

The Governor’s plan did not address school funding — a closely watched issue this year after the Governor attempted to change state

Otis celebrating 40 years in business



Staff report

LYONS FALLS — During its four decades in business, Otis Technology has grown from a small manufacturer to an internationally recognized leader in gun cleaning products and accessories — providing its USA-made products to the military, law enforcement and sporting goods markets.

This year, the company celebrates 40 years in business and an ongoing commitment to rethink and redefine gun care, giving gun owners better and smarter ways to keep their most cherished firearms in the best condition possible.

Otis Technology's origins began in 1985 when founder Doreen Williams tripped and fell in the mud while whitetail deer hunting with her father.

With the barrel of her grandfather's Model 94 Winchester full of mud, the day's hunt was over for the 16-year-old. From that fateful day came an idea with a dream and the tenacity to see it through to success.

Ms. Williams, along with her parents and three siblings,

endeavored to create a smarter solution to a problem every hunter, soldier, shooting enthusiast and firearm owner has encountered.

The Williams family set out with a vision to innovate gun care and drove them to create quality products that serve the men and women who depend on their firearms to feed their families and protect their country.

And innovate is what Otis Technology did. The company pioneered the Breech-to-Muzzle® cable cleaning concept, allowing firearm owners to clean properly from the breech end of the firearm without disassembling their firearms.

Their round, soft pack cleaning kits are iconic and synonymous with the Otis brand much like the Coca-Cola bottle is to its brand.

"A lot of hard work and dedication over the last 40 years can be attributed to reaching this milestone," said Bill Kleftis, Otis Technology CEO. "What started as the Williams family at the kitchen table has grown



Doreen A. Garrett, founder of Otis Technology Inc., Lyons Falls, holds examples of their gun-cleaning kits in this 2014 photo. She is also the former chief executive officer. Watertown Daily Times.

into a workforce of 100-plus dedicated employees. We couldn't do what we do without our employees, our customers and our relationships with our community and in this industry. We look forward to another 40 years in business."

Otis Technology is known

for manufacturing the most advanced gun cleaning systems and accessories available. The superior Breech-to-Muzzle® design combined with unmatched quality has positioned Otis as the gun-care system of choice with the U.S. military. Otis Technology is smart

gun care.

There will be 40th anniversary-themed promotions on the Otis website throughout the year that will be announced via social media and the email newsletter. To sign up for the newsletter, go to otistec.com.

Ice Cream

From T3

ble and counter seating. Work continues on a back room that will be used for birthday parties and special events.

The couple expects to open Shaboom's during the week of Feb. 10 for Valentine's Day.

"Who opens an ice cream shop in the winter?" Bill Voodre quipped, cracking a bit of a laugh. "I do."

Committee member Mike Pierce told the Voodres they've picked a good location, just across the street from Watertown City School District schools. The Chrissy Beanz coffee and bakery shop next door will complement Shaboom's, he said.

"It sounds exciting," Pierce said.

WLDC board member Dawn Cole was glad to hear that she'll be able to get flavor bursts, concentrated syrups that are integrated into soft-serve ice cream, at Shaboom's.

"I'm an ice cream connoisseur," she said.

The shop also will sell 26 flavors of Hershey's hard and soft ice cream, pints and gallons of ice cream, ice cream cakes and sandwiches and bars, along with milkshakes. The couple also plans to have a well-stocked candy counter.

Shaboom's also will offer bubble tea, a popular cold, frothy drink created from a tea base that's shaken with flavors, sweeteners and sometimes milk.

Amy Voodre wants to create

an ice cream parlor patterned after Puff's Ice Cream Store, the ice cream shop that was on Washington Street until it closed during the 1990s.

Shaboom's will give something for kids to do, she stressed. WLDC board members recalled roller skating rinks and other businesses that catered to young people when they were kids.

Shaboom's will initially be open from 1 to 6 p.m. and extend as the weather gets warmer.

Amy Voodre is an experienced businesswoman as the former owner of Hearing Solutions. Bill operated businesses in Oregon until he relocated to Watertown about five years ago.

Fifty years ago, the couple were high school sweethearts



"Who opens an ice cream shop in the winter?" Bill Voodre quipped. "I do." Craig Fox/Watertown Daily Times

at Watertown High School. When Bill moved back to the north country, they fell in love again and married.

"We reconnected after 30 years," he said.

And they are now running the business together.

WATERTOWN AIRPORT EXPANSION IS CHUGGING ALONG

Terminal on pace for fall completion

By **JONATHON WHEELER**

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WATERTOWN — It was a big day at Watertown International Airport on Friday Dec. 20 as one of the final steel beams for the new airport terminal was lifted into place.

The airport, which has gained popularity over the years, will be getting new amenities — a welcoming area, new security checkpoints, a new waiting room, a restaurant and a jet bridge.

The total cost of the project is \$28 million. The airport's terminal account is covering \$116,021. No money is coming from county tax revenues such as property tax and sales tax. The majority of the 20,000-square-foot project is funded through a state grant with other money from an airport improvement program.

"This day is huge," said Grant W. Sussey, the airport's director of aviation. "This is a pretty good moment."

Rain, sleet and snow have not stopped construction

workers from ensuring the airport project has progressed.

Jefferson County Administrator Ryan M. Piche said there weren't any real delays because of the weather, other than during some high wind events. Piche confirmed that crews were working during the last two lake-effect snowstorms.

"They're making great progress," he said. "We're really moving."

Piche said that as the steel beam was being placed Friday, he was thinking about the next time he will see it: when it is completely covered and he's taking a tour of the new terminal. He also spent time imagining what the terminal will look like when it's done.

"It's something that has taken a lot of time and a lot of effort and a lot of persistence but the Board of Legislators have stuck with it and it really is, now, something special," he said.

Also in attendance was retired Jefferson County Admin-



Crews on Friday Dec. 20 at the Watertown International Airport put one of the last beams into place on the new terminal. Jonathon Wheeler/Watertown Daily Times

istrator Robert F. Hagemann III, who was at the helm when the county took over the airport in the early 2000s. The

airport now offers twice daily commercial flights to Philadelphia and serves more than 40,000 commercial passen-

gers each year.

Hagemann said he was

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St. Lawrence County Chamber planning for active year

By **BOB BECKSTEAD**

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MASSENA — The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce has plans for an active year in Massena.

“The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is making plans for an exciting year in Massena in 2025 as we pursue staffing and a new office, hosting of events, collaboration with local organizations, community promotion, tourism development and attraction, and support of its businesses,” Executive Director Benjamin R. Dixon said.

The Massena, Canton and Ogdensburg chambers had merged with the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce in 2023, and Laura Pearson began working in Massena on Mondays and Tuesdays and attending meetings of the Massena Rotary Club in 2024 while splitting her time with the Ogdensburg Chamber office.

“The past year was one of tremendous evolution for the chamber as we developed a new staff, grew our board of directors, delved into new tourism initiatives, and established new membership benefits,” Dixon said. “We also effected the four-party legal business merger of the Massena and St. Lawrence County (with Ogdensburg and Canton) chambers, a process that has required patient and deliberate effort to implement logistically. We continue to seek the financial capacity to achieve our vision and goals of an integrated chamber of commerce.”

Reflecting back on 2004, he said Massena was well-represented in the chamber’s nationwide and Canadian marketing efforts.

“Recreational assets were featured in heavily trafficked digital platforms such as Discover Upstate NY, Thousand Islands Regional Tourism, and the Hearst Times Union. We helped the town secure \$10,000 in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Tourism Promotion funds. We posted frequently on our Visit STLC: Massena NY Facebook page with nearly 5,000 followers, and our Massena-specific web page at www.visitstlc.com/massena-new-york/ receives excellent traffic,” Dixon said.



The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce has plans for an active year in Massena, including a new office and full-time staffing. They are looking to sell the current chamber building at 16 Church St. Watertown Daily Times

In addition, he said, “We amplified digital marketing of the Fall Fest Pumpkinpalooza to thousands.”

On the business side, he said they hosted Business After Hours events, spotlighted several businesses on Facebook, and recently hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony at North Country Liquor & Wine, formerly Romeo’s Liquor store.

“Curran Renewable Energy was our Local Producer of the Year,” Dixon said.

Now, it’s time to look forward to 2025.

“We have far loftier goals for 2025, as we work to achieve the financial capacity for a new office and permanent staff in Massena,” he said.

He said they’re looking to “drive engagement with businesses and organizations and connect them to development opportunities pertinent to their needs, promote them through digital and other marketing channels, and build awareness and utilization of the robust benefits of chamber membership.”

“We look forward to hosting Business After Hours, including

May 27 at the Gristmill Brewery, our annual tourism dinner at the River Course at Louisville Landing on June 12, more ribbon-cuttings, and community-wide festivals to feature businesses and organizations holding thematically connected events and offerings and a Shop Local in Massena campaign,” Dixon said.

He said they also want to advance tourism promotion of Massena and surrounding communities by collaborating with municipalities, promotion partners and local attractions, “and, in keeping with our vision of an integrated chamber of commerce, connect our work in business development, workforce development, advocacy and tourism to our members, the businesses, and the communities we serve.”

“In pursuit of these goals, the 16 Church St. property has been put up for sale on the Multiple Listing Service. The large building exceeds our needs for an office and visitor center and can be put to a higher use by a different entity, becoming an active property for the community and contributing to the local economy,”

Dixon said.

He said the sale of the building, along with financial support from the town of Massena, membership dues and sponsorships, “will hopefully provide the catalytic revenue for us to hire a permanent Massena community coordinator and staff a new office.”

He said the Massena presence is necessary to carry out their plans for 2025.

“The chamber holds a dedicated checking account solely for the revenues and expenses specific to our Massena operations, and the sale revenues of the Church Street property will be deposited into that account,”

he said.

Dixon said they’re anticipate an exciting 2025.

“As we turn the corner from a year of evolution in 2024, the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce casts its vision forward with enthusiasm to a year of beneficial impact and exciting activity in the Greater Massena community. We look forward to increasing collaboration and engagement with the businesses, organizations, and residents of the community and welcome your feedback and support as we work together to do great things in 2025,” he said.



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Local chef to lease Ives Hill Country Club restaurant

By **CRAIG FOX**

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WATERTOWN — Jake Johnson will have a local restaurateur run the restaurant at Ives Hill Country Club this season.

Johnson, a local developer who owns dozens of properties in and around downtown, opened the restaurant back up in December 2023 and hired a staff to run the restaurant after purchasing Ives Hill Country Club the previous summer from P.J. Simao for \$1.9 million.

This season, Michael Bailine, a local chef with experience running eateries in the area, will lease the restaurant from him.

Most recently, Bailine was going to lease the former Flashback Lounge at 1303 State St., but then Johnson called him last week with the offer to run the Ives Hill restaurant, Bailine said.

"It all happened in a

week," Bailine said.

He signed a lease with Johnson on Wednesday. The restaurant under Johnson will close Saturday. Johnson will continue to operate the 9-hole Ives Hill Country Club.

Some of what Bailine was planning at the old Flashback Lounge he'll do at Ives Hill. But he intends to reopen Ives Hill as a full service restaurant in time for the golf season in April. About 20 employees will work there. He's already started applying for his liquor license.

Until then, he'll start next week with Doordash deliveries, offering burgers, pasta, deserts and beverages. Plans will follow with \$12 business lunch boxes soon after that — which he had originally planned at the State Street take-out restaurant location.

He's "still figuring out" exactly how he'll approach the Ives Hill venture once



The dining room inside the Ives Hill Country Club. Watertown Daily Times

it opens for golf season, adding that it might end up with either one or two separate restaurants because the building can be "divided into two," he explained.

"We still have some time before the golf season," Bailine said.

On Wednesday, Bailine was in Syracuse at the Cisco Foods kitchen working on his menu.

When he acquired Ives

Hill Country Club in the summer of 2023, Johnson had originally intended to lease out the restaurant but then ran it himself, he said.

Under the arrangement with Bailine, Johnson can solely focus on the golf course, he said.

He stressed that he wanted to thank the community for the support he's received. He also encouraged the community to support

Bailine "because he's going to do a bang up job."

Last week, the city's Planning Commission approved a special-use permit for the State Street take-out eatery. Bailine has since notified the Planning Department that deal is off and he is no longer pursuing it, said Michael A. Lumbis, the city's planning and community director.

Lumbis said he was unaware that the two businessmen were working on the plans for Ives Hill.

Dating back to 1897, the West Flower Avenue landmark has a long, rich history as a golf course and restaurant.

Bailine was once the co-owner of the Last Call Lounge in Evans Mills with his now ex-wife, but left the business several years ago. It closed last year, he said.

He also once owned a pizzeria in Watertown.

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24-WO-00527 (02/24)

Another Year of Crepes, Coffee and peace at Old Market Coffee



Attention to detail in every cup.



Sweet and savory crepes.



A sunny interior at Old Market Coffee in Potsdam greets customers.

Their mission is to inspire communities of peace and conversations of truth through considerate service and companionable atmosphere. And that's what they continue to provide at Old Market Coffee.

Old Market Coffee opened in August 2021 at 1/2 Main Street in downtown Potsdam. The business is owned

by friends Jerrial Martin and Josh Puffer.

Martin and Puffer grew up together, attended church together and have had a mutual dream to own a coffee shop. Martin said a lot of research was done ahead of opening, including training

owners took a special interest in crepes following visits to Montreal and France.

Old Market offers a full service espresso bar. Coffees include drip coffee, Americano, cappuccino, and macchiato, among others. Their sweet and savory crepes in classic and fusion styles are inspired by their travels. Batter is made from scratch each day. Some crepe options in-

clude bacon avocado, red raspberry mousse and capri, which include basil pesto, tomato and fresh mozzarella.

"There is a selection of savory or sweet crepes," Martin said. "Build-your-own crepes, yogurt parfaits and sweet treats round out the menu."

On Thursdays during the college semester, Old Market offers their space and

complimentary coffee/tea as a Study Night for students 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. See their website for more information and dates, www.oldmarket.coffee.

Regular business hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Old Market Coffee is a proud member of the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce.



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Jefferson Community College Featured Honors Program Student

By Pamela J. Dixon

Jefferson Community College

Kary Melendez-Aristud, Theresa, is the featured Jefferson Community College (JCC) Honors Program student for the month of December 2024. Melendez-Aristud is a business major at Jefferson. For one of her honors program options, she conducted a project on data and marketing analytics.

The Jefferson Community College Honors Program offers students with exceptional academic skills the opportunity to receive enriched instruction within their current program of



Kary Melendez-Aristud.

study. For the Honors Program, students select three courses within their curriculum, and enhance them as Honors Options. The option is based on a project agreed to by the student and a faculty member willing to work closely with the student to provide a unique and rewarding experience. Students also take the Honors Seminar, a unique inter-disciplinary course open only to program participants. The seminar examines a single theme each semester and features guest speakers from a variety of disciplines and often includes some sort of field experience.

rience.

Successful program participants earn a prestigious Honors Graduate designation on their academic transcript for each Honors Option course. Students demonstrating excellent academic achievement in high school or who have completed 12 credit hours of college coursework are invited to apply for admission to the Honors Program.

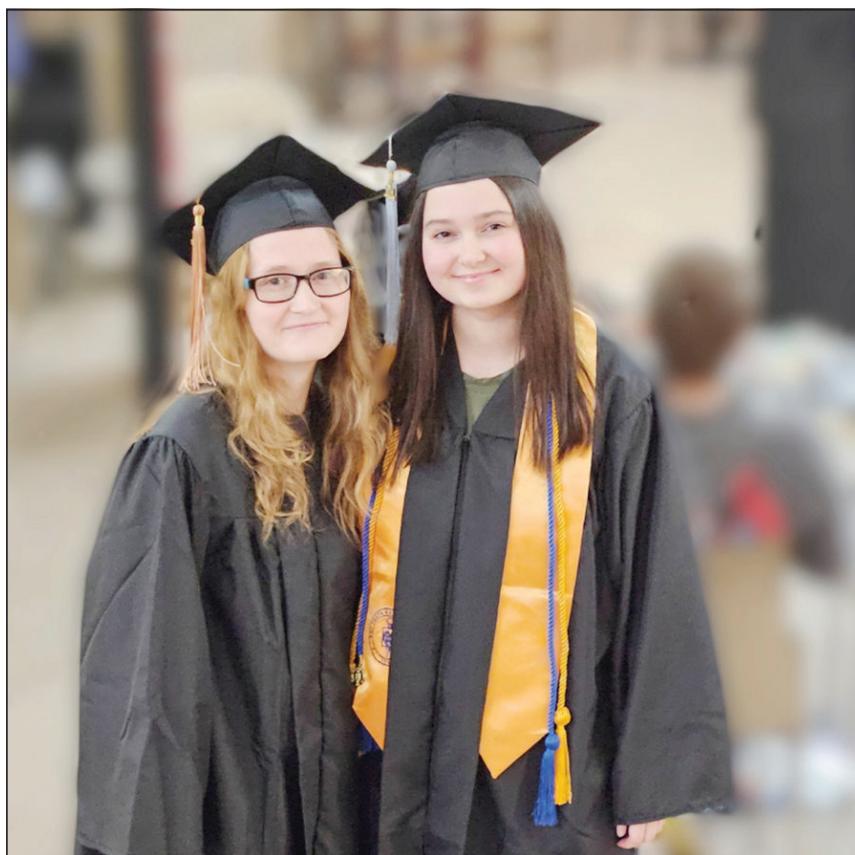
"I joined JCC's honors program to build my skills and boost my résumé by working on independent projects that I had a passion about, with the help of my professors," says Kary Me-

lendez-Aristud, JCC featured Honors Program student. "The honors program is a great way to challenge yourself, figure out what you're passionate about, and bring it to life through your honors option. You also get to build closer relationship relationships with your professors, which was essential for my journey at JCC."

For information, visit www.sunyjefferson.edu or contact Honors Program coordinator, Dr. Joshua Canale, at jcanale@sunyjefferson.edu.

JCC celebrates fall grads

On Dec. 17, 2024, Jefferson Community College held a senior send-off to honor the accomplishments of its fall graduates. The fall 2024 graduating class consists of approximately 85 students, pending satisfactory completion of coursework. Among them are Britni Mays (left) of Adams and Rose Slate of Adams Center. Fall graduates have the opportunity to join the spring commencement.



Application Deadline for Dental Hygiene Degree Program Jan. 31

By PAMELA J. DIXON

Jefferson Community College

Jefferson Community College (JCC), in partnership with Monroe Community College (MCC), Rochester, NY, is bringing the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) Degree in Dental Hygiene to the North Country. This unique collaboration offers local students an opportunity to pursue a rewarding career in dental hygiene while remaining in Jefferson or Lewis counties. The application deadline is January 31, 2025 (fall 2025 start).

The Dental Hygiene program prepares students for licensure and practice as a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH). Upon successful completion, students graduate with an Associate of Applied Science degree and are eligible to take the National Board and regional licensing examinations. The program begins in fall 2025, and only five seats are available for the 2025 cohort. Additional seats will be offered in 2027 and 2029.

Key Program Details:

Application Deadline for Fall 2025 Start: January 31, 2025

Eligibility: Students must reside in Jefferson or Lewis counties.

Clinical Courses: Taken in person at North Country Family Health Center, Watertown, NY.

Online Courses: Delivered via SUNY BrightSpace Learning

Management System.

Prerequisites apply: visit www.sunyjefferson.edu for details

Prospective students are encouraged to meet with an advisor at JCC or MCC to plan their academic pathway. Admission to the program is competitive, and meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee acceptance. Prerequisites must be completed prior to applying, and detailed information can be found on the College's website, www.sunyjefferson.edu.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a strong outlook for dental hygienists, with employment in the field projected to grow by 9% nationally through 2033. In New York State, dental hygienists earn an annual mean wage of \$87,000, making it a lucrative and in-demand career path.

This innovative partnership between JCC and MCC underscores a commitment to expanding educational opportunities and meeting regional workforce needs. Clinical coursework will provide hands-on experience, while online learning ensures a flexible schedule for students.

For more information visit www.sunyjefferson.edu or contact Donna Stevenson, Interim Associate Vice President at JCC, at (315) 786-2323 or dsteven@sunyjefferson.edu.

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www.SLCIDA.com



2025 Spring Session of The Captain School at ABM Open for Registration



People gather at the St. Lawrence River for the 51st annual boat parade at the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton. A captain's course, required to operate a boat like the Zipper in the foreground will be held in March at the museum. Watertown Daily Times

By JESS GOULD

jgould@abm.com

CLAYTON — The Antique Boat Museum (ABM) is excited to announce the 2025 Spring session of The Captain School at ABM, led by experienced instructors Captain Tom Trovato and Captain Ken Kozin. This comprehensive program provides the essential training required to obtain a U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC).

This session offers courses for the Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels (OUPV/6-Pack), Masters Upgrade (~100 GRT), and Towing Endorsement, with the addition of a new Auxiliary Sail Endorsement. Upon completing the courses and exams, students will fulfill key requirements for their MMC at the OUPV or Masters level, with the option to add endorsements.

Course Details and Schedule:

OUPV/6-Pack Course + Exams

- Dates: March 15-25, 2025

Class Times:

- March 15, 16, 19, 22, 23: 8 AM – 5 PM

- March 17, 18, 20, 21: 8 AM – 12 PM

Exam Dates & Times:

- March 24: 9 AM

- March 25: 1 PM

- Cost: \$845 (includes exam fees)

Towing Endorsement Course + Exam

- Date: March 25, 2025

- Time: 8 AM – 12 PM (exam included in curriculum)

- Cost: \$100 (includes exam fees)

Upgrade to Masters (~100 GRT) Course + Exam

- Dates: April 1-3, 2025

- Time: 8 AM – 5 PM (exam included in curriculum)

- Cost: \$350 (includes exam fees)

NEW Auxiliary Sail Endorsement Course + Exam

- Date: March 20, 2025
- Time: 1 PM – 5 PM (exam included in curriculum)
- Cost: \$100 (includes exam fees)

Why Earn a Merchant Mariner Credential?

An MMC is required to legally operate vessels carrying passengers for hire, including fishing charters, tour boats, diving excursions, and more. It is also necessary for commercial operations such as ferries, tugboats, and supply boats, as well as private yacht delivery for many manufacturers.

Registration and Contact Information:

Registration is now open on the Captain School at ABM webpage at <https://www.abm.org/education/the-captain-school/>. This page also includes links to register online and access the U.S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center's MMC application checklist.

For questions about registration, course materials, or the licensing process, please contact Museum Educator Molly Voth at mvoth@abm.org or 315-686-4104 ext. 225.

Located on the St. Lawrence River in upstate NY, ABM features a collection of over 300 antique and classic boats and thousands of recreational boating artifacts. Each summer the 4.5-acre waterfront campus comes alive with numerous educational programs and special events, including the longest-running antique boat show in North America. For more information, please visit the Museum's website at abm.org.

Coastal Resilience Specialist Named for St. Lawrence River-Eastern Lake Ontario Region

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) has added Lauren Darcy as a Great Lakes Coastal Resilience Specialist for the St. Lawrence River and eastern Lake Ontario region of New York State. From NYSG's new office housed with the Tug Hill Commission at the Dulles State Office Building in Watertown, New York, Lauren will serve as a conduit to NYSG's expertise with coastal processes and hazards, Great Lakes fisheries and ecosystem health, water quality, Great Lakes literacy training for teachers and informal educators, and coastal tourism.

Early in 2025, Lauren, along with NYSG Great Lakes Coastal Community Development Specialist Mary Austerman, will conduct focus groups to determine the information and resource needs of local decision makers, building inspectors, supervisors, mayors, and Tribal leaders. NYSG provides local governments with training in best practices and customized resources related to water resources and land use planning, green infrastructure, and stormwater and floodplain management. The training empowers



Lauren Darcy. Contributed.

local communities to build resilience capacity against extreme weather and storm impacts.

New York Sea Grant is a cooperative program of Cornell University and the State University of New York and among a nationwide network of 34 university-based programs working with coastal communities under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Sea Grant College Program. Learn more at www.nyseagrant.org. Lauren can be reached at 315-849-3962.

The 36th Annual Save the River Winter Environmental Conference is Saturday, Jan. 25 in Clayton

Save The River® Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper® is hosting its 36th Annual Winter Environmental Conference on Saturday, January 25 at The Harbor Hotel in Clayton.

The Winter Environmental Conference is a chance to hear from speakers across the region about topics concerning the Upper St. Lawrence River.

Pre-registration and tickets are currently available online at

savetheriver.org. The conference will begin with registration at 9:30 a.m. and opening remarks at 10 a.m.

Dr. Kate Cleary will discuss efforts by the A2A Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative to improve connectivity for wildlife through a bi-national road ecology study in the 1000 Islands region. Jake Tibbles, Executive Director of the Thousand Islands Land Trust, will latest updates on Blind Bay.

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CLARKSON HIRES LEADER FOR ITS NY HEALTHY WATER SOLUTIONS

By **JAKE NEWMAN**
Clarkson

Clarkson University Hires Business Development Manager for its New York State Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions

The New York State (NYS) Center of Excellence (CoE) in Healthy Water Solutions, led by Clarkson University and SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF), has hired Courtney Johnson-Woods as its new Business Development Manager.

“Our CoE staff and faculty are excited Courtney is joining our team in this role,” said Stefan Grimberg, Clarkson Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Co-Director of the NYS CoE in Healthy Water Solutions. “We believe her well-rounded technical and partnership skills will help the CoE expand business development opportunities to accelerate growth and impact to benefit not only our partnering institutions, but in keeping with the mission of the CoE, will collectively contribute long-term to economic development objectives across the state.”

Johnson-Woods is not new to Clarkson, having spent 17 years as a faculty member in the Communications, Media & Design department. In addition to teaching, her research focused on shoreline community decision-making along the St. Lawrence as well as additional grant projects centering around water challenges. She also has a deep connection with CoE partner ESF, from which she received her MS and more recently her PhD, and has worked with several ESF faculty members on collaborative projects over the years.

Bookending her academic career, Johnson-Woods worked in economic development and planning in Central New York focused on groundwater protection, and in business development for a state agency in Arkansas. It was



Courtney Johnson-Woods is Clarkson University’s new Business Development Manager. Contributed.

there she began working in the forest products industry, where she focused on sustainability and best practices for water conservation in a formal role and for the last three decades remotely as a consultant.

Most recently, Johnson-Woods worked at a global consulting firm in international development, providing expertise on cross-sector partnerships in water and fisheries, sustainable tourism in Greenland, and private sector open innovation models and environmental, social and governance (ESG) roadmaps.

Taking advantage of this announcement, Johnson-Woods invites Clarkson faculty who might have research and development interests that intersect with diverse water challenges and opportunities to contact her. She will be meeting with faculty to better understand Clarkson’s strengths and potentials, as well as those of ESF, as a critical step in exploring opportunities to collaborate with other organizations, industry, and municipalities across the state on healthy water solutions at all stages of research, development and commercialization.

She can be reached by email at cwoods@clarkson.edu or phone at 315-268-2001.

To learn more about the NYS CoE in Healthy Water Solutions, visit www.healthywaters.org.

Clarkson University Research Recognized in 2023 Environmental Science & Technology Best Paper Awards

By **JAKE NEWMAN**
Clarkson

A team of Clarkson University Researchers were recently recognized as fourth runners-up in the Environmental Technology category in the 2023 Environmental Science & Technology (ES&T) Best Paper Awards, released this past December.

Richard and Helen March Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Selma Mededovic, Jean S. Newell Distinguished Professor of Engineering and Co-Director of the Center for Air and Aquatic Resources Engineering & Science (CAARES) Thomas Holsen, Graduate Research Assistant Faith Isowamwen, Undergraduate Student Katherine Ross, and Associate Professor at Sun Yat-sen University and former Clarkson University Research Assistant Professor Rui Li were recog-

nized for their research titled “PFAS-CTAB Complexation and Its Role on the Removal of PFAS from a Lab-Prepared Water and a Reverse Osmosis Reject Water Using a Plasma Reactor.”

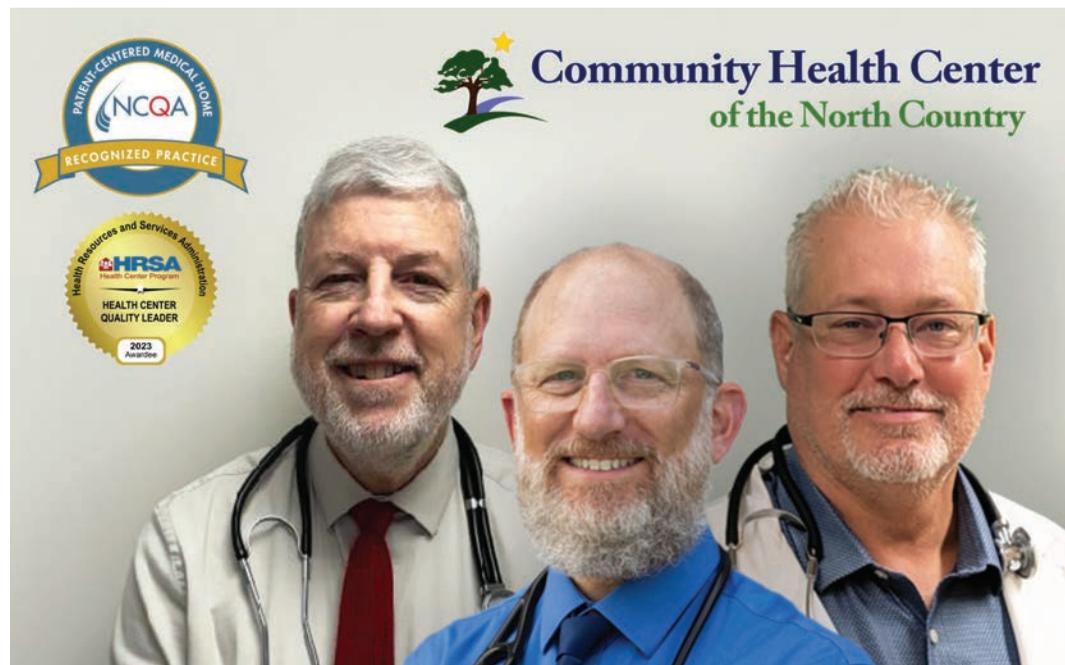
The group’s study develops and provides a detailed explanation of a novel approach for degrading per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) of varying chain lengths using electrical discharge plasma, in the presence of a cationic surfactant.

“This paper is the result of the hard work of our undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral students,” Mededovic said. “We are all thrilled to be recognized by the ES&T, among the 1,600 manuscripts it publishes annually.”

Environmental Science & Technology (ES&T) is widely recognized as one of the top journals in the field of envi-

ronmental science, with an impact factor of 11.4 and acceptance rate of approximately 15 percent.

Clarkson University is a proven leader in technological education, research, innovation and sustainable economic development. With its main campus in Potsdam, N.Y., and additional graduate program and research facilities in the Capital Region and Hudson Valley, Clarkson faculty have a direct impact on more than 7,800 students annually through nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate STEM designated degrees in engineering, business, science and health professions; executive education, industry-relevant credentials and K-12 STEM programs. Alumni earn salaries among the top 2% in the nation: one in five already leads in the c-suite. To learn more go to www.clarkson.edu.



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Naturally Lewis, Inc. Opens Applications for 2025 Funding Opportunities

By **KAYLEE TABOLT**

kaylee@naturallylewis.com

Lewis County, NY – Naturally Lewis, Inc. is announcing its 2025 funding opportunities with seven opportunities for businesses, commercial property owners, community organizations, and youth. These funding opportunities are: (1) Building Business Fund, (2) Business Retention Fund, (3) Community Connections Fund, (4) Launch Lewis County, (5) Small Things, Big Impacts Fund, (6) Student Pitch Competition and (7) Vacant Property Revitalization Fund.

The Building Business Fund, funded through the Community Economic Development Program, will support local businesses providing matching funds to invest in the “tools” to scale up and grow. Funds can be used for literal tools (equipment/machinery) or figurative tools (business services/professional services) to assist business growth. Projects must show overall benefit to the community and promote economic development through business growth. Applications are currently open and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

The Business Retention Fund, funded through the Community Economic Development Program and Lewis County, will support existing businesses by providing matching funds to businesses looking to sustain their business operations following a natural disaster, act of God, or mandate affecting business retention or operations. Applications are currently open and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

The Community Connec-



Mick Lehman of Grand Slam Safety with their completed project funded by the Vacant Property Revitalization Fund. Contributed.

tions Fund, funded through the Community Economic Development Program, will support non-profit organizations, municipalities, and schools in developing partnerships, building organizational capacity, and executing projects that foster collaboration and economic growth. Applications are currently open and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

The Launch Lewis County Program, funded by NYS Office of Homes & Community Renewal, will support low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs in starting up their businesses. Applications are currently open and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

The Small Things, Big Impacts Fund, funded through the Community Economic Development Program and HLH Living Trust, will support Lewis County businesses and nonprofit organizations to implement innovative, small-scale projects that enhance visibility, build capacity, and drive growth. Additionally, there is a focus on funding events and festivals that bring vis-

itors to our community. Applications are currently open and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

The Student Pitch Competition, funded through the Community Economic Development Program, will support young entrepreneurs through a business proposal competition for high school students in Lewis County. Applications open on January 20, 2025 and close on May 1, 2025.

The Vacant Property Revitalization Fund, funded by Lewis County, will support building owners that are looking to revitalize vacant buildings or floors into usable spaces for commercial use. Applications are currently open and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Find more information about current funding opportunities and growing your business in Lewis County, New York at naturallylewis.com or by following Naturally Lewis, Inc. on Facebook and LinkedIn.

OTIS TECHNOLOGY ANNOUNCES SALES, MARKETING & OPERATIONS PROMOTIONS

Lyons Falls, NY: Otis Technology is proud to announce several key promotions and new hires within the sales, marketing and operations team. These promotions are not only well deserved but fulfill our strategic goals for 2025 and beyond.

On the Sales & Marketing Team, **Kenda Campbell** has been promoted to Vice President of Commercial Sales. Kenda has eight years of tenure at Otis Technology and will continue to lead the commercial sales team as they continue their positive sales growth trajectory.

Otis also congratulates **Heather Pleskach** on her new role as Vice President of Marketing. She has been on the Otis team for 16 years and will continue to drive marketing and new product strategy for the organization.

In Otis' commitment to innovation, Otis Technology welcomes **Samantha Harter** as its New Product Manager. Sam brings a wealth of firearms knowledge which will be vital in her role at Otis.

Over his 4-year tenure, **Jared Sturtevant** has been instrumental in driving brand awareness efforts through brand influencers, social media, paid media and video content. In his new role as Brand Marketing Manager, Jared will also be responsible for leading Otis Technology's public relations efforts.

On the Operations Team, **Sean Fox** was promoted to Production Supervisor. Sean previously

held the role as Area Specialist, leading the assembly team in their production goals while ensuring operational quality, processes and policies were being met. Fox has been employed at Otis for 12 years and in his new role will oversee the entire production team.

Shelley Lallier, previously Production Supervisor, now tackles her new role as Production Training Supervisor. In this role, Shelley is responsible for designing, implementing and overseeing training programs for the various production departments. Lallier has been with Otis Technology for 21 years.

“I am very excited to announce these promotions on our team,” states Bill Kleftis, Chief Executive Officer for Otis Technology. He continues, “We have many talented employees and are very fortunate to be able to promote from within. With their leadership in their new roles, along with the rest of our team, we are positioned for continued success. The future is bright for Otis and Shooter's Choice.”

Otis Technology is known for manufacturing the most advanced gun cleaning systems and accessories available. The superior Breech-to-Muzzle® design combined with unmatched quality has positioned Otis as the gun care system of choice with the US Military. Otis Technology is SMART GUN CARE.



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Grand Opening of Hoagies N More eatery in Ogdensburg



Pictured for the Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting (in no particular order) are Jerry and Dawn Crossett, Julia Cote, Gracie Crobar, Lillian Russell, Hunter McDonald, Alan and Ruth Laughman, Storm Cilley, City Councilman, Mike Weaver, City Councilman, Mike Tooley, Mayor of Ogdensburg, Anthony Adamczyk, Director of Economic Development, Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority, Kevin McDonough, Ogdensburg Community Ambassador and Benjamin Dixon, Executive Director of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce. Contributed.

The Ogdensburg Community office of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony of Hoagies N More, a new eatery located at 120 Chimney Point (in Commerce Park behind the St. Lawrence Federal Credit Union) in Ogdensburg.

Owned by Jerry and Dawn Crossett, Hoagies N More is pleased to serve a variety of quality food to the Ogdensburg community and surrounding areas. Their menu features a selection of subs, sandwiches, salads, soups, and plenty of desserts!

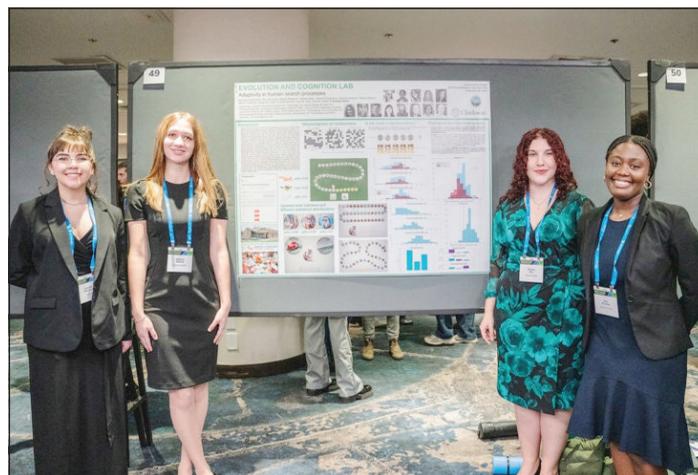
Hoagies N More is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, you can contact them at 315-605-1283, via email at hoagiesnmore24@gmail.com, or

visit their Facebook page at HOAGIESNMORE.

Anthony Adamczyk, Director of Economic Development, Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority shared enthusiasm about the new business, “The Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority is very pleased to have Hoagies N More as a new tenant in the Commerce Park Campus. It has been the Authority’s goal for some time now to have on-site food service catering to companies located within the campus and we appreciate Hoagies N More for helping make this goal a reality”.

For more information, please contact Laura Pearson at the Ogdensburg Community Office at 315-386-4000 ext. 5 or by email at: Laura@slcchamber.org.

Clarkson Students Present Research on Adaptivity in Human Search Processes



Clarkson Students Present Research on Adaptivity in Human Search Processes at Psychonomics Annual Meeting. Contributed.

By JAKE NEWMAN
Clarkson

A group of Clarkson University students recently presented their research at the Psychonomic Society 65th Annual Meeting in New York City in November.

Psychology and Biology major **Katerina Medved '27**, Biology major and Honors Student **Vivienne Way '28**, Psychology major **Isabella Makdouli '27**, and Psychology Major and McNair schol-

ar **Nina Pluviose** presented their research titled “Adaptivity in Human Search Processes.”

Humans and other organisms must search effectively for the resources they need, whether these are physical, like food, or informational, like patterns in the world or concepts stored in memory. Most human search studies have focused on brief static

See STUDENTS T20

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*SeaComm has partnered with Titanium Payments of Northern New York to provide terminal-based support, PDS system expertise and payment processing options. To contact Titanium Payments directly, call Mike Homing at (315) 244-5575.

Auction

From T4

ness not just for a job, but also to help people who may have lost somebody. They get overwhelmed with their stuff and they don't know what to do with it or where to turn," Bert said, adding that such a service provides a rewarding aspect to the business. "It's nice when you go in and help them out. It's a good feeling when they're happy when we take care of their stuff, and when they get a check in the end, they're even happier."

Bert said after his father started the business, he got involved by just helping out — and on occasion, he'd fill in as auctioneer to give his dad a break. His involvement gradually grew, and his role expanded until he took over the business in 2021 — one year before his father passed.

"It was a seamless transition. We did pretty much everything



Elora Gray (standing) takes a moment to chat with some of the attendees prior to an auction on Jan. 4. Richard Rosentreter/Malone Telegram

together. It was always a family thing. It wasn't really much different," Bert said of being in charge, adding that the emo-

tional bond contributed to his decision to take the helm. "It would have been sad to see it go after dad built the business up.

If dad hadn't done it, I probably wouldn't have started it myself."

According to Bert, his auction service takes on a variety of clientele, from those clearing

VALUE IN 'JUNK'

See AUCTION T20

Affordability

From T6

to permit funding cuts to districts annual foundation aid payments last year. A report commissioned by lawmakers from the Albany-based Rockefeller Institute of Government released in November laid out a number of suggestions including a phased-in move to cut foundation aid totals for certain districts — but the Governor quickly backtracked on her support for that move and plans remain unclear.

She's signaled support for a cell phone ban in schools set by state law, but did not reference that topic either on Tuesday's speech or SOTS book. The Governor did lay out one education priority — to provide free community college education to any state resident age 25 to 55 who wants to pursue a career in healthcare, modern industrial work or teaching.

She also pledged \$1 billion for green energy, although she didn't specify what that money would be spent on specifically.

Tuesday's presentation was far showier than Hochul's previous State of the State addresses — the Governor has in the past three years hosted the event in the state Assembly Chamber. There, she opted for a fairly scaled-back presentation with the usual ceremonial Color Guard procession and little else before taking the dais, but Tuesday's presentation opened with over 30 minutes of performances and a video presentation as well. A high school marching band played songs from Rocky, a poet read an original piece, a troupe of dancers over age

50 danced to a Justin Timberlake song, and a vocalist performed along with a piano accompaniment before the Governor was introduced by a video narrated by young New Yorkers.

The performances prompted some criticism from local lawmakers.

"Governor Hochul opened her State of the State address with a new song and dance; literally," Senator Mark C. Walczyk, R-Watertown said. "I'm not sure how slam poetry, marching bands, choirs, dancers and Off-Broadway productions are going to reduce crime, or lower financial burdens for everyday New Yorkers but I'm sure she entertained herself. What's not entertaining is the price tag of all the goodies she's promising and what these proposals will do to further the largest state budget in the nation."

The substance of what Hochul proposed Tuesday got some higher marks — Minority Leader William A. Barclay, R-Pulaski, said in a statement that he was pleased to see inflation relief, public safety and child care at the core of the Governor's proposals, but felt the speech and legislative plan didn't realistically represent the situation in New York.

"Gov. Hochul's speech offered an overly optimistic picture of New York's current state of affairs," he said. "The reality is, for six years, one-party rule has created a more expensive and more dangerous New York." Assemblyman Kenneth D. Blankenbush, R-Black River, echoed that sentiment.

"The cost of living is unsustainable, with soaring house prices, record-high groceries and rising energy costs thanks to forced green energy policies," Blankenbush said. "New Yorkers need bold action and real solutions, not empty rhetoric and failed

promises."

Barclay said the presentation failed to properly address public safety concerns and repeated a common Republican appeal for lawmakers to re-address the state's bail reforms and the Raise the Age bill that upped the age a person can be tried as an adult for most crimes.

He also urged the governor to lower spending in the state budget this year — something the Republican lawmakers in Albany have long said should be a key answer to solving the affordability crisis in the state.

"We cannot continue on this unsustainable financial path," he said. "Hopefully, the Governor will address these concerns in her executive budget address next week."

Assemblyman Scott A. Gray, R-Watertown, said he approved of the tax cuts outlined by the Governor, but wasn't as impressed by the inflation rebate program.

"Inflation rebate, that's questionable," he said in a special edition of his weekly YouTube video address 'The Gray Area.' "Certainly people want to see money coming back to them, the question is why did we take it from them in the first place?"

He said he was largely disappointed that the Governor's address focused so much on issues relevant to New York City, and did not spend equal time on upstate issues, like housing or transport infrastructure.

That budget address will contain solid spending figures for the proposals the governor has made so far this year, and will likely also contain details on her plans for education funding and other key programs.

Coat Drive Benefits Area School Children, 2024 Home Sales



Coats collected for area school children. Contributed.

By LANCE EVANS

levans@nnymls.com

Children in Jefferson and Lewis Counties are warmer thanks to the efforts of REALTOR® and Affiliate members of the Jefferson-Lewis Board of REALTORS®. With the aim to get coats to elementary children in need, members contributed about 325 new coats as well as a large number of hats, mittens, and gloves.

Spearheaded by the Board of REALTORS®' Community Outreach Committee, all of the school districts in Jefferson and Lewis Counties were contacted in late October and asked to send the numbers and sizes of coats needed. Members signed up to provide the coats which the committee sorted and placed into tote bags for distribution to the children.

"I am very proud of how our members stepped up to fill this critical need," said Jennifer Flynn (2024 JLBOR President). "REALTORS® and our affiliate members do more than make sure property changes hands.

We care about the local community and work to better the world around us."

Helped by slightly lower mortgage rates, 2024 real estate sales numbers in the tri-county area have gradually stabilized. This followed the state and national trends with overall sales dropping but recovering some in the fourth quarter. Median prices rose overall and days on the market stayed about the same. Days on the market (or DOM) measures the number of days from when the listing starts to when the purchase contract is accepted.

Jefferson-Lewis REALTORS® sold 1337 residential (single-family) properties in 2024. This was down slightly from 2023 when 1381 properties changed hands. The median price rose in 2024 to \$210,000 from \$189,900 the previous year. The days on the market rose slightly to 48 from 43 in 2023. Adding in all other types of property including commercial, land, and multifamily yielded similar re-

sults with a total of 1796 properties sold. In 2023, this was 1875. The median price rose to \$180,000 from \$165,000 in 2023. The DOM increased by about two weeks to 71.

St. Lawrence County members also saw a drop in homes sold in 2024 to 756 from 803 in 2023. The median price was \$149,000 up \$19,000 from \$130,000 in 2023. Marketing time decreased slightly to 71 days from 73 the previous year. Adding in the other types of properties sold, 2024 saw 961 total sales down from 1008 in 2023. The median price rose by \$7,000 to \$126,000 and DOM was down one day to 88 days.

The fourth quarter yielded mixed results in the area with Jefferson-Lewis members selling 356 homes (up 26 from 2023) for a median price of \$195,000 (up \$8000) with DOM rising 3 days to 49. St. Lawrence County sales dipped to 197 in the same period down 15, although the median price paid rose \$19,000 to \$150,000.

Like Jefferson-Lewis sales, DOM rose 3 days to 65.

The national real estate forecast for 2025 is for modest growth in sales and prices. The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) believes that the mortgage rate will stabilize around 6%. This will help to stimulate sales of existing homes with 4.5 million homes changing hands. NAR also believes the stable interest rate will stimulate new home construction in some parts of the country.

Realtor.com, a national real estate portal, is slightly more pessimistic forecasting a 1.5% increase in 2025 sales to 4.07 million annually. Their 2025 Housing Forecast cautions that sales in early 2025 may lag behind 2024 but pick up later in the year as the mortgage rates ease.

A lower stable interest rate will help locally. Among sales recorded in the Jefferson-Lewis Multiple Listing Service (MLS) about 75% of homes involve a

mortgage. It is slightly lower in the St. Lawrence County MLS with 70% of sales using a loan.

The realtor.com report also notes that the market is shifting from a strong sellers' market to one in which buyers and sellers have more balanced market power. For both buyers and sellers, it will be important to have a REALTOR® as their trusted advisor. Sellers will need to price and market their home carefully to attract buyers. While buyers will have a little more time to decide on a property, faster acting buyers will be more likely to make the winning offer. REALTORS® can help both buyers and sellers be successful.

LANCE M. EVANS is the Executive Officer of two local real estate trade associations, the Jefferson-Lewis Board of REALTORS® and the St. Lawrence County Board of REALTORS®. Contact him at levans@nnymls.com.

BY THE NUMBERS: NNY HOME SALES

JEFFERSON-LEWIS BOARD OF REALTORS

December 2024

Homes sold: 103
Median Price: \$185,000

November 2024

Homes sold: 111
Median Price: \$195,000

December 2023

Homes sold: 98
Median Price: \$190,000



ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF REALTORS

December 2024

Homes sold: 60
Median Price: \$136,500

November 2024

Homes sold: 68
Median Price: \$149,500

December 2023

Homes sold: 67
Median Price: \$139,000



Students

From T17

laboratory tasks, but being effective in realistic search settings requires adapting to changing environments over both short and long terms, and to changing abilities developmentally.

To investigate how young children learn to understand searchable patterns as clus-

ters and sequences, members of Clarkson University's Evolution and Cognition Lab developed an iPad-based decision-making task that assesses to what extent children can differentiate among objective alternation probabilities of various kinds, specifically when they are non-random and contain statistical regularities.

The distributions that were used included clumpy ones, where a hit is more likely to predict another hit

NNY Business

nearby or vice versa, and dispersed ones, where a hit is more likely to predict a miss nearby or vice versa. Children were presented with three different animals who foraged for binary resource outcomes along a path. Task animals were paired with distinct objective alternation probabilities reflecting clumpy, random, and dispersed distributions.

"Our analyses suggest that children, indeed, hold strong expectations of

clumpy resources when they search through and reason with statistical distributions," said Clarkson Psychology Professor Andreas Wilke. "These results will be an important building block in designing statistical literacy interventions for adolescents and adults."

The Psychonomic Society 65th Annual Meeting was held from Nov. 21 to 24 in New York City, and hosted more than 2,800 attendees from 48 countries.

Auction

From T18

out an attic or entire estate, to dealers clearing out items. He added that it takes a lot of work setting up and holding an auction.

"There definitely a lot of time spent. People only see the auctions, but there's plenty of early mornings and late nights," he said.

One thing about the auction business, is that it can be very unpredictable as it's hard to know what items come up for auction or the price it sells for.

"There's always a surprise at every auction — on both ends. The item you think will go for good money goes for really cheap, and then there's the piece that I'd expect would go for little to nothing, and it goes crazy high," Bert said. "I tell people that the item they want 50 bucks for, they'll get five, and the item they want five for or want to throw away, they'll get 50 — or sometimes even 500 bucks for."

"One of the biggest things I tell people is to not throw stuff away, especially if they're not in the business and familiar with antiques and collectibles," he added, and described a situation that exemplifies that message.

"I remember dad and I went to a place and the owner showed us the stuff they wanted to send (to auction). They had a dumpster there, and I went over and looked in and asked 'Do you mind if I took some of this stuff.' It was the better stuff and they were just throwing it away, but we took it. The stuff they wanted to sell wasn't really that good," Bert said. "For him what was in the dumpster was garbage and just figured nobody wanted it, but we sold a few pieces and he couldn't believe what we got for it.

"We got talking to him, and he said he still had a bunch of stuff in the attic. We wound up taking a trailer load out — and it was really good stuff. He was laughing at us at first, and thought he just had stuff that would go to the dump,"

he added. "He was surprised at how much it sold for."

Some situations require more empathy — such as those getting rid of a loved one's possessions.

"For some people, the grieving process is also getting rid of the stuff, but it's different for everybody. Some people hate to see the stuff go. Some just want it gone," Bert said, adding that when called to such homes, it can be tough job — and he is sympathetic. "Some people are really attached to the stuff and for others it's memories. You have to give them their time and you can't put a price on sentimental value. I always tell people if there is sentimental value, you can keep it — don't send it to auction."

And sometimes, items up for auction do bring in top dollar.

"One of the big things we sold are axes. A guy from out-of-state paid some crazy money for an ax — we sold it for \$900," Bert said, and the ax was a black raven, which stands out for the bird it has on it.

CARRYING ON

Bert said he has no plans to grow the business, but hopes the interest in auctions does.

"We'll probably keep it like it is, but it's an aging audience. I don't know what the future is for in-person auctions," he said. "High-end items will always have a market, but the middle-of-the-road stuff is so-so. My generation doesn't really go to auctions. It would be nice to see the younger generation get into it"

Bert said he understands that lack of interest because he doesn't go to auctions anymore, and it's sad to see the decline, but there are signs of hope. He said shows like "Storage Wars" and "American Pickers" contribute to promoting the concept of finding "hidden" treasures.

"Those shows help," he said. "At an auction, you don't know what you're going to find. We found some pretty crazy stuff in places you wouldn't think you would find much."

Bert said that those who cannot attend an auction in person are still able to participate by placing an absentee bid — and items coming up for auction can be viewed on their website.

Although Bert said he has changed a handful of things at the auction service since taking over, one thing that remains the same is the 25% of total sales he takes for the service — and the fact he doesn't charge a buyer's premium, which is an additional fee that the buyer must pay on top of the final bid price that goes to the auction house for its service.

"If you spend \$500 at an auction, you have to pay an extra 10% on it, plus the 8% sales tax,

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it really adds up," he said. "Dad always said if we charge a buyer's fee, just close the doors, and I've always kept that policy — that was my father's thing."

According to Bert, maintaining the same business philosophy as his father is important to him — and with each auction, he thinks about being able to continue what his father started.

"I always try to do it the way he would do it, and try to be fair," Bert said — and his aunt Karen traced some of that philosophy to an experience nearly 50 years ago during the first auction she ever attended. It wasn't a good experience.

"We went for a refrigerator but wound up not getting it as the auctioneer said they would not get enough money and just ended the auction. I didn't go to another one since," she said — until Gray's Auction Service opened.

"My brother never wanted to be an auctioneer like that," Karen said, as the stage was set for the operation run today — and she now loves the family affair it has become. "I'm glad, it gives us a chance to be with family. It's like a reunion. When the auction is over, we all sit down and do the paperwork together, and we have a meal together. It's fun."

Bert was asked if he ever thinks his dad is looking down at him with pride for maintaining the family business and his practices.

"Yes, I think he'd be proud," Bert said.

Those interested in bringing items to be auctioned, may contact Bert at 315-842-0413. Also, visit Gray's Auction Service Facebook page.



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St. Lawrence University Fed Challenge Team Tackles Real-World Financial Challenges

St. Lawrence University's Fed Challenge team leveraged the power of their liberal arts education, the University's top-ranked alumni network, and financial support from a local bank to prepare for this year's virtual National College Fed Challenge.

The competition encourages students to deepen their understanding of the U.S. economy and the role of the Federal Reserve System while emulating the role of monetary policymakers as they analyze current economic and financial conditions and recommend a course of action—including adjusting interest rates.

"This class is unique in that it's 100-percent experiential learning, and it's student led, so it's an opportunity for students in a major that tends to have larger classes to have a smaller, hands-on experience," says Charles A. Dana Professor of Economics Cynthia Bansak, who teaches the Fed Challenge course.

Although the course officially convenes in the fall, the team began preparing for the Fed Challenge competition last May and met biweekly on Zoom through much of the summer. During those weeks, students completed online certifications so they could use the proprietary terminals in the University's Bloomberg Finance Lab once they returned to campus. During class meetings, Bansak guided discussions on the labor market, housing costs, and the stickiness of inflation.

Finance-major Henry Worden '25 says he especially appreciates the Fed Challenge course because the material is "applicable to the real world." He adds: "I think a lot of peo-



St. Lawrence University students utilizing the Bloomberg Finance Lab. Contributed.

ple's frustration with studying economics or finance is that it's all theory, but every day this class is different based on newly released data or reports."

John Hill-Edgar '25, another finance-major, says the class often feels like it could be televised on CNBC: "You see people on TV talking about the economy and what the Fed should do, and we had several days in this class where we legitimately had those debates, and it felt like you could put a camera on us."

Over mid-semester break in October, Bansak and all 12 students traveled to New York City to present their recommendation to Laurentians at key financial institutions, where they were able to get valuable feedback and network. The course was supported in part by a gift from North Country

Savings Bank.

"The alumni help tremendously," Bansak says. "It's a really special connection we have as members of the SLU community."

Five students were ultimately selected to represent the team in the virtual competition, including John Hill-Edgar '25, Lauren Rundell '25, Mitch Sampson '25, Eric Seltzer '25, and Edvin Strandberg '25. All students enrolled in the course were heavily involved in the preparation and development of the recommendation and all presented the team's recommendation in NYC over the mid-semester break. They were Jack Capizzi '25, Andrew Cullen '25, Alix du Plessis '25, Lane Haehl '25, Jackson Kelly '25, Sisco Tellez '25, and Henry Worden '25.

Competition was fierce this

year, and teams from a variety of prestigious institutions, including Princeton and Harvard, made strong presentations. Although the St. Lawrence team did not advance to the finals, they did the University proud, Bansak says. "Our SLU students always have creative, non-vanilla policy recommendations, even though it's typically pretty clear what the Fed will do. This year it was less obvious," she explains.

Hill-Edgar attributes that, in part, to the unique liberal arts environment at St. Lawrence. "When you talk about a St. Lawrence liberal arts education, the whole point is to have all these different people with different skills and backgrounds come together," he says. "That's what happens with this challenge—students with talents in writing, data

analysis, coding, and public speaking all came together."

About St. Lawrence University:

Founded in 1856, St. Lawrence University is a private, independent liberal arts institution of about 2,250 students located in Canton, New York. The educational opportunities at St. Lawrence inspire students and prepare them to be critical and creative thinkers, to find a compass for their lives and careers, and to pursue knowledge and understanding for the benefit of themselves, humanity and the planet. Through its focus on active engagement with ideas in and beyond the classroom, a St. Lawrence education leads students to make connections that transform lives and communities, from the local to the global. Visit www.stlawu.edu.

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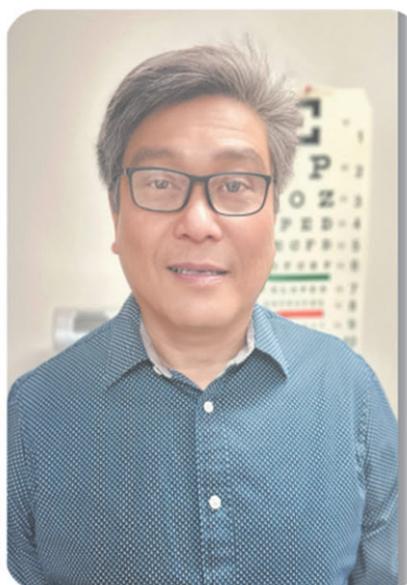


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Businesses spotlighted at Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours



Chamber president Tina Lanier and vice president Kristy O'Shaughnessy welcomed guests to the Jan. 16 Business After Hours at Papermaker's Pub at Zero Dock Street. The chamber holds a networking event as a way for the public to learn more about area businesses and nonprofit organizations as well as to provide a casual environment for networking. The Business After Hours events are normally held the third Thursday of each month hosted by various chamber members. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers Corp.



Jennifer Dalrymple, owner of Jen's Backroad Blooms, Champion, told visitors to the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours about her business which she says is "Carthage area home-studio florist." The business makes floral arrangements for any occasion and delivers locally. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers Corp.

Airport

From T8

using the airport a couple of weeks ago. He said at that point the foundation was in, but no steel beams, so when he got the call about the ceremony earlier in the week, he was "amazed."

"This is exciting," he said.

Hagemann said that the project shows the success of the airport since 2006.

"It's been steady progress, time well spent, money well spent as well and we've grown

slowly but steadily," he said. "We've done it very smartly and it's taken time. I think it's a testimony to good travel, great economic development, and it bodes well for the future of the county."

County Legislator Phil N. Reed Sr. said that Friday was "an important and exciting milestone on the project."

"They are really moving at a rapid pace," he said. "It's going to be exciting to have this project done next year."

Reed also said that without the support of the community and county legislators, the project would have never hap-

pened.

"So thank you, past board legislators, administrators, administration, and the public for utilizing this asset," he said.

Piche said that October had the highest ridership the airport has ever had with American Airlines.

Design teams have already begun working on phase two of the project.

"It'll be a great asset to the north country," Reed said.

The new terminal is expected to open by the fall.



Jeremiah and Rochelle Fletcher, owners of Fletcher's Contracting, Carthage, told visitors to the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours about their business which specializes in electrical, generators and HVAC. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers Corp.

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