

PROGRESS

FEBRUARY 2026



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Inside these pages, local businesses and organizations spotlight what they have to offer.

Read about the highlights of economic developments over the past year.

A special supplement to this week's edition of the Journal & Republican
Wednesday, February 25, 2026

The Journal & Republican continuing to serve the community

From the staff: We hope you enjoy the 2026 Progress edition

The Journal & Republican continues to serve all of Lewis County and the greater Carthage area.

We strive to provide information of upcoming events, feature the achievements of community members, follow the successes of students from local schools and keep abreast of the workings of the municipalities.

Since becoming managing editor for the weekly paper, I have encouraged the community to

utilize the paper with my slogan, "This is your community newspaper — utilize it to promote your organization." Many have taken advantage of this opportunity.

Along with our advertising executive Barbara Loomis, we keep area businesses in the spotlight.

In the past year, the Carthage area has had several businesses open and in Lewis County, Naturally Lewis has provided aid to

businesses to open, expand and improve.

Looking forward to the next year, there will be more opportunities for business ventures.

Lewis County and the Carthage area are great places to live and work as well as to visit.

We hope this Progress edition helps you to discover what the area has to offer and to learn more about the area's businesses and non profits.



Elaine M. Avallone, managing editor



Barbara A. Loomis, advertising executive

HEADLINERS

Community Economic Development Programs funded 32 projects



One of the recipients of the Building Business Fund was the Moving Mountains Cafe in Croghan. Pictured from left, are Anna Platz, Community Economic Development Program Committee (CEDPC) member; Scott and Ingrid Moshier, owners of Moving Mountains Cafe; Jake Monnat, CEDPC member; Tyler McDonald, CEDPC member; and Thomas Kalamas, Lewis County legislator and CEDP member. Photo provided by Naturally Lewis

Originally published Feb. 5

LOWVILLE — Naturally Lewis, Inc. has announced the results of its 2025 Community Economic Development Programs, which funded 32 projects across Lewis County, generating a total economic impact of over \$33.2 million. A total of \$551,578.50 was awarded to businesses, nonprofits, municipalities, schools and community organizations through multiple funding programs.

The Community Economic Development Program was established in 2022 through a Host Community Agreement (HCA) between the Lewis County Development Corporation (LCDC) and Number Three Wind, providing \$150,000 in annual investment to support local economic growth, revitalization and community development. The impact of the program has been strengthened through additional funding partners, including Lewis County Board of Legislators for the Vacant Property Revitalization Fund (\$1.5 million) and the HLH Living Trust to create the Events & Festivals focus area within the Small Things, Big Impacts Fund (\$20,000). "Each of these projects

represents an investment not just in a single business or organization, but in the long-term vitality of our communities," said Jenna Lauraine, Naturally Lewis programs and partnerships director. "Through creative funding partnerships, we are excited to be able to offer these opportunities to the Lewis County community into the future. The scale of impact we continue to see reflects the power of locally driven investment to strengthen our local economy and quality of life."

In 2026, Naturally Lewis received an additional \$150,000 through the Host Community Agreement with Number Three Wind, renewing the following programs:

- Small Things, Big Impacts Fund — \$20,000
- Community Connections Fund — \$30,000
- Building Business Fund — \$100,000

These programs are designed to support business growth, organizational capacity, community-driven projects, and strategic investments that strengthen Lewis County's economy and quality of life. Since 2023, 98 projects have been administered through the Community

Economic Development Programs, resulting in a cumulative \$40.9 million in economic impact countywide.

Applications are now open, and funding is awarded on a competitive basis. Eligible applicants are encouraged to learn more about program guidelines and application deadlines by visiting <https://naturallylewis.com/support/funding-opportunities>

2025 Funded Projects & Awards

Recipients included local businesses, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, schools, and private developers advancing redevelopment projects throughout Lewis County.

Vacant Property Revitalization Fund

- 4113 Center St. Renovation (\$39,812.50) — To transform a vacant commercial space into an occupied business.

- Harrisville Bistro Project (\$20,000) — To rebuild commercial space on a site that recently underwent demolition of a dilapidated structure.

- Harrisville Coffee Co. (\$20,000) — To inspect, repair, or replace the septic system and complete construction needed to operate a

small-scale café.

- Opera House Cantina (\$85,000) — To revitalize the historic opera house, including exterior restoration, second-floor opera house improvements, and a full commercial kitchen build-out for a new Tex-Mex restaurant.

- Rochester's Cornerstone Group, Ltd. (\$100,000) — Toward the adaptive reuse of the former Glenfield Elementary School to create 63 affordable housing units.

- Top View Apartments (\$100,000) — To revitalize the former Lyons Falls School into 20 medium- to high-end apartment units.

- Building Business Fund
- Harrisville Coffee Co. (\$20,000) — Toward equipment and furniture purchases to launch the café.

- Moving Mountains Café (\$39,866) — Toward remodeling and kitchen equipment to expand offerings.

- Zehr's Flowers and Landscaping (\$35,500) — To purchase silt sock equipment and office/IT infrastructure.

- Business Retention Fund
- QubicaAMF (\$50,000) — For equipment upgrades to meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards for particulate emissions.

- Community Connections Fund
- Lewis County Home-school Connection (\$11,472.50) — Toward curriculum development and office equipment needs.

- ReNew Bremen, Inc. (\$5,000) — Toward ongoing efforts to revitalize Wagner Field.

- Three G Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. (\$5,000) — Toward building upgrades to create an updated community hub.

- Town of Diana (\$8,500) — To develop a conceptual master plan and scoping report for future recreational park improvements.

- Small Things, Big Impacts Fund
- Beaver River Central School (\$1,500) — To support a new collaborative recycling program.

- Black River Valley Four Wheeler Club (\$2,000) — Website design.

- Croghan Library (\$800) — Exterior signage.

- Crumbs Bake Shop (\$1,000) — Website design for the Flour Loft Airbnb.

- Dani's Daffodils (\$600) — Professional development coursework.

- Great Lot Sportsman's Club Corp (\$1,000) — Exterior

signage.

- Hartley's Meat Market (\$500) — Exterior signage.

- Azahar Roast House (\$1,000) — Commercial espresso equipment for a mobile coffee cart.

- Lewis County Home-school Connection (\$1,000) — Website design.

- Lowville Appliance & Air Conditioning, LLC (\$1,000) — Exterior signage.

- Lowville Dental Care (\$2,500) — Website design and exterior signage.

- NC Handymen LLC (\$1,000) — Website design.

- PhoebeNix Pet Salon LLC (\$1,000) — Equipment upgrades to expand offerings.

- Pine Grove Community Church Preservation Society, Inc. (\$1,000) — Exterior signage.

- The Bloom Bar Floral & Gift Shop (\$1,000) — Exterior signage.

- Top View Apartments (\$2,500) — Website design.

- Events & Festivals Fund
- Little Village Mushrooms (\$2,500) — Equipment and furniture purchases to support pop-up events.

- Town of Diana Community Days 5K (\$1,000) — Reusable event promotion signage.

From the Desk of Andrew Boulais, P.E., Regional Manager and Senior Vice President, New York Power Authority St. Lawrence FDR Power Project.

Greetings from the New York Power Authority's St. Lawrence FDR Power Project. As we embark on 2026, I am filled with pride in the remarkable achievements NYPA made in 2025. The new year will bring new projects that underscore our commitment to clean energy, economic growth, and community support in the North Country.

Alcoa Power Contract with NYPA

The renewal of the power contract with Alcoa stands as one of last year's key accomplishments. As NYPA's inaugural customer, Alcoa continues to play a crucial role in the North Country economy. The new agreement secures the provision of low-cost, reliable power to one of the region's largest employers, thereby supporting thousands of direct and indirect jobs throughout the North Country. Extending through 2036, this contract underscores NYPA's commitment to fostering economic stability and growth in the region.

Smart Path Connect Transmission Line

The Smart Path Connect transmission project in the North Country is scheduled to be completed later this year. The project, which is 90 percent complete, marks a significant upgrade to New York's transmission infrastructure, enhancing the reliability and capacity of our power delivery system. The Smart Path Connect project, which began construction in late 2022, is on track to help unbundle existing renewable resources in the region, yielding significant production cost savings and emissions reductions.

Massena Power Canal Project

In 2025 NYPA began work to stabilize the former Alcoa dam located at the intersection of the Massena Canal and the Grasse River in Massena. The work, which will continue into 2026, will involve the removal of steel structures and the partial demolition of the concrete structure. Any remaining structures will be stabilized and

covered with topsoil and grass to form a more visually appealing earthen dam. The project aims to restore natural river flow and improve ecological conditions. This work is part of broader environmental restoration efforts in the region, aiming to rehabilitate and preserve the natural environment for future generations.

NYPA Initiatives on Renewables, Nuclear Energy, and Sustainability

NYPA has a long history in Massena beginning with the construction of the St. Lawrence-FDR hydroelectric facility that brought economic revitalization and job opportunities to the region. This landmark project not only supplied clean, renewable energy but also demonstrated NYPA's commitment to sustainable development. Building on this legacy, NYPA is now poised to embark on new energy infrastructure initiatives, focusing on renewable energy projects and nuclear power development. These initiatives aim to further enhance the region's energy portfolio, reduce carbon emissions, and ensure a resilient, sustainable energy future for Massena and beyond. By leveraging its experience, NYPA continues to lead the charge in advancing the clean energy frontier.

Nuclear Energy

On June 23, 2025, Governor Kathy Hochul directed NYPA to develop at least one new nuclear energy facility with a combined capacity of no less than one gigawatt of electricity, either alone or in partnership with private entities in upstate New York. This initiative will provide clean, reliable, around-the-clock power to support the state's economic growth and clean energy goals while shielding New Yorkers from long-term energy volatility and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. This project will complement the state's effort to build renewables and retire aging fossil plants, and is a critical step toward energy

security, affordability and sustainability built by and for New Yorkers.

Community Engagement and Support

Our partnership with the North Country communities remains strong. Our Environmental Justice team remains deeply engaged with the community, partnering with local organizations to improve public facilities. NYPA has a talented workforce that is working to implement initiatives that will have a lasting impact on New York's energy future. The Power Authority has a strong commitment to Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and Workforce Development, recognizing the integral role these principles play in fostering a sustainable and equitable energy future. NYPA actively engages with underserved communities to ensure that the benefits of clean energy initiatives are equitably distributed. Through various programs and partnerships, NYPA prioritizes environmental justice through educational resources and support, ensuring that every New Yorker has a stake in the state's transition to a greener energy landscape. NYPA remains committed to cultivating a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities it serves. By providing comprehensive training and development programs, NYPA equips the next generation of utility workers with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the evolving energy sector. These initiatives include apprenticeships, internships, and professional development opportunities aimed at attracting and retaining talent from diverse backgrounds. NYPA's commitment to workforce development ensures that the energy field benefits from a wide range of perspectives and expertise, driving innovation and excellence while promoting equitable access to career advancement opportunities. Through these efforts, NYPA not only supports the current energy infrastructure but also lays the groundwork for a dynamic and inclusive future in the utility industry.



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The North Country economy is built on low-cost renewable hydropower from the New York Power Authority's St. Lawrence-FDR Power Project in Massena. By modernizing its regional sections of the statewide transmission grid and supporting innovative local solutions, NYPA is proud to collaborate with the North Country to advance a reliable, affordable, and clean energy future.

To connect, contact karen.white@nypa.gov

Learn more about Low-cost Power & North Country Success Stories with the St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency
<https://slcida.com/rvrda/>



HEADLINERS

January Business After Hours event planned

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com

CARTHAGE — After taking off December for the holidays, the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce will resume its Business After Hours networking events.

Monthly, the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce sponsors Business After Hours events to provide a casual environment for networking as well as to allow the public to learn more about area businesses. The networking events are generally held monthly on the third Thursday and the public is encouraged to attend.

According to chamber executive director Deborah J. Atkins, the host businesses have a chance to share their “why” — why they opened their business in the Carthage community, why they opened their business in general and what their future looks like.

The next event is planned for 5-7 p.m. Jan. 22, hosted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Dionne-Rumble Post 7227 and Auxiliary at 668 West End Ave.

The VFW is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, guard and reserve forces. Its mission is to foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve veterans, the military and communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans. Its auxiliary supports the VFW, serving veterans, service members and their families, and spreading patriotism nationwide. Male and female relatives of service members and veterans are eligible to join.

The Father John Cosmic Knights of Columbus Council 291, Watertown Wolves Hockey Team, KOA Natural Bridge Campgrounds and NBC Watertown will co-host the event.

The Knights of Columbus is a fraternal Catholic group focused on charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism, providing members financial protection while engaging in significant community service, parish support, and promoting Catholic values through works such as food drives, support for pregnancy centers and youth programs.

The Watertown Wolves is a minor professional ice hockey team competing in the Federal Prospects



Members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge 1762, from left, Sean McHale, Thomas Brotherton and Brian Scott, spoke of their organization during the November Business After Hours. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

Hockey League (FPHL) and playing their home games at the Watertown Municipal Arena.

The KOA Campground in Natural Bridge has a lot to offer campers with a variety of sites, cabins and RVs to rent along with an indoor heated pool and many outdoor recreational activities.

NBC Watertown bills itself as local presence with coverage of the north country area for community events, military affairs and regional happenings, including live sports and entertainment.

To learn more about these businesses and organizations stop by the Jan. 22 Business After Hours. Admission will be \$5 per person and there will be complimentary hors d'oeuvres, raffles and a cash bar.

The November event, held at the Carthage Elks Lodge, was co hosted by Murphy N Murphy, Noftsier Financial, and War Dog Junk Removal.

The Elks lodge, which recently received the Community Impact award from the chamber, is a popular venue for a variety of

dinners, weddings and special events. Its members strive to serve the community through various programs including the annual Shoe Party, Major Projects event, Veterans Dinner, with the Lions — the annual Thanksgiving Community Feast and with the chamber the annual Citizen of the Year recognition.

“We’re thrilled to host the Business After Hours,” said past exalted ruler Robert Sligar. “We stand to serve the community and youth.”

He noted the lodge holds fundraisers including chicken barbecues which allow the Elks to give back an average of \$75,000 per year.

“A strong membership allows us to give back more,” he added.

Murphy N Murphy is a singing duo performing hits in several genres — country, oldies and old time rock n roll. Del and Holly Murphy moved to the north country from Alabama and have been performing at Elks lodges, American Legion posts and clubs since 2003.

“We are happy to be here,” Mr. Murphy said.

“We are grateful to the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce to help us promote our business.”

Noftsier Financial provides tax preparation, financial advice and services to help clients plan for their short and long term goals, as well as insurance products.

Owned by Larry Noftsier, the company has been in business since 2014.

“We work with people to prepare for retirement, help navigate taxes and retirement planning,” Mr. Noftsier said.

War Dog Junk Removal is a veteran owned and operated junk removal service operating in Jefferson and Lewis counties. Jaden and Lauren Dennery of Carthage saw the need for such a service when they were quoted what they deemed an unreasonable.

“We wanted to offer services at a better, more affordable rate,” Mr. Dennery said.

For more information about chamber events, visit the organization’s Facebook page or website at www.carthagny.com.



Del Murphy provided entertainment as well as information about his business at the November Business After Hours. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



During the November Business After Hours, Angela and Larry Noftsier spoke about financial services. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



Lauren and Jaden Dennery talked about their junk removal business during the November Business After Hours. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

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Morgia Wealth here to help build legacies

At Morgia Wealth Management, building a legacy for future generations is paramount—and not just when it comes to financial planning and investment management.

Founder Cataldo (Tony) Morgia began helping local families and businesses in Watertown, New York, in 1968. Tony saw a need in his community and spent the next 58 years serving it. Always future-thinking, Tony built his reputation by offering clients steady, disciplined, and careful guidance, nurturing client relationships just as much as investment portfolios.

When he needed the support of others to keep up with his growing client base, he knew exactly where he could turn to for help: his family.

In 1988, his son, Michael Morgia, joined him in business. As they continued to see growth in clients and assets, Tony's son-in-law, PJ Banazek, left his career as a CPA in Syracuse to help build the practice in Watertown. Together, the two generations worked to bring "The Morgia Difference" to the community, taking a holistic view of every client's life and being a steady presence in moments of major financial decisions.

Part of "The Morgia Difference" is trust. When Tony decided to transition his leadership over to Mike and PJ in 2001, he knew it would be a smooth one because of the strong relationships built over decades.

"PJ and Mike had the respect of the employees and a vision to grow the practice," said Tony. "It was easy for me to transition."

While Tony's role evolved, his presence and dedication to

the business never changed.

"My father made it easy for us," said Mike. "He kept coming into the office and still does—even today at 87!"

Mike acknowledges that the continuity of Tony's presence helped clients feel secure during the transition—especially since Morgia Wealth Management works with many of the children and, now, grandchildren, of Tony's original clients.

Under the leadership of Mike and PJ, the practice has continued to grow and expand. Morgia Wealth Management has become a trusted advisor for banks, hospitals, unions, foundations, boards, retirement plans, non-profits, professional practices, and private businesses of all sizes. Now at 14 employees, the practice is entering another new chapter of leadership.

Having watched Tony navigate the transition with care and discipline, Mike and PJ are taking the same thoughtful and graceful approach in this most recent evolution that has been years in the making. The first steps began back in 2022, when Morgia Wealth Management expanded its active partners to include Heather Clement and John Johnson.

"Tony taught Mike and me a very important lesson," said PJ. "Be willing to trust the people that you brought on board to build this business for the next 25 years." PJ says from day one, they've asked each person brought on to think like an owner.

"Now, it's time to let them be the key decision makers on the day-to-day management of the business," he said.

Today, the practice is managed by John, Heather, and

Frank Murphy, the director of Trading & Research. The third generation of the Morgia family, Nico Morgia, has also joined the management team.

"Similar to when Tony handed over the reins, Mike and PJ continue to be actively involved in the business, working with their long-time clients and making key investment decisions," said Heather. "Their guidance and insights are critical because the team is still growing in the North Country."

Heather says 2025 was one of the best years the practice has seen for new client growth. At Morgia Wealth Management, keeping up with growth has been a dynamic process, involving increasing the complexity of operations and reorganizing business functions.

Underlying each change has been a focus on deepening the level of service provided to clients.

The team is also growing beyond the North Country: This past fall, William McCanney opened a satellite office in Reading, Pennsylvania, to serve the Greater Reading and Lancaster region. William is currently taking new clients in the area.

Today, Mike and PJ remain involved in the business, fostering long-term client relationships and participating in all portfolio investment decisions. While, like Tony, they now work a few fewer days each month, their active presence is felt.

Values become a legacy when we pass them on. Tony, Mike, and PJ take pride in watching a new cohort of leaders steward the Morgia legacy for the generations to come.

HEADLINERS

BOCES seeks options to continue snow tubing at Maple Ridge



The snow tubing hill at Maple Ridge Center in Lowville. Jefferson-Lewis BOCES is looking at options that would allow for the popular winter activity to continue. Watertown Daily Times

Staff report

Originally published Jan. 14
LOWVILLE — With Jefferson-Lewis BOCES having finalized a lease agreement to use the Maple Ridge Center to expand its career and technical education programs and job training opportunities for students, questions have arisen about the future of a popular snow-tubing hill on the property.

For years, the Maple Ridge Center has hosted events and family celebrations and has been known for its snow-tubing hill at 7421 East Road, but BOCES says it does not have the legal authority and resources to operate a snow tubing hill and is looking to sell or lease that portion of the property.

"It's our desire to work with a business partner to continue the tubing operations, allowing it to remain a recreational activity for families and visitors to the region," Jefferson-Lewis BOCES District Superintendent Christopher DiFulvio said in a statement. "We welcome inquiries from anyone wanting to purchase or lease the hill."

BOCES announced in July that it intended to lease 56

acres at Maple Ridge Center to complement and support the existing programs offered at the Lewis County Education Center, which is adjacent to the center. The lease agreement was finalized in November.

BOCES says it still wants the center to remain a community asset, including the tubing hill.

"We hope the community traditions continue at Maple Ridge, and we look forward to the property remaining an asset to contribute to the local economy," DiFulvio said in the statement Wednesday.

Anyone seeking information about the use of Maple Ridge or purchasing/leasing the tubing hill can contact BOCES at (315) 779-7000.

BOCES said the recently signed lease agreement is part of long-term, multi-site, facilities-expansion strategy it has developed in response to significant enrollment increases and regional workforce development needs. This will begin in the near term with expanded space for the Heavy Equipment program offered to high school students in Lewis County.

BOCES said this strategy will also include a proposed

building swap agreement with Lewis County. Under this proposal, BOCES will assume 100% ownership of the Lewis County Education Center, 7395 East Road, in exchange for Lewis County assuming 100% ownership of the Boak Education Center, 5439 Shady Avenue.

This building exchange will meet capacity needs by helping ensure students no longer wait for placement in high-demand programs, according to BOCES. It will also offer adaptable space for possible future program development in agriculture and forestry—sectors central to regional workforce pipelines.

BOCES said as it moves ahead with this long-term strategy, it will continue to communicate and seek feedback from all of our stakeholders in the region.

"Lewis County is excited to expand the partnership with Jefferson-Lewis BOCES to increase educational opportunities for the region", Lewis County Manager Timothy

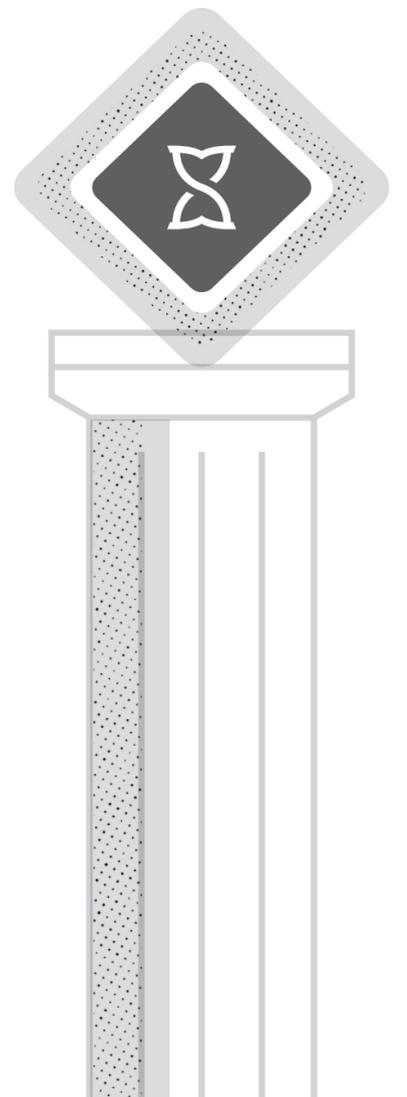
Hunt said in BOCES statement.

Building for What Comes Next

For more than 50 years, Morgia Wealth Management has grown through careful planning and deliberate leadership transitions.

Founded by Tony Morgia and expanded under the long-term leadership of Michael Morgia and PJ Banazek, the practice is now following a multi-year succession plan for a new generation of partners, supported by the continued involvement of its founders.

This continuity of leadership and process keeps Morgia steady, disciplined, and prepared.



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Welcome to All Things Beautiful Bed and Breakfast in Croghan

We are so grateful for all our wonderful guests — those staying with us for the first time and those who return time and again. Your business and friendship mean the world to us, and we look forward to welcoming you back soon.

At our Bed and Breakfast, we host guests from all walks of life and many corners of the world. Whether you're a vacationer, visiting family, attending a reunion, wedding, or funeral, or traveling for work, we're here to make your stay comfortable. Most of our rooms are equipped with microwaves and mini-fridges, perfect for traveling professionals like nurses, doctors, or business travelers who need simple meal options.

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Recent updates include a freshly painted exterior and improved entryway with additional hand railings for extra support—features our guests have truly appreciated.

RELAXATION AWAITS

Unwind in our vibrant flower, vegetable, and fruit gardens. Enjoy a

moment of peace on the front porch in a comfortable rocking chair, listening to the birds and friendly greetings from our neighbors. Want to feel even more pampered? Book an on-premises massage during your stay.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Croghan offers plenty of attractions within walking distance:

- Chocolate shop and ice cream parlor
- Specialty meat market
- Railroad and Maple Museums
- Hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing, and picnicking A Unique Artistic Touch

One thing that sets us apart is the original art displayed throughout our home, much of which is available for purchase.

From oil paintings and watercolors to embroidery, pottery, and photography, there's something for every art lover. Guests also enjoy the historical timeline of Croghan, displayed floor-to-ceiling in our entryway.

ROOMS & RATES

- Applewood Suite: Queen bed, kitchenette (mini-fridge, microwave, table), private bathroom.
- Plumwood Suite: Queen bed, small fridge, private bathroom.
- Maplewood: Two XL twin beds, a trundle day-bed, table, small fridge/microwave, shared bathroom.
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- Birch: Queen bed, chair, shared bathroom.

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-James Wolf, Watertown

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HEADLINERS

Funeral home changes hands

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com

Originally published Oct. 15
CARTHAGE — Bruce and Rhonda Bezanilla, owners of the Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home, 518 State St., have sold their business to Nicole M. LaRue of Copenhagen.

Mr. Bezanilla started with the McGraw Funeral Home, owned by Charles and Margaret McGraw, June 1, 1980

The burial service had been started by Mrs. McGraw's family the DoYLES in the early part of the 1900s and was transfer to McGraw in late 1970.

Mr. Bezanilla said he knew early on in life that he wanted to become a funeral director and own his own business.

"My grandmother's death when I was in eighth or ninth grade affected me a lot," Mr. Bezanilla said. "During my junior year, I looked into it and worked part time at Bossuot. I would wash cars and do what ever was needed."

After graduation from Carthage Central School, Mr. Bezanilla pursued a mortuary science degree from Canton and did a one-year apprenticeship with Samuel Lundy at Bossuot-Lundy Funeral Home Inc. He then went to work with the funeral home as a manager for 11 months.

"I realized then that I could do it on my own," Mr. Bezanilla said, and did just that when Mr. McGraw approached him to purchase his funeral home.

Mr. Bezanilla said a lot has changed in the industry over the past 50 years.

When he first started there were three very competitive funeral homes in the Carthage area - McGraw's, Bossuot-Lundy and Scherer Funeral Home in West Carthage each with their own following.

"McGraw's was the Catholic funeral home," Mr. Bezanilla explained, noting religion played a big role in funerals at the time when he started as well as ethnic background. "There were Italian, Lebanese and Polish families each honoring their own traditions."

With the sale of his business, all three former funeral homes are now owned by Nicole M. LaRue of Copenhagen.

Mrs. LaRue, a lifelong North Country resident, brings experience and a deep-rooted passion for serving her community, especially during life's most challenging moments.

The 2001 graduate of Ogdensburg Free Academy and a 2004 alumna of SUNY



Nicole M. LaRue has purchased the Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home from Bruce Bezanilla. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers Corp

Canton's Mortuary Science Program started her career at Allen-Nichols Funeral Home while completing her studies. In 2004, Mrs. LaRue joined Lundy Funeral Home in Carthage, where she completed her residency and provided over two decades of exceptional service as a funeral director. She partnered with Cullen Lundy in November 2014, to open Northridge Cremation Chapel in Philadelphia. In April 2016, Mrs. LaRue alongside business partner Christopher C. Pitcher, acquired Allen-Nichols Funeral Home, renaming it LaRue & Pitcher Funeral Home. She played a key role in its operation until January 1, 2024, when the business merged with Frary Funeral Homes under Ryan Frary's ownership. In 2021, amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the operation was relocated to Carthage.

Transitioning to a new chapter, as owner of Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home, she will continue her commitment to care, dedicated to helping families with dignity and compassion and to offer personalized, heartfelt services.

"I believes every family deserves a meaningful farewell that honors their loved one's life, and I am committed to making that process as comforting and stress-free as possible," Mrs. LaRue said.

"While I wasn't actively seeking to purchase another funeral home after selling my previous one in January 2024, I felt it was crucial to prevent a corporate entity from establishing a presence here in Carthage," she said. "I deeply value the opportunity to serve the families in Jefferson and Lewis counties, especially within Carthage and the surrounding smaller communities, where I've built strong and meaningful connections. I am truly grateful for the opportunities Lundy's provided me, particularly considering that hiring female directors was less common when I first started in this field. Now, that we are no longer competitors, families will have the flexibility to choose the location that best suits their needs, and we are committed to conducting services according to their specific wishes. There is also the potential for us to share staff and resources in the future, which could further enhance our ability to serve the community effectively. My commitment is to ensure that this location continues to operate as long as it remains financially viable and continues to be a valuable resource for our community."

She noted that all pre-need accounts established by Mr. Bezanilla will be fully guaranteed.

"My aim is to continue providing the same

level of professionalism and compassionate care that Bruce consistently offered," she said. "He was an exceptionally devoted individual, and I am wholeheartedly committed to upholding his legacy."

Mrs. LaRue specializes in creating personalized tributes for both people and pets, offering pet cremation services as a devoted animal lover herself. Her two dogs, Coco and Lily, who mutually adore each other, inspire her to bring extra care to every family - human or furry - ensuring they feel supported during their time of loss.

"For the past 23 years, I've been dedicated to the funeral service profession, and I've held my license as a director for the last 19 years," Mrs. LaRue said. "What I find most rewarding about this work is the privilege of supporting individuals and families during incredibly difficult times. Taking that initial call and offering guidance when someone is experiencing profound loss is a significant driving force for me. Being there for families through these moments becomes a deeply personal experience and shapes your perspective in a unique way."

A past member of the New York State Funeral Directors Association (2006-2024), she has contributed to numerous committees and graduated from the Leadership Academy in 2016, reflecting her commitment to excellence in her field. She has also served her community as a former board member of the Carthage Area Hospital Foundation and Carthage Pop Warner Football Association, and she remains an active member of the Copenhagen Pee Wee Wrestling Club.

She resides in Copenhagen with her husband, Steven C. LaRue, and their two sons, Zakkary and Alexander.

"This is the merging of two great legacy Funeral Homes in the village of Carthage," said Mr. Bezanilla. "Rhonda and I have chosen to sell to Nicole M. LaRue because she is an extremely hard worker and we trust her to continue caring for our families with professionalism, and to uphold our outstanding level of service to our community."

Mr. Bezanilla plans to serve in an advisory capacity, as well as the manager of the business, which will retain its present name.

During their retirement, the Bezanillas, who now reside in Cape Vincent, plan to travel possibly to Spain and to Singapore where their daughter Leanne is now living.

HEADLINERS

New tourism promotion unveiled Wednesday, April 9, 2025

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com

Naturally Lewis, Inc. has unveiled its refreshed digital brand for tourism promotion in Lewis County and the Tug Hill Region - Discover Tug Hill.

"Discover Tug Hill is more than a brand, it is a call to action" said Kristen Ward Aucter, Director of Tourism at Naturally Lewis Inc. "By creating a bold brand for tourism promotion we are able to showcase the attractions and experiences of our community, from the Tug Hill to the Western edge of the Adirondack Park, and provide the hub for visitors and community members to be in-the-know on happenings in our

community."

Naturally Lewis Inc. has been appointed as the official tourism promotion agency for Lewis County by the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

With a new brand for tourism promotion, Naturally Lewis Inc. has developed a regional partnership to promote the entirety of the Tug Hill Region in addition to Lewis County. Through a collaborative marketing effort, the Tug Hill Region and designated tourism promotion agencies within it have developed a formal partnership to promote the Tug Hill as a destination.

"Tourism is the front door to economic development" said Brittany Davis, executive

director of Naturally Lewis, Inc. "By partnering with Jefferson, Oneida and Oswego counties, we are removing boundaries in promoting the experiences of the Tug Hill as a whole and providing a one-stop platform for visitors and community members to stay in-the-know."

For more information on attractions and experiences within Lewis County and the Tug Hill Region, visit DiscoverTugHill.com and follow Discover Tug Hill on Facebook and Instagram. For more information on business and community development, visit NaturallyLewis.com and follow Naturally Lewison Facebook and LinkedIn.



Sherman Electric: quality products and service for more than 100 years

Sherman Electric, located at 417 S. Clinton St. in Carthage, is a familiar name to generations of families in the area.

Established in 1912 by LeRoy E. Sherman, the store was always the first place people thought of for electrical supplies and household appliances. In 1970, son LeRoy Z. Sherman took over and continued the tradition of trust and service.

Today, Sherman Electric is owned by Ray

Pickel, who has worked at the store since 1970. They mostly serve the tri-county area, but go outside of the area as needed.

They provide wholesale electrical supplies and lighting fixtures for industries, residences, municipalities, contractors and schools. They stock Berko electric heat, Nutone ventilators, Sylvania lamps, Progress lighting, Murray distribution equipment and Klein tools and provide sales

and service on GE appliances. They also carry all sizes of conduit and wire, GE appliances, TVs, DVD players and electronics supplies.

Ray invites you to stop in and see their wide range of products firsthand.

The shop is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday or give them a call at 315-493-3050. They'll be happy to assist your needs.

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Industrial & Residential, BERKO Electric Heat,
SYLVANIA Lamps, PROGRESS Lighting
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SOUTH CLINTON ST., CARTHAGE (315) 493-3050

"114 Years In Business"

Champlain Valley Equipment

A Legacy Built on Integrity, Community, and Forward-Thinking Growth

For more than five decades, Champlain Valley Equipment (CVE) has been a trusted partner to farmers, contractors, and property owners across Vermont and New York. What began as a single-store tractor dealership rooted in the Champlain Valley has grown into one of the Northeast's most respected, multi-location equipment organizations—while remaining firmly committed to the values that shaped its founding.

Champlain Valley Equipment's story began in 1970, when father and son Russell F. Carpenter and Russell C. Carpenter purchased Knapp Farm Supply in Middlebury, Vermont. On November 7 of that year, the Carpenters officially established Champlain Valley Equipment as a Ford Tractor dealership. From the start, the business reflected the family's agricultural roots and their belief that success comes from hard work, honesty, and taking care of people.

In 1981, Russell F. Carpenter retired, and the company entered a period of transition and opportunity. When Ford divested its tractor business in the mid-1980s, CVE became a New Holland dealership in 1986—marking the beginning of a long and successful partnership with one of the most recognized names in agricultural equipment.

That same decade, the next generation of leadership was taking shape. Russell C.'s son, Brian Carpenter, graduated cum laude from St. Lawrence University in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in economics. Upon graduation, he received a Regular Army commission through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and served nine years on active duty with the United States Army. His service included assignments in Germany and Panama, as well as several stateside bases—experiences that helped shape his disciplined leadership style and long-term strategic mindset.

In 1993, Brian joined the Vermont Army National Guard, allowing him to return home and prepare to assume a leadership role within Champlain Valley Equipment. His transition back to Vermont marked a pivotal moment in the company's evolution, as CVE began positioning itself for thoughtful expansion beyond its original footprint.

By 2001, CVE expanded operations in Middlebury through the acquisition of Green Mountain Tractor. This growth brought additional manufacturers into the dealership's lineup, including Case IH, Kubota, and New Holland Hay & Forage—broadening the company's ability to serve a more diverse customer base while strengthening its full-service model.

With a clear objective to provide dependable equipment sales and support across multiple regions, Champlain Valley Equipment acquired Fine Line Equipment in St. Albans, Vermont, in 2005. The acquisition transformed CVE into a two-store dealership and welcomed Jason Bessette as a partner. Just one year later, CVE was named "Dealership of the Year" by Farm Equipment magazine—an early indicator of the company's operational excellence, leadership strength, and customer-focused culture. The organization would go on to earn multiple industry recognitions in the years that followed.

In 2008, after years of steady growth and strong leadership, Brian Carpenter was named President and Chief Executive Officer of Champlain Valley Equipment. That same year, CVE expanded again with the acquisition of Derby Equipment in Derby, Vermont, and Josh Provost joined the company as a third partner. The pace of growth continued in 2012 with the



Russell C. Carpenter (center) pictured with his mother, Priscilla Carpenter (left), and his father and co-founder, Russell F. Carpenter (right), during the early years of Champlain Valley Equipment.



An aerial photograph of Champlain Valley Equipment's original Middlebury, Vermont location, circa 1970.



Russell C. Carpenter (left) and Brian Carpenter (right) pictured together during the company's early leadership transition.



Members of the Champlain Valley Equipment Middlebury team after receiving the 2014 Business of the Year award from the Addison County Chamber of Commerce.



Brigadier General Brian Carpenter upon his retirement in 2014 after 30 years of military service.

acquisition of Riverside Equipment in Berlin, Vermont, making CVE a four-store dealership and further solidifying its presence across the state.

In 2014, Champlain Valley Equipment acquired L.W. Greenwood & Sons in East Randolph, Vermont. Though the East Randolph location was later merged into the Berlin dealership in 2018, the acquisition added Bobcat to CVE's equipment lineup across all locations. That same year, CVE received the Business of the Year Award from the Addison County Chamber of Commerce—recognizing not only business success, but also the company's involvement and leadership within the community.

Russell C. Carpenter retired in 2015 and passed away in 2020, leaving behind a lasting legacy. His influence remains deeply embedded in the company culture—carried forward by a team that includes family members, long-tenured employees, and loyal customers who have grown alongside the business he helped build.

At the heart of Champlain Valley Equipment's success is a philosophy grounded in integrity. Brian Carpenter has often spoken about the values instilled in him by his father—values

shaped by farming, community involvement, and accountability. Leading with integrity, he explains, means standing behind your word, learning from mistakes, and doing right by the customer even when it is difficult. That mindset has become a defining characteristic of CVE's approach to business and a cornerstone of the trust it has built with customers over generations.

This customer-first philosophy extends beyond transactions. Many CVE customers describe their relationship with the dealership as personal and enduring—one rooted in reliability, respect, and familiarity. As Brian has noted, when people need help, they often turn to those they trust most. CVE has worked intentionally to be that trusted partner for the communities it serves.

Community involvement has always been central to the Carpenter family's leadership. Champlain Valley Equipment actively supports civic engagement and encourages employees to give back through volunteer fire departments, emergency medical services, and other local organizations. The company supports this involvement by allowing flexibility for employees to serve their

communities—reinforcing a culture where public service and professional excellence go hand in hand.

Brian Carpenter himself has long been a visible leader both locally and nationally. He has served on the Middlebury Select Board since 2014 and has chaired the board since 2016. Within the equipment industry, he has served as Chairman of the North American Equipment Dealers Association board, chaired both the New Holland and Kubota Dealer Councils, and contributed to numerous other industry boards. His leadership reflects not only operational expertise, but a deep understanding of the evolving needs of modern equipment customers.

In addition to his civilian leadership, Brian retired in 2014 as a Brigadier General after serving as Assistant Adjutant General of the Vermont National Guard—bringing decades of service, strategic planning, and team development experience into his role at CVE.

Environmental stewardship is another pillar of Champlain Valley Equipment's operations. Recognizing the responsibility that comes with growth, CVE has invested in sustainable initiatives across its locations. Solar panels have been installed on

many buildings in Middlebury, St. Albans, and Colchester, electric operations have been adopted where feasible, and stormwater systems have been reengineered to capture rainwater runoff for use in wash bays. These initiatives reflect CVE's broader goal of minimizing environmental impact while supporting regenerative practices that benefit future generations.

Today, Champlain Valley Equipment operates as an 11-store organization serving Vermont and New York. Growth in recent years includes the acquisition of Essex Equipment in Colchester, Vermont, in 2022, followed by the transformative acquisition of Empire Tractor in November 2024. The Empire Tractor acquisition added six locations—Atlanta, Batavia, Canton, Cortland, Watertown, and Waterloo—significantly expanding CVE's footprint across Upstate New York while preserving the local identities and legacies of each dealership.

With more than 200 employees across its locations, CVE continues to operate under its longstanding motto: "Big enough to keep you running, small enough to know your name." The company remains committed to honoring the heritage of each family-owned business it brings

into the CVE organization, ensuring continuity for customers and employees alike.

From sales and rentals to parts, service, and after-sale support, Champlain Valley Equipment offers a full-service model designed to keep customers productive. Its knowledgeable team stays current through ongoing training and industry education, ensuring customers receive expert guidance and dependable support.

CVE's extensive equipment lineup includes leading brands such as Kubota, New Holland, Case IH, Bobcat, Krone, Oxo, Polaris, Woods, Land Pride, Great Plains, Kuhn Knight, H&S, Ventrac, Jamesway, Stihl, Kinze, Manitou, Gehl, Farmi Forest, and more—serving agricultural, construction, and residential customers alike.

As Champlain Valley Equipment continues to grow, it does so with the same principles that defined its beginnings: integrity in leadership, commitment to community, and a forward-thinking approach to service and sustainability. More than 50 years after opening its doors, CVE remains focused on what matters most—keeping its customers running and its communities strong.

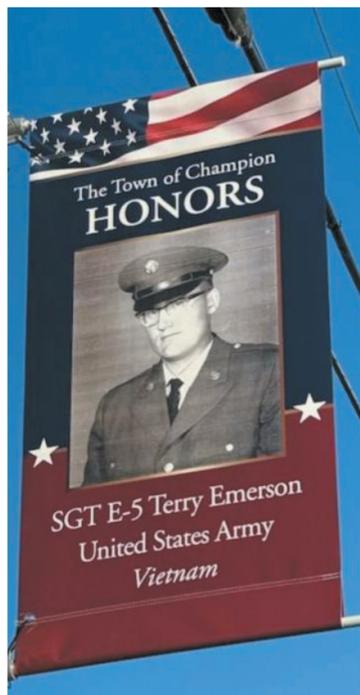


Champlain Valley Equipment's Watertown, New York dealership.



The Greater Carthage Area has something for everyone. Our events include our Holiday Parade, Memory Tree Lighting, Winterfest, Citizen of the Year Celebration, Fireworks Festival, Business Person of the Year Celebration and Business After Hours at various locations. Come visit the Farmer's Market during the summer months and support our local businesses throughout the year.

We look forward to seeing you soon!



PROGRESS

FEBRUARY 2026

Business awards presented

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com

In the Carthage area and in Lewis County businesses, business owners and non profits were honored for contributing to the community.

Naturally Lewis Inc. hosted its Membership Awards Night on Nov.19 bringing together more than 100 business and community leaders to celebrate the achievements of the Naturally Lewis Membership who contribute to the success of Lewis County's economy. Held at the Town Hall Theater, Membership Awards Night was a night of inspiration, recognition and community spirit according to organizers.

"This year has been defined by growth, reinvestment, and resilience with more than \$8 million invested directly into our local economy by the nominees in this room alone," said Jenna Lauraine, programs and partnerships director at Naturally Lewis. "Tonight's awards honor not only individual achievements, but the collective momentum of a county that continues to grow, adapt, and thrive because of the people who call it home."

This year, the Community Excellency Award went to North Country Family Health Center in recognition of the Lowville acquisition and expansion.

Good Ol' Wishy's was the recipient of the Discover Tug Hill Award.

Entrepreneur of the Year Award went to Scott and Ingrid Moshier, owners of Wolff's Body Shop, Monnat & Nortz Service Station, The Old Croghan Engine House and Moving Mountains Cafe.

Red Barn Meats was the recipient of the Naturally Lewis Outstanding Business Award.



Lewis County businesses were given the red carpet treatment at the annual Naturally Lewis Membership Awards ceremony. Photo provided by Naturally Lewis

To be eligible for an award, a business must be an active Naturally Lewis Member and meet the criteria of each respective award category. Businesses and organizations were nominated for awards by Naturally Lewis staff and awards were decided by the community through public voting.

The Naturally Lewis Membership tools businesses and organizations with intentional benefits, the tools and resources needed to start and

grow. Businesses and organizations interested in joining the Naturally Lewis Membership can find more information at naturallylewis.com/min/membership.

Held Oct. 29 at the Elks Lodge 1762, the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce honored an individual, a small business, a business, a new member and a non-profit.

This year, Sandra Johnson, owner/operator of An Eclectic Boutique, was selected as

the Business Person of the Year.

Mrs. Johnson, was nominated by Elizabeth Northrop and Amy McEathron.

The antique and gift store in the Buckley Building opened in April 2011 with three other women and became the sole owner in 2015.

Mrs. McEathron pointed out that the honoree's view of business is one of community and it's through community support that the business services.

Mrs. Northrop mentioned The Kindness Campaign which Mrs. Johnson began shortly after her cancer treatments. During that time she received a gift basket from Lea's Baskets and "outstanding care from the Carthage Area Rescue Squad" and decided to show kindness to others. The twice annual basket raffles and Kindness T-shirt sales benefit local non profits.

At the dinner, the artisans whose work is in The Eclectic

Boutique spoke of Mrs. Johnson's professionalism as a business woman and her community philanthropically.

"I am honored and humbled," said Mrs. Johnson accepting her award. "I am proud to be part of our community of businesses."

The honoree thanked her husband and family for their support, the artisans who contribute to the shop and

See AWARDS B4



The Elks Lodge 1762 was honored with the Community Impact Award. Pictured, from left, are presenter Lydia Young, Elks exalted ruler Mike Rohr, Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce president Amy McEathron and chamber executive director Deborah Atkins. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



The Gambles family accepted the Large Business of the Year Award which was presented by Robert Sligar, left. Representing the family were Steven, Warren and Sheryl Gamble with Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce president Amy McEathron and chamber executive director Deborah Atkins. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



Posing with the Business Person of the Year were, from left, presenter Elizabeth Northrop, Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce president Amy McEathron, the honoree Sandra Johnson and chamber executive director Deborah Atkins. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



The Non Profit Award went to Dot's Fund. With the award presentation were, from left, Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce executive director Deborah Atkins, Brandi McDonald, chamber president Amy McEathron, and David 'Skip' Green. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

HEADLINERS

A father's dream fulfilled

By Elaine M. Avallone
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Originally published Oct. 22

WEST CARTHAGE — Gary Johnson who passed away 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, who started the process years ago. "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



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

the convenience store.

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 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 'Nevill's House,'" she said, noting there are no plans to have the house occupied except for use for the tank gauging and inventory.

Ms. Johnson said once the gas station is up and running, work will continue on the restaurant in Fargo. She pointed out her father had begun the repairs prior to his untimely death.



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



A replicate old fashioned gas pump is displayed in the Johnson Corner Mart II convenience store. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspaper Corp



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

Oswegatchie FFA Camp Gears Up for Another Summer of Leadership and Adventure

CROGHAN, NY — The Oswegatchie FFA Camp, set on 1,200 acres of Adirondack forest in Croghan, is preparing for its 2026 summer season, continuing a storied tradition of outdoor adventure and leadership development for teens. Founded in 1946 by the New York FFA Association, the camp was created to give youth a place to discover themselves, meet new people, and grow through hands-on experiences far from home.

Open to youth ages 11–18 or those entering grades 7–12 in the fall, Oswegatchie offers a wide range of activities designed to build confidence and foster teamwork. Campers can test their limits on a 350-foot zip line, paddle kayaks and canoes across four pristine ponds, ride horses through forest trails, and mountain bike rugged Adirondack terrain.

Registration for the six week summer program opens in March, with special rates for FFA

members. Week-by-week sessions begin in late June and run through early August.

In addition to adventure activities, Oswegatchie hires about fifty seasonal staff members

each summer, providing training in wilderness first aid and leadership before guiding campers throughout the season.

As the camp looks forward to another season, organizers emphasize

that the experience offers not just thrills, but lasting friendships and personal growth.

Join us on April 26th, 2026 for the 32nd Annual AdironDuck Race & Pancake Breakfast. The day

starts as early as 8 AM for breakfast, includes free entertainment in the morning, and a 5k at 10 AM. Ducks are raced at 1 PM. A special thank you to our Title Sponsor, Farm Credit East.



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Oswegatchie's 32nd Annual Sunday April 26th, 2026

AdironDUCK Race

Racing as many as 10,000 rubber ducks!
All proceeds go to support the Oswegatchie Summer Camp Program.




Mail your Payment to:
Oswegatchie Educational Center
9340 Long Pond Road,
Croghan, NY 13327

Quickly Order DUCKS online at: www.adironduckrace.com

\$10 per Duck Grand Prize \$2,000!

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Tyler McDonald
Salesperson
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Good Morning Realty Leads Lewis County Sales in 2025, Prepares for Growth in 2026

LEWIS COUNTY -In a year marked by competitive market dynamics, Good Morning Realty achieved the highest total sales volume and represented the highest number of buyers and sellers in the Lewis County market during the 2025 calendar year. This success was driven by the exceptional performance of the brokerage's team, with four agents—**Britt Abbey, Carole Dunbar, Aaron Jantzi, and Jennifer Law**—all finishing the year ranked in the top six for total sales volume in Lewis County.

"We are incredibly proud of the dedication our team has shown to our clients," said Broker/Owner Britt Abbey. "Having four of the top six producing agents in the county is a testament to their hard work and deep understanding of our local market."

Celebrating Service and Welcoming New Talent The brokerage is also announcing significant changes to its roster. After a distinguished tenure, Associate Broker **Steve Kubinski** announced his retirement. The team

celebrates Steve's contributions to the company and wishes him the very best in his next chapter after years of dedicated service in the Lewis County real estate market.

Simultaneously, Good Morning Realty was excited to welcome **Toni Newman** as a Licensed Real Estate Salesperson. Toni joins a high-performing team dedicated to maintaining the gold standard of service that clients have come to expect. **Toni Newman** has shown exceptional eagerness and passion to serve her clients, and we are looking forward to seeing her grow in her new role.

Tyler McDonald, Licensed Real Estate Salesperson and Auctioneer, saw substantial growth in demand for real estate auction services as some sellers put emphasis on speed and certainty in transactions. Tyler's auctioneer services also expand beyond real estate, helping with estates, downsizing and business and equipment sales too!

Tools like auction services, use of Good Morning Realty's enclosed trailer, in-house certified residential real estate appraisers, professional photography, drone photography, custom signage, lasered measured floorplans, and customized marketing pieces all help create unparalleled marketing resources and exposure for our clients.

Looking Ahead to 2026 As the page turns to 2026, Good Morning Realty forecasts a robust year for local real estate. With interest rates projected to lower, the brokerage anticipates increased activity from buyers who continue to prioritize "quality of life" when choosing a home in the North Country. We also anticipate greater housing supply and an overall stabilization of housing prices. Good Morning Realty remains committed to guiding both buyers and sellers through these changing market conditions with the same expertise and integrity that have defined their nearly three-decade role as leader in the local real estate market.

Augustinian Academy Continues a Legacy of Academic Excellence, Faith-Formation, and Community Service in the North Country

For over 140 years, Augustinian Academy has been a trusted educational cornerstone for families across the North Country, serving students from Carthage, Fort Drum, Copenhagen, Lowville, Beaver Falls, and neighboring communities. Founded in 1885 by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Augustinian Academy has remained steadfast in its mission to provide a high-quality, faith-centered education for students in preschool through eighth grade.

Augustinian Academy has small class sizes, a committed faculty, and a close-knit, family-focused atmosphere. These qualities allow for individualized instruction while fostering a nurturing environment that supports students' academic, emotional, physical, and spiritual development. While rooted in Catholic tradition, the school welcomes students of all faith backgrounds, offering

values-based education that emphasizes service and character development. Located near Fort Drum, the school proudly supports military-connected students and understands the unique challenges associated with military life.

Beyond the classroom, the Academy provides a variety of extracurricular activities and opportunities for community involvement, encouraging students to grow into well-rounded individuals. This holistic approach to education reflects the school's long-standing commitment to shaping not only strong students, but compassionate and engaged citizens.

Community connection has always been central to Augustinian Academy's identity, and that spirit is especially evident through its long-running community events. The school's Annual Gala, now in its 24th

year, has become a highlight of the local social calendar.

What began as a simple gathering envisioned by the late principal Sister John Mary has grown into a signature fundraising event that supports the school's mission. This year's celebration, themed "Movie Premiere Gala - A Night on the Red Carpet," featured fine dining, dancing, live jazz music from The Lowville Community Orchestra, raffles, a silent auction, and more.

The Gala is made possible through the generous support of Major Event Sponsors, including Carthage Area Hospital, Rob Sligar of Cross Country Mortgage, the Sisters of St. Joseph, Iseneker Funeral Home, Knights of Columbus Father John Cosmic Council 291, and Indigo Inkwel. Numerous local businesses and individual donors also contribute gift certificates, raffle prizes, and

auction items. These collective efforts help ensure that Augustinian Academy continues its longstanding policy of never turning away a student due to financial hardship.

Another cherished community tradition is the St. James Fair, the school's largest annual fundraiser and a beloved summer event. Now celebrating its 52nd year, the fair draws thousands each summer with its food vendors, live entertainment, carnival rides, games, and family-friendly attractions. The fair stands as a testament to the Academy's deep roots and lasting impact within the community.

Academically, Augustinian Academy offers a challenging curriculum aligned with New York State Standards and accredited through Cognia. This accreditation underscores the school's dedication to continuous improvement while

remaining grounded in its Catholic identity. Students in eighth grade have the opportunity to accelerate in core subjects such as mathematics, earning high school credit through NYS Regents courses. The Academy also works closely with local public school districts to support students with Individualized Education Plans and 504 Plans.

The academic curriculum at Augustinian Academy is enriched by classes in physical education, music, art, and technology, along with access to a modern library and computer lab. Students may also participate in a variety of extracurricular opportunities, including after-school programs, intramural sports, and at the middle school level modified sports offered through local public school districts. In addition, the After-Care Program supports families by providing

a supervised, structured environment featuring activities such as baton twirling, drama club, arts and crafts, and homework assistance.

Through its emphasis on academic excellence, faith formation, service, and affordability, Augustinian Academy continues to serve as a vital resource for families throughout the region. Scholarships, low tuition rates, and transportation provided by local school districts help ensure that a Catholic education remains accessible to all.

As the Academy looks ahead to the 2026-2027 school year, applications are now being accepted. Families interested in learning more or scheduling a visit are encouraged to visit www.c-augustinian.org or contact the school directly at 315-493-1301.

Awards

From B1

the customers..

"We currently have 20 local and small businesses displaying in the boutique," the owner noted.

The New Member Spotlight Award went to Hall Pass Tavern, owned by Julio and Traci Hall since 2021. The veteran-owned and family-operated bar restaurant participates in and sponsors events that impact the community.

The restaurant provided lunches of the Twin Villages summer recreation programs, has hosted winter clothing drives for the Comet Closet, supports local fundraising tournaments, hosts team dinners for Carthage Central School District sports teams, participated in the local Bar Crawl to benefit local non profits and held holiday fundraisers for those in need.

Elks Lodge 1762 received the Community Impact Award.

In presenting the award, Lydia Young said the award goes to a recipient which would be truly missed.

"If it were to disappear, what kind of hole would it leave?" She said.

The Elks Lodge plays a part in many community events. The lodge is a venue for many wedding, funeral receptions and other large gatherings. The lodge hosts the annual Shoe Party, Veterans Dinner, Major Projects fundraisers and bingo. With the Carthage Lions the Elks host the annual Thanksgiving Community



The Small Business Award went to Bezanilla-Mcgraw Funeral Home. With the presentation, are from left, Faye Waterman, Bruce Bezanilla, Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce president Amy McEathorn and chamber executive director Deborah Atkins. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

Feast and with the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce the Citizen of the Year dinner.

This year the Elks lodge Ritual Team won at the national competition.

Bezanilla-Mcgraw Funeral Home was named the Small Business Award recipient.

Faye Waterman presented the award to Bruce Bezanilla, noting the former owner of the local funeral home was always there in times of need.

In accepting the award, Mr. Bezanilla noted the funeral home, now owned by Nicole LaRue, has been in business since 1882, making it the longest standing business in Carthage.

Gamble Distributors Inc. received the Large Business Award. The family business was started by Warren Gamble in 1947 as Gamble Machine. In the 1950s Gambles

starting selling snow thrower and in 1960 the business became more focused on retail, transiting to Gamble Distributors Inc. Richard Gamble joined the business in 1963 and his wife Sheryl in 1980, continuing still in many aspects of the business from parts to accounting and management. Richard and Sheryl took the reigns of the business when Warren and Jessie Gamble retired in 1982. The following year, the third generation, Jeff and Steven joined the family business adding many new products and services. Jeff's son, Christopher joined the company in 1999 working in sales until his death in 2020.

The family believes in giving back to and being involved in the community.

Steven was Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce president in the early years when



Julio Hall accepted the New Member Spotlight award from Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce president Amy McEathorn and chamber executive director Deborah Atkins. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

the organization was struggling.

"I want to thank our business partners," Steven

Gamble said accepting the award. "We always try to do business locally."

Non-Profit of the Year

award was presented to Dot's Community Fund which was established in 2017 following the passing of Dorothy "Dot" Fargo to carry on her mission of raising funds to help those diagnosed with cancer. Ms. Fargo had established a cancer fund at the Carthage American Legion to help members who had cancer and their families. The family hosts an annual golf tournament to benefit the Shots for Dot Fund. The upcoming June 20 tourney will be the 10th anniversary of the fund.

"This award is so meaningful to us because it is a powerful affirmation that we are successfully meeting our mission," said Brandi McDonald upon accepting the award on behalf of the family. "It proves that the grants we offer are not only needed but are making a positive difference in the lives of our community members."

Foy Agency celebrating its 76th year

The Foy Agency is a 3rd generation, family-owned independent insurance agency that has been providing insurance to businesses and families for 76 years.

The agency was founded by Francis and Rosemary Foy upon Francis's return home from being a POW in WWII. Francis and Rosemary ran the business out of their home on Roberts Road in Deer River for several years before purchasing a small schoolhouse building on Deer River Road in 1960. Francis's son and his wife, Thomas and Sue Foy, later took over the family business. The Agency is now owned and operated by Jeffrey Foy and Michael Hayes.

There continues to be three offices located in Lewis County.

The Croghan Office has

personal lines customer service representative, Brenda Nortz.

The Lowville Office has Kristi Best-Spencer and Ashley Hoch as personal lines customer service reps.

The commercial Lines department in Deer River is led by Maureen Steria as well as Paige Eves & Jeanna Everard.

The personal lines department in Deer River have Shawna Brotherton and Erin Gebo, both who have over 20 years of insurance experience. Other team members include Brooke Smykla, Rachel Woodworth, Jake Fleury, & Laura Fitzpatrick.

Kyle Gehrke and Rox Hulbert continue to be the go-to Farm and Agriculture Specialists. Kyle often wears several hats and helps with Commercial & Personal

Sales as well.

As an Independent insurance firm, the Foy Agency represents over 25 Regional and National Insurance Companies to provide you with all your business and personal insurance needs. Foy Agency's clients include businesses from agricultural to manufacturing as well as restaurant, lodging and non-for-profit organizations. They welcome the opportunity to work on home and auto quotes, along with motorcycle and off-road vehicles.

The Foy Agency welcomes the chance to provide recommendations on any of your various insurance needs. You may reach us in Deer River at 315-493-2391, Croghan at 315-346-6378 and our Lowville office at 315-376-2731.

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HEADLINERS

Open house held at new Carthage Cancer Center



The new Carthage Cancer Center at 3 Bridge St., West Carthage, held an open house Nov. 6. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspaper Corp

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com
Originally published Nov. 12

WEST CARTHAGE — In an effort to keep healthcare local, the new Carthage Area Hospital Cancer Center is now open at 3 Bridge St. It will offer medical oncology, hematology, and radiation oncology consultations and follow-ups, along with infusion services.

The cancer center has four examination rooms and a treatment room for infusions, laboratory draws, injection and port care.

The center will feature a team from the Richard E. Winter Cancer Center at Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center.

Dr. Lucille Alston was on hand for the open house held Nov. 6. She noted that Claxton Hepburn Medical Campus in Ogdensburg, as well as our newly opened Carthage Cancer Treatment Center in Carthage, both members of the North Star Health Alliance, will offer high risk women's health and genetics.

"Screenings can pick up early breast cancer," she said. "That way, special treatment may be done before it spreads. We are also learning more about the link between genetics and cancer."

As a breast specialist, Dr. Alston reassures prospective patients and offers advice for the initial visit.

"Seeing a high risk specialist may seem intimidating, but



There are four exam rooms Carthage Cancer Center. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspaper Corp

please don't worry," she said. "We are here to help ensure you get the best care and information possible for your health journey. When preparing for your first genetics evaluation, talk to a family member that knows everything about the family — someone who does the family tree is a great source. Collect all of the health information from your immediate family including both cancer and non cancer diagnoses, and then move on to your extended family members such as your aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. Try to get as detailed information as possible — don't worry if you aren't sure if it's relevant information, we will help you sort it out."

Representatives of

Compassionate Care Foundation will also be available at the Carthage Cancer Center.

"The Compassionate Care Foundation's mission is to provide our northern New York Cancer community with complementary integrative therapies during a post treatment to help improve quality of life and their cancer care experience," Monica Behan said. "This is our rural integrative initiative."

She noted their model is based on the best practice cancer centers Integrative programs.

This therapies include



Amber Lee-Clement, Board President of the Compassionate Care Foundation, and Monica Behan were on hand at the Carthage Cancer Center open house to offer information about their services. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspaper Corp

massage therapy, acupuncture, Reiki, support group, meditation and yoga.

"We work in tandem with conventional medicine. While conventional medicine treats the disease, we address the

whole person's needs, mind, body and spirit," said Ms. Behan.

Currently Compassionate Care Foundation representatives are in the Walker Center, Watertown, and Claxton

Hepburn in Ogdensburg.

The services of the non-profit, funded by the community members, are at no cost to the patient.



A treatment room with seating for three is available at the new Carthage Cancer Center at 3 Bridge St., West Carthage. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspaper Corp

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Retreat from life's worries at Beaver Camp

For generations, Beaver Camp has been providing youth with some of the finest experiences of summer, and adults many opportunities to retreat from life's worries on Beaver Lake in the Adirondacks.

Beaver Camp delivers enriching, fun-filled, spiritually-focused summer camps for kids, with swimming, boating, nature instruction and the ropes course that will get you climbing! Beaver Camp offers year-round programming and facilities for youth and adults, including winter camps, and the perfect place to book your group's retreat or event.

Wilderness adventure camps and other specialty camps for youth are also offered at Beaver Camp.

The camp's mission is to provide facilities and programs, infused with God's love, in which people of every age are invited to establish and grow in their relationships with Jesus Christ, through teaching and positive role models. Countless people leave camp each year feeling refreshed, and energized by a fresh, life-changing faith decision.

Beaver Camp is a place to grow, where positive friendships, and lasting faith decisions are made.

Beaver Camp is the DBA of Adirondack Mennonite Camping Association, which is a group of approximately 198 members, governed by a Board of Directors.

Upcoming events
The annual Beaver Camp Auction at the Lewis County Fairgrounds is June 6-7.

Beaver Camp summer camps begin this year on July 6 and run for seven weeks. Prices vary based on camp and the



length of the camp.

Women's scrapbook and craft retreats, a women's retreat, a parenting weekend, a grandparent and grandchild camp, winter and fall family retreats, and a young adult weekend are also offered throughout the year.

We want to hear from you! If you have any questions about Beaver Camp, please contact Mike Judd, Director at 315-376-2640 or by emailing office@beaver.camp. You can also visit their website at www.beavercamp.org.

Ph: 315-376-2640
www.beavercamp.org
 8884 Buck Point Road, Lowville, NY

Roggie's Flooring Thanks the Community

As we enter our 20th year of serving our community, we here at Roggies Flooring Center would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to you. We look forward to continuing our tradition of bringing the latest styles of all types of flooring to you.

We are a member of The Flooring Network which represents an association of strong, knowledgeable, and local independent flooring retailers across the Northeast. We provide all things flooring as well as ongoing product

knowledge, industry tips, and most importantly real value. You can check out the Flooring Network @ www.flooringnetwork.com

It is our desire to provide a shopping experience that will be personal and tailored to your needs.

Your new floor, installed by our experienced installers, will add even more beauty to your home.

You can follow our Facebook page as well as checking out our website - www.roggiesflooring.com



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Founded in November 2023 by Broker/Owner Amanda Mattimore, Northern Beginnings Realty LLC has quickly established itself as a growing presence in the North Country real estate market.

Our team is dedicated to helping buyers and sellers navigate the real estate process with professionalism, integrity, and a strong commitment to the communities they serve. From first-time homebuyers to longtime property owners, Northern Beginnings Realty prides itself on providing personalized service rooted in local knowledge and community values.

Looking ahead to 2026, Northern Beginnings Realty LLC remains focused on continued growth while staying true to its mission of serving the region it proudly calls home. The brokerage extends its sincere gratitude to its clients, friends, family, and the broader community for their continued trust and support, which has made this progress possible.

As Northern Beginnings Realty moves forward, its commitment to the North Country remains at the heart of everything it does—helping neighbors, strengthening communities, and building lasting relationships one property at a time.

Northern Beginnings Realty, LLC
10245 NY-812, Castorland, NY 13620
 northernbeginningsrealty.com



Stony Creek Country Store carries a variety of products

Stony Creek Country Store is located in Deer River on State Route 26, about 21/2 miles south of Carthage. Our bulk foods part includes baking supplies, spices, soup mixes, pasta, candy and snacks, cereal, canning supplies and gift items. We bake our own bread, pies and cookies. At the deli, you can order subs and sandwiches, have party platters made or get cold cuts for making your own sandwiches. We take phone orders for quick pickup.

Spring opens our soft ice cream window and brings in flower and vegetable plants from local greenhouses. We carry garden seeds and mulch hay, too. In the summer, there are vegetables and fruit from local sources. Potato and macaroni salads and coleslaw are available then, too. Fall brings mums, apples from nearby orchards and apple cider.

Brown eggs and a lot of the pork products come from our own farm. We have some cuts of goat meat and goat feta and mozzarella cheeses from our own goats. We sell maple syrup from our own sugarbush. The applesauce and soups in the freezer are homemade here at the store. We've started to stock several different kinds of frozen potpies and are planning to have other frozen meal options by summertime. Pure

honey is available from local sources.

We do custom baking by order and can make some gluten- or sugar-free things. There are a variety of party platters to choose from such as snack trays, veggie trays, cheese and crackers, and regular meat and cheese trays. We can make rolls to go with the tray or make a sub or sandwich tray that's ready to serve.

We support a lot of local businesses here. There is meat from Red Barn Meats, milk from Black River Valley Natural, coffee from Tug Hill Artisans, dry brine from Miller's Meat Market, and Croghan bologna from Croghan Meat Market. We also carry maple sugar products from Sollyjon's Maple and Lyndaker's Maple Orchard. Flavored maple syrups and maple hard candy comes from Sterling Maple.

We accept debit and credit cards and food stamps. Our store hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. We are closed Sunday. Mark your calendar for our Open House the first weekend in June. There is a free lunch and a storewide discount on your purchases that Friday and Saturday. You can contact us at 315-493-0750 if you have questions or orders. Thank you, friends and customers, for stopping in to shop at the store!

Beutel Recyclers celebrates 20 years

Beutel Metal Recyclers, 17950 County Route 63, is celebrating 20 years of continual growth in the metal recycling business. In 2006, Ann Beutel, opened a metal recycling center on the former site of the dismantling and repair shop originally owned and operated by her father, the late William Beutel.

Ms. Beutel decided to open the yard to build on what her father had started. "Whereas my father took apart old cars and sold or reused the parts, the new business is as a scrap processor and recycler," Ms. Beutel said. "We take in a variety of used metal products and then sort and prepare the metals for their next life. We recycle."

Beutel Metal Recyclers is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Beutel's can

facilitate disposal of metal construction debris and can provide container service if needed.

They also accept stoves, washers, dryers, water heaters, small electrical appliances, dishwashers and gas grills.

"People are more aware of recycling today and they need a place that is close,

convenient and knowledgeable about how to safely and legally recycle their used items," said Ms. Beutel.

"As our advertising states, 'We weigh ya and pay ya' for your unwanted metal scrap."

For more information and prices call 315-788-4080 or log onto www.beutelrecyclers.com.



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www.beutelrecyclers.com
 Email: sales@beutelrecyclers.com

Naturally Lewis here to help local business grow

2025 has been a year of exciting change and growth for Naturally Lewis. We've welcomed new team members, strengthened partnerships, and expanded the ways we support the people and places that make Lewis County unique.

Allow us to reintroduce ourselves. Naturally Lewis, Inc. is an independent non-profit organization that serves as the umbrella for the Lewis County Industrial Development Agency (LCIDA), Lewis County Development Corporation (LCDC), and the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce (LCCOC). Together, these organizations—each with a long history of contributing to our region's economic prosperity—have aligned their services and resources under one unified banner. Guided by a dedicated board of local leaders, Naturally Lewis acts as

a one-stop shop for economic and business development in Lewis County.

At our core, we help local businesses, nonprofits, and communities move ideas into action. Whether you're starting or expanding a business, rehabilitating a vacant building, planning a development project, seeking financing solutions, or looking to connect through membership and networking, our team is here to help you navigate the path forward. Through grants and forgivable loans, educational programs like Coffee & Connections, tourism and placemaking initiatives, and strategic partnerships, we work alongside organizations at every stage of growth.

Guided by our Strategic Plan, we continue to invest intentionally—focusing on sustainable growth, strong

partnerships, and projects that create lasting impact. This year, we've supported entrepreneurs, helped redevelop vacant spaces, promoted Lewis County to new audiences, and funded community-driven ideas that strengthen our local economy and quality of life.

None of this happens alone. Our progress is made possible by our boards, volunteers, partners, members, and supporters who share a commitment to keeping Lewis County vibrant and resilient.

As we look ahead to 2026, we invite you to connect with us. If you have an idea, a project, or a goal for your business or community, Naturally Lewis is here to help make it happen. Together, we're making Lewis County a thriving place to live, work, grow your business, and play.



Photo (from left to right): Kristen Ward-Aucter, Director of Tourism, Megan Marolf, Finance and Operations Manager, Amy Hawthorne, Administrative Specialist, Joanne Witt, Executive Director, Jenna Lauraine, Programs and Partnerships Director

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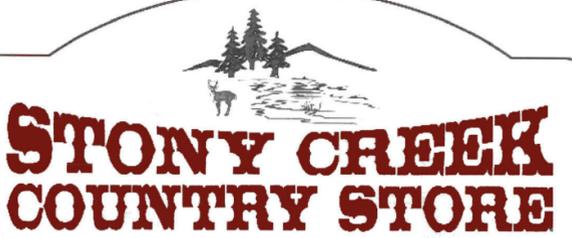




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Naturally Lewis, Inc. is an economic development organization championing the growth of our communities.

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- Party Platters
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HEADLINERS

Naturally Lewis welcomes new director

By Elaine M. Avallone

eavallone@lowville.com

Originally published Aug. 20

LOWVILLE — Naturally Lewis Inc. has announced Joanne Witt has taken the position of executive director for the nonprofit economic development organization.

In April, the organization began searching for a replacement for Brittany Davis, who is embarking on a new venture.

According to a statement from the organization, the Naturally Lewis Inc. Board of Directors led an extensive and competitive hiring process to identify the next executive director of the organization.

The responsibilities of the executive director include organizational leadership and strategic planning, staff leadership and development, economic and business development, community engagement and partnerships, and financial and operations management.

"Naturally Lewis, Inc. is proud to announce Joanne Witt as the Executive Director of our organization," Mike Jackson, chairman of the board, said in a statement. "With a strong background in education and youth development, Joanne brings a fresh perspective to the work of community and economic development. Her passion for empowering people and building connections will be an incredible asset as we continue to grow and serve Lewis County."

Joanne Witt officially assumed her role on Aug. 4.

"I am thrilled to be joining the Naturally Lewis Team as the executive director and serving our community in this new role," she said in the prepared statement.

Witt grew up in Richville and raised my family in Watertown, where she taught English at Watertown High School. She later became a career and technical education principal at St. Lawrence Lewis BOCES' Southwest Technical Center in Gouverneur and then Jefferson Lewis BOCES' Bohlen Technical Center in Watertown. During COVID pandemic, she was promoted to Jefferson Lewis BOCES CTE and adult education director.

About two years later, she became the Director of a Department of Defense sponsored STEAM program, called STARBASE Academy, through which area schools' fifth graders went to Fort Drum for 25 hours of hands-on STEAM learning that was



Witt

supplemental to the district curriculum.

"We opened our doors after only two months; a record," Ms. Witt pointed out. "In its first three years, STARBASE Fort Drum served over 4,000 students in 17 districts and one home-schooling group. This September, they will expand to serve middle school students, as well."

It was through the STARBASE program that Witt became familiar with Naturally Lewis when the Lewis County Leadership Academy toured Fort Drum and she attended a Coffee and Connections event.

She said in attending events in Lewis County, she always felt valued and "always walked away with something tangible that I could take back and immediately implement."

"I knew then that I wanted to be more involved with this

phenomenal group of professionals," the new Naturally Lewis director said. "I continued to attend different Naturally Lewis events, and when I learned about the executive director position, I jumped at the chance to be a part of it."

She said in attending events in Lewis County, she always felt valued and "always walked away with something tangible that I could take back and immediately implement."

Witt has three adult children - Megan, who with her family lives in Columbus, Ga.; Raeleen, and her family who live in Memphis, Tenn.; and Joseph and her granddog, Biggie, who live in Gouverneur.

Davis' departure from Naturally Lewis follows the timeline she set for herself when she took the executive director position in 2020.

"I feel that I was put in that role to build," she said. "Build

a team, build a one-stop-shop resource center for business development, build services and programs, build boards who can oversee the direction of big picture economic development, build resources for internal and external operations, build capacity, build a foundational organization that can do great economic development and build the strategy to achieve that."

"I am proud of our brands and community identity we have built through Naturally Lewis, the economic development brand, and Discover Tug Hill, the local and regional tourism brand," she said.

Under my leadership, we went from two staff in 2020, to seven staff in 2025, as we built the programs and services, to which needed talented people to administer and run. Lastly, I am proud that Naturally Lewis has become a model

organization for rural economic development across New York state. We focused on what actually works here, not what works elsewhere, and because of this, we are seeing tremendous growth."

Davis said working with Christie Andrus Nakano, owner of the Human Factor Leadership, inspired her to pursue a career in consulting, with a focus on organizational development and leadership.

Davis said she feels she has left Naturally Lewis in good hands.

"Joanne Witt brings a wealth of experience in the education and leadership field," she said. "I am very excited for her fresh perspective and to be the person that can lead the organization into its next phase - her, coupled with an amazingly talented team, will continue to do great things for our community."

The former executive director hopes Naturally Lewis remains a "powerhouse rural economic development organization."

"We've made a name for ourselves, creating unique programs and initiatives that fit for Lewis County," she said. "I hope that we don't lose sight that what works in a big city, just doesn't work here - we need to continue to focus on what is already growing in Lewis County and cultivate that growth. I hope that the organization continues to build and nurture partnerships and a great team culture - developing the people and the place - so that people want to invest here in Lewis County. After all, I still call this place my home and want to live in the very place that I worked so hard over nine years to help grow and develop - keep that momentum going."

Family Ice Cream celebrating 23 years of serving up soft custard ice cream



Family Ice Cream, 7388 Turin Road, Lowville, offers a wide variety of sweet summertime treats.

Rich and Kim Martin want to thank everyone who helped Family Ice Cream have a wonderful season in 2025. We couldn't have done it without you. Now we are looking forward to 2026 with some new and exciting additions to our menu.

We also have weekly Fruit Slush flavor specials.

We are located at 7388 Turin Road, Lowville, the last place on the left going up Martinsburg Hill, the colorful building which represents some of the more than 40 flavors we serve in soft custard ice cream.

For those of you that haven't visited Family Ice Cream our menu consist of waffle, sugar and gluten free cones always with free sprinkles, sundaes, banana splits with many different toppings and always includes nuts, whipped cream and of course a cherry. Our avalanches are out of this world:

Butterfinger, Oreo, M&M, Reese's Pieces, cookie dough, Heath and Andes candies and

of course your own combination.

We also have shaved ice with many different flavors to choose from. Don't forget to try our signature sundae the Piggy Sweet, you guessed it, a waffle bowl, two toppings, nuts, whipped cream, cherry and the piggy (bacon bits). You'll love it.

As Rich and I look back to our early years of Family Ice

Cream, we can only thank our faithful customers for supporting our business.

If it wasn't for them we wouldn't have had the wonderful years that has brought us to where we are today. We always miss the interaction with our customers during the off season and look forward to opening day, which will be Friday, April 24. Again thank you everyone.



Family Ice Cream
7388 Turin Rd., Lowville

OPENING
Fri., April 24th, 2026

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2pm - 9pm

CELEBRATING 21 YEARS!



10th Mountain Life features soldier shoutouts, photos of Fort Drum events, memories from post and more.

To recognize your favorite soldier or share photos, email news@wdt.net with subject "10th Mountain Life"

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole addresses a Fort Drum news conference as part of the 1985 reactivation of the 10th Mountain Division, with which he served in World War II. With him were, from left, U.S. Sens. Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Alfonse M. D'Amato, U.S. Reps. David O'B. Martin and Sherwood Boehlert, Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh Jr., U.S. Rep. Samuel S. Stratton, and Army Chief of Staff Gen. John A. Wickham Jr. From the Watertown Daily Times Archive

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Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization

www.advocatedrum.com



10TH MOUNTAIN LIFE

How does winter weather impact Fort Drum operations?

Fort Drum Public Affairs

Winters in the north country can be harsh and unpredictable. To address this, Fort Drum officials follow an established weather call policy designed to balance mission requirements with the safety of Soldiers, Army civilians, and their families. The installation's weather call process is based on multiple factors, including forecasts from the National Weather Service and 18th Combat Weather Squadron, road conditions on and around the installation, and input from multiple organizations, including the directorates of Public Works, Emergency Services, and Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

Under this policy, installation leaders may implement a Delayed Report, Early Release, or Do Not Report order. Rich Hughes, the installation emergency manager, said Fort Drum personnel are notified of the initial weather call before 4 a.m.

"Many of our Soldiers and civilian employees live across the North Country and report to work early each day, so we want to get the information to people for their awareness before they begin their morning commute," he said. The early decision also allows Fort Drum DPW snow removal crews to clear roadways and lots, unimpeded by normal traffic. Additionally, the installation informs local school districts about on-post conditions to inform their separate decisions on delays or closures. If weather conditions worsen, the data collection process is repeated for a potential status change before 7 a.m.

"If the severe weather is projected to continue, or roads and parking lots can't be cleared even by the delayed reporting time, we may recommend a 'Do Not Report' for non-essential personnel," Hughes said. For severe weather developing during the duty day, an early release decision is made before 11:30 a.m. "If we're already here and see that severe weather is going to impact the afternoon

hours and/or the drive home, we may recommend an early release to prevent personnel from having to drive in hazardous conditions," he added.

Hughes said the weather call policy is reviewed annually as part of a broader effort to maintain readiness while reducing unnecessary risk during severe weather events.

"There is so much more that goes into a decision than what the weather looks like at any given moment," he said. "It's not an exact science, but it is as informed a decision as we can make it based on multiple factors."

These include:

- The ability to clear snow in time for personnel to report for duty.

- Current weather and road conditions across a 40-mile commute radius, which involves canvassing local law enforcement agencies, monitoring travel advisories and bans in the tri-county area, and tracking 511NY.

- Forecasted weather conditions across the commute radius for the entire duty day. The unpredictability of lake effect snow bands in some areas can make this difficult to project. Any minor variations to wind speeds and directions can greatly affect the amount of snow.

- Mission-essential activities such as deployments, redeployments, special events, and critical training. The command team may designate certain activities as mission-essential to ensure personnel are available.

STAYING INFORMED

Information on post status, road conditions and how weather impacts Fort Drum is available at <http://wdt.me/FortDrumAlerts> and accessible through MAPA (My Army Post App). Status updates are also posted on the U.S. Army Fort Drum & 10th Mountain Division Facebook page. Community members can also call the Fort Drum Information Hotline at 315-772-3786 for road conditions, and delay and closure information.

Above: Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division and across the U.S. Army ski in the annual D-Series event at Fort Drum on Jan. 29. This event tested the strength and agility of different squads in the U.S. Army to build cohesion while honoring the legacy of the 10th Mountain Division ancestors. Check back this month for more D-Series photos in 10th Mountain Life. Courtesy of the 10th Mountain Division

NEWS FROM POST

■ The parents of a 10th Mountain Division soldier who embodied the values of courage and selflessness were notified this week that their son, Staff Sgt. Michael H. Ollis, who died in the summer of 2013 during combat in Afghanistan while protecting a comrade in arms from Poland, will posthumously receive the nation's highest military decoration. On Tuesday, Bob and Linda Ollis received a call at their Staten Island home from President Donald Trump informing them that Michael deserved the Medal of Honor for his actions.



Michael H. Ollis during his first deployment to Afghanistan.
St. Martin's Press

In August 2006, Ollis enlisted in the Army at age 17 after excelling in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at the Michael J. Petrides School on Staten Island.

He completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was assigned to the 1st Armored Division in Baumholder, Germany. In April 2008, he deployed to Iraq and was promoted to sergeant before the combat tour ended. Ollis moved to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served as a fire team leader with 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. He completed Air Assault School before deploying to Afghanistan with his unit. Ollis returned to Fort Campbell in May 2011, but he was soon reassigned to the 10th Mountain Division. He arrived at Fort Drum in November to join the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team. While stationed at Fort Drum, he lived in Sackets Harbor at Madison Barracks. He told his father he hoped to retire there after his Army career.

In 2013, Ollis was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Following two tense combat deployments in the mountains of Afghanistan, he earned the U.S. Army's Ranger tab. On Aug. 28, 2013, Ollis and his entire coalition military base, Forward Operating Base Ghazni, were caught in the middle of a major Taliban assault.

■ The 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Mobile Brigade Combat Team is set to deploy to the Middle East. The Army announced Monday that the 2nd Mobile Brigade Combat Team will be replacing the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Iowa National Guard, as part of its regular rotation of forces. The 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team was deployed from Iowa in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.



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Thank You THE 2026 **SILVER SPONSORS**

PROGRESS

FEBRUARY 2026

Lowville outlines plans for \$9.7 million in DRI funding



Aerial view of downtown Lowville. Provided photo

By Elaine M. Avallone

eavallone@lowville.com

Originally published May 24

A year ago, the village of Lowville learned that its Restore, Rediscover, Reconnect Downtown Revitalization Initiative round 7 application was accepted.

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced May 15 that the Lowville DRI was among the awards for a total of 22 transformational projects in the north country as part of two economic development programs: the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward.

"Our North Country communities embody strength, resilience and a spirit of determination - that's why I'm investing in 22 transformational projects that give every resident and business the opportunity to reach their full potential," Gov. Hochul said. "Our towns and villages are the foundation of what makes New York special, and we're giving them the tools they need to better their communities as a whole."

New York Secretary of State Walter T. Mosley said, "When we invest in our downtowns, we're investing in the heart of our communities. Through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward program, we're not just funding projects - we're fostering vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that spur economic growth, enhance quality of life for residents and preserve the unique character of each municipality and region. These signature programs exemplify



our commitment to ensuring that every New Yorker, in every corner of our state, has the opportunity to succeed and thrive."

The announcement states, "As the 'urban heart' of Lewis County, the village of Lowville seeks to preserve and enhance its small-town, rural charm, while diversifying and expanding its economic base in ways consistent with its unique character. The village's DRI projects are focused on transforming its downtown into a more vibrant neighborhood through private and public sector project opportunities that will achieve its vision for the downtown. Lowville's investments will build on its past and ongoing efforts to make the downtown a regional center for business and culture, drawing on its position as the intersection corridor of the Thousand

Islands, the Tug Hill Plateau and the Adirondack Mountains."

Village of Lowville mayor Dan Salmon said, "First, on behalf of the Village of Lowville Board of Trustees, its residents, and the DRI committee, I would like to thank Governor Hochul and staff for this gift. We are excited to receive the announcement of the DRI project awards that will enhance our community."

The governor's announcement listed and described the 10 Lowville DRI projects, totaling \$9.7 million.

* Improve Access and Parking at Veteran's Memorial Park Creating a Safe and Inviting Space (\$2,848,000): Reconfigure the parking lot at Veteran's Memorial Park to create a welcoming gateway, improving access and increasing pedestrian safety. Key features include

an improved entrance from State Street, curb bump-outs, upgraded sidewalks, green infrastructure for stormwater management and new street trees. A formal monument sign will mark the park entrance, while parking improvements on Parkway Drive will optimize access and aesthetics.

* Revitalize State Street to Enhance Safety, Accessibility and Aesthetics in Downtown Lowville (\$1,711,000): Enhance safety, accessibility and aesthetics through the installation of high-visibility crosswalks, curb bump-outs, Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons, street tree plantings and green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff and beautify the area.

* Renovate the Stevens Block to Create Market Rate Apartments (\$1,558,000): Renovate an abandoned

space at 7623 N. State St., creating market-rate residential units on the upper floors, with comprehensive upgrades including a new vestibule, stairwell, energy-efficient systems and exterior improvements.

* Restore the Historic Keller Red Building, 7545, 7551 S. State St., to Create a Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential Space (\$1,193,000): Preserve a historic downtown building by renovating its second and third stories into commercial and residential spaces, establishing a professional office space, enhancing meeting capabilities for Naturally Lewis, and upgrading the building's structural, mechanical and safety systems.

* Rehabilitate the Historic Masonic Temple into an Efficient Community Hub (\$776,000): Rehabilitate the historic National

Register-listed Masonic Temple building in downtown Lowville, enhancing its role as a center for historical preservation, education, and cultural activities while modernizing its facilities for energy efficiency to serve the community and promote heritage tourism.

* Establish a Small Project Fund to Enhance Downtown Lowville (\$400,000): The Small Project Fund will support smaller projects in downtown Lowville with improvements such as facade restoration and improvement, interior renovation, signage, public art, and business assistance.

* Develop a Downtown Branding and Wayfinding Strategy to Enhance Lowville's Identity (\$358,000): Revitalize its downtown area through a comprehensive initiative that includes a branding and marketing strategy, a wayfinding signage system, and interpretive elements that highlight local history.

* Reimagine Veteran's Park to create Community Space with Modern Amenities and Enhanced Accessibility (\$320,000): Upgrade Veteran's Park with improvements that aim to create a vibrant and accessible community space.

* Restore the Historic Town Hall Theater into a Community Asset (\$294,000): Restore a historic building to its original state while modernizing its functionality, including facade restoration, window replacement, interior

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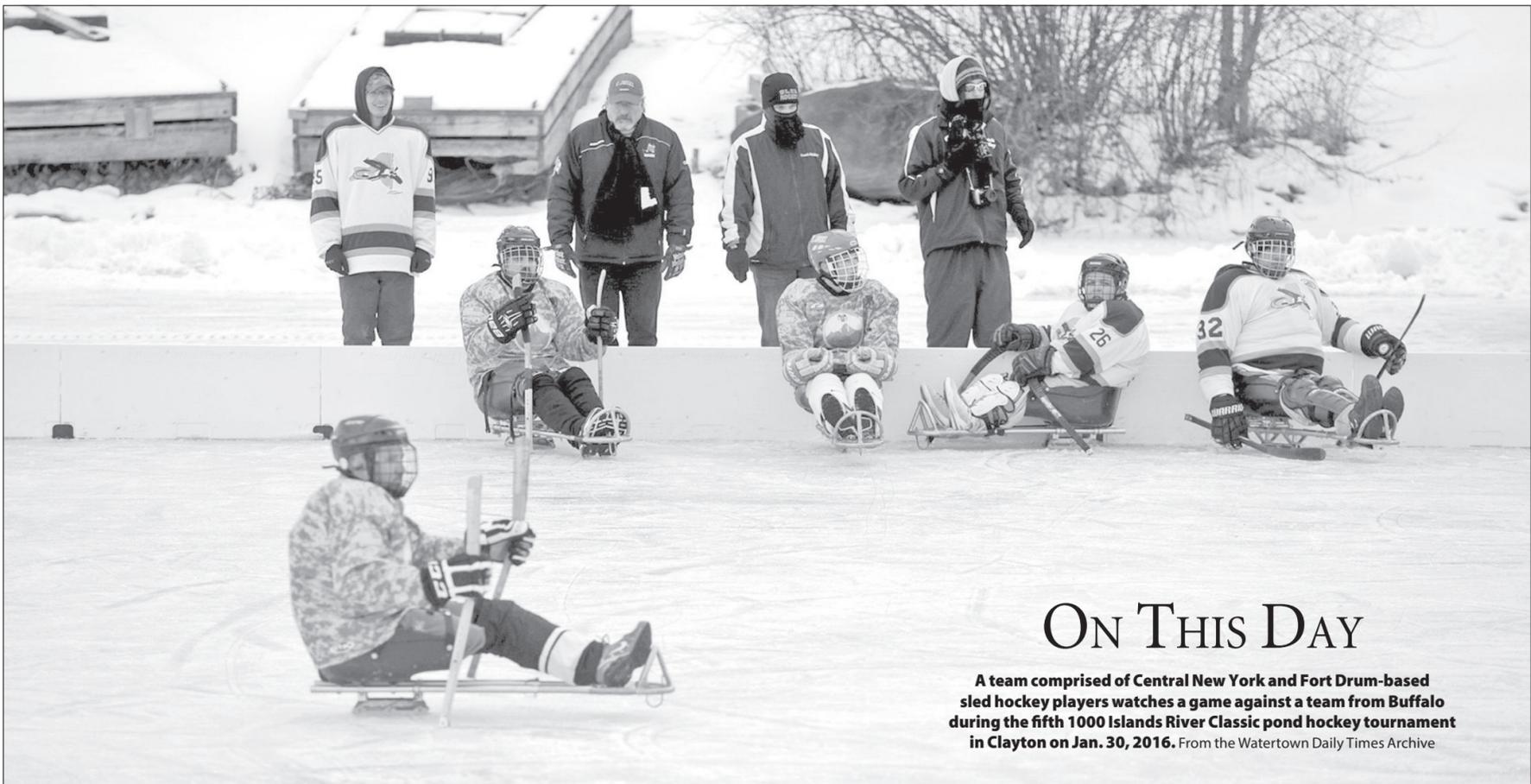


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10th Mountain Life features soldier shoutouts, photos of Fort Drum events, memories from post and more.

To recognize your favorite soldier or share photos, email news@wdt.net with subject "10th Mountain Life"

The Madison Barracks 9th Division of the 25th Field Artillery, on maneuver at the Pine Camp artillery range, prepare to fire a 75-millimeter gun. In 1906, the area of Pine Camp near the communities of Black River and Deferiet was selected by the commanders of Madison Barracks for training. Courtesy of the 10th Mountain Division & Fort Drum Museum



ON THIS DAY

A team comprised of Central New York and Fort Drum-based sled hockey players watches a game against a team from Buffalo during the fifth 1000 Islands River Classic pond hockey tournament in Clayton on Jan. 30, 2016. From the Watertown Daily Times Archive

10TH MOUNTAIN LIFE

10th Light Support Battalion honored by Assemblyman Gray

By JONATHON WHEELER
jwheeler@wdt.net

FORT DRUM — The 10th Light Support Battalion was recently recognized by Assemblyman Scott A. Gray for extraordinary efforts during high-priority missions.

The battalion had completed more than 20 high priority missions without a single error.

"It really came down to extraordinary work by the unit," Gray said. "We thought it was worthy to point it out and actually thank them for it and welcome them home."

Gray said that when units complete the high-level missions without error, it is worth officially recognizing at the state level.

"They're under extreme pressure," Gray said. "It's like having a perfect season in sports... It's worthy of recognition when somebody can execute at that level."

Gray called the Fort Drum connection to the north country "huge" while complimenting the work of Capt. Kenard Hird, who is the Company C commander.

"There are certain units and there are certain leaders and Kenny Hird is one of those leaders, one of those



Assemblyman Scott Gray presents the citation to Capt. Kenard Hird, right, and 1st Sgt. Darlson Osias. Provided photo

exceptional leaders," he said.

He said Hird leads the unit at a high level.

"We're talking about not only war-fighting, when they're operating flawlessly, but we're talking about when they come home, they train hard...

they incorporate moral type of building activities in there and they're very community oriented," Gray said. "When you talk about well rounded leadership and you're talking about a well-rounded unit, you're looking at Kenny leading that unit."

JOB WELL DONE



Sgt. Pedro Crespo Jesus, a human resources NCO, gets awarded by soldiers and leaders with HHC, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade during his ETS ceremony at Fort Drum on Dec. 9. Pedro reaffirmed his dedication to service in the United States Army by reenlisting for 3 years the prior month. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mason Nichols

OUT AND ABOUT

■ Seven soldiers, including one from the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Polk, started off 2026 by earning their newest Military Occupational Specialty — 91J — by completing five weeks of training in the 91J10 Quartermaster and Chemical Equipment Repairer Course at Regional Training Site (RTS)-Maintenance at Fort McCoy. Spc. Chandler Petrimoulx with 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was among them.

■ Although he never wore a military uniform, Charles Minot Dole's service to the U.S. Army proved invaluable as his advocacy and recruitment efforts led to the establishment of the 10th Mountain Division in 1943. Fort Drum community members and invited guests gathered inside the post museum to celebrate his legacy Jan. 23 during the dedication ceremony of the Charles Minot "Minnie" Dole Heritage Complex. "Today we are not simply renaming a building," said Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum commanding general. "We are recognizing the individual whose vision, persistence, and love of the mountains helped create this division and, probably more importantly, helped define who we are."

Dole, the founder of the National Ski Patrol, recognized a critical gap in the U.S. military and relentlessly petitioned the War Department for a specialized mountain unit.

'Animal Chiropractic' Now Being Offered at Countryside Veterinary Clinic

Countryside Veterinary Clinic (CVC) is proud to be the largest provider of veterinary services for pet owners, dairy/livestock farmers and horse owners throughout the North Country. With hospitals located in Lowville, Carthage, Boonville and Otter Lake, the CVC doctors and staff bring their family atmosphere every day to serve their clients and four-legged family members. To strengthen this commitment Countryside is always adding new and improved services, plus technology for even better service to their clients.

The most recent service addition to Countryside is the introduction of Veterinary Spinal Manipulative Therapy (VSMT). You may also hear VSMT referred to as "animal chiropractic". It is a manual therapy focused on restoring normal, healthy range of motion to your pet's joints. By improving joint mobility, VSMT helps reduce pain, enhance nervous system function, and support your pet's overall health and performance. When joints become restricted or don't move properly (called hypomobilities), the body compensates—often leading to pain, stiffness, muscle tension, or injury over time. VSMT works to gently correct these restrictions, allowing the body to heal and



function optimally. VSMT is both an excellent preventative and therapeutic option for pets of all ages, including horses. The service is offered by appointment with Dr. Julia Brigandi. Driven by a passion for rehabilitation and holistic care, Dr. Brigandi pursued advanced training in Veterinary Spinal Manipulative Therapy,

and in November 2025, she completed her certification in VSMT (CVSMT) and became a Fellow of the College of Animal Chiropractors (FCoAC). A more detailed description and conditions that can be treated with VSMT is available on Countryside's website. VSMT appointments (for any of the



four clinics) can be made by calling 315-376-6563.

Our ability to offer advanced diagnostic specialty services continues to grow. We are now equipped to perform complete cardiology work-ups including echocardiogram with the Oncura telehealth ultrasound system. This system allows us

to collaborate with board

certified cardiologists outside our practice area for assessment and diagnosis of a variety of cardiac conditions from the comfort and convenience of our Lowville hospital.

Other recent changes in the Countryside system include a major expansion and renovation of the Carthage Clinic, which now has two separate entrances for improved patient flow. In addition to more exam rooms for their patients, the new space has a larger laboratory and pharmacy area. Facility improvements include a private, comfort room to accommodate families navigating the end-of-life journey with their beloved pet.

Otto, a new online patient communication platform was introduced, which helps pet owners conveniently connect with Countryside clinics to get the best care for their pets. The Otto app can be used to request appointments, prescription refills, or follow up after appointments as well as

See VET 04

Williamson Trash Removal family owned since 1987

Williamson Trash Removal is a family-owned business located in Natural Bridge. The business was established in 1987 by Gary and Therese Williamson, they operated the business, providing trash removal and septic pumping until their retirement in 2012.

After their retirement Williamson Services operations

continued under the ownership of Stephen & Shannon Clarke who had been working for Williamsons since 1994.

Over the past 39 years Williamson Services has continued to provide reliable service and has been able to expand with the help of our employees to increase our service areas in Jefferson, Lewis and

St. Lawrence Counties. Williamson Services provides a range of services for residential trash and recycling pick-up, commercial dumpsters, roll-offs containers and septic pumping services.

We're located at 12988 North Croghan Road in Natural Bridge. Give us a call at (315) 644-4000.

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A Strong Foundation for What's Ahead: GYMO's Review of 2025

GYMO Architecture, Engineering, & Land Surveying, DPC experienced another productive and meaningful year in 2025, marked by community engagement, professional accomplishments, and continued investment in projects that strengthen communities across the North Country.

Our People & Professional Growth

The firm was able to grow with quality individuals who are committed to improving the North Country. We are proud to announce that the following people joined GYMO's Construction Management department in 2025:

- Kris Carr, Project Manager

- Jennifer Wise, Project Manager

- Nick Westcott, Senior Construction Manager

- Greg Millard, Senior Construction Manager

- Rod Tyrell, Senior Construction Manager

Investing in the next generation of professionals also remained a priority. During the summer, GYMO welcomed four interns who supported active projects across disciplines and gained hands-on experience working alongside our staff:

- Priya Retajczyk, Engineering

- Rob Hellings, Engineering

- Hunter Garnsey, Construction Management

- Lucas Edgar, Construction Management

Several team members celebrated notable professional milestones in 2025:

- Jesse Irwin was promoted to Architectural Project Manager, recognizing his leadership and expanding role in guiding projects from design through construction.

- Mark Tompkins, Senior Project Engineer, achieved professional engineering licensure, further strengthening GYMO's engineering expertise.

- McKenzee Fisk-Kamide, Architectural Department Manager, successfully passed all three NCIDQ exams, earning Certified Interior Designer status and professional licensure through the New York State Education Department.

- David Nisley, Marketing Coordinator, graduated from the Lewis County Leadership Academy, reinforcing GYMO's engagement in regional leadership development.

Community Engagement & Firm Activities

GYMO remained actively involved in local and regional events throughout 2025, continuing a long-standing commitment to community engagement. Staff participated in the Tug Hill Commission's Local Government Conference, Naturally Lewis Economic Development Conference, SUNY Potsdam Local Government Conference, the Spring Conference for Public Housing Authorities, and

the Clayton Climate Smart Community Public Information Session.

The firm was also proud to support the region through sponsorships and community involvement, including the 4th Annual Tyler R. Christman Foundation ATV/UTV "Ride for Ty" and the Lewis County Fair. Team members also enjoyed joining various golf tournament fundraisers, ringing bells for the Salvation Army, and having a family day at our annual Open & BBQ at Thompson Park Golf Course. The firm wrapped up the year with winning "Best Use of Festival Theme" at the 2025 North Country Festival of Trees, continuing a tradition that reflects our creative spirit and community pride.

Our team isn't just making a living. They're making a difference, and we are proud of the causes and communities they support.

Completed & Ongoing Projects

GYMO continued work on a diverse portfolio of completed and ongoing projects. While each project is unique, together they reflect the breadth of the firm's services and the partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit clients. These clients include:

- Municipal & Infrastructure Projects

- Town of Potsdam – Parkhurst Brook Bridge

- Town of Philadelphia – Park Improvements

- City of Watertown – City Courthouse Renovation, Huntington Street Topographic Survey, Northeast Water Topographic Survey, Burlington Street,

- Village of Hammond – I/I Study and Preliminary Engineering Report

- Village of Lowville – Groundwater Development Continuation and Drainage Study

- Village of Malone – Recreation Park, Future Growth Plan, Civic Center Expansion

- Private Development & Community Facilities

- The Globe – Renovations for BOCES and Apartments

- Agape Shoppe – Building Renovations

- Half Pints International Brewery – Design Services

- Net Par Indoor Golf – Design Services

- Zoo New York – Concept Design for Concession Area & Entrance

- Masonic Care Community – Sidewalk & Drainage Improvements

- Watertown International Airport (with Bette Cring) – Airport Escalator Shoring

- Missile Defense Agency – Fort Drum FSOMM Project

- Housing Authority Projects

- Wilna Housing Authority – Westside Terrace Renovation

- Malone Housing Authority – Riverside Haven Electrical Upgrades

- Ogdensburg Housing

- Authority – Mechanical & Electrical Upgrades

- Watertown Housing Authority – Hilltop Towers Generator & Sprinkler Replacement

- Educational Facilities (Construction Management)

- Altmar-Parish-Williamstown CSD – Phases 2 & 3 Capital Projects

- Thousand Islands CSD – Phase 1 Capital Project

- Morristown CSD – Phase 1 Capital Project

- Phoenix CSD – Phase 1 Capital Project

- Stockbridge Valley CSD – Phases 1 & 2 Capital Projects

- General Brown CSD – Phases 1 & 2 Capital Projects

- Town of Webb UFSD – Phase 1 Capital Project

- Healthcare & Nonprofit Projects

- Lewis County General Hospital – Surgical and Podiatry Offices

- North Country Family Health – Office Renovation

- Jefferson County SPCA – SPCA Expansion

- Tupper Arts – Theater Structural Shoring

- Salvation Army – Bathroom and Shower Renovations

- North Jefferson Improvement Association – The Mill House Mixed-Use Building in LaFayetteville

- Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust – Conservation Easement Surveys

- Carrying the Foundation Forward

- As GYMO looks toward

2026, the firm is well positioned for continued growth, supported by strong leadership, an expanding team, and a healthy pipeline of work. This readiness is reflected in both GYMO's project outlook and its leadership - a key part of the firm's foundation. At the beginning of 2026, Matthew Cervini assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer. He brings strong technical expertise and a deep understanding of GYMO's mission and culture.

Patrick Scordo remains an important part of GYMO, continuing to contribute his experience and institutional knowledge while transitioning to a part-time role as he begins to enjoy retirement. This transition ensures continuity for clients and staff alike, while supporting the next generation of leadership.

Looking ahead, GYMO is also focused on strengthening its team for the future. The firm is currently hiring for several leadership and senior technical positions, including:

- Managing Engineer

- Senior Municipal Engineer

- Senior Project Engineer

Additional information about career opportunities is available at www.gymodpc.com.

The year ahead builds on what matters most: people, partnerships, and successful projects.



Vet

From C3

chat with the clinic staff to ask pet health questions. In addition, pet owners can view upcoming appointments and reminders, as well as information about previous visits.

Orthopedic services continue to be an important part of the small animal practice. Countryside offers a highly specialized competitively priced ACL Knee Surgery for dogs. The pioneering technique offered by Countryside eliminates many of the complications associated with traditional extracapsular techniques. Patients that have benefitted from this service hail from a broad region of the northeast as well as our local community.

Our team of large animal veterinarians travel within Lewis, Oneida, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence counties serving

over 200 dairy, beef, and small ruminant clients. Utilizing advanced techniques in reproduction and herd health services, CVC veterinarians support area farmers that are well known to produce high quality food products while remaining competitive in an increasingly global economy. Equine services are focused on preventative healthcare and vaccinations as well as reproduction and lameness challenges as needed by the significant population of pleasure horse owners in the area.

The doctors and staff wish to thank the community for continued confidence in our services and for allowing us to be part of your family's animal healthcare. For more information on their services, visit their website www.cvc-pets.com or "Like" their Facebook pages to stay up to date on current news and information!

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Mark is PPG certified, and all paint is mixed on a PPG mixing station on the premises to ensure a better quality paint match. A paint baking system allows the finish to be cured to a factory-like durability like the new cars have today. We are one of the only shops in the area that uses this environmentally-friendly waterborne paint.

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HEADLINERS

Heritage Park officially opens

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com
Originally published Sept. 5

CASTORLAND — During the first Tasty Tuesday in the village, the ribbon was cut Aug. 26 to officially open Heritage Park on the corner of State Route 812 and Railroad Street.

Walking, coming on ATVs and by car, about 100 people gathered at the newly established park for the ribbon cutting and to listen to music by The Myers Family. Nino Catering was on hand with their pizza food truck for the inaugural Tasty Tuesday.

Castorland Fire Company chief, Gary Ashline, who has been a village resident his entire life, was happy to see the park constructed.

"It was wasted space," he said it's good to see they made something out of it," he said. When the rails to trails come they will be able to make improvements and expand. I hope people enjoy it."

Robin Grunert, village clerk, said it was a "fun adventure."

"There was a lot of red tape to get through to get to the blue tape," she quipped referring to the blue tape used at the ribbon cutting. "It all came together."

Prior mayor Rick Ward, grew up in the village and served as a trustee and mayor for nearly 20 years.

"It's very nice," he said. I hope it gets utilized as it should. Heidi (Lehmann, current mayor) did a great job getting funding. There's grant money out there we might as well capitalize on it or it will get to someone else."

Rita Genito has lived across from where the park now is for 22 years.

"It's a nice walk around and close to home," she said, noting she was looking forward to the future Tasty Tuesdays.



Heritage Park on the corner of State Route 812 and Railroad Street in Castorland was officially opened Aug. 26. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



This gazebo, several picnic tables and benches were placed in the Heritage Park in Castorland. Photo courtesy of Castorland village

He husband, Adam, and their son, Owen, 5, had a hand in the park construction, level out the stone on the walkways.

"It's a good community place to get together," Mr. Genito said.

According to Mrs. Lehmann, the community-wide vision started over 18 months ago.

"The Parks and Rec Committee started dreaming about what the county-wide Rails to Trails initiative could mean to our small village," said the mayor. "With tracks that directly intersect our village, we reached out to our residents to ask what amenities they would like to see in future years. Overwhelmingly, the response was to have more hiking, biking, walking paths for young families and the "young at heart" that wanted activities they could do with their grandkids that did not involve technology."

The committee coupled the feedback with the idea that the Lowville to Castorland part of the railbed could



Heidi Lehmann, Castorland mayor, said a few words prior to cutting the ribbon to officially open Heritage Park Aug. 26. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

be dedicated to non-motorized activities.

"We began to brainstorm ways that Castorland could be a destination along the rail corridor, not just a sleepy pass-through village," Mrs. Lehmann said. "The birth of this park came out of many conversations that revolved around community involvement, beautification and what makes a village attractive to potential home buyers

while also engendering pride for one's place of residence. Additionally, we felt it was important to honor the legacy that the railroad played in the historical growth of Castorland."

The next step was to apply for grant funding.

Naturally Lewis awarded the village \$30,000 in grant funding to help purchase the gazebo, landscaping, flowers and crushed gravel for

the new 1.5 mile village-wide walking paths.

Pratt Northam awarded the village a grant of \$18,000 to help cover the cost of the picnic tables, benches, planters and bins.

"This is the bread and butter of what Pratt Northam does — give back and support communities and create spaces for people to gather," said Sarah Bullock, the organization's executive director.

WinDenmark helped to cover the expense for the Heritage Park sign. The mayor noted the park's name reflects on the origin of the village.

"Castorland came to be because of the railroad," she said, noting it was once a thriving community with many businesses.

She added a history story walk on the trail would be ideal.

The village board is also working closely with Lewis County to utilize the property on the opposite side of the tracks adjacent to the park for additional parking space,

a public restroom and a place to host the upcoming Tasty Tuesday events. Next summer the village board plans to have food trucks in the Heritage Park the last Tuesday of each month in June, July and August. Community members are encouraged to follow the village Facebook page for more information.

"Parks are a beautiful gift to both the current and future residents. Not only do vibrant greenspaces improve the neighborhood, but they foster community involvement and encourage safe recreation activities for families of all ages," said mayor Lehmann. "As a board, our goal is to continuously improve this village so that we can leave it better than we found it."

With the development of the Rails to Trails program, the mayor foresees Castorland as a destination for non motorized travel — walking, hiking, bicycling and cross country skiing.

DRI

From C1

renovations, stage construction, and technological upgrades to create a versatile cultural center for the community.

* Reopen 5423 Shady Avenue to Create a Mixed-Use Building (\$242,000): Renovate the second floor into

a functional law office, restoring the building's integrity, while transforming the long-vacant third floor into safe, and affordable mid to long-term housing.

Before this DRI application was approved, the village had submitted three others with varying projects.

Local Planning Committee, which includes local and regional leaders, stakeholders and community

representatives, drafted the DRI application.

Then Lowville Deputy Mayor Dan Salmon and Michele Ledoux of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County and member of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council served as the Lowville LPC co-chairs.

Mr. Salmon explained that they had asked for \$13 million originally, knowing

there would be cuts and was thankful for the projects that were selected for funding.

"We got a big chunk of what we asked for," the mayor said. "It will help the community for sure. Every one of the projects important and I'm hoping for a good effort to bring all to fruition."

He expressed gratitude to his co-chair and members

of the committee who "did their homework" and "asked good questions."

"I thoroughly enjoyed working with them," he said. "I appreciate what they each did - Cheyenne Steria of Naturally Lewis and Brittany Davis behind the scenes and Casandra Buell, Lewis County director of planning and community development."

Canton, with five projects,

and Alexandria Bay, with seven projects, were each Round 2 winners of \$4.5 million NY Forward awards which accelerate and expand the revitalization of smaller and rural down-towns throughout the state "so that all communities can benefit from the State's revitalization efforts, regardless of size, character, needs and challenges."

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Lewis County Humane Society Nears Completion of Major Capital Improvement Project

The Lewis County Humane Society in Glenfield is entering an exciting new chapter as it nears completion of a major capital construction project. After more than three years of planning, building, and community support — and an investment exceeding \$900,000 — the organization is preparing for the final phase of improvements and a long-anticipated grand opening.

The project was designed to modernize and strengthen the shelter's ability to serve homeless and vulnerable animals across Lewis County and surrounding areas. Upgrades have focused on improving animal housing, safety, workflow efficiency, and overall comfort for both the animals and the people who care for them. With construction largely complete, only a final punch list of finishing items remains before the facility is fully ready for use.

The improvements support both animal welfare and regulatory compliance. The shelter is governed by New York State Agriculture and



Left: After arriving in poor health from a hoarding situation, Blush received extensive medical care and a second chance. She is still waiting for a patient, loving home. **Right:** Ike is a bright, high-energy Lab/Border Collie mix who loves to learn and stay busy. Shelter staff say he'll shine in an active home with structure and room to move.



Markets Law and follows The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' (ASV) Guidelines for

Standards of Care in Animal Shelters. New state standards took effect on December 15,

2025, and the organization has been working diligently to ensure full compliance.

Capital upgrades have helped bring the facility up to required standards in key

areas such as quarantine space, ventilation, and sealed flooring. Additional requirements — including daily exercise and socialization, expanded record keeping, and animal identification protocols — are being met through enhanced staff procedures and training.

Operationally, the shelter strengthened its municipal partnerships over the past year. Contracts have been established or renewed with 15 Townships in Lewis County, as well as with the Town of Wilna in Jefferson County. The Humane Society also continues to maintain its contract with the Fort Drum installation for stray dogs and cats.

As construction wraps up, the organization will begin installing a donor recognition wall to celebrate the many individuals and organizations who made the capital project possible. The wall will include plaques honoring all supporters who contributed \$500 or more toward the campaign. Shelter leadership emphasizes that the project

See HUMANE 7

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On the livestock side, J & H Farms raise beef cattle with care. By combining traditional farming values with

attention to quality, J & H Farms aims to provide dependable, farm-fresh products and friendly service to its customers.

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Lewis County Humane Society

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Shelter Manager: Barb Turck

Location: 6390 Pine Grove Road, Glenfield, NY

Mail: P.O. Box 682, Lowville, NY 13367

Email: LewisCountyHumaneSociety@gmail.com

FB: Lewis County Humane Society NY 501c3

Web: LewisCountyHumaneSociety.org

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Aubertine and Currier – A Look Back at 2025’s Highlights and Opportunities

Aubertine and Currier Architects, Engineers & Land Surveyors, PLLC is a NYS Certified Women Business Enterprise (WBE) located in the City of Watertown. For over 25 years, we have been servicing clients throughout the North Country by leading projects with innovative, efficient design while growing long-lasting relationships with clients and colleagues. Through decades of hard work and expertise, we have remained a major player in the developments happening in our local communities.

In 2025, Aubertine and Currier was proud to have attended several conferences, career fairs and community events to directly engage with members of our local communities. This year, we look forward to attending the upcoming annual SUNY Canton Engineering Career Fair, Jefferson Community College’s Spring Open House, the Clarkson University Career Fair, and the annual Jefferson County Career Jam to connect with another generation North Country students. We also had the opportunity to connect with industry leaders on a national level at the SAME Federal Small Business Conference in Phoenix, Arizona! The SAME Conference unites businesses across the United States, government

agencies and AEC professionals to promote innovation, drive industry discussion, and foster long lasting professional relationships. We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to attend such an impactful, nationwide event!

Last fall, we collaborated with Jefferson Community College to host another successful Collegiate Science & Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) Leadership event. JCC’s CSTEP students spent the day touring local facilities, connecting with community representatives, and were introduced to the various opportunities the North Country has to offer, including architecture and engineering. Throughout the day, students toured the Thrive Wellness and Recovery Outpatient Clinic, got a glimpse into the construction process of the Neighbors of Watertown Housing Facility for the Homeless, enjoyed lunch at the STRAND Theater with a guest speaker from Samaritan Hospital, received a guided architecture and engineering tour of the Clayton Riverwalk, and ended their day at Boldt Castle for some St. Lawrence River sightseeing. We are grateful for the partnerships that allow these events to happen and look forward to collaborating in the upcoming year!

Our team experienced significant growth in 2025 as we had the pleasure of welcoming six new team members. Allow us to welcome: Wyatt Holmes, Survey Technician, Kaela Mellowship, Proposal Coordinator, Dani Wright, Administrative Assistant, Duane Rayburn, Construction Inspector, Storm Turck, Survey Proposal Coordinator, and Justin Queary, IT Specialist. We also had the pleasure of hosting a Thousand Islands High School student looking to get some hands-on engineering experience!

Project Updates:
Plattsburgh Water Recovery Resource Facility Façade Project – The Plattsburgh WRRF is officially under construction! The Façade Integration Project, completed in partnership with CDM Smith, will transform the existing WRRF into an attractive and informational destination that harmonizes with the surrounding scenery and the Lake Champlain waterfront. Once completed, the facility will be more than just a water treatment plant, rather an interactive facility that blends education, recreation, and revitalization.

Massena School of Business Revitalization – The historic Massena School of Business located in the heart of Downtown

Massena will soon receive a fresh new look! Ground broke last summer to convert the structurally insecure and unsafe building into a community resource. The project converts the facility into a public “Pocket Park” for recreational use, while maintaining its historic brick façade on Main Street.

New Projects:
Cape Vincent Improvement Projects – Downtown Cape Vincent will soon undergo some impressive changes. Aubertine and Currier is engaged in providing Civil Engineering services for two major projects that will come to revitalize the Cape Vincent community. Partnering with Edgewater Civil, the Club Street Waterfront Project strengthens infrastructure for recreational boating, will stabilize the existing seawall and provide new dock space for incoming guests. This project, as part of a larger effort to improve Downtown Cape Vincent, is anticipated to undergo construction this spring. Simultaneously, our civil engineering team is partnering with Delta Engineers for the Streetscape Improvements & Pedestrian Zone project that will create safer downtown infrastructure and streetscape improvements for the village. This project will aim to create safer sidewalks

and pedestrian routes, improve street lighting and significantly enhance site amenities in an effort to create an inviting downtown environment. Once completed, these projects will provide Cape Vincent with safe, accessible infrastructure that will allow the downtown area to accommodate tourists and long-term economic development!

Thousand Islands Inn Revitalization - Built in 1897, the historic Thousand Islands Inn was once a booming tourist destination but has now sat vacant for over 10 years. Aubertine and Currier is providing a full suite of design services to ensure the building receives the revitalization it deserves. With construction aimed to start early this summer, the TI Inn will be transformed into a multi-use facility accommodating the growing needs of the Thousand Island region. The renovation will focus on improving the structural integrity of the building, adding a modern element to the Inn, and bringing it up to current NYS Building and Energy Codes. The renovated building will take on new life as it will provide publicly available apartment units for those looking to live on the majestic St. Lawrence River. Four apartment units will comprise the

second floor, while the third floor is made up of one large apartment designed for luxurious river living. This apartment will feature 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and a loft-style mezzanine to take full advantage of the space. Moving down, the first floor will be home to a new restaurant, with a tenant lobby and entrance on the opposite side of the building. On the exterior, the first floor will be fitted with a wraparound porch, with balconies on the remaining two levels. Our teams have been working diligently to provide our client with a design that meets their needs, as well as those of the greater Clayton area. Stay tuned for this impressive renovation coming later this year!

To learn more about the progress of these projects, be sure to follow us on Facebook, visit our website at aubertinecurrier.com, or subscribe to our newsletter! Aubertine and Currier always welcomes resumes from qualified applicants in the fields of Architecture, Structural or Civil Engineering, Land Surveying and Construction Inspection. If you are looking for a rewarding career, please visit our website for more information. We cannot wait to see what 2026 will bring!

New Family Room at Lewis County Residential Health Care Facility



Residents of the Lewis County Residential Health Care Facility and their loved ones now have a welcoming space designed to bring families together, thanks to the recent completion of the newly renovated Family Room.

The Family Room offers a

warm, homelike environment where residents can spend meaningful time with family and friends outside of their rooms. The space is designed to accommodate shared meals, celebrations of special occasions, and quiet visits, providing privacy and comfort

in a relaxed setting.

“This room was created with families in mind,” said Nursing Home Administrator, Debra Wurz. “It gives residents and their loved ones a space that feels more like home where they can connect, celebrate, and simply enjoy

being together.”

The Lewis County Hospital Foundation proudly supported the modernization of the Family Room as part of its ongoing commitment to raise funds to support programs and services at the Lewis County Health System.

The new space was recently introduced during an Open House event, where residents, their families and staff had the opportunity to tour the room and see firsthand how it can be used and how to reserve the space. Attendees praised the thoughtful design and the

sense of comfort and privacy it brings for residents and their families.

Resident’s families can reserve the Family Room by contacting the Activities Department at 315-376-5452 or srobbins@lch.net.

Humane

From C6

was made possible through widespread community generosity.

The Humane Society also extends special thanks to several major donors and grantors who provided substantial support this year, including Mary Delton, The Mika Foundation, E & W G Foundation, Northern New York Community Foundation, G. David Phelps Hamar, Kathy Hudson, Lewis County, The Hanley Foundation, Susan LaChausse, Kovach Land Surveying PC, and many others whose generosity continues to sustain and advance the shelter’s mission.

Additional improvements are already planned. A full exterior siding project is

scheduled for the spring, and fundraising efforts are currently underway to support that upgrade. The siding replacement will protect the building long-term and give the facility a refreshed exterior that reflects the quality of care provided inside. Following the siding project, a custom patio — a secure outdoor patio space for cats — will be constructed, fully sponsored by a generous donor. The patio will allow cats to safely enjoy fresh air and enrichment, which helps reduce stress and improve adoptability.

Despite reduced intake capacity during construction, the shelter continued to make a meaningful impact throughout the year. Annual statistics include:

Animals taken in: 481 cats, 193 dogs
Adopted: 444 cats, 124 dogs
Returned to owner: 11 cats,

60 dogs
Placed in foster care: 217 cats, 80 dogs
Spayed/Neutered: 395 cats, 105 dogs

These numbers reflect continued lifesaving work by staff and volunteers, even during a period of limited space and active construction.

Long-Term Resident Spotlights
Blush has been with the shelter since February 7, 2025 — nearly a full year. This 1½-year-old female cat came from a hoarding situation after her owner passed away. She was one of many cats humanely trapped from the property and arrived in urgent need of care. Blush required a full dental extraction, treatment for lice, and extensive cleaning and medical support after her health had declined. Today she is healthy, though she

occasionally experiences respiratory flare-ups. She is timid but friendly and would thrive in a quiet home with a patient adopter willing to give her time to feel safe and secure.

Ike has been at the shelter since November 8, 2024. This 1 year, 11 month old Lab/Border Collie mix arrived as a stray and was never claimed. Ike is high-energy, highly intelligent, and full of enthusiasm. Like many active dogs in a shelter environment, his energy level has increased without the benefit of a consistent home routine. Staff are confident that with structure, enrichment, and regular exercise, Ike will settle into an exceptional companion. He completed a one-month board-and-train program and excelled, showing strong learning ability and focus. Ike would do best in an active home — possibly with

land or a farm setting — and with a confident owner who appreciates a spirited, loyal dog who enjoys having a job to do.

Community members who wish to support ongoing improvements and shelter operations may donate by mail to LCHS, PO Box 682, Lowville, NY 13367, or electronically via Venmo or PayPal at @

LewisCoHumaneSociety.

With major upgrades nearly complete and future projects already underway, the Lewis County Humane Society continues its mission to provide safe shelter, medical care, and second chances for animals in need — now supported by a facility built for the future.

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HEADLINERS

New shop opens for business



Featuring energizing power teas and protein packed shakes, Treat Yourself Nutrition, owned by Jessica Baker, held a ribbon cutting Aug. 27 to officially open the shop at 320 State St., Carthage. Photo courtesy of Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce

Community Foundation partners with donors to strengthen quality of life across Northern New York

The Northern New York Community Foundation partners with families, individuals, businesses, and organizations across Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence County to support a variety of charitable interests.

Since 1929, the Community Foundation has worked to make the region a better place to live, work, and play—for all. Its commitment to donors helps them achieve their charitable objectives now and for generations to come by preserving and honoring legacies of community philanthropy. The Foundation is also a resource for local charitable organizations, donors, professional advisors, and nonprofits and is home to the Northern New York Philanthropy Center, sharing space with three other local organizations.

The Foundation's mission — to inspire and celebrate giving, steward resources honorably, and foster vibrant North Country communities — has evolved to serve the Northern New York region. Its guiding values shape the work it does in partnership with donors to improve quality of life in communities across our region: Inspire Philanthropy. Develop Relationships. Act Respectfully. Honor Stewardship.

While much has changed through the Foundation's 96-year history, one constant remains: the spirit of local philanthropy that inspired civic leaders to organize a community foundation is stronger than ever.

Community foundations work with charitably inclined individuals, families, organizations, and businesses to support quality-of-life programs, projects, and services that improve the region. Anyone may decide to establish a charitable fund at the Community Foundation to support a cause, a geographic area, or organization about which they are passionate. These can be scholarships to specific schools to support education, a fund to support a nonprofit agency in perpetuity, or a customized fund to fulfill charitable interests. Another option is to make a gift to the Friends of the Foundation Community Betterment



Northern New York Community Foundation

Annual Fund, which is designated to support various community programs, projects, and endeavors — including the next-generation Youth Philanthropy Council and the LEAD Giving Circle — in a flexible and responsive manner. The Foundation also makes many grants to projects that bring vital services and value to the community.

Establishing a fund at the Community Foundation isn't a one-time event. It is managed locally with an eye toward steady and stable growth. This means the fund can provide for its intended purpose in perpetuity with added stewardship and oversight. Charitable funds may

be created to honor a loved one, family members, or those who have made a difference in the community. In the past year, donors established 60 new funds at the Community Foundation to support a wide range of charitable organizations, causes, and interests.

Educational support for post-secondary students continues to be a longstanding part of the Community Foundation's legacy and heritage. Annual gifts to the Foundation help build scholarship funds and extend opportunities for students. Many awards also honor the legacies of caring individuals who believed in the value of

making education more accessible.

In partnership with donors and 36 tri-county public and private schools, the Foundation awarded 1,157 scholarships totaling \$1.56 million in 2025 to help 743 tri-county students pursue their post-secondary educational goals — 143 of whom graduated from Lewis County high schools.

Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of donors who continue to make gifts that support Community Foundation scholarships, opportunities for students this year have grown through the establishment of new awards. In the past 18 months, donors have

created nearly 50 new scholarships at the Community Foundation.

The Foundation is fortunate to partner with more than 150 nonprofits that serve tri-county residents, many of which have created funds within the Community Foundation for enduring support. Partnerships help support and strengthen organizations while working to preserve the North Country's past, enhance its present, and secure its future. These critical relationships also provide stewarded options for donors.

In 2025, the Community Foundation awarded \$2.8 million in grant funding to support the work and

missions of hundreds of tri-county nonprofit organizations. Last year's grant funding included \$390,000 to aid nonprofit organizations that serve Lewis County residents.

Ten seventh- and eighth-grade students were selected as winners of the 2025-2026 Community Spirit Youth Giving Challenge, and each awarded a \$1,000 grant to a local nonprofit of their choice.

Several community funds at the Foundation highlight investments donors continue to make in geographic-specific giving including the Six Town Community Fund, Clifton-Fine Community Fund, and the Canton Community Fund, among others.

The Community Foundation is based in the Northern New York Philanthropy Center, 131 Washington St. Watertown. Contact the Foundation at 315-782-7110 or info@nnycf.org. The team can work with you to plan the most effective and enduring legacy for today and tomorrow. Visit nnycf.org to learn more and follow the Foundation on social media.



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We offer a full range of mechanical services, including brake and suspension repair, tire mounting and balancing, four-wheel precision camera alignments, complete engine overhauls,

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In addition to repairs, we sell quality pre-owned cars, trucks, and SUVs, giving our customers even

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Behind everything we do is an experienced and dedicated team. Our office manager Krystal, and clerical assistant Michaela, are the friendly voices answering the phone. From scheduling to ordering parts, they are the glue that holds our shop together. We have seven technicians employed with us who together bring more than 200 years of combined experience to Beller's Auto. We are lifelong learners, always expanding our knowledge and refining our skills to stay current with today's evolving vehicle technology.

As we reflect on more than 45 years in business, we want to sincerely thank our community and loyal customers for placing their trust in us. Serving you and your vehicles has truly been our greatest pleasure.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce plans to break ground in the winter of 2026 on an office remodel. Our goal is to create a more

inviting and comfortable space for our customers while they wait for their vehicle service to be completed. We look forward to welcoming everyone to tour our new office during our customer appreciation event this spring.

For updates and event details, follow us on Facebook or Instagram. To view our current inventory of pre-owned vehicles or learn more about our services, please visit www.bellersauto.com.



Ready to serve you at Beller's Auto, your one-stop-shop, are, from left, Daryl Halko, mechanical technician; Zach Gingerich, auto body technician; Michaela Zehr, office secretary; Jacob Zehr, mechanical technician; Mike Beller, owner/autobody technician and manager; Patrick Sullivan, auto body technician; Myron Beller, Owner/mechanical technician and manager, Darin Halko, auto body technician; Krystal Beller, office manager; and Nevin Beller, founder of Beller's Auto.

PROGRESS

FEBRUARY 2026

18 north country projects funded through state program



The Southern Tug Hill Sno-Riders in Lewis County and the Cranberry Lake Mountaineers Snowmobile Club in St. Lawrence County have received funding to acquire new trail grooming equipment to maintain snowmobile trails. Watertown Daily Times

Staff report

ALBANY — The north country has been awarded nearly \$12.4 million in Regional Economic Development Council funding to support 34 projects, including 18 in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

They're part of the more than \$313 million that Gov. Kathleen C. Hochul says has been awarded through the

2025 REDC initiative to support 381 projects statewide.

Five projects were awarded funding in Lewis County, along with four in Jefferson County and eight in St. Lawrence County.

JEFFERSON COUNTY
■ \$495,000 to the Little Lukes Childcare LLC, located in Black River, to purchase a vacant daycare building and

open a new licensed childcare center. A partnership with Milestones Children's Center will allow the delivery of integrated preschool special education services, including speech, occupational and physical therapy, helping to reduce long waiting lists.

LEWIS COUNTY
■ \$129,048 for Lewis County to complete an engineering study for

a repetitive flood area along East Martinsburg Road.

■ \$60,028 for Lewis County to conduct an engineering study on two small local dams to determine the existing conditions and viable alternatives for reuse and rehabilitation.

■ \$207,292 for Lewis County to complete a county-wide pre-planning inventory and

analysis of brownfield affected areas including historic remnants of factories, mills, tanneries, iron foundries and potential brownfield parcels.

■ \$186,300 for the town and village of Lowville to update their zoning laws to align with the recently completed joint comprehensive plan. The project will modernize land

use regulations to reflect community goals, including downtown revitalization, climate resilience, and expanded housing choice to create a more connected, vibrant and sustainable future for Lowville.

■ \$208,056 for the Southern Tug Hill Sno-Riders to acquire new trail grooming equipment to maintain 69

See PROJECTS D4

Naturally Lewis seeking developers

LYONS FALLS — Naturally Lewis, Inc., on behalf of the Lewis County Development Corporation (LCDC), is inviting developers, business owners, and entrepreneurs to submit Expressions of Interest for the redevelopment of the former Lyons Falls Pulp & Paper Mill site, a vacant riverfront property in the village of Lyons Falls.

The approximately 6.5-acre site, located at 4010 Center St., sits at the confluence of the Moose River and Black River and offers access to public water and sewer, natural gas, high-speed internet, and proximity to New York State Route 12. The property has undergone extensive demolition and environmental remediation efforts and is positioned for future redevelopment.

The village of Lyons Falls has been designated a New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA), and prior

planning and feasibility studies identified the mill site as a key opportunity for redevelopment that could support commercial, industrial, hospitality, or recreation-based uses. The BOA designation helps position the site for funding opportunities and reduces barriers to redevelopment.

"This site represents a transformational opportunity for Lyons Falls and Lewis County," said Joanne Witt, executive director of Naturally Lewis, Inc. "We are seeking development concepts that align with the community's vision and build on the significant public and private investment already made to prepare this site for future use."

Expressions of Interest are due by Feb. 27 and site visits are available by appointment. Full details, including submission requirements and available resources, can be found at www.naturallylewis.com.



The Lyons Falls Mill site is primed for development. Photo provided by Naturally Lewis

10th Mountain Life features soldier shoutouts, photos of Fort Drum events, memories from post and more.

SPONSORED BY



www.advocatedrum.com

To recognize your favorite soldier or share photos, email news@wdt.net with subject "10th Mountain Life"

OUT AND ABOUT

■ At a Feb. 2 wreath-laying ceremony at the Florence American Cemetery in Italy, soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum honored their predecessors who were killed 81 years ago during World War II.

A day later, soldiers were accompanied by U.S. Army Secretary Daniel P. Driscoll during a commemoration to honor the historic 1945 battle of Riva Ridge in Italy, where 10th Mountain Division soldiers executed a daring nighttime ascent to break the German "Gothic Line" during World War II, hastening the collapse of Nazi forces in northern Italy.

During the night of Feb. 18, 1945, soldiers with the division quietly ascended the icy, rigged slopes and cliffs. As the Germans slept in their covered positions, the division slowly climbed the ridge, covered by a blanket of fog and armed with the element of surprise. Once the Germans realized the division managed to scale Riva Ridge, they launched a series of counterattacks that killed 17 U.S. soldiers. However, after five days of fighting, the observation post was secured and in the Allies' control.

Maj. Gen. Scott M. Naumann, 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum commanding general, was also among the soldiers on the climb.

A Valentine's Day display in the East Wing Entrance of the White House on Feb. 13, 2023, featuring artwork from a classroom at the South Riva Ridge Child Development Center at Fort Drum. Katie Ricks/White House



10TH MOUNTAIN LIFE



Photos courtesy of the 10th Mountain Division



Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division and across the U.S. Army participated in the annual D-Series event at Fort Drum from Jan. 28 to 30. This event tested the strength and agility of different squads in the U.S. Army to build cohesion while honoring the legacy of the 10th Mountain Division ancestors.



Spc. Paul Kenny, an infantryman assigned to 11th Airborne Division, swims during the 25-meter relay race during D-Series, a multi-day winter competition at Fort Drum on Jan. 30. Soldiers participating in D-Series had their mental and physical fortitude pushed to the limits by adapting and overcoming challenges such as qualifications for multiple critical weapons systems under simulated stress, and several hands-on tests validating knowledge over essential Alpine survival skills and unit history. Image by Cpl. Alyssa Norton/U.S. Army



Pfc. Craig Vanderkoy, an infantryman assigned to 11th Airborne Division, jumps into the pool during the 25-meter relay race during D-Series, a multi-day winter competition, at Fort Drum on Jan. 30. Soldiers participating in D-Series had their mental and physical fortitude pushed to the limit by adapting and overcoming challenges such as qualifications for multiple critical weapons systems under simulated stress, and several hands-on tests validating knowledge over essential Alpine survival skills and unit history.

Image by Cpl. Alyssa Norton/U.S. Army



NY Connects your trusted place for assistance

NY Connects at Lewis County Office for the Aging is your trusted place to go for free, unbiased information and assistance. We can help you link to long term services and supports, such as home care, transportation, and meals. Our goal is to help individuals remain in their homes when possible. NY Connects works to alleviate the misconception that long term care services and supports are only delivered in institutional settings. NY Connects is a support that is available to everyone, people who are aging and individuals with disabilities of all ages and caregivers. NY Connects Specialists engage in options counseling which is an interactive, person-centered process whereby individuals are supported in making informed long-term support decisions based on their preferences, strengths, values, abilities and resources. It includes exploring

options, assisting with accessing supports/services and following-up with the individual, and it may result in the development of an action plan.

How can we help you?

- Anyone can get help with information about resources by telephone, online, or in-person.
- We can help link you to long term services and supports regardless of diagnosis, age or payor source.
- We coordinate with other agencies to guide you through eligibility processes.
- We provide seamless linkages for any necessary assessment you may need.
- We help with application and enrollment in public assistance benefits.

This service is available for everyone. Please contact Lewis County NY Connects at 315-376-5432 to speak with one of our NY Connects Specialist.

Windy Ridge Acres Greenhouse



Wintertime spells preparation for anyone in the plant selling business. Getting all the ordering in and organizing and preparing for the spring sales are all part of it. This year our preparations are not as major as they were last year, but we still have things that we hope to get finished before our opening day, the beginning of May. We are happy with our new structure and the comfortable temperatures we can maintain even in the hot sunshine of early summer.

It is always a challenge to anticipate what our customers will be looking for each year. We like to try a few different things each year to add to our line of flowers, but we continue to stock the plants that have been a mainstay for years. We offer many choices of Proven Winners Supertunias. They continue to offer new colors and plants, but none of their

Supertunias make quite the impact that the Bubblegum (pink color) does. All the Supertunias continue to blossom the entire summer without needing to deadhead the plant, so you can plant the flowerbed, keep them watered and fed, sit back and enjoy the show all summer long.

We will again be offering many hanging baskets, single potted plants, and many smaller annuals in packets. We put together large pots ready to fill the spot in your outdoor living space. We enjoy trying our hand at putting together combinations that might be just the thing you want. If you have a special pot, you want filled, we also offer the service of filling it for you with the plants you pick out. Vegetable gardening is something we enjoy and we have plants to help you fill your garden.

We are looking forward to

serving you in 2026. In a few weeks we anticipate starting to enjoy the warm sunshine within the confines of the greenhouse, working to get ready to serve you right here at our greenhouse at 9085 Ridge Road just outside of the village of Castorland. When the weather warms, we plan to keep a selection of plant on the

porch of Nolt's Country Store and Stony Creek Store just outside of Deer River along Route 26. We look forward to serving you this spring. A special Thank You to our regular customers, who come yearly and bring their friends with them. Here to serve you, from Windy Ridge Acres Greenhouse.



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What is NY Connects?

NY Connects is a free resource in Lewis County where you can get information and assistance in long term care services and supports, such as:

- In Home Health Care
- Application Assistance
- Home Delivered Meals
- Transportation
- Respite Care
- Early Intervention (Children)
- Options Counseling and Support
- And More

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PO Box 193 • 5274 Outer Stowe St., NY 13367
Phone: 315-376-5432
FAX: 315-376-5105
www.nyconnects.ny.gov



NY Connects
 Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports

LEWIS COUNTY
 (800) 342-9871 or (315) 376-5432

Lowville Appliance and Air continues to grow



Lowville Appliance and Air Conditioning is located in the former Brown's Appliance building on Shady Ave. in Lowville. Lowville Appliance and Air Conditioning is owned and operated by Bradley and Megan Moser. Bradley was a long time employee of Wm. C. Brown and Son, Lowville NY. With one year of business ownership under their belts; it's been fun to reflect on the first year in operation. Our business has expanded and it's been an exciting journey. While not without its growing pains; this past year has been a busy blur of new things to learn. We're excited to start year two and bring even more exciting things to our showroom floor!

Lowville Appliance and Air Conditioning offers the following services: appliance sales as well as installation of new appliances. We also will repair your current appliances, whether they have been bought from Lowville Appliance and Air Conditioning or not. A showroom (located in the former Brown's appliance building) will offer a look at most major brands of appliances. Our knowledgeable sales and service team will be available to answer questions, and if you don't see what you're looking for, we can order it from our vast appliance buying group. We will continue to offer Carrier branded Air Conditioning, heat pumps, and mini split units; along with installation of those units and repair

services. Customer financing is now available; stop into the showroom for more information. Our employees are Ethan Widrick and Alexis Zehr. Ethan is a professional young man who has been working with Brad for a few years now. He is quick to do any job that comes his way and is eager to learn all he can; he is working on his refrigeration license. Lexi is our office manager and is able to answer any questions that you might have. Lexi would love to have you stop in and see what we have available in the showroom. She is attending JCC in the Business Management program and is always looking for new ways to make the office run more smoothly. Bradley

splits his time between the office and the field, keeping everything efficiently. Megan handles much of the back office work and their daughters are a huge help as well, keeping the showroom and offices looking neat and clean. Our goal is to offer our community a reputable and professional business model. We're so thankful for those who have already supported us and we're looking forward to seeing more of you in the future! Please reach out to us at 315-377-4098 or 315-377-4139. You can also find us on Facebook or visit us at www.lowvilleappliance.com. We'd love to have you consider us for your next home appliance or air conditioning need.

Projects

From D1

miles of snowmobile trails in the north country region.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS-HAMILTON-HERKIMER-ONEIDA BOCES
\$316,000 for the Jefferson-Lewis-Hamilton-Herkimer-Oneida Board of Cooperative Educational Services to upgrade their Watertown and Glenfield facilities by adding state-of-the-art heavy equipment and welding simulators to support training and career development in the fields of welding, power mechanics, and advanced manufacturing. The simulators offer modular training for a variety of equipment, including excavators, wheel loaders, backhoes and dozers.

Lewis County also was one of 12 projects to be awarded a share of \$3.1 million through the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program. The program transforms brownfield sites — “neighborhoods or areas within a community negatively affected by real or perceived environmental conditions — from blighted liabilities to vibrant community assets.”

The program provides planning grants for the development of BOA plans which are submitted to the New York State Secretary of State for approval, or “designation.” Designated BOA areas receive priority for certain State funding. The BOA program also provides grants for pre-development activities in State-designated BOAs — such as environmental, housing and economic studies; infrastructure analyses; marketing strategies; Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.

■ \$186,300 for Town and Village of Lowville Smart Growth Zoning Update Project Description: The two municipalities are partnering to update their zoning laws to align with the recently completed joint comprehensive plan. The project will modernize land use regulations to reflect community goals, including downtown revitalization, climate resilience, and expanded housing choice to create a more connected, vibrant and sustainable future for Lowville.



Logs are unloaded at Farney Lumber Corp. on Brewery Road near Croghan.

Farney Lumber: leader of the local lumber industry

Farney Lumber Corporation, incorporated by Niles E. Farney in 1965, buys all species of hardwood and softwood logs from local loggers year round. In the third generation of

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retail businesses as well as bark, chips, and sawdust. Farney Lumber Corp. is located at 7194 Brewery Rd.,

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HEADLINERS

Inaugural Renaissance Faire draws crowd to Lowville



On Aug. 30 there was a horse show at the Lewis County Renaissance Faire. Photo provided by Wyatt Wagner



Totentanz Historical Fencing and Fitness provided sword fighting demonstrations as well as some information about the weapons during both days of the Lewis County Renaissance Faire. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

By Elaine M. Avallone
eavallone@lowville.com

Originally published Sept. 1
LOWVILLE — Good for a first-year event, was the re-sounding message from avid faire goers about the Lewis County Renaissance Faire held Aug. 30 and 31 at the Lewis County Fairgrounds. The event was a fundraiser for Youth of Lewis County.

"I've been to these all over the place," said Josh McCann of Watertown, dressed as a forest demon complete with animal skins and elk antler wings. "This was better than a lot of other first-year faires."

He said he enjoys the event since they allow him to dress in costume. He won the costume contest on Sunday.

"We are absolutely thrilled with how the weekend turned out," said organizer Wyatt Wagner, Youth of Lewis County executive director. "For an inaugural event, it was a re-sounding success. The support we received from the local community, as well as the wonderful community of actors and performers, was overwhelming. We were especially humbled to hear from seasoned performers that it was one of the best-run faires they had been to in a long time. Any minor hiccups were handled seamlessly by our amazing team of volunteers, and the overall feedback has been incredibly positive."

Wagner said the attendance was much greater than expected with approximately 1,300 attendees in total for the

two-day event.

"The crowd was split fairly evenly, with a slightly higher attendance on Saturday," he noted. "This number significantly exceeded our initial expectations — we had originally projected for 750 guests, so to nearly double that number is a result we are extremely proud of."

Riss Taylor, Jen Graham and Seve Chorma came from Watertown, dressed the part to attend the Renaissance Faire.

Taylor said they try to attend an event each year.

"We get to dress up and have fun with like minded people," Graham said, noting that although it was not to the level of the Sterling Renaissance Faire, it had a "fun environment."

She added that she enjoyed the sword fighting demonstration by Totentanz Historical Fencing and Fitness.

Taylor said there was a lot of the same attractions at Sterling but the Lewis County event was smaller.

"It's nice to have this close to home," she said, adding that carriage rides were a nice touch that Sterling does not have.

The Donoghue family from LaFargeville attended Sunday dressed in costume.

"We can dress up and see what it was like back then," said Declan Donaghue, 9, admitting it was fun for the day but would not want to live during Renaissance times. "There was not a lot of food then."

Dennis Donaghue said it

was nice to get his children out to "see history and learn about other times."

Kelly Donaghue, a Lewis County native, added it was good to get her children outside — away from iPads.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Donaghue said they would like to see the Lewis County event grow.

"Our main events, the live equestrian show and the sword fighting demonstrations, were undoubtedly the biggest draws and consistently gathered the largest crowds of the weekend," Wagner said.

"However, we were thrilled to see that all our events were well-attended. The audience participation contests, like the pie eating and root beer chugging, were incredibly popular and generated a lot of fun and laughter. We also heard wonderful things about the hobby horse contest, which was a clear favorite among our younger attendees."

For an extra charge, attendees could complete tasks and find clues to escape from the locked and decorated stalls in the horse barn.

"The escape rooms were a phenomenal success," Wagner said. "We initially planned for just one, but after seeing the incredible pre-sale demand, we proactively expanded to three rooms before opening day. They were one of our most popular attractions and were consistently booked all weekend. The feedback from everyone who participated was excellent."

The popularity did create significant wait times, which we recognize, and we are already planning to build additional escape rooms for next year to better accommodate the high demand and reduce wait times."

There were degrees of difficulty for the room with the easy room taking about 10 minutes to complete and the most difficult one, about 30 minutes. Volunteers were on hand to give hints if the entrapped hit a snag.

Alicia Berghorn and her group of volunteers devised the puzzles, decorated the rooms and even made their own costumes.

Vera Canova of Boonville said her family attended the Renaissance Faire to show support.

"It's awesome," she said of the event Sunday while waiting to go into the Escape Room. "It's great to have new things in the area."

She said the roaming minstrel was very entertaining.

The Forest Park Pavilion was filled with vendors including tattoo artists, jewelry makers, face painters, sellers of wooden bowls and crystals.

Some of the vendors even got into the theme by decorating their booths and wearing costumes.

"I'm here, I might as well really be part of it," said Roy Oakes of Five Oakes.

Wanting to be a scary princess Evelyn Rose, 4, of Carthage, had a skull painted on her face.

"I like it," said Evelyn's father, Tucker. "It's awesome. The weather is great."

He said he especially liked the blacksmith and sword fighting demonstrations.

Throughout the event there were demonstrations by artisans including blacksmith Steve Schleicher of North Country Forge, Boonville, roving bagpiper Kevin Dano of Mexico, the Syracuse Scottish Pipe Band director, and fortune teller Niki Beard, Croghan.

"Our contests were a huge highlight of the weekend, showcasing the incredible creativity and enthusiasm of our attendees," Wagner said. "The winner of Saturday's costume contest was a young boy (Kayden Kroser) who crafted a fantastically creative suit of armor out of duct tape."

On Sunday, the prize went to a gentleman (Josh McCann) with a stunning and elaborate costume that featured a magnificent set of elk antlers. The pie-eating contest was another crowd-pleaser that came down to a nail-biting finish, with the winner being decided by just a few bites of crust."

To solicit feedback, organizers asked faire goers to complete a survey.

"We have received a strong number of submissions to our attendee survey, and the response has been incredibly encouraging," Wagner said. "The feedback is overwhelmingly favorable, with many praising it as an amazing first-year event and, most

importantly, nearly all respondents indicating they would return next year. The survey has also provided valuable feedback for growth. The most common request is simply for 'more'—more things to see and do, and more immersive decorations. We wholeheartedly agree, and this aligns perfectly with our goals. Thanks to this year's success, we anticipate a more flexible budget and increased sponsorships, which will allow us to directly invest in that feedback and make next year's faire even bigger and better."

With the inaugural event in the books, plans are being made for next year, building on this year's success and making the experience even richer.

"We plan to expand our offerings with more shows, more interactive events and a wider selection of vendors," the organizer said. "We are also strategically reviewing the calendar and may select a new date to avoid a scheduling conflict with the state fair, which will help us secure even more top-tier talent for key events like our equestrian show."

This year's event had a profit of about \$20,000 which Wagner said will be used for insurance renewal, operating costs and hiring back the summer intern part-time to continue providing and expanding peer services to youths ages 13 to 21.



Josh McCann of Watertown won the costume contest at the inaugural Lewis County Renaissance Faire Aug. 31. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



Riss Taylor, Steve Chorma and Jen Graham of Watertown, dressed the part for the inaugural Lewis County Renaissance Faire held Aug. 31. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers



The Donaghue family from LaFargeville — in front from left, Declan, 9, and Arya, 5, with their father, Dennis — attended the Lewis County Renaissance Faire Aug. 31. Elaine M. Avallone/Johnson Newspapers

Bush Memorial Library serving the community for over 100 years

The William H. Bush Memorial Library is located on the corner of Whitaker Road and NYS Route 26 in Martinsburg. Open hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 10 a.m. until noon on Saturday.

The library was established in 1912 by Dr. M. Anstance Harris and M. Alice Whitaker to provide the citizens of the community with good reading material.

Over one hundred years

later the library continues to offer good books, as well as audio books, newspapers, magazines and movies on compact disks. Also available to patrons are public access computers, a copier and an AccuCut machine. Wi-fi capability is provided for those patrons who prefer to bring their own devices for internet connection and is now available to use from personal vehicles in the parking lot or Whitaker Road at times when the library is not open.

The library also provides

many entertaining and educational programs throughout the year.

As a member of the North Country Library System, the materials of all 66 member libraries are available to any patron. Placing an order on the system's website will bring the item to the library where it can be borrowed and returned.

A museum contains many items of interest from Martinsburg and other areas. The staff will gladly open the museum upon request.

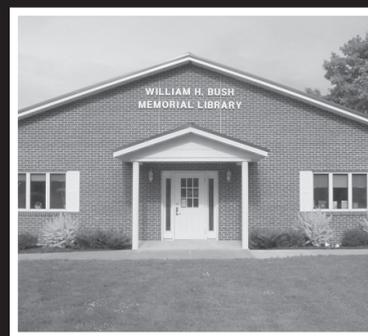
A summer reading

program provides children and adults with an opportunity to challenge themselves to reading during the busy summer school vacation. A Story hour is also available for children.

The friendly staff consists of Brandie Rogers, director and Susan Boldt, assistant librarian. David Ortlieb and Elijah Manning keep the grounds and building in pristine condition.

Everyone is welcome to take advantage of the many services at the William H. Bush Memorial Library.

William H. Bush Memorial Library
5605 Whitaker Road, Martinsburg NY 13404
315-376-7490



Library Hours:
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Tuesday & Thursday
9am - 1pm
Saturday
10am - Noon

Serving The Citizens of Martinsburg Since 1912

Arborcare Tree Service Continues Commitment to Professional, Safe Tree Care

Arborcare Tree Service continues to serve Northern New York with a strong reputation for safety, professionalism, and integrity under the leadership of local owner Herb Frost, an ISA Certified Arborist. Serving residential, commercial, and municipal clients from the St. Lawrence River region to the Adirondacks, Arborcare delivers science-based tree care tailored to the unique conditions of the North Country.

What sets Arborcare apart is its commitment to professional standards and qualified leadership.

In addition to Frost's long-standing certification, the company is proud to

announce that Crew Leader Zach Palmer has earned his ISA Certified Arborist credential, further strengthening Arborcare's on-site expertise and reinforcing its emphasis on safe, informed decision-making at every jobsite.

ISA certification ensures that Arborcare approaches each property with a professional, site-specific evaluation, delivering accurate diagnoses and customized solutions that emphasize safety, tree health, and long-term property value. This commitment to excellence is reflected in Frost's recognition as a recipient of the New York Arborist Association Distinguished Arborist Award, honoring his

leadership, professionalism, and contributions to the arboriculture profession.

Arborcare offers a full range of services including tree trimming and pruning, hazardous tree removal, cabling and support systems, storm damage response, stump grinding, site clearing, plant health care, and landscaping and lawn services. The company operates year-round, addressing the challenges posed by Northern New York's severe weather, including ice storms, heavy snow, and high winds.

Safety remains the company's top priority. Arborcare is fully insured, utilizes modern professional equipment, and emphasizes low-impact

techniques to protect surrounding property.

Consultations with a certified arborist are available to help homeowners and property managers protect their assets, reduce risk, and enhance long-term property value.

As part of its continued growth, Arborcare recently launched a new website, making it easier for customers to request estimates, learn about services, and explore career opportunities. The site also highlights AcreCare Lawn Services, Arborcare's expanding lawn-care division, providing comprehensive outdoor property care under one trusted local brand.



With spring approaching, Arborcare encourages property owners to proactively assess their trees and address potential risks early. To schedule a free estimate or learn more, visit www.arborcarenny.com or call 315-608-1903.

Journey Physical Therapy personalizes your experience

Come see Journey Physical Therapy out on the Number Four Road in Lowville. Journey offers one on one therapy sessions to make your experience personalized to you.

This past year Journey has participated in many local events within Lewis County including the fair parade in July and The Cream Cheese Festival in September. We also joined Lowville Academy, and Beaver River Central School in their Career Days for middle and high school students. We can't wait to see what this year brings for us and the community!

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VEHICLES PICTURED FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY. COLOR TRIM, OPTIONS, AND MSRP MAY DIFFER FROM VEHICLE SHOWING. PAYMENTS BASED ON APPROVED CREDIT. PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES AND DMV FEES. MUST FINANCE THROUGH QUALIFIED LENDER. MUST QUALIFY FOR (FIRST RESPONDER, MILITARY) DISCOUNT. INCLUDES NYS TAX REBATE. PRIOR SALES EXCLUDED. IN STOCK VEHICLES ONLY. MUST TAKE RETAIL DELIVERY BY 03/02/2026.

BOB JOHNSON
AUTO GROUP



18712 US - Rt 11
Watertown, NY 13601
315-788-7400

What Started as a Dream

What started as a dream in high school has become a reality beyond anything we could have imagined.

As juniors, we talked about building something of our own — something rooted in hard work, faith, family, and community. We didn't know exactly what it would look like, but we knew we wanted to serve people and create opportunity close to home.

That dream began humbly as a mobile service. From there, it grew into a small custom shop. In 2012, we took a leap of faith and became a USDA-inspected facility — opening the door to larger production, higher standards, and greater opportunity.

And we haven't stopped growing.

A Major Expansion in 2025

In 2025, we completed a major expansion of our USDA processing facility. The new plant features:

- A large, modern processing room

- State-of-the-art equipment for efficiency and top-quality USDA packaging

- Increased production capacity

- Full-time smokehouse operations

Our smokehouses are running constantly to meet the supply and demand of our in-house cured and smoked specialties — hams, bacons, and signature smoked products. In fact, demand is growing so quickly, we may need to add another smokehouse soon.

We are proud to produce ready-to-eat products with consistency, quality, and care — right here in the North Country.

A Retail Dream Realized
In August 2025, another dream became reality — opening our very own retail store.

Our store was built with one goal in mind:

Make locally sourced food convenient and affordable.

Inside you'll find:
Fresh, locally sourced beef, pork, chicken, and seafood

- Ready-to-eat products
- In-house smoked meats
- Cheeses and dairy
- Beverage cooler
- Produce and fruit cooler
- Farm-fresh eggs
- Local baked goods
- Maple products
- Local cheeses and honey

- Handmade crafts
- Tallow balm
- Merchandise and pens
- Products from cottage bakers, farmers, and artisans

It truly is the best the North Country has to offer — all in one stop.

Serving Others Is the Heart of It All

Beyond growth and expansion, what brings us the most joy is serving others. Helping neighboring farms, bakers, and artisans grow their businesses is something we are deeply passionate about. When local businesses succeed, our whole community thrives.

That was the heart of the dream in high school — and it remains the heart today.

More Than a Store
Red Barn Meats Inc proudly offers:

- USDA inspection services
- Nationwide shipping
- Local deliveries
- Wholesale options for schools, restaurants, and more

We are grateful for every customer who has supported us along the way.

Visit Us
Red Barn Meats Inc
9095 Briot Rd
Croghan, NY 13327
315-346-1254

Retail Store Hours:
Monday – Wednesday: 9 AM – 5 PM
Thursday – Friday: 9 AM – 6 PM

Saturday: 9 AM – 2 PM
Sunday: Closed
Follow us and stay connected:

Facebook: Red Barn Meats Inc

Instagram: @redbarnmeatsinc2024

Website: shop.redbarnmeatsinc.com

From a high school dream to a thriving USDA facility and retail store — we are just getting started.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

The “One Big Beautiful Bill” is Bringing The Most Changes to Your Taxes In Recent Years... How Will it Impact You?



Every year there have been numerous changes to the tax codes and regulations. The recently passed “One Big Beautiful Act” (OBBA, or H.R. 1) makes the greatest number of major changes to the U.S. tax code in many years. These new provisions will affect your taxes, depending on your income source, age, location, or family situation. Quite frankly there are so many changes it is almost impossible for the average person to keep track of... and if you miss some it can literally cost you money! Staying on top of these changes really does require the assistance of tax professionals, such as M.R. Gaebel, to navigate through these complex regulations.

Here are some of the key changes in the new statutes:

- Lower tax brackets made permanent – prevents 2026 rate increases.
- Higher Child Tax Credit – increases from \$2,000 to \$2,200 per child, indexed for inflation.
- Standard deduction remains high – continues simplified filing for most taxpayers.

- New Tip Income Deduction – allows deduction of up to \$25,000 in reported tips.
- Overtime Deduction – certain overtime wages can be deducted from taxable income.
- Extra Senior Deduction – additional \$6,000 deduction for taxpayers age 65 and older.
- SALT Cap Raised – raises state and local tax deduction limit from \$10,000 to \$40,000.
- Car Loan Interest Deduction – permits limited deduction for interest on loans for U.S.-assembled vehicles.
- 100% Bonus Depreciation Made Permanent – full expensing for qualified business property.

- Pass-Through Deduction Extended – continues the 20% deduction for qualifying small business income.
- Reduced Green Energy Credits – scales back credits for solar, wind, and electric vehicles.
- Enhanced Deduction for Senior Citizens

Gary Rowe, CPA/Owner, M.R. Gaebel added, “This Bill changes the tax rules more than any other years in recent memory.” The specifics of all the changes are spelled out in an easy-to-read format on our website. I encourage everyone to review the many changes and feel free to call us if they

have questions.”

M.R. Gaebel sets the standard of tax and accounting services for businesses and residents of Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties. They specialize in offering their clients personalized, professional, quality service together with CPA expertise, knowledge, and experience... all at affordable rates. Appointments are available in Watertown and Carthage. To schedule an appointment for individual or business tax services, or for more information, please call 315-493-1862, or visit them at their website, www.mrgaebel.com.



FROM FIELD TO FREEZER

EST. 2012

BEEF • PORK • CHICKEN • LOCALLY SOURCED PRODUCTS

Red Barn Meats Inc. is rooted locally. When we say “Shop Local,” we mean it, right down to the steaks and sausages in your cart. Our shelves are proudly stocked with locally raised beef and pork, thanks to the incredible farmers we work with. And guess what? We're looking for more. We want every cut, every bite, and every product to come straight from hardworking local producers. That's the goal: 100% local, 100% proud.

Jordan & Rachel Brandt
Owners

Custom & USDA Meat Processing

DELIVERY | NATIONWIDE SHIPPING

“Our Core Values: Learn by Doing | Lead by Example | Excel as a Team
Thank you to every customer and employee who has joined our journey. Stop by, say hello, and meet the owners. This is more than meat It's community, passion, and a local legacy in the making!”

9095 Briot Road, Croghan, NY 13327
Phone: (315) 346-1254

WWW.REDBARNMEATSINC.COM



The One Big Beautiful Bill has brought more changes to tax laws than we've seen in years.



TAX & ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONALS

Missing Just One Change Could Cost You!

Appointments available in Carthage and Watertown.

www.mrgaebel.com

HEADLINERS

Ribbon cutting held at Carthage Physical Therapy



Members of the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce, the family of Brian and Jess Dunn and the West Carthage mayor Robert Peluso, gathered at Carthage Physical Therapy, 17 North Broad St., West Carthage to officially open the business. According to its Facebook page, Carthage Physical Therapy provides personalized, one-on-one rehabilitation services to help patients recover, move better and live pain-free. The office specializes in orthopedic rehab, sports injuries, post-surgical recovery, and pain management. Directed by owner Brian Dunn, physical therapist and doctor of physical therapy, the clinic combines expert care with a welcoming atmosphere focused on individual goals. Photo provided by CACC

Backwoods BowWorks for all your archery needs

Backwoods BowWorks is a full-service archery pro shop specializing in Bear, Elite, and PSE bows, while proudly servicing all brands of compound bows regardless of where they were purchased. We focus on providing expert tuning, repairs, and personalized setup to ensure every customer gets the best performance possible from their equipment. Backwoods BowWorks carries a wide range of trusted accessories and gear,

including UltraView, CBE, Scott, Trophy Ridge, REK Broadheads, GAS and ThreadZ strings, Gold Tip and Altra arrows, Bulldog targets, and more. In addition to compound bows, we also sell and service crossbows, making our shop a one-stop destination for archers of all experience levels. Our commitment to quality service, trusted brands, and customer satisfaction sets us apart in the local archery community



HEADLINERS

Red Barn celebrates expansion

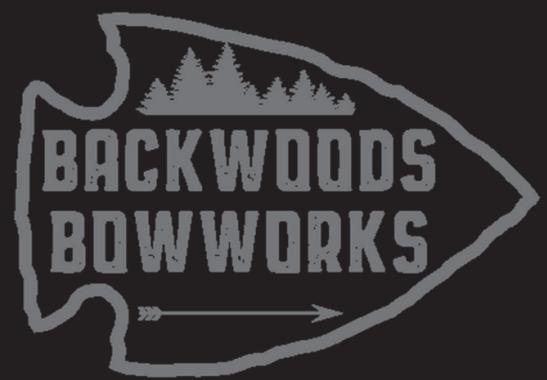


To celebrate the completion of its expansion, the community was invited to a ribbon cutting and open house Aug. 16 at Red Barn Meats, 9095 Briot Road, Croghan, owned by Jordan and Rachel Brandt. The event also included tastings and tours, a local vendor fair and a farmer meet-and-greet. Photo provided by Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce

Omnia revitalizing



Omnia Advanced Materials has revitalized the former Beaverite building in Beaver Falls with support from Naturally Lewis' Vacant property Revitalization Fund. Photo provided by Naturally Lewis



Carson Kuhl

6813 Tillman Rd., Lowville, NY 13367
backwoodsbowworks@gmail.com

315-418-5873

10TH MOUNTAIN LIFE

SPONSORED BY



www.advocatedrum.com

Welcome to 10th Mountain Life, where you'll find soldier shoutouts, photos of Fort Drum events, memories from post and more.

To recognize your favorite soldier or share photos, email news@wdt.net with subject "10th Mountain Life"

From right: Third graders John Carr, Scott Hyde and Joseph Trombley watch the complicated gauges and controls of an Army UH-1 "Huey" helicopter from Fort Drum that landed on the fields of General Brown Central School for a brief visit one morning in September 1984. From the Watertown Daily Times Archive



HISTORIC DRUM



Above and below: Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team conduct rail load operations on Jan. 24, 2019, at the Fort Drum rail yard to prepare for deployment to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Photos by Sgt. Keegan Costello/U.S. Army

SOLDIER OF THE MONTH

Sgt. Rocio Ceja is our 10th Mountain Division's soldier of the month. She was chosen for her efforts on ARSTRUC and her exceptional performance at the Basic Leader Course (BLC). Her subject matter expertise and personal drive led to hundreds of processed HR actions critical to DIVARTY's ARSTRUC transition. In addition, she graduated BLC on the Commandant's List and received the class Superior Writing Award.

NAME: Rocio Ceja
AGE: 26
RANK: Sergeant
HOMETOWN: Coachella, California
YEARS IN SERVICE: 2

WHAT MAKES FORT DRUM HOME?

Fort Drum is home because of the people and the community. I have been fortunate enough to have met motivated Soldiers that inspire me to be the best I can. The local community is also very supportive of Fort Drum. Growing up in the desert, I am out of my element here in Drum. But when I get invitations to go snowboarding or watch hockey games it's not so cold when I'm with friends.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR JOB?

As a 42A, my job is characterized by change. I do my best to keep my Battalion informed on the best course of action for the types of requests/processing they are most likely to submit for so we "get it right" the first time. We have demanding training cycles, and I understand the time other Soldiers take out of their day to visit the S1. My role in support is to prevent as many hiccups as possible.

Soldier of the Month is a collaboration with the Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs Office.

ON THIS DAY



OUT AND ABOUT

■ The 10th Mountain Division helped the Buffalo Bills and their fans say goodbye to Highmark Stadium on Jan. 4. The flyover involved crews for two Blackhawk helicopters, one Chinook and one Apache helicopter. The Buffalo Bills extended the flyover opportunity to the 10th Mountain Division as part of its celebration of the final game to occur at Highmark Stadium. The Bills won their final game at the stadium — 35 to 8 over the New York Jets. The Bills played the first game at the Orchard Park site on Aug. 17, 1973, in what was then called Rich Stadium. This year marked the final season at what is now called Highmark Stadium.

■ The New York State Assembly recently honored the 10th Light Support Battalion, Challenger Company, at Fort Drum with a citation recognizing the unit's courage, sacrifice, and performance during deployment and their lasting impact at home. The citation was presented by Assemblyman Scott A. Gray. **Read more about the honor next week.**



Sgt. Rocio Ceja
 Photo courtesy of the 10th Mountain Division

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Marcia Brooks • 315-727-0751



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Melissa Mooney • 315-777-3163



Courtney Dibble • 315-408-8177



Kerrie Baker • 315-486-4874



BRENDA MALONE
Licensed Real Estate Broker/Owner

HOMES REALTY

of Northern New York

5411 Shady Ave.,

Lowville, NY 13367

Cell: 315-408-1008



www.homesrealtynny.com

Homes Realty of Northern New York would like to take this opportunity to thank our surrounding communities for your love and support. For those who put their trust in us to sell or purchase a property our gratitude is beyond words. For those who have encouraged us along the way, stopped in to say hello, and have spoken kind words about us, that too has not gone unnoticed.

With a team of 17 realtors, we are equipped to help you with any real estate needs. With years of experience, we are confident in what we do. We believe communication, professionalism, honesty, and listening, is the recipe for a successful transaction. With gratitude in 2025 we had 164 sides in sales. We are a small town company with BIG ideas, and dreams. Repeat business is one of the best compliments you can give us. We also love working with new clients and building new relationships.

Homes Realty is current in technology that gives your listing the best exposure. If you are considering selling or buying our office number is 315-377-4147, or stop in our office at 5411 Shady Ave Lowville, NY 13367 Monday-Friday from 9-5. Our phones are always forwarded to a professional realtor on week ends and evenings. Visit our website at <http://www.homesrealtynny.com> or visit us on facebook at Homes Realty of Northern New York.



7746 NUMBER FOUR RD., LOWVILLE, NY 13367
\$229,000

Welcome to this cozy 2 bedroom log home with cathedral ceilings and multiple sliding doors to the deck from both the living room and kitchen with the views of the surrounding woods. Enjoy the large open space of the living/dining and kitchen area, making get together so easy. The one stall garage/workspace is walled off from the full basement which has lots of potential for upgrading! Never worry about power outages with your stand alone generator and lastly but not least the wooded back yard with Crystal Creek trickling through your 3.2 acre lot makes for much beauty to sit and surround yourself with. MLS#S1651255 Presented by **Kerrie Baker 315-486-4874 with Homes Realty of Northern New York**



5341 WATERS TERRACE, LOWVILLE, NY 13367
\$279,900

Location is always the key and this beautiful Victorian home holds loads of charm on a beautiful village street with walking distance to the school and shops. The wrap around porch with new composite decking and rails, is the perfect place to start and end your day with the view of the surrounding neighborhood. Inside the home you will find original wood work, pocket doors, hard wood floors, and an inviting foyer that showcases the open staircase. The efficient kitchen is wide open to the formal dining room, perfect for entertaining. There are double living rooms that can be closed off with doors or left wide open for an open concept. A full bathroom houses the laundry and there is an additional small room that would be perfect for an office space. The stain glass window as you go up the stairs is a charming feature of this home. On the second floor you will find 4 bedrooms and a full bathroom. There is a back stairway that leads to the back bedrooms. Natural gas furnace was installed less than 10 years ago and the windows have been replaced. All you need to do is unpack and you can start enjoying village living in this move in ready home. MLS#S1630022 Presented by **Stephen Malone 315-377-4147 with Homes Realty of Northern New York**



7701 WEST STATE ST., LOWVILLE, NY 13367
\$185,900

For the love of old houses. Why people move to Lowville, to create, design and preserve. This village home has this potential to become the next on the list. So come with a vision to this 3 Bed, 2 1/2 bath home conveniently located within walking distance to the hospital, school and downtown Lowville. All the bigger ticket items have been done here within the last four years, 2021: new roof, 2022: New paint, furnace and Hot Water heater, 2024 Washer/Dryer. All original moldings to work with and most all of floors still have the original wood flooring, some even wide plank. There are three points of entry, including the back entrance from driveway into the mudroom hallway, closet and the Laundry room with half bath. Next up could be your brightest room in the house, a Multi use area. Sun Room/ Reading / office or an extra sleeping room if needed. Full country kitchen with exit out to an enclosed and open porch area, formal dining room with exit to front porch, lastly the oversized Living area completing the downstairs space. Upstairs off of the hallway there are 3 good sized bedrooms all with walk-in closets. Then there is the yard, with just over half an acre behind you! Get your creative mind thinking and make this into another one of those gorgeous Lowville homes. MLS# S1649883 Presented by **Marcia L Brooks 315-727-0751 with Homes Realty of Northern New York**