



BNNY Business

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Daily updates: NNY360.com

January 2024

■ GWNC Chamber to present Shapiro Award in February
PAGE 23



■ NNY Business is back after a brief break in this new format.
PAGE 17

■ Breaking News! Bad Apple bar business sets sights on downtown Watertown.
PAGE 16

■ Want to get away, but not travel too far? Check out St. Lawrence County Chamber's new lodging booking tool online.
PAGE 7

Justin Ernst is an Army veteran, and a savvy businessman. Read about his new venture on Page 4.



Justin Ernst, owner of C&J's Repair Shop and SEATS Transportation, fixes the engine of a Volkswagen Jetta that was damaged after the owner ran it without oil. ZACHARY CANAPERI/NNY BUSINESS

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Antique Boat Museum plans Captain School



The Antique Boat Museum, 750 Mary St., Clayton. Contributed

CLAYTON — The Antique Boat Museum has scheduled its 2024 spring session of the Captain School with instructors Captain Tom Trovato and Captain Ken Kozin.

The Captain School at ABM offers courses necessary to secure a captain's license. During this session, the operator of uninspected passenger vessels (OUPV), masters upgrade, and towing endorsement courses will be offered. Upon completion of all coursework and testing, students will have fulfilled a portion of the requirements to apply for their merchant mariner credential (MMC) through the U.S. Coast Guard at either the OUPV or masters level up to 100GRT with the option to add a towing endorsement.

Course dates and times:

— Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels (OUPV/6-Pack) Course + Exams

Class: March 16th-24th (16th, 17th, 20th, 23rd, 24th 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 18th, 19th, 21st, 22nd 8 a.m. to noon)

Exams: March 25th and 26th (Exams begin at 9 a.m. All students must complete all four exams during the scheduled testing period.)

— Commercial Assistance Towing Endorsement Course +Exam

Date: March 21st 1 to 5

p.m. (1-hour exam time is built into the course curriculum)

— Upgrade to masters (100 GRT) Course + Exam: March 28th – 30th

Class + Exam Times: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (2-hour exam time is built into course curriculum)

Merchant mariner credentials are required in order to legally carry passengers for hire. "For hire" includes fishing charters, tour boats, diving excursions, water transportation of any kind, and all piloting instruction. Commercial operations such as ferries, tugboats, and supply boats also require USCG-licensed captains and many manufacturers require licenses for private yacht delivery.

Registration is open on "The Captain School at ABM" page at abm.org. Further information and links to register online and the Coast Guard's National Maritime Center MMC Application checklist can all be found on the webpage.

For questions about registration, course materials and/or the process of securing your license, contact Museum Educator Molly Voth at mvoth@abm.org or 315.686.4104 ext. 225.

Save The River Welcomes New Board and Staff Members

By **CHELSEA BROUGHTON**

outreach@savetheriver.org

Save The River (STR), the 45-year-old environmental watchdog for the St. Lawrence River, recently welcomed a new board member and a new staff member.

Save The River welcomed Norma Zimmer to the board of directors.

Norma arrived in Clayton in 1961, leaving behind friends, family, and career from the Southern Tier. It has been an exciting and challenging journey. She is looking forward to being a part of the STR team. Norma was employed for 23 years at Frink America and in 2000 when they closed she was part of the transition team for Henderson Mfg. She now enjoys working at the Antique Boat Museum, another great asset to our community. Her experience and dedication to the community will be helpful as we all work together to fulfill STR's Mission.

STR also welcomed a new Education Coordinator, Daniel Bellinger.

Daniel spent his childhood



Zimmer. Contributed



Bellinger. Contributed

in Hawaii, Florida, and Texas before beginning to settle down in upstate New York. He started falling in love with the North Country while pursuing degrees in Environmental Science & Policy, Environmental Engineering, and Political Science at Clarkson University, and delving deep into the Adirondack-to-Algonquin Corridor. Over the next several years, he worked with the Student Conservation Association in

Alaska, the Excelsior Conservation Corps across NYS, and the North Country Children's Museum as their Science Educator in Potsdam, before joining Save the River in late 2023. In his free time, Daniel enjoys volunteering with the St. Lawrence Land Trust, gardening with his family at their home in Gouverneur, experimenting with random personal projects, and going on imaginary dice-fueled adventures with friends and family.

More information can be found at the Save The River website by visiting www.savetheriver.org.

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1000islands-clayton.com

Seats Transportation moving up with 'over-the-road' trucking and more

By **CHRIS BROCK**

cbrock@wdt.net

Justin D. Ernst has a business sense that's constantly on the move.

In 2017, he started a private taxi company, based in the hamlet of Plessis, with lots of that business contracted out through Medicaid and United Health Care. About five years ago, with the creation of Seats Transportation, he shifted exclusively to transporting for Johnson Newspaper Corp. — trucking the company's newspapers and those the company printed for other publishers across the state.

"Over the course of the last four years, we gained routes," Ernst said. "Now, we're at the point where we basically lost all the routes."

But Ernst had a contingency plan.

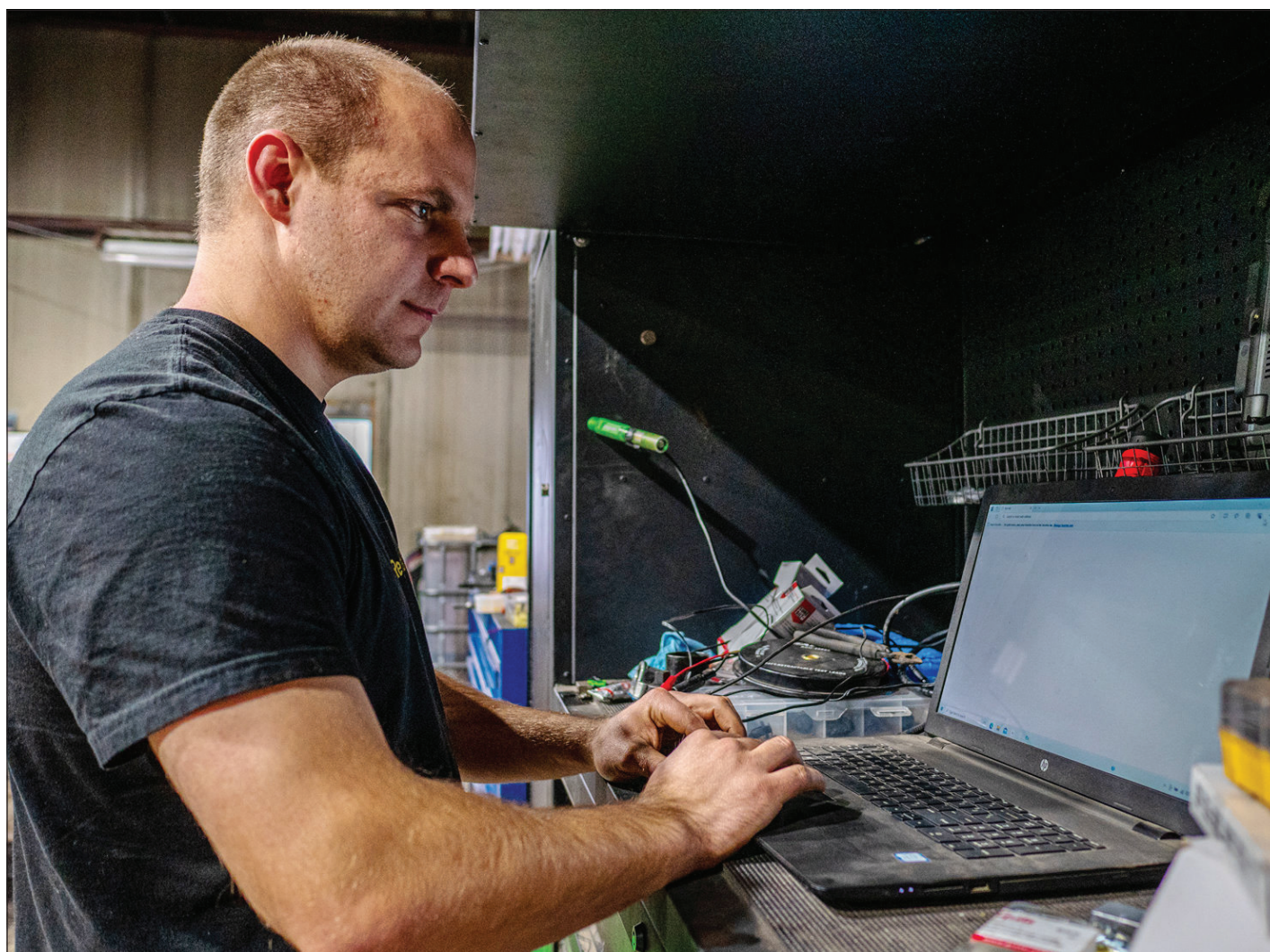
"I ended up buying a repair shop," he said.

It opened last year and he named it C&J's Repair Shop, located at 19431 State Route 12F, Watertown. It serves all vehicles — from big rigs to automobiles, and not just his own. It's open to the public, but there are advantages with his transportation company owning the repair shop.

"We could fix our own vehicles. One, it's faster and two it's cheaper. But really, it's the speed. If you go to another shop, it might be a week or two before they even look at it and I need my trucks fixed like right this second. And owning a shop, we can do that."

He opened the shop at about the same time he purchased his first tractor-trailer — a transition to "over

See SEATS T5



Justin Ernst, owner of C&J's Repair Shop, searches for car's specifications. Zachary Canaperi/NNY Business



C&J's Repair Shop on Route 12F in Brownville. Zachary Canaperi/NNY Business



Trucks at C&J's Repair shop on Route 12F in Brownville. Zachary Canaperi/NNY Business



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Justin Ernst, owner of C&J's Repair Shop, searches for vehicle's specifications. Zachary Canaperi/NNY Business

Seats

From T4

the road" trucking for Seats Transportation, which has a legal name of JDE Platinum Marketing LLC. "Over the road" trucking refers to hauling goods and products to various locations across the country. "We go all over," Ernst said. Hauling jobs with that truck ranged from North Dakota to Texas.

Last year, Ernst purchased his second tractor-trailer and he recently closed on his third rig, which he should have in the next week or two.

The first two rigs he purchased are Kenworths — one a 1995 and the other a 1996 model. The one he recently purchased is a 1999 Peterbilt rig.

"We went old school," Ernst said of the 1990s'-era vehicles. He noted there are benefits to owning such a fleet. "We can fix anything on it," he said. "And when you're on the road, it's easier to fix. I can go to Auto-Zone or O'Reilly's and find an alternator or something. I don't have to special order anything."

He added, "We ran into issues with our 2015s," — box trucks, diesels. "They have emissions (equipment) and if a sensor goes out, it puts the whole truck down and it's a nightmare."

Ernst employs four drivers

and four employees on the shop side.

"One of the biggest things I love about the job is that especially in the transportation world, we transport something different every day. I guess it's also a downfall too in that we don't really have a routine. Today may be crushed cars and tomorrow it may be lumber and the next day coils. Being universal in what we can and can't transport just broadens our strengths."

For the past nine years, Ernst, a native of Oklahoma, has been a soldier in the Army Reserves. In 2017-18 that reserve duty sent him to serve in Iraq. Ernst is a horizontal construction engineer in the Reserves, building things like roads, runways and foundations.

"My mom joined the Army, active duty, when I was young," he said. "We traveled the world."

They spent two years in South Korea and three years in Germany, where Ernst graduated from high school.

"From there, we ended up here at Fort Drum," he said. His mom, Anne, has returned to Oklahoma.

■ ■ ■
To contact Seats Transportation/C&J's Repair Shop/ JDE Platinum Marketing, call 315-771-7737.

Samaritan leader elected board chair of Healthcare Association of New York State

Staff Report

WATERTOWN — Samaritan Medical Center has announced that Thomas H. Carman, president and CEO, has been elected as the 2024 board of trustees chair for the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS). Carman's one-year term began on Jan. 1, 2024. This is a volunteer board position, which compliments his role as Samaritan's CEO.

"As a CEO in a New York State rural community, I look forward to being the chairman of the HANYS board and bringing forward the issues and advocacy efforts that will encompass the entire state, with a greater understanding of what rural hospitals face," Carman said. "I think my experience and perspective of what I have learned over my 40+ year career in healthcare will be beneficial to many, and I look forward to leading this board as we continue to navigate the challenges of healthcare in New York State."



Thomas H. Carman. Contributed

HANYS is a membership-driven organization that represents 241 hospitals, 80 nursing homes, 104 home care agencies and 49 other health care providers in the state, representing nearly 20 million New Yorkers, according to its website.

Carman has served as Samaritan's President and CEO

since 2004. Prior to joining Samaritan, Carman was with Cortland Regional Medical Center from 1997 to 2004. He earned a Bachelor's degree in pharmacy from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and a Master's degree in business administration from Syracuse University.

In addition to serving as HANYS 2024 board chair, Carman holds leadership roles with Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, Vice Chair; Advocate Drum/Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, Past Chair; North Country Initiative, board member; Healthcare Partners of the North County, board member; Iroquois Healthcare Association, past chair; Greater Watertown-North Country Chamber of Commerce, board member; and Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.



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MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Master's Degree in Public Health or related field*, and two (2) years of administrative experience in a health related organization or government agency. Experience should demonstrate effective knowledge and communication skills to administer public health programs, manage staff and budget, establish and implement policy and goals, and compliance with legal requirements.

NOTE: *Related field includes; health administration, nursing, environmental health or community health education. Appointment to the Director Position is subject to approval of New York State Commissioner of Health.

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Ruth A. Doyle, County Administrator
48 Court Street, Canton, New York 13617
Deadline for applications will be
Wednesday January 31, 2024. AA/EOE



**Now Hiring:
ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR SL2**

Position: Admissions Counselor **Salary:** \$47,000 - \$50,000 **Department:** Admissions

Job Description: SUNY Canton invites applications for the position of Admissions Counselor to be based Canton, New York. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, recruitment of prospective students, working with students and parents through all phases of recruitment from inquiry through enrollment, working as part of an admissions team to achieve enrollment goals, event management, and handling other responsibilities as assigned. The position requires extensive travel with overnights and a willingness to keep a flexible work schedule, including evenings and weekends. Excellent Benefits Package including healthcare, paid vacation, and tuition assistance.

Required Qualifications: A Bachelor's degree and valid driver's license. · Strong interpersonal skills and ability to build relationships with potential students, families, and the counselors and teachers in the students' support network. · Ability to work independently and on a team. · The successful candidate will be adaptable, detail oriented, accurate, able to learn new technology quickly, and able to gather data. · Ability to work nights and weekends.

Preferred Qualifications: Experience traveling and working with students with multicultural backgrounds. · A strong knowledge base of Microsoft Excel, Word, and Outlook. · Experience working with a student information system.

Prior to final offer of employment, the selected candidate will be required to submit to a background check including, but not limited to, employment verification, educational and other credential verification, and criminal background check.

Application Deadline: open until filled; application review begins immediately. Persons interested in the above position should apply online at <https://employment.canton.edu/>

SUNY Canton, a unit of the State University of New York, is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer. SUNY Canton is building a culturally diverse and pluralistic faculty and strongly encourages applications from minority and women candidates. The college is located in Canton, a village in the St. Lawrence River valley of northern New York. Located 20 miles from the St. Lawrence River and the Adirondack Park, and 70 miles from the Canadian capital city of Ottawa, Ontario, Canton holds excellent opportunities for the outdoor or cultural enthusiast. SUNY Canton is a member of the Associated Colleges, a consortium of four colleges.



Persons interested in the above position should apply online at
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**Now Hiring:
JEFFERSON COUNTY SUPERVISING DOG CONTROL OFFICER**

This is a position charged with the responsibilities for carrying out the provisions of the Agriculture and Markets Law dealing with the general control of dogs including their seizure, impoundment, adoption, redemption and care. An employee in this class must possess skill in handling dogs of all sizes and be able to operate independently in the field. Civil Service exam required for permanent appointment. EOE

Salary Range \$67,788 - \$ 76,296 per year, with excellent fringe benefits including health, vision and dental insurance, Flex Spending Account, NYS Retirement, Deferred Compensation, paid vacation and sick leave.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma and three years of work experience, one of which must have been in a supervisory capacity, involving the handling and caring for dogs or other domestic animals. Must be at least 21 years of age at the time of appointment.

NOTE:

1. This position involves the operation of a motor vehicle; possession of the appropriate level New York State driver's license is required.
2. Additional experience may be substituted for the education requirements on a year-for-year basis.

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Or send an application and resume to: Jefferson County Dept. of Human Resources, 175 Arsenal St. Watertown, NY 13601.



Jefferson County

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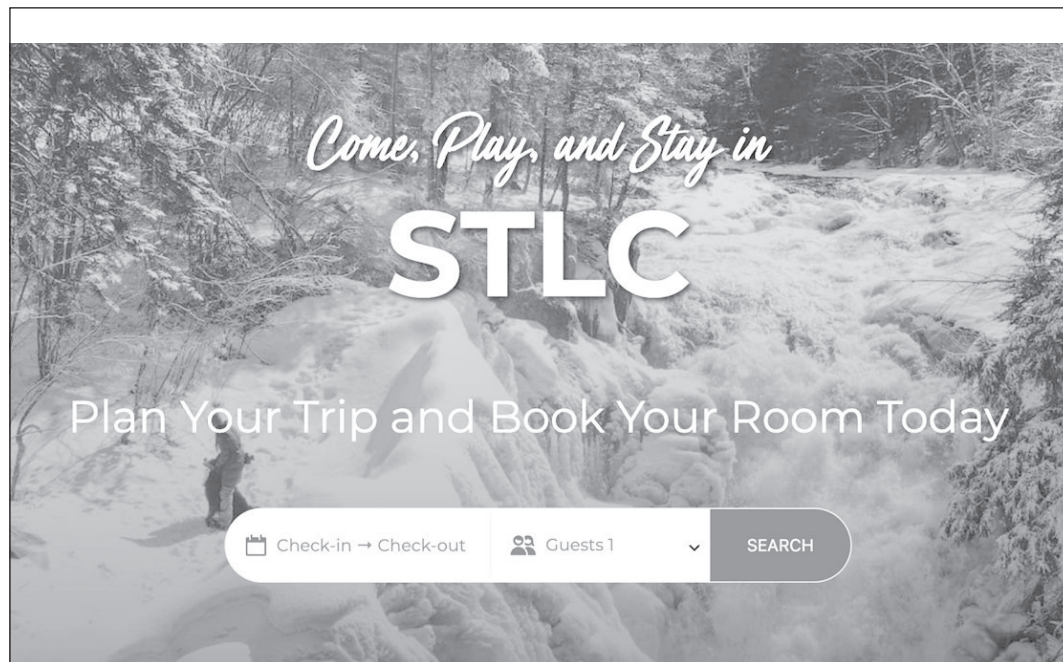
New lodging booking platform launched

PROPERTY OWNERS ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE FOR BETTER VISITOR EXPERIENCE

By ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CANTON — A new online booking platform showcasing St. Lawrence County lodging options including a search bar and interactive map is officially live on www.VisitSTLC.com! The platform not only features lodging options on its interactive map but also highlights more than 80 points of interest throughout the county, including golf courses, hiking and walking trails, museums, libraries and more. The inclusion of these points of interest will make it easier for visitors to choose accommodation that aligns with their desired vacation activities and inspires them to check out something that they didn't already know about.

"This online platform has the potential to provide visitors with a one-stop-shop trip-planning experience," Tiffani Amo, Interim Director of Tourism at the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce explains. "The ability for visitors to be able to identify the wide and varied range of lodging available while they are dreaming up their vacation itineraries can help them lock in trips more quickly and decisively. This is especially helpful because our short term rentals are not always easy for visitors to find, but they provide access points to sought after recreation and entertainment in rural areas. This platform is the tool that can help connect those dots."



A screenshot of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce's new trip planner.

"As the largest county in New York State, we want to embrace the fact that when you come to St. Lawrence County to visit, you aren't in the middle of nowhere - you are in the middle of everywhere," Amo says. "We want trip-planning to be easy, and presenting people with lodging options in a way that makes them feel connected to everything we have to offer is critical. With so much rural outdoor recreation and a variety of assets and attractions spread throughout our many small towns and villages, it's important to make sure that visitors can find a place to stay that is convenient and

meets their needs."

The newly launched booking platform currently includes 28 lodging properties, all members of the St. Lawrence County Chamber, for the pilot phase of the project. Amo notes that there are hundreds of properties that could potentially find their way onto the map, ranging from major chain establishments and larger hotels and motels to local inns, bed and breakfasts and vacation rentals.

The booking platform soft-launched in early November, and digital and print promotions have since begun to hit the airwaves. Costs for the build-

out of the platform have been subsidized by funding that was pursued by the Chamber and awarded through the American Rescue Plan Act funds that were distributed in St. Lawrence County to help the economy rebound after the pandemic, which will continue through September 2025.

Amo said she hopes that as the word spreads, property owners will recognize the value of their participation, both as business owners and also as contributors to the bigger picture. "The financial investment for property owners is so minimal by becoming a member,

and the benefits are exponential," Amo said. "We've done the heavy lifting here, and what we need now is strength in numbers. We need local businesses in the accommodation sector to seize this opportunity to play a role in changing the narrative about tourism in St. Lawrence County."

The Chamber's ongoing tourism marketing campaigns, which all include references to the website and which are being updated to include verbiage about booking accommodation online, have reached billboards in Toronto, magazines throughout the USA and Canada, and brochures and guides in public and private display areas at hotels, restaurants, rest stops, grocery stores, retail chains, museums, pharmacies, libraries and more throughout New York State and Ontario. Campaigns have also included digital streaming shorts, radio spots and a range of other media sources.

As the designated Tourism Promotion Agent for St. Lawrence County, the Chamber also works closely with *I Love New York* and partners with the *Thousand Islands Seaway Region* and the *Adirondack region* to collaborate on special marketing and outreach initiatives. To get involved with this project or other tourism marketing efforts, contact Tiffani Amo at Tif@slcchamber.org or 315-386-4000.

St. Lawrence Chamber appoints new staff member

By ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce welcomes Katie Berry as the Canton Community Coordinator & Communications Specialist. This position was established to represent, support, and promote the businesses and community of Canton in the integration of the Canton and St. Lawrence County Chambers of Commerce. In her new

position, Berry will coordinate events, programs, and networking opportunities that promote Canton area member businesses, foster collaboration, and strengthen the local business ecosystem. As the Chamber's Communications Specialist, she will help communicate business opportunities and Chamber programming across the County and beyond.

Katie Berry is a recent graduate of Clarkson University and

brings several years of experience in communications and marketing, in which she has worked at Clarkson University and the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce.

"I am so grateful to have the opportunity to join the team at the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce," said Berry. "I look forward to building a relationship with the business community and being able to provide support throughout the

region. Being a recent college graduate who fell in love with this area, I'm hoping to provide another perspective when engaging with the community."

"The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to have Katie on board and working with us in our Canton offices," said Ben Dixon, the Chamber's Executive Director. "With Katie's experience and enthusiasm, we will be better equipped to share opportuni-

ties to County businesses in development, training, funding, networking, marketing, and more. We are excited to have her on the ground in Canton to support the community's diverse businesses and quality-of-life assets."

Katie Berry can be reached at the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, located at 101 Main Street in Canton, at 315-386-4000x6, or Katie@slcchamber.org.

The unique rewards of building a career at the Watertown Family YMCA

By **APRIL ANNE YOUNG**

ayoung@nnyymca.org

In addition to impacting the lives of its members, the Watertown Family YMCA impacts the lives of its staff in a variety of ways.

Working at the YMCA provides staff with a profound sense of purpose. The Y's mission to promote youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility aligns with the values and aspirations of many employees, giving their work a deeper meaning.

Employees at the YMCA often develop strong connections with their local communities. The Y's focus on community impact allows staff to see firsthand how their efforts positively affect the lives of individuals and families, fostering a sense of connection and pride.

A strong emphasis is



The six lane lap pool inside the new YMCA Community Center.
Zachary Canaperi/Watertown Daily Times

placed on the professional development at the Y. Employees have access to skill-building workshops, training, and career advancement opportunities.

Watertown Family YMCA programs require collaboration and teamwork. Employees work together toward common goals, fos-

tering a sense of camaraderie and collaboration. This team-oriented environment contributes to positive relationships among Y staff.

The Y recognizes and rewards talent within their organization. Employees often have opportunities for career advancement and progression, providing a clear



YMCA officials and local leaders celebrate after cutting the ribbon to the new facility in December.
Jonathon Wheeler/Watertown Daily Times

career path that encourages them to stay and grow with the Y.

Whether through supervisory roles, program management, or involvement in community initiatives, employees have the chance to take on leadership responsibilities, enhancing their

leadership skills and confidence.

Choosing to work for the Watertown Family YMCA means a purpose-driven career, impacting lives, fostering growth, and contributing to a healthier, more connected community. Just ask any of its 220 employees.



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The Unique Rewards of Building a Career at the Watertown Family YMCA

In addition to impacting the lives of its members, the Watertown Family YMCA impacts the lives of its staff in a variety of ways.

Working at the YMCA provides staff with a profound sense of purpose. The Y's mission to promote youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility aligns with the values and aspirations of many employees, giving their work a deeper meaning.

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A strong emphasis is placed on the professional development at the Y. Employees have access to skill-building workshops, training, and career advancement opportunities.

Watertown Family YMCA programs require collaboration and teamwork. Employees work together toward common goals, fostering a sense of camaraderie and collaboration. This team-oriented environment contributes to positive relationships among Y staff.

The Y recognizes and rewards talent within their organization. Employees often have opportunities for career advancement and progression, providing a clear career path that encourages them to stay and grow with the Y.

Whether through supervisory roles, program management, or involvement in community initiatives, employees have the chance to take on leadership responsibilities, enhancing their leadership skills and confidence.

Choosing to work for the Watertown Family YMCA means a purpose-driven career, impacting lives, fostering growth, and contributing to a healthier, more connected community. Just ask any of its 220 employees.

2023 BUSINESSES OF THE YEAR TO BE ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK

By Greater Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce will be announcing its 2023 Business of the Year Awards at the Harbor Hotel Jan. 25.

The votes have been tallied, and at the dinner Emerging Business of the Year, Legacy Business of the Year and Outstanding Organization of the Year will all be honored.

EMERGING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

A business that has been in operation less than 5 years. A newer business that is bringing "good vibes" to the community and has made a "splash" in 2023.

Balanced Nutrition - Founded by Tim Allers and Majken Bassette in 2021, Balanced Nutrition offers an array of energizing teas in a variety of flavors, along with protein balls, shakes, coffee, and much more. With an unwavering commitment to exceptional customer service, their brand is taking flight, rapidly expanding to meet the growing de-

mands of their loyal customers. Presently, they proudly operate three locations in Watertown, Mexico, and Lowville. As they continue to build their brand, they are not only building a customer-centered business but also nurturing a team that shares their vision of providing healthy options to the community.

Jake Johnson Properties - Founded in 2019 by Jake and Kate Johnson, Jake Johnson Properties has grown from 9 properties to a remarkable portfolio worth \$54 million. They specialize in residential and commercial property management throughout Jefferson County and the Upstate New York area. With a focus on renewing distressed properties, they strive to provide exceptional service and care to tenants. Amid their remarkable growth, they remain dedicated to delivering exquisitely maintained residential and commercial units while tirelessly supporting various initiatives that uplift the community.

The Lincoln Loft and Studio - Founded by Chris and Brianna Pisani in 2020, The Lincoln Loft and Studio is a captivating wedding and event venue nestled in downtown Watertown. This extraordinary space not only hosts unforgettable celebrations for our community but also serves as a vibrant hub for emerging small businesses. The space is available as a photo studio for local photographers and during holidays they offer a platform for artisans to showcase their handcrafted goods.

LEGACY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

A business that has been in operation for over 20 years. A staple business in the North Country that has done great things in 2023.

Burrville Cider Mill - The Steiner family has owned and operated the Burrville Cider Mill since 1996 and the mill itself has a history dating back to 1801. Every year residents and tourists alike flock to Burrville Cider Mill for their annual picture at the falls with warm cider donuts and that signature

Burrville Apple Cider. Folks young and old enjoy the tradition of the mill and look forward to the seasonal delights. The family has built a network of North Country businesses serving up fan-favorites with the original cider at the heart of it all.

Dry Hill Ski Area - Dry Hill Ski Area has hosted generations of snow enthusiasts since 1982. Always a winter favorite and now a year-round destination. New owners Pat & Boo Jareo purchased the ski area from Tim and Deb McAtee in 2022 and have maintained the hill's history while growing programs and offerings. The North Country's destination for skiing, snowboarding, tubing and community gatherings. The annual ski swap, friendly lessons, music sessions, market days and unique parties are a few examples of what makes Dry Hill special.

Old McDonald's Farm - Old McDonald has a farm and it's in Sackets Harbor! In 1986, "The Farmer's Wife", Nancy Robbins, founded Old Mc-

Donald's Farm with a vision to provide an opportunity for the non-farming public to experience first-hand the joy of the country, animals, and agriculture. Today, Old McDonald's Farm has set the stage for an educational, agricultural, hands-on adventure for "kids" of all ages! A family tradition, the farm is a unique North Country asset bringing light to the agritourism industry making it accessible for all.

OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

A business or nonprofit organization that has been the most charitable throughout the North Country. Whether it be monetary donations, volunteer work, or advocacy, this business or organization is top of mind when it comes to making a difference in the community.

North Country Family Health Center - Since 1971, North Country Family Health Center has been dedicated to ensuring those in our community have access to

See **AWARDST20**

Weight Loss Surgery

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BY THE NUMBERS: NNY HOME SALES

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December 2023

Homes sold: 96
Median Price: \$184,000

November 2023

Homes sold: 114
Median Price: \$178,000

December 2022

Homes sold: 131
Median Price: \$178,000



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December 2023

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November 2023

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Three Lewis County Farms receive Century Farm Awards

Farms have been in families more than 100 years

By **NATURALLY LEWIS**
naturallylewis.com

Three Lewis County farms received Century Farm Awards at the 192nd Annual Meeting & Forum of the NYS Agricultural Society at the Syracuse On-Center on Jan. 11.

Each January, stakeholders from the NY agri-food system and natural resource industry gather to discuss priority issues and to recognize peers for outstanding achievement in eight categories. Since 1937, the Society has recognized farm families who have successfully operated their businesses for 100 years or more on the same property. These operations have been critically tested and serve as a treasured ideal for NY's 33,000 family farms. The award is sponsored by Farm Credit East, and each operation receives a permanent sign for their farmstead, and a signed proclamation from Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The theme of this year's Forum was "Harnessing Regenerative Agriculture." It offers an opportunity for farmers and other key partners to examine how regenerative agriculture is creating new opportunities for stakeholders throughout the agriculture and food supply chain. Commissioner Richard Ball of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets will also deliver the 2024 State of Agriculture Address.

Founded in 1923, Emmanuel and Christina Lehman purchased a 193-acre farm on the banks of the Black River in Castorland, and grew corn, hay and maple syrup. In 1964, the farm passed to the second generation — Richard and Pauline Lehman — and to Delvin and Sharon Lehman — the third generation — in 1994. It was at this point the farm was renamed to Riveredge Dairy. Delvin was instrumental in transitioning from small, square bales to large round bales. The operation was awarded Dairy of Distinction honors under Delvin's man-



Members of the Moser Family. Contributed



Members of the Markham Family. Contributed

agement. In 2021, the fourth generation — Delvin's son Curtis — joined the operation. Responsible for day-to-day operations and financial management, Curtis has expanded the maple business to 1,700 taps, and is providing custom harvesting, primarily round baling and wrapping hay, for others. The farm has expanded to 233 total acres, and future plans include adding a manure pit, a new barn better suited for year-round housing, and a sugar house for maple syrup processing.

In 1923, Ernest and Evelyn Markham purchased 78 acres in Constableville. Here they raised eight children while milking a small herd of Jerseys. A decorated WWII pilot, son Robert took over the fam-

ily business with his wife Rita. Together they transitioned to a Holstein herd and expanded the operation by purchasing neighboring farms. In 1978, Robert and Rita's son — John Scott Markham — purchased the farm with his wife Evelyn. They suffered a barn fire in 1985, rebuilt and continued to operate as Markham Farms, Inc. John Scott earned numerous industry recognitions including Young Farmer of the Year in 1985. In 2009, the Markhams experienced a second barn fire, and the farm transitioned to beef. Cortney Markham, son of

John Scott and Evelyn, began using the maintenance shop and remaining barn as the center for his crop farm/harvesting business. Cort-



Riveredge Dairy has been in the Lehman Family since 1923.

ney also began tapping sugar maples on the property. In 2020, Cortney and his wife Kerin purchased the farm and moved with their four children into the original farmhouse. Cortney continues to run his grain business, raise beef cattle, and tap maples. The operation extends over 1,000 acres.

Andrew and Emma Moser purchased 205 acres in Copenhagen for \$12,000 in 1923. It included a barn, a few horses and cattle, and a collection of farm equipment. The second generation - Ellis and Joyce Moser - took over in 1962 followed by their son Douglas and wife Sandi. Andrew Moser - the fourth generation - joined the operation in 2009. As the family has grown, so has the farm. In 1988 the farm was milking 135 Holstein cows, cropping 330 acres, and tapping maple trees on another 600 acres. Today Moserdale Dairy is growing crops on 2,000 acres, managing a herd of 1,600 ani-

mals, and milking in a double 15 herringbone. Moserdale is a member of the NorthEast Dairy Herd Producers Association. A passion of the Moser family is showing registered Holsteins at the Lewis County Fair. They have collected several Premier Breeder and Exhibitor awards. Snyder's Sugar Shack came online in 2019 and is owned by Mara Moser Snyder - also fourth generation - with her husband Mike Snyder. Given the demands of the dairy, this has enabled the family to return to tapping the same trees as generations past.

Established in 1832, the mission of the NYS Agricultural Society is to build a robust future for NY's food, agricultural and natural resource industries by providing networking and educational opportunities for its strongest advocates, decision-makers, and aspiring leaders.



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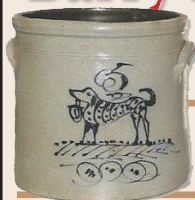
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Naturally Lewis has \$930,000 in grant funds available

By Naturally Lewis

Naturally Lewis has a second round of funding for four grant programs totaling \$930,000. These grant funds are: (1) Small Things, Big Impacts Fund, (2) Community Connections Fund, (3) Building Business Fund and (4) Vacant Property Revitalization Fund.

The Small Things, Big Impacts Fund (\$26,000) will support smaller-scale projects that will make a big impact. The 2024 priority for this fund is visibility, including, but not limited to, signage, branding, packaging, murals/artwork, and mobile visibility.

Applications for the Small Things, Big Impacts Fund will open on Jan. 15 and close on March 28. Applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis until all funds are dispersed.

The Community Connections Fund (\$60,000) will support municipalities, schools, and 501c3 non-profit organizations in projects that will strengthen ties within the community, to develop relationships, and to spur economic growth and development through the creation and enhancement of public gathering places or services. Applications for the Community Connections Fund will open on April 1, and close on June 13.

The Building Business Fund (\$100,000) will support local businesses providing matching funds to invest in the "tools" to

scale up and grow. Funds can be used for literal tools (equipment/machinery) or figurative tools (business services/professional services) to assist business growth. Projects must show overall benefit to the community and promote economic development through business growth. Applications for the Building Business Fund will open on July 1 and close on Sept. 26.

The Vacant Property Revitalization Fund (\$750,000) will support building owners that are looking to revitalize vacant buildings or floors into usable spaces for commercial use. Applications for the Vacant Property Revitalization Fund will open on September 30, 2024 and close on December 5, 2024.

Applications for all programs will be reviewed by the Community Economic Development Fund Committee. This committee consists of six (6) community leaders and one (1) Lewis County Development Corporation Board Member.

Find more information about the Community Economic Development Program and each of the grant opportunities at <https://naturallylewis.com/growing-opportunities/cedf>, or by following Naturally Lewis on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn at @naturallylewis.

Business and community leader breakfast

This is more than an event; it's a call to action. Communities need voices to foster involvement, innovation, and resilience. Be part of this empowering experience, where leaders come together to spark change, break barriers, and amplify a variety of voices. Register now and be a catalyst for positive transformation.

What's Happening?

A Business & Community Leaders Breakfast Feb. 9 at The Station on Depot Street in Harrisville! These are highly anticipated informal networking events serving as a platform for local and regional businesses

and organizations to get connected, explore trending topics, and gain the tools to make change. Bonus: there's free coffee & pastries!

Tentative Agenda:

9 a.m. Registration & Networking
9:30 a.m. Welcome & Introductions
9:40 a.m. Panel Discussion
Stay tuned for a panel reveal!
10:10 a.m. Roundtable Sessions
10:55 a.m. Closing & Final Thoughts

Interested in sponsoring this event? *Connect with kaylee@naturallylewis.com*

Small things, big impact

Naturally Lewis awards 15 grants

By Naturally Lewis

In 2023 Naturally Lewis selected 15 businesses and organizations in Lewis County to receive Small Things, Big Impacts funding, an opportunity designed to support small projects that will have a big impact on our communities. Last year, \$13,897 was awarded to 15 businesses and organizations. The projects are estimated to have an impact of over \$40,000 on the local economy.

The Small Things, Big Impacts Fund aims to empower local businesses and organizations by providing grants of up to \$1,000. The focus for the 2023 funding cycle was enhancing the visibility of businesses and organizations, encompassing initiatives such as signage, branding, digital marketing, packaging, murals/artwork, and mobile visibility. The

award recipients are as follows:

■ Azahar Roast House (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with logo enhancement and promotional materials - \$664.50

■ Coughlin Printing (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with a trade show display - \$1,000

■ Foothills Market, LLC (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with vehicle signage, exterior signage and interior shelving - \$1,000

■ Grand Slam Safety (Croghan, NY) funding will assist with vehicle and trailer signage - \$1,000

■ Greet on Repeat, LLC (Brantingham, NY) funding will assist with website upgrades and search engine optimization - \$1,000

■ Osceola Tug Hill XC Ski Center (Osceola, NY) funding will assist with exteri-

or signage, vehicle signage and promotional materials - \$1,000

■ HumbleBee Farms (Lyons Falls, NY) funding will assist with in house product labeling system - \$1,000

■ International Maple Museum Centre (Croghan, NY) funding will assist with exterior signage - \$1,000

■ Judge's Quarters B&B (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with directional signage for new venue and promotional materials - \$232.50

■ Lowville Free Library (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with display shelving - \$1,000

■ Maple Ridge Center, Inc (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with logo design, marketing materials and website design - \$1,000

■ Open Sky Wellness, LLC

See GRANTST15

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Grants

From T14

(Lowville, NY) funding will assist with exterior signage and landscaping - \$1,000

- Snyder's Sugar Shack LLC (Copenhagen, NY) funding will assist with exterior signage - \$1,000

- Transitional Living Services of Northern New York (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with exterior signage - \$1,000

- Trish Michael, Author (Lowville, NY) funding will assist with branded materials for events - \$1,000

Funds for this opportunity have been made available through Naturally Lewis' Community Economic Development Program. This program was created through a Host Community Agreement in partnership with Number Three Wind.

Through this agreement, Number Three Wind has committed approximately \$150,000 per year - for the next 30 years - to be into Lewis County through new business development and impactful community projects. Program focuses are determined on an annual basis by the Community Economic Development Program Committee and will be available each year.

Applications for this program underwent an evaluation process by the Community Economic Development Program Committee, comprising six community leaders and one representative from the Lewis County Development Corporation board. The Lewis County Development Corporation Board has given authority to the Community Economic Development Program Committee to determine awards at the time of application review.

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The Bad Apple tree is growing

From its start in Burrville, Downtown Watertown is next

Staff Report

The Bad Apple tree has been growing, it's seen some pruning and soon will be blooming downtown.

From early days in Burrville to Cape Vincent to the Bad Apple Garage on Washington Street and its own labeled beer and vodka, the business has evolved as its owner Shannon M. Exford has found new opportunities.

When the Garage opened in 2022 it did so with a strong side dish of sarcasm.

Don't fret if a server at a new Washington Street bar and grill puts a hat on you and makes fun that you're not a perfect customer, the Watertown Daily Times reported when it opened.

Exford, owner of The Bad Apple Garage Grill and Bar, just wanted to make her new

restaurant a fun place to go.

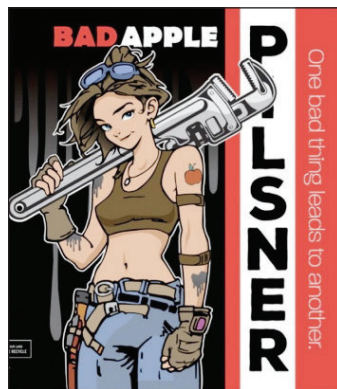
In the time since customers have said it is the best thing to happen to the south side of the city in a long time, if not ever.

"Sarcasm and humor" are served up with the menu at the bar and grill, located in a former oil change business at 1120 Washington St.

Humorous signs are displayed around the bar that once was the location of garage bays for the former Fast Lube of Watertown.

The bar features a repair garage motif. The interior features red and white colors for a reason; they were prominently displayed on the old Fast Lube business, she said.

Exford - who owns two other restaurants and bars, The Bad Apple Saloon on Arsenal Street and The Wicked Bad Apple in Glenfield - had no intentions of opening a third restaurant.



The Bad Apple Beer label. Contributed

She planned on starting a catering business as a spin-off for her restaurants. But before she knew it, The Bad Apple Garage was what she ended up with.

"I guess I have to do it another way," she said.

A friend who owns the building kept trying to get her to do something with it, she said. Exford lives nearby.

The original Bad Apple in Burrville, "opened on a whim with no intentions of expansion," Exford said.

That was followed by the Wicked Bad Apple in Glenfield in 2015, a back woods bar and grill of sorts that remains open. The Bad Apple Inn in Cape Vincent was the first restaurant in 2016. The motel in the rear was returned to life and the restaurant thrived until it was sold in 2020. Then the Bad Apple Saloon opened on Arsenal Street in 2020. It was shut down during the Covid pandemic and renovated, opening in October of that year. It remains open, and is also where Bad Apple catering operates from. Exford said the catering continues to be a growing portion of the business.

Last year was the year of the Bad Beer as Bad Apple Pilsner and Badd Apple IPA and their

own vodka was grown and expanded for sale from Kewis to Onodoga County.

Bravo Alpha Delta Apple (Bad Apple Black River) also opened in 2023 near Fort Drum. It's got a military theme and outdoor seating at the site of a former Korean restaurant.

This year, Exford said, they have sites set on downtown Watertown. Renovations are planned soon at the former Spokes location and that will be Bad Apple Downtown, where Times Square meets Public Square as a Small Plate Ale House Piano Bar, the restoration of the deck and outdoor dining.

What's next? "In 2025 we look forward to transforming another oil change shop into a newly themed Apple Garage on the northside And...then I'll probably be dead LOL," Exford signed off.

NEW LOCATION

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www.badapplebars.com

Clarkson Professor elected to National Academy of Inventors

By Clarkson University

John Milne, Neil '64 and Karen Bonke Associate Professor in Engineering Management in Clarkson University's David D. Reh School of Business has been elected as a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, the Academy announced Tuesday. Election as an Academy Fellow is the highest professional distinction awarded solely to inventors.

Milne is an expert in supply chain optimization planning and scheduling methods and is the inventor or co-inventor of more than 40 U.S. patents, predominantly focused on software methods for optimizing supply chain planning and scheduling. His patented innovations led to IBM reducing inventory by \$80 million in 1999 alone while improving customer

service.

Another set of patented work and business process changes led to the IBM Microelectronics Division asserting in 2005 that on-time deliveries had increased by 15%, asset utilization had increased by two to four percent of costs, and inventory had been reduced by 25 to 30%. At IBM, Milne was named a Master Inventor and co-chair of an Invention Review Board.

"After inventing at IBM, it's been my pleasure to work with Clarkson Engineering & Management students," Milne said. "Students develop their own patentable inventions using the same approaches that worked well for me at IBM. They also learn intellectual property law concepts that all inventors should know."

NNY BUSINESS RETURNS TO THE NORTH COUNTRY

Staff Report

NNY Business is back.

After a more than a decade as a business features magazine, the publisher of NNY Business has developed a new monthly for the business community. Through partnerships with the chambers of commerce in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence and Franklin counties, the editors and advertising sales force have developed a valuable tool for the business community.

Gary C. Valik, chief executive officer of Johnson Newspaper Corp., said the refocused NNY Business will have a wide audience throughout the north country.

The new NNY Business distribution plan benefits advertisers as it will be the central place to promote business to business opportunities to subscribers, chamber members and business offices in print and online. NNY Business will have an au-

dience of about 40,000 readers throughout the north country.

Printed on the company press in Watertown, it will be distributed in the newspaper, at chambers of commerce and businesses in four counties.

"It was a features magazine and now we are bringing news that will report on the business climate of northern New York," Valik said. "We are going to use our entire newsroom to get the most up to date information to our business leaders and we have established a network through all the local chambers."

This is the first issue. In February we will announce the 20 Under 40 class of leaders and, five business leaders will be featured each month until the spring when we will hold our gala event to honor the entire group.

Alec E. Johnson, editor and publisher, of the Watertown Daily Times, will lead the reporting.

"We have great depth in our newsroom to report on the many businesses, and the people behind them to bring the business community together even tighter," Johnson said. "As we see great promise of growth, through Micron to our south, Convalt's plans in Jefferson County and emerging new businesses started by Fort Drum soldiers and their families, we will be here to tell their stories."

Content will also be published on the NNY Business section of NNY360.com, the north country's news website.

"NNY Business will be informative for our readership," Valik said. "It will be valuable information and a great addition to the newspaper for our entire audience."

We hope you enjoy this first edition and welcome suggestions and submissions for future editions. Email to nnychamberconnect@wdt.net.



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Bean there, done that

Couple continues coffee roastery at Cape Vincent cafe



Amanda Derouchie, left, owner of Cup of Joy Cafe with Brian and Sandy Coombs, who on Jan. 1 took over the shop's roasting operation, naming it Lake and River Roasters. Zachary Canaperi/NNY Business

By **CHRIS BROCK**

cbrock@wdt.net

CAPE VINCENT — The Cup of Joy Cafe has brewed up some renewed delight for coffee aficionados as a couple has taken over a specialty roasting operation nestled in back of the 288 E. Broadway business.

Amanda Derouchie is in her sixth year of ownership of Cup of Joy. Shortly after opening, Daniel Miller approached her about opening and renting a coffee roastery in space in back of her establishment. Dan and his wife, Lynn Miller, through their Gato Diablo Specialty Coffee Roasters, churned out “primo” beans with meticulous monitoring of the roast process and scrupulous sourcing of their beans.

“What Dan was able to bring to the table was environmentally friendly, bird-friendly, sustainable and family-run-and-farmed beans from South and Central America,” Derouchie said. “That brought a different niche to the roastery.”

The Millers roasted for Cup of Joy and a few other entities.

“He decided last spring that he was ready to retire,” Derouchie said of Dan. “He and his wife wanted to do some traveling and he no longer wanted to do Gato Diablo anymore.”

Derouchie said she was asked by Dan to take over Gato Diablo, but the request was grounds for concern.

“That would have been a big undertaking,” Derouchie said. “I knew I couldn’t do it on my own. I started to think of some local people in the area who I thought would be great business partners to venture with.”

A coffee break was found through Brian P. and Sandy C. Coombs — a married couple who moved to Cape Vincent in the summer of 2020.

“Right away, they fully engaged themselves into the community and became big advocates of it,” Derouchie said. “And that’s what I was looking for to partner with.”

The couple moved to Cape Vincent from Massachusetts, where they lived about 40 minutes outside of Boston.

“I had a roastery back in central Massachusetts, which I really enjoyed,” Brian said. “So, when Amanda approached us about joining her in the business, we were both very enthusiastic. Sandy brings more of a business background.”

On Jan. 1, the Coombses opened Lake and River Roasters at the Cup of Joy location.

Brian is a mechanical engineer and Sandy is a biomedical



Brian Coombs of Lake and River Roasters operates the controls of the roaster nestled in the back of Cup of Joy Cafe. Zachary Canaperi/NNY Business

engineer. They have two children, Chase, 14, and Riley, 13.

“My passion is the coffee, the sourcing, the roasting, the flavor profiles, etcetera,” Brian said. “It wasn’t a planned opportunity, but we certainly jumped on it.”

The couple was familiar with Cape Vincent through family connections and were married at Boldt Castle. Sandy’s grandfather, Robert Miller, was a longtime art teacher in the area.

“What ultimately brought us to this area was COVID,” Sandy said. “That sounds off because it’s COVID.”

But as many people began to work from home, the Coombses realized they could relocate and telecommute.

“And what we were looking for was a more wholesome community and just a better way of life for our kids and us,” Sandy said. “That’s what we found up here.”

Lake and River Roasters is not a hobby for the couple. “This is our second job,” Sandy said. “It’s not a side business, not a

hustle.”

Lake and River Roasters carries the popular coffee sourced from the same origins that Gato Diablo established.

“We’re looking to maintain that quality, where the beans are bird-friendly and procured from organic sources,” Brian said. “Our main focus right now is maintaining the high quality, maintaining the taste and then we’ll start branching out into other origins and other blends.”

The couple purchased the roastery equipment from Gato Diablo owners, including the small-batch SF6 from the San Franciscan Roaster Company. The machine includes temperature probes that measure bean mass and the temperature inside its drum. That info is displayed on a dual-digital meter simultaneously during the roast.

Lake and River Roasters’ most popular blend is its medium-bodied “Lake Ontario,” created from organic, Fair Trade coffee beans from Honduras.

In addition to Cup of Joy, Lake

and River Roasters bagged coffee is available at French Towne Market, 342 E. Broadway, Cape Vincent. The couple plans to expand offerings to other storefronts in the coming months. The roasters take orders on their website, lakeandriverroasters.com.

Derouchie said Cup of Joy patrons are pleased that the roastery at her establishment, which also features pastry items and a breakfast and lunch menu, is continuing.

“Even during the slow season, there are several people coming in every day, very excited to learn about the coffee,” she said. “It’s kind of gotten a new approach, where people didn’t realize we were doing roasting in back of the coffee house for the past six years.”

“It was a smooth transaction to take over a great existing business and to recreate it into our new business,” Sandy said.

“We’re really happy that they decided to take over and grow it beyond what I brought it to,” Dan Miller said.

NEW OWNERSHIP

Snackline & Sweets to open in Ogdensburg



Brendan and Rachel Johnson are the new owners of 608 Ford St., Ogdensburg, and are calling it Snackline & Sweets. A year-round operation, the business will offer ice cream and carnival-style treats and other foods at the former Fish'er Chips and Ice Cream building. Matt Curatolo/NNY Business

By **MATT CURATOLO**

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OGDENSBURG — New owners at 608 Ford St. are looking to give those with a sweet tooth something to soothe those cravings.

Rachel and Brendan Johnson are the new owners of the Ford Street location, which used to be Fish'er Chips and Ice Cream.

Now called Snackline & Sweets, the business will provide hard and soft ice cream, slushies and carnival-style treats year round like deep-fried Oreos, candied apples, fried bread dough, pretzels and a local favorite – poutine.

“We wanted to bring a new place to the community that we love. When we heard that it was up for sale we felt we need to take this place over. We’re excited about that because this is our favorite ice cream,” she said. “We wanted to offer the treats that we want all year round that are only available in the summer time. So why not? Kids

can have fun all year round. It doesn’t have to be just a summer venture.”

It will also have an old fashioned penny candy rack where customers can fill a paper bag with their favorite sweets as well as freeze-dried candy.

Daily specials will be on the menu and on Fridays it will continue with its past life and offer fish fries.

Snackline & Sweets started selling selling ice cream and Christmas trees, something that the couple plan on continuing each holiday season.

Now that the trees are sold they are closed to revamp the inside of the building and will be fully open and hold a grand opening at the end of January or early February.

Mr. Johnson said that the business venture is a way to give back to the community.

“We’re trying to make a difference in Ogdensburg,” he said, adding that they will be hiring staff to assist in the day-to-day operations.

JRECK Subs a legacy in NNY since 1967

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A ham and cheese sub with all the fixings, wrapped in paper with updated branding in 2022 at JRECK Subs on Arsenal Street in Watertown. Watertown Daily Times

In 1967, five visionary teachers from Carthage Central High School embarked on a flavorful venture, converting an old school bus into the genesis of JRECK Subs. Jerry Haley, Robert Martin, Ellis Martin, Charles Lehman, and Keith Waltz combined the first letter of their names to create “JRECK,” a brand that has been synonymous with fresh ingredients and high quality subs throughout upstate New York. JRECK Subs has become a legacy, not just in name, but in its enduring commitment to community and education.

Connecting with its roots in education, JRECK Subs is proud to sponsor the Scripps Spelling Bee for the second consecutive year. This sponsorship, stem-

ming from the brand’s founding by educators, reflects a dedication to supporting schools and fostering educational initiatives. It’s a natural extension of JRECK’s ethos — giving back to the local community that has been the backbone of its success.

The corporate owner, Matthew Darrah, emphasizes this commitment: “JRECK Subs stands as a testament to the power of community. Our support for the Scripps Spelling Bee is more than sponsorship; it’s a commitment to education and making a positive impact in the places that matter most.”

Since 2022, JRECK Subs has been on a rebrand journey (moving its graphic representation from the Admiral to the sub school bus),

in a mission to reconnect with its founding story. The rebrand will encompass a branding refresh and upgraded dining experience, as well as a focus on actively connecting and contributing to our local communities.

Amidst this evolution, JRECK Subs proudly embraces its new tagline, “It’s how you spell delicious.” This tagline not only encapsulates the brand’s commitment to crafting the best subs in town but also ties seamlessly into the sponsorship of the Scripps Spelling Bee. JRECK Subs invites everyone to savor not only the flavors of its subs but also the taste of a brand deeply rooted in community, education, and the delight of giving back.

Awards

From T9

high quality, affordable, patient-centered, and integrated health services. NoCo serves nearly 16,000 individuals each year within their Medical, Behavioral Health, and Dental Programs in their 4 community-based and 12 school-based locations. Their WIC Program serves more than 4,000 women, infants, and children and they assist nearly 1,500 people each year with affordable health insurance coverage.

North Country Library System - The North Country Library System (NCLS) is a support organization that delivers services to the 66 public libraries located in Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego, and St. Lawrence counties. Through shared library services, cooperative purchasing, coordinated literacy campaigns, and training, NCLS maximizes sharing, creativity, and innovation to help improve the lives of North Country residents at home, at work, at school, and at play.

The North Country Library System was established in 1948 and has grown across the North Country region since then.

Watertown Urban Mission

- Founded in 1968, Watertown Urban Mission provides a broad range of programs to vulnerable populations in Jefferson County. Working in tandem with a network of local churches, businesses, human service agencies, philanthropic partners, schools, community leaders, donors and volunteers, the Mission provides supportive services and advocacy to those struggling with generational poverty, substance use disorder, domestic violence, financial setbacks caused by job loss or illness, homelessness, food insecurity, mental behavioral health issues, and feelings of loneliness and isolation.

WATERTOWN FARM & CRAFT MARKET VENDOR OF THE YEAR

A market vendor who is friendly, consistent, takes pride in quality products and exemplifies excellent customer service.

C&J Old Fashion Kettle Corn - New owners Mackenzie Denny & Patrick Caldwell took over in 2023 from previous owners Cathy & Jerry Sherman. There's hardly a festival or community event in the north country where C&J Old Fashioned Kettle Corn isn't seen. Their sweet and salty kettle corn delights all visitors to their booth, and the aroma wafts through the crowd

drawing people in.

Coyote Moon Vineyards - What started as inspiration from a trip to Italy turned into reality for the Randazzo family in 2008 when they planted their first vineyard, establishing Coyote Moon. In 2009 they sold their first bottle of wine and have been busy producing award-winning wine since. A staple in the North Country, Coyote Moon Vineyards prides itself on the attention to detail they provide throughout the entire wine making process. From fruit selection to pruning, hand-harvesting and label painting, the passion is evident within each bottle of Coyote Moon Vineyards wine.

Simmons Farm - As a third-generation gardener, Shari and Ted Simmons took a family passion and turned it into a growing business. Almost 20 years ago, Simmons Farm joined the Watertown Farm and Craft market selling produce and has since expanded their product list and community reach. Simmons Farm, located in Copenhagen, recently opened a second location in Watertown where customers can purchase their products. Simmons Farm is most well-known for its Christmas trees and wreaths, becoming a popular destination throughout the holiday season.

Cash buyers in the local real estate market

By Lance Evans

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A article in the Saturday, December 16 Watertown Daily Times caught my eye.

Entitled "Rise of the all-cash homebuyer shifting market" and written by Mia Taylor of Bankrate.com, the article states that there has been a "proliferation of all-cash home purchases, which is making an already daunting market even trickier for hopeful buyers."

Of course, one of the main reasons for this is that all-cash buyers do not need to get a mortgage loan.

The article goes on to state that "the share of homes being purchased with all cash reached its highest level" since 2014. I was curious to see if this was the same in our area.

The Tri-County region has seen a fluctuation in the number of cash sales over time. For the years 2019-2023, Jefferson and Lewis Counties has seen a low of 17.75% of homes bought for all cash to a high on 26.65% in 2023. The average during that time is 22.55%. It is interesting to note that in 2014 (the year cited in the article), the percentage

of cash buyers was 25%. This was about the percentage of cash sales in Jefferson and Lewis Counties in 2019 also when it was 24.74%. The years 2020, 2021, and 2022 were below that with 2022 coming in at about the 5 year average.

St. Lawrence County shows a different picture. In 2023, 37.37% of homes were bought with cash. The five year average was 29.44% and the range was from 25.41% (2021) to 2023's high. In 2014, 23.43% of homes were bought for cash. Cash was used by 29.09% of buyers by 2019 which is just below the 5 year average. The number of cash buyers dipped even lower in 2020 and 2021 before rising to a little over 30% in 2022.

At press time, interest rates have dropped slightly, although not as far as the rates of several years ago. This may affect the percentage of homes that sell for cash. However, as you can see by the above, real estate is local and conditions change from market to market.

A good piece of advice for buyers and sellers is to rely on a local REALTOR®'s expertise and assistance.



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JCC appoints Sidney A. Pond III vice president for Administration and Finance

By JEFFERSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

pdixon@sunyjefferson.edu

Jefferson Community College (JCC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Sidney A. Pond, III, (right) to the position of Vice President for Administration and Finance.

Pond joined Jefferson in 2022 as the Executive Director of Accounting and Auxiliary Services.

In July 2023, he was appointed Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance while the College conducted a search to fill the position.

As the College's chief financial officer, his responsibilities include development and implementation of the College's operating budget and facilities master plan, and oversight of all financial operations.

Additionally, he oversees the facilities department, office of campus safety and security, and auxiliary services at the College.

Prior to his employment at Jefferson, Pond served seven years as the Director of Finance at North Country Orthopaedic Group where he was responsible for developing and implementing financial policies, procedures, and programs for enhanced financial reporting and management as well as securing financing for key capital purchases and projects.

Previously, Pond served seven years in the accounting field, first, as a Staff Tax



Sidney A. Pond, III, has been appointed vice president for administration and finance at JCC. JCC photo

Accountant, then Senior Tax Accountant and eventually Certified Public Accountant.

President Daniel J. Duplee, II, states, "Sid brings a wealth of experience in fiscal operations and risk management to the College along with a fresh perspective in strategic leadership. In the 18 months since he joined the College, Sid has already implemented new initiatives that advance the long-term sustainability of the College and positively impact the ways in which we serve our student population."

Pond holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Le Moyne College.

He is a member of the Community College Business Officers Association and serves on the Board of Directors for Hospice of Jefferson County.

His appointment was effective December 4, 2023.

JCC Featured Honors Program Student: Morgan E. Moser

By JEFFERSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

pdixon@sunyjefferson.edu

Morgan E. Moser, Croghan, is the featured Jefferson Community College (JCC) Honors Program student for the month of January 2024. Moser is a psychology major at JCC. For one of her honors options, she explored the connection between psychology and gymnastics.

The Jefferson Community College Honors Program offers students with exceptional academic skills the opportunity to receive enriched instruction within their current program of study. For the Honors Program, students select three courses within their curriculum, and enhance them as



Morgan E. Moser. JCC photo

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.

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Carl McLaughlin honored with 70th Shapiro Award

By **ZACHARY CANAPERI**
zcanaperi@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — During a Rotary Club holiday auction at the Italian American Civic Association, the 70th annual Israel A. Shapiro Citizenship Award was announced, recognizing a person devoted to the betterment of the community — Carl A. McLaughlin.

The Greater Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce presents the award each year to a community member who displays outstanding citizenship, achievement, leadership, dedication and motivation. Established by Arnold I. Shapiro in honor of his father, a long-time business leader in the community, the award has been presented over the years to people representing those characteristics on behalf of the city and surrounding areas.

Kevin Jordan, Rotary Club executive director, said McLaughlin embodies all of the Shapiro Award qualities.

“It takes all kinds of leaders and leadership styles to support any community and help enhance the quality of life for those that live there,” he said. Jordan said McLaughlin is a

leader who encourages those around him and stays optimistic when faced with a challenge.

“Carl McLaughlin is a leader who quietly works behind the scenes, mentors those that work with him, allows others to be recognized for the work they do, takes a ‘cup-half-full’ approach to dealing with challenges, and all the while providing the steady consistent underpinning necessary for community projects and initiatives to be successful. I applaud Carl’s leadership style and unconditional commitment to the greater Fort Drum and Watertown community.”

McLaughlin said he is “truly honored” to have been selected for this year’s Shapiro award, and that his work with the community is part of a larger collaboration with like-minded people.

“This has been home now for 43 years, and believe me, I’ve worked with all the other folks who make this such a great community and I’m just following through with what they started,” he said.

McLaughlin believes that a life spent getting involved and working on behalf of others is

an enjoyable one.

“You get more out of it if you participate. If you are just standing by and watching, it’s not as much fun. It’s more fun if you’re willing to get in and get your hands dirty and participate in all these activities,” he said.

McLaughlin certainly got his hands dirty, devoting his time to being a board member, committee member and volunteer for Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, Greater Watertown North Country Chamber of Commerce, Jefferson Community College’s Center for Community Studies, Neighbors of Watertown, North Country Arts Council, Samaritan Keep Home and Summit Village, Victims Assistance Center, Watertown Noon Rotary Club and Rotary International and WPBS-TV.

McLaughlin’s most recent role as a community leader was being the organizer of the annual Fourth of July Concert in the Park and fireworks show at Watertown’s Thompson Park. He stepped up to the job in 2017 when the Noon Rotary Club was asked to assist in organizing the event.



Carl A. McLaughlin receives the 70th Israel A. Shapiro Citizenship Award during a Rotary Club holiday auction at the Italian American Civic Association in Watertown. Zachary Canaperi/NNY Business

He was the driving force securing sponsors and donors to keep the music and fireworks going. He also sustained partnerships with the city of Watertown, Northern New York Community Foundation, Operation Yellow Ribbon and Zoo New York that were crucial to the event’s continuation.

McLaughlin is also a veteran of the Vietnam War, serving in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1969 and was awarded the Bronze Star and Good Conduct Medal for his service.

His support for the military

forces did not end there. He directed the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization for 12 years, serving as an advocate for both Fort Drum and the community, and linking the two together.

McLaughlin’s award will be formally presented at a dinner hosted by the Chamber of Commerce on Feb. 8 in the Banquet Room at the Faichney Drive Business Complex. Reservations can be made online at www.watertownny.com or by contacting the Chamber at 315-788-4400 by Jan. 31.

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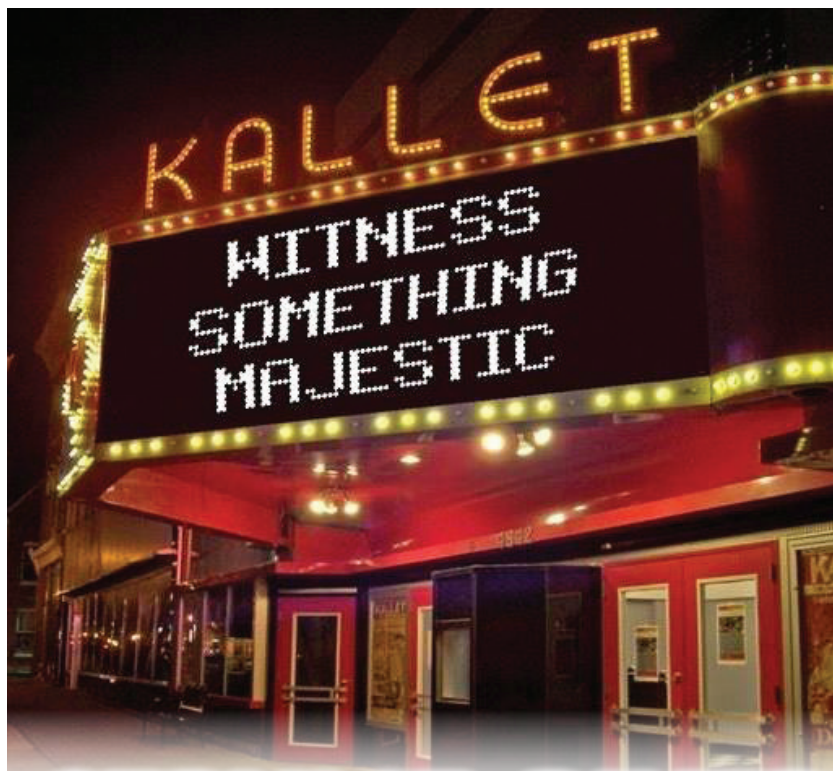
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