

NNY Business

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Back row, from left: Oliver King, South Jefferson High junior; Lydia Tremont, South Jefferson High junior; Annabelle Renzi, South Jefferson High junior; Nola Johnson, Watertown High junior; Julia Tontarski, Immaculate Heart Central junior; Trey Urf, Watertown High junior; Hudson Guldenpfennig, Watertown High junior; Maxwell Hunt, Lyme Central junior. Front row, from left: Isabel Mendez, General Brown junior; Caitlin Daugherty, Watertown High junior; Frances Weir, Watertown High junior; Lucy Swartz, Watertown High junior; April Wang, Watertown High senior; Valerie Akins, Carthage High junior; Alexandria Zajac, Immaculate Heart Central junior; and Gaige Doroha, Watertown High junior. Absent from photo: William Steward, South Jefferson High senior. Northern New York Community Foundation photo

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Watertown Chamber CEO to leave position; search for new executive director opens

Times staff report

WATERTOWN — The president and chief executive officer of the Greater Watertown-North Country Chamber will be leaving her position at the end of year, opening up a search for a new executive director.

The chamber announced Friday that Kayla Jamieson, the current chamber president and CEO, will be leaving the organization in late December after accepting a position at North Country Family Health Center.

Jamieson started with the chamber in 2017 as the organization’s events director and also served as its Procurement Technical Assistance Center director.

The chamber said in a statement that as president and CEO over the last three years, Jamieson led the organization with meaningful programs, key community events and focused initiatives to support membership and stakeholders in an evolving local business climate.

“Kayla brought outstanding professionalism and experience to the Chamber for many years and espe-



Kayla Jamieson, the president and CEO of the Greater Watertown - North Country Chamber of Commerce, will leave the position in late December, opening up a search for an executive director. Watertown Daily Times

cially in her leadership role,” Max DelSignore, chair of the Board of Directors, said in the statement. “We are grateful for her commitment to the organization, elevating its visibility and importance in serving the business community in the greater Watertown area and Jefferson County.”

Jamieson will continue in her role through late December to ensure continuity of operations and a seamless transition to new leadership, the chamber said.

“It’s been a true privilege and joy to serve this organization in so many capacities over the years,” Jamieson said. “The relationships built

with our members, board, businesses, and community partners have meant the world to me. Every day brought something new, but the mission was always the same — to make Jefferson County better.”

The chamber said its Board of Directors is seeking a dynamic, relationship-driven professional ready to continue the chamber’s mission of connecting, empowering and promoting north country businesses. The executive director will lead the organization in membership engagement initiatives, program development, and strategic outreach and investments that align with the chamber’s mission.

The job description for the executive director position is on the chamber’s website at watertownny.com. Interested applicants are required to submit a resume, cover letter and three professional or employer references via email to GWNCchamber315@gmail.com. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

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Work begins on outdoor coffee stand

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

WATERTOWN — Coffee should soon start pouring at the new 7Brew drive-up stand on Arsenal Street.

With an 8-foot fence surrounding the site, construction of the 510-square-foot stand at 1068 Arsenal St. began on Tuesday on the nearly acre site. It should take just a few months to get the coffee stand up and running.

On a rainy day, a three-man construction crew already was busy doing some site work. One worker directed a heavy equipment operator where to dump gravel into a large hole that had already been dug by mid-afternoon, while the third member of the crew manned a small bulldozer tearing up the parking lot at the back of the former Deal-maker site.

7 Brew will serve up a variety of beverages, including coffee, tea, Italian sodas, smoothies, shakes, energy drinks and hot chocolate. No food is offered. There are no

seating accommodations inside.

Last month, the Watertown Planning Commission gave final site approval for the project after okaying a change in the entrance to the property.

Customers can expect to get their beverage within three or four minutes of their order. Employees would meet them in one of two serving lines and then deliver the beverage at the vehicle without actually going up to a drive-up window.

Between four and six people will work during each shift.

The company is leasing the property from 1068 Arsenal St. RE LLC, a Rochester-based car wash company that purchased the vacant parcel four years ago.

The Watertown 7 Brew will be the eighth store in the state under an expansion by the company that holds the franchise agreement in New York.

The company currently owns 7 Brews in Syracuse, New Hartford, Rome, near



Construction at the new 7Brew drive-up stand on Arsenal Street began Tuesday. It should take just a few months to get the 510-square-foot stand coffee stand up and running.Craig Fox/Watertown Daily Times

Albany and Johnstown, with another opening in Schenectady next month. Further

expansion is planned in the state.

Started in 2017, the Arkan-

sas-based corporation oper-

ates about 420 locations.

Alcoa in Massena makes spot on state tour

By **BOB BECKSTEAD**
bbeckstead@wdt.net

MASSENA — Alcoa's Massena Operations was one of the stops during a statewide Manufacturing Week bus tour by the Business Council of New York State.

It was part of a six-region tour of the state to visit manufacturing facilities, Communications Director Patrick Bailey said. Joining them Oct. 6 in Massena was Assemblyman Scott A. Gray, R-Watertown.

"The way we do the stops is we come in, we do a little briefing, everybody says hi to everybody, and we do a tour," Bailey said.

He said this week's visit was an offshoot of a compe-

tition the Business Council held last year, called "Coolest Things Made in New York." Alcoa's Massena Operations made it to the finals before losing to NightRide Thermal Inc., which makes thermal cameras.

"As a state-wide chamber and the Manufacturing Association, we do two of those things — the Coolest Things contest and this tour, and we tie them together. So, that's why we're here this year. We've been trying to get up here for two years now," he said.

All together, he said the tour bus would be traveling to several locations throughout the state this week, including Massena,

Saratoga, Watertown, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Elmira, Rockland and Westchester counties.

The guests visited three areas at the plant — the baking furnace, where a capital project was taking place; the pot rooms to see where materials are turned into aluminum; and the cast house, where the melted aluminum becomes the finalized product.

Plant Manager Ingolfur Helgason said Alcoa had been a longtime partner in the Massena community.

"We have been operating here since 1902. So, this is the oldest continuous aluminum production in the world. We're pretty proud



Members of the Business Council of New York State learn about Alcoa's baking furnace before heading inside for a tour during a stop in Massena. Bob Beckstead/Watertown Daily Times

of that," he said. "The plant, of course, has gone through multiple stages and upgrades and all kinds of stuff here over the years. But,

See **ALCOA T5**

Latham Auto celebrates 20th anniversary



On Oct. 7, Latham Auto, 6100 County Route 6, Ogdensburg, celebrated its 20th anniversary with a ribbon-cutting and provided raffles, snacks and other gifts during an open house. Pictured are Wayne and Tessa Latham cutting the ribbon along with their employees. Matt Curatolo/Advance News

Alcoa

From T4

still, we have been making aluminum in this area for 123 years.”
 “Alcoa has a long history in the north country, and we’re glad to have them here, and we think we’re going to keep them around for the foreseeable future,” Gray said.
 Helgason said the Massena plant was smaller compared to some other facilities.
 “So, that’s one of our issues. It’s hard to be competitive when you’re small,” he said.
 However, he added, Massena had the advantage of adding products and experienced employees.
 “So, that’s a huge advantage,” Helgason said.
 He said more changes would be coming in the future.
 “Massena has been up and down over the years, and lately it’s been pretty underinvested, and we want to change that. We want to

build a future for Massena,” he said.
 Investment would be a key word, Helgason said. New York Power Authority trustees have approved an agreement to keep Alcoa in Massena for at least 10 years, and up to 20 years if Alcoa meets employment and capital investment commitments.
 At their July 29 meeting, trustees had approved a 240 megawatt allocation of Preservation Power to Alcoa for an initial term of 10 years, with an option for Alcoa to extend the term for two additional five-year periods if specific capital investment and employment commitments are met.
 The approval is based on Alcoa’s commitment to maintain at least 500 full-time jobs, an increase of 50 jobs from the current 450 job target in the current contract, and to make a capital investment of at least \$30 million (\$3 million per year over 10 years) at the facility that will use the Preservation Power allocation.
 If Alcoa elects the first five-year extension, it will

be required to invest \$85 million for the 15-year term, If Alcoa elects the second five-year extension, it will

be required to invest \$145 million over the 20-year term.
 “If we don’t invest, we will

just go back, and that’s what we want to change,” Helgason said.

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A father's dream fulfilled

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com

WEST CARTHAGE — Gary Johnson who died unexpectedly in 2024, left behind several unfinished projects. The local businessman had worked for years to establish a his second gas station in the village and had recently purchased the former Sahara Restaurant in Fargo.

Now, that his estate is settled, his daughter, Jessica Johnson, has fulfilled one of her father's dreams through which she is keeping his memory alive. After more than four years, Johnson Corner Mart II has opened at 3 S. Broad St.

"All credit goes to dad," said the station owner of her late father. "It was his dream. Dad, fulfilling your dream has been the most meaningful journey. Today that dream is finally reality. Johnson Corner Mart II isn't just a business — it's a piece of your heart, a tribute to your hard work and dedication. Every detail that helped your vision come to life carries your spirit. I hope you're smiling down, proud of what we've built together."

The station owner expressed thanks to the community for their support and noted, "My father was an exceptional man who I see is greatly missed in this community."

The late Mr. Johnson's spirit lives on in the new business.

Countertops locally sourced from T.F. Wright and Son Granite Foundry, Carthage, have been utilized including one as a memorial to the late Mr. Johnson. Near the side entrance to what will be a small food court is the inscription, "In memory of Gary R. Johnson 1958-2024."

Ms. Johnson, who had worked closely with her father in the early stages of the gas station's development, had a reciprocate of an old fashion gas pump customized and it stands by the main entrance of the convenience store.



Johnson Corner Mart II has opened at 3 S. Broad St. in Carthage. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspaper Corp

The gas station has 18 pumps for gas and diesel including one for fast pumping diesel for large trucks and one pump for kerosene. The fuels are provided by local distributor Christman Fuels. The fuel service's owner Jason Christman was once employed by Mr. Johnson.

The convenience store has all the basics with plans to include a breakfast and lunch items with seating. Gail Kilbourn, former owner of the Chatterbox, will be brought on to prepare the fresh food items.

Ms. Johnson said, as was her father's plan, the station down the road on the corner of North Main and Bridge streets, Johnson Mart, will remain open.

There has been a lot of speculation about what will be done with the house next to the station.

"Dad always wanted to salvage 'the Nevill's House,'" she said, noting there are no plans to have the house occupied except for use for the tank gauging and inventory. The late Leslie "Red" and Doris Nevills owned and operated Nevills Bros Service Station at the location of new station for 58 years, closing in 2005.

Ms. Johnson said once the



Gary Johnson dug the first hole to start the project, prepping for the first canopy, on Sept. 24, 2022. Photo by Jessica Johnson

gas station is up and running, restaurant in Fargo. work will continue on the



The late Gary R. Johnson is remembered at Johnson Corner Mart II. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspaper Corp



An old fashioned gas pump at the newly opened gas station. Elaine Avallone/ JNC

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SLC Chamber annual award winners named



Scott Wright will accept the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award at the chamber's Annual Dinner on Oct. 22, at the GranView Restaurant. Photo provided



The Customer Service Excellence Award is going to Jernabi Coffee House on Oct. 22 at the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner at the GranView Restaurant. Photo provided

CANTON – The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce has announced the winners of its annual business awards ahead of its Annual Dinner on Wednesday, Oct. 22, where the recipients will be officially recognized for their achievements and contributions to the county's business climate, quality of life and character.

Business of the Year is Pepsi-Cola Ogdensburg Bottlers. Their Customer Service Excellence Award goes to Jerna-

bi Coffee House. Their Local Producer of the Year is Canton Apples & Cider. The chamber's Community Cornerstone Award goes to Massena Public Library

"St. Lawrence County and the North Country are filled with remarkable businesses and organizations that are essential to the vitality of our region," chamber executive director Ben Dixon said in an award announcement. "It is wonderful for us to be able to recognize them for the way



Joel Howie of Canton Apples will be presented with the Producer of the Year Award at the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner at the GranView Restaurant on Oct. 22. Photo provided



The Massena Public Library will be presented with the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce's Community Cornerstone Award on Oct. 22, at the Chamber's Annual Dinner at the GranView Restaurant. Photo provided

they support other businesses, enhance our economy, and present our region as an exceptionally great place to be."

For over 80 years, Pepsi-Cola Ogdensburg Bottlers has exemplified what it means to be a cornerstone business, demonstrating a deep commitment to quality, community, and ongoing growth in St. Lawrence County. Founded in 1943, the company employs more than 50 local residents and consistently reinvests in modern equipment, facility improvements, and sustainability initiatives that strengthen both its operations and the regional economy.

Under the leadership of the Winter and Wright families, Pepsi Ogdensburg balances business excellence with exceptional community engagement. Its philanthropy has

supported innumerable local initiatives, ranging from the Boys & Girls Club and youth athletics to healthcare, including support for the Richard E. Winter Cancer Center.

The company demonstrates ongoing innovation through recent investments in recycling technology and cold storage systems.

Jernabi Coffee House is being recognized with the Customer Service Excellence Award for its dedication to warmth, consistency, and genuine community connection. Nominators praised the coffeehouse as an establishment that embodies hospitality from the moment guests enter.

Jernabi's staff is consistently friendly, knowledgeable, and professional, noted for attention to detail like remembering a regular's custom or-

der or guiding new customers through the menu. Beyond its exceptional service, Jernabi delivers high-quality offerings using locally roasted beans and fresh-baked goods.

The award for Local Producer of the Year is presented to Canton Apples & Cider, a business rooted in tradition, innovation, and community stewardship. Canton Apples is passionate about preserving heritage apple varieties, including rare and heirloom strains, keeping agricultural heritage alive while offering consumers a distinctive, local product. The business demonstrates innovation through its new line of handcrafted ciders. By blending apple varieties, they produce complex, naturally balanced flavors. Their commitment to quality and the environment is evident in their methods, which include sustainable orchard practices and the use of UV treatment rather than chemical additives. Canton Apples plays a vital role in the local food ecosystem, partnering with farmers' markets, co-ops, and local retailers to keep dollars circulating within the community. Community

The Massena Public Library is being honored with the Community Cornerstone Award for its outstanding contributions through education, inclusion, and connection. Far more than a place to borrow books, the library serves as a vibrant hub that offers free access to technology, lifelong learning, and cultural enrichment for all ages. The library's staff was praised for its commitment to making everyone feel welcome. The library has also been a tremendous supporter of the Massena Chamber of Commerce, assisting integration efforts by hosting St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Assistant Director Laura Pearson in a temporary office space.

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Youth Philanthropy Council welcomes new members

By JONATHON WHEELER

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WATERTOWN — The Northern New York Community Foundation has announced its 2025-26 Youth Philanthropy Council members.

The council, which was established in 2010, has a total of 17 students from six Jefferson County high schools who will be in the leadership program.

“When Council members graduate, they frequently say the Council is one of the most transformational experiences of their high school career. Above all, it is a powerful, multi-dimensional leadership program that instills lifelong lessons in civic responsibility and engagement,” Rande S. Richardson, Community Foundation executive director, said in a news release. “Our donors are making valuable investments in our youth and helping ensure that our community’s future is in good hands.”

This school year’s council includes Valerie Akins, a Car-



Northern New York Youth Philanthropy Council

An advisory committee of the Northern New York Community Foundation

thage Central School District junior and first-year member; Caitlin Daugherty, a Watertown High School junior, and a first-year member; Gaige Doroha, a Watertown High School junior and a first-year member; Hudson Guldenpfenning, a Watertown High School junior and first-year member; Maxwell Hunt, a Lyme Central School District junior and a first-year member; Nola Johnson, a Watertown High School junior, and first-year member; Oliver King, a South Jefferson Central School, and a first-year member; Isabel Mendez, a

General Brown Central School District junior and first-year member; Annabelle Renzi, a South Jefferson Central School junior, and first-year member.

Also in the council is William Steward, a South Jefferson Central School District senior, a second-year member; Lucy Swartz, a Watertown High School junior and first-year member; Julia Tontarski, Immaculate Heart Central junior and second-year member; Lydia Tremont, a South Jefferson Central School District junior and first-year member; Trey Urf, a Watertown High

School junior and second-year member; April Wang, a Watertown High School senior and second-year member; Frances Weir, a Watertown High School junior and first-year member; and Alexandria Zajac, an Immaculate Heart Central junior, and second-year member.

“I am very honored to be selected to serve as this year’s Youth Philanthropy Council Chair. I am pleased to collaborate with my fellow Council members and advisors to continue to make a meaningful, lasting impact,” April Wang, chair of the said in the news

release. “My experience on the Council last year has deepened my understanding of our Northern New York community and its needs, and I am excited to lead by sharing that insight.”

Julia Tontarski will chair the Communications Committee; William Steward will chair the Grants Committee; and Alexandra Zajac will chair the Service Committee.

Since it began in 2010, the Youth Philanthropy Council has awarded 155 grants that have totaled \$285,070.



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25-WO-01128 (04/25)

Clarkson University awarded \$20,000 to support CNC training



Clarkson University has received a \$20,000 grant from the Gene Haas Foundation to support engineering students enrolled in computer numerical control (CNC) shop training. Clarkson University photo

POTSDAM — Clarkson University has received a \$20,000 grant from the Gene Haas Foundation to support engineering students enrolled in computer numerical control (CNC) shop training.

This funding is used for scholarships for machining-focused instruction, supports the University's Student Projects for Engineering Experience & Design (SPEED) student competition teams, and can help students acquire essential tools. Haas's backing bolsters hands-on learning, keeps facilities modern, and helps student teams bring designs from concept to reality.

At the heart of this work is Clarkson's Student Prototyping Machine Shop, located in the Center for Advanced Materials Processing (CAMP) building. The shop is the central resource for students to fabricate, prototype, and test their designs, and while it is most actively used by SPEED teams, it is open to all students on campus.

The shop features a wide range of advanced equipment, including CNC milling machines and lathes, manual machines, welding and fabrication labs, water-jet cutting, wire EDM, and up to five-axis machining centers. Students are trained and certified through a series of courses that cover basic shop skills, lathe and mill operation, CNC programming, welding, and MasterCam software. Skilled machinists supervise the

shop to ensure safe practices and guide students as they develop their expertise.

Clarkson's SPEED teams, such as Formula SAE, Baja SAE, Formula SAE Electric and SAE Clean Snowmobile, rely on the shop to manufacture parts, test assemblies and refine their designs. For example, the Formula Knights build suspension components, drivetrain parts and bodywork in-house, gaining valuable experience with both CNC and manual machining techniques.

These projects demonstrate how the Foundation's investment directly enhances student learning and prepares Clarkson graduates for careers in advanced manufacturing.

Over the past five years, Clarkson has received nearly \$100,000 in support from the Gene Haas Foundation. These funds have enabled scholarship awards and helped sustain the University's engineering design teams, providing students with real-world experience that extends beyond the classroom.

"Through Haas's ongoing support, we're equipping students not just with theory but with tangible skills and opportunities to build, test and compete," said Supervisor of Technical Support Services Jacob Weller. "We look forward to growing this partnership and keeping our shop and team resources aligned with the latest industry standards."

NNY Business

St. Lawrence County Chamber adds three new members

CANTON — The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce continues to grow with the addition of three new members in September.

"Our membership thrives on fresh perspectives, and these new businesses will discover Chamber resources that directly fuel their own growth," said St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ben Dixon. "We are delighted to welcome these three unique and exceptional entities as collaborators in strengthening the North Country's economic vitality."

The new businesses on the chamber's roster include JiggleFoot Auto Sales, The Port House and Wray Enterprises:

JiggleFoot Auto Sales, located on Old Route 11 in Canton, is a veteran-owned used car dealership that promises transparency in its curated selection of vehicles.

"At JiggleFoot Auto Sales, we take pride in our curated inventory of meticulously inspected vehicles. Each car in our selection undergoes a rigorous qual-

ity check to ensure reliability and performance," Coast Guard Veteran Mark Baker said on his website. "We believe in complete transparency and provide detailed vehicle histories and comprehensive descriptions, empowering you to make an informed decision with confidence."

Baker can be reached at mp-baker428@gmail.com or 315-261-0173.

The Port House is a short-term rental in Ogdensburg owned by Tif Amo. The Port House boasts a 5-star rating on Airbnb and is described on the site as "a clean, modern, comfy and central place to stay. Perfect for small group trips. Enjoy a view of the St. Lawrence River and catch a lovely sunset or stay comfy indoors with central heat and air and plenty of space to relax and unwind during your North Country travels. Right around the corner from groceries, gas, and essential shopping. Walking distance to eateries. Short drive to the Ogdensburg-Prescott bridge."

Find the Port House on Airbnb

at <https://tinyurl.com/3pax4y5z>

Nathan B. Wray, EA, is the founder of the Colton-based accounting firm, Wray Enterprises Inc., launched in 2014. With degrees in Accounting and Finance, Nate became an enrolled agent in 2021, granting him the federal authority to represent clients before the IRS in audits, collections, and appeals. Wray has been recognized for his leadership and innovative drive, utilizing his problem-solving skills in areas such as strategic development, hospital financial management, and government fund accounting. His entrepreneurial spirit has also led to partnerships in property management and other industries. Committed to the community, Wray is the treasurer of the Parishville Sportsmen's Club. Find out more about Wray Enterprises at wrayinc.com.

These three new chamber members can be found on the chamber's business directory at <https://business.visitstlc.com/list>.

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Massena Business Development Corp. revived to close out unfinished business



The Massena town and village boards are appointing individuals to the Massena Business Development Corp. to wrap up unfinished business. Watertown Daily Times

By BOB BECKSTEAD

bbeckstead@wdt.net

MASSENA — The Massena Business Development Corp., which last met in July 2022, is coming back to the table again to take care of unfinished business.

The Massena Town Board appointed Sabina DeLaPorte, Roger Bennett and Sherry Thompson to the BDC Board of Directors. Village trustees will be asked to appoint Jeff Dobbins, Joe Mittiga, Mark Ryan and Mike Violi to the board when they meet on Tuesday.

“We appointed ours so that we have seven on the group,” Town Supervisor Susan J. Bellor said.

She said the board would likely have few meetings.

“It’s probably a temporary one or two meetings,” she said.

Bellor said the board would be wrapping up outstanding issues such as liquidating the board’s funding and addressing insurance that the BDC had contracted for while it was active.

The BDC was a joint operation between the village and town. However,

that organization held its last official meeting in July 2022. James A. Murphy remained as full-time executive director until July 22, 2022, and then moved to a per diem contract, giving him time to close out a grant that he had been working on and to answer any questions.

The Business Development Corp. had been operating under decreased funding after the Massena Town Board agreed in March 2022 to reduce its funding from \$75,000 to \$40,000.

Then, in July 2022, the town board voted to eliminate all of its funding for the Business Development Corp. Board members approved reducing the monetary amount given to the BDC to zero, which was done through a budget amendment.

The Massena Village Board had previously cut off BDC funding, opting instead to use that money to pay for grant writing services.

New consulting firm looks to advance tribal governance, justice systems

AKWESASNE — A new native and woman-owned consulting firm dedicated to advancing tribal governance and justice systems officially launched in August.

Indigenous Governance Consultants LLC (IGC), co-founded by Carrie E. Garrow, J.D., MPP (Mohawk) and Danielle J. Mayberry, J.D., (Western Shoshone), offers practical solutions to governments and organizations seeking expertise in governance, courts, and community-based justice.

Dedicated to improving tribal nations, communities, and the lives of Indigenous Peoples, the firm provides services in four areas: court development, restorative justice, grant writing, and education. Headquartered on the Saint Regis Mohawk

Indian Reservation in Akwesasne, IGC seeks to work with tribal governments, non-profits, and other organizations in creating innovative and long-term solutions that address the challenges facing tribal communities.

The IGC founders are tribal court professionals with years of experience working in Indian Country as tribal judges and in other capacities, including court administration and consulting.

“We are excited to work with tribal nations and communities, applying the knowledge we have gained from our years of experience in various roles,” said Mayberry.

Garrow notes her more than 25 years of legal work in Indian Country have prepared her with the back-

ground needed to make a positive impact on the clients who come to IGC for assistance.

“We look forward to working with tribal courts and Indian Nations to help them improve infrastructure, provide training, and secure the funding needed for courts to continue to grow and exercise tribal sovereignty,” she said. “Whether they need assistance with grant writing, drafting laws or policies, training for staff, leaders, or community partners, we are ready to help.”

For more information, visit <https://www.indigenous-governanceconsultants.com>.

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Winfrey celebrates 2,000th radio show

By Bob Beckstead

bbeckstead@wdtnet

MASSENA — The morning host on WMSA radio has hit a milestone.

Elijah Winfrey, a Georgia native who transplanted to Massena, has celebrated his 2,000 show since he first hit the morning airwaves in 2016. He can be heard from 6 to 10 a.m. weekdays.

"I was born in Georgia, raised in many places, but when it comes to the man I am today, I was made in Massena," Winfrey said.

He originally started at one of the company's sister stations, but expressed a desire to become the morning show host on WMSA when that position became available. Winfrey said he met with the previous general manager to share his desire to move.

"He sat me down and the first thing he said to me was, 'Elijah, why would you want to go from being on Mix 96.1, our sister station to WMSA radio?' He said the signal is not as large. He said, 'It's not the type of music you listen to. Why do you want to do this?'" he recalled.

Winfrey said it was an opportunity to be part of history.

"This is a heritage station in Massena. There's not very many people that have had the privilege of doing this job. I want to be part of that. I want to be able to put my name on some Massena history and hopefully do some good with it," he said.

The general manager agreed and soon Winfrey was in the studio for his first show.

"When I first got the job, I did not think I would still be here. I thought maybe they would let me and my goofiness and my craziness go for about 50 shows and then they would find somebody far more qualified and let them do the job. Maybe they haven't found



Elijah Winfrey has celebrated his 2,000 show since he first hit the morning airwaves in 2016. He can be heard from 6 to 10 a.m. weekdays. Provided photo

somebody. I don't know, but I'm still here 2,000 shows later, and I'm ecstatic about it. I'm grateful," he said.

Winfrey said being the morning show host wasn't something he had on his life's agenda. He said at one point he was homeless, sleeping on the floor of a building on Woodlawn Avenue.

But, like other morning show hosts before him, he became active in the community. He organized seven Upstate Comic Con conventions and raised more than \$10,000 for local charities.

"I had a personal goal of reaching \$10,000 raised for local charities by the time I turned 25 because of how folks in the north country were looking out for me whenever I was homeless. I want-

ed to make sure that I gave back," Winfrey said.

He was also involved with the former Seaway Valley Venom semi-pro football team, helping rebuild the team, coaching, and then becoming team owner and president.

"The big part of that was it gave 50 athletes the opportunity to play semi-professional football after high school, to give them a chance to play the game they loved again after high school," he said.

Winfrey also wrote and directed two locally produced movies, with the first one creating 20 jobs locally and the second creating another 20 jobs.

His community efforts continued when he joined WMSA.

"My favorite thing about WM-

SA radio is what we're able to do in the community, being able to raise money for different great causes like Meals on Wheels, raise money for Trinity Catholic School back when they were open, raise money for the rescue squad and the fire department. Being able to see the community rally behind these different things to me is the most rewarding thing," he said.

Winfrey said he never envisioned what he has been able to accomplish.

"When I was living over on Woodlawn Avenue, sleeping on a floor over there, I could never have envisioned any of this stuff happening in my life. I did not foresee making movies. I did not foresee doing comic book conventions. I didn't foresee a football

team or doing 2,000 radio shows. I didn't see any of that. I was just trying to get to my next day," he said.

But, Winfrey said, he was thankful for a community that supported him as he worked to "honor the legacy of what came before me, and trying to make sure to give people what it is they're expecting and what it is they need each and every morning."

"I'm very grateful this morning to everybody that played a role in me getting this goal," he said. "Realize you do not get to 2,000 shows just because you're so great. It's because of the people that are around you, that lift you up and help you every single day."



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Potsdam Chamber of Commerce welcomes eight new members

POTSDAM — The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce has welcomed eight new members, recently approved by its Board of Directors, to the organization's growing network of businesses and community partners.

Joining the chamber this month are America 1 Realty, Nick Rycroft – Solo Performing Entertainer, Brookdale Mattress & Bedding, ADK Cards-N-Collectibles, Leonard Nesbit Designs, Bertrand's Construction, Inc., Friends of the Norwood Public Library, and Willow View Property. Each brings talent, dedication, and community spirit that strengthen the local economy.

America 1 Realty is a full-service real estate firm proudly serving St. Lawrence County and parts of Jefferson and Franklin Counties. Their experienced team assists clients with residential, commercial, and waterfront properties throughout the region. Learn more at america1realty.com or contact amer1@twcny.rr.com.

Nick Rycroft has been performing since 2014, entertaining audiences across the North Country with his energetic solo shows. His performances bring music, fun, and connec-

tion to community events and local venues alike. For booking and schedule information, email nicholous.rycroft@gmail.com.

Brookdale Mattress & Bedding offers high-quality mattresses, bedding, and accessories from trusted brands including Puffy, Helix, and Diamond. They are a new storefront located at 2A Main Street, Potsdam. With locations in Winthrop and Potsdam, they make better sleep accessible through financing, delivery, and setup options. Visit brookdalemattress.com or email brookdalemattress@gmail.com.

ADK Cards-N-Collectibles, located at 24 Market St., is a downtown destination for trading cards, comics, retro games, and collectibles. The shop also features a welcoming play area that serves as a hub for players of all ages. To learn more or check tournament times, contact adkcardsncollectibles@gmail.com.

Leonard Nesbit Designs, also known as Elite Events by Lenny, offers full-service event planning, décor rentals, and custom floral design in Potsdam. Their companion business, Tuxe by Leonard Nesbit

Designs, provides high-end men's formalwear from top designers, with rental packages starting at \$179 and custom suit options available for a personalized, polished look. For information or consultations, email leonardbnesbit@icloud.com.

Bertrand's Construction, Inc. is a trusted local roofing professional with more than 40 years of experience. Known for reliability and quality craftsmanship, the company has built a reputation for standing firmly behind its work. Visit bertrandsconstruction.com or email Bertrand'sConstruction@gmail.com.

Friends of the Norwood Public Library is a nonprofit organization supporting the Norwood Public Library through events, fundraising, and volunteer efforts. Their mission helps sustain the library as a welcoming space for learning and connection. To get involved, email friendsofthenorwoodpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

Willow View Property is a beautifully decorated Airbnb located at 380 Irish Settlement Road in Canton. It offers peaceful, comfortable lodging surrounded by scenic views and all the comforts of home.



The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce welcomed eight new members, recently approved by its Board of Directors, including ADK Cards-N-Collectibles. Provided photo

Guests visiting the North Country for business, family, or leisure will find it the perfect place to stay. For booking details, email willowview380@gmail.com or find them on Airbnb.

To learn more about the Potsdam Chamber of Com-

merce, including membership benefits, upcoming events, and opportunities to get involved, visit www.potsdamchamber.com, call (315) 274-9000, or stop by the chamber office at 6 Market St., Potsdam, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Potsdam Chamber Annual Dinner & Awards – Nominations Now Open

POTSDAM, NY - The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce will host its Annual Dinner & Awards on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at The Stables at Windy Point, 215 Outer Sissonville Road, Potsdam, NY. The evening will include cocktails, a buffet dinner, the presentation of the Chamber's annual awards, and live entertainment by Nick Rycroft. Tickets are \$40 per person, with corporate tables of six or eight available. RSVPs are due by October 24 to director@potsdamchamber.com.

The Chamber is also seeking nominations for the 2025 Chamber Awards, which recognize excellence and commitment within our community. The

awards include Business of the Year, which honors a Chamber member business that has enhanced the community through improvements, growth, innovation, staff development, and volunteerism. Pride in Potsdam, which recognizes a Chamber member business that demonstrates pride in their establishment and the community as a whole. And Commitment to the Community, which celebrates an individual whose dedication, service, and contributions have improved the quality of life in Potsdam.

Nominations are open now through November 1, 2025, and finalists and recipients will be honored at the Annual Dinner & Awards. Nominations may

be submitted online at www.potsdamchamber.com under Upcoming Events.

"This dinner is not only a celebration of our members, but also a chance to shine a spotlight on the people and businesses who make Potsdam such a strong and welcoming community," said Melanie Flack, Executive Director of the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, contact the Potsdam Chamber at director@potsdamchamber.com or (315) 274-9000. The Chamber office is located at 6 Market Street, Potsdam, NY, and is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.



JOIN US FOR POTSDAM'S FRIGHT NIGHT

The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce will host their

2025 Fright Night Thursday, Oct. 23 from 5-8 p.m.

On Market Street in Potsdam. Get ready for a night of Spook-tacular Fun!

For more information go to www.potsdamchamber.com



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West Carthage businessman seeking to open a cannabis shop in Watertown



Brandon Blount, managing partner with Black River Supply Company in West Carthage, is seeking to open a cannabis dispensary in the city of Watertown. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

By Craig Fox

cfox@wdt.net

WEST CARTHAGE — Brandon Blount, managing partner with Black River Supply Company in West Carthage, is seeking to open a dispensary in the city of Watertown.

Blount's proposal is one two received by the city Planning Department for cannabis dispensaries to open in the city.

Michael A. Lumbis, the city's director of planning and community development, confirmed that dispensaries have been proposed for the current Bad Apple Saloon at 545 Arsenal St. and for a commercial building at 848 Coffeen St.

The Planning Department has received applications for both ventures seeking use ordinances for the dispensaries, he said. The Zoning Board of Appeals will take up the zoning requests during its Oct. 15 meeting.

According to Lumbis, Blount would purchase the Bad Apple Saloon and convert the building into a dispensary.

Owned by Sboro Enterprises LLC, the 2,143-square-foot Coffeen Street building would undergo renovations if the owner can receive the use variance, Lumbis said.

The city's zoning board would need to take action for them to proceed.

"Both are not zoned for can-

nabis," Lumbis said.

Dispensaries would only be allowed in commercial districts. They can open along Arsenal Street, between the railroad bridge and Interstate 81, along Western Boulevard and on the eastern side of the city along sections of State Street and Eastern Boulevard and in Northland Plaza.

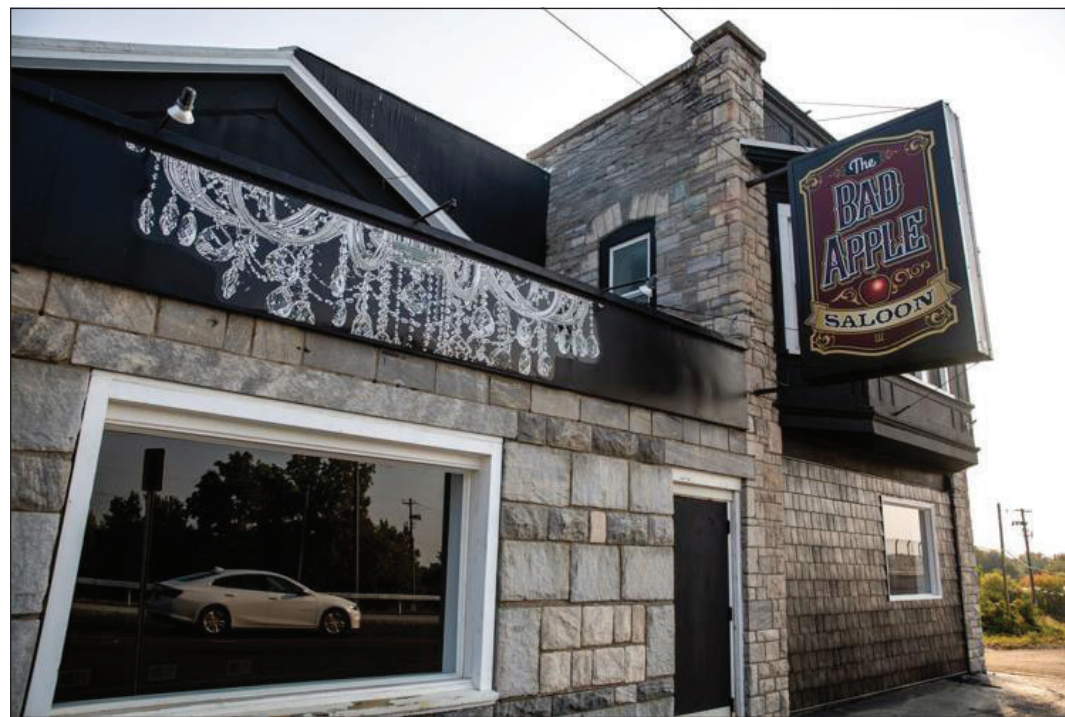
The Coffeen Street structure is currently zoned neighborhood mixed use, while the Bad Apple Saloon is zoned urban mixed use. They would need to apply for a use variance with the Zoning Board of Appeals.

To get the zoning request, the two owners would have to prove unnecessary hardship that the properties would not yield "a reasonable return without the variance," Lumbis said.

Planning Commission members on Oct. 7 agreed to make changes to eliminate the more controversial proposed restrictions on how marijuana dispensaries should be regulated in the city.

They unanimously agreed that a 30-foot landscaping buffer should be reduced to the 15-foot barrier that already exists in the city's zoning law for residential areas.

Previously, city council members Lisa A. Ruggiero and Cliff G. Olney III stated the proposed city regulations were too restrictive. There aren't a lot of



Bad Apple Saloon, 545 Arsenal St., Watertown. Watertown Daily Times

places that dispensaries would be allowed, Ruggiero said.

"I think it's a bit prohibitive for anyone who wants to open up a business," she said.

The 30-foot landscaping buffer would add an \$86,000 cost to Blount's project, Olney said.

The commission also recommended eliminating the restriction regarding dispensaries operating within 100 feet of cemeteries.

That restriction would only have impacted the Arsenal Street cemetery, planning commission members said.

Planning Commission chair Michelle Capone said she "didn't think it made much sense." Commission member Pete Monaco pointed out the cemetery only consists of graves that are about 120 years old and he never sees anyone visiting the historic city cemetery.

The City Council will now have the final say whether to agree with the Planning Commission's recommendations. A public hearing must be held before the council acts on them; the Jefferson County Planning Board also must review them before they become part of the city's zoning laws.

After the vote, Sboro and Blount said they were satisfied with the Planning Commission's changes.

"If anything, they did the

right thing today," Sboro said, adding that it would help Blount more for his proposal than for his venture.

Blount thinks the commission used "a little bit of common sense."

Two municipalities in the state are facing backlash for proposing restrictions that purposely limit dispensaries in their community. The state's Supreme Court struck down the town of Riverhead's zoning restrictions on Long Island for pot retail shops, while state cannabis officials shot down proposed marijuana zoning in the town of Southhampton, Suffolk Island, for going too far.

Opponents of the city's proposed restrictions questioned whether they would also come under state scrutiny without the Planning Commission's recommendations.

"We're looking for reasonable recommendations that meet our community's needs and follow the state regulations," said city senior planner Geoffrey Urda.

The majority of the Planning Commission agreed to keep dispensaries only in commercial districts. They also agree on changing the city's proposed hours of operations. The dispensaries can operate seven days a week but cannot

be open before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m.

State laws prohibit cannabis dispensaries within 200 feet of churches and within 500 feet of schools. However, the stricter city restriction measures those distances from the pot shop's door to the school and church property lines.

In September, the City Council voted, 3-2, to opt back in and allow retail pot dispensaries after it decided not to allow the businesses four years ago.

In an Oct. 10 telephone interview, Blount noted that patrons of his shop in the village have told of the medical uses of cannabis.

"We have had veterans tell us they are now off opioids and use cannabis to manage pain," he said, stressing the shop's staff does not give medical advice. "These stories make me feel good and tell me we are doing the right thing."

His next step is to attend the zoning board of appeals meeting to request a special use variance in order to allow the shop in an other than commercial district as allowed by the state regulations.

Journal & Republican editor Elaine M. Avallone contributed to this report.

Free transit connects Fort Drum, Lewis County

Times staff report

FORT DRUM — Fort Drum announced Sept. 26 that it has launched a free transit service in partnership with Lewis County. The post said in a statement that the Alpine Express shuttle bus made a brief stop in front of Hays Hall Friday for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to formally recognize the launch of the service.

Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum commanding general, applauded the partnership with Lewis County and the people who worked on this project for more than a year through an Intergovernmental Support Agreement, IGSA, Fort Drum said in its statement.

“This is more than just cutting the ribbon for a bus service,” Naumann said in the post’s statement. “This is a demonstration of the proud partnership and really incredible link that we share and that we are privileged to have as someone who benefits from living in the North Country.”

Naumann said there are many young soldiers and families whose quality of life will improve knowing there is a new transportation option on post. He commented how his wife will offer rides in her car when she passes by a soldier and had to explain to their son why this act of generosity matters.

“They’re not choosing to walk in the rain or snow,” Naumann said. “They don’t have a choice. Now, they’ve got a choice. Now, they’ve got this fantastic option, and we’re really excited about this. We know the impact is going to be real. And frankly, it’s happening now.”

The transit route, which started Sept. 22, includes 53 stops throughout the cantonment and Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, and covers the dining facilities, medical clinics, shopping and recreational centers, and barracks and housing areas.

Christine Robinson, Fort Drum Plans, Analysis and Integration Office management and program analyst, served as the technical representative on the IGSA partnership.

She said she dug deep into her military and federal service experience for relevant project man-



The ribbon is cut on the Alpine Express. Fort Drum/U.S. Army photo

agement knowledge.

“I’ve had to dive into numerous Army regulations regarding mass transit, non-tactical vehicle transportation and independent government cost estimates for running a service such as this,” Robinson said. “I will tell you, though, that the civilians and contractors on this installation that have the knowledge and expertise in these areas are amazing and were so helpful with guiding me to the answers I was looking for. It definitely took a village to get it completed.”

Robinson said that as more drivers are hired and trained, the Alpine Express will have increased hours of operation, including weekends. Curious as to what community members are thinking about the Alpine Express, Robinson said she spoke with the drivers two days after the launch, according to Fort Drum.

“One service member had been walking from The Timbers to her unit every day since she did not have a vehicle here,” Robinson said. “A Commissary employee had finished work and caught a ride with the Alpine Express to the housing area. Even though there were several stops before getting to his destination, he was happy just to relax and not have to walk a long distance.”



Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum commanding general, walks down the aisle of the Alpine Express on Friday. Fort Drum/U.S. Army photo

Robinson also learned of a family member who just arrived at Fort Drum from Germany. She had dropped her child off at a child development center, and hopped on the Alpine Express — not to go to a particular destination, but as a break from unpacking to explore the area.

“A lot had changed since they were last stationed here 15 years ago,” Robinson said. “She

intended to take the Alpine Express again the following day for her son’s medical appointment. She said she was happy because they have only one vehicle and it wasn’t running, so this helped a great deal.”

Naumann said it is important to spread the word about the Alpine Express so that more people can benefit from the service.

Information about bus sched-

ule, route and times is available at wdt.me/AlpineExpress.

Commuters can use the free Transit app to access the Lewis County Public Transit lines, schedules and maps. This includes the Fort Drum Circuit Route that travels from Lowville, Carthage, Croghan and Evans Mills onto post, and will soon include the Alpine Express.

\$1M sought from NYPA for Gouverneur mine



Empire State Mines LLC plans to eventually employ 55 additional full-time equivalent employees and support the retention of 135 current employees if it is approved for \$1 million in funding from the New York Power Authority. Watertown Daily Times

By **BOB BECKSTEAD**

bbeckstead@wdt.net

GOUVERNEUR — Empire State Mines LLC plans to eventually employ 55 additional full-time equivalent employees and support the retention of 135 current employees if it is approved for \$1 million in funding from the New York Power Authority.

The Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Board met Oct. 8 to review the company's request, and they've recommended that the NYPA Board of Trustees approve the funding.

The increase in the number of employees, which would be four initially, would be part of the plan to establish a micronization and purification facility at its Gouverneur location. The number of employees would increase once the facility is fully scaled.

The fund allocation approved would reimburse the company for a portion of costs related to the purchase of machinery and equipment, and soft costs such as working capital, front end engineering design, test work, and engineering and consulting fees to establish the Gouverneur facility.

Patricia K. Wilson, NYPA's senior program manager for economic development, said \$500,000 of the \$1 million requested for the project would be dedicated to energy-related projects.

"In this 15th round of allocations for the board to consider, staff recommends an award of

\$1 million from the Northern New York Economic Development Fund to Empire State Mines, LLC, owned by Titan Mining Corporation and Augusta Group Company," she said.

Wilson said Empire State Mines plans to spend approximately \$5.6 million to establish the Gouverneur facility. It would process 20 to 50 kilograms per hour of natural flake graphite, "a key next step in advancing the first fully integrated graphite production in the U.S. since 1956," she said.

"The technical, operational and qualification data achieved from this phase will form the foundation for full commercialization ramp-up benefiting the United States defense, aerospace and clean energy industries," she said. "The project represents a landmark achievement in processing and refining, an end-to-end U.S. natural graphite product promoting supply chain resilience and national security."

Wilson said graphite was the largest component in lithium ion batteries, with the U.S. importing 100% of its natural graphite requirements. New York will become the first state in 70 years to produce natural flake graphite, which the U.S. government classifies as a critical mineral for the country's clean energy future.

"This project aims to solve the supply chain resilience issue and onshore production of inputs essential for energy storage," she said.

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