

BNNY Business

A Watertown Daily Times/
Malone Telegram production

Daily updates: NNY360.com Dec. 2025

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Bookstore grows in woods of Theresa



Stephen and Norma Jean Side on the porch of Bearly Hyde N' Cabin. Chris Brock/Watertown Daily Times

By CHRIS BROCK
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TERESA — The first thing you may notice at a quirky and cozy bookstore that has remarkably and firmly taken root in the woods near Hyde Lake is the store's cat, who acts like she owns the place.

"We call her our official Walmart greet-

er," Norma Jean Side explained to a visitor on Nov. 5 who was welcomed by the feline, Sassy. "She will literally run out and sit in the driveway when somebody comes, and she'll bring them in. And then she will wait and see if they will pet her or give her a snack. And then, she'll go out and wait for the next customer."

The cat's loyalty to the business may be because she is privy to the store's mission: supporting area pet rescue groups and food pantries by do-

nating pet food to both.

Side, who goes by her middle name, is the standard-bearer behind Bearly Hyde N' Cabin Used Books & Gifts, Hyde Lake Road. Her husband, Stephen E. Side, officially owns it, and is also the main brawn behind it by moving and lifting things, even though reading "is not his thing."

"Without his support and love, none of it would have been possible," Jean said.

See B00KS T3

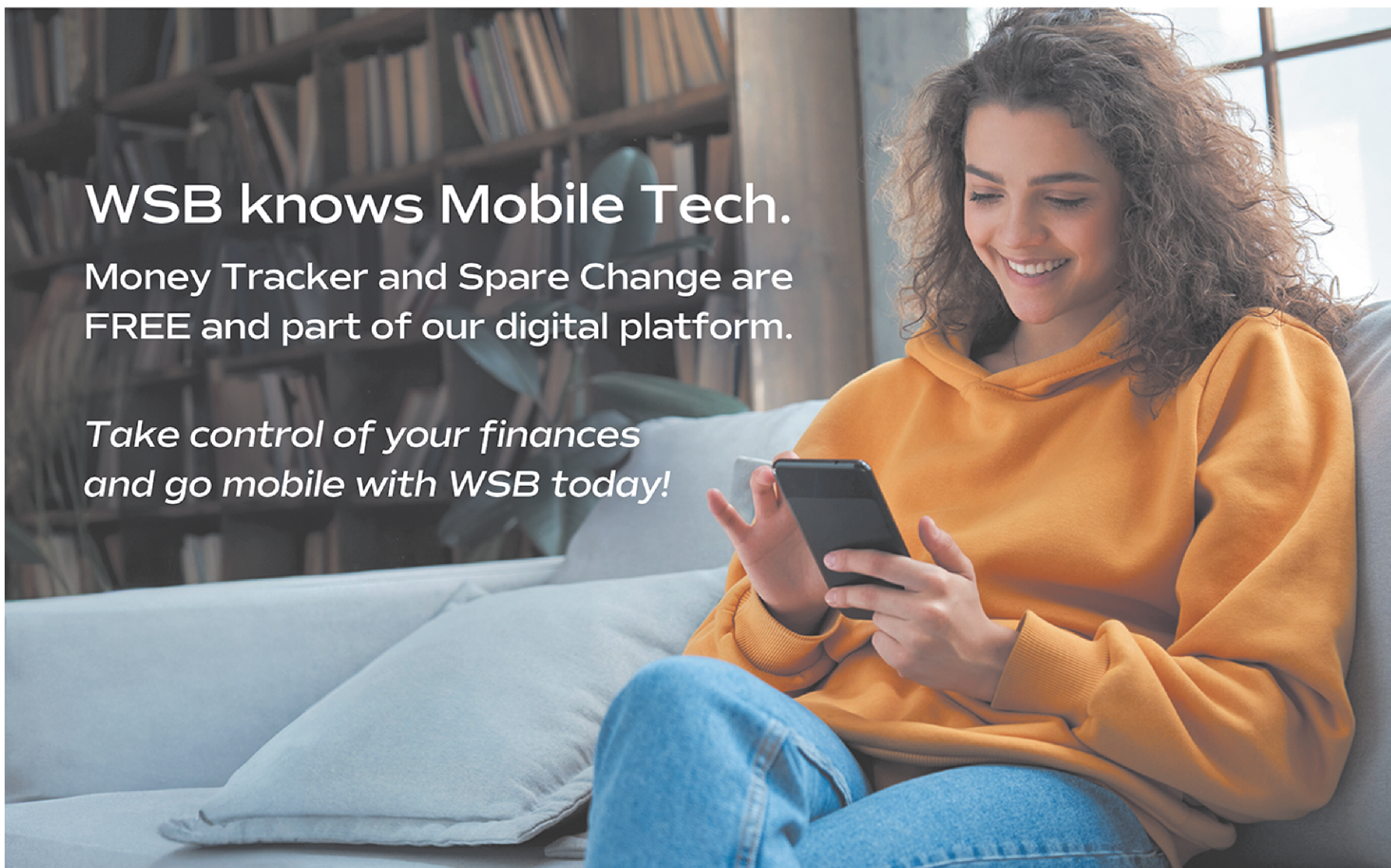
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Books

From T1

Sassy will lead you to the store. But if you linger outside, Stephen may approach and strike up a conversation about topics ranging from deer hunting to the seemingly spastic squirrels that dart around his property, constantly chattering and chasing one another. Or he may discuss at least one book he did read and highly recommends: “Si- cology 1: Tales and Wisdom from Duck Dynasty’s Favorite Uncle,” by Si Robertson.

Stephen, a former stock car racing champion, may even invite you to check out his Ford Model A hot rod in his nearby garage. He and his wife live a stone’s throw away from the shop. He occasionally starts up the vehicle for a visitor, sending a loud, smooth and satisfying guttural rumble through the forest and through the walls of the bookstore.

“Most of the time, the women have to go look for their husbands, because he’s kidnapped them,” Jean said.

She describes Bearly Hyde as “a sanctuary for book lovers, animal lovers and anyone who believes in the quiet magic of following your heart.”

In addition to books, mostly pre-owned, the store stocks book-themed gifts and the products of 14 local vendors — from soaps to sourdough. On the morning a visitor from the Times stopped by, Ashley Cody, owner of The Sunny Dough Company, Theresa, and Amanda Lynn DeCecchis of Three Sisters Sewing, Redwood, dropped off products.

“I love the store and everybody that I have sent here loves coming here,” Cody said. “For people like us, it’s a bonus. I bake out of my home. It’s extra money for my family. Jean also does so much for different animal places, plus donations to the food pantries.”

The store is a community hub, dedicated to giving back. Each month, it donates a portion of its sales to a local animal rescue or food pantry to help people feed their pets. The store has aided pet rescue

groups and food banks from Boonville to Wellesley Island.

“We’ve also adopted three cats from local rescues (Sassy is one) and three parrots from the Jefferson County SPCA, because we believe in second chances and full bellies for all,” Jean said.

The store’s “Blind Date with a Book Project” is one project that goes toward buying pet food for local food pantries and rescues. The blind date book concept involves wrapping a volume in paper, hiding its cover and title. At Bearly Hyde, the wrapped books also include some “goodies.” The project is very popular at the store. To keep up with demand, Jean taught her husband how to wrap the Blind Date books.

“It took him a while, and there was a lot of wadded up paper and frustration at first,” Jean said. “But he watched YouTube videos, so now, he does my wrapping.”

But Jean had advice learned from the experience: “When you are wrapping a book about a dog, you don’t put cat paper on it.”

“Whoops!” Stephen said. But in his defense, added, “It’s not as funny as you would think.”

Cody the baker was certainly impressed by Stephen’s wrapping skills. “You are the greatest wrapper! I’m bringing all my Christmas presents over and you are going to wrap them.”

It was a lighthearted joke. Still, Stephen seemed open, or even resigned, to the possibility.

A CHURCH, A LIBRARY AND A DREAM

Jean’s dream of owning a bookstore was nurtured in Antwerp, where she grew up. Her parents, Kenneth H. and Nettie A. Hale, adopted her shortly after birth. Both of her adoptive parents died in 2003.

“My mother had a lot of mental health problems,” Jean said. “She was in mental institutions for most of my childhood. My dad was my best friend. He was big into church, was a reader and worked multiple shifts at St. Regis Paper Company, because he had all these medical bills.”



Many of the hunting and fishing books at the bookshop are from the collection of the late conservation officer and avid outdoorsman Douglas C. Kerr of Glenfield. Chris Brock/Watertown Daily Times

Jean said that in her youth she often visited Antwerp Congregational Church and the nearby Crosby Public Library. “I didn’t really have anything else to do. My mother was never around, and my dad was working.”

She found company in books. “The Wizard of Oz” was her favorite. “But I read everything. It didn’t really matter.”

Jean, who played violin and sang in the church choir, also checked out vinyl records from the library. “I’d sit in my room, play vinyl records and sing.”

Two librarians at Crosby Library, Inez V. Rose, and E. Hall, took Jean under their wings.



Ashley Cody, owner of The Sunny Dough Co., Theresa, is one of 14 vendors who sell items at the bookstore.

Chris Brock/Watertown Daily Times

“They taught me to shelve books and it got to the point where I was sitting at the desk, checking people out. There was a day when Mrs. Rose was sick and had to go home. She asked me if I wanted to stay until 4 o’clock.” Jean was 11 or 12 years old at the time. “But she trusted me to stay and lock up the library.”

One day, Jean noticed a stack of books at the library that were marked for disposal.

“My pay was that I could

bring home any book I wanted from that pile, until my mother put an end to it. I’d come home with armfuls. They weren’t even books that I read. I’d just play library in my house.”

Stephen and Jean, who wed in 1989, settled in Alexandria Bay. Stephen was a mechanic at Alexandria Central School District, eventually becoming the district’s transportation supervisor, working there for a

See BOOKS T5

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SLC Chamber receives Assembly Citation for tourism work



New York State Assemblyman Scott Gray, R-Watertown, presents an Assembly Citation to the tourism team of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce. From left: St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ben Dixon, Assemblyman Gray, Tourism Director Tif Amo, and Destinations Manager Kathryn Puleo, at the Chamber's Annual Dinner at the Gran-View Riverside Restaurant. Provided photo

OGDENSBURG — New York State Assemblyman Scott Gray, R-Watertown, presented the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce tourism team with a special Assembly Citation Oct. 22 at the chamber's annual dinner.

The citation honors the team's Digital Canadian Marketing Campaign.

The campaign was developed in partnership with BBG&G Integrated Marketing. Chamber Executive Director Ben Dixon, Assemblyman Gray, Tourism Director

Tif Amo, and Destinations Manager Kathryn Puleo were present for the recognition at the Gran-View Restaurant.

"We are so pleased to be honored with this recognition from Assemblyman Gray as we continue in our

mission to maintain strong and strategic cross-border tourism efforts," Amo said. "As the county's tourism promotion agent, we feel a sense of pride that the work we are doing has been impactful. We have invested a lot of time and energy into creating marketing campaigns and pursuing initiatives that position St. Lawrence County as a welcoming destination for Canadian visitors, which has become increasingly important in current times. We are grateful for the recognition of this work."

The Citation reads in part: "This innovative campaign, developed in partnership with BBG&G Integrated Marketing, successfully tailored and engaged Canadian audiences between 2023 and 2025 through targeted outreach that emphasized the accessibility, affordability, and unique charms of the North Country experience."

The campaign was recently recognized by the New York State Tourism Industry Association with an Excellence in Tourism Marketing Award.

The citation went on to

say: "The campaign's measurable impact in advancing regional visibility and cross-border tourism represents not only a marketing achievement but also a significant contribution to the local economy, reinforcing St. Lawrence County's position as a welcoming gateway for visitors from Canada and beyond."

"We'd like to thank Assemblyman Gray and the New York State Tourism Industry Association for recognizing the Chamber on the effective Canadian marketing campaign executed by the Chamber tourism staff with BBG&G," Dixon said. "The campaign, which was executed with thoughtfulness and precision, was aimed at attracting continued Canadian tourism to support our economy and the quality of life in St. Lawrence County in keeping with our approach to resident-first tourism. That partners in these efforts recognized the excellence of this campaign is both rewarding and inspiring."

Canton Launches 'Holly Jolly Canton' Campaign to Boost Holiday Shopping and Community

CANTON — The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is announcing the launch of "Holly Jolly Canton," a cooperative, town-wide marketing campaign designed to encourage residents and visitors to Shop Local and establish Canton as the jolliest place to be throughout the holiday season.

The campaign officially kicks off the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, Nov. 28, immediately fol-

lowing the Village's traditional Santa's Holiday of Lights event on the Village Green at 6 p.m.

"This holiday season, we are pursuing a cooperative marketing campaign to make Canton the jolliest place to be," said Tom Graser, the chamber's Community and Membership Relations Manager. "Our goal is to promote commerce and encourage engagement with our incredible local businesses throughout De-

cember and into the new year."

Ways for Businesses to Get Involved

The Chamber is actively encouraging local businesses to participate and leverage the momentum of the campaign:

Storefront Decorating: Shop owners are encouraged to decorate storefronts to add a festive aura to downtown

Host Seasonal Activities: Host events that are fun for the com-

munity and encourage shoppers to visit your store. Suggestions include:

Promotional offers and bundles.

Seasonal demonstrations and workshops.

Staying open later one day a week.

Seasonal food/drink offerings at local eateries.

The Chamber will help promote all shared seasonal events

and activities. The campaign information will be updated regularly on the Chamber website: <https://tinyurl.com/262sweva>.

Contact Graser at tom@slc-chamber.org with any business or community activities.

Community members can contact Tom Graser at tom@slc-chamber.org or 315-386-4000 ext 5 for information on participating in both the "Holly Jolly Canton" campaign and Winterfest 2026

For more information:
www.VisitSTLC.com
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Books

From T3

total of 36 years. Jean drove a school bus and later worked in the district office, for a total of 15 years.

The couple moved to Theresa about a dozen years ago. "When we moved from Alex Bay, we had a room full of books," Jean said.

On Hyde Lake Road, the couple began selling craft items, including wood crafts that Steve created. Books were soon added to what they sold, which helped to address Jean's "book-hoarding" tendencies. Her dream of owning a bookstore took shape. Stephen put the word out as to what they were planning.

A few years ago, the family of Harvey "Ted" Jones reached out to the Sides. Ted had died in 2014, his wife, Marilyn B. Jones, died in 2021, and the family was settling the estate in Alexandria Bay.

"Mrs. Jones was big into Alley Cat Rescue of Alexandria Bay," Jean said. "When they heard what we were doing and that we were going to donate a portion to help rescues, they called us on a Tuesday night and said, 'We sold the house. Would you like dad's books?'"

Ted was a voracious reader on several topics, from sports to science fiction.

"We had to have the books out by Friday at noon," Jean recalled. "We figured we got 7,000 books out of there." Some bookshelves were added to the haul.

Stephen estimates he made about eight trips with his pickup truck and attached trailer to bring the collection to Theresa.

"After we received the donation from the Joneses, we knew what we were going to do," Jean said.

Not long after, Jean said she was "blessed with another miracle." In 2022, they were offered the shelving from the old Hammond Free Library at a price they could afford. The library was moving to a new site. "That's when I knew that this journey wasn't just mine. God was gently guiding me down this path."

There's nearly 20 shelving units from the Hammond library at the store. Stephen had to take them apart before transporting them to Theresa. He's amazed at their craftsmanship. "You can take one shelf and put it in another, and it fits exactly," he said. "Everything is exact. I was putting them back together and said, 'Boy, this guy really knew what he was doing.'"

Within two weeks, the shelves were filled with books.

About two years ago, another large donation of books came from another estate. In 2003, avid outdoorsman Douglas C. Kerr of Glenfield died at the age of 49. He was a state conservation officer and had worked out of the Watertown office since 1988.

"His wife contacted us and wanted to give us his whole collection of fishing and hunting books," Jean said.

The couple made multiple trips to the Glenfield area to bring the collection to Theresa. "A lot of the fishing books were signed. It was an awesome collection. I still have a lot more of his books to go through." The same is true of Mr. Jones's collection. That is partially why the Side property contains two shipping containers. They are stocked with books, awaiting review and categorization. Meanwhile, patrons continue to drop off books.

"It's amazing," Jean said. "I can't say enough about our customers. They bring us beautiful books."

The Sides have even partnered with north country libraries to take in books scheduled to be discarded. Books, especially paperbacks, are recyclable, Jean noted. "We went as far as Williamstown (Oswego County) with a U-Haul and cleaned out all the books they couldn't get rid of."

A DESTINATION

Bearly Hyde N' Cabin is open four days a week: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays. Jean said that customers come "from everywhere," especially in the summer months. Many customers drive for hours to reach the destination.

"I ask if they have a camp in the area, and they say, 'No, we drove up to see you!' It's just amazing who comes here, because it's kind of off the beaten path, in the middle of nowhere. We're just a little bookstore in the woods."

DETAILS

The 14 vendors who sell products at Bearly Hyde:

- The Sunny Dough Co.
- Three Sisters Sewing Co.
- Brash & Sassy Sterling Silver Jewelry
- Wood Family Farms (honey)
- The Nelipot's Garden (creative home decor and book-related crafts)
- Holy Davis/Davis Art Designs
- A&B Beaded Kreationz
- Lou Lou Teas
- Lori Pitts of Lori's Front Porch Designs
- Linda's Patchwork
- Mia Bella Threads
- Homestead Wax Melts
- Darkness Acres Soaps
- Sue Ryn Burns of Wellesley Island Wildlife Rehab Center

By ALEXANDER VIOLO

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MALONE — One of the town's three prisons will close next year in March following an announcement Nov. 18 from the state's Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.

The closure of Bare Hill Correctional Facility, a medium security prison in Malone and one of three state correctional facilities located in the town, was announced by DOCCS following a review of the state's 42 operational prisons.

Franklin and Upstate correctional facilities are also located in Malone near Bare Hill.

The Bare Hill facility, which has 293 staffers including corrections officers, medical and support staff, will be closing at the end of the day on March 11, according to a press release

from DOCCS.

"We are being told that nobody is losing their jobs, everybody will continue to have employment," Mayor Andrea M. Dumas, of the village of Malone said, when reached for comment Tuesday morning. "It's not just corrections officers there's support staff, civilian workers. This is a major concern that's a big hit for us."

Dumas said although no job losses are currently associated with the closure, shutting Bare Hill will still impact the community.

"It's a big part of our community. The prisons have helped our community in such a way, these prisons have employed a lot of people, a lot of people have worked extremely hard there, and that's why we need to make sure we are tak-

See PRISON T6

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JCIDA might go after equipment Convalt left for defaulted loan

By **CRAIG FOX**

cfox@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — The company that defaulted on a \$1 million loan after failing to build a solar manufacturing plant in the town of Hounsfield is storing robotics, laminators and other high-tech equipment in at least two local buildings.

Convalt Energy used the software and other equipment as collateral when it obtained a \$1.05 million loan from the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency four years ago.

And now JCIDA officials hope to find out how much the equipment, once valued at as much as \$13 million, is worth currently, if the agency needs to acquire it to recoup on the defaulted loan.

At its monthly board meeting on Thursday, the JCIDA board authorized spending \$1,100 to retain the company that assessed the original value of the equipment to get an appraisal on its current value.

"We want to take in stock in our collateral," said Marshall Weir, the JCIDA's CEO.

The JCIDA and Convalt President Hari Achuthan have been in talks for the company to pay back the loan after it failed to move forward with constructing a 300,000-square-foot manufacturing plant near the Watertown International Airport in Hounsfield.

The JCIDA board discussed the status of the discussions during an executive session on Thursday morning, but Weir declined to comment about it.

The JCIDA board hopes the



Convalt Energy stores manufacturing equipment in this building at 511 Pearl St. Craig Fox/Watertown Daily Times

equipment is valued at \$2 million or more, he said. The company purchased and trucked the high-tech equipment from a defunct Oregon solar plant to use on the factory here.

Last month, a reporter observed that some of the equipment that's being stored in a Pearl Street warehouse was removed from the building and placed in its parking lot.

At the time, a company employee said the building was piled up with equipment and that it was being moved to make way for a fire lane. But the city's code enforcement office and fire department both said they had not directed the company to make room for a fire lane.

In February, the JCIDA filed a lawsuit against Convalt in state Supreme Court for failing to pay on a \$1,050,000 loan for constructing a solar manufacturing plant on land that the economic development agency owns near the airport. The company defaulted on the loan.

In November 2024, the JCI-

DA and Convalt parted ways after the company failed to fulfill its obligations on a land development agreement to build on the 88-acre site on Route 12F.

When the deal fell through, the JCIDA learned that Achuthan was seeking to build the solar manufacturing plant in Colorado Springs.

The Hounsfield project was once billed as the largest economic development project in Jefferson County's history. The JCIDA board decided in November not to renew the land development agreement after continued delays.

Plans were announced in February 2021 for Convalt, then a New York City-based renewable energy company, to invest \$650 million in the project that would manufacture solar panels, initially creating hundreds of jobs but projected to employ thousands over time. A sister company, DigiCollect, would also build a facility in the airport industrial park.

Prison

From T5

of individuals that are going to be placed in new facilities," she said, "I'm sure as soon as they heard the closure people were nervous about their jobs and they are telling us no one is losing their jobs."

Dumas expressed concerns about how long the state will be able to maintain Bare Hill after March's closure to ensure a future use for the facility.

"They say they are going to keep this facility in a state-of-ready but how long is that going to happen for?" she asked, "Look at what happened with Camp Gabriels, look at what happened with Chateaugay, it's another concern for us."

DOCCS could have identified up to three prisons for closure this year through the state budget approved by the legislature.

Dumas said there is always concern in the area when potential prison closures are included in a given year's state budget.

"Is there ever a good time to do these closures? No, but it wasn't a surprise. I'm a little sad they are doing this a week before Thanksgiving and people have to go into the holidays not knowing," she said, "I know DOCCS says they are going to talk to people and let them know they aren't losing their jobs, they are moving them to another facility. At the end of the day it's still an issue because it's a building that will be vacant and will have an impact on our village, town and county."

Dumas said she believes Bare Hill was opened in 1988.

"Our biggest concern is making sure that people, right now, aren't financially impacted by losing a position or losing a civilian job, that's our biggest concern," she said, "Any time you hear closures happening you want to make sure people aren't financially impacted."

The around 700 incarcerated individuals at Bare Hill will be transferred to other medium-security prisons in New York, while the staff will be largely transferred to the neighboring prisons in Franklin County—Upstate and Franklin correctional facilities, accord-

ing to DOCCS press release.

All three of Malone's prisons are part of DOCCS' Clinton Hub, which also includes facilities in Altona, Dannemora, Ogdensburg and Ray Brook.

Upstate prison, in Malone, and Clinton Correctional in Dannemora are the only two maximum security prisons in the region with Adirondack, Altona, Franklin and Riverview listed as medium security prisons, according to DOCCS.

Other politicians react

State Sen. Daniel G. Stec, R-Queensbury, whose district also includes Great Meadow Correctional Facility, closed in November 2024, told the Telegram that he does not believe closures are the way to address ongoing staffing shortages or safety concerns at state prisons.

"I'm disappointed by the announcement from DOCCS that Bare Hill Correctional Facility is being closed. Given the ongoing safety crises inside correctional facilities, I believe that the solution is to enact substantive policy changes to make these sites safer and not closures and consolidations," he said, "Given the implications of this announcement, my primary focus is on ensuring that the correction officers and civilian staff currently employed at Bare Hill remain working and living in Malone and Franklin County. These men and women are vital parts of our community and it's critically important that they remain here."

In Tuesday's press release, DOCCS said its review of the state's 42 prisons was based on available space, quality of infrastructure, program offerings, proximity to other prisons, medical capacity and security levels.

Assemblyman Michael Cashman, D-Plattsburgh, also expressed frustration following Tuesday's announcement.

"This decision is wrong for our workers, wrong for our families, and wrong for the North Country. This closure is a direct blow to the hard-working correctional officers and civilian staff whose lives and livelihoods are being upended," Cashman said in a press release, "These are dedicated men and wom-

See PRISON T13

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SUNY to discount tuition for active-duty military

By ALEX GAULT
agault@wdt.net

ALBANY — The SUNY system is moving to provide a new kind of tuition assistance to active-duty service members, closing a gap in education programs focused on those who serve or have served in the nation's military.

Under the program, active-duty service members can receive a school-sponsored scholarship that matches the kind of federal educational assistance a veteran or reserve service member would receive.

As of early November, nine campuses have opted into the early adoption phase, including SUNY Canton, SUNY Plattsburgh, SUNY Oswego, the online-focused Empire State University, and schools in western New York and the Hudson Valley. They will provide the scholarships starting in January for the spring semester. The remaining SUNY schools, including both community colleges and four-year campuses, will start providing the scholarships starting in August next year for the fall semester.

This will not extend to CUNY schools in New York City, which operate separately from SUNY.

This scholarship program closes a gap that's been left in educational assistance programs provided to soldiers, veterans and reservists, where those on active duty weren't given access to as many of the grants and scholarships as those in the reserves or people who had completed their time in the military. That's largely because college courses and other educational opportunities relied on in-person teaching. Now, with the advent of online schools like Empire State University and the roll-out of online-only degree programs at most SUNY campuses, active-duty soldiers can seek a college degree while in the service.

"As part of SUNY's ongoing

efforts to honor the heroes who have answered the call to serve, we are taking action for those who currently serve today," SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr. said in a statement. "With the new military tuition rate, SUNY is removing barriers and making sure cost is never what stands between service members and their education. On Veterans Day, and every day, SUNY is proud to support our veterans, active duty service members, and military-connected students."

SUNY is also crafting a "one stop shop" webpage with information for veterans and all students with a connection to the military at SUNY.edu/military, which will explain the active-duty scholarship and other assistance programs, as well as on-campus and community-based resources for veterans and soldiers.

SUNY's focus on reaching veterans and those in the military is a longstanding effort, and trickles down to individual campuses, many of which operate their own individual programs aimed at that group.

"The Military Tuition Rate Program reflects our college's deep commitment to supporting those who serve in our armed forces," said SUNY Canton President Zvi Szafran. "It is the latest in a series of strategies to remove financial barriers and expand access to high-quality SUNY Canton education and it deepens on our commitment to being a military-friendly college."

"Our service members give so much of themselves to protect and strengthen our nation," said SUNY Plattsburgh President Alexander Enyedi. "At SUNY Plattsburgh, we believe it is our responsibility to make their path to higher education clear, affordable and accessible. The Military Tuition Rate embodies the values of service and opportunity that define both SUNY and our campus community."

Jumpin' GOAT is growing in NNY



Jumpin' Goat co-owner Kiera Russell makes a drink for a customer on June 13 in Watertown. Jonathon Wheeler/Watertown Daily Times

By CRAIG FOX
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WATERTOWN — As a businessman, nothing makes owner Erik Russell happier than when he sees his customers leave the Jumpin' Goat drive-thru coffee stand with a smile on their face.

And he might be seeing a lot more smiles in the near future.

Russell, who opened the drive-up beverage business in the former Brew Ha Ha at 418 Coffeen St. last year, is opening a second location on State Route 26 in the town of Champion with plans to launch three others.

The Champion location is now going through the site plan approval process. He has talked to the Champion Town Planning Board twice about building the drive-up coffee stand from scratch. The project is on the planning board agenda for Nov. 25. It was also presented to the Jefferson County Planning Board last month.

"It's going to be built for our business," Russell said. "We're not trying to fit it into a business that's already there."

The Champion coffee stand will employ between 20 and 25

people and be open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day of the year.

"We're open Thanksgiving, we're open on Christmas," he said. "Every person who wants a drink we want to make sure they get a drink"

It will be next door to the Licks on 26 ice cream stand at 36426 State Route 26. He's going into the venture with partners C.J. and Kyla Oliver, who own the property and run the ice cream stand.

He's also working on other Jumpin' Goats in the city of Watertown, in a suburb of Rochester and in Lake Nona, Florida. He declined to give more details about the second Watertown site because it's "in the early stages" of development.

"I never wanted to open just one," he said. "I always wanted to open more than one."

Michael A. Lumbis, the city's planning and community development director, said Russell came into his office asking general questions about zoning and where he could open it. The existing Coffeen Street spot "is pretty busy," Lumbis said.

As for the Rochester plans, Russell hopes to rebuild a coffee

stand that had been in business for years in the town of Brighton.

Since opening the first one last year, Jumpin' Goat has become a popular stop for customers wanting specialty drinks.

"It's the only business of mine that makes people smile," he said. "I want to continue to expand, make more people smile."

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

His goal has been to make the "Greatest Of All Time" coffee. As in G-O-A-T, the same term that some people call seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady.

While plans are proceeding for a Jumpin' Goat in Champion, an Arkansas company continues with construction of a similar type business, a 7 Brew coffee stand, at 1068 Arsenal St. It's slated to open before the end of the year.

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New terminal at Watertown International ready for passengers

By **JONATHON WHEELER**
jwheeler@wdt.net

WATERTOWN — The Watertown International Airport’s new terminal has been cleared for takeoff.

Jefferson County and airport officials officially cut the ribbon on the new \$32.3 million terminal Nov. 14 in front of a packed crowd. The project modernized the terminal and added additional space.

“It’s a very exciting day,” Airport Manager Grant W. Sussey said. “We’ve worked hard to get to this point.”

The old terminal will be repurposed as a restaurant and meeting space for both travelers and non-travelers. Local restaurant and bar chain Bad Apple was chosen to operate the restaurant space.

Some of the new changes include an automatic conveyor belt for baggage, a jet bridge, new seating with USB charging ports, a larger holding area, and improved baggage claim space.

The first flight out of the new terminal took place on

Oct. 24 at 6 a.m.

Gov. Kathleen C. Hochul said in a news release that investing in airports puts the community on the path towards economic prosperity and can provide a better quality of life.

“This new terminal at the Watertown International Airport gives the North Country the first-class travel hub it deserves and will create a welcoming environment for passengers traveling through its spacious confines, including the many soldiers stationed at nearby Fort Drum who frequently use this airport,” she said in the news release.

The project was funded by a \$28 million state grant to north country airports. Jefferson County paid \$1.3 million and the Federal Aviation Administration contributed \$3 million.

The Watertown International Airport was one of nine upstate airports that were awarded a total of \$230 million in the Upstate Airport Economic Development and



Elected officials and airport officials officially cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Watertown International Airport on Nov. 14. Jonathon Wheeler/Watertown Daily Times

Revitalization Competition, which were given to promote, revitalize, and accelerate investments in commercial passenger service airports in upstate New York.

Jefferson County assumed

See **AIRPORT T10**

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Airport

From T9

responsibility of the airport in 2006 from the city of Watertown. County Administrator Ryan Piche said in 2006 there were around 4,000 passengers a year. They expect there will be over 50,000 travelers going through the airport next year.

"This is truly an impressive space," Piche said.

Piche said that the project would not have been possible without the support from the state and the governor's office.

"The state believes in Jefferson County, has shared our vision for the airport, and has supported this critical project with almost \$30 million in funding from the New York State Department of Transportation," he said.

Department of Transportation Chief Engineer Stephanie Winkelhake said that the airport was built with military members in mind.

"In many ways, this space is an honor of what you mean to your community, to our country," she said. "This new modern facility is a blessing (for) many reasons... This transformation sends a clear message: The Watertown and the Thousand Islands region are open for business, opportunity, and tourism."

Sen. Mark Walczyk said the airport is the first impression travelers will have when they come to the area.

"I love this airport," he said.

Kelly Curry painted the murals that appear on the walls inside the new terminal. She stated that as soon as she heard that they were looking for artwork for the terminal,



A seating area for passengers to eat quick snacks is also now inside the Watertown International Airport's new terminal. Jonathon Wheeler/Watertown Daily Times

she was interested.

Curry, who also has a book coming out titled "Murals: The Seen and Unseen Along the St. Lawrence River" said she wanted to make murals for the county as a whole, not just a specific portion.

She said she has been working since August on the murals and used exterior house paint from Benjamin Moore.

"To be here and be able to add my art to our home area, our roots so to say, is a really big deal," Curry said.

Curry's grandfather is a previous sheriff of Jefferson County and used to be a legislator.

Chairman of the Board of Legislators William W. Johnson stated that the project was made possible by legislators past and present.

"True vision and true leadership is the ability to see beyond what's in front of us today and push towards an uncertain future," he said.

"This is the value of consistent investment and the shared belief that this community is deserving of access to high quality air travel."

Legislator James A. Nabywaneic was an original member of the county's airport committee and currently serves as chairman of the General Services Committee. He said that they had a chance to see the terminal a few weeks back.

"For us, it was a little like Christmas morning," he said.

He also stated that the relationship with Fort Drum brought a legacy carrier like American Airlines to the airport.

"I think they saw the potential of Fort Drum and ridership," he said. "We're so fortunate to have a legacy carrier like American Airlines to partner with. It's been a great 15-year relationship."

Nabywaneic said the county is "very fortunate" to have



A representative from American Airlines held demonstrations Friday showing how the new baggage conveyor works.

Sussey as the director of aviation for the airport.

Legislator Phil Reed said that the opening was "a long time coming."

"We would not be anywhere without the people flying in and out of here or the community support," he said.

"We're not going to be the next major airport, but we're going to provide the community with an asset that's not saddled with debt, responsible growth, and provide a good service for the area."



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

North Country Savings Bank cuts ribbon on new lobby



North Country Savings Bank recently updated its Canton branch's lobby. From left: Loan Originator Chris Nyman, St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ben Dixon, Client Relationship Coordinator Anthony Levato, Chief Information Officer Zach Bush, Board Member Phillip Cosmo, Chief Financial Officer Ryan Spadaccini, President & CEO R. Brian Coakley, Chief Retail Banking Officer Amanda Stone, Loan Origination Manager Robert Liggio, Canton Branch Manager Seamus O'Brien, Board Chairperson Andrew McMahon, Retail Support Specialist Jennifer Gollinger, Corporate Secretary Pamela Mahoney, and Director of Retail Lending & Marketing Henry LaSala. Provided photo

CANTON — Brian Coakley, president and CEO of North Country Savings Bank, welcomed about 50 community members to the newly remodeled lobby of the bank's Canton Branch on Nov. 13, marking a milestone in the bank's ongoing efforts to modernize and strengthen its connection with the North Country community.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Coakley reflected on the project's four-month journey and the bank's commitment to innovative, community-driven banking.

"Banking is so traditional and has been so traditional in what we do to serve customers that we want to start to take a different approach. And this is the first step," Coakley told the crowd.

Unlike traditional banks, Coakley emphasized that North Country Savings Bank is a mutual bank, owned by its depositors rather than stockholders.

"Our vision isn't on a quarterly basis, but on long term service, providing value to our communities," he said.

The redesign aims to not just modernize the space

but also invite tellers and staff "out from behind the line" to better serve customers.

The project, designed by Michael Reynolds of Beard-sley Architecture in Malone and carried out by Heritage Homes of Massena, was praised for its smooth transition from paper plans to real-world implementation.

"This project is part of a bigger process, a bigger change," Coakley said, noting the bank's eight branches across the North Country. "When we stay local, we all lift each other up."

Prison

From T6

en who have served this state. Now, through no fault of their own, their careers are being threatened, their families destabilized, and our local economy placed at severe risk. The consequences will ripple through our region's economy."

Cashman, who was elected to the assembly in a special election earlier in November, said he is unconvinced that this closure makes anyone safer.

"In fact, it creates new vulnerabilities at a time when folks across New York are already struggling under the weight of an affordability crisis," he said, "I will use every tool at my disposal to ensure our community is heard. I intend to make it unmistakably clear in Albany how devastating decisions like this are for our residents, our workforce, and our economic future."

Downsize reaction

In addition to the announced closure of Bare Hill, DOCCS said it plans to downsize Collins Correctional Facility, in Erie County, closing one side of the prison by April 2026.

The union representing correction officers, the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, opposed Tuesday's announcement via a press release.

Since January 2023, the number of correction officers and sergeants has plummeted by 28%, while the incarcerated population has increased by 7%, according to NYSCOPBA.

Staffing levels are now at their lowest in decades, according to the union, and this is not a system on the brink, it is a system that has already broken.

"We have sounded the alarm for years that New York's correctional system is at a breaking point," Chris Summers, NYSCOPBA's president, said in the release, "Closing prisons is a short-sighted Band-Aid on a gaping wound. It does nothing to address historic staffing shortages, does nothing to curb the record levels of violence inside our facilities, and forces loyal public servants to choose

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Despite efforts to hire more corrections officers, DOCCS still has about 4,000 open officer positions.

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Potsdam chamber welcomes five new members

POTSDAM — The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce has welcomed five new members to its growing network of local businesses and organizations: the Clarkson University Bookstore, Anirroc's Art, Rob Rust Tech Support & Web Development, Precision Auto Service & Repair, and Baker's Sizzling Grill.

The Clarkson University Bookstore, located inside Cheel Arena, offers a wide variety of Clarkson apparel, gifts, and supplies for students, alumni, and Golden Knight fans. The Chamber was delighted to attend the bookstore's recent ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating its beautiful new location on campus. The bookstore accepts Potsdam Chamber Gift cards and continues to serve as a welcoming hub for Clarkson students, families, and alumni. Learn more: clarkson.bncollege.com or call (315) 268-4300.

Anirroc's Art, owned by local artist Corrina Boyer, is a creative small business specializing in custom watercolor commissions and DIY craft parties. Boyer transforms client photos and ideas into meaningful works of art, while her craft parties provide a fun, relaxed way for participants to explore their creative side. While a dedicated studio space is in the works, Anirroc's Art currently operates as a mobile and home-based business, serving Potsdam and the greater North Country with art that inspires connection, creativity, and joy. Learn more: Email corriinalyn.anirroc@gmail.com or follow Anirroc's Art on Facebook and Instagram.

The chamber also welcomes Rob Rust, Tech Sup-



Nathan Plumadore (left) and James Barney (right) of Precision Auto Service & Repair in Potsdam. Provided photo

port Specialist and Web Developer. Rust helps local businesses strengthen their online presence through custom websites and reliable technology support. Serving clients throughout Potsdam and beyond, his expertise makes it easier for businesses to build and maintain an online presence while staying connected with their customers. Learn more by visiting robrust.dev or email contact@robrust.dev.

Precision Auto Service & Repair joins the chamber with years of experience and a passion for precision. The shop offers reliable repairs, maintenance, and diagnostics for all makes

and models, helping keep the community safely on the road. Located at 7297 US Highway 11 in Potsdam, Precision Auto Service & Repair is already an active part of the community, recently joining in the Chamber's annual Fright Night Trunk-or-Treat celebration. The business is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., providing friendly, professional service for all vehicle needs. Learn more: Visit www.precisionautonny.com or call (315) 261-4028.

The chamber is also pleased to welcome Baker's Sizzling Grill, a take-out restaurant and caterer located in the foothills of

the Adirondacks in Colton. Owned and operated by Peggy Smith, Baker's Sizzling Grill offers delicious homemade meals and catering services that showcase local flavor and warm Adirondack hospitality. The business, located at 18 McKabe Road in Colton, serves the surrounding communities with hearty, satisfying food that keeps customers coming back for more. Learn more by following them on Facebook or call (315) 274-2014.

"We're thrilled to welcome these outstanding members, each contributing something unique to our local economy and community," said Melanie Flack, executive director of the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce. "From creativity and education to technology, automotive care, and great local food, these new members reflect the diversity, innovation, and heart of Potsdam's business community."

The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce is proud to support a vibrant community of local businesses and organizations that make the North Country a wonderful place to live, work, and visit. The Chamber provides networking opportunities, promotional support, and community events throughout the year to strengthen connections and encourage economic growth in the Potsdam area.

To learn more about the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce, become a member, or explore upcoming events, visit www.potsdamchamber.com, or email director@potsdamchamber.com.

Maple, etc. celebrating one-year anniversary in Norwood

NORWOOD — The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce that Maple, etc. will celebrate its one-year anniversary and the grand opening of its Maple Learning Center with a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by the chamber on Saturday, Nov. 29, at 10:30 a.m. The celebration will take place at 28 South Main St., Norwood, and is open to the public.

The anniversary celebration will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will feature product sampling, maple syrup tasting, refreshments, 10% off storewide, and a variety of interactive and educational displays inside the Maple Learning Center. Families can also enjoy kids' activities and learn more about the maple-making process and local craftsmanship.

Maple, etc. offers a curated selection of locally made maple products, artisanal goods, handmade gifts, candles, soaps, jewelry, home décor, and custom woodwork — all crafted by North Country creators.

"We are so grateful for the support of our customers and community this past year," said owner Margaret Finen. "Opening the Maple Learning Center has been a dream of ours, and we're thrilled to share it with families, visitors, and anyone who loves maple and locally made products."

For more information, please contact Margaret Finen at (315) 353-2015 or finenmaple@gmail.com. For chamber-related inquiries, contact Melanie Flack at director@potsdamchamber.com.



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40 Catherine St., Malone

SeaComm Federal Credit Union Cafe now open at Canton-Potsdam Hospital



Rochester Regional Health's Canton-Potsdam Hospital recently opened the SeaComm Federal Credit Union Cafe. Pictured are St. Lawrence Region President Donna McGregor; Kristen Ashley and Maranda Rowley from Sugar Valley Bakery; Conor O'Brien from St. Lawrence Valley Roasters; Josh Taillon from The Blue House; and SLR Nutrition Services Director Lauren Prentice. Missing: Joel Howie from Canton Apples, and Pattie Mason & Sharon Poole from One Steep at a Time. St. Lawrence Region photo

POTSDAM — Rochester Regional Health's Canton-Potsdam Hospital is proud to announce the grand opening of the SeaComm Federal Credit Union Café, a brand-new dining and relaxation space located within the hospital's main campus in Potsdam. A grand opening ceremony was held on Oct. 28 to mark the official opening, attended by representatives from SeaComm, the hospital, and community members.

This new café represents a unique partnership between SeaComm and Canton-Potsdam Hospital, designed to enhance the experience of patients, visitors, and team members by providing a welcoming, comfortable space with convenient access to fresh food, beverages, and a peaceful atmosphere.

Earlier in the St. Lawrence Health Foundation's Great Care, Right Here fundraising campaign, SeaComm Federal Credit Union announced a generous \$100,000 donation that supported the construction of the hospital's Regional Care Pavilion, which includes the café. SeaComm's investment is part of its broader mission to give back to the North Country through strategic community partnerships and ongoing philanthropic support.

"Our partnership is just to attest to what you all do on

a daily basis at this health care facility for the community and SeaComm is very pleased to be a partner in that and will continue to be a partner," said Scott Wilson, SeaComm President & CEO.

The SeaComm Café offers a variety of refreshments, including locally sourced snacks, treats, coffee, grab-and-go meals, and healthy options tailored to hospital visitors and team members; made available, in part, through the partnership of local vendors including The Blue House, Canton Apples, One Steep at a Time, St. Lawrence Valley Roasters, and Sugar Valley Bakery. The space features modern, comfortable seating and free Wi-Fi to encourage rest and recharge during busy days.

Donna McGregor, president of St. Lawrence Region, expressed appreciation for the collaboration.

"We are incredibly grateful to SeaComm for their generosity and shared vision. The café is already becoming a cherished part of our hospital, offering a calming space that supports the wellbeing of our caregivers and guests," she said.

The café is open Sunday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is located adjacent to the hospital's main lobby and is open to the public and hospital personnel.

SeaComm donates \$10K to Norwood Brass Firemen

NORWOOD — The Norwood Brass Firemen received a generous \$10,000 donation from SeaComm Federal Credit Union recently in support of the band's efforts to replace the existing 1961 bus it has been operating for over 30 years.

The commitment of this bus is to serve as an emergency utility/rescue vehicle for the Norwood Fire Department as well as trans-

port for the band's performances.

Scott A. Wilson, CEO of SeaComm Federal Credit Union stated, "SeaComm is pleased to partner with the Norwood Fire Department to acquire a new bus to be used for emergency response as well as to transport our very own talented north country Norwood Brass Fireman Band."

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Potsdam Food Co-op reports positive 3Q trends in meeting

POTSDAM – The Potsdam Food Cooperative hosted its third quarter board meeting, open to store member-owners and the public, on Oct. 28 at the Potsdam Town Hall.

The co-op's general manager, Jessie LaRose, delivered an enthusiastic report to the directors highlighting the co-op's positive fiscal performance with the third quarter closing at a 4% increase in customer visits to the store with more than 1,100 customers each week, and a 6% increase in overall store sales with bulk goods and grocery items representing 40% of those sales, and highlighting the economic and health value that the Co-op delivers to the community through its sizeable bulk section.

LaRose also reported a newly hired team member for front end management, and a team reorganization that gives a renewed focus on receiving, and health and wellness products.

LaRose also shared that the co-op's fresh bread category has been widely popular, with added varieties of locally

baked goods from micro bakeries including Earth Bound Bread, Katie's Kitchen, and My Sister's Kitchen. In closing, LaRose noted that the co-op continues to reduce expenses and product losses and has improved management of margins, which has enabled the store to realize a profit this quarter.

When asked about the positive trends experienced by the co-op, Andre Comandon, president of the co-op board said, "Jessie has done a wonderful job turning around the co-op's financial situation under challenging conditions. The store's improving financial health comes at a crucial moment as we prepare to embark on an expansion and bolsters the case for a new space that will improve customers' experience."

The board of directors also received a report from the GM on behalf of the Expansion Committee on the status of the co-op's expansion project.

In the coming year, the Potsdam Co-op, which has 1,222 owner-member house-

holds with an addition of 40 new owner-members since last quarter, plans to break ground to build a 5,440 square foot structure, which will allow the business to expand its inventory selection. The plan calls for approximately 3,000 square feet of the new structure to be allocated for retail, which will double the co-op's grocery capacity. The current project plan includes construction of a new co-op building behind the current store, allowing store operations to continue during construction of the new building.

Aubertine and Currier created a building design for the Potsdam Co-op that has the character of New York's historic grain and grist mills such as Cold Brook Feed Mill of Herkimer County and the Jeffersonville Grist Mill of Sullivan County, while highlighting elements recognizable in the North Country including a limestone veneer at the foundation and vertical metal siding resembling the agricultural barns found on countless St. Lawrence County farms.



The Potsdam Food Cooperative hosted its third quarter board meeting, open to store member-owners and the public, on Oct. 28 at the Potsdam Town Hall. Provided photo

Customers will enter through a sliding glass door and enter the main retail area, which opens into a double-volume space with exposed beams that mimic an open-air market, unrestricted by ceilings. The building honors both historic and contemporary agriculture and visually underscores the invaluable mission of the Potsdam Co-op in providing a year-round marketplace for 50+ local growers and producers.

When asked about the vision for the new co-op, Aubertine and Currier's Project

Architect Brian Krueger, said, "Our objective for the Potsdam Food Co-Op is to create a local market space that promotes access to healthy, sustainable, and affordable high-quality food products."

Krueger added, "The design pays homage to the rich agricultural history of St. Lawrence County while recognizing the contemporary standards of building performance. This project will allow future generations to take an active role in the well-being of their community while creating a staple of downtown Potsdam."

Seacomm Insurance Agency holds grand opening



Pictured from left: Patricia Dodge, SeaComm Secretary Board of Directors/SeaComm Insurance Agency, LLC Secretary Board of Directors; Erin Fennessy, Support Specialist; Michelle Patenaude, SeaComm VP of Accounting/SeaComm Insurance Agency, LLC Treasurer Board of Directors; Myron Burns, SeaComm Chairman Board of Directors/SeaComm Insurance Agency, LLC Chairman, Board of Directors; Scott A. Wilson, SeaComm President & Chief Executive Officer/SeaComm Insurance Agency, LLC President; Jake Bellinger, Licensed Agent; Tom Bellinger, Manager/Lead Licensed Agent. Submitted photo

Wray Enterprises celebrates grand opening of new Parishville office

PARISHVILLE — The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce has announced the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for Wray Enterprises Inc. on Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 2 p.m. The ceremony will be held at the firm's new office located at 1888 State Highway 72. Parishville.

Wray Enterprises is owned and operated by Nathan Wray, an Enrolled Agent (EA) authorized by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to represent taxpayers before the IRS. Wray Enterprises provides comprehensive accounting services including tax returns, bookkeeping, payroll assistance for nonprofits, and controllership contracts.

Nathan Wray founded the firm in 2014 and has built a practice focused on providing



Nathan B. Wray is the Founder of the Colton-based accounting firm, Wray Enterprises Inc., launched in 2014. Provided photo

quality, personalized service to North Country clients, offering a private conference room for

one-on-one consultations.

Wray brings extensive experience to his clients, including a background in hospital finance and local government fund accounting. He became an Enrolled Agent in 2021, a federal authorization allowing him to represent clients in all matters before the IRS, including audits, appeals, and collections.

Wray is also deeply involved in the community, currently serving as Treasurer for both the Parishville Sportsmen's Club and the Parishville-Hopkinton PTO.

Staff Accountant Ally Smith, who recently celebrated her two-year anniversary with the firm, joins Wray.

Clarkson launching new Business of Biotechnology major

POTSDAM — The biotechnology and biomedical fields are booming, growing close to 12 percent every year. To help students step into that momentum, Clarkson University is launching a new Business of Biotechnology major that mixes science know-how with business skills and management savvy.

The program is built for students who like science and want to be part of the biotech world, but don't see themselves working only in a research lab. It blends courses in biology and biotechnology with training in business, management and leadership—giving graduates the flexibility to move into many different roles in the industry.

"This program opens doors for students who want to understand the science but also want to manage, lead and innovate in the fast-growing biotech sector," said Assistant Biology Professor Petra Kraus, who teaches core courses in the new program and has worked in the biotechnology industry. "It provides the tools to succeed in roles that connect science and business."

Students in the program will take biotechnology courses alongside classes in finance, marketing, supply chain, and management. The curriculum also allows students to earn nine graduate credits toward an MBA while completing their bachelor's degree, giving them a head start on advanced business training.

Unlike pre-med tracks or research science degrees, the Business in Biotechnology major is designed for students seeking direct career opportunities after graduation. Alumni can expect to pursue roles in project management, regulatory affairs, operations, supply chain management and more at leading companies such as Regeneron and Bristol Myers Squibb.

By combining biotechnology coursework with business training, Clarkson's new major sets graduates apart in a competitive job market. They will be equipped to bridge the gap between scientific discovery and business strategy—an essential skill set in a sector driving both technological progress and economic growth.



Clarkson University is launching a new Business of Biotechnology major that mixes science know-how with business skills and management savvy. Clarkson University photo

"We believe this is a first-of-its-kind undergraduate major. Many colleges offer biology with an unconnected business minor. This is something different - a truly integrated combination of bioscience and business," said program director Tom Langen.

The new program is now

accepting students for Fall 2026.

For more information about Clarkson's Business in Biotechnology major, visit the program website, clarkson.edu/academics/majors-minors/business-biotechnology-major.



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25-WO-01128 (04/25)