

BNNY Business

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Daily updates: NNY360.com March 2026

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DPAO Founder Rich honored



DPAO founder Joseph Rich was presented a lifetime achievement award from the North Country Music Project for his work in bringing national music acts to the north country for over 50 years. From left: Walter Young, Rich, Stan Soboleski (James Pond) of Froggy 97 and Tom Murray. / Photo by Walt Young

By Chris Brock
cbrock@wdt.net

Joseph L. Rich, founder of the Disabled Persons Action Organization, was picked up at his home for a trip to a local radio station for what he thought would be an interview to discuss the North Country Music Project.

But once he arrived at Froggy 97 studios on Mullin Street, Rich realized something else was afoot.

"They gave me a lifetime achievement award," Rich said after arriving back home. "It was a big surprise."

The North Country Music Project presented a plaque to Rich, which reads: "In recognition of over 40 years of dedication and support for both national stars and local talent in Watertown... With heartfelt gratitude for bringing music legends to Watertown while nurturing local artists and supporting a worthy cause."

The North Country Music Project (NCMP) is a multimedia initiative dedicated to documenting, archiving, and celebrating the history of rock and roll and popular music in this area, specifically focusing on the 1960s and 1970s. It includes oral histories and memorabilia.

DPAO was founded in 1974 by Rich, and the nonprofit, originally called, Foundation for the Handicapped, was incorporated in 1976. Rich retired as executive director and CEO of



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Jefferson Community College and Syracuse Veteran Affairs Partner to Bring VITAL Program to Local Veterans

Through a strategic partnership with the Syracuse Veterans Affairs (VA) Office, Jefferson Community College (JCC) is expanding support for Veteran students by bringing the nationally recognized Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) Program to campus. VITAL is designed to connect Veterans with world-class VA health care while supporting their successful transition and integration into college and university life. On average, 42% of Jefferson's student body is comprised of veterans, service members, family members, and retirees.

The VITAL program offers seamless access to both VA and campus-based resources, including transition and adjustment counseling, mental health and wellness support, and help navigating campus and VA programs and benefits. As more Veterans pursue undergraduate or advanced degrees after military service, programs like VITAL help address the unique challenges they may face including cultural adjustment, academic pressures, and physical or mental health needs.

"Jefferson is committed to supporting Veterans not only academically, but holistically," says Joanna Brislan, Director of Military Enrollment and Workforce Solutions at Jefferson Community College. "Partnering with the Syracuse VA to bring the VITAL program to campus strengthens the network of support available to our Veteran students, helping them navigate the transition to college life while ensuring they have access to the health care, counseling, and resources they need to succeed."

Sonya Mangovski, LCSW, Military to VA Program Manager, and VITAL Coordinator at the Syracuse VA Medical Center, says,

"Transitioning from military

service to civilian life can be overwhelming, and entering an academic environment adds another layer of complexity. VITAL bridges that gap, providing Veteran students the support they need to thrive both academically and personally."

Daniel J. Dupee, II, President, says, "Jefferson Community College is committed to supporting veteran students during their transition from military service and as they pursue their career goals. With many of our staff who are veterans or military-affiliated, the College understands their unique needs. Bringing the VITAL Program to campus strengthens Jefferson's dedication to providing the support, resources, and opportunities veterans need to succeed in the next chapter of their lives."

Jason World Turner, Educational Planner of Veteran Services at JCC, says, "For many of our veteran students, knowing where to start can be the biggest challenge. VITAL strengthens our ability to connect students directly with the right resources at the right time, removing barriers and ensuring they receive coordinated support both on campus and through the VA."

In addition to the VITAL Program, the College offers veteran students and their family members access to a private Veterans Lounge and a dedicated Veteran Services office on campus, as well as an office located at Fort Drum. Jefferson is designated a 2025 Best for Vets college by *Military Times* and a 2025 Military Friendly? Top 10 School and Military Friendly? Spouse School by VIQTORY.

For more information about Veteran Services at Jefferson, visit www.sunyjefferson.edu/veterans. For more information about the national VITAL program, visit: VAVITALProgram.com.

New York Air Brake to add line in Watertown

13 manufacturing jobs slated for plant



New York Air Brake, 784 Starbuck Ave., Watertown. Watertown Daily Times

By CRAIG FOX
cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — New York Air Brake is bringing in a manufacturing line to its Starbuck Avenue plant from a facility in Maryland.

It's the first time that its parent company, the manufacturing giant Knorr-Bremse Group, is adding manufacturing jobs in Watertown since it reduced the workforce by 99 jobs three years ago.

The move from Westminster, Maryland, will create 13 jobs in Watertown — five salaried and eight hourly positions.

The news came during a Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency meeting on Thursday.

CEO Marshall Weir told the JCIDA board that he learned about the addition of the manufacturing line from a local company official when he took a tour of the plant a few weeks ago.

"It's good news," Weir

said, adding that the company official thanked the JCIDA for its support over the years.

The products coming to the local plant are electronic components and relay connectors for transit vehicles, the company said in a statement.

The transfer of the commercial line optimizes efficiency for the company, according to NYAB.

The move to Watertown presents two significant opportunities: greater production floor space, along with state-of-the-art manufacturing and testing cells, both of which would enhance production across all product lines, and provide room for potential future expansion at the plant, the company said.

"We will also capitalize on improved industrialization with the latest tooling technology. The move is another step aimed at enhancing our future competitive position and improving our ability to better serve our customers,"

the company said.

Nine positions at the Westminster facility will be affected by the move to Watertown, but the company will reassign the workers to other positions at the Maryland facility.

In 2023, NYAB went through a restructuring plan that shifted a portion of its manufacturing, assembly and test operations from Watertown to other locations across North America.

At the time, the company announced 125 layoffs and said that it would move manufacturing to a new facility in Mexico. The number of jobs lost ended up being 99, with 25 positions retained.

The company — which got its start in Watertown more than 130 years ago — remains committed to Watertown, NYAB officials said.

Watertown remains the corporate headquarters and the company's engineering center.

St. Lawrence County Planning Board focuses on Data Centers

By Bob Beckstead

bbeckstead@wdt.net

CANTON — The St. Lawrence County Planning Board had several recommendations for the Massena Town Board after reviewing an addition to the town code that authorizes data centers in industrial zones.

Many of the recommendations addressed concerns that had been heard during a town board public comment session held earlier this month.

St. Lawrence County Planning Director Jason C. Pfothenhauer told planning board members that they had previously reviewed site plans for Petawatt Holdings, which at the time was clearing land on County Route 42 for the construction of a new data center substation. That location is zoned as industrial.

“About a year-and-a-half ago or so we had quite a lengthy discussion about cryptocurrency regulations in the town of Massena. This is a little bit different than the crypto. What the town intends to do here is add data centers as a permitted use after site plan review in the industrial zone in the town of Massena,” Pfothenhauer said.

He said they received a “pretty good, detailed definition of what a data center is, which all sounds great” from the town board.

“The challenge that we had in putting this together is there were no specific standards that the town attached to data centers. We felt something of this magnitude really needed to have a little bit more of a robust review because of its potential impact on the community, the power grid, everything that could or

would be impacted by such a development. So, we want to also ensure that the town has as much control over future development as possible,” Pfothenhauer said.

He said the town has identified permitted uses in the industrial zones with a site plan review.

“However, they do have another section on special use permits. It’s sort of unclear how you get to that next level of review, and that’s something that I think is really important for a data center is that you have that next level of review, that special use permit review opportunity,” he said.

He said, because of that concern, planners recommended the town make sure that when they were reviewing data centers, “it’s not just a simple site plan, that they actually have some more ability to scrutinize that project.”

“That’s the first concern and first suggestion that we would have,” Pfothenhauer said.

He said adult uses are also permitted in the industrial zone, “and there’s this whole separate section that has a number of different restrictions, setbacks, a number of other requirements that an adult use would need to meet before it could be permitted.”

“So, if they’re going to go to the trouble of having this extra rigor for adult uses, we certainly would encourage them to do the same for a data center,” he said.

Using a sample from the town of Brighton, Pfothenhauer said they were able to summarize standards that Massena should apply when reviewing data centers.

They included addressing setbacks, screening, noise limits, minimum lot size, height restrictions and buffering, as well as any environmental impacts that are likely to be generated and specific measures that will be used to mitigate or eliminate any negative impacts.

The standards also include ensuring adequate capacity is available on applicable electrical supply lines and substations, and ensuring utility supply equipment and related electrical infrastructure are sufficiently sized and can safely accommodate the proposed use.

“The big one with data centers is power usage. What is going to happen to MED (Massena Electric Department)? What’s going to happen to everybody that’s receiving MED power when a huge data center comes in and sucks up all the MED power? Is that a concern? Is that an issue? How is that being addressed?” Pfothenhauer said.

He said they also suggested the data center submit a cooling plan that outlines the facility’s needs, how they plan to cool it, and the actual amount of water or electricity needed, as well as how that method will be realized.

Finally, he said, they suggested consulting with the fire department to review procedures that would take place in the event of an emergency.

Pfothenhauer said, in a conversation with the New York Power Authority, he was alerted to a Feb. 6 news article from Albany that discussed a potential state

See DATA T14

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Greater Watertown Chamber of Commerce to host strategic planning session

WATERTOWN — The Greater Watertown–North Country Chamber of Commerce will kick off its strategic planning initiative to guide the organization’s priorities and impact in the coming years.

Billed as the “Blueprint for Success: Powered by GYMO,” Chamber of Commerce officials will meet with members on Tuesday, Feb. 24 to talk about its future. The membership-only event will be held at The Lincoln Loft.

It will kick off the organization’s strategic plan for 2026 to 2028.

“This strategic planning initiative is about clarity and alignment,” said Kaylee Millward, Executive Director of the Greater Watertown–North Country Chamber of Commerce. “When we are clear on our direction, we can focus on tooling our members with



Kaylee Millward. Provided photo

the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. This strategic plan will ensure our work reflects their needs and drives meaningful impact across our region.”

Blueprint for Success is being facilitated by Brittany Davis, owner of Focus Consulting, whose approach emphasizes stakeholder-driven planning. The Kickoff Event will focus on understanding

current strengths, identifying opportunities, and clarifying where the Chamber of Commerce can have the greatest impact.

Blueprint for Success is sponsored by GYMO Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying and Construction Management. GYMO’s experience planning and executing large-scale projects reflects the importance of clear strategy and thoughtful execution, principles that align with the goals of this strategic planning initiative.

Members interested in directly impacting the Chamber of Commerce’s Blueprint for Success are encouraged to attend the Kickoff Event. Feedback gathered will be incorporated into the strategic plan, which is expected to be completed later in 2026.



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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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How does 'no tax on car loan interest' actually work?

Plan to give tax deduction to Americans who buy new car is now active

By **ALEX GAULT**

agault@wdt.net

Some people who've bought a new car recently might be eligible for up to a \$10,000 deduction on their federal taxes.

As part of the 'One Big Beautiful Bill' passed by Congress early last year, a federal tax deduction was made available to people who've financed the purchase of a new car that was made in the United States. The IRS is still working through the rulemaking process, but their draft regulations have been made available and public comment closes on Feb. 2.

The deduction is up to \$10,000 per tax year, and will match the value of whatever the taxpayer paid in interest on a loan for a vehicle for personal use in that year. The terms do not apply to vehicles purchased for work use.

The taxpayer has to have initiated the loan after Dec. 31, 2024 and the deduction will be available through 2028 under the current law. The rules are fairly specific; perhaps the biggest restriction is that the car has to have been made in the United States, at least for final as-

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sembly. To prove that, taxpayers will be asked to provide their VIN on their tax returns.

The Monroney sticker, the large window sticker that lists all the details of a new car that is required by federal law, will list the vehicle's final assembly point clearly under the 'parts content information' section, as well as the country of origin for its major mechanical components. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration maintains a VIN lookup tool that can also provide that information, which can be found at wdt.me/VINLookup.

Other qualifications include a requirement that the loan must be secured by a lien on the vehicle it's relevant to, and cannot be a refinanced loan. It has to be is-

sued by a legitimate lender or dealership, and it must be an interest-bearing loan in the year the deduction is being sought; loans with terms of zero interest will only become eligible once the interest starts to accrue.

The IRS is in the process of drawing up the new forms required for this credit now. In the meantime, lenders are required to send their customers a statement with the total amount of interest paid on a qualified vehicle loan by Saturday. The taxpayer will include that information on their Schedule 1-A form when filling out their 2025 federal income tax return, which is due by April 15 of this year.

The deduction only works for new cars; previously owned vehicles are not eligible. Income restrictions are also in place; the deduction starts to phase out for single taxpayers who report more than \$100,000 in modified adjusted gross income per year, or joint filers who report more than \$200,000. The deduction is cut by \$200 for every \$1,000 earned above those levels.

Once put into place, taxpayers who claim the standard deduction and people who itemize their deductions will be able to apply for the credit. The standard deduction is \$15,750 for individual filers and \$31,500 for married joint filers this tax year.

Tax deductions lower the total taxable value of an individual's income for the year, lowering the person's overall tax burden. It's different than a tax credit, which provides a specific dollar-for-dollar reduction of the individual's tax burden.

According to automotive services and research group Cox Automotive, this deduction isn't expected to really drive much new car purchasing. The group's interim chief economist Jeremy Robb said that this isn't a new concept, and has been done before.

"The idea of making auto loan interest tax deductible is not new; it was allowed before the Tax Reform Act of 1986. And the new rules can indeed benefit many buyers of new U.S.-assembled vehicles, as the administration notes," he said.

Robb said about 50% of vehicles sold in the U.S. are finished in the country, and the fact that both standard deduction-takers and those who itemize will be able to receive it means it applies to a fairly broad category of people. But he said the actual financial benefits for each taxpayer are modest at best.

"A typical auto loan today — 72 months, 9.5% APR, on a \$48,000 vehicle (the average price of a new vehicle) with 12.5% down — results in about \$3,800 in interest in the first year; \$3,200 in the second year. Interest drops to \$2,600 in year three and declines from there," he said. "If we assume the average federal tax rate ranges from about 15% to 20% for new-vehicle buyers, the first-year deduction — the largest during the life of a loan — would be less than \$750. In the second year, the deduction will result in about \$640 in savings on taxes. While all sav-





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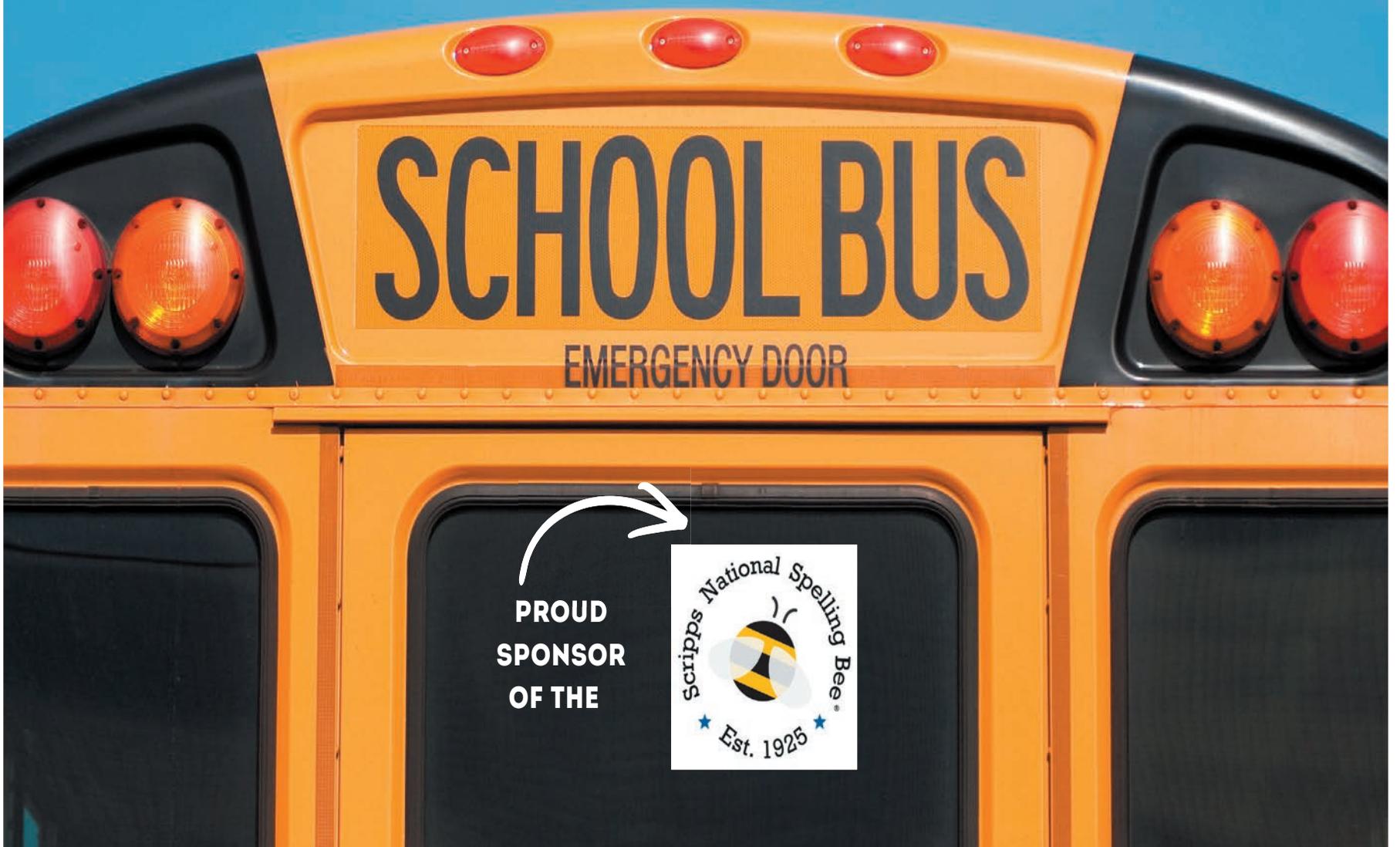
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Frigid weather heating up utility bills

By CHRIS BROCK

cbrock@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — Recent low numbers on north country thermometers and high numbers on energy bills have left us chilled and, in many instances, hot under the collar.

Cold weather and increased energy demand have led to more volatile supply markets, resulting in higher energy bills. The natural gas supply is market priced; customers pay what suppliers and distributors such as National Grid pays.

“What our customers are feeling right now is the result of skyrocketing energy prices, coupled with extreme cold,” National Grid spokesman Jared Paventi said.

New York Independent System Operator, a nonprofit authorized by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to manage New York state’s electrical grid and wholesale electricity markets, notes that the average 2025 gas price at Transco (Transcontinental



The sub-zero temperatures delayed the openings of several north country schools on Monday, allowing for safer walks to school. At mid-morning, a crossing guard at the intersection of Knickerbocker Drive and Gotham Street in Watertown helps students cross.

Chris Brock/Watertown Daily Times

Pipe Line Co.) Zone 6 — which serves as a key delivery point for natural gas in the Northeast — was roughly 120% higher than in 2024.

The result was significantly higher wholesale prices for electricity — with an average price of \$74.40 per megawatt hour throughout 2025, compared to \$41.81 per MWh for 2024.

The bottom-line number for

Northern New York National Grid customers: we are paying 30% more for electricity and natural gas supply this winter than we did in 2025. There are also increased “delivery” fees.

“The grid is experiencing an unprecedented transition and, along with it, unexpected challenges. A variety of complex and evolving factors are impacting prices that consumers are seeing on their

bills,” Shaun Johnson, vice president of Market Structures for the New York ISO said in a news release. “We know how important it is to provide consumers with information about the factors behind rising energy costs.”

New York ISO recently released a report, *Impact of National & Global Conditions on Electricity Prices in New York*, that discusses that higher nat-

ural gas prices, growing demand from large loads, aging power generation resources, cold weather and supply chain challenges are placing “upward pressure” on electricity costs.

Natural gas remains the dominant fuel source for electric generation across the Northeast. Another utility

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NYPA approves \$21.8 million for Massena project

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

MASSENA — New York Power Authority trustees have authorized \$21.8 million in additional funding for a Massena transmission life extension and modern-

ization project.

That's in addition to a previously authorized amount of \$45 million, bringing the total authorized amount for the project to \$66.8 million.

President and CEO Justin E. Driscoll said the addi-

tional funding, which was recommended by the Finance Committee, would be used for the completion of the project.

"That investment will continue upgrades in the north country over our

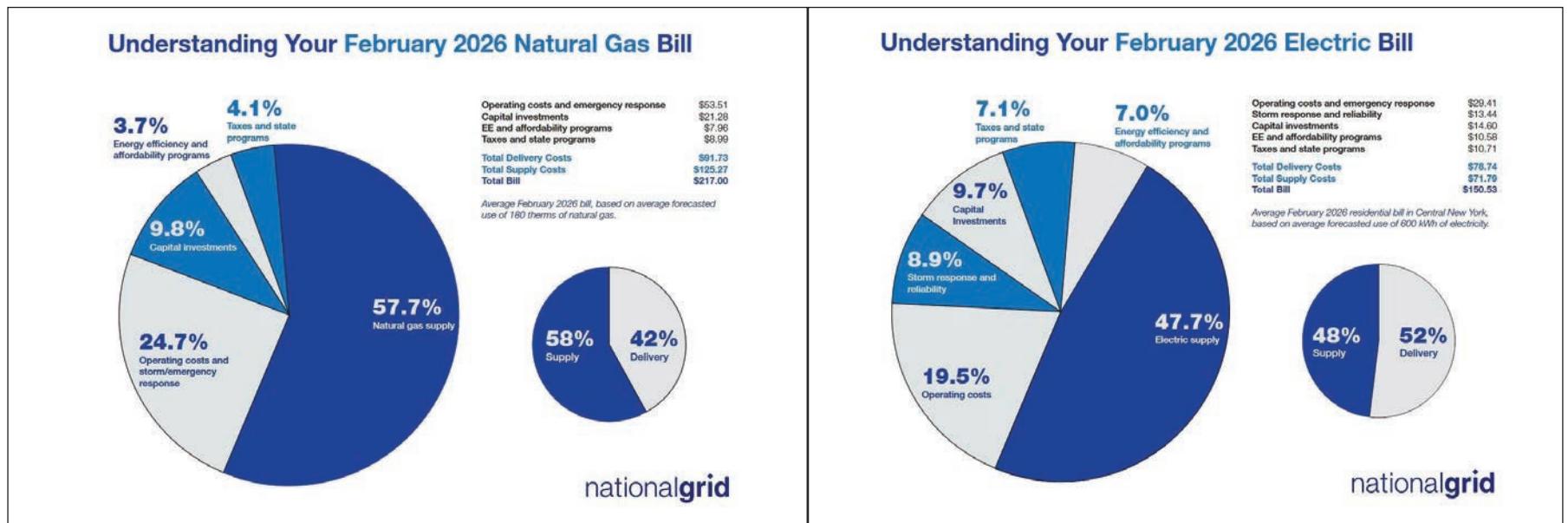
transmission assets there and where the assets have been aging and expensive to maintain in their current condition. This upgrade will certainly alleviate some of those issues," Driscoll said.

He said the project would

be substantially complete by 2030, "again, enhancing grid reliability and reducing maintenance costs there."

Trustees also approved awarding a four-

See NYPA T14



National Grid February 2026 bill forecasts for gas and electric, based on the typical residential customer using the typical amount of energy for the month based on historical averages — 180 therms of natural gas, 600 kwh of electricity. National Grid

Bills

From T8

dominant fuel source for electric generation across the Northeast. Another utility in New York state, New York State Electric and Gas/ Rochester Gas and Electric, has pointed to additional factors driving higher demand that is spiking prices. A news release from that utility released last week states, "As gas prices have climbed over the past

year, driven by weather-related demand spikes, growing consumption from data centers, and increased load from artificial technologies, electricity prices have followed suit."

National Grid spokesman Paventi explained that on monthly bills, supply costs make up 58% of the charges on the gas side and 48% on the electric side.

"When you add in taxes and state mandates, 66 cents of every dollar spent on natural gas bills and 62 cents of every

dollar of electric bills will pass through the company," he said.

Depending on the day, 50-60% of upstate New York electricity is derived from natural gas.

In addition to the supply (the energy itself) element of bills, there is the "delivery" element. Delivery rates cover the utility's costs to maintain and operate the gas system, including wages, materials and other operational costs. At National Grid, there was an increase in delivery rates, ap-

proved by the Public Service Commission in August, that has been in place since September.

The rate hike initially added about \$22 per month to the average upstate resident's power and gas bill. Rate hikes will occur at regular intervals through April of 2027. By the end of the increase schedule, total costs will have gone up by 28% for power and 36% for natural gas.

In October, the average residential electricity price in New York hit 26.95 cents per

kilowatt-hour — about 50 percent higher than the U.S. average and among the top ten highest rates nationwide, according to the Empire Center, an Albany-based independent, non-partisan, nonprofit think tank.

National Grid is using increased delivery rates to fund infrastructure upgrades, modernization of electric and gas systems, and to cover higher costs for poles, wires and transformers.



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

IDA hopes to draw investor with upgrades at former Kraft plant in Canton

By **ANDY GARDNER**

agardner@wdt.net

CANTON — Outdated lighting at the former Kraft plant at 30 Buck St. will be replaced through a National Grid program as part of an effort to attract a commercial tenant to the building.

St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency CEO Patrick J. Kelly said the organization has started rehabilitating the property and explained that a National Grid program would allow for the installation of energy efficiency upgrades.

Under the program, National Grid coordinates the installation of energy efficiency measures. Kelly said the work would be completed by a National Grid-approved certified contractor and would include interior lighting, perimeter lighting and outdoor fixtures.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$288,000, with the IDA's Property Development Corp. responsible for \$70,886 of that amount.

"So it's a significantly discounted price," Kelly said, adding that the overall expense is largely due to the Kraft plant's "size and nature."

He said the lighting upgrades would also enhance security, calling them "an asset for the building itself" and added that the improvements are "appealing for any kind of investment."

Another board member

agreed that improvements such as lighting upgrades are necessary to make the building more attractive to potential tenants.

"The lighting in there, any larger older facility, you've got a range of lighting types," Kelly said, explaining that some fixtures are "not that bad," while others are "pretty outdated." Kelly said the upgrades must be completed by October.

"This is a pretty advantageous program ... kind of a larger scale version of what we've done in this building," Kelly said, noting that the IDA previously upgraded exterior lighting at its Commerce Lane facility, with about 66% of the cost covered by a similar program.

"This will bring that part of the facility pretty well up to state of the art," Kelly said.

The most recent tenant at the Buck Street facility was a company called Tosca. They made reusable packaging, operating at the site to refurbish large wooden containers used in cheese manufacturing. The facility shut down at the end of 2023, taking 15 jobs with it.

Kraft Foods ended cheese production at the plant in 2004 and later sold the property. Those layoffs accounted for about 6% of Kraft's workforce worldwide. The facility, situated between two railroad lines, was built in 1951 and had its last major renovation in 1999.

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Don't miss this important membership event!

St. Lawrence Chamber Membership Breakfast March 11

Learn about the "State of the Chamber" and cheer on 2026 award recipients. The breakfast will be held for STLC Chamber members and partners at the Gran View Restaurant in Ogdensburg from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Tickets for the event are \$35 per person and include a GranView Breakfast of French

toast, scrambled eggs, home fries, bacon, fruit salad, English muffins, coffee, tea, milk, and juice.

2026 Meeting Agenda:

- Reappointment of Directors
- Officer Elections
- Reports from Chamber Leadership
- Chamber Appreciation Award
- Chamber of Commerce Day Award

Power equipment makes long journey from Europe to NNY

By **ALEXANDER VIOLIO**

aviolo@mtelegram.com

MALONE — After a day of traveling through St. Lawrence and Franklin counties a large piece of equipment made it from Massena to Webster Street, south of the village.

The equipment arrived at National Grid's Webster Street substation in Malone at 5 p.m. Thursday, meaning that no further traffic interruption will be needed, according to Jared Paventi, a strategic communications manager at National Grid.

Thursday's convoy was transporting a phase angle regulator, which is a specialized piece of equipment that helps regulate power flows on our system, according to Paventi, who said the regulator was manufactured in Europe, transported across the Atlantic Ocean and offloaded at a St. Lawrence River port.

Moved by rail to the CSX yard in Massena, the phase angle regulator was then loaded on a flatbed for Thursday's drive accompanied by a state police escort.

Paventi said the next step in the project to upgrade the Malone substation is relocating a subtransmission line that carries power to the station.

That project is scheduled to begin in April and take three months to complete.

Electrical work at the Malone station begins in August, according to Paventi, who said there will be months of other line relocations and distribution line construction projects with the goal of completing work in 2030.

Paventi said this week's transport is the only large scale National Grid convoy planned for the area this year that he is aware of.

"This is the only one like this, it's a pretty significant piece of equipment," he said, "I believe that is the only one we are installing in the area."

According to Paventi, the route the phase angle regulator was transported over was developed in consultation with the state's Department of Transportation and local offi-



The convoy escorting National Grid's phase angle regulator to Malone travels over a bridge in Parishville on Thursday. Provided photo

cials.

"You saw how large that was and we had to make sure the roads were both wide enough for the truck convoy and could support the amount of weight that would be traveling over it," he said, "I know there are roads that are posted with weight limits of eight or 10 tons and considering that this was much larger than that we had to make sure the roads were going to be able to support it."

At a Wednesday meeting of Malone's town council, Mike Andrews, the town's highway superintendent, said the regulator was shipped on Route 11B instead of Route 37 because of two bridges on 37.

Malone Town Supervisor Terrence C. Maguire, a former state trooper, said a bridge by Home Depot in Massena near the railroad is too low and not usually used for oversized transports.

Mayor Andrea M. Dumas said the village pushed back on initial plans to bring the equipment down Main Street en route to Webster Street in Malone, citing existing infrastructure in the downtown area and the weight of the phase angle regulator, a roughly 322 ton piece of equipment being transported on a 146-foot long trailer.

The equipment measures

approximately 16 feet in height and weighs approximately 615,000 pounds, according to a press release from state police, and due to the size and weight of the load, the convoy traveled at a maximum speed of approximately eight mph during transport on

Thursday.

According to James A. LaValle, an attorney with Albany-based Young Summer LLC, legal counsel to National Grid, who was on hand for a town council meeting, in Malone, last year the phase angle regulator was made in

the Netherlands.

Paventi said the current substation on Webster Street was built in 1958, adding there have been substantial upgrades over the years.

"It was in our asset plan to

See **POWER T16**

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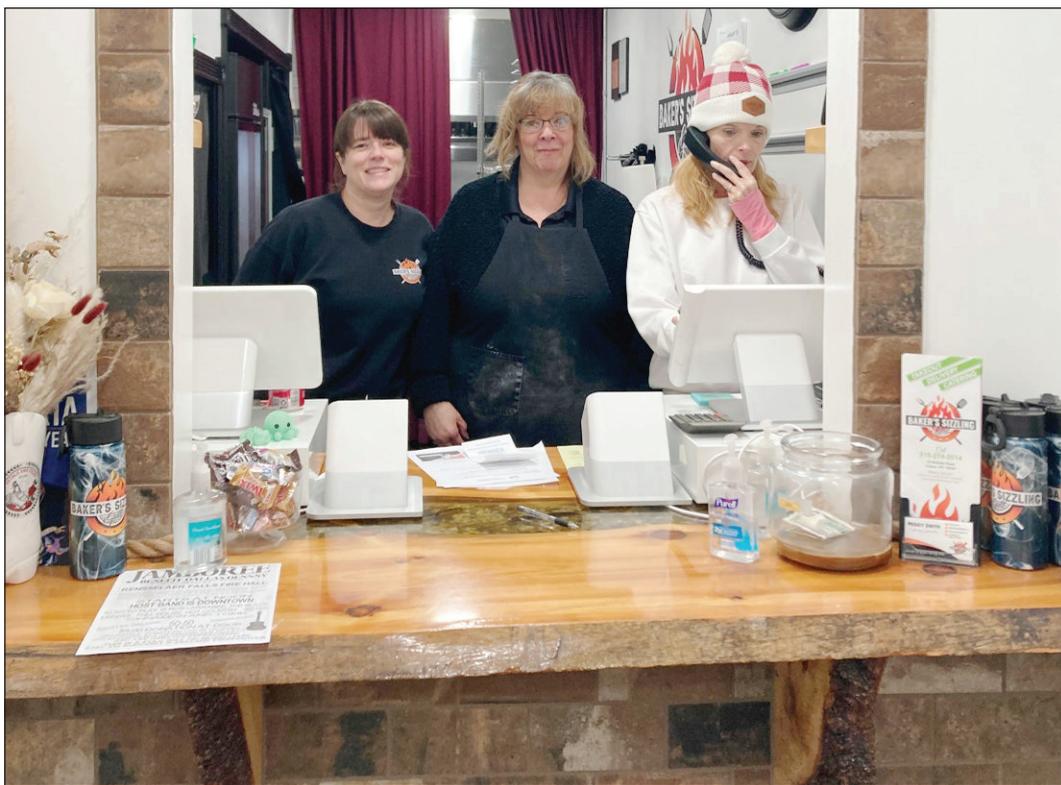
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Baker's Sizzling Grill



Pictured from left: Kayc Stone, Peggy Smith, and Jenn Cole of Baker's Sizzling Grill, a tucked-away take-out favorite on McKabe Road in Colton, NY. Co-owner Peggy brings home-style comfort food to this local hometown kitchen each day, while Jenn keeps things moving at the counter and Kayc helps deliver meals throughout the community. Their friendly service and North Country flavor have made Baker's Sizzling Grill a local favorite.

Jumpin' Goat coffee opening second Watertown location

By **CRAIG FOX**

cf@wdt.net

WATERTOWN—With one location in Carthage due to open later this year, the owner of Jumpin' Goat have received zoning approval to build a third — and the city's second — drive-thru coffee stand.

Owner Erik Russell is moving forward to build the company's "flagship" drive-thru stand on the property at 440 State St. to give him the chance to show off potential Jumpin' Goats that would open throughout the country.

Russell, who opened his first Jumpin' Goat at 418 Coffeen St. in 2024, said he's planning to start work on a second location on Cole Road in the town of Champion during the first week of May.

"We've got a lot going on," he said.

Jumpin' Goat sells only beverages, focusing on branding and marketing the products. The menu consists of coffee, espressos and specialty beverages containing Red Bull, Dr. Pepper and Mountain Dew.

Russell opened his first Jumpin' Goat in an existing building on Coffeen Street that formerly housed the Brew Ha Ha.

The new State Street stand will be built to the exact specifications and equipment to make it more efficient for employees and customers. The espresso machine will be 50% bigger than the one in the Coffeen Street location, making it faster to serve customers, Russell said.

The new location will also offer a walk-up window and feature an area where activities can be held, like tables to play chess, Russell said.

Russell doesn't know when work on the State Street location will begin. He's also working on additional locations near Rochester and in Florida.

Since the first one opened, Jumpin' Goat has become a popular stop for customers wanting specialty drinks, with vehicles sometimes backed up into the road.

Since opening the first location, Russell's goal has been to make the "Greatest Of All Time" coffee.

Podcast Launches to Inspire Wellness Conversations



Sangita Chanda and Alene Thomas

Local creators Sangita Chanda and Alene Thomas have launched The Everyday Glow Podcast, a new wellness and self-care show produced through Everyday Glow Media LLC. The podcast features honest, encouraging conversations focused on real-life experiences, personal growth, and practical ways to support overall well-being. Through

inclusive and uplifting discussions, the hosts aim to help listeners across the North Country and beyond feel supported and inspired wherever they are on their wellness journey. Listeners can learn more at everyday-glowpodcast.com and follow the show on Facebook and Instagram at Everyday Glow Podcast.



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Jefferson Community College Featured Honors Program Student

By **PAMELA DIXON**
JCC

Madison L. Shepherd of Adams Center is the featured Jefferson Community College (JCC) Honors Program student for the month of February 2026. She is a liberal arts student concentrating in creative writing at Jefferson. After graduating, she plans to transfer to SUNY Oswego to further her studies. As part of Madison's honors program options, she created a presentation on the history and mythology she explored during a trip to Greece with the Jefferson European Excursion Club.

"I enjoy diving deeper into select subjects for my honors projects and the opportunities the program has given me," says Shepherd.

The Jefferson Community College Honors Program offers students with exceptional academic skills the opportunity to receive enriched in-



Shepherd

struction 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.

Beer will flow at soon-to-be-open Canton brewery

By **ANDY GARDNER**
agardner@wdt.net

CANTON – The long-anticipated Bent Beam Brewing in Canton is expected to begin brewing its first batches of beer soon, with plans to open to the public in March or early April.

As of late January, construction on the brewery was considered "finished substantially," according to St. Lawrence County IDA CEO Patrick Kelly.

At the IDA board's Jan. 27 meeting, Kelly said the company is "working on cleaning and commissioning the brew house now."

In addition, the IDA CEO said the business is in the process of obtaining the necessary licenses and putting key operational components in place, including a point-of-sale sys-

tem.

Kelly noted that the owners are targeting a March or April debut, though he said the timeline is tentative because "they're trying to take the time and do everything correctly."

After Bent Beam secures its final licenses, brewers will need to allow for the natural fermentation process, which Kelly estimated could take "eight to ten weeks."

The IDA LDC approved a \$225,000 loan for the project in December.

Kelly explained that half of the loan will be repaid, while the remaining half will serve as "permanent financing."

The project previously received \$610,000 in Restore NY funding in 2022.

Construction on the brewery began in May 2024.

Travel with SLC Chamber

Traveling Chevaliers announce a new partnership with the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce to present an exclusive community travel opportunity: "Discover Switzerland, Austria & Bavaria."

This curated 10-day journey, scheduled for Sept. 19 – 28, offers local residents and business owners a unique blend of cultural immersion, luxury accommodations, and world-class networking.

The partnership aims to foster community spirit through shared experiences, taking travelers through the heart of the Alps and culminating in the historic tents of Munich's Oktoberfest.

"We are thrilled to collaborate with the Chamber to bring this world-class itinerary to our community," said Craig Chevalier, owner of The Traveling Chevaliers. "This isn't just a vacation; it's an opportunity to experience the heritage of Europe—from the Swiss Parliament in Bern to the oldest restaurant in Austria—all while traveling with friends and neighbors from home."

Tour Highlights & Cultural Milestones: Heritage Exploration: Guided tours of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Bern and the "Sound of Music" gardens in Salzburg. Authentic Experiences: A private Alphorn workshop, yodeling demonstrations, and a Tyrolean folklore show.

The Main Event: Reserved seating at Munich's legendary Oktoberfest, a folk festival tradition dating back to the 1800s.

Royal Grandeur: An expert-led tour of King Ludwig II's Linderhof Palace in Bavaria. Early Booking Incentives In honor of the Chamber partnership, a special "Book Now" discount is available.

Travelers who secure their reservation by March 20, 2026, will receive a \$250 per person discount. Rates include round-trip airfare from Montreal, hotel transfers, and 13 meals. For more information, or to request a reservation form, please contact: Craig Chevalier The Traveling Chevaliers Phone: 315-296-8204 Email: info@chevtravel.com

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From T9

year, \$52.2 million contract to Kubricky-Jointa Lime, LLC for Madison In addition, they approved \$4 million for workforce development funding.

In his update to trustees, Driscoll also addressed the Smart Path Connect project.

“Smart Path Connect will be energized later this year. That will free up another 1,000 megawatts of generation in the north country that from time to time gets bottled up,” he said.

Driscoll said, with the additional build-out of wind power and interest in further development in the region, “this can only help attract companies to the north country with better transmission, but also improve our own operations and our own transmission network.”

The Smart Path Connect project includes modernizing more than 100 miles of transmission lines. Those include approximately 45 miles east from Massena to the town of Clinton, which is led by the Power Authority, and approximately 55 miles south from Croghan to Marcy, which is led by National Grid NY. Aging wooden H-frames that date back to the 1950s are being replaced with steel poles almost exclusively within existing rights-of-way, resulting in longer spans between poles and the use of

less land.

The work also involves the replacement or upgrade of 10 substations.

The transmission line is owned and operated by the Power Authority and National Grid, and the rebuild will convert existing 230-kilovolt lines to either 230-kilovolt or 345-kilovolt with associated substation construction and upgrades along the existing rights-of-way in Clinton, Franklin, St. Lawrence, Lewis and Oneida counties.

When it’s finished, the two Smart Path Connect segments will be connected by Smart Path, NYPA’s rebuild of the Moses to Adirondack transmission lines which was energized in 2024. Smart Path was an upgrade of 78 miles of transmission lines from the total 86-mile transmission artery spanning from Massena in St. Lawrence County to Croghan in Lewis County.

It’s designed to strengthen transmission lines against weather events and enable the reliable transmission of clean energy from Northern New York into the state’s electric power grid.

The two lines will form one continuous 345-kilovolt transmission line between Clinton and Oneida counties, reinforcing the statewide grid and connecting energy into the power system including power from newly constructed and proposed renewable energy sources.

New postmark policy impacting bill payments

By Bob Beckstead

Johnson Newspapers

MASSENA — Individuals who wait until the last minute to mail out bill payments could be facing late charges.

That includes bills for village of Massena services, Village Administrator Monique N. Chatland told the village board.

Effective Dec. 24, 2025, the U.S. Postal Service changed its postmark policy, reflecting the date an item is processed at a facility, not when it is dropped off. This shift can delay the official postmark date by several days, potentially resulting in late fees, missed tax deadlines, or rejected mail-in ballots.

The postmark now represents the date of the first automated processing operation, which occurs at a regional center rather than upon initial collection.

“I know that’s already been put out there, and there’s stuff posted on our Facebook page about the way that the Postal Service is changing their postmark procedures. I specifically mentioned that because we use the postmark dates for our water bills and tax bills, so as long as they’re postmarked by the due date, then we consider them on time,” Chatland said.

However, she said, with the change, “now it may



take two or three days to get a postmark” because of the mail transfer to the regional hub.

“They’re reducing how frequently the mail is being transferred there,” she said. “So, I just wanted to point that out. Somebody might say they put it in the box on the 9th and it wasn’t postmarked until late the 11th. We can’t remove that.”

To ensure timely processing, the USPS recommends visiting a staffed retail location to request a manual postmark. For drop boxes, mailing items several days early is essential.

Another alternative is to use the drop boxes in front of the Massena Town Hall.

One box is designated for water bill and village tax payments.

“So, if my water bill is due tomorrow and I dropped it in the box tonight, the staff

picks it up first thing in the morning tomorrow. Make sure it’s dropped off tonight,” Trustee Kenneth J. McGowan said.

Chatland said that would prevent the payment from being overdue.

“People are able to go in and have their request at the post office as postmarked that day as well, but I just want to make sure that people understand that so our staff isn’t getting a bunch of calls,” she said.

The U.S. Postal Service offers other advice, such as mailing early to allow extra time for all time-sensitive documents; use retail counters for legal or tax documents to get a postmark in person; or consider using electronic payments online for bill payments to avoid postmark issues.

Deduction

From T6

ings are a benefit to consumers, this tax credit alone is unlikely to be a big motivator for new car buyers. A \$40,000 vehicle over a similar 60-month loan: First year deduction would be less than \$600.”

It’s expected to cost the federal government over \$57 billion in lost revenue in exchange,

according to analysis from the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation.

Robb said there may be other benefits driven by this deduction though; because it reduces adjusted gross income, it could help taxpayers near the income limits for other deductions or tax credits to qualify for them. That could include the federal student loan interest deduction or health savings account contribution deductions.

“In the end, the new tax policy

may reduce the number of cash buyers (as there is some offset for taking out a loan now), but even then, that result will benefit lenders and banks (more loans) more than it will benefit consumers,” he said. “Overall, any incentive for new-vehicle buyers is welcome, but this tax credit is limited, won’t be a market mover, not is it a tool to substantially address the affordability challenges and high interest rates our market faces.”

Data

From T4

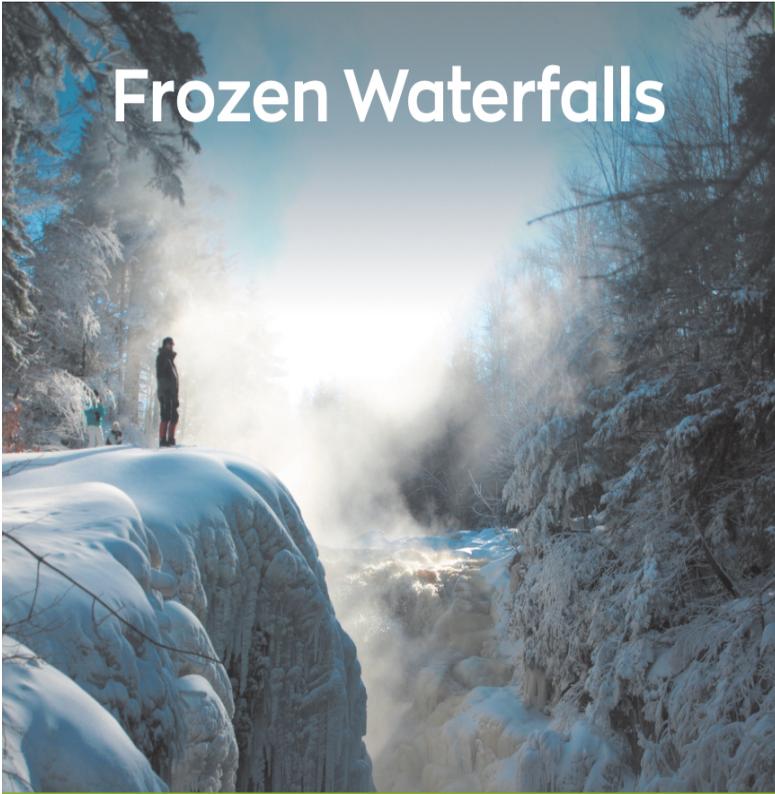
moratorium on data centers for up to three years.

“I’m not sure where that is in the process, but that is something that may be in play here as well. I think the rationale for that is because there is not a lot of capacity,” he said.

At the suggestion of planning board members, they

also added a recommendation to impose a moratorium to “give the town time to put their ducks in a row before the first one comes across the screen.”

They also recommended that a fee structure be put in place that would allow them to hire a consultant to review plans for future data centers in the town.



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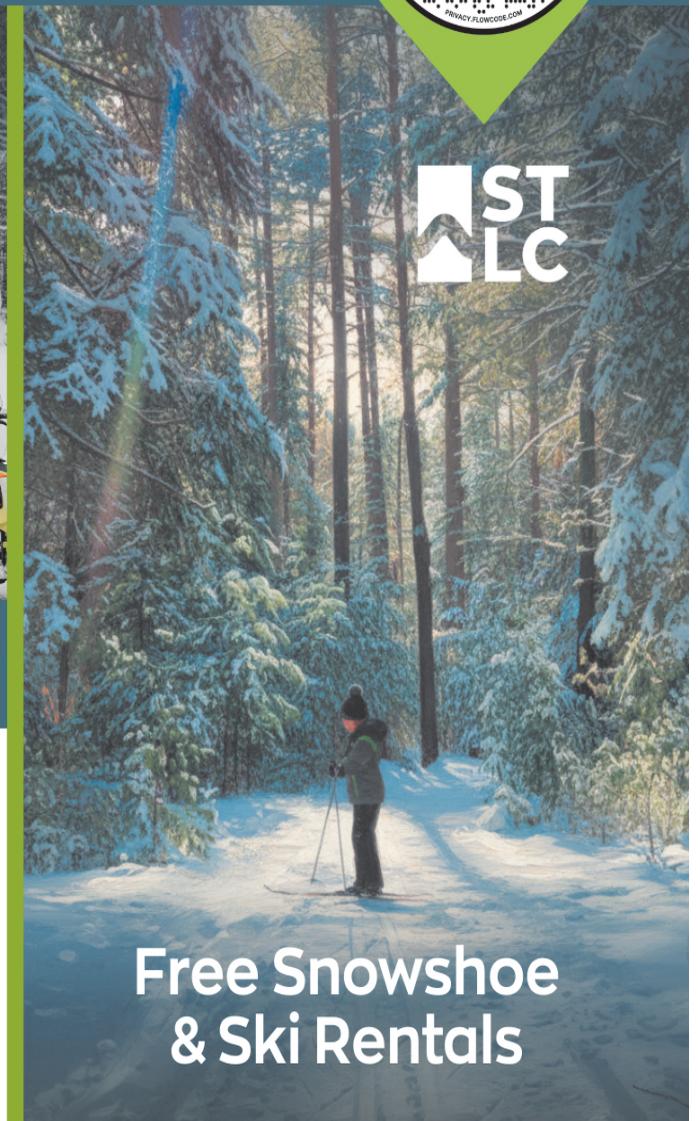
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Rich

From T11

the agency in 2008. He was later president of the DPAO Foundation and now serves on its board, in an advisory, non-voting role.

When he founded DPAO, Rich began to bring national music acts to Watertown to raise funds for the agency. Due to the skyrocketing costs of bringing in those acts, a 51-year run of concerts hosted by the DPAO bowed out last year.

Rich said that country star Alan Jackson was DPAO's biggest concert, held in June of 2010. Rich recalled, wistfully, an element of that concert: "Rob Freeman, who ran Freeman Bus Corporation, gave us 22 buses to use. We had people parked in a designated area, and we bused them to the concert. Things like that don't happen anymore. I feel so sad that things have changed, in some ways, not for the good, but in others, for the good."



National Grid's phase angle regulator arrived at the substation on Webster Street in Malone at 5 p.m. Thursday. The equipment is seen here just on the outskirts of the village on State Route 11B.

Richard Rosentreter/Malone Telegram

Power

From T11

make upgrades, we do these based on inspections, the age of the unit, and the demand placed on it," he said, "It's a comprehensive profile that we have of each of our substations and the Malone station was in the work plan for upgrades this year. It was includ-

ed with the latest rate case we filed with the PSC. It was identified within the last few years as in need of some upgrades to modernize the substation and support our customers in the region."

Paventi said the transport of the phase angle regulator to Malone was dictated by construction and delivery schedules.

"Once it got on the boat in Europe we had to get it off the boat and to the site," Paventi said.



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