NNY Business

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Daily updates: NNY360.com Dec. 2026

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Learn more inside

Parishville business bringing scent of NNY to NYC



Adirondack Fragrance Farm, based in Parishville, will be among hundreds of vendors featured at massive holiday markets in New York City. Submitted photo.

By Andy Gardner
agardner@wdt.net

PARISHVILLE – A local fragrance maker will have two booths in the Columbus Circle and Grand Central Terminal holiday markets in New York City.

Adirondack Fragrance Farm, on Route 72 in Parishville, is owned by Yen and Clark Maine. Yen Maine is originally from Taiwan. They met in Asia in 2019 and later married. She recently became a naturalized United States citizen. The couple also owns the recently expanded Nature's Storehouse in Canton.

They make naturally scented candles and unisex fragrances.

"We make everything in Parishville on Highway 72," Yen Maine said. "We actually have a little outlet gift shop there."

They now are the second generation to own their family farm, having taken over in 2023. Her mother-in-law, Sandy Maine, started it in 1979.

Yen Maine, reflecting back on first coming to the north country, said her first impression was, "oh this is

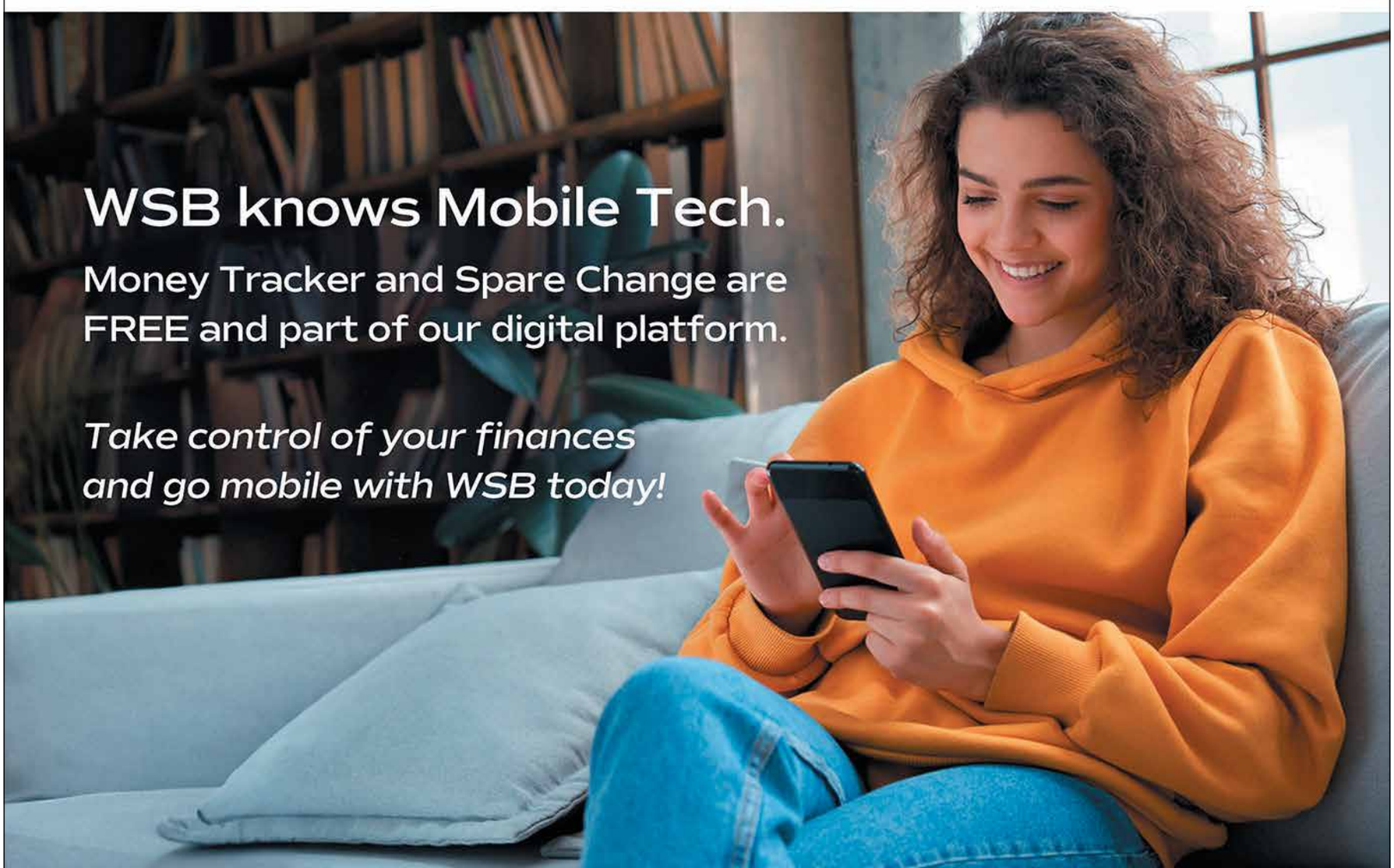
See NNY T15



Yen Maine poses with stock that she'll take to New York City to be sold at holiday markets there that attract tens of millions of people annually. Submitted photo.

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US Postal Service to raise prices, make fuel surcharge permanent

By Cailley LaPara
Bloomberg News (TNS)

The U.S. Postal Service is moving to raise and make permanent its fuel surcharge, which the agency introduced for the first time earlier this year.

The fuel surcharge will increase to 11% from 8% starting in January, the USPS said in a statement Thursday. Certain domestic shipping services also will increase by an average of 5.9%. That adjustment is in line with the typical annual rate changes that other large parcel carriers have announced for the year ahead.

The fuel surcharge hike comes after diesel prices hit record highs due to the war in Iran. The USPS implemented its first-ever fuel related fee in April, soon after the war started and diesel prices jumped. Costs have continued to increase throughout the year.

Shares of parcel giants United Parcel Service Inc. fell 1% and FedEx Corp. slipped less than 1% on Thursday after the Postal Service announced the planned price hikes. Both companies are contending with similar cost headwinds and are leaning heavily on pricing to boost revenue.

The announcement comes days after the USPS reported annual financial results which showed that the agency lost $6.5 billion in fiscal year 2026, compared with $9 billion the year prior.

The USPS faces a dire financial situation due to its massive operational costs and waning mail volume. Postmaster General David Steiner has said the agency could run out of money as soon as February, and has halted discretionary spending and certain retirement contributions to stave off a liquidity crisis. He has also asked Congress for help solving some of the agency's structural financial issues.

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A mail truck sits parked on Elm Street in Malone as the letter carrier was making the daily delivery. Richard Rosentreter photo

New vehicle charging stations bring additional spark to Cape Vincent

Times staff report

CAPE VINCENT – Electric vehicle travelers now have another fast-charging option in the Thousand Islands region with the addition of two new dual Combined Charging System (DC fast chargers) stations in this village.

The new charging stations, capable of delivering up to 120 kW, were made possible through funding from National Grid and New York State grants, and funding from the Cape Vincent Local Development Corporation, supporting the community's efforts to expand EV infrastructure and make Cape Vincent more accessible to today's travelers.

Located behind the Chamber of Commerce at 173 N. James Street, just one block from downtown Cape Vincent, the chargers make it easy for visitors to power up while enjoying the waterfront, grabbing a bite, shopping or exploring the village.

With its location along the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario, Cape Vincent continues to enhance its amenities for residents and visitors alike. In a news release, officials said that the addition of 120 kW DC fast charging stations is another step toward creating a more connected, accessible, and visitor-friendly community.



The new charging stations were made possible through funding from National Grid and New York State grants, and funding from the Cape Vincent Local Development Corporation. CVLDC photo

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Ribbon cutting ceremony for the renovated John Foster Dulles building at Jefferson Community College, Friday, Oct. 23, 2026, in Watertown, NY. © Kara Dry Photography LLC

JCC unveils renovated Dulles Building for technical workforce training

Times Staff Report

WATERTOWN — Jefferson Community College has unveiled its renovated Dulles Building, creating new training spaces for advanced manufacturing, mechatronics and cybersecurity through a project costing more than $11 million.

The building includes mechatronics laboratories, a cybersecurity classroom and lab equipped with servers, and traditional classrooms, according to Empire State Development.

The project received $8.3 million in state support, including a $4 million Next Move NY grant and $4.3 million through SUNY's capital allocation. Jefferson County contributed $2.9 million in matching funds.

Micron Technology also awarded the college $750,000 to support a new degree and training program focused on mechatronics and the semiconductor industry. The program will be housed in the renovated building.

The Next Move NY grant reserves 40% of program seats for transitioning military personnel and spouses from Fort Drum.

"As the North Country continues to grow and evolve, Jefferson Community College must continue to lead," college President Daniel J. Dupee II said. "New industries, new technologies, and new opportunities are emerging all around us."

Dupee said the facility will help prepare students for high-demand careers while expanding workforce training and supporting regional employers.

The $4 million grant is part of the $10 million Next Move NY initiative developed by the North Country Regional Economic Development Council and announced in December 2023. The initiative helps transitioning soldiers and spouses obtain training and credentials for jobs in the region and elsewhere in New York.

"By supporting the new training hub at Jefferson Community College, we're meeting the demand for skilled advanced manufacturing and semiconductor labor while creating direct, meaningful career pathways for Fort Drum military service members transitioning to civilian life," said Hope Knight, Empire State Development's president, CEO and commissioner.

Jefferson County Administrator Ryan Piche credited cooperation among government, education and industry partners.

"Students and soldiers are going to be blown away at the equipment and training opportunities provided by this new facility," Piche said.

The college serves approximately 3,400 students and offers more than 50 associate degree, certificate and microcredential programs.

More information is available at sunyjefferson.edu.



A view of the new lab at JCC. Contributed.

JCC student receives PTK Chime Scholars Foundation Award

WATERTOWN – Jefferson Community College (JCC) student, Kimberly S. Searles of Potsdam, has been named a 2026 Chime Workforce Scholar, joining 200 students nationwide recognized for their academic achievement and pursuit of career-focused education.

The Chime Workforce Scholarship, funded by the Chime Scholars Foundation and administered by the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Foundation, provides each scholar with $1,000 to help cover educational expenses while completing a certificate or associate degree that prepares them to enter the workforce in a high-demand field.

Jeni Izuel, president of the Chime Scholars Foundation says, “At the Chime Scholars Foundation, we believe that career and technical education opens doors to financial progress and long-term opportunity. We’re proud to support students who are working hard to gain in-demand skills and build better futures for themselves and their families.”

Searles, a mother of six, is pursuing a degree in Human Services at Jefferson while balancing the responsibilities of raising her family. As a participant in Jefferson’s Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP) program, she anticipates graduating from Jefferson in May 2027. Driven by a deep desire to help others, Searles hopes to become a Chemical Dependency Counselor, working directly with individuals facing addiction and guiding them through the recovery process. She is passionate about providing compassionate, evidence-based support that helps people regain stability, restore hope, and feel understood during some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

Throughout her educational journey, Searles has found encouragement and inspiration in Jefferson’s supportive learning environment. Faculty mentorship and engaging coursework have strengthened her confidence, expanded her skills, and reinforced her commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.



Kimberly S. Searles

“Jefferson has given me a strong foundation for the career I’m working toward,” said Searles. “I am thankful to JCC for offering a flexible online learning experience that has allowed me to be present for my children while continuing to build a brighter future for my family and myself.”

Receiving this award is especially meaningful to Searles because it recognizes the determination and sacrifices that often accompany the pursuit of higher education as an adult learner and parent. Juggling coursework, family life, and everyday responsibilities has not always been easy, but she views this recognition as proof that hard work and perseverance can open new doors. She hopes her experience serves as encouragement to others who may be considering a return to school, reminding them that every step forward brings them closer to achieving their goals.

Amanda Karpinski Gorman, executive director of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation said, "We are thrilled to launch this new program and award hard-working students with Chime Workforce Scholarships. These scholarships support students pursuing career and technical education at two-year colleges, and we look forward to seeing all they go on to accomplish."

Daniel J. Dupee, II, College President says, “Receiving the PTK Chime Scholars Foundation Award is a tremendous accomplishment and a reflection of Kimberly’s dedication to education and future success. We are proud to see our students recognized for their hard work and commitment to achieving their goals, and we congratulate Kimberly on this well-deserved honor.”

The Chime Workforce Scholarship supports students preparing for high-demand careers that strengthen their communities and local economies. By helping students complete their education and earn workforce credentials, the program helps create a stronger pipeline of skilled workers in fields where they are needed most.

Amazon facility opens in Pamelia after delay

By Craig Fox
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WATERTOWN — Delivery drivers recently rolled out for the first time from the new Amazon distribution center in Bradley Street Commerce Park.

The 77,400-square-foot distribution is now open, according to Amazon’s website. Operation at the facility began about a week ago.

The facility, known as WNY6 by the company, was originally going to open in September, but was delayed for an unspecified reason.

The north country’s first Amazon facility will employ about 150 workers.

Amazon is still hiring for the facility, looking for delivery drivers and package handlers, according to Indeed.

Amazon is still hiring for the facility,

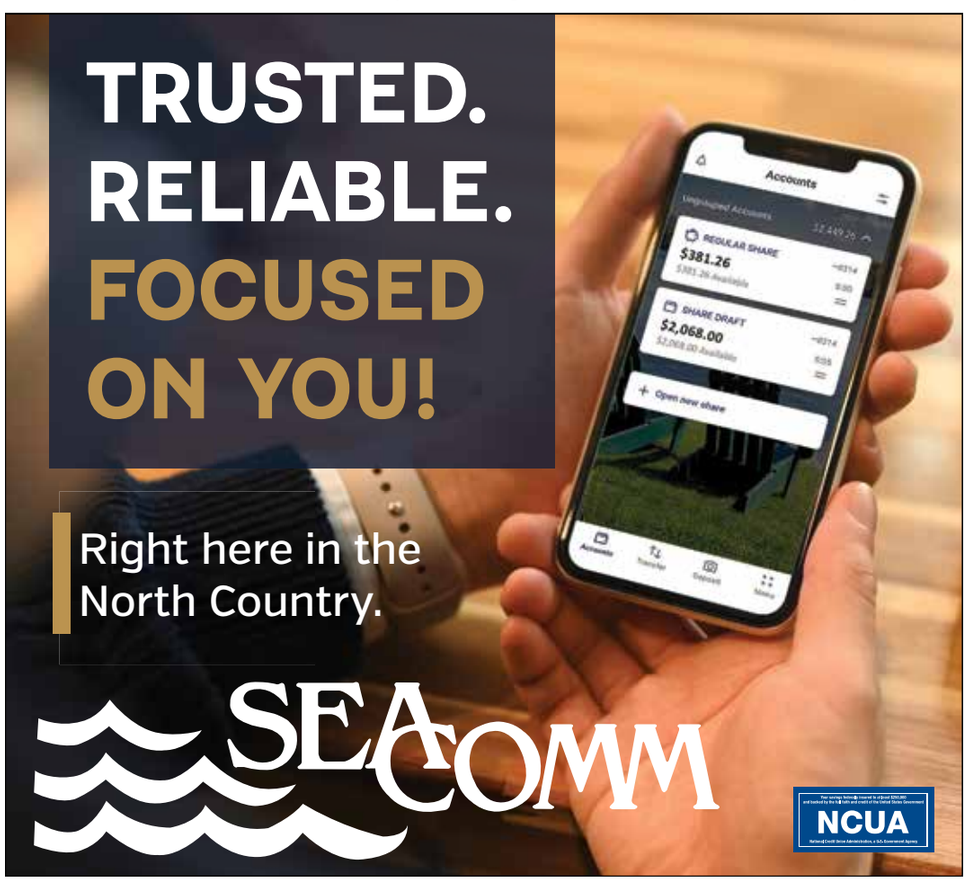
The Montante Group, a Buffalo company that designed and developed the facility, is leasing the building to Amazon. Construction began late last summer.

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

Amazon has provided few details about the facility’s operations or workforce. Amazon distribution centers of this size are typically considered regional facilities.

Purcell Construction, the Watertown company that began developing the corporate park about 10 years ago, owned the land until it was acquired for the Amazon project.

The Montante Group, owned by the Montante family, has built two other Amazon distribution centers: one in Tonawanda, near Buffalo, and another in Salem, Massachusetts. Both are at least twice as large as the Pamelia facility.



Thousand Islands Land Trust's largest conservation project protects 70% of Galloo Island

EASEMENT INCLUDES 5 MILES OF UNDEVELOPED SHORELINE AND DIVERSE COLLECTION OF HABITATS

By Chris Brock
cbrock@wdt.net

HENDERSON — The remarkable landscape of Galloo Island, with its diverse wildlife, terrestrial habitats, shorelines, coastal wetlands and its role as a migratory stopover for resting and refueling waterfowls and monarchs, will be protected for generations to come following a Thousand Islands Land Trust conservation easement.

TILT recently announced the agreement will permanently protect 1,410 acres of the 2,000-acre Galloo Island, making it the largest conservation project by acreage in the organization's 41-year history.

The second largest is now the Augsbury Family Conservation Easement on Grindstone Island, a 680-acre limited easement established in 1998 by the collaboration of the late Junie and Frank Augsbury in partnership with TILT.

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that protects land from future impacts while allowing it to remain privately owned. The Galloo easement protects approximately 70% of the island''s total acres.

"They are one of our primary conservation mechanisms, and they are perfect for landowners who want to maintain ownership of the property, while protecting some of the more sensitive resources," Jake Tibbles, executive director of TILT, said in a phone interview.

Galloo Island, which TILT calls one of the region's most significant places for conservation, is 6 miles offshore on Lake Ontario in the town of Hounsfield. With the acquisition, TILT has surpassed the 17,000-acre mark of protected land, with half of that portfolio consisting of conservation easements. In February, TILT announced that a conservation easement led to the Cosgrove Nature Preserve on Cherry Island in Chaumont Bay.

"While they do protect the conservation values of the property —the wetlands, the wildlife and waters —they also balance future development, all while staying on the tax rolls," Tibbles said. "There's a perception out there that people may think all of TILT's lands are tax-exempt, and that is not the case. We are very thoughtful about how we deploy those mechanisms and striking a balance between conservation and economic development."



A view of Galloo Island, where 1,410 acres are now permanently protected through a conservation easement with the Thousand Islands Land Trust. TILT photo by Spencer Busler

While the easement permanently protects a large portion of Galloo Island, the remaining portion can continue to support agricultural activities, improvements to existing operations and is open for potential development.

The Patten family, which owns most of the island, worked with TILT for the conservation easement.

"There's something about Galloo that you just can't put into words," Michael Patten, managing member of Galloo Island LLC, said in a news release. " It's where I find peace, where our family comes together, and where some of our happiest memories have been made. Protecting the Island is our way of making sure what makes this place so special will endure."

There are two "inholdings" on the island not affected by the easement: a former Coast Guard station owned by the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the former Coast Guard lighthouse property.

"Aside from that, the LLC owns 99% of the island," Tibbles said.

Galloo Island sits just outside the core terrestrial boundaries of the "A2A" region —Algonquin to Adirondack —a nearly 200-mile ecological corridor that connects New York's Adirondack Park to Ontario's Algonquin Provincial Park.

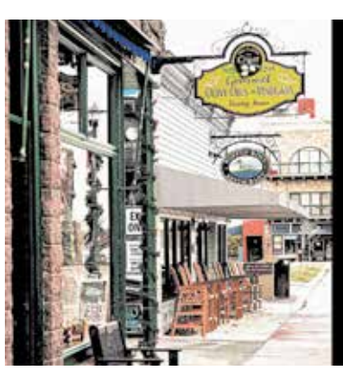
"What's happening in those regions is influencing the St. Lawrence River, the St. Lawrence River Valley and Thousand Islands as a whole," TIbbles said.

The Galloo Island pact, recorded with the Jefferson County Clerk as a $3,178,328 transaction, had funding support from the DEC's Water Quality Improvement Project.

The easement helps protect water quality along Galloo Island's extensive undeveloped shoreline. By limiting future disturbance on the protected acreage, the easement helps preserve the natural riparian buffers along Lake Ontario, including roughly 5 miles of undeveloped shoreline.

"By making sure the riparian vegetation stays intact, and those areas remain natural prevents any sort of detrimental use that could impair the water quality of the adjacent waters," Tibbles

See GALLOO T10


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SLC Chamber recognizes members at annual dinner



Representatives from LeBerge & Curtis, Inc. accept the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award during the chamber's annual dinner. From left are Emily Bristol, VP, Senior Business Banking Relationship Manager with Community Bank and Board Member of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce; Mollie Cleveland, Simone Wolf, Cooper Newman, Andrew Knight, Ben Dixon of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, Matthew Klemko, and Tad Rubin. SLC Chamber photo



Representatives from Upstate Candle accept the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Producer of the Year Award during the chamber's annual dinner. From left are Ben Dixon, executive director of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce; Amanda Hitterman, board secretary of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce; Jennifer Nelson; Tristen Durand; and Mike McCormick. SLC Chamber photo

POTSDAM — The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce gathered nearly 200 business leaders, community advocates, and regional entrepreneurs Oct. 28 for its 2026 Annual Dinner in SUNY Potsdam's Barrington Student Union Multi-Purpose Room.

The annual celebration highlighted local economic growth and regional leadership, featuring a "State of the Chamber" presentation alongside the presentation of three major business recognition awards.

In his "State of the Chamber" speech, Ben Dixon, St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director highlighted the accomplishments of 2026 and projects planned for 2027.

"We are now launching a welcome home guide, which is targeted at new residents and prospective residents," he said. "And we're launching a community-wide gift card that can be used at participating member businesses."

While tackling big projects, the chamber doesn't lose sight of the small acts that make it click.

"I think what makes our chamber work really special is the daily small actions and connections that we facilitate that move us all forward," he said.



Representatives from SeaComm Federal Credit Union accept the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Customer Service Excellence Award during the chamber's annual dinner. From left are Jonathan Haggard, AVP of information systems; Scott Wilson, president and chief executive officer; Robert Santamoor, board of directors; Tom Bellinger, SeaComm Insurance Agency manager and lead licensed agent; Elizabeth Holliday, Canton branch manager; Christina Smutz, member business loan officer; Rick Maloney, VP of branch operations; Ben Dixon, executive director of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce; Ashley Allen, Potsdam branch manager; Benny Fairchild, board president of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce; and Sherry Thompson, executive vice president. SLC Chamber photo

LeBerge & Curtis, Inc., a fourth-generation, family-owned equipment dealership based in Canton, took top honors as Business of the Year. Harold Curtis and Emmerson LeBerge established the business in 1954, and Mollie Cleveland and Andrew Knight lead it today.

After joining the chamber in 1973, LeBerge & Curtis holds the distinction of being the chamber's longest-running active member.

The company was recognized not only for its longevity and support of local infrastructure, but also for its community contributions

"Two powerful examples are the Help Sami Kick Cancer Foundation and The Lodge at Dreaming Tree Ranch," Emily Bristol, VP, Senior Business Banking Relationship Manager with Community Bank and Board Member of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce said while present

See SLC T11

Potsdam Chamber honors three local businesses at annual dinner



Jordan Robert, owner of NoCo Superior Exterior LLC, holds the company's 2026 Pride in Potsdam Award at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner & Awards on Nov. 12 at The Stables at Windy Point. From left: Chamber Board President Albert Hanson, Treasurer Rob Bicknell, Jordan Robert and Executive Director Melanie Flack. Potsdam Chamber photo



Tim Vollmer, owner of Stone and Steel Gym, holds the gym's 2026 Commitment to the Community Award at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner & Awards on Nov. 12 at The Stables at Windy Point. From left: Chamber Board President Albert Hanson, Treasurer Rob Bicknell, Tim Vollmer and Executive Director Melanie Flack. Potsdam Chamber photo



Robin Wolpin, owner of The Third Wheel Pottery Studio, holds the studio's 2026 Business of the Year Award at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner & Awards on Nov. 12 at The Stables at Windy Point. From left: Chamber Board President Albert Hanson, Treasurer Rob Bicknell, Robin Wolpin and Executive Director Melanie Flack. Potsdam Chamber photo

POTSDAM — The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce recognized The Third Wheel Pottery Studio, NoCo Superior Exterior LLC and Stone and Steel Gym at its Annual Dinner & Awards on Nov. 12, at The Stables at Windy Point.

Business of the Year — The Third Wheel Pottery Studio. Owner Robin Wolpin has created a welcoming place for people of all ages and skill levels to learn and make art. The studio offers classes, workshops and open studio time, and brings volunteers together to make bowls for the annual Empty Bowls fundraiser.

Pride in Potsdam — NoCo Superior Exterior LLC. Led by Jordan Robert, NoCo helps keep local homes, businesses and community spaces looking their best through exterior cleaning, painting and holiday lighting. Nominators also highlighted the company's support for veterans, older residents and a young local entrepreneur.

Commitment to the Community — Stone and Steel Gym. Owner Tim Vollmer donated more than $10,000 worth of fitness equipment for Ives Park, giving residents a place to work out outdoors for free. He has also supported local athletes and donated a 3D printer to the Potsdam Public Library.

The evening featured a look back at the Chamber's year, a silent auction and a keynote address by Marc Compeau titled "It's Your Turn."

"The chamber thanks everyone who attended, submitted a nomination or helped make the evening possible, including sponsors, auction donors and volunteers," a press release stated.

For more information about the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce, visit potsdamchamber.com , email director@potsdamchamber.com , or call (315) 274-9000.

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Titan Mining upgrades graphite plant in Fowler, targets early 2027 for Kilbourne study

Times Staff Report

FOWLER — Titan Mining Corp. is upgrading its graphite demonstration plant in St. Lawrence County and expects to complete a feasibility study for its proposed Kilbourne graphite project in early 2027, according to its third-quarter earnings report released Nov. 12.

The Kilbourne project at Empire State Mines is designed to produce about 40,000 metric tons of natural flake graphite annually. Titan expects to make a final investment decision after completing the study. The company said federal and state permitting remain on schedule.

Titan is working with the U.S. Export-Import Bank on potential financing of up to $120 million. The bank has expressed interest, and the company said it is working toward a financing commitment.

The demonstration plant has produced graphite concentrate since January and continues to ship samples to prospective customers for testing. Titan said it is adding a fourth grinding mill and upgrading other equipment to produce concentrate with more than 95% carbon purity in a single pass. Installation and testing are expected to continue through November.

The report also said Titan's Empire State Mines subsidiary signed a term sheet Oct. 7 with the U.S. Army outlining key terms for a proposed lease at Anniston Army Depot in Alabama, where Titan is considering a commercial graphite processing facility.

Titan reported $5.2 million in graphite-related spending in the third quarter. The company posted a pretax loss of $3.1 million, which it attributed in part to the Kilbourne feasibility study and other graphite expenses. Quarterly revenue rose 35% to $22.6 million from $16.8 million a year earlier.

For the first nine months of the year, Titan reported $19.8 million in adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, up 146% from the same period a year earlier. The company's adjusted measure excludes graphite project and feasibility study expenses.



A screenshot of Titan's website.



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Galloo

From T6

future use of the island."

RICH HISTORY

Galloo is a place where natural and cultural history are closely intertwined. The island once supported cedar shingle mills, with cedar cut into shingles and shipped to the mainland for homes throughout the region. In the late 1800s, the Galloo Island Fortknightly Club brought prominent visitors to the Island and established a tradition of fishing and recreation that continues in different forms today. It remains an important destination for recreational fishing, with North Pond serving as a popular shore-lunch location for fishing guides from throughout the region.

In more recent years, the island was proposed as the site of a large-scale wind energy development. While that proposal did not move forward, environmental studies conducted during the planning process further documented the island's ecological significance, including its importance to birds and other wildlife. The DEC has described Galloo as the largest generally undeveloped island in Lake Ontario and noted its importance as nesting, feeding and resting habitat for waterfowl and migratory birds.

Historian Timothy W. Lake, an Ellisburg native who is a veteran of newspapers, radio and television news including spending 21 years as a news anchor for WCAU-TV in Philadelphia, is an expert on Galloo Island. His 379-page coffee table book, "Galloo: A Historical Story of the Galloo Islands," will be released soon.

"During my extensive research into the fascinating history of Galloo, I determined that most of the owners and stewards of the island over the past 200 years were intent on keeping it in its natural state for farming and wildlife management," Lake said. "The only exceptions were the recent wind-farm proposals. Now it'll remain natural forever."

"Galloo Island is a remark

See GALLOO T12

Ombra founder negotiating lease for expansion into his hometown of Massena



Michael Fieldson gave a presentation about his expansion plans to the Massena Monday Luncheon Club earlier this year, and he updated Massena Rotary Club members this week. Provided photo

By Bob Beckstead
bbeckstead@wdt.net

MASSENA — Massena native Michael Fieldson is negotiating a lease to expand his technology company into his hometown, with plans to open an operation as early as this year or in 2027.

Fieldson, founder and president of Ombra, discussed the plans during a Zoom presentation to the Massena Rotary Club from Florida this week.

Ombra, based in Tampa, Florida, also has an office in Potsdam. The technology and professional services company works primarily with the U.S. Department of Defense. It develops products involving biometrics, space technology, artificial intelligence, machine learning, power and energy, chemical detection and undersea technology.

"I'm optimistic. There's a chance I could lease something in '26, but definitely '27," Fieldson said. "We'll be there one way or the other in '27, even if I have to go someplace else."

Fieldson said he was "actively negotiating a lease."

"If I could sign the lease tomorrow, I would. But, that process is ongoing," he said.

Fieldson said he is initially seeking space that would allow the operation to grow as needed.

"The reason is I like to start off small and kind of grow into whatever we can kind of use. That's what we did in Potsdam. We started off at I think 1,500 square feet and now we're at 3,000 there. In Tampa, we started at like 1,500 square feet. So, I expect it to grow. My target would be something closer to 100,000 square feet than it would be 70,000 square feet. But, it really depends on what the business needs," he said.

The company would secure additional space as needed, he said.

"We'll build buildings. We'll do whatever the business needs when it makes sense. That's kind of the logic that we follow in our company," Fieldson said.

He is requesting 2 megawatts of low-cost power

See OMBRA T12

SLC

From T7

ing the award.

SeaComm Federal Credit Union received the Customer Service Excellence Award. Founded in 1963 by 10 Massena foundry workers, SeaComm has expanded to nine branch locations serving more than 55,000 members across northern New York and Vermont. Beyond personalized member services, SeaComm was honored for its community investment initiatives, including its "Beyond the Branch" program, nonprofit sponsorships, and local commercial lending programs

SeaComm President and Chief Executive Officer Scott Wilson connected the credit union's service promises to the vision of its founders in 1963, emphasizing that the institution was built around people rather than buildings or assets:

"They had an idea. It wasn't about assets, and it wasn't about buildings. It was about people. They shared that vision, and we have what we have today because of it," Wilson said.

Wilson closed by thanking the chamber and saying the credit union would continue its mission of helping people.

"When a business like SeaComm helps another business succeed, supports a community event, or invests in a local organization, the benefits reach far beyond a single customer visit. They help strengthen the entire region," Benny Fairchild, United Helpers Marketing Manager and president of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors said while presenting the award.

Upstate Candle Company, run by Jennifer Nelson from its Caroline Street storefront in Ogdensburg, was named Local Producer of the Year. The enterprise crafts handcrafted candles, wax melts, soaps, and skincare products using locally sourced ingredients. Nelson was recognized for her small-business craftsmanship, customer loyalty, and ongoing contributions to local school and community fundraisers.

"Jennifer has built a passionate following," Amanda Hitterman, vice president for Advertising and Secretary of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors said while presenting the award. "Her customers appreciate her personal service, her communication about product availability, and the care she takes in meeting their needs. That loyalty is earned through hard work and a genuine commitment to customers."

The evening featured a cocktail and networking hour, silent auction, and 50/50 raffles. Following the dinner and official award presentations, Dawn Merz of Stephen's Media led a live auction.

AmeriCU Credit Union, St. Lawrence Federal Credit Union, Northern Credit Union, and Bill Rapp Chevrolet of Ogdensburg sponsored the event.

"This event brings together business leaders, community advocates, and entrepreneurs from across St. Lawrence County to celebrate our collective work to enhance economic and community vitality," said Ben Dixon, executive director of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce.



SUNY Canton offering new online bachelor's degree



SUNY Canton is launching an online Applied Professional Studies degree specifically tailored to adult learners who have had previous college experience, but have not yet earned a degree. SUNY Canton photo

CANTON — SUNY Canton is launching an online Applied Professional Studies bachelor's degree to meet a growing need for self-directed programs that accommodate adult learners and working professionals who have earned college credits but never completed their four-year degree.

"Many adults have invested considerable time and money in their education but, for one reason or another, never finished their bachelor's degree," said Humanities Department Chair and Associate Professor Phil LaMarche, the program's lead faculty member. "They may have attended several colleges, changed majors, or left school to pursue a career or raise a family. When they consider returning, they often discover that their previous coursework doesn't fit neatly into the requirements of a traditional major. We developed Applied Professional Studies to offer these students another pathway to completing their education."

Those entering the program will work with academic advisors to evaluate their previous college coursework and develop a degree plan that reflects their educational background and professional aspirations.

For example, a student with previous coursework in healthcare might pursue additional studies in business management, organizational leadership, or communication. A working professional with a background in business might incorporate coursework in technology, writing, or other disciplines that complement their experience and career objectives. The program's interdisciplinary structure allows students to develop a broad range of professional skills while meeting the academic requirements of a bachelor's degree.

School of Business and Liberal Arts Dean Kenneth Rhee said employers are seeking those with educational credentials or encouraging their current employees to upskill and adapt to the changing demands in the workplace. "This degree helps students gain the knowledge, skills and credentials needed to meet those demands."

In addition to traditional semester-long courses, the college offers an increasing number of accelerated seven-week courses during the fall and spring semesters, along with five-week courses during winter and summer sessions. These options give students additional opportunities to begin or continue their studies at times that work with their personal and professional schedules.

"For many people, the biggest obstacle to finishing college isn't a lack of motivation. It's finding a program that recognizes what they've already accomplished and fits the realities of their lives," said LaMarche. "We want students to know that they don't have to put their careers or families on hold to finish their education."

The program is expected to begin enrolling students for the fall 2027 semester.

Prospective students are encouraged to contact the Admissions Office to learn more about the program, transfer-credit evaluation, available course formats and degree requirements by visiting https://www.canton.edu/admissions/transfer/.

Galloo

From T10

Ontario and noted its importance as nesting, feeding and resting habitat for waterfowl and migratory birds.

Historian Timothy W. Lake, an Ellisburg native who is a veteran of newspapers, radio and television news including spending 21 years as a news anchor for WCAU-TV in Philadelphia, is an expert on Galloo Island. His 379-page coffee table book, "Galloo: A Historical Story of the Galloo Islands," will be released soon.

"During my extensive research into the fascinating history of Galloo, I determined that most of the owners and stewards of the island over the past 200 years were intent on keeping it in its natural state for farming and wildlife management," Lake said. "The only exceptions were the recent windfarm proposals. Now it'll remain natural forever."

"Galloo Island is a remarkable place, and protecting it is a tremendous accomplishment for TILT and for the region," Tibbles said. "Its location along the Atlantic Flyway makes it especially important for migratory birds, providing a place to rest, feed and nest during their journeys. By protecting the island's forests, wetlands, meadows and undeveloped shoreline, we're helping secure an important piece of habitat for wildlife and an important part of the Lake Ontario landscape."

Ombra

From T11

the New York Power Authority through the St. Lawrence County Economic Development Power Program. The program allocates 20 megawatts of hydropower from the St. Lawrence-Franklin D. Roosevelt Power Project in Massena to support business growth.

"We submitted our power application to Massena Electric. It's moved from Massena Electric to St. Lawrence County to the RVRDA (St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency) and to the Regional Economic Development Board, back to Massena Electric and back to the Power Authority. So, the Power Authority is reviewing our application now. So, we're kind of waiting for that process to kind of move forward," he said.

The expansion, called "Project Genesis," would create employment opportunities, Fieldson said.

"We're excited to come to town. We're looking for great people to come and be hired for all kinds of different jobs. Initially, right now we're looking for salespeople and engineers. I just posted a link yesterday about looking for a lead software engineer," he said.

"As we can hire people, we're going to hire people. We're going to need people. We're going to need laborers at some point, technicians, operations people. All the things that would be required to build drones and whatever else we're building will be needed, and those jobs will be in Massena," he said.

For Fieldson, the expansion would mark a return home.

"I grew up in Massena. I went to high school in Massena, played hockey, played lacrosse, played soccer. I went to SUNY Potsdam for a couple of years. I was a math/physics double major with a minor in Spanish. I enlisted in the Navy back in 1995 and spent seven years in the Navy. I was an intelligence specialist," he said.

He founded Ombra in Florida in 2018 and later opened the Potsdam office before setting his sights on Massena.

PROFESSIONAL CONNECTION



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Fort Drum applauds civilian workforce at quarterly ceremony



Civilian employees are recognized for their exceptional contributions to Fort Drum during the Civilian of the Quarter ceremony Nov. 12, 2026, at The Peak. (Photo by Glenn Wagner, Fort Drum Visual Information)



Betsy Bushnell, Directorate of Public Works, receives the overall Civilian of the Quarter award in the GS 9 and Above category from Col. Jason Adler, Fort Drum garrison commander, during the Civilian of the Quarter ceremony Nov. 12, 2026, inside The Peak. (Photo by Glenn Wagner, Fort Drum Visual Information)

Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- On most days, their work usually doesn't draw wide attention – whether it is keeping critical systems online, maintaining a safe and secure community or ensuring Soldiers and their families have what they need to thrive in the North Country.

However, the Fort Drum garrison workforce took center stage on Nov. 12 at the Civilian of the Quarter ceremony inside The Peak. The event recognized 19 nominees whose achievements directly strengthened the installation and 10th Mountain Division's mission readiness.

"Your service, your dedication, your excellence is vital to our readiness," said Col. Jason Adler, Fort Drum garrison commander. "And it is my honor to stand shoulder to shoulder with all of you as we accomplish our mission together."

Adler presented certificates to the following awardees:

General Schedule 1-8

Kevin Butcher, Directorate of Human Resources; Donna Hajdasz, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate; Karin Karlsen, Directorate of Human Resources; Brian Soules, Directorate of Emergency Services; and Danielle Strasser, U.S. Army Dental Activity.

Donna Hajdasz was named overall Civilian of the Quarter in the GS 1-8 category. As a legal assistant, Hajdasz sustained high-tempo legal operations supporting the 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum. She strengthened military justice by reviewing alcohol-related driving offenses, coordinating police reports, and drafting more than 40 administrative actions.

General Schedule 9 and Above

Clay Ashley, Directorate of Resource Management; Cody Bresette, Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC); Betsy Bushnell, Directorate of Public Works; Travis Cudlin, 10th Mountain Division Sustainment Brigade; Emily Gaffney, 2nd Mobile Brigade; Roger Graham, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security; Jessica Guyton, Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation; Gilbert Mansil, Command Safety Office; Jaime Martinez, Guthrie Army Health Clinic; Paul Ramsey, Religious Support Office; and James Shinholt, Directorate of Human Resources.

Betsy Bushnell was named overall Civilian of the Quarter in the GS 9 and Above category. Bushnell, a construction control inspector, provided critical safety oversight for more than 400 DPW employees, conducting inspections, coordinating corrective actions, and improving safety awareness across the organization. Her efforts contributed to a 78 percent reduction in quarterly accidents.

Supervisor

Jeanne Mottis, Directorate of Emergency Services.

Jeanne Mottis was named overall Civilian of the Quarter in the Supervisor category. As the Crime Records Branch chief, she ensured uninterrupted operations during a period of reduced staffing and increased demand. Mottis led the processing of 907 cases, more than 600 DA Form 4833 actions, and over 2,500 traffic citations.

Wage Grade

Tanner Koberling, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security; and Eduardo Ramos Pons, Army Field Support Battalion.

Tanner Koberling was named overall Civilian of the Quarter in the Wage Grade category. An electronics worker, he supported active-duty and Army Reserve units with safe, realistic live-fire training through expert operation and maintenance of Fort Drum's advanced target systems. Koberling developed tailored target scenarios, trained unit personnel, and ensured timely support for weapons qualification and gunnery requirements.



Tanner Koberling, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, receives the overall Civilian of the Quarter award in the Wage Grade category from Col. Jason Adler, Fort Drum garrison commander, during the Civilian of the Quarter ceremony Nov. 12, 2026, inside The Peak. (Photo by Glenn Wagner, Fort Drum Visual Information)

As Fort Drum was recently named 2026 Best Garrison for U.S. Army Installation Management Command-Western Hemisphere, Adler led a round of applause for the workforce that helped make that possible.

The award evaluated garrison performance across a dozen categories ranging from mission support and quality of life to real property management, safety, and communications.

"Frankly, it highlighted the breadth and depth of services that Soldiers and family members depend upon all of you to provide," Adler said. "But they have a commonality, and that is all of our amazing (Department of the Army) civilians driving every day toward mission accomplishment."

NNY

From T1

is beautiful. I can live like this, except the winter is pretty brutal for me."

She said they first went to the Columbus Circle Market, open from Dec. 1 to 31, last year. This year, they added the Grand Central market from Nov. 9 to Dec. 24.

"It's very important to us to have the north country manufacturing [grow]," she said.

Maine said she enjoys connecting with some of the millions of people who visit the markets, but by the end it's exhausting. This year, she expects over 40 million people combined will pass by both of her booths.

"Last year, my husband and I did the show ourselves and after the show, we don't want to talk to each other," she said with a chuckle. "I'm an introvert. After talking to so many different people it's fun, [but] we need to reserve our energy."

Maine said she feels her products sell well in New York City because it "helps the connect to nature."

"So many New York City people live in the concrete jungle, so they love how the can connect to nature just smelling our products."

She said their flagship products are each balsam and cedar scented – a candle and a unisex perfume. Each are made with natural ingredients grown on the farm in Parishville.

"They feel ... they are walking in the forest and it's really nice when they have the scent with them," Maine said.

They wild harvest balsam needles and mix it with alcohol to make a tincture that has to age for six months. After that, they add essential oils.

"Our perfume is 100 percent essential oils with no synthetics," she said. "Anyone can wear it. We try to make it neutral."

Other fragrances they make include balsam and lavender, sweetgrass, wild rose and milkweed.

"Many people don't know [milkweed] has a really nice scent," Maine said. She said the scent is the strongest between 9 and 11 a.m., and that's when they harvest that particular plant. In addition to being easy to grow, it's also a necessary part of the local ecosystem.

"We plant it on our farm because monarch butterflies really need them," she said. "You just put the seeds and then it's blooming."

Maine said they got into the New York City markets after hearing about them from customers they met while working at the Lilac Festival in Rochester that happens in the spring. In 2025, they looked into the NYC markets and were accepted for Columbus Circle. This year, they added Grand Central Terminal. There's also a larger one in Bryant Park that Maine said they're considering for the future. She sees her presence there as bringing the north country to the attention of many people who wouldn't otherwise give it much thought.

"Just by selling the products in a big city, I feel it's such a good economic opportunity for the north country and I'm really happy we can create that," Maine said.

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Dave's Hot Chicken gets preliminary approval, with toned-down exterior

By Craig Fox
cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN -- If all goes well, franchise owner Jonathan Trager hopes to open his Dave's Hot Chicken fast-food chain restaurant in Target plaza on Dec. 3.

On Wednesday, Trager got "a conceptual okay" from the town's Planning Board to move forward with the take-out restaurant after he failed to properly submit all of his plans in recent months.

Planning Board members said that Trager had not followed the normal site plan process. He must now go before the Jefferson County Planning Board for review of the plans and then return to the town for a public hearing and final approval at its Dec. 2 meeting.

To get to this point, Trager has eliminated colorful graffiti from the exterior of the former TGI Fridays restaurant building in the sprawling Watertown Towne Center retail complex on Route 3 in the town of Watertown. Town planners had objected to the colorful urban-looking artwork, citing it does not fit into the character with the other retail stores in the plaza.Trager also will hold off asking for signage for the restaurant until later.

"We do appreciate what you've done with the sign and everything," Planning Board Chairman Tom Boxberger said.

The total interior renovations of the longtime vacant restaurant are almost completed, Trager said. Not much work will be completed on the parking lot, although sidewalk repairs were done, Trager said.

The Dave's Hot Chicken restaurant will occupy the front part of the building. The other part of the building will not be occupied at this time.



Dave's Hot Chicken will offer its signature Nashville-style hot chicken menu; the first franchise in the north country. Its customers mainly order their food online and pick it up inside although the restaurant will seat about 50 people.

More than 50 employees will work at Dave's Hot Chicken. The restaurant will be open from 10:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.

Trager would not say how many franchises that he owns or identify other chain restaurant he operates.

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