

BNNY Business

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Daily updates: NNY360.com **Oct. 2026**

■ **Micron project a boon for union jobs.**

PAGE 3

■ **National Grid earns emergency response awards.**

PAGE 7

■ **Eagle Beverage in Watertown has a new owner.**

PAGE 9

■ **Flip Factory opens new Malone facility.**

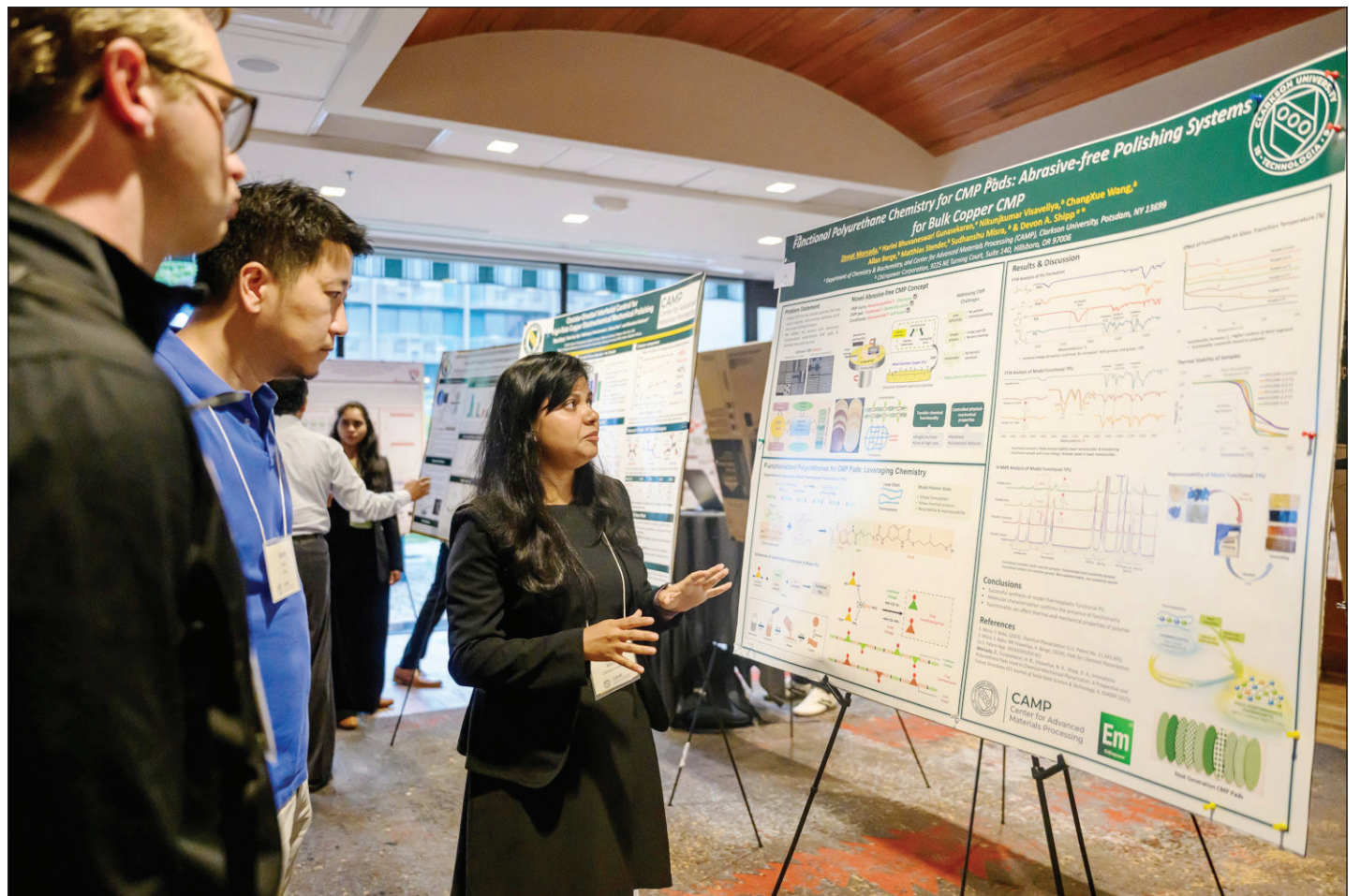
PAGE 12

■ **Seacomm donates \$110k for Malone pool.**

PAGE 15

Learn more inside

Clarkson helps tackle next-gen chip challenges



The International Symposium on Chemical-Mechanical Planarization (CMP) was hosted by Clarkson University's Center for Advanced Materials Processing (CAMP). Clarkson University photo

POTSDAM — As computer chips become smaller, more powerful and more complex, the scientists and engineers responsible for manufactur-

ing them face an increasingly difficult challenge: developing processes precise enough to keep pace.

The experts working at the

forefront of that challenge gathered in Lake Placid, Aug. 2-5, for the International Symposium on Chemical-Mechanical Planarization (CMP), hosted by Clarkson University's Center for Advanced Materials Processing (CAMP).

The symposium brought together researchers and representatives from major semiconductor manufacturers, suppliers and universities around the world to exchange

ideas about CMP, a critical process used to polish and clean the layers of material that make up computer chips.

For Jason Keleher '98, '04, who has spent much of his career working in CMP, Clarkson has created a gathering unlike any other in the field.

"This conference is the best conference for what we do," Keleher said. "I think it really is

See **CHIP T5**



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Micron project a boon for union construction workers

FOR TRADESPEOPLE IN NNY, PROXIMITY AND DEMAND WILL PAY DIVIDENDS

By Chris Brock

cbrock@wdt.net

CLAY — In July, concrete began to be poured for the largest semiconductor factory in the country, with the number of workers now there a drop in the bucket as to what is planned for the site, located in a suburb about 10 minutes north of Syracuse and about an hour south of Watertown.

Micron Technology's massive \$100 billion semiconductor manufacturing complex will consist of four planned fabrication plants designed to produce memory chips. Groundbreaking was in January. It is projected to create about 9,000 direct jobs and tens of thousands of indirect regional jobs over its lifespan as it meets the growing demands of AI systems and devices powering the modern economy.

"It's a monumental project," said Matthew Nesbitt, Business Manager of Iron Workers Local 60, a member and affiliate of Regional Building and Construction Trades Councils in Central and Northern New York. "The political rhetoric around it talks about the project being the largest in the history of New York State. That's for real. For the buildings and trades council and for the size of this project, we haven't built anything of this mag-



In early July, Micron celebrated the first concrete pour milestone at its Clay site, which occurred more than one quarter ahead of the original plan and marked the transition from site preparation to vertical construction. Micron plans to invest up to \$3 billion to develop the domestic semiconductor supply chain ecosystem in support of its U.S. manufacturing footprint. Micron

nitude before."

The project will be big, in scope -- from its 1,400-acre planned footprint to the related ancillary jobs on the horizon -- but also the changes it will bring to those who build it, including labor union workers. If peace of mind could be built for those and other workers, the task is well underway.

Traditionally, union employ-

ees such as iron workers, steamfitters, pipefitters and welders often travel miles from their homes, necessitating overnight stays for their work. Also, because of the nature of the construction industry, there can be periods of unemployment.

"There are going to be apprentices, no matter which trade they start in, who are going to start at the Micron project and probably

retire from it," Nesbitt said.

He said some workers could be on the site for up to 40 years.

"It's not just the building of this project," Nesbitt said. "Micron maintains a skilled- trades workforce. The machinery they put in needs to be changed out from time to time. They'll keep a workforce there that will work for them doing that."

'DEEP BENCH OF SKILLED TRADES'

Carson Henry, Senior Director of U.S. Expansion for Micron, said the company chose Central New York for its new plant largely because of the strength of the regional workforce and the "deep bench of skilled trades talent across Upstate, including the north country."

"Building a project of this scale is a decades-long undertaking, which means it can offer exactly what many tradespeople are looking for: steady, high-quality, years-long work close to home, without the need to travel far from their families and communities," Henry said.

Henry noted that for workers in the north country, the Clay campus is right down the I-81 corridor.

"We fully expect people from that region to be part of building this facility," he said. "Constructing a leading-edge semiconductor fab takes virtually every building trade, from electricians and ironworkers to pipefitters, carpenters, operating engineers, laborers and sheet metal workers, along with apprentices, specialty contractors and suppliers from across New York. We have been working with the building trades and workforce partners

See **JOBST13**



Mullen Gordon works on a project at IBEW's Local 910 training center on Water Street in Watertown. Local 910 photo



Luke Frederick of IBEW Local 910 works on a solar farm project. Local 910 photo



Tyler Lavine, a Copenhagen Central student, works on a carpentry project at the Howard G. Sackett Technical Center in Glenfield. Photo courtesy of Jefferson-Lewis BOCES

Clarkson construction engineering students earn more than \$41,000 in national, state scholarships



Backus MS CEM photos

Clarkson University

Five Clarkson University students have earned more than \$41,000 in competitive national and state scholarships recognizing academic excellence, leadership and commitment to careers in construction engineering and civil engineering.

"It's exciting to see our students earn tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships beyond traditional financial aid each year," said Erik Backus, Howard E. Lechler Director of Construction Engineering Management. "These awards reflect the outstanding work of our students and the strength of the industry partnerships that support Clarkson's construction engineering program."

Leading this year's honors, Michele LaTour '28 of Redfield received a \$10,000 scholarship from the National Academy of Construction, one of only six awarded nationwide in 2026. The scholarship recognizes academic achievement, leadership and campus involvement. LaTour also has been invited to the National Academy of Construction Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee.

Clarkson students Kaitlinn Campana '27 of Yorktown Heights and Johnathan Klick '28 of Manlius each earned \$12,500 scholarships from The Moles, one of the construction industry's most prestigious organizations. The awards support students pursuing careers in heavy civil construction and place recipients among a select group of future industry lead-

ers. Clarkson is among fewer than 30 universities invited to participate in The Moles Scholarship Program, reflecting the university's national reputation in construction education.

"I am very grateful to receive this scholarship from The Moles," Klick said. "It is an honor to be recognized by an organization with such a strong connection to the construction industry. The scholarship will allow me to focus on my classes, professional development and involvement in activities like Steel Bridge and the CEM SPEED team."

The Associated General Contractors of New York State also recognized two Clarkson students. David Fields '27 of Watervliet and Emily Milleville '27 of Lockport each received \$3,000 scholarships as part of the organization's 100th anniversary scholarship program, which honors students demonstrating academic excellence and strong potential in the construction industry.

Clarkson's Construction Engineering Management program, housed in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, combines rigorous academics with extensive industry engagement. Over the past decade, the program has maintained a 100% job placement rate within three months of graduation, with graduates earning an average starting salary of more than \$76,000.

Learn more about Clarkson's Construction Engineering Management program at clarkson.edu/cem.

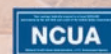
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Workforce Connections mixer Oct. 7 at Clarkson University

POTSDAM — A University and business resource mixer titled "Workforce Connections: Beyond Internships — Building Stronger Connections Between Students & Our Community" will be held Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026, at the Schuler Educational Resource Center at Clarkson University, 8 Clarkson Ave., Potsdam.

The event will run from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., with an optional tour of Clarkson's Maker Space from 4 to 4:30 p.m. Registration is open through Oct. 2, 2026.

Organizers said a panel of local businesses and colleges will discuss ways to strengthen St. Lawrence County through collaboration. Student leaders from Clarkson University, St. Lawrence University, SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam will share perspectives on student life, leadership and community engagement and highlight organizations and activities through which local businesses can connect with students beyond traditional hiring. The program will conclude with a networking mixer for business lead-

ers, students, educators and community partners.

Refreshments will be served and a cash bar will be available.

The event is hosted by the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley, the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce and the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce. Questions may be directed to Karen Kus, executive director of the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley (ACSLV), at acslv@potsdam.edu.

St. Lawrence Leadership Institute still accepting applications

The St. Lawrence Leadership Institute is accepting applications for its 2026-27 program on a rolling basis until the class is full, organizers said.

The initial application deadline was Aug. 31. Enrollment is capped at 25 participants.

Classes typically will meet in person from 4 to 7:45 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month from October through May, with graduation in June. The nine-month program costs \$750, including course materials and meals. Scholarships are available, and employers often sponsor participants.

The program focuses on leadership skills, awareness of community issues and professional networking. Leadership topics include communication, team building, conflict resolution, negotiation and ethics. Participants also explore issues affecting St. Lawrence County, including agriculture, government, business, health care, education and the environment.

With support from Clarkson University, the institute will offer credit-bearing microcredentials to students who complete the prescribed program, organizers said.

The institute has more than 200 alumni since 1993. Prospective participants can learn more and apply through the St. Lawrence Leadership Institute's webpage.

Chip

From T1

the premier conference in the industry."

Keleher worked in industry at Komag Inc. and Cabot Microelectronics and is now chair of chemistry at Lewis University. He said CAMP has built an environment where researchers can challenge conventional approaches while bringing students directly into the innovation process.

"CAMP has always been at the forefront of making what we want to do differently a reality," Keleher said. "But moreover I think they are doing it with students and the students are getting actively involved in this space."

That combination of academic research and industry expertise is increasingly important as semiconductor manufacturers contend with rapidly changing technologies.

Each new material or change in chip architecture can create new challenges for CMP. At the same time, the industry is looking for ways to manufacture both advanced and more traditional chips more efficiently, affordably and sustainably.

The value of Clarkson's symposium is not only in the research being presented, but also in bringing different parts of the semiconductor industry into the same room.

Elizabeth Di Geronimo, a senior research engineer in material science with Saint-Gobain Research North America, said those interactions can help bridge gaps that exist between companies through-

out the semiconductor supply chain.

"We have this gap between us and the foundries. Being here allows us to have a connection between myself, the supplier and the foundry, who is the final consumer," Di Geronimo said. "It is in this space where you manage to have all these interactions at once and the discussions are valuable."

Those conversations help researchers and suppliers better understand the problems manufacturers are facing and identify what products and technologies may be needed next.

Clarkson's role in facilitating those discussions is rooted in the University's expertise in surface science, engineering, chemistry and colloid science. CAMP Director Devon Shipp said Clarkson researchers became involved in CMP because they had the fundamental scientific expertise needed to understand a complicated manufacturing process.

"Clarkson was approached by IBM not long after they first developed the CMP process as they wanted to know more about the underlying science and engineering of CMP. We had several faculty who jumped right in because they had this fundamental technical background that could help out the CMP industry," Shipp said. "That initial core group of faculty grew quickly as other faculty at Clarkson with complimentary expertise were brought in. This helped immensely since the processes in CMP are grounded in so many disciplines, such as chemistry and physics, as well as engineering fields such as mechanical and chemical en-

gineering."

Today, the challenges facing that community continue to evolve.

"What's happening in the semiconductor industry is that the types of computer chips that are needed to power the world are getting more complicated," Shipp said.

Advanced chips used for artificial intelligence and high-performance computing require increasingly complicated architectures and materials. Meanwhile, simpler chips remain essential to countless everyday technologies and must be manufactured more efficiently and at lower cost.

Sustainability has also become a major focus. CMP can require significant amounts of water, while researchers are also exploring alternatives to chemicals traditionally used in the process. Artificial intelligence could help researchers accelerate the development and optimization of new CMP processes.

But the industry also needs people.

"This conference really is where we develop the next generation minds that need to be in this field," Keleher said.

Clarkson materials science and engineering Ph.D. student Murali Ramu experienced that connection firsthand. Ramu participated in the symposium for the fourth time this year, presenting his research directly to industry professionals and other experts.

"It was a really nice experience presenting in front of industry professionals and other experts," Ramu said.

The experience has also given him a clearer view of current technologies and poten-

tial career paths.

"Being here several times gives us more of an idea of the current technologies and builds our confidence," Ramu said.

Clarkson alumni already working in the industry also return to Lake Placid. Yongneng Wu, a senior staff engineer at Applied Materials who came to Clarkson in 2016 to study chemistry, sees the symposium as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between his employer and the University.

"I really want to bridge Applied Materials and Clarkson. I want to give so much back to Clarkson," Wu said.

For Shipp, those connections are particularly important as semiconductor companies seek more engineers and scientists. Clarkson has educated students in the field for decades, and many now hold influential positions throughout the industry.

The Lake Placid symposium, now in its 28th year, continues that cycle by putting students alongside the people developing the technologies they may soon help advance.

Ramu said that interaction between academia and industry is essential.

"Academia alone, and industry alone, cannot build a technology with this much advancement," Ramu said. "They need collaboration so they can bring a new idea from the industry, give it to academia, and academia can help to research and resolve their problem. Both fields benefit from each other."

PROFESSIONAL CONNECTION

is featured each Wednesday, Saturday as well as in NNY Business. This is found at your local Chamber of Commerce and in the third Thursday of each month's Watertown Daily Times.

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National Grid's New York electric team earns three EEI Emergency Response Awards



Underground line mechanics from National Grid in Brooklyn assisting Con Edison as they recover from a multi-day outage in early March. Contributed.

COMPANY CITED FOR RECOVERY AND ASSISTANCE EFFORTS

National Grid New York has received two Edison Electric Institute Emergency Response awards, recognizing the company's exceptional response for storm recovery and assistance efforts in 2026.

National Grid's upstate New York division received a Recovery award for its response to events in 2026:

A Jan. 7 underground cable outage in Buffalo affected power to thousands of customers in downtown Buffalo.

Winter Storm Iona in March caused multiday impacts that resulted in more than 150,000 outages across upstate New York.

A June 18 windstorm affected service for tens of

thousands of customers in upstate New York and spun multiple tornadoes across the region.

National Grid also earned an Assistance award for its work to help Con Edison recover from a winter storm in late February and early March that affected much of New York City. The company sent underground electric teams and specialized equipment to assist crews with critical repairs across the five boroughs.

"These awards reflect the dedication, expertise and preparedness of our teams across the company," said Sally Librera, interim U.S. president, National Grid. "Whether responding to major storms in Upstate New York or Massachusetts, or



supporting fellow utilities and the significant impact of mination of their workforce, **Crews repair a line in Brockport following Winter Storm Iona. Contributed**

during times of need, our employees are committed to safely restoring power and serving customers when it matters most. We are proud to see their hard work and professionalism recognized by EEI."

"Our workforce knows that prolonged outages from storms are more than an inconvenience, they impact families and businesses, and for many, can be life-threatening," said Matt Barnett, interim president of National Grid New York. "I'm proud of how our employees overcome difficult conditions to safely and quickly restore our customers when storms strike Upstate New York, and for lending their expertise to our fellow utilities when they need our assistance. On behalf of all of us at National Grid, I want to thank our colleagues for their boundless dedication to their work

their efforts."

Presented to EEI member companies twice a year, the Emergency Response Awards recognize the recovery and assistance efforts of electric companies following service disruptions caused by extreme weather or other natural events. Winners were selected by a panel of judges through a nomination process. The awards were presented during EEI's September Board of Directors and Chief Executives Meeting.

"When severe weather strikes, our member companies mobilize around the clock to restore power safely and as quickly as possible for the customers they serve," said Drew Maloney, president and CEO of EEI. "EEI is proud to recognize National Grid with Emergency Recovery Awards for its outstanding response. This honor reflects the skill and deter-

who prepare year-round—practicing, planning, and investing in resilience—so they're ready to face the toughest conditions and get the lights back on for communities who depend on them."

The Edison Electric Institute, or EEI, is the association that represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies. Its members provide electricity for nearly 250 million Americans and operate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The electric power industry supports more than 7 million jobs in communities across the United States. In addition to U.S. members, EEI has more than 70 international electric companies, with operations in more than 90 countries, as international members, and hundreds of industry suppliers and related organizations as associate members.

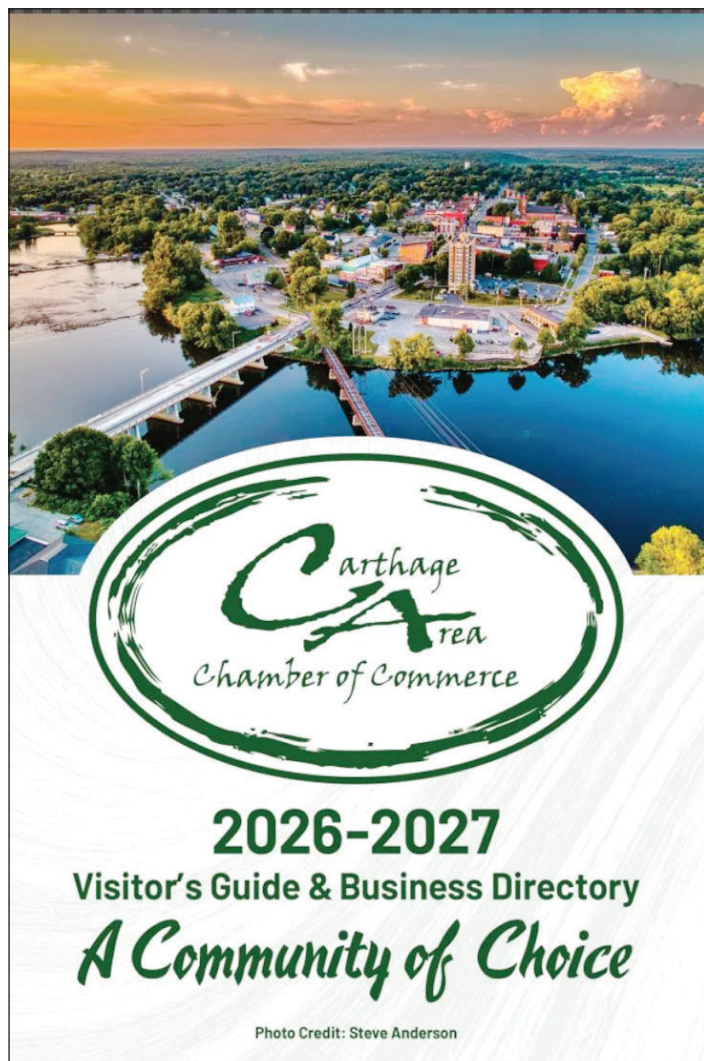
Carthage chamber seeks advertisers for 2027-28 guide

CARTHAGE — The Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce is seeking advertisers for its 2027-28 Visitor's Guide & Business Directory, scheduled for publication in spring 2027.

The chamber has partnered with E&M Consulting Inc. to manage advertising sales, layout and design. E&M representatives plan to contact

chamber members about advertising opportunities in the coming weeks.

Businesses interested in advertising can call E&M at 800-572-0011, ext. 0104, or email advertising@eandmsales.com. The chamber can be reached at 315-493-3590 or carthagenychamber@gmail.com.



The cover of the 2027-2028 Carthage Area Chamber visitor guide.

NNY Business

Clarkson's Almeida selected for Inaugural Bioconjugate Chemistry Early Career Board

POTSDAM — Clarkson University Assistant Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Bethany Almeida has been selected to serve on the inaugural Early Career Board of Bioconjugate Chemistry, a peer-reviewed journal published by the American Chemical Society.

Almeida is one of 10 early-career researchers from institutions around the world selected for the new board. Members represent a range of disciplines contributing to advances in bioconjugate chemistry, a field that brings together chemistry and biology to develop new approaches with applications in medicine, biotechnology and other areas.

The Early Career Board will work alongside *Bioconjugate Chemistry* Editor-in-Chief Theresa Reineke and the journal's editorial board. Members will help foster engagement within the scientific community while bringing the perspectives of emerging researchers to the journal.



Bethany Almeida

Almeida's research at Clarkson focuses on designing and fabricating advanced functional biomaterials to control stem cell behavior. Her work combines concepts from organic chemistry, materials science and stem cell biology to investigate fundamental scientific questions and develop biomaterial-based approaches with potential clinical applications.

As part of the American

Chemical Society's announcement of the board, Almeida highlighted bioorthogonal click chemistry as an emerging area she is particularly excited about. The approach allows researchers to selectively connect chemical components to biomolecules under conditions compatible with biological systems. Almeida noted its potential applications in areas including targeted therapeutics, biomolecular imaging, drug delivery and tissue engineering.

Almeida earned her Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from Brown University and a bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering and professional writing from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Before joining Clarkson, she was an American Society for Engineering Education postdoctoral fellow at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory's Center for Bio/Molecular Science and Engineering.

Bioconjugate Chemistry is part of the American Chemical Society's portfolio of scientific journals.

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Eagle Beverage Company sold to Central New York company

By Craig Fox
cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — The Eagle Beverage Company has been sold to a company that operates a large alcohol beverage distribution center in Liverpool.

T.J. Sheehan, a leading regional alcohol distribution company, purchased the Eagle Beverage Company and its 6,300-square-foot docking and distribution center in the Thousand Islands International Agriculture and Business Park on Route 3 in the town of Watertown. The deal also includes acquiring Eagle's main distribution center in Oswego.

The terms of the sale were not disclosed. The deal was finalized on Aug. 26.

T.J. Sheehan intends to continue operating the two former Eagle Beverage distribution centers in Watertown and Oswego and retain those employees with the new compa-



ny, according to a letter from former Eagle Beverage President Dan Dorsey.

The subject of Eagle Beverage selling its assets came up during a Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency meeting on Thursday morning. The JCIDA board agreed that Sheehan can maintain a tax abatement agreement that Eagle Beverage had with the agency.

Marshall Weir, CEO of Jefferson County Economic Development, doesn't expect any changes at the Watertown facility.

"It's business as usual" he said.

Operating since 1979, Eagle Beverage constructed its

Watertown distribution center about eight years ago after moving from a facility in the town of Pamela. It has served five counties in the region: Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, Seneca and Cayuga.

T.J. Sheehan is a major regional beverage distributor based in Liverpool, serving Central and Western New York. Both companies supplied Anheuser-Busch, as well as top-selling local and regional craft beers, premium non-alcoholic drinks and other beverages.

The deal expands Sheehan into the five counties and adds 3 million cases a year and surpasses its volume to 30 million annually, according to the company. In business since 1898, Sheehan also has holdings in three other states.

Sheehan did not immediately respond to questions about the deal.

Roth Industries approved for Watertown expansion

By Craig Fox
cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — City Planning Commission Chair Michelle Capone expressed her satisfaction that Roth Industries Inc. is moving forward with a nearly 12,000-square-foot expansion at the City Center Industrial Park off North Bellevue Avenue.

"I'm really pleased to see a business here in Watertown expand," she said after the Planning Commission unanimously approved the site plan for the project in early September. "It speaks volumes for what economic developers can do. It speaks volumes how it's helping an international company."

The project calls for 7,220-square-foot and 4,060-square-foot additions, expanded asphalt storage areas, chain-link fence, relocated light poles and larger infiltration basins. The company will add about 10 jobs because of the expansion.

After the meeting, Christopher Todd, an engineer with Aubertine & Currier, said Roth will start "some aspect" of the construction this year. However, he was unable to say how long it will take to complete the expansion without talking to the company about it.

It took less than 20 minutes for Planning Commission members to approve the project. They briefly talked about plans for landscaping, lighting and how it was better that the project will include two entrances rather than one for trucks entering the South Bellevue Avenue manufacturing plant.

Capone also asked how the expansion will impact sewer restriction credits levied by the state Department of Environmental Conservation to correct a longstanding environmental issue with Beaver Meadows, a marshy area on the city's west side.

"If anything, I think it's going

See ROTH T13

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Pepsi Cola Ogdensburg Bottlers donates \$2,000 to bring laser tag to Potsdam Summer Fest 2026



Pictured from left are Anna Campbell, Alene Thomas, Helen Sullivan, Scott Wright, Tim Welp, Thomas Burns, Jeff Bonno, Louise Jensen, Joann Yette, Sophia Yette, Janice Adderley and Melanie Flack.

Scott Wright, owner of Pepsi Cola Ogdensburg Bottlers, presented a \$2,000 donation to the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Events & Festivals Committee to help bring laser tag to Potsdam Summer Fest 2026, the chamber announced. The announcement was provided by Melanie Flack, executive director of the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce.

First Saturday Photo: The Potsdam Pitches and Local Sponsor

Tom Burns, owner of Frog Acres Farm and The Dirty Business Bath Company, is pictured with The Potsdam Pitches during First Saturday, the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce's welcome event for college students and the community, held Sept. 12 in downtown Potsdam. Both businesses sponsored the group's performance. Founded in 2007, The Potsdam Pitches are SUNY Potsdam's oldest mixed a cappella group and were finalists in the 2018 International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella.

Jordan LaPointe wins putting contest at Potsdam Chamber golf tournament



Jordan LaPointe, left, was the winner of the Putting Contest at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce's 6th Annual 4 Person Scramble Golf Tournament, held Friday, August 28 at the Potsdam Town & Country Club. Rob Bicknell, right, owner of SummerHaven Pool, Hearth & Spa, presented LaPointe with a 23-inch Four Seasons Courtyard gas fire pit donated by SummerHaven as the Putting Contest prize.





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SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr. Visits Jefferson Community College to Highlight SUNY Reconnect

Watertown — State University of New York Chancellor John B. King Jr. visited Jefferson Community College Sept. 4 as part of his SUNY Reconnect tour, where he heard from students, toured the college's mechatronics labs and met with faculty.

Chancellor King has visited SUNY campuses statewide to highlight Gov. Kathy Hochul's SUNYReconnect program, which began with the start of fall 2025 classes and provides free associate degrees in high-demand fields for eligible adult learners. The 2026-2027 enacted state budget expanded SUNY Reconnect to include associate degree programs at bachelor's-granting institutions, additional high-demand programs, and provisions intended to make it easier for adult learners to return to college to pursue nursing if they have a prior degree in another field.

"The SUNY Reconnect program is helping adult learners throughout the state pursue the career of their dreams," King said. "Campuses like Jefferson Community College are vital drivers of upward mobility that empower our students to reach their full potential through an affordable, excellent public higher education. I commend Jefferson Community College for supporting our adult learners and providing them with a well-rounded education."

Heather K. Cayabyab of Carthage, a Jefferson education student, said SUNY Reconnect made it possible for her to continue her education. "I was really impressed, and it was nice to share our experiences with Dr. King. SUNYReconnect is the reason I'm able to continue my education. It has inspired me to finish my degree and set goals for a career, rather than simply finding a job. I hope people can see that having a family doesn't mean you can't further your education and start a career. I can do both. SUNY Reconnect has given me that opportunity."

During the visit, King highlighted Jefferson's health sciences, cybersecurity and engineering programs, which are eligible for SUNY Reconnect.

Jefferson President Daniel J.



Front row (l-r): Daniel J. Dupee II, president; Erika Flint, trustee; Heather K. Cayabyab, education student; JoLynn Fiorentino, assistant professor of education; Gloria Payne, education student; John Walter, health sciences student; Tyler Merrill, engineering student; Valerie P. Dent, SUNY vice chancellor. Back row (l-r): David Snow, director of community services—mechatronics/JEWEL Program; Dr. Robert Kimball, Watertown City Council member; Scott Gray, assemblymember, 116th District; John B. King Jr., SUNY chancellor; Breland Griffin, computer information technology student; David J. Males, trustee. Contributed.

Dupee II said SUNY Reconnect is opening doors for New Yorkers who put college on hold or never had the opportunity to pursue a degree. "At Jefferson, we're proud to expand that opportunity through our new Health Sciences degree, which provides a clear pathway for students to build a strong foundation in the sciences and continue on to nursing or other health-related bachelor's degree programs. By combining an in-demand academic pathway with the financial support available through SUNY Reconnect, we're helping more adults take the next step toward a rewarding career while strengthening the healthcare workforce our region needs," Dupee said.

State Assemblymember Ken-

neth Blankenbush said Jefferson Community College and programs like SUNY Reconnect can open new doors for adults ready to build a better future for themselves and their families. "By expanding access to training in health sciences, cybersecurity, engineering and other high-demand fields, we are not simply helping people earn degrees, we are strengthening the workforce our communities will depend on for years to come. I am proud to see Jefferson Community College leading the way and giving more New Yorkers the opportunity to learn new skills, fill critical jobs and build their future right here at home," Blankenbush said.

Assemblymember Scott Gray said the expansion of SUNY Re-

connect in this year's budget is a major win for adult learners across the region. "By removing financial barriers for high-demand fields like health sciences, cybersecurity, and engineering, we are opening doors for residents to up-skill, re-enter the workforce, and secure high-paying careers right here at home. Jefferson Community College continues to be a vital hub for economic growth in Jefferson County, and I encourage eligible adults in our community to take full advantage of this transformative opportunity," Gray said.

Eligible SUNY Reconnect programs at Jefferson Community College include:

- Childhood Education, A.A.
- Childhood Education, Birth-

Grade 2, A.A.

- Childhood Education, Birth-Grade 6, A.A.
- Health Sciences, A.S.
- Nursing, A.A.S.
- Computer Information Technology, A.A.S.
- Computer Information Systems, A.S.
- Computer Science, A.S.
- Engineering Science, A.S.

Jefferson's SUNY Reconnect information is available online at www.sunyjefferson.edu/freec and via Enrollment Services at (315) 786-2437. Applying to Jefferson Community College is free. A late session of eight-week classes was announced to begin Oct. 19, 2026, and end Dec. 11, 2026.

Flip Factory cuts ribbon in Malone



Friends and family gathered at the Flip Factory, Thursday, Sept. 3, for a ribbon cutting organized by the Malone Chamber of Commerce. Alexander Violo/Malone Telegram

The Flip Factory, a gymnastics center in the village of Malone, held a ribbon cutting at its new location, off of West Main Street. Alexander Violo/Malone Telegram

By Alexander Violo

aviolo@mttelegram.com

MALONE – A gymnastics center in the village held a ribbon cutting at a newly renovated location off of West Main Street, on Thursday.

Raeann Bilow, owner of the business and a coach at the Flip Factory Gymnastics Club, said she was drawn to the space in Malone by its size and location.

“It’s kind of the perfect spot, it’s kind of the perfect size, not too big and there’s space where maybe we can do birthday parties,” Bilow said, “It was a great set up, the parking is good, it’s a central location too.”

Located in back portion of the Stewart’s Shop at the intersection of West Main Street and Finney Boulevard, the Flip Factory started fall classes in

early September, according to Bilow.

“I’m looking forward to having all the kids in here, it’s going to be so fun,” Bilow said, “The kids are already having so much fun, all of my kids and their cousins and everything. We’ve been having fun and I’m just excited for other kids to have fun too.”

Bilow said she was a gymnast at the Flip Factory when she was growing up, starting when she was six-years old.

“I’ve done some coaching before but mostly just grew up doing gymnastics for many years,” Bilow said, “I’m super excited for this.”

According to Bilow, the gymnastics center’s classes are for kids of all ages, adding she has a child who is 18-months old.

“We start at 18-months because he’s 18 months so I wanted that for him and there’s no limit, pretty much all ages,” Bilow said.

According to Bilow, the center’s fall class will focus on basic gymnastics.

“Just for the fall schedule then I have some ideas and am going to add some more classes and different things for later on,” Bilow said.

Bilow said a lot of work went into transforming the space into a new gymnastics center.

“We did all the painting and all of the flooring in here,” Bilow said, “It took two months, we were busy.”

Mary Scharf, executive director of the Malone Chamber of Commerce, said it’s always nice to welcome a new business to the community.

“This is a great spot, look at

all the equipment and the new space and there’s even parking,” Scharf said.

The Flip Factory originally opened in 1996, by Ballard Mill, at the current location of North Country Community College, before moving to Skateland on Railroad Street, in Malone, and then Brushton before returning to the village of Malone.



Raeann Bilow, owner of the business and a coach at the gymnastics club, said it took two months to get the space ready to open. Alexander Violo/Malone Telegram

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since day one, including through our Project Labor Agreement with the Central New York Building Trades, which coordinates the region's registered apprenticeship programs and creates structured pathways into these careers."

Micron, Henry said, is also investing directly in that pipeline, including trades and pre-apprenticeship programming with area BOCES, so that local students have an on-ramp to build a career in the trades right here at home.

MORE THAN IRON

Despite the specific "Iron Workers" name, Nesbitt said the workers in his union do much more than work with iron. "Everybody knows the 'Lunch on the skyscraper' photo. People may think that's the only thing iron workers do. It's a pretty diverse trade."

Iron workers do everything from structural and reinforcing iron work and rebar grids for concrete, to rigging for machinery and ornamental iron work. Local 60 is looking for more of them; part of a hiring drive also being seen by other local labor unions as the Micron site advances.

The first step to becoming a union construction worker is contacting a local union representing a specific trade to inquire about their apprenticeship program or direct entry requirements.

But there is something not taught in apprenticeships that will give potential employees an advantage.

"I think you will hear this from most of the trades' leaders: we are looking for good attitudes and good work ethics," Nesbitt said. "The rest of it, we can teach them. Whether it be plumbing

skills or any other – those two things can't be taught. If they come with those two attributes, they have a pretty good shot at continuing forward."

The training center and headquarters for Iron Workers Local 60 is 500 W. Genesee Street, Syracuse. In mid-August, Nesbitt said that Local 60 received about 180 applications for the year. "We just tested 55 apprentices for a 30-person slot last weekend," he said. "It's encouraging that we are getting a lot of interest."

IBEW SEES OPPORTUNITIES

At 25001 Water St., Watertown, there's a training center for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 910, operated by the Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee. EJATC is co-sponsored by Local 910 and the National Electrical Contractors Association, Northern New York Chapter.

Potential apprentices must be at least 18 and take and pass an aptitude test, said Local 910 Business Manager Travis Flint. A prerequisite is having a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate.

"Once they do that, they qualify for an interview and go on an eligibility list," Flint said. "We pull off that eligibility list when we need new apprentices."

The free classroom training is one day a week. "They spend time in the classroom learning about theory," Flint said. "The second half of the class is going to the lab where they will install conduit, work on circuitry and other labs."

It takes about four years to go through the apprenticeship program, which also includes supervised on-the-job work. Upon completion, a worker receives a New York State journeyman certificate -- an official credential proving a worker has fully finished a registered apprenticeship in a skilled trade.

In addition to the Micron proj-

ect, Flint said that Local 910 sees opportunities in other areas.

In Massena, a data center has been proposed, but not without vocal opposition; a situation seen elsewhere in the country. Gov. Kathleen Hochul has taken executive action to implement a one-year moratorium on data centers. But Flint is optimistic about the Massena proposal.

"That would be a lot of work for electricians with a lot of conduit, wire and equipment installation," he said. "They are projecting the project could take up to 400 electricians at peak. For our local, everybody would have a chance to work on that job because it's so big. We would pull in electricians from other areas."

Flint has also seen work pick up at school districts. Solar projects are another area where Local 910 is seeing opportunities.

"There's a large one starting up in Chateaugay and we expect to have 80 electricians on that job," he said.

The Brookside Solar Project is a 100-megawatt solar photovoltaic electric generating facility developed by AES Clean Energy in Franklin County. Tree-clearing was underway at the site this spring. It spans approximately 1,100 acres across the towns of Chateaugay and Burke in Franklin County.

Late next year, construction is expected to begin at the Greens Corners Solar Project, a 120-megawatt solar farm developed by Boralex. It spans 3,000 acres in the towns of Watertown and Hounsfield in Jefferson County.

"Because of such high demand for solar and its high labor demands, we don't always have enough people," Flint said. "That's where we can take in new people and bring them into our training program and eventually make them become journeymen."

Labor unions such as Local 910 have a tradition of working

with Jefferson-Lewis BOCES to find many of those future journeymen.

"We've had a long history with BOCES, and with this much electrical work and demand for electricians, they've been able to take larger classes and we try to get as many of those students as we can to work for us, because they come out of BOCES set up for success," Flint said. "They do a lot of good training, and it kind of feeds right into ours."

'NOT WAITING' AT BOCES

Jefferson-Lewis BOCES has responded to the rising demand of workers in skilled trades, a situation that emerged in the mid-2000s. Also, according to reports by the U.S. Department of Education, for every five skilled tradespeople who retire, only two new workers enter the pipeline.

"At Jefferson-Lewis BOCES, our students who have enrolled in technical and career education have gone from 1,000 students (annually) to almost 1,600 students just in the past five years," said Jefferson-Lewis BOCES Superintendent Christopher DiFulvio. "We've seen just about a 50 percent increase."

Most of that growth, DiFulvio said, is driven by regional workforce needs.

"We are seeing the strongest demand in electrical wiring, welding, HVAC/plumbing and heavy equipment operation. Those are the strongest, but we are also seeing increases in cosmetology, culinary arts and early childhood education because of student demand."

DiFulvio said that liaisons from Micron have been in touch with career and technical education program officials at Jefferson-Lewis BOCES.

"We are not waiting for the jobs to arrive to start preparing students," he said. "We have been working with Micron at around the first major phase of

workforce demand, which is the construction, the site preparation and earth moving."

One of those earth movers now working at the Micron site is Garrett D. Fuller, a 2021 graduate of South Jefferson Central School District and who took courses in the heavy equipment program at Jefferson-Lewis BOCES. The program features a 100-acre training site and simulators.

Fuller said he mainly operates an excavator and a bulldozer at the Micron site. He commutes to his job from Mannsville.

"I've operated equipment my whole life, and it's something that I wanted to pursue as a career," Fuller said.

His advice to students on a career path: "Work hard, be a sponge and soak up as much information as possible. You never know when you are going to need it."

STRENGTHENING THE PIPELINE

DiFulvio said the Micron supported Jefferson-Lewis BOCES workforce development state grant application. Four years ago, Governor Hochul announced an investment of \$350 million for workforce development, including the creation of the Office of Strategic Workforce Development within Empire State Development. It is charged with better aligning workforce development efforts with the needs and priorities of today's employers.

"These grants helped us secure just under a million dollars to support career and technical training and to strengthen the skilled labor pipeline," DiFulvio said.

Jefferson-Lewis BOCES, DiFulvio said, recently sent out a six-month graduate survey, which had an 85% response rate.

"Ninety-four percent of the graduates, from electrical, HVAC/plumbing, heavy equip-

See J0B5T14

Roth

From T9

to help," Todd said.

Prior to the meeting, the Zoning Board of Appeals had already granted the company two area

variances to allow adding 30,000 square feet to its asphalt exterior storage area and increase the parking lot to the front of the building and expand a shipping drive and a connection to Rail Drive.

The larger storage area and parking lot exceeds the allowable size for the site's impervious

surface. A use variance allows the parking lot to be in front of the building.

The reconfiguration makes it easier to access the building's shipping dock and prevent tractor-trailers from backing up on Rail Drive.

The company manufactures plastic highway barriers and

septic tanks at the facility.

This will be the fifth expansion at the site since the nearly 75,000-square-foot facility in the City Center Industrial Park opened in 2007.

The company also operates a plant in Syracuse.

Roth Industries, a family-owned business established

in Germany more than 65 years ago, has 1,100 employees and locations in more than 40 countries. Roth entered the North American market in 1997 and then moved to Watertown from Rhode Island about 20 years ago, partly because of the proximity to Canada.

Jobs

From T13

ment, welding were employed in their field just six months after their graduation,” DiFulvio said. “One hundred percent of our HVAC graduates are either employed or enrolled in post-secondary education. And, 93 percent of the graduates in the electrical field had entered the union or post-secondary training in that field. We have a lot of students who will come here, then go to electrical lineman school or things like that.”

He added, “These programs aren’t where we are simply hoping jobs will exist when students graduate. In most cases, employers are already looking for the people in the region, and we are supplying that.”

That does not happen by luck. “The reason why BOCES is on top of these things is because we use real labor market data,” DiFulvio said. “Each program has an advisory council made up of industry professionals. We also have a career and technical training advisory council. We use the Department of Labor statistics and labor unions provide us with statistics. That data helps us to get in front of students. Student interest also plays a factor.”

One area of particular student interest is cosmetology.

“That’s an area where you don’t necessarily hear about a huge demand,” DiFulvio said. “However, our students who graduate from cosmetology often go to work for themselves. It’s the soft skills that they are learning, which BOCES has always offered. We’ve always done a great job on that.”

MECHATRONICS FOR THE FUTURE

The career pathway students find at Jefferson-Lewis BOCES will be aided with the April news of Jefferson Community College being awarded \$750,000 from Micron Technology to support the development of new academic programming and workforce training opportunities in the rapidly growing semiconductor industry.

Beginning in the autumn of 2027, JCC anticipates launching new academic programming in mechatronics designed to prepare students for immediate employment in semiconductor and

advanced manufacturing fields.

“With the development of the new mechatronics and advanced manufacturing lab at JCC, we are looking at how to create a stronger manufacturing pathway and a local talent pipeline,” DiFulvio said. BOCES and JCC, great partners, are working together closely on many programs. We are exposing students to modern manufacturing, automation, and mechatronics. These are skills employers are telling us they have an increased need for.”

Those skills could bode well for the advanced manufacturing needs at sites such as the Micron plant.

“The next opportunity is not only in construction, but what happens after these facilities are built,” DiFulvio said.

SPACE NEEDED FOR DEMAND

To meet growing demand, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES is in need of its own construction. “We are bursting at the seams,” the superintendent said.

In January, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES announced plans to use the Maple Ridge Center, 7421 East Road, Lowville, to expand career and technical education programs and job training opportunities for students throughout the region.

Last year, BOCES entered into an agreement with 302 Globe LLC, to lease space in the newly renovated Globe Building at 302 Court St. in Watertown. The first floor of the building houses health career programs for high school and adult students.

BOCES also plans to address infrastructure needs at its facilities in Jefferson and Lewis counties: the Howard G. Sackett Technical Center in Glenfield and the Charles H. Bohlen, Jr. Technical Center and Special Education Building in Watertown.

Jefferson-Lewis BOCES career and technical education programs serve 18 school districts -- at 3,300 square miles, it’s the largest BOCES in geographical area in the state.

“When you consider that, the area we are drawing from and the demand, expansion is needed right now because we don’t want to be in a situation where we are telling students that we can’t serve them when we have a workforce that’s demanding more employees in these areas,” DiFulvio said.

NNY Business

Jefferson Community College Featured Honors Program Student

Jefferson Community College

Watertown — Conner M. DeLaverne of Plattsburgh is the featured Jefferson Community College (JCC) Honors Program student for the month of September 2026. DeLaverne is a humanities and social sciences major whose career goal is to become a special education teacher. For one of his Honors Program projects, he researched ancient artwork and its impact on ancient cultures and beliefs.

DeLaverne says, “I chose to participate in JCC’s Honors Program because I am proud of my accomplishments. Knowing that I am doing well academically motivates me to continue working hard and pursuing my goals. I did not always excel academically in grade school, so seeing how far I have come and all that I have accomplished gives me a sense of pride and achievement that I had not experienced before.”

The Jefferson Community College Honors Program offers



Conner M. DeLaverne
Contributed.

students with exceptional academic skills the opportunity to receive enriched instruction within their current program of study. For the Honors Program, students select three courses within their curriculum, and enhance them as Honors Options. The option is based on a project agreed to by the student and a faculty member willing to

work closely with the student to provide a unique and rewarding experience. Students also take the Honors Seminar, a unique inter-disciplinary course open only to program participants. The seminar examines a single theme each semester and features guest speakers from a variety of disciplines and often includes some sort of field experience.

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

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

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Service-sector activity declines as New York businesses face higher costs

Service businesses across New York and the surrounding region reported declining activity, slightly lower employment and continued cost pressures in September, according to a Federal Reserve Bank of New York survey.

The Business Leaders Survey covers service firms in New York, northern New Jersey and southwestern Connecticut. It does not provide separate results for the North Country, but offers a broader measure of conditions facing businesses in industries that play a major role in the region's economy.

The survey's business activity index fell 9.2 points to minus 8.7. About 27% of respondents said conditions improved during the month, while 35.5% reported a decline.

A reading below zero indicates that more businesses reported worsening conditions than improvement.

The business climate index dropped 10.2 points to minus 35.9. Nearly 49% of respondents described the business climate as unfavorable, compared with 13%

who considered it favorable.

"Business activity in the New York-Northern New Jersey region's service sector declined modestly in September after holding steady last month," Richard Deitz, an economic research adviser at the New York Fed, said in the report. "Pricing pressures remained elevated, and firms were not very optimistic about the outlook."

Employment also weakened. The number-of-employees index declined from 2.4 in August to minus 4.9 in September, indicating a slight reduction in staffing. Nineteen percent of businesses reported increasing employment, while nearly 24% reported having fewer employees.

Wage growth continued at roughly the same pace, with the wage index edging down from 30.7 to 30.3.

Businesses continued to report sharp increases in operating costs. The prices-paid index remained elevated at 69, with about 70% of respondents saying their input costs rose during September.

The prices-received index increased six points to

33.7, indicating that more firms raised the prices they charged customers. Nearly 39% reported higher selling prices, while about 5% reported lower prices.

Supply conditions also continued to deteriorate. The supply availability index fell to minus 15.8, and businesses expect availability to worsen further during the next six months.

Capital spending was weak, with that index falling from 2 to minus 2.2.

Businesses remained only modestly optimistic about the months ahead. The index measuring expected activity six months from now declined to 5, while the future business climate index remained negative at minus 19.

Companies expect slight increases in employment and capital spending, but they also anticipate that wage and price pressures will persist. The future prices-paid index rose to 68.9, with 70% of respondents expecting their costs to increase.

The New York Fed collected responses for the September survey from Sept. 2 through Sept. 10.

Malone swimming in the SeaComm pool



Malone Recreation Park Programs and Recreation Director Ellie Gravell, SeaComm Board of Directors Vice Chairman Wayne Duso, SeaComm Executive Vice President Sherry Thompson, SeaComm President and Chief Executive Officer Scott A. Wilson, SeaComm Vice President of Retail Operations Rick Maloney, and Former Malone Recreation Park Programs and Recreation Director Jennifer Hathaway

SeaComm donated \$110,000 to the Malone Recreation Commission, which supported the construction of the

new pool, splash pad, and filtration system at the Malone Recreation Park, ensuring that children in Malone have a safe

place to learn how to swim. In honor of the gift, the facility will now be known as the SeaComm Pool.

Rose Rivezzi, co-owner of Big Spoon Kitchen, is pictured with one of the business's prepared dinner orders. Serving the community since 2017, Big Spoon offers a new menu each week featuring locally sourced ingredients, with Tuesday pickup and Wednesday home delivery available. View the weekly menu at bigspoonpotsdam.com



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Enid Moore - Owner 226 James St., Clayton, NY

Home Zone opens third North Country store in Massena

MASSENA — Home Zone has opened a store at 28 Andrews St., adding Massena to its North Country locations in Potsdam and Malone.

The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon-cutting for the furniture and appliance retailer. Massena Town Supervisor Ray Lancto attended the event.

Owner Juan Rivera said the three nearby stores will help the company offer customers a broad selection of products and quick delivery. The Massena store sells furniture, mattresses, appliances and hot tubs. It also offers delivery, old-appliance removal and financing.

General manager Michelle Kemp oversees all three locations. The company said grand-opening promotions will run through the end of September.

For information, visit the-homezone.com or call 315-705-2100.



Surrounded by town and village officials, members of the public and company representatives, Massena Home Zone owner Juan Rivera and General Manager Michelle Kemp, center, cut the ribbon to officially open the Massena store at 28 Andrews St. The ribbon-cutting, hosted by the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, marks the opening of the retailer’s third regional location alongside stores in Potsdam and Malone. Contributed.



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