

Put Your Business in Front of Western New York Advertise with Niagara Action.

Contact for pricing



www.niagaraaction.com
(716) 538-8237
contact@niagaraaction.com

Full page • Banner • Half vertical • Grid sizing available
Print, website & social media

BUFFALO ACTION

DELIVERED WEEKLY ACROSS NIAGARA, ERIE & MONROE COUNTIES

ROCHESTER ACTION

NIAGARA ACTION

FREE

June 24th, 2026 - June 30th, 2026

NiagaraAction.com

Vol. 1, No. 13

FREE

Erie County Legislators Pressed to Hold Hearing on Death of Nurul Amin Shah Alam

By: Staff Reports

The family of Nurul Amin Shah Alam — a blind Rohingya refugee whose death shocked Western New York — is continuing its push for answers, urging Erie County lawmakers to examine the actions taken by the Erie County Sheriff's Office in the days leading up to his death.

On Wednesday, June 17th, family members of Alam joined State Assemblymember Jon Rivera at Old County Hall to deliver a petition containing more than 700 signatures calling on the Erie County Legislature to investigate why Alam was transferred from local custody to federal immigration authorities upon his release.

The petition asks legislators to publicly question officials about the circumstances that led to Alam being turned over to U.S. Border Patrol and what role, if any, local authorities played in the chain of events that preceded his death.

(Cont. on pg. 8)

Sexual Harassment Allegations Rock Buffalo School Board as Questions Mount Over Delays, Secrecy and Executive Raises



By: John Watson

What began as a confidential complaint behind closed doors has rapidly evolved into one of the most damaging controversies fac-

ing Buffalo Public Schools in recent years, exposing deep divisions within the Buffalo Board of Education and raising serious questions about whether district leaders followed

(Cont. on pg. 7)

The Opportunity No One Saw Coming The AI Data Center Boom, the Quincy, Washington Miracle, and Why Niagara Falls Is Holding a Royal Flush It Doesn't Know It Has

By: John Karcz

Part Two: A Special Report by the Niagara Falls
Economic Reinvention Project

This is the second article in a four-part series. Part One examined the history of failure in Niagara Falls, NY and identified the three underutilized assets at the heart of this plan. Part Three presents the full plan. Part Four maps the path to execution.

In 2006, a Microsoft site-selection team flew into a small agricultural town in central Washington State. They were looking for three things: cheap clean power, cold climate, and cheap land. They found all three. Within two years, the town of Quincy, Washington — population 7,000, economy built on potatoes and apples — had become one of the most important data center hubs in the world. Today it is one of the wealthiest small cities in the Pacific Northwest. Niagara Falls has better power than Quincy. It has colder winters. It has more land. The only thing it is missing is the ask.

THE FASTEST-GROWING ELECTRICITY CONSUMER IN HUMAN HISTORY

What artificial intelligence actually requires — and why it is creating a crisis that Niagara Falls is uniquely positioned to solve

To understand the opportunity, you have to understand the demand. Artificial intelligence — specifically the infrastructure required to train, run, and serve the large language models and machine learning systems that have become the defining technology of the 2020s — is consuming electricity at a rate that has stunned even the engineers who build these systems.

A single large AI training run — the

(Cont. on pgs. 3)

SECTIONS

Niagara Tourism.....	2
Niagara Falls.....	3-5
Buffalo.....	6-7
Erie County.....	8
Rochester.....	9
State News.....	10
National News.....	11
Crime.....	12
Business.....	13-14
Environment.....	15
Horoscopes, Puzzles and Funnies.....	16

SHEDDING LIGHT ON LIGHTS

*How Modern Lighting Technology Impacts Comfort, Productivity, Sleep,
and Energy Costs.*



By: Sumit Majumdar

All light is not equal. Lights affect work mood and power consumption. As I know what lumens are I wonder how lights work and what are the right lights for work for home for the backyard. Let's shed some light on lights.

In our modern era, illumination is treated as a given. You flip a switch, and darkness is banished. However, the qualitative properties of the photons bathing our living and working spaces are rarely

(Cont. on pg. 15)



SIGN UP TODAY

www.buffalobiodiesel.com
1-800-721-1427

**RENEWABLE ENERGY TODAY,
FOR A CLEANER TOMORROW**

Recycling commercial used fryer grease since 2005

NIAGARA TOURISM

New Interactive Exhibits Open at Niagara Falls State Park, Offers Visitors New Way to Experience the Falls

Staff Reports

Visitors to Niagara Falls State Park now have two new ways to experience one of the world's most recognizable natural wonders. State officials and tourism partners gathered on June 18th to unveil a pair of major attractions inside the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Welcome Center.

The new additions – a permanent historical exhibit called Voices of the Falls and an immersive virtual reality attraction known as Above the Roar – are designed to give guests a deeper understanding of Niagara Falls beyond the iconic views that draw millions of visitors each year.

Together, the projects represent a significant expansion of the visitor experience inside the Welcome Center, which opened in late 2023 as part of a broader effort to modernize facilities at the nation's oldest state park.

The Voices of the Falls attraction is a nearly 5,000-square-foot interactive exhibit that explores the people, events and stories that helped shape Niagara Falls over generations.

The \$4.4 million installation combines artifacts, multimedia displays, hands-on experiences, historical accounts and first-person storytelling to examine the park's past, present and future through the perspectives of those who have lived, worked and traveled through the region.

Exhibit content ranges from the experiences of Indigenous communities who first inhabited the land to stories connected to the Underground Railroad, the environmental legacy of Love Canal, and the diverse plant and animal life found throughout the park.

Officials said the exhibit was developed to help visitors better understand the cultural, historical and environmental significance of Niagara Falls beyond the waterfalls themselves.

State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Kathy Moser praised the partnerships that helped bring the exhibit to life.

"I am especially grateful for our partnership with the Seneca Nation, Tuscarora Nation, and Underground Railroad collaborators, whose contributions helped bring these stories to life," said Moser. "By sharing a more complete and inclusive history, these exhibits ensure that visitors gain a deeper understanding of the people, cultures, and events that shaped New York and our nation."

The exhibit was designed by Haley Sharpe Design, which operates offices in the United Kingdom and Toronto, while fabrication work was completed by Buffalo-based Hadley Exhibits.

While Voices of the Falls focuses on history and storytelling, the park's newest attraction offers visitors an entirely different experience.

Above the Roar places guests inside a fully immersive virtual reality journey that simulates flying above and around Niagara Falls.

Using motion-enhanced seating, surround sound and high-definition virtual reality technology, participants are transported along the Niagara River before soaring over the American Falls, Bridal Veil Falls and Horseshoe Falls.

The experience then takes visitors through the Niagara Gorge and beneath the water's surface, where they encounter seven species of fish native to the Niagara River before returning to the brink of the falls and eventually back inside the Welcome Center.

Developed and operated by Delaware North Parks and Resorts, the attraction is intended to provide a perspective of Niagara Falls that would otherwise be impossible for most visitors to experience.

"Above the Roar offers a completely new way for people to experience Niagara Falls as part of their visit to the park," said Derek Zwickey, chief operating officer of Delaware North Parks & Resorts. "We are proud of our partnership with New York State Parks and thrilled that Delaware North could bring this attraction to life as another way for visitors



from around the globe to experience Niagara Falls State Park."

Delaware North has managed food service, retail operations and other visitor amenities at Niagara Falls State Park since 1995.

The company partnered with MDSX, an award-winning experiential design and media production firm known for its work at major attractions including the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

According to Delaware North officials, the goal was to create an experience that blends entertainment with education while showcasing the scale and power of the falls from a completely new vantage point.

"Working with MDSX, we used cutting-edge virtual reality content to create a perspective that has never been accessible to the public – a cinematic, awe-inspiring journey that is as emotional as it is exhilarating," said Zwickey. "Every moment is designed to bring guests closer to the scale, power and beauty of Niagara Falls in a way that feels immediate and unforgettable."

The attraction is open year-round. Advance reservations are available online and walk-in guests are welcome when

space permits.

The completion of both attractions marks another milestone in the transformation of the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Welcome Center, a 28,000-square-foot facility that serves as the gateway to Niagara Falls State Park.

The modern visitor center was opened by Governor Kathy Hochul in December 2023 and was designed to maximize views of Niagara Falls through expansive glass walls and a low-profile roofline.

The facility includes visitor information services, ticketing areas, concession space, public restrooms, support facilities and environmentally focused design elements. Among its sustainability features are rooftop solar panels, specialized bird-friendly glass, green roof components and enhanced landscaping with native plant species.

With millions of people arriving annually from around the world, the two new attractions aim to provide a richer understanding of the region's natural beauty, cultural heritage and historical importance while offering entirely new ways to experience one of North America's most iconic landscapes.

From WNY to Hollywood: A-list Celebrities Born in and Around Niagara

Staff Reports

The Niagara region, famously known for the majestic Niagara Falls, has not only been a favorite spot for tourists but has also given birth to many talents who later went on to achieve worldwide fame – here is a list of some of the celebrities who were born in this stunning region of Western New York (WNY):

1. William Fichtner: One of the most famous celebrities to be born in the Niagara Region, Fichtner is a versatile actor who has appeared in films such as Armageddon, The Dark Knight, and Black Hawk Down. Fichtner was born in East Aurora, New York, which is located about 20 miles southeast of Buffalo.

2. Brian Finney: The talented musician of the American band 'Fall From Grace' was also

born in the Niagara region.

3. Edward Gibson: Gibson is an astronaut from Buffalo, New York who has had a stellar career in NASA.

4. Larry Wellman: An actor best known for 'Grand Theft Auto V,' was born in Buffalo.

5. Mark Bridges: An award-winning costume designer, famous for his work in films such as 'Phantom Thread,' 'The Artist,' and 'There Will Be Blood,' was born in Niagara Falls, New York.

6. Mark Russell: A popular political satirist and comedian, Mark Russell was born in Buffalo.

7. Robbie Takac: Takac, a member of the 'Goo Goo Dolls,' was born in the Western New York area.

8. Shemar Moore: Born in California but raised in Buffalo, the talented actor is best

known for his roles in 'Criminal Minds' and 'S.W.A.T.'.

9. Thom Noble: An Academy Award-winning film editor known for his work on films such as 'Thelma & Louise' and 'Witness,' was born in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

10. William Sadler: An actor renowned for his roles in 'The Shawshank Redemption' and 'Die Hard 2,' was born in Buffalo, New York.

11. Barbara Frum: Known for her influential journalism career at CBC, Frum was born in Niagara Falls, New York.

12. Christine Baranski: Born in Cheektowaga, New York, just a few miles east of Buffalo.

Baranski has had a successful career in film, television, and theater, earning acclaim for her roles in projects like The Birdcage, The Grinch, Mamma Mia!, The Good Fight and much more.

13. Wolf Blitzer: Born in Western New York in the city of Buffalo, Blitzer is best known as a longtime correspondent and anchor for CNN.

14. Frank Dux: The martial artist, who was the inspiration for the movie Bloodsport, was born in Toronto, but was raised in Niagara Falls, New York.

15. Charles Cyphers: This actor, who had notable roles in many of John Carpenter's films including Halloween and Escape from New York, was born in Niagara Falls.

While the majestic falls have been the center of attention in the Niagara Region, the area has undeniably contributed to the arts and sciences, by serving as the birthplace of many individuals who made it big in their respective fields. The natural beauty of this place seems to provide an inspirational backdrop that aids the inhabitants to reach for the stars.



www.niagaraaction.com

(716) 538-8237

contact@niagaraaction.com

FOLLOW US



@niagaraaction



LOCAL NEWS

NIAGARA FALLS

Operation Powerhouse Part 2: The Opportunity No One Saw Coming The AI Data Center Boom, the Quincy, Washington Miracle, and Why Niagara Falls Is Holding a Royal Flush It Doesn't Know It Has (Cont. from cover)

A Four-part Series / Part Two of Four

John Karcz

kind used to build a model like GPT-4 or Google's Gemini — can consume tens of millions of kilowatt-hours of electricity. That is comparable to the annual energy consumption of thousands of American homes, concentrated into weeks or months of sustained computation. And training runs are only the beginning: the inference infrastructure — the server farms that serve AI responses to millions of users simultaneously, around the clock — operates continuously and at enormous scale. Every time you ask a chatbot a question, every time an AI system processes an image or generates a document, a cluster of specialized processors somewhere in the world draws power, generates heat, and requires cooling.

The numbers are extraordinary. Global data center electricity consumption reached approximately 400 terawatt-hours in 2022. By 2026, projections from major research organizations place that figure at or near 1,000 terawatt-hours — a more than doubling in four years. The International Energy Agency has identified data center power demand as one of the primary drivers of global electricity consumption growth. In the United States alone, data centers are expected to account for a substantial and growing share of total national electricity demand by 2030.

The companies building this infrastructure are not small. Microsoft, Google, Amazon Web Services, Meta, and Oracle are collectively spending hundreds of billions of dollars on data center construction globally. Microsoft alone announced \$80 billion in data center capital expenditure for fiscal year 2025. Google announced \$75 billion. Amazon is spending at similar scale. These are not speculative investments — they are the physical infrastructure of the AI economy, and they are being built right now, as fast as the companies can find suitable sites.

And that, precisely, is the problem. Suitable sites are scarce, and getting scarcer. The combination of cheap, reliable, clean power — ideally renewable, increasingly required to be renewable by corporate ESG commitments and government policy — with cold climate, available land, and accessible fiber infrastructure is not common. It exists in specific places. One of those places is Niagara Falls, New York. It has existed there, unmarketed and un-leveraged, for as long as the falls themselves have been generating power — which is to say, for more than a century. The difference between now and every prior moment in that century is that the demand for what Niagara Falls has to offer has never, in the history of electricity, been greater than it is today.

Understanding that demand — its scale, its urgency, and its specific technical requirements — is the foundation of everything that follows in this series. The hyperscalers are not looking for a community to rescue. They are looking for power. The argument this series makes is that Niagara Falls should stop waiting to be discovered and start making the pitch.

- Global data center electricity consumption: ~400 TWh in 2022, projected ~1,000 TWh by 2026
- Microsoft announced \$80 billion in data center capital expenditure for fiscal

year 2025

- Google announced \$75 billion in data center investment for 2025
- U.S. data centers projected to account for 9–11% of total national electricity consumption by 2030
- A single large AI training run can consume the annual electricity of thousands of homes

THE POWER CRISIS NO ONE IS TALKING ABOUT

Why the hyperscalers are quietly desperate — and why geography has become destiny

The electricity grid of the northeastern United States was not designed for what is being asked of it. The transmission infrastructure — the high-voltage lines, substations, transformers, and switching equipment that move power from generation sources to consumers — was largely built out in the mid-twentieth century. Expanding it requires permitting processes that take years, construction timelines that stretch into decades, and capital costs that are measured in the billions. The regulatory environment in most northeastern states adds additional layers of complexity that further extend these timelines.

The result is a growing mismatch between where large-scale electricity consumers want to be located — near existing fiber infrastructure, near population centers, near the labor markets and logistics networks that support data center operations — and where large-scale electricity supply is actually available in the quantities required.

This mismatch has created something that people inside the data center industry describe quietly but consistently as a crisis. Hyperscale operators are making site-selection decisions years in advance of when they need a facility to be operational, because the process of securing power, permitting a site, and constructing a facility at scale takes that long. They are competing for a limited inventory of power-secured locations with increasing urgency and, in some cases, increasing willingness to pay for the certainty of having power secured before construction begins.

The power-secured locations that do exist tend to be in specific geographic corridors — the Pacific Northwest, where Columbia River hydropower is abundant; the mid-Atlantic, where grid connectivity is strong; Texas, where grid capacity has been expanded. The northeastern United States — one of the most data-hungry regions in the world, home to the financial industry, major media and technology companies, universities, and government infrastructure that all rely on cloud computing — is notably underserved by locally-sited data center infrastructure.

Fiber routes run through Niagara Falls. The Buffalo metro area is a significant connectivity hub. The I-190 corridor provides logistics access. And the New York Power Authority operates one of the most powerful clean-generation facilities in the eastern United States twenty minutes from downtown Niagara Falls. The Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant — rated at 2,675 megawatts, one of the largest hydroelectric stations in the world — sits on the Niagara River and has been generating clean, cheap power since 1961. Its output is allocated through a system administered by NYPA, and those allocations — particularly the preferential low-cost power allocations available to economic development projects



Downtown Niagara Falls, NY.

— are among the most valuable assets any community in the eastern United States could offer a prospective industrial tenant.

The irony is acute. One of the most powerful clean-energy stations in the hemisphere sits within sight of a city that has been economically distressed for sixty years. The power has always been there. The demand for it — at the scale that can change a city — has only recently arrived.

"The hyperscalers are not looking for a good deal. They are looking for power. Niagara Falls has more clean power than almost anywhere else in the eastern United States — and almost nobody has told them."

THE ECONOMICS OF COLD

Why a Niagara Falls winter is worth tens of millions of dollars a year to a data center operator

Data centers generate enormous amounts of heat. Every server rack, every processor, every switch and router dissipates electrical energy as thermal energy, and that heat must be removed continuously or the equipment fails. At hyperscale — hundreds of thousands of servers operating in a single facility — the cooling requirement is immense, and meeting it is the single largest operating cost after electricity itself.

The industry has developed increasingly sophisticated cooling approaches over the decades — air cooling, water cooling, immersion cooling, free-air economization — but the fundamental physics remain constant: the colder the ambient environment, the less mechanical work is required to remove heat from the facility, and the lower the operating cost. In warm climates, cooling systems must work against the ambient temperature using energy-intensive mechanical refrigeration. In cold climates, outside air can be drawn directly through the facility for large portions of the year, removing heat at essentially zero marginal energy cost.

This approach — called free-air cooling or economization — can reduce the energy consumed by cooling systems by 30 to 40 percent compared to a warm-climate facility of equivalent scale. On a hyperscale campus consuming 100 megawatts or more, that translates to savings in the range of \$10 to \$30 million per year in operating costs, sustained indefinitely, for as long as the

facility operates.

Niagara Falls has an average annual temperature of approximately 48 degrees Fahrenheit. Its winters are sustained and cold, driven by lake-effect patterns and the city's position at the eastern end of Lake Erie. For six or more months per year, outside air temperatures are in ranges that allow substantial or complete free-air cooling. For data center operators comparing sites across the northeastern United States, this is not an amenity. It is a core financial variable — one that, at scale, is worth tens of millions of dollars per year more than a site in a warmer climate with equivalent power and land characteristics.

When a site-selection team builds the financial model for a 100-megawatt campus, they are not comparing aesthetics. They are modeling forty-year total cost of ownership across power cost, cooling cost, land cost, construction cost, tax burden, and network connectivity. Niagara Falls wins on four of those six variables before a single negotiation has taken place. The remaining two — construction cost and network connectivity — are addressable with the right infrastructure investment. The cold and the power are already there, and they are not going anywhere.

WHAT FREE-AIR COOLING ACTUALLY MEANS IN DOLLARS

A 100MW data center campus in Phoenix, Arizona spends approximately \$25–35 million per year on mechanical cooling — chillers, cooling towers, refrigerant systems, and the electricity to run them. The same facility in Niagara Falls, NY, using free-air economization for 6+ months annually, reduces that figure by 30–40%, saving \$8–14 million per year in operating costs. Over a 20-year facility lifespan, that difference compounds to \$160–280 million in cost savings — before accounting for the value of the cheaper NYPA electricity rate. For a site-selection team comparing options, the cold is not a footnote. It is a headline.

QUINCY, WASHINGTON — THE PROOF OF CONCEPT

How a potato farming town became one of the most important tech hubs in America

The most compelling proof that this

(Cont. on pg. 4)

NIAGARA FALLS CONT.

Operation Powerhouse Part 2: The Opportunity No One Saw Coming Cont.



Quincy, Washington

model works is not theoretical. It exists, it is documented, and it is sitting in the middle of eastern Washington State in a town that was, by every measure, less well-positioned than Niagara Falls when the transformation began. Quincy, Washington is not a metaphor or a thought experiment. It is a real place with real numbers — numbers that are, by almost any measure, astonishing — and understanding what happened there is the most important analytical exercise any serious person engaged with the Niagara Falls economic question can undertake.

CASE STUDY: QUINCY, WASHINGTON — THE FULL STORY

Quincy, Washington sits in the Columbia River Basin, about 150 miles east of Seattle. In 2005, it was an agricultural community of approximately 6,000 people, economy built around fruit and vegetable farming, with a significant Hispanic population, a poverty rate around 29%, and no particular reason to expect that its fortunes would change dramatically.

What it had — largely unnoticed — was the same combination of assets that Niagara Falls possesses today. The Columbia River generates enormous quantities of cheap, clean hydroelectric power, and Grant County Public Utility District provided power to the region at rates that were among the lowest in the nation. Eastern Washington's climate is cold and dry — average temperatures significantly below those of the coastal cities where the tech industry was concentrated. And the Columbia Basin had vast amounts of cheap, flat, available land.

In 2006, Microsoft's corporate real estate team identified this combination and made the decision that changed Quincy forever. Microsoft broke ground on a data center campus that would eventually sprawl across hundreds of acres and consume hundreds of megawatts of power. The construction alone employed thousands of workers over multiple years. The property taxes from a single large facility exceeded the entire previous property tax base of the region's agricultural land.

Then came Google, which built its own campus nearby. Then Amazon Web Services. Then Yahoo, then Sabey Data Centers, then Intuit, then Dell, then 29 additional operators of varying sizes. The Grant County area — Quincy at its center — became one of the most concentrated data center markets in the world.

The economic results were transformative by any measure:

- Poverty rate: fell from approximately 29.4% to 13.1% in under a decade — a reduction of more than half
- Property tax revenue: increased 1,277% — rising from modest agricultural assessments to \$54 million per year
- New school: the Quincy School District built a state-of-the-art high school widely described as one of the finest in Washington State, funded entirely by data center property tax revenue
- New hospital: a new regional medical facility was built, funded in part by the

- expanded tax base
- Community infrastructure: soccer complex, community center, parks, roads — all built from data center revenue
- Jobs: thousands of permanent operations and maintenance positions, plus construction employment that sustained local contractors for years

Microsoft President Brad Smith has publicly cited Quincy, Washington as the national model for responsible data center community investment — a demonstration that hyperscale infrastructure can be an affirmative economic development tool for small communities rather than simply an isolated industrial facility.

The Quincy precedent is important not just as an example but as a template. The key variables that made Quincy work — cheap clean power, cold climate, cheap land — are all present in Niagara Falls. The key difference is that Quincy's deals were structured as standard industrial development: tax incentives, favorable rates, and grateful municipal officials. Niagara Falls, as this series argues, should structure its deals differently — as equity partnerships, with resident ownership of the upside built into the structure from day one.

WHAT NIAGARA HAS THAT QUINCY NEVER DID

The advantages that make Niagara Falls not just comparable to Quincy — but superior

The Quincy comparison is instructive, but it understates Niagara Falls' advantages in several important respects. Quincy, Washington is a genuinely remote agricultural town in the high desert of eastern Washington. Its proximity to Seattle — about 150 miles, or a two-and-a-half-hour drive — gives it some access to the Pacific Northwest tech labor market, but it is not, by any reasonable definition, a convenient location. Its airport connections require a drive to the Tri-Cities or to Seattle-Tacoma. Its civic infrastructure — schools, hospitals, restaurants, cultural institutions — was, at the outset of its transformation, extremely limited.

Niagara Falls, New York sits within a 30-minute drive of Buffalo, New York — a city of 270,000 with a functioning airport (Buffalo Niagara International), a growing medical and educational economy anchored by the University at Buffalo and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, a regional hospital system, a professional sports presence, and an increasingly recognized cultural scene. The Buffalo-Niagara metro area has a population of approximately 1.2 million, providing a labor market of a scale that Quincy could never access.

Niagara Falls also has the Rainbow Bridge — one of only a handful of land border crossings between the United States and Canada in the region — giving it direct connectivity to the Canadian side and to the broader Canadian tech and business community. Ontario is home to a substantial and growing technology sector, and Niagara Falls sits at the crossing point.

And then there is the 12 million. Quincy has no tourist economy to speak of. It has no natural attraction. It has data centers and agriculture. Niagara Falls has a world-class natural wonder that draws 12 to 14 million visitors per year — visitors who arrive on existing transportation infrastructure, who are already spending money in the region, and who represent a potential audience for the additional tourism layer that Part Four of this series describes.

The point is not to diminish what Quincy accomplished — it is extraordinary, and it is real, and it is the most relevant precedent this plan has. The point is that if Quincy could accomplish what it did with the assets it had, Niagara Falls — with stronger power infrastructure, colder winters, greater connectivity, a larger regional labor market, and an existing tourist economy — has every reason to expect results that are at minimum comparable and potentially more substantial.

"If a potato farming town of 7,000 people in eastern Washington could cut its poverty rate in half and build a new hospital from data center tax revenue, what could Niagara Falls — with better power, colder winters, and twelve million tourists already showing up — actually do?"

BEYOND QUINCY — THE GLOBAL EVIDENCE

Iceland, Ireland, and the international precedents that prove the model scales Quincy is the most directly analogous precedent for the Niagara Falls opportunity, but it is not the only one. Around the world, communities and countries that have recognized the combination of cheap renewable power and cold climate as a strategic asset have attracted data center investment at scales that have transformed their economies.

Iceland is the most dramatic international example. A nation of 370,000 people, Iceland has virtually no fossil fuel resources but enormous geothermal and hydroelectric generating capacity — clean, cheap, and abundant. Its average annual temperature is roughly 40 degrees Fahrenheit. These two characteristics have made it a preferred destination for data center operators seeking cheap renewable power and free-air cooling in a politically stable jurisdiction. Over the past two decades, Iceland has attracted hyperscale and enterprise data center operators from across Europe and North America, building an industry that has diversified its economy beyond fishing and aluminum smelting in ways that would have been impossible to predict thirty years ago. The country also pipes waste heat from data centers and geothermal plants into residential heating systems, substantially reducing household energy costs — a detail that is not incidental, and one that Part Three of this series will return to in the context of the Niagara Falls structure.

Ireland offers a different but related lesson. Dublin and the surrounding county became one of Europe's primary data center hubs through a combination of favorable tax policy, EU membership, English-language environment, and connectivity infrastructure — not primarily cheap power or cold climate. The Irish case shows that when a jurisdiction actively markets itself as a data center destination and structures its regulatory environment to welcome the industry, results follow quickly. Ireland now hosts data centers representing a majority of the country's total electricity consumption — which has created its own challenges, but also its own economic dividends.

The pattern across all of these cases is consistent: communities and jurisdictions that have the right physical characteristics and the political will to actively structure deals with hyperscale operators have seen rapid, substantial, and durable economic transformation. Communities that have those characteristics but lack the organizational vehicle to make the pitch and capture the value have seen nothing. Niagara Falls is, today, in the second

category. The remainder of this series describes how to move it into the first.

THE STRUCTURAL QUESTION

Why the opportunity exists — and why it hasn't been seized yet

The obvious question, at this point in the analysis, is: if this opportunity is as clear as this series argues, why hasn't it been seized already? The answer has several components, and being honest about them is important for the credibility of the proposal.

First, the AI infrastructure boom is genuinely recent. The scale of hyperscaler power demand that makes Niagara Falls' assets strategically critical did not exist five years ago at its current magnitude. The urgency of the site-selection problem — the desperate search for power-secured locations in the northeastern US — has intensified dramatically since 2022 and 2023, as AI investment accelerated following the public release of ChatGPT and the subsequent explosion of AI infrastructure spending. The window opened recently. It has not been open long enough for every community to notice.

Second, taking advantage of it requires a specific organizational vehicle that Niagara Falls does not currently have. The NYPA power allocation requires an applicant. The hyperscaler RFP requires a counterparty with the authority to offer land, power access, and partnership terms. The deal structure proposed in Part Three of this series — equity participation, Citizens' Dividend, fiber network development — requires a legal entity created for the purpose. None of these exist today. They need to be built. That is the work of Part Three.

Third, and most honestly: Niagara Falls has been told, repeatedly and by serious people, that its situation is hopeless. The city has internalized a narrative of decline that makes bold structural proposals feel unrealistic. The purpose of this series is not to paper over that damage with optimism. It is to demonstrate, with specific evidence from specific places, that the situation is not hopeless — and that the tools to change it are closer than anyone has been told.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Part Two has established the demand side of the equation: a global AI infrastructure boom that is generating unprecedented appetite for exactly the combination of assets that Niagara Falls possesses, a set of international and domestic precedents that prove the model works, and a clear analysis of why Niagara Falls is better positioned than any comparable community in the eastern United States.

Part Three presents the plan itself — specifically, the legal and financial structure of the Niagara Municipal Power Cooperative, the deal mechanics for attracting the first hyperscale tenant, and the Citizens' Dividend that ensures every resident of Niagara Falls shares in the upside from day one.

The opportunity is real. The precedents are proven. The assets are there. Part Three describes what to do with them.

*Operation Powerhouse | Part Two of Four
| Niagara Action Special Report | June 2026*

Research and analysis by the Niagara Falls Economic Reinvention Project. Data sourced from the International Energy Agency, U.S. Department of Energy, Grant County (WA) Economic Development Council, and the New York Power Authority.

About the Author:

Before turning to journalism, John Karcz spent years in technical and analytical roles — first as a field and laboratory investigator in the Buffalo State Department of Geography and Planning, then overseeing technical writing and reliability engineering for Sanofi Pharmaceuticals in Swiftwater, Pennsylvania, and later as plant manager at Stollberg Chemical Company where he worked in close conjunction with the NYPA. That background informs his reporting on economic redevelopment and municipal systems. John grew up in Niagara Falls, is published nationally on medium.com and elsewhere, and is the author of several books.

NIAGARA FALLS CONT.

THE QUIET KING: A Psychological Profile of Stefano Magaddino

John Karcz

THE OLD MAN AND THE MATCHBOX

Niagara Falls learned early not to listen for noise.

The city had noise in abundance—water crashing over rock, factories grinding through night shifts, sirens slicing the dark, voices raised in bars where men rehearsed bravado for audiences that no longer cared. Noise was common. Noise was cheap.

Power, however, arrived quietly.

By the time most people noticed Stefano Magaddino, it was already too late to remember when influence had shifted. There was no coup, no announcement, no moment anyone could point to and say this is when it happened. Control accumulated the way frost does on a windshield—slow, invisible, undeniable once the glass would no longer clear.

Stefano did not arrive with an entourage. Rarely arrived at all. When present, Stefano occupied rooms like furniture—unremarkable until moved, impossible to ignore once noticed missing.

People who expected menace were disappointed. Those who expected warmth were unsettled. What Stefano offered instead was attention—undivided, unhurried, and devastating.

The Matchbox

They used to say the old man never raised a voice.

Not once. Not in sixty years.

No slammed fists.

No shouted threats.

No drunken rants echoing down hallways.

In a world built on noise — gunfire, shouting, sirens, the constant hum of men trying to sound bigger than they were — Stefano Magaddino existed like a pause in the music. A held breath. A space where sound should have been, but wasn't.

The bar on Pine Avenue had been closed for three months when the meeting took place. The windows were papered over, the sign disconnected, the stools stacked upside down like bones. Snow drifted against the front door, sealing it from the street. Inside, the air smelled of dust, old beer, and something faintly metallic—like cold iron.

Stefano sat in the back room beneath a single exposed bulb. The light cast a shallow circle across the table, leaving the corners of the room in shadow. Stefano did not remove the coat. There was no need. The posture was deliberate: ready to leave, always.

The matchbox rested in Stefano's hands. A young man stood in the doorway. Early twenties. Nervous energy radiated from every movement—the way weight shifted too often from foot to foot, the way eyes darted before settling. The kid had been told what to expect: consequences, confrontation, maybe worse. The kid had prepared a speech.

None of it mattered.

"Come in," Stefano said.

The voice was soft, almost courteous. The kid stepped forward because the alternative—standing still—felt worse.

Stefano slid the matchbox across the table. It moved slowly, friction whispering against wood, stopping precisely at the edge of the light.

"Open it."

The kid hesitated. Fingers hovered. The moment stretched long enough to feel intentional.

Inside the matchbox lay a single brass button. Smooth. Old. Polished by handling rather than cleaning. No note. No explanation.

The kid frowned. "What's this supposed to mean?"

Stefano smiled—not sharp, not amused. A smile worn smooth by repetition.

"It means," Stefano said, "you already decided."

"I didn't say anything."

"You didn't have to."

The chair creaked as Stefano leaned back.

The movement was minimal, but the effect was immediate. The room contracted.

"People tell me everything," Stefano said. "They just don't always use words."

The matchbox stayed open. The button did not move.

That was the end of the meeting.

A Mind Trained on People, Not Events

Stefano Magaddino did not think in terms of violence. Violence was a tool used by people who arrived late to understanding.

Stefano thought in patterns.

Most men watched what others did. Stefano watched why they hesitated before doing it. The half second pause before a lie. The glance toward a door that suggested escape. The sudden stillness when pride outweighed caution.

Power did not come from force. Force created resistance. Resistance created chaos. Chaos made

outcomes unreliable.

Stefano preferred certainty.

People who sat across from Stefano often left convinced they had revealed something private—something they had not intended to share. In truth, they had. They always did. Stefano created an environment where concealment felt unnecessary and exposure felt inevitable.

No intimidation.

No threats.

No ultimatums.

Just the quiet pressure of being seen too clearly.

The Coat

In 1948, a bookmaker named Rizzo skimmed from a numbers operation on 19th Street. The amounts were small, calculated to test tolerance rather than enrich. The kind of theft that announces curiosity rather than defiance.

Rizzo expected punishment.

Instead, Rizzo received an invitation.

Stefano's house was ordinary. No gate. No guard. The front walk was shoveled but not salted. When the door opened, warmth spilled into the cold like a held breath released.

Stefano stood there holding a heavy wool coat. "You left this," Stefano said.

Rizzo stared. The lie hung in the air, unchallenged. Correcting it felt dangerous. Accepting it felt worse.

Stefano draped the coat over Rizzo's shoulders anyway, adjusting the collar with practiced hands.

"Warm," Stefano observed. "Feels right."

Rizzo nodded, throat tight.

"I want you to remember this feeling," Stefano said. "Being taken care of."

No mention of money.

No accusation.

No warning.

Rizzo left with the coat.

Rizzo never skimmed again.

Fear did not motivate that decision. Shame did. Gratitude. The unbearable weight of obligation created without demand.

The Chair

Stefano's office contained a single chair for visitors. Plain wood. Cracked leather. Slightly unbalanced.

People noticed it immediately.

When someone sat, Stefano would wait until the body settled—until posture betrayed comfort—then look up.

"You look comfortable."

A pause.

"Too comfortable."

Nothing followed.

No reprimand. No clarification.

Yet every person who sat there left feeling exposed. As if something about the way they had relaxed, the way they had claimed space too easily, had been noticed and cataloged.

The chair became a test.

No one sat in it twice.

The Coffee Cup

A young lieutenant once entered Stefano's office angry enough to shake. A fist struck the table.

"They disrespected us," came the shout. "We can't let that stand."

Stefano stirred coffee.

"Sit."

The lieutenant sat.

The spoon stopped. The cup lifted. A measured sip. Then the cup was placed down with exacting care.

"Why does it bother you?" Stefano asked.

"Because it makes us look weak."

"And who told you that?"

Silence.

"If you know," Stefano said, leaning forward slightly, "then they know you know. And if they know you know, they know you're afraid."

The room went still.

"So," Stefano finished, "why should I act on your fear?"

The lieutenant never raised a voice again.

How a City Was Conducted

Niagara Falls was not controlled through fear. Fear scatters. Fear hides. Fear forces people into mistakes.

Stefano understood the city as a network of pressure points:

Bars where courage dissolved into confession.

Factories where resentment fermented into ambition.

Churches where secrets learned to whisper.

A river that accepted anything without question.

Stefano knew which families hated one another. Which grudges were inherited. Which men wanted permission to become worse and which wanted absolution for already being so.

Mistakes were not punished. They were reframed.

"You're smarter than this," Stefano would say.

And the listener would spend weeks trying to

become worthy of the assumption.

Stefano made space for others to feel powerful. Opinions were solicited. Plans were entertained.

Ego was fed just enough to keep it from becoming dangerous.

Then direction was adjusted—gently, invisibly—until outcomes aligned with decisions already made.

Stefano dressed modestly. Walked slowly.

Spoke as if apologizing for taking up room.

"If they fear you," Stefano once said, "they hide. If they underestimate you, they tell you everything."

The Matchbox Revisited

Years later, after Stefano was gone, the young man from the shuttered bar found the matchbox in a drawer. The brass button was still inside.

Understanding arrived late, but fully.

The button was not a warning.

Not a symbol.

Not a threat.

It was a test.

A test of whether the box would be opened at all.

Because the moment someone opens something they were not sure they should open, the decision has already been made.

That was how Niagara Falls was ruled.

Not with noise.

Not with fear.

Not with force.

But with the quiet certainty that every outcome had been predicted long before the question was asked.

Stefano Magaddino ruled without noise. But silence was not absence. It was structure.

The Man Who Never Moved First

What most people never understood about Stefano Magaddino was that the stillness came first. It wasn't a tactic layered on later. It wasn't discipline learned through age. It wasn't the absence of emotion.

It was the foundation.

From the outside, it looked like patience. From inside the room, it felt like gravity. People entered conversations with Stefano already off balance, already compensating for something they couldn't name. The longer they stayed, the more they adjusted themselves around him, like furniture pushed to the edges of a room to make space for something heavy at the center.

Stefano did not rush because rushing implied uncertainty. And uncertainty, to Stefano, was not a condition — it was a failure of observation.

Emotion, when it arrived in others, arrived loudly. Anger came first, then fear disguised as urgency, then pride pretending to be principle. Stefano watched all of it without interruption. Not because interruption was rude, but because interruption interfered with revelation.

People always told on themselves if allowed to finish.

Once, a man burst into Stefano's office shaking, voice already raised before the door closed behind him. Disrespect. Insults. Territory.

The words came fast, overlapping, sharpened by adrenaline. The man expected resistance — something to push against, something to climb.

Stefano did not look up.

Stefano adjusted the coffee cup on the desk, rotating it until the handle aligned perfectly with the saucer. Only then did Stefano speak.

"Sit."

The word was not louder than the shouting had been. It did not need to be. The calm behind it made standing feel ridiculous, like shouting into a lake.

The man sat.

What followed was silence. Long enough for breathing to change. Long enough for the anger to realize it was alone.

Stefano never asked what happened first. Stefano asked why it mattered.

That distinction defined everything.

Most people reacted to events. Stefano reacted to motivations. Events were surface noise. Motivations were structure.

This was how Stefano thought — not in moral categories, not in loyalty or betrayal, but in pressure systems. Every person was a set of internal tensions waiting to be mapped. Pride here. Shame there. Fear disguised as certainty. Certainty disguising fear.

Once mapped, behavior became predictable.

Predictability made enforcement unnecessary.

This was why Stefano rarely gave direct orders. Orders created moments of defiance. Stefano preferred inevitability. People left conversations believing they had chosen freely, unaware that every available choice had already been framed.

Stefano did not threaten because threats clarified stakes. Clarified stakes invited courage. Courage invited chaos.

Instead, Stefano used incompletion.

A pause that lasted too long.

A comment that landed slightly sideways.

An object handed over without explanation.

People hated incompletion. They filled it instinctively — with justification, with confession, with imagination. And imagination was always harsher than reality.

Once, at a private gathering, a visiting operator laughed and remarked that Stefano's influence was "mostly nostalgia now." The room froze, waiting for response.

Stefano reached for a piece of bread. Broke it carefully. Brushed crumbs from the tablecloth.

When the silence became unbearable, Stefano looked up.

"That may be true," Stefano said. "But nostalgia has a long memory."

Nothing else followed.

The visitor spent the rest of the evening correcting statements no one challenged, retreating from implications no one named. Stefano never revisited the comment. The visitor was never invited back.

Stefano did not defend status. Status adjusted itself in the absence of reaction.

This same control extended to moments others considered humiliating. During a routine detention, an officer attempted provocation — louder questions, sharper tone, deliberate inconvenience.

"You're awfully calm," the officer said. "Most people aren't."

Stefano folded hands neatly on the table.

"Most people believe volume improves outcomes."

"You think you're better than them?"

A pause — not for calculation, but filtration.

"No," Stefano said. "I think I'm quieter."

There was nothing left to provoke. The officer lost interest. Without escalation, authority had nothing to push against.

Stefano understood that emotion was not dangerous — unregulated emotion was.

This applied even to vulnerability. When a longtime associate broke down mid sentence, tears arriving suddenly and without control, Stefano did not interrupt. Did not comfort. Did not look away.

Stefano waited.

The silence was not punitive. It was respectful — an acknowledgment that emotion, once activated, deserved to complete itself.

When the associate finally looked up, embarrassed, Stefano said only one word.

"Finish."

The story resumed. Steadier. Clearer.

Stefano did not rescue people from their emotions. Stefano allowed emotions to exhaust themselves. This was not cruelty. It was containment.

Fear, Stefano knew, motivated compliance.

Shame motivated correction.

That distinction shaped everything.

When Rizzo skimmed from an operation, punishment was expected. Instead, Stefano answered the door holding a heavy wool coat.

"You left this," Stefano said.

Rizzo knew it wasn't true. Correcting it felt dangerous. Accepting it felt worse.

Stefano placed the coat over Rizzo's shoulders, adjusted the collar gently.

"Warm," Stefano said. "Feels right."

Then, softly: "Remember this feeling. Being taken care of."

No accusation. No warning. No debt named.

Rizzo never skimmed again. Not because of fear — but because betrayal now carried weight.

Identity had been invoked.

"You're smarter than this."

That sentence appeared often in Stefano's vocabulary. It corrected behavior without fracturing allegiance. It reframed mistakes not as betrayal, but as deviation from self image. People worked harder to prove Stefano right than they ever would have worked to avoid punishment.

Even the environment participated.

The chair in Stefano's office was plain, slightly unbalanced, leather cracked from age. When someone sat, Stefano waited until posture relaxed — until comfort revealed itself.

"You look comfortable," Stefano would say.

Pause.

"Too comfortable."

Nothing else.

Men left convinced they had revealed something private, though no question had been asked. The chair became legend. No one sat in it twice.

Stefano never raised a voice.

He never needed to.

At the core of all of this was not ambition or cruelty, but certainty. Certainty that people behaved according to type. Certainty that silence revealed more than interrogation. Certainty that the calmest nervous system always set the tempo.

Stefano did not move first.

He waited.

And while he waited, people showed him exactly who they were.

BUFFALO

Buffalo Announces Six Public Pools Will Open July 1st with New Safety Rules, Security Measures and Digital ID Program

Staff Reports

Buffalo residents will have six city-operated swimming pools available this summer as city officials move forward with a new safety plan that includes enhanced security, stricter accountability measures and the launch of a digital identification system for pool users.

Mayor Sean Ryan announced Thursday, June 18th that Buffalo's public pools will open beginning July 1st and remain in operation through September 7th, providing residents with recreational opportunities throughout the summer. Meanwhile, the new security policies are designed to prevent disruptions and improve safety for swimmers, staff and families.

The city will operate five outdoor pools and one indoor facility during the season. Outdoor locations include Centennial Pool, JFK Pool, Kensington Pool, Masten Pool and Riverside Pool. Those facilities will operate from 11am until 7pm five days each week, including one weekend day.

The indoor Connors, Kait, Harrity Memorial Pool at Cazenovia Park will remain open Monday through Friday.

City officials said the goal is not only to maximize recreational opportunities but also to create welcoming neighborhood gathering places throughout Buffalo.

"Our goal was simple," said Ryan, "open as many pools as possible and make them destinations for families throughout the summer. We're not just opening pools. We're creating safe, welcoming spaces where residents can swim, learn, exercise, and spend time together in their neighborhoods."

One of the most significant changes this summer will be the introduction of a new digital pool identification system that will

require visitors to register before using city pools.

Officials say the program serves multiple purposes including improving emergency response capabilities, helping staff identify pool users and increasing accountability if problems arise.

Children under the age of 18 will need to be registered by a parent or guardian. The city plans to offer online registration as well as in-person registration opportunities at pool facilities and community outreach events.

According to city officials, the system will allow staff to maintain emergency contact information and quickly reach parents or guardians when necessary.

Mayor Ryan said the digital identification cards are intended to provide pool personnel with a better understanding of who is utilizing city facilities and help address behavioral issues when they occur.

"We want to be able to know who is in our pool and if you're causing a problem in one of our pools, the ID card will help. And so we have an emergency contact number so we can call your guardian and let them know that you're having a problem with this young person in the pool, so all this accountability starts with knowing who is coming into the pools."

The city has also increased security measures for the upcoming season.

Pool rules emphasize that lifeguards, parks personnel and city staff have full authority to enforce safety regulations and maintain order. Visitors who fail to comply with instructions may receive warnings and could ultimately be removed or suspended from using city pool facilities.

The enhanced policies come less than a year after a widely publicized disturbance at JFK Pool that resulted in the facility closing before the end of the 2025 season.

City officials have repeatedly pointed to

that incident as an example of why stronger accountability measures are needed.

Last August, an adult woman allegedly refused to leave the pool when staff temporarily closed the water to add treatment chemicals. Officials said the confrontation escalated when additional family members and others arrived at the scene.

According to Buffalo Common Council Majority Leader Leah Halton-Pope, the situation rapidly intensified.

"Twenty to 30 young people showed up, attacked these youth lifeguards and the security guard, so much so that they barricaded themselves inside of the JFK Community Center," said Halton-Pope.

The disturbance prompted then-Acting Mayor Christopher Scanlon to close JFK Pool for the remainder of the summer season.

Despite the incident, city leaders continue to emphasize that the confrontation was isolated and not representative of the vast majority of pool users.

Speaking during a Juneteenth event this week, Halton-Pope expressed confidence that the new policies will help ensure a successful summer season.

"I know the new administration has some new policies that they're trying to implement that I think will be really helpful in the long run," said Halton-Pope. "But I think we're going to have a great summer and I'm just asking our constituents to respect one another and have fun."

She also expressed confidence in the safety measures being implemented across the city pool system.

"I am confident that our children and adults that are there are gonna be perfectly safe," she continued.

In addition to recreational swimming, the city is partnering with City Swim Project to provide free swimming lessons for hundreds of Buffalo children.

City of Buffalo
POOLS 2026

Pool Schedule

Each pool is open 5 days a week. For detailed programming per location & weekly updates, visit www.buffalony.gov/pools.

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
CENTENNIAL	Closed	11-7	11-7	11-7	11-7	Closed	11-7
MASTEN	11-7	Closed	11-7	11-7	11-7	11-7	Closed
KENSINGTON	11-7	11-7	Closed	11-7	11-7	11-7	Closed
JFK	11-7	11-7	11-7	Closed	11-7	Closed	11-7
RIVERSIDE	11-7	11-7	11-7	11-7	Closed	11-7	Closed
CAZENOVIA	8-4	10-6	8-4	10-6	8-4	Closed	Closed

Officials announced that 300 children between the ages of 4 and 14 will receive free swim instruction through a program funded by a \$50,000 New York State grant.

City leaders say the swim lesson initiative is intended to increase water safety skills while expanding access to aquatic programs for families who may otherwise be unable to afford lessons.

As opening day approaches, city officials plan to hold informational events across Buffalo to help residents understand the registration process and answer questions regarding the new digital ID program.

The city hopes the combination of expanded programming, increased accountability, enhanced security and free swim education opportunities will create a safer and more enjoyable summer experience.

For more information, visit: <https://www.buffalony.gov/1901/Pools-and-Splash-Pads>.

Buffalo's 'Angry Cop' Goes to War With City Hall, Files Federal Lawsuit

Claims Buffalo Police Rewarded Singing Cops, Punished Him

Staff Reports

A Buffalo Police detective known nationally for his military-themed social media persona has filed a federal lawsuit against the City of Buffalo alleging department leadership repeatedly denied him promotions while favoring other officers and targeting him because of his online content.

Detective Richard Hy, widely known through his "Angry Cops" social media channels, filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court earlier this week. The complaint accuses city officials of discrimination and claims he was subjected to unequal treatment throughout his career despite achieving high scores on promotional examinations.

At the center of the lawsuit is Hy's assertion that he was repeatedly passed over for advancement while other officers with lower rankings received promotions ahead of him. Although Hy ultimately received a promotion in 2023, court filings reportedly outline eight separate occasions in which he was not selected despite his placement on eligibility lists.

According to the lawsuit, Hy believes his military-focused social media presence played a role in those decisions. The filing contends that promotions instead went to officers who ranked lower than him and who did not have military backgrounds or operate military-themed social media platforms.

The lawsuit further alleges that department leadership treated social media activity inconsistently. Hy claims certain officers were allowed to benefit from online exposure despite conduct that al-

legedly violated departmental policies.

Among the examples cited are two Buffalo police officers who became locally known as the "Singing Cops" after posting videos of themselves performing songs while in uniform. The lawsuit argues those officers were embraced by the department and received opportunities to appear on television programs, attend Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres events, and participate in various public appearances.

Hy also points to another officer who livestreamed a police pursuit on social media and was reportedly heard using racial slurs during the broadcast.

The detective is seeking compensation for lost wages and employment benefits, damages related to emotional distress, reimbursement of legal expenses, and additional relief that may be ordered by the court.

The lawsuit marks the latest chapter in a long and often controversial career that has frequently placed Hy at odds with department leadership.

Over more than a decade with the Buffalo Police Department, Hy has purportedly been the subject of more than 20 Internal Affairs investigations. Several incidents from his disciplinary history have generated public attention over the years.

One of those incidents dates back to 2014 when department officials received information suggesting Hy may have been intoxicated following a crash involving his SUV near D'Youville University. Records indicate investigators reviewed the matter, though documents showed no evidence that Hy was tested for alcohol or drugs. Notes from a supervising officer indicated no odor of alcohol was detected



and that Hy was speaking clearly at the scene.

As such, he was cleared.

Another incident occurred in West Seneca in 2016 while Hy was off duty. Police records from that event alleged he used a racial slur, headbutted another individual, took marijuana from that person and appeared to be intoxicated. The report further alleged that Hy pursued the individual and made derogatory remarks while speaking with responding officers.

Hy has also drawn attention through public commentary outside of law enforcement matters. Last year he appeared multiple times on a podcast where he alleged Buffalo Public Schools intentionally failed to report incidents involving sexual assault and abuse. One of those podcast appearances reportedly accumulated more than two million views on YouTube.

Following those allegations, the school district released an internal report that found no evidence of intentional cover-ups. The report did identify concerns involving how incidents were handled and documented within the district, recommending improvements to existing procedures.

Supporters of Hy have applauded him for speaking up, having been correct in his claims of deficiencies within the district.

There has been no public confirmation that Hy faced any disciplinary action related to those podcast appearances or the statements he made during them.

The Buffalo Police Department declined to comment on the lawsuit.

The federal case will now move through the court system where the city will have an opportunity to respond to Hy's allegations.

BUFFALO CONT.

Sexual Harassment Allegations Rock Buffalo School Board as Questions Mount Over Delays, Secrecy and Executive Raises (Cont. from cover)

As sexual harassment allegations mounted and parents demanded answers, Buffalo school leaders spent much of June 17th meeting debating pay raises for top administrators.

John Watson

their own policies when allegations of sexual harassment surfaced against a sitting board member.

Now, more than two weeks after district leadership were first notified of the accusations, board members remain frustrated, the district's legal department has been gutted by resignations, and parents are openly questioning whether Buffalo Public Schools is more focused on protecting insiders than protecting employees.

The controversy traces back to June 2nd when Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Pascal Mubenga received a written complaint alleging misconduct by a member of the Buffalo Board of Education.

According to district officials, Mubenga then forwarded the complaint to Board President Dr. Kathy Evans-Brown.

What happened next has become the subject of growing scrutiny.

Despite the district maintaining a sexual harassment policy that states investigations involving complaints or suspected harassment should be prompt, thorough and commenced immediately, no public action was taken for nearly two weeks.

The complaint was not shared with the full nine-member Board of Education and no independent investigation was announced.

Rather, it appeared the beginnings of a coverup was beginning.

Instead, according to district officials, board leadership was left to determine how and when other board members would be informed.

That explanation has generated significant criticism because several board members say they remained in the dark while allegations sat unresolved.

Some continued to be left in the dark for weeks.

Questions surrounding the district's handling of the matter intensified after a special Board of Education meeting scheduled for June 12th was abruptly canceled.

The meeting had been called by Board Vice President Adrianna Zullich for the purpose of privately briefing board members about complaints received against a fellow board member. The meeting notice also indicated the board would consider hiring outside legal counsel.

However, not enough members were

available to establish a quorum, preventing the board from legally entering executive session. The meeting was canceled before it could take place.

Zullich later expressed frustration over the delay.

"I take employee complaints seriously," said Zullich. "The lack of urgency is disappointing, baffling and unacceptable."

While refusing to disclose specific details because of confidentiality restrictions, Zullich confirmed there were multiple complaints involving a single board member and that some of those allegations were sexual in nature.

She also indicated that none of the complainants were believed to be members of the Board of Education itself.

As the controversy continued to grow, several board members publicly broke ranks with leadership and criticized how the matter was being handled.

Board Member Larry Scott warned that the district was failing to follow its own sexual harassment policies and failing to protect those who came forward.

"We are failing to uphold our own Sexual Harassment Policy and respect the voices and dignity of the complainants," said Scott.

Scott went further, warning that if the board failed to appoint an independent investigator at its next meeting, outside intervention would become necessary.

"If we don't act accordingly at tomorrow's board meeting to appoint an independent and impartial firm to investigate, then it is my belief that the state officials will need to take action."

Board Member Cindi McEachon delivered a similarly sharp rebuke.

"The lack of urgency and transparency regarding these allegations is unacceptable," said McEachon.

She argued that an independent investigation should have been launched immediately and questioned why the full board was left uninformed for nearly two weeks.

"At a minimum, we must move immediately to an independent investigation. Since the decision was made to wait two weeks to reveal the allegations to the full board, I expect tomorrow's meeting to deliver swift and clear next steps. Anything less risks outside intervention."

Other board members were noticeably more cautious.

Board Member Stephon Wright declined to discuss the allegations themselves, citing confidentiality concerns and his understanding that the matter remained under review.

"My understanding is that any personnel or board-related matters currently under review are confidential," said Wright, "and I intend to respect that process."

While the board wrestled with the controversy, another development further fueled speculation about turmoil within district leadership.

Three members of Buffalo Public Schools' legal department resigned, including General Counsel Mary Scarpine and two assistant counsels.

The departures represent roughly 60 percent of the district's legal office.

District spokesperson Jeff Hammond maintained that Scarpine's resignation

was unrelated to the sexual harassment allegations, noting she submitted her resignation on May 27th, several days before board leadership was formally notified of the complaint.

Still, sources within the district suggested broader frustration with the conduct and direction of the Board of Education may have contributed to the departures.

It also raises questions if the district were actually made aware of the complaints beforehand and failed to act.

Those same sources raised concerns that delays in launching a formal investigation may have left complainants continuing to interact with the board member they accused, potentially exposing the district to legal liability.

Additional questions emerged regarding who knew about the allegations and when.

While district officials say the written complaint was received June 2nd, it remains unclear whether any verbal complaints or concerns had been raised before that date.

Critics also questioned why the superintendent chose to notify only board leadership rather than immediately informing the entire board.

Hammond defended the process.

"Due to confidentiality, the district's practice has been to notify board leadership of these types of complaints and then board leadership determines when to notify other board members," said Hammond.

That explanation, however, has done little to satisfy critics who point to the district's own policy language requiring immediate action when sexual harassment allegations are received.

The controversy reached a boiling point during the Board of Education's June 17th meeting at Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts.

Yet rather than focusing exclusively on the allegations, much of the meeting centered on a proposal to award a 3 percent cost-of-living raise to exempt district employees, most of whom are senior administrators and cabinet-level personnel.

Outside the meeting, parents and community members protested the proposed raises.

Many argued that rewarding administrators while the district faces a massive budget deficit and academic challenges sent the wrong message.

Facing a \$66 deficit, the raises appeared out of touch to all parents who attended the meeting.

Many of those in attendance felt as though the raises were a distraction from the districts handling of the sexual misconduct allegations.

"Is it a coincidence that this is what the Board chose to spend the entire meeting on," said one parent? "I think not."

Another parent question questioned what made salaries approaching \$200,000 annually not competitive, which was one of the rationales used by the Board to justify the raises.

Numerous speakers echoed similar concerns during public comment.

Even board members expressed skepticism.

Wright questioned whether district leadership had provided sufficient justification for the raises.

"Where's the data? Was there a cost-



Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Pascal Mubenga

of-living assessment?" asked Wright. "I didn't get answers."

Superintendent Mubenga defended the proposal by noting that exempt employees had not received raises in at least two years while unionized workers had seen increases through collective bargaining agreements.

Mubenga described the proposal as "pretty much fair."

Despite public opposition and internal concerns, the raises ultimately passed by a divided board vote.

Only after that vote did Evans-Brown publicly address the sexual harassment controversy that had dominated headlines for days.

"The Buffalo Board of Education has identified and will be contacting an outside independent firm to investigate allegations against a board member to move forward with addressing these allegations, once the board finalizes the agreement with the independent firm, it will share the name publicly."

Beyond that brief statement, no additional information was provided.

No details about the allegations were disclosed.

No timeline for the investigation was announced.

No explanation was offered regarding why nearly two weeks passed before action was publicly acknowledged.

And no answers were provided about whether district policies had been followed.

For many observers, the optics were difficult to ignore.

As serious allegations involving a member of the Board of Education continued to hang over the district, the board spent much of its public meeting debating executive pay raises while parents demanded accountability.

Now, Buffalo Public Schools finds itself facing mounting questions not only about the allegations themselves, but about whether district leaders acted quickly enough, transparently enough and responsibly enough when those allegations first surfaced.

With an independent investigation finally moving forward, the answers may eventually come.

But for critics, the bigger question remains why it took so long to get there.

The cover photo is AI generated satire and does not depict real events. It is being used to emphasize the gravity of the allegations and drive home investigative findings.



Board President Dr. Kathy Evans-Brown

AROUND ERIE COUNTY

Hailee Steinfeld Reveals Name of Baby Daughter with Bills Quarterback Josh Allen

Actress Hailee Steinfeld shared a heartfelt letter to her newborn daughter, revealing for the first time the name she and Bills quarterback Josh Allen chose – Harper Haize Allen.

Staff Reports

Buffalo Bills QB Josh Allen and his wife, actress and singer Hailee Steinfeld, have officially shared the name of their newborn daughter.

Steinfeld made the announcement on Friday, June 19th in her Beau Society newsletter, revealing that the couple's baby girl is named Harper Haize Allen.

The announcement came as part of a deeply personal message written directly to her daughter, reflecting on the life-changing experience of becoming a mother and the first months of raising their child.

In the newsletter, Steinfeld explained that recent questions from readers about motherhood inspired her to write a letter to Harper. One subscriber asked what her daughter had already taught her while another asked what she hoped Harper would someday learn about her mother by reading Beau Society.

Steinfeld then shared the following letter: "Dearest Harper, I'm in awe of you.

You've been here for only a short while now, and somehow it feels as though you've always been ours. There are moments (like right now, as you sleep so soundly on my chest), I still look at you and wonder how you're real. These last few months have been beautiful and exhausting. Sacred and so special. The longest days and the shortest season all at once.

People tell you becoming a mother changes everything, but no one tells you how, why, or when exactly. It isn't always in the big moments.

Sometimes it's realizing that I no longer measure time in months or years, but in ounces, naps missed and naps miraculously taken, in diaper changes, and the quiet triumph of a successful transfer from my arms to your crib.

Your daddy and I look at you often and ask each other the same question: How did we get so lucky to have you?

You, whose tiny fingers already wrap around mine with a trust I pray I never take for granted. You, whose dad is officially outnumbered when it comes to choosing a movie for movie night, though I suspect he'll secretly love every minute of it.

Everyone tells me not to blink. Now I understand why. Because already, I miss versions of you that still feel like yesterday: The way you'd make sure we'd have multiple visits throughout the night, the impossibly small diapers we swore looked enormous before you arrived.

Before I was a mother, I had never understood this feeling of being so wistful and filled with excitement at the same time. I want your baby hair to stay this soft forever, but I long for the day you might ask me to braid it down your back while we're sitting in the grass. I could tear up at the thought of your tiny toes getting bigger, but I know that someday your big-girl feet will carry you through this big world.

It's funny, I used to think motherhood was about raising a child. But now, I think being a mother is actually about allowing yourself to become someone new over and over again. Each day with you, I meet a different version of myself. A softer version. A stronger version. A more patient and present version. A version that loves



everything and everyone – including myself – more deeply than she ever knew possible.

I've learned that motherhood isn't made up of grand moments as much as the tiny, precious ones. The sway of tired hips in the middle of the night, your little milk-drunk smiles, and the quiet realization, over and over again, that my heart is now somehow living outside of my body and it always will.

And even though I know I am meant to guide

you through this life, Harper Haize Allen, the truth is that already, you have taught me far more than I could ever teach you.

One day you'll read this and know that to be true, my sweet girl.

*Love,
Your mom"*

The announcement marks the first time Allen and Steinfeld have publicly revealed their daughter's name.

Cheektowaga Councilman Accused of Threatening Town Employee During Confrontation at School

Staff Reports

A confrontation between a Cheektowaga town employee and a sitting town councilman has sparked controversy after allegations surfaced that the elected official threatened the employee during an encounter at a public meeting earlier this year.

Robert Hupkowicz, who works for the Town of Cheektowaga Highway Department, is accusing Councilman Michael Jasinski of threatening him during an April 10th interaction at Maryvale Primary School. Jasinski denies the allegation and insists the conversation centered on concerns involving his family.

The dispute stems from an encounter that occurred during a meeting held at the school. Hupkowicz obtained surveillance footage through a Freedom of Information request submitted to the Maryvale School District and later shared the video publicly.

The footage shows Jasinski approaching Hupkowicz inside the school cafeteria before the two men move outside. According to Hupkowicz, the confrontation quickly escalated once they were away from the meeting area.

Hupkowicz alleges the incident was connected to a social media post he had previously made. He said the post claimed Jasinski had called into a local radio program while using a different name.

According to Hupkowicz, when he attempted to greet the councilman, the interaction immediately became hostile.

"I reached out to shake his hand, he swatted at my hand, crawled into my face, and basically said 'I am going to kill you,' and a few other words that you can't say on TV," said Hupkowicz. "It was very uncalled for, I mean, me and Mike are nowhere near friends, but I would never do that to anyone in public."

Hupkowicz also provided a police report documenting the incident. According to the report, he requested that the encounter be recorded by law enforcement but did not seek criminal charges.

The report indicates Hupkowicz wanted the incident formally documented rather than pursuing prosecution.

Jasinski disputes the allegations and

maintains he never threatened Hupkowicz.

The councilman said the reason he approached Hupkowicz was unrelated to the social media post and instead involved concerns about his family. Jasinski alleges that Hupkowicz had stalked his home the previous year and said he wanted to make it clear that he did not want his family involved in any disputes.

"That's just not who I am. I'm not that type of person. I just, like any person, would defend their family. I asked him to please stay away from my house and my family," said Jasinski.

Jasinski also pointed to what happened immediately after the confrontation as evidence that the exchange was not as hostile as alleged.

"At the end of the video we proceeded in and he held the door for me to walk in the building, and plus there was a person who walked by and my assumption is if I was acting irate like he alleges, I would just find it hard to believe somebody would just walk by like that, like nonchalant," said Jasinski.

The dispute has drawn attention inside Town Hall where political tensions have existed for years.

Cheektowaga Town Supervisor Brian Nowak, who defeated Jasinski in a closely watched supervisor race in 2023, said the allegations did not surprise him.

After reviewing the surveillance footage, Nowak said he viewed the incident as part of what he described as a broader pattern.

"I'm not surprised, based on the video, to see what happened there," said Nowak. "I've served with Councilman Jasinski for a little over three years now and there's an emerging pattern here."

At this time, no criminal charges have been filed. There have been no public calls for Jasinski to step down.

The confrontation remains a matter of dispute, with Hupkowicz maintaining that he was threatened and Jasinski continuing to deny the accusation while insisting his comments were solely intended to protect his family.

Quotes in this article were obtained during separate interviews conducted with WIVB.

Erie County Legislators Pressed to Hold Hearing on Death of Nurul Amin Shah Alam (Cont. from cover)

Staff Reports

death.

Alam, a Rohingya refugee who arrived in the United States in 2024, was blind and spoke little to no English. His death drew widespread attention and condemnation earlier this year after he was found deceased days after being released by immigration authorities.

According to previously released information, Alam was dropped off outside a closed Tim Hortons location in February. Family members, advocates and elected officials have since questioned how a visually impaired refugee with limited English proficiency came to be left alone under those circumstances.

The Erie County Medical Examiner later ruled Alam's death a homicide.

The case quickly became a flashpoint in the broader debate surrounding cooperation between local law enforcement agencies and federal immigration authorities.

Standing alongside supporters this week, Alam's widow, Fatimah Abdul Roshid, thanked those who have continued advocating on behalf of her family while emphasizing that she remains focused on finding out exactly what happened.

"I am extremely grateful and very happy, and I will remember them in my prayer," said Roshid through an interpreter. "I am looking for answers, and they are supporting, and they are looking for the same answer, so that it doesn't happen again."

Rivera, who has been among the most vocal elected officials seeking additional scrutiny of the case, said the concerns extend beyond one individual tragedy.

He argued that questions remain regarding the relationship between local government agencies and federal immigration enforcement and whether additional safeguards are needed moving forward.

"We're worried about the interaction between local government and ICE, and it's not just something that's going to go away," said Rivera.

The assemblyman said he believes the Erie County Legislature is uniquely positioned to seek answers because of its oversight responsibilities involving the Sheriff's Office.

"This body is the body that approves the sheriff's budget," said Rivera. "This body is the body that approves the sheriff's contracts. It's this body that approves what the sheriff does, and I'm hopeful that it will continue its track record of holding the sheriff's office accountable."

Rivera noted that he first called for legislative action shortly after Alam's death earlier this year but said those efforts generated little public response at the time.

Now, with hundreds of signatures collected and community support continuing to grow, Rivera believes lawmakers have a stronger mandate to address the issue.

"We just submitted today to the county legislature a petition of almost 700 signatures," said Rivera at Old County Hall. "Which is high by the standards of what we see come into this legislature, of concerned people that feel the same way I do, that feel the same way they do, which is answers have to be made."

The petition does not dictate a specific course of action but asks legislators to formally examine the circumstances surrounding Alam's transfer to federal authorities and the decisions that followed.

According to Rivera, lawmakers have several options available once the petition is received. The legislature could formally enter the petition into the public record, discuss the matter during committee or legislative meetings, or request that Sheriff John Garcia and other officials appear before lawmakers to answer questions.

The Erie County Legislature is scheduled to return to session on June 25th.

Whether lawmakers choose to pursue additional inquiry remains to be seen, but supporters of Alam's family say the issue is unlikely to disappear without a public accounting of what occurred.

For Alam's relatives, the effort is not only about understanding what happened to one man. They say it is also about ensuring safeguards exist to prevent similar situations involving vulnerable individuals in the future.

Now, with hundreds of residents adding their names to a petition and elected officials renewing calls for accountability, pressure is mounting on Erie County lawmakers to decide whether those questions deserve a public hearing.

ROCHESTER

Buffalo Bills Announce Return to St. John Fisher for 2026 Training Camp

Number of practices open to the public cut down to seven.

John Watson

Buffalo Bills fans will once again make the trip to Rochester this summer as the team officially announced its 2026 training camp schedule at St. John Fisher University.

The annual summer tradition will begin on July 29th and feature seven public practices before the Bills shift operations back to Orchard Park to continue preparations for the upcoming NFL season.

The announcement continues the long-standing partnership between the Bills and St. John Fisher University, which has hosted the team's training camp for years and has become a major destination for fans hoping to get an up-close look at players before the regular season begins.

However, the Rochester portion of camp continues to shrink compared to previous years.

This year's schedule includes seven open practices available to the public, down from the 10 public sessions held at St. John Fisher during last year's training camp. Once the Rochester practices conclude, the Bills will return to Orchard Park for the remainder of their preseason preparations.

The team also announced details regarding ticket distribution for fans hoping to attend

practices.

Admission remains free, but fans must secure tickets through a lottery system. The Bills said supporters can request a maximum of four tickets during the lottery process. Each account will be limited to a total of six tickets throughout the entire training camp schedule.

The lottery window will open on June 24th and remain available through June 26th.

Season-ticket members will receive early access to tickets through an exclusive presale beginning at 10am on June 24th before the general lottery process gets underway.

The public practice schedule at St. John Fisher University includes:

Wednesday, July 29th

Thursday, July 30th

Saturday, August 1st

Monday, August 3rd

Tuesday, August 4th

Thursday, August 6th

Friday, August 7th

All seven practices are scheduled to begin at 8:30am

Training camp remains one of the most anticipated parts of the NFL offseason. The practices provide fans with their first extended look at the team following spring workouts and offseason roster moves.

Fans can watch position battles develop, see rookie players in action and get a glimpse



of the team's plans heading into the regular season.

In recent years, attendance at Bills training camp has remained strong. Thousands of fans traditionally travel to Rochester each summer, generating a significant economic boost for local businesses, restaurants and hotels surrounding the university.

Details regarding the annual Return of the Blue and Red practice will be announced at a later date. That event is expected to take place

at the team's new Highmark Stadium, which remains under construction.

For now, fans eager to attend training camp are encouraged to mark their calendars for the June 24th ticket lottery opening and prepare for another summer of football at St. John Fisher University.

With training camp less than six weeks away, the countdown to the 2026 Buffalo Bills season is officially underway.

Cook Fatally Stabbed After Intervening in Domestic Dispute Outside Rochester Bar; Recently Released Convict Charged With Murder

Coworkers say the 33-year-old cook lost his life trying to help a woman during a domestic dispute; online fundraiser launched as loved ones mourn a man remembered for his kindness, courage and willingness to put others first.

John Watson

What began as an argument between a couple inside a downtown Rochester bar ended with a 33-year-old employee dead, a recently released ex-convict facing a murder charge, and a community mourning a man friends and coworkers say sacrificed his own life to help a stranger in distress.

Rochester Police say Kameron Nelson was stabbed to death during the early morning hours of Saturday, June 20th, after intervening in what investigators described as a domestic altercation involving 23-year-old Alexavier Colon and his girlfriend outside The Mafia Hub, a Buffalo Bills-themed bar located at 187 St. Paul Street.

The fatal encounter unfolded around 3:30am when officers responded to reports of a stabbing outside the establishment. When police arrived, they encountered a chaotic scene as patrons poured out of the bar and several individuals attempted to render aid to Nelson, who was suffering from multiple stab wounds.

Emergency responders rushed Nelson to a local hospital, but despite lifesaving efforts he shortly thereafter succumbed to his injuries.

Investigators spent the following hours interviewing witnesses and reviewing evidence before identifying Colon as the primary suspect.

According to police, Colon had been involved in an argument with his girlfriend inside the bar earlier in the evening. Staff members and patrons reportedly did not initially view the dispute as something that would escalate into deadly violence.

After leaving the bar, however, the disagreement continued outside and eventually turned into a physical confrontation.

Police said Nelson, who had been working as a cook at the establishment, observed the altercation and stepped in when he saw Colon's girlfriend involved in the dispute.

Authorities allege that during Nelson's attempt to help the woman, Colon pulled out a knife and stabbed him multiple times.

The attack left Nelson critically wounded and bleeding uncontrollably.

Saturday afternoon, members of the

Rochester Police Department's SWAT Team and Tactical Unit executed a search warrant at an apartment on West Main Street. Colon was located inside the residence and taken into custody without incident.

He was subsequently charged with second-degree murder.

Colon was arraigned Sunday morning and entered a plea of not guilty.

He is scheduled to return to Rochester City Court for further proceedings and is being held in custody.

As detectives continued piecing together the circumstances surrounding the stabbing, additional details emerged about Colon's recent criminal history.

Police confirmed that Colon had previously been arrested in connection with a shooting on Sullivan Street in December 2021. In that case, authorities said he ultimately pleaded guilty to criminal possession of a weapon.

Court records show he was sentenced in May 2023 to three years in state prison followed by post-release supervision.

Colon had been released from prison only last month.

At the time of his arrest in the Nelson homicide investigation, police said he was still wearing a GPS ankle monitor issued as part of his supervision conditions following his release.

Those who knew Nelson continue trying to process the sudden loss.

Adding to the tragedy is the fact that Nelson had only recently joined the staff at The Mafia Hub.

In fact, Friday had been his first day working as a cook at the restaurant.

Coworkers described him as someone who immediately made a positive impression on those around him.

Jonathan Quinones-Palermo, vice president of The Mafia Hub, remembered Nelson as a genuinely caring and compassionate individual who consistently displayed kindness toward others.

Quinones-Palermo said nothing about Colon's behavior earlier in the night raised concerns significant enough to suggest violence was imminent. He noted that the business utilizes contracted security personnel who

screen customers entering the establishment.

After learning how the incident unfolded, coworkers said they were devastated by the realization that Nelson lost his life while attempting to help someone else.

Quinones-Palermo said Nelson acted instinctively when he saw someone who appeared to need assistance and did so without hesitation despite the potential danger involved.

In the days following the tragedy, The Mafia Hub released a statement honoring Nelson's actions.

The business described him as someone who immediately stepped forward when he observed a domestic dispute occurring outside the establishment. According to the statement, Nelson intervened to help a woman he believed was in danger and paid for that decision with his life.

The statement characterized his actions as selfless and courageous, saying his willingness to place himself in harm's way reflected the type of person he was. The bar described Nelson as a hero whose final actions demonstrated remarkable bravery and compassion.

"Kam did what many people wouldn't," read the statement. "When he observed a domestic altercation in the adjacent alley, he leaped into action without hesitation to defend a woman in need. In that single, selfless act of bravery, his life was taken senselessly. He died a hero, and his courage in the face of danger speaks volumes about the incredible young man he was."

Management also announced plans to honor Nelson's memory moving forward while reviewing and strengthening security measures at the establishment.

Police have continued asking anyone who may have witnessed the incident or recorded video to contact investigators.

A GoFundMe campaign was set up to assist relatives with funeral expenses and the many unexpected financial burdens that often accompany a sudden death.

Organizers of the fundraiser described Nelson as a beloved friend and family member whose life ended far too soon. They said the goal is to provide support for his loved ones as they navigate an unimaginable loss.

According to the fundraising page, all money collected will be directed to Nelson's



family to help offset costs and provide assistance during the difficult weeks and months ahead.

Despite widespread attention surrounding the case, fundraising efforts have gotten off to a slow start.

As of publishing this article, less than \$2,500 has been raised of the total goal of \$30,000. If you would like to donate, you can do so here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/in-loving-memory-of-kameron-nelson>.

Meanwhile, the murder case against Colon continues moving through the court system.

If convicted of second-degree murder, he faces the possibility of spending decades in prison.

For Nelson's family, friends and coworkers, however, the legal proceedings cannot undo what happened outside the downtown bar early Saturday morning.

They are left remembering a man who, according to investigators, saw someone who needed help and chose to step in. That decision cost him his life.

Now, a Rochester community is mourning a man who died a hero.



STATE NEWS

Hochul Extends Taxpayer-funded Health Program for Sex Workers, Igniting New Debate Over \$2.5 Million Cost

Staff Reports

A state-funded health program created specifically to provide medical services to individuals involved in the sex trade has been quietly extended by Governor Kathy Hochul's administration, reigniting criticism from republicans who argue New York taxpayers are once again being asked to bankroll controversial social programs while residents continue to struggle with soaring utility bills, housing costs, gas prices higher than \$4 per gallon, and public safety concerns.

The extension of New York's Sex Worker Health Pilot Program will keep the initiative operating through June 2028 with state records indicating the expanded effort could cost taxpayers approximately \$2.5 million.

The program provides access to primary medical care, sexual health services, behavioral health treatment, dental care, case management and referrals for individuals engaged in sex work. State officials and public health advocates have defended the initiative as an effort to reach a population they describe as medically underserved and often reluctant to seek traditional healthcare services.

Opponents, however, are questioning whether such a narrowly focused program deserves millions in public funding at a time when many New Yorkers are struggling to pay for basic necessities and facing repeated increases in utility rates, taxes and living expenses.

State contract records show the program is being administered through partnerships with Community Health Project Inc., better known as Callen-Lorde, and EHS Inc., which operates as Evergreen Health in Western New York.

According to records filed through the New York State Comptroller's Office, contracts tied to the pilot program were initially approved in 2023. Recent contract listings indicate that at least one of those agreements has now been extended through June 30th, 2028.

The program first generated controversy when it launched in 2023 with approximately \$1 million in state funding.

At the time, supporters argued that sex workers face disproportionately high rates of sexually transmitted infections, violence, mental health challenges and barriers to obtaining healthcare.

Federal research has shown that sex workers experience significantly higher rates

of HIV infection than the general population. Studies have also found elevated rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse and victimization. Advocates say those realities justify specialized outreach efforts designed to connect individuals with testing, treatment and support services before larger public health problems emerge.

Organizations involved with the pilot have described the initiative as a harm-reduction model intended to reduce stigma and create a pathway toward healthcare access for people who might otherwise avoid seeking treatment.

Callen-Lorde has promoted programs such as its COIN Clinic, which focuses on care coordination and medical services tailored toward individuals involved in the sex trade.

Democrats and Hochul herself contend that preventative healthcare and early intervention can ultimately reduce emergency room visits, lower long-term medical costs and help connect vulnerable individuals with housing, counseling and substance abuse treatment.

Republicans remain unconvinced.

The extension has fueled renewed accusations that Albany continues prioritizing activist-driven programs while many residents

face financial hardship.

Conservative critics quoted in coverage surrounding the program accused Hochul's administration of catering to advocacy organizations and directing taxpayer resources toward politically charged initiatives instead of addressing broader public concerns.

The dispute arrives as New York continues facing affordability challenges across multiple fronts. Utility customers have seen rate increases approved across the state, housing costs remain elevated, and state leaders continue debating billions in spending priorities.

Questions are also emerging about transparency and accountability surrounding the pilot program.

While democrats argue the initiative serves an important public health purpose, critics are demanding measurable outcomes to justify the cost. They say taxpayers deserve to know how many individuals have been served, how many medical screenings have been completed, how many people have been connected with treatment programs and whether the program has produced quantifiable public health benefits.

For now, the extension ensures the program will continue operating for at least three more years.

DOJ Lawsuit Targets Hochul Administration Over \$11 Billion Home Care Program as Questions Mount Over Medicaid Spending

Staff Reports

Governor Kathy Hochul's administration is facing intensifying scrutiny over an \$11 billion Medicaid home care program after the U.S. Department of Justice joined a growing list of legal challenges alleging the state improperly steered a lucrative contract as part of a controversial overhaul that was supposed to reduce costs but has instead generated lawsuits, political backlash, and mounting questions about New York's management of taxpayer-funded healthcare dollars.

The latest challenge came when the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice filed suit over New York's 2024 restructuring of the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, commonly known as CDPAP. The federal action adds to a growing collection of lawsuits surrounding the state's decision to centralize payroll services for nearly 240,000 home care aides who participate in the Medicaid-funded program.

The federal lawsuit follows multiple legal challenges already filed against the state, making the contract award one of the most heavily litigated healthcare decisions in recent New York history.

At the center of the controversy is CDPAP, a program that allows elderly and disabled Medicaid recipients to hire caregivers to assist with daily living activities. The program differs from traditional home care because recipients can often select friends, relatives, or trusted individuals to provide care.

Supporters have long argued that the program allows vulnerable residents to remain in their homes while receiving personalized assistance. Critics, however, have increasingly pointed to explosive growth in enrollment and spending as evidence that the system became vulnerable to abuse.

Program costs have risen dramatically over the last decade.

After state lawmakers loosened eligibility and caregiver rules in 2015, enrollment surged and spending ballooned into the billions. Thousands of additional caregivers entered the system and the number of fiscal intermediaries – companies and organizations responsible for handling payroll and administrative duties – expanded from just a handful of organizations to hundreds across New

York.

State officials argued that the rapid growth created inefficiencies and opened the door to fraud, waste and abuse.

In response, Hochul's administration proposed consolidating payroll processing under a single statewide contractor, claiming the move would streamline operations and save taxpayers approximately \$500 million annually.

Instead, the effort has become engulfed in allegations of favoritism and bid-rigging.

According to allegations outlined in various lawsuits, state officials allegedly worked closely with Public Partnership LLC, known as PPL, before the competitive bidding process was formally opened. Court filings have pointed to claims that the company was effectively positioned for the contract long before competing bidders had an opportunity to participate.

The Department of Justice lawsuit specifically names New York Health Commissioner James McDonald and Medicaid Director Amir Bassiri, alleging irregularities in the procurement process surrounding the contract award.

Critics argue the allegations undermine the state's claim that the process was fair and competitive.

The controversy has also drawn attention because PPL was not an unknown entity entering the process. Opponents of the contract award have noted that the company had previously encountered significant implementation challenges during similar transitions in other states.

Despite those concerns, New York proceeded with awarding the contract and launching one of the largest healthcare administrative transitions in state history.

The rollout quickly encountered problems.

Patients, caregivers and advocacy groups reported widespread confusion during the transition as workers attempted to register under the new system. Concerns emerged over delayed enrollments, administrative bottlenecks and uncertainty about whether vulnerable residents would continue receiving care.

While state officials maintained that the transition was necessary to modernize the program, critics argued the overhaul created new problems while failing to address the underlying causes of escalating costs.

One of the most politically sensitive

aspects of the dispute involves the role of the healthcare workers union 1199 SEIU.

Multiple legal filings and investigations have examined the union's involvement in the restructuring effort. Critics argue the transition ultimately benefited the union by significantly increasing the number of caregivers eligible for membership.

Supporters of the union contend that workers deserve representation and improved wages regardless of the broader contract dispute.

Meanwhile, the promised savings remain difficult to quantify.

Although the administration promoted the consolidation as a major cost-cutting measure, republicans note there is little evidence thus far that the projected annual savings have materialized. Some observers have instead warned that higher wages and continued program expansion could ultimately drive spending even higher.

The dispute has also reignited a broader debate about New York's Medicaid system as a whole.

New York consistently ranks among the nation's highest Medicaid spenders on a per-capita basis. State spending has increased dramatically over the past decade, with Medicaid expenditures now exceeding \$120 billion annually.

Supporters argue that New York operates one of the country's most expansive healthcare safety nets, providing coverage and services unavailable in many other states.

Critics counter that the size and complexity of the system make it increasingly vulnerable to waste, mismanagement and fraud.

Questions surrounding program eligibility have also surfaced in recent years as officials

attempt to determine whether all recipients continue to meet qualification standards.

At the same time, some watchdog organizations have expressed concern about declining fraud enforcement activity statewide, arguing that aggressive oversight has not kept pace with rapidly expanding Medicaid expenditures.

The legal challenges surrounding CDPAP arrive at a particularly difficult moment for the Hochul administration, which has faced criticism over affordability issues, rising utility costs, inflation, liberal state spending priorities and growing concerns about government efficiency.

Supporters of the administration continue to defend the home care reforms as a necessary attempt to modernize a rapidly expanding program that had become difficult to manage.

Critics, however, argue the lawsuits tell a different story. One in which a reform advertised as a cost-saving measure has instead produced years of litigation, allegations of procurement misconduct and unanswered questions about whether taxpayers received the accountability they were promised.

As federal litigation moves forward and additional court challenges continue to unfold, the future of the state's home care overhaul remains unclear. What was originally presented as a straightforward effort to eliminate inefficiencies has evolved into a major political and legal battle that could have significant implications for New York's Medicaid system, the Hochul administration and hundreds of thousands of caregivers and recipients who rely on the program every day.

 1365 Nash Rd. North Tonawanda (716) 525-1888 ***** 2429 Military Rd. Niagara Falls (716) 297-1986 Open 7 Days, 8am-8pm	We're locally-owned and have a lot to offer! • Meat Cut Fresh By Our Butchers • Deli Meat Sliced Fresh Daily • Fresh Produce • Ice Cold Beer • Local Items • All Your Favorite Name Brands • ...And So Much More! 	We Offer Delivery!  instacart  DOORDASH  Uber Eats Now Accepting SNAP/EBT On Delivery Orders!
---	---	--

NATIONAL NEWS

US-Iran Talks Advance in Switzerland After Hormuz Dispute Threatened Fragile Ceasefire

60-Day Diplomatic Clock Ticking as U.S., Iran Seek Permanent Deal After Hormuz Dispute Threatens Fragile Ceasefire.

Staff Reports

Just days after the United States and Iran announced what was described as a breakthrough agreement designed to halt months of conflict and reopen one of the world's most important shipping lanes, negotiators returned to Switzerland this week attempting to prevent the fragile arrangement from unraveling.

The latest round of high-level discussions concluded Monday, June 22nd after nearly two days of meetings involving American and Iranian officials, along with mediators from Qatar and Pakistan. While both sides described the talks as productive, major issues remain unresolved and negotiators are now racing against a newly established 60-day timetable intended to produce a broader and more permanent agreement.

The meetings come against the backdrop of a conflict that has shaken global energy markets, driven up fuel prices around the world, disrupted international shipping routes and created uncertainty throughout the Middle East.

Only last week, President Donald Trump announced that Washington and Tehran had reached an initial framework agreement aimed at ending the war and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply normally passes.

That announcement initially triggered optimism across financial markets. Oil prices declined sharply as investors anticipated a return to stability and the resumption of energy exports from the Persian Gulf.

But the optimism proved short-lived.

Following the June 17th agreement, disputes quickly emerged over implementation. Iranian actions in and around the Strait of Hormuz raised concerns that shipping traffic could once again be disrupted, prompting renewed diplomatic efforts and increasing pressure on negotiators to secure stronger enforcement mechanisms.

The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the most strategically important waterways on the planet. At its narrowest point, the passage is only about 21 miles wide and serves as the primary export route for crude oil and liquefied natural gas produced throughout much of the Middle East.

Any disruption to traffic through the strait immediately affects global energy markets.

Before the conflict began earlier this year, approximately 20% of the world's oil and natural gas exports traveled through the corridor. During periods of heightened tensions, shipping traffic slowed dramatically, insurance costs surged and energy prices climbed.

At one point during the conflict, benchmark crude oil prices climbed above \$120 per barrel, creating inflationary pressures that rippled through economies across Europe, Asia and North America.

Negotiators entered the Switzerland talks hoping to prevent a return to those conditions.

Speaking Monday, Trump portrayed the United States as holding overwhelming leverage over the strategic waterway.

"As long as they respect us, we're not going to have any trouble," said Trump.

Trump further claimed that the United States maintains complete control over the Strait of Hormuz and suggested any future restrictions on maritime traffic could be re-

imposed rapidly if circumstances required it.

"We have total control of the strait," said Trump.

The president argued that restrictions on maritime commerce had proven even more effective than military strikes during the conflict.

"I think the blockade was more impactful than dropping bombs, if you want to know the truth," said Trump.

"It was like I said, they call it the steel wall. Nobody got through it. Not one ship got through, able to go to Iran."

Trump also emphasized that the United States could restore similar restrictions quickly if Iran failed to comply with future agreements.

"They got through if we wanted them to go through, and we could set that up again in about 15 minutes. I would say one phone call. How long would it take? Maybe half an hour," he added.

The president also contrasted the current negotiations with the 2015 nuclear agreement reached during the Obama administration.

"Obama gave them a road to a nuclear weapon. I gave them a wall against another. They'll never, under this agreement, even think about building a nuclear bomb," said Trump.

Nuclear issues remain one of the largest unresolved disputes.

Although both sides agreed to continue negotiations, a final resolution regarding Iran's nuclear program has not yet been reached.

One of the most significant developments emerging from the Switzerland meetings involved international inspections.

Vice President JD Vance announced that Iranian officials had agreed to allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency back into the country.

According to Vance, securing the return of inspectors represented one of the administration's primary objectives and marked a major achievement because it creates an independent verification process rather than relying solely on Iranian assurances.

The agreement is particularly significant because access to several nuclear sites has been a source of contention for years.

American officials have repeatedly argued that independent inspections are essential to preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons capability.

Trump reinforced that position following the talks, declaring that Iran must commit to extensive future inspections designed to ensure what he described as long-term nuclear honesty.

"Everybody is fully aware that Iran will agree to have Major Weapons Inspections in order to ensure 'Nuclear Honesty' long into the future," wrote Trump.

Vance repeatedly emphasized that verification, rather than trust, would guide future negotiations.

He explained that American negotiators are focused on measuring Iran's actions instead of relying on statements or promises. According to Vance, the administration believes the only meaningful way to evaluate progress is through observable compliance with agreements.

The vice president described the meetings as productive and said the administration achieved all four objectives it brought into the negotiations.

According to Vance, those goals includ-



Strait of Hormuz.

ed establishing a mechanism to keep the Strait of Hormuz open, creating communication channels to prevent regional conflicts from escalating, securing the return of international nuclear inspectors and laying the groundwork for future technical negotiations.

He acknowledged that Iranian officials expressed frustrations during portions of the discussions but characterized those disputes as expected during complex diplomatic negotiations.

At the same time, Vance urged observers not to place too much emphasis on social media speculation surrounding the talks.

He pointed to reports suggesting Iranian officials might walk away from negotiations, noting that despite those rumors, discussions continued for many additional hours afterward.

Perhaps most importantly, Vance stressed that negotiators have not reached a final agreement.

Instead, he described the Switzerland meetings as creating the foundation for future progress while cautioning that significant work remains.

Among the unresolved issues are sanctions relief, access to frozen Iranian assets, future nuclear restrictions and the long-term security structure for the region.

One area where negotiators appear to be making progress involves Iran's frozen assets.

Trump suggested discussions are underway regarding the possible release of some Iranian funds currently restricted under international sanctions.

However, he indicated any released money would be tightly controlled and directed toward specific purchases.

According to Trump, negotiators have discussed a framework that would require those funds to be spent on agricultural products sourced from American farmers, including commodities such as corn and soybeans.

Vance likewise emphasized that any future release of Iranian assets would be conditioned upon continued progress in negotiations and compliance with the agreement's provisions.

The Switzerland meetings also addressed broader regional security concerns.

According to Vance, negotiators established communication mechanisms designed to prevent future military flareups involving Israel, Hezbollah and other regional actors from escalating into wider

conflicts.

The goal, he explained, is to create direct channels that allow governments to communicate quickly during periods of heightened tension and potentially stop violence before it spirals further.

Those discussions remain especially important because fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has continued intermittently despite previous ceasefire arrangements.

Regional mediators expressed cautious optimism following the meetings.

Officials from Qatar and Pakistan reportedly described the negotiations as encouraging and said meaningful progress had been achieved toward future technical discussions.

Both countries have played central roles facilitating communication between Washington and Tehran during recent months.

Their involvement has become increasingly important as both sides attempt to navigate a series of complicated disputes involving energy security, sanctions, regional conflicts and nuclear oversight.

For now, the agreement remains a work in progress.

The Switzerland talks established a roadmap, but negotiators still face substantial obstacles before a comprehensive peace agreement can be finalized.

The next several weeks are expected to focus on technical discussions involving nuclear verification procedures, sanctions frameworks, shipping guarantees and regional security arrangements.

Whether the current momentum ultimately produces a lasting agreement remains uncertain.

What is clear, however, is that both sides have strong incentives to keep talking.

The United States wants stability in global energy markets, lower fuel prices and assurances regarding Iran's nuclear activities.

Iran is seeking sanctions relief, access to frozen assets and greater economic stability.

For the moment, diplomats appear determined to keep negotiations moving forward.

The challenge now is transforming a temporary framework into a permanent agreement capable of surviving the same tensions that nearly caused the latest ceasefire to collapse only days after it was announced.



CRIME BLOTTER

CRIME REPORTS PUBLISHED BY NIAGARA ACTION OVER THE LAST WEEK

-Child Drinks Rubbing Alcohol at Niagara Falls Walmart, But Where Were the Parents?

Law enforcement received a call around 2:30pm on June 15th after reports of a medical emergency at Walmart on Military Road in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller told police that a young child grabbed a bottle of rubbing alcohol off of the shelf and drank it. The caller told dispatch that the child only drank a small amount, but that the child needed emergency medical treatment. Police and medical responded to the scene. It is unknown if the child was transported to a local hospital for medical treatment, if the parent(s) will face legal consequences, or if child protective services became involved. No further information is available at this time.

-Witnesses Shocked after Disabled Man in Wheelchair Punched in the Face in Niagara Falls. Law enforcement received a call around 1:04am on June 16th after reports of an assault on Cedar Avenue in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller told police that there were two males fighting in the parking lot. However, one of the males was in a wheelchair and disabled. Security was on the phone with dispatch stating that the aggressor "punched the wheelchair guy in the face." The parties were then said to be in the Tops parking lot. The male in the wheelchair sustained injuries from being punched in the face. The suspect was described as a black male wearing a red shirt. Police and medical responded to the scene. It is unknown if the suspect was still on scene when the suspect arrived and was arrested. No further information is available at this time.

-Niagara Falls Woman Urinates in Front of Passing Cars Outside Target. Law enforcement received a call around 8:40am after reports of indecent exposure in front of Target on Niagara Falls Boulevard in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller told police that there is a black female, about 30-years-old, with her skirt lifted urinating in the street as cars passed by. The caller further told police that everything was visible to the cars that drove by. In other words, they got a "full frontal." The woman was spraying everywhere, according to one passerby. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the woman was taken for mental health treatment or arrested. No further information is available at this time.

-Drunk Man Covered in Blood Terrifies 7-Eleven Clerk in Niagara Falls. Law enforcement received a call around 2:03am on June 18th after reports of disorderly conduct at 7-Eleven on the 1500 block of Pine Avenue in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller – a female store clerk – told police that a black male, highly intoxicated, and covered in blood, came into the business "yelling and screaming" at her. She further told dispatch that he was being very belligerent and would not leave the store when asked to do so. It looked like the guy had gotten the sh*t beat out of him. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the male was still there when law enforcement was still arrived and, if he was, whether they arrested him. No further information is available at this time.

-Dead Body Found After Mental Health Call in Niagara County. Law enforcement received a call around 6am on June 18th after reports of a medical emergency on Harwood Street in Lockport. Deputies from the Niagara County Sheriff's Office responded to assist Lockport Police with a mental health patient. Once on scene, law enforcement advised dispatch that there was a confirmed deceased individual on the east side of the roadway at that

address. The coroner was requested. The circumstances of the individual's death are unknown other than that it was related to a mental health call. No further information is available at this time.

-Mother Beaten While Holding Her Screaming Baby in Niagara Falls. Law enforcement received a call around 2:50pm on June 18th after reports of a domestic incident and assault with injuries on Livingston Avenue and 30th Street in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller, a third party, told police that a male and female were fighting outside. The caller further told police that the female was holding an infant while the physical altercation was going on. This included the female hitting the male and the male hitting the female. The female was crying. The baby was hysterical. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the male was arrested or if CPS became involved. No further information is available at this time.

-Drunk Guy Laying on Bathroom Floor Refuses to Leave Niagara Falls Hotel. Law enforcement received a call around 4:44pm on June 18th after reports of a welfare check and public intoxication at the Quality Inn at 240 1st Street. The 911 caller, an employee of the hotel, told police that a "heavily intoxicated white male" was laying on the bathroom floor refusing to leave. The male was being belligerent and causing a scene, including yelling. He was making guests and hotel employees uncomfortable. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the male was arrested. No further information is available at this time.

-Brawl Ends with a Stabbing in Niagara Falls. Law enforcement received a call around 8:52pm on June 18th after reports of a brawl with injuries on the 1500 block of Centre Avenue in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller told police that 15-20 people were outside fighting and yelling. The caller further told police that someone was "being stabbed with some sort of object." Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if any participants were arrested. No further information is available at this time.

-Son Breaks In, Tears Apart Mother's Niagara Falls Home Looking for Cash. Law enforcement received a call around 9:26am on June 20th after reports of a domestic incident and burglary on 68th Street in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller and suspect's mother told police that her son broke into her home last night through a window demanding money and "tore the house apart." She further told police that her son "hides out in the garage usually" but is unsure if he is there at the moment. Dispatch then advised responding officers that there was a call from a couple weeks ago where the son made threats to harm himself with a kitchen knife. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the male was arrested. No further information is available at this time.

-Boyfriend Tees Off, Hits Woman in Head with Baseball Bat in Niagara Falls. Law enforcement received a call around 8:42pm on June 20th after reports of a violent assault with injuries on Panama Street in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller told police that a male hit her in the head with a baseball bat. She was conscious but sustained injuries requiring medical attention. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the male was arrested and if the woman was transported to a hospital for medical treatment. No further information is available at this time.

-He just wanted a brewski': Break-in Suspect Found Inside 7-Eleven Beer Cooler. Law enforcement received a call around 4:52am on June 21st after reports

of suspicious activity at 7-Eleven on the 400 block of Niagara Street. There was no indication on the audio how police became aware of the possible individual inside 7-Eleven whether that be an eyewitness report or an alarm system at Police arrived at the 7-Eleven and, upon checking the premises, found the suspect inside of the beer fridge. Police took the suspect into custody. No further information is available at this time.

-Male Overdoses on Morphine at Niagara Falls 7-Eleven. Law enforcement received a call around 12:40am on June 21st after reports of a medical emergency at 7-Eleven on the 6700 block of Packard Road in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller, an employee of 7-Eleven, told police that a male walked into the store and told the clerk that he "feels like he's going to overdose" but was "unable to say what he took." The male was described as black and wearing batman pajama pants. The male later said that he had taken morphine. However, he was not sure on the amount. Police and medical responded to the scene. It is believed the male was taken for medical treatment. No further information is available at this time.

-'The wrong kind of handyman': Man Tries to Beat Woman with Crowbar. Law enforcement received a call around 7:57pm on June 21st after reports of an attempted assault in the alleyway near Ashland Avenue and 13th Street in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller told police that a male was chasing her and "trying to hit her with a crowbar." It was unknown at the time of the call who the male was, nor did police have a description of the suspect. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if a suspect was observed and/or apprehended by law enforcement. No further information is available at this time.

-Woman Nearly Abducted Near Elementary School in Niagara Falls. Law enforcement received a call around 9:42pm on June 21st after reports of an attempted abduction in the area of 79th Street school in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller, a third-party, told police that a white box truck similar to a U-Haul tried abducting a female. The female was currently with the caller's sister. The sister also spoke to dispatch but was unable to provide any information. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if any suspects were located and/or arrested. No further information is available at this time.

-Angry Woman Sets Boyfriend's Car on Fire in Niagara Falls with Him Inside. Law enforcement received a call around 12am on June 22nd after reports of a domestic incident with property damage on 18th Street in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller, a male, told police that his girlfriend – likely to be ex-girlfriend – was "pouring lighter fluid" on his red Chevy Cruz. The call ended with him telling dispatch that it was "burning." She set the car on fire. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the female was taken into custody. No further information is available at this time.

-Child's Father Says He Wants to Slap Around the Babysitter. Law enforcement received a call around 7:12pm on June 22nd after reports of menacing on A Street in Niagara Falls. The 911 caller, a babysitter, said that she is babysitting and one of the children's friends' dads threatened to hit her. She told dispatch that he is still currently there. He was described as a white male. The babysitter was a juvenile. Police responded to the scene. It is unknown if the male was arrested or simply asked to leave the premises. No further information is available at this time.

Man Going to Prison for Attempted Sexual Encounter with 12-year-old Girl from North Tonawanda

By: Staff Reports

A Niagara County judge sentenced a Clarence man to more than a decade behind bars after he was found guilty of attempting to sexually assault a person he believed was a 12-year-old North Tonawanda girl.

Daniel Gregory, 34, was sentenced Thursday in Niagara County Court following his April conviction on charges of attempted first-degree rape and attempted dissemination of child pornography. Niagara County Court Judge Caroline Wojtaszek imposed a 13-year state prison sentence on the attempted rape conviction and an additional sentence of 1 1/3 to 4 years on the child pornography-related charge. The sentences will run concurrently.

Gregory faced a potential maximum sentence of 15 years in state prison.

The conviction stemmed from an undercover investigation conducted by the North Tonawanda Police Department and federal authorities after investigators alleged Gregory actively sought sexual encounters with minors through social media and ultimately arranged a meeting with someone he believed was a young girl.

Authorities said the investigation began in early January 2025 when North Tonawanda detectives discovered social media messages posted by Gregory seeking contact with teenage girls.

According to court records, investigators identified messages in which Gregory allegedly asked other Facebook users, "You know any NT teens I could hook up with? 13-16."

After locating the messages and preserving screenshots, detectives traced the account to Gregory and compared profile photographs with booking photos maintained by the Niagara County Jail.

On January 9th, 2025, an undercover North Tonawanda detective created a fictitious Facebook profile under the name "Alexis Jones" and sent Gregory a friend request. Investigators said Gregory accepted the request and soon began communicating with the account through Facebook Messenger.

During the conversation, Gregory allegedly asked the profile owner her age. According to federal court documents, the undercover detective responded, "I'm 12 hbu."

Gregory allegedly replied, "32."

Investigators said communications quickly escalated. Court filings indicate Gregory repeatedly attempted to video call the undercover account and encouraged the individual behind the profile to call him directly.

None of the video calls were answered and that all communications remained limited to Facebook Messenger.

Gregory continued conversations over several weeks and repeatedly attempted to arrange an in-person meeting. Federal court documents allege that he also sent explicit photographs of himself to the undercover account and engaged in multiple sexually explicit conversations.

The investigation ultimately culminated in February 2025 when Gregory agreed to meet "Alexis Jones" at an apartment in the City of Tonawanda to engage in sexual activity.

When Gregory arrived at the location and knocked on the apartment door, investigators said he was greeted by North Tonawanda police detectives waiting to take him into custody.

According to federal court filings, Gregory later participated in a voluntary interview with investigators following his arrest.

During questioning, detectives asked Gregory if he had come to the apartment intending to have sex with "a 12-year-old."

According to investigators, Gregory responded, "Right, yeah."

A court-authorized examination of Gregory's cellphone uncovered additional evidence that investigators said suggested he had attempted to contact other minors, including teenagers in Orchard Park.

While the Niagara County prosecution has now concluded with Gregory's conviction and sentencing, the legal proceedings against him are far from over.

Gregory remains the subject of a separate federal criminal case stemming from the same investigation. A federal grand jury returned an indictment in February charging Gregory with one count of attempted enticement of a minor. Federal prosecutors say he used interstate communications to persuade, induce or entice a child into unlawful sexual activity. The charge carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison.

DECIDING ON DECKS & PORCHES: Making the Right Investment

Comparing wood, composite, concrete, and modern materials to help homeowners build the perfect outdoor living space.



A friend of mine needed a front porch. They asked for advice and we talked about wood, concrete, and Trex. Pros and cons, cost and durability, along with the most important: aesthetics. Let's talk about decks and porches for the do-it-yourselfer and the not-so, like myself!

Adding a deck or a porch is a monumental decision for a homeowner. It bridges the gap between the sanctuary of the indoors and the expansive potential of the outdoors. However, the sheer volume of choices can be paralyzing. Do you pour a concrete slab? Do you build a traditional wood frame? Do you invest in advanced composites? Every material has a unique profile regarding upfront cost, long-term durability, necessary upkeep, and visual appeal. Furthermore, the decision to swing the hammer yourself versus hiring a professional dramatically shifts the financial equation.

Throughout this article we will dismantle these choices to help you build the perfect outdoor oasis.

1. The Classics: Wood Decks

Wood is the ancestral material of outdoor building. It brings a natural, organic warmth that synthetic materials strive to mimic. The most common entry point is Pressure-Treated (PT) Pine, which is chemically treated to resist rot and insects. It is highly affordable but prone to warping, splintering, and requires rigorous maintenance.

Stepping up the aesthetic and durability ladder, we find naturally rot-resistant woods like Cedar and Redwood. These offer gorgeous, rich colors and natural oils that defend against the elements, though they are softer and can dent easily. At the apex are exotic

hardwoods like Ipe or Tigerwood. These are incredibly dense, fire-resistant, and boast lifespans of up to 50 years, but they are expensive and notoriously difficult to cut and drill, presenting a formidable challenge for the average DIYer.

2. The Modern Marvel: Composite & Trex

When my friend and I discussed modern options, composite decking — often referred to by the proprietary eponym "Trex" — was at the center of the conversation. Composite boards are manufactured from a blend of wood fibers and recycled plastics, wrapped in a protective polymer shell.

This process virtually eliminates the headaches of traditional wood: no splinters, no rot, no termite damage, and absolutely no sanding or staining required.

The upfront cost is significantly higher than pressure-treated wood, but the long-term ROI is where composite shines. A simple wash with soap and water once a season is all it takes to maintain it. Aesthetically, early composites looked artificially plastic, but modern iterations feature deeply embossed, highly convincing wood grain patterns with variegated colors that mimic exotic hardwoods beautifully. For someone who wants to spend their summer lounging on their deck rather than laboring over it, composite is a premier choice.

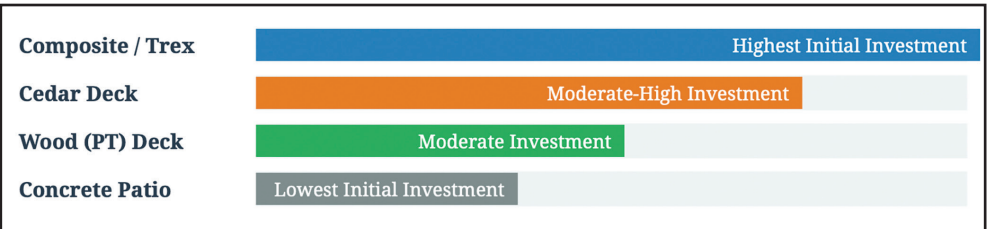
3. The Solid Foundation: Concrete Porches

Sometimes, elevating a deck isn't the right architectural move for a home. A poured concrete patio or a raised masonry porch offers a permanence that framed decks simply cannot match. A properly poured, rebar-reinforced concrete slab will outlast the people who laid it. It is impervious to rot, insects, and fire.

Historically, concrete was viewed as purely utilitarian and aesthetically cold. However, the advent of stamped and colored concrete has revolutionized the industry. Contractors can now pour a slab and stamp it to perfectly mimic the look of natural flagstone, brick, cobblestone, or even wood planks. While concrete is incredibly durable, it does have a fatal enemy: freeze-thaw cycles. In climates with harsh winters, improper drainage can lead to cracking. Sealing the concrete every few years is required to maintain its color and prevent water ingress.

4. Advanced Synthetics: PVC & Aluminum

Beyond standard composites, the decking industry offers cellular PVC and aluminum options. PVC decking contains zero wood fibers; it is 100% plastic. Because there is no organic material inside, it is fundamentally impossible for



Total Cost Ranking for a Standard 320 Sq Ft Build.

it to rot or host mold. It is also remarkably lightweight compared to composite and dissipates heat much faster, making it an excellent choice for full-sun backyards or pool surrounds.

Aluminum decking is the rarest but arguably the most indestructible decking material available. It is completely fire-proof, waterproof, immune to pests, and actually stays cooler to the touch in direct sunlight than wood or composite due to high thermal conductivity. It also allows for completely watertight installations, meaning you can build a dry outdoor living space underneath a second-story aluminum deck. However, both PVC and Aluminum sit at the absolute top of the price spectrum and offer a more contemporary, less "rustic" aesthetic.

5. Safety and Style: Railing Systems

A deck is just a platform until you add the railings. Railings dictate the architectural style of the space and account for a shockingly large portion of the total build cost. While many DIYers assume the deck boards will be the most expensive line item, an intricate railing system can easily double the material budget.

Wood railings with standard balusters are the most economical but require the most maintenance to prevent splintering and rot. Vinyl (PVC) railings are low-maintenance and inexpensive, frequently paired with composite decks for a clean, white aesthetic. For a modern profile, powder-coated aluminum railings with sleek, thin profiles are incredibly popular as they don't obstruct views. For those who want zero visual obstruction, tempered glass panels or horizontal stainless-steel cable railings provide a high-end, luxurious finish, though they require meticulous cleaning and careful code compliance regarding spacing.

6. The Economics: Costs per Sq Ft & ROI

Understanding the financial implications of a deck goes beyond the checkout lane at the lumber yard. The cost per square foot varies wildly based on material choice, elevation, and complexity (stairs, built-in seating, multi-levels). On average, a basic pre-sure-treated wood deck built by a pro will run \$25 to \$35 per square foot. Upgrading to a capped composite pushes that to \$45 to \$60 per square foot. High-end synthetics or exotic woods with glass railings can exceed \$80 per square foot.

However, decks offer some of the strongest Return on Investment (ROI) in home improvement. When it comes time to sell, outdoor living spaces are highly coveted. Interestingly, wood decks often yield a slightly higher percentage ROI upon resale (around 65-70%) compared to composite (around 60-65%) simply because the initial cash outlay for wood is lower.

Yet, composite adds undeniable "curb appeal" and acts as a major selling feature for buyers wanting maintenance-free living.

7. Labor, Materials & The DIY Equation

For the do-it-yourselfer, building a deck represents an ultimate weekend (or

multi-weekend) warrior badge of honor. But what truly goes into it? If you choose to DIY, you immediately cut the total project cost by roughly 50%.

The materials — concrete footings, joists, ledger boards, decking, hidden fasteners, and railings — are only half the bill. The other half is the intense physical labor of digging, leveling, framing, and finishing. For those "not so like myself," hiring a professional is an investment in time, back health, and structural peace of mind. A seasoned pro crew can frame and finish a standard deck in 3 to 5 days. A DIYer working weekends might take a month or more. Furthermore, professionals understand load paths, flashing to prevent house rot, and how to properly sink footings below the frost line — a critical step in Western New York to prevent winter heaving.

8. Playing by the Rules: Town Codes

Whether you are building it yourself or hiring a crew, there is one universal law of outdoor construction: always check with your town codes and secure a permit. A deck is a structural addition to your home. If it collapses during a family barbecue, the liability is catastrophic. Building without a permit can result in hefty fines, forced teardowns, and complications when selling your home.

Town code enforcement ensures your footings are deep enough to bypass the frost line (usually 42 inches in our region), your ledger board is properly flashed and bolted (not just nailed) to the house, and your railings meet height and baluster-spacing safety requirements. For residents in our area, reaching out to your local building department is step one before buying a single piece of lumber.

9. Sourcing Locally & Making it Reality

Turning these plans into a tangible outdoor living space requires the right materials and the right people. For DIYers, purchasing high-quality lumber that isn't bowed or severely crowned is crucial — something big-box stores don't always guarantee. For those looking to hire out, working with contractors who specialize specifically in outdoor living spaces ensures a superior, warranted finish.

In the Erie and Niagara County areas, we are fortunate to have excellent local suppliers and dedicated deck-building professionals who understand the nuances of Western New York weather, local town codes, and modern material applications.

It's summertime and if you are looking to add or replace there is plenty of time to enjoy many seasons.

About the Author:

Sumit Majumdar is the Vice Chairman & Chief Sustainability Officer of Verite Capital Partners. For over 20 years, he has been a leading voice in the fight against climate change, specializing in practical solutions for reducing carbon and methane emissions through sustainable fuel technology and industrial oversight.

DECK / PORCH STRATEGY	PRIMARY ADVANTAGE	PRIMARY DISADVANTAGE	AESTHETIC PROFILE
DIY Installation	Significant labor cost savings	High time commitment, requires skill	Varies by creator's skill level
Professional Build	Warrantied, fast, code-compliant	High upfront labor costs	Polished, structurally flawless
Ground-level Deck	Easier to build, often needs fewer permits	Limited view, potential moisture issues	Intimate, integrated with landscape
Elevated / Multi-Tier	Maximizes yard space, dramatic views	Requires intense structural engineering	Grand, architectural, commanding

FINANCIAL MARKETS & COMMODITIES

STOCK MARKET INDEXES



DOW JONES

51,564.70



NASDAQ

26,517.93



S&P 500

7,500.58



TSX (CANADA)

34,857.34



NIKKEI 225

71,250.06



SSE (CHINA)

4,090.48



FTSE 100 (UK)

10,363.27

METALS COMMODITIES



GOLD

\$4,166.68 per troy oz.



SILVER

\$65.56 per troy oz.



COPPER

\$13,604 per metric ton



PLATINUM

\$1,681.70 per troy oz.



PALLADIUM

\$1,280 per troy oz.



TIN

\$53,085 per metric ton



NICKEL

\$17,830 per metric ton



ZINC

\$3,607.50 per metric ton



ALUMINUM

\$3,403.50 per metric ton



LIVESTOCK



LIVE CATTLE

\$2.55 lb.



FEEDER CATTLE

\$3.66 lb.



LEAN HOGS

\$.97 lb.



BEEF

\$391.93 cwt



POULTRY

\$1.27 lb.

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES



COFFEE

\$2.68 lb.



SUGAR

\$.14 lb.



CORN

\$4.17 bushel



SOYBEANS

\$11.22 bushel



WHEAT

\$6.05 bushel



COTTON

\$.77 lb.



FCOJ

\$1.56 lb.

ENERGY COMMODITIES



GASOLINE

\$3.93 gallon avg.



DIESEL

\$5.01 gallon avg.



NATURAL GAS

\$3.23 MMBtu



HEATING OIL

\$3.18 gallon



WTI (West Texas int.)

\$77.54 barrel



BRENT CRUDE

\$80.57 barrel



USED COOKING OIL (UCO)

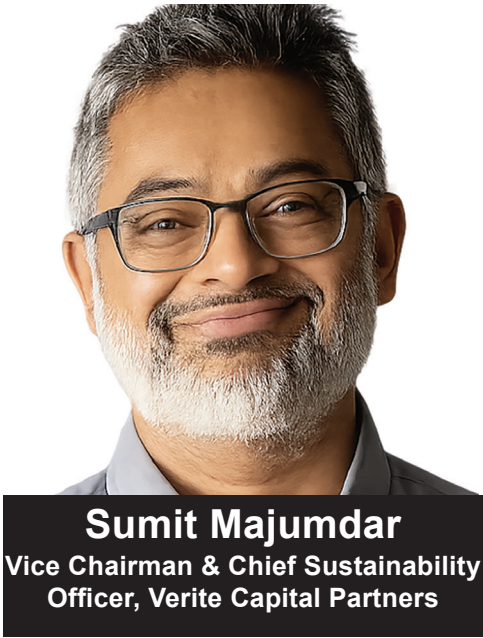
\$.78 per lb.

A SNAPSHOT IN TIME

AS OF 6AM MONDAY, JUNE 22ND, 2026

Shedding Light on Lights (Cont. from cover)

How Modern Lighting Technology Impacts Comfort, Productivity, Sleep, and Energy Costs.



scrutinized by the average consumer. From the spectral distribution of the light waves to the conversion efficiency of the electrical power powering them, the nuances of illumination technology profoundly impact our physiology, our productivity, and our wallets. As a sustainability officer, I view lighting not just as a utility, but as a critical intersection of human well-being and energy conservation.

1. The History and Evolution of Light

To understand where we are going, we must look at where we started. For millennia, humanity relied exclusively on combustion for illumination. The campfire, the oil lamp, and the beeswax candle were the only technologies available. This meant that light was inherently tied to heat, smoke, and a massive expenditure of fuel for very little actual illumination.

The paradigm shifted radically in the 19th century. The invention of the incandescent light bulb by figures like Thomas Edison and Joseph Swan separated light generation from open flame. By passing an electrical current through a carbon (and later, tungsten) filament in a vacuum, resistance caused the filament to glow. It was a monumental leap, yet it remained fundamentally inefficient; over 90% of the energy consumed was emitted as heat, not visible light.

The 20th century brought the fluorescent tube, which utilized a completely different principle: passing an electric arc through mercury vapor to create ultraviolet light, which then caused a phosphor coating to fluoresce and emit visible light. This dramatically improved efficiency and lifespan, paving the way for the Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL). Yet, nothing has disrupted the market quite like the Light Emitting Diode (LED), a solid-state technology that bypasses filaments and gases entirely.

2. Understanding Lumens and Physics

For generations, consumers bought light bulbs based on wattage. A 60-watt bulb was brighter than a 40-watt bulb. However, watts measure electrical power consumption, not light output. As energy-efficient technologies emerged, this metric became fundamentally broken. A 10-watt LED can produce the same light as a 60-watt incandescent. This necessitates a shift to understanding Φ_v , or luminous flux, measured in lumens.

A lumen is the standard unit of measurement for the total quantity of visible light emitted by a source per unit of time. If you want to know how bright a bulb is, you look at the lumens. Efficacy, the true measure of a light's efficiency, is calculated simply as Lumens divided by Watts (lm/W).

How do modern lights generate these lumens? LEDs work on the principle of electroluminescence. When a suitable voltage is applied to the leads, electrons are able to recombine with electron holes within the device, releasing energy in the form of photons. The color of the light (corresponding to the energy of the photon) is determined by the energy band gap of the semiconductor. This is fundamentally different from halogens, which run a current through a tungsten filament enclosed in a quartz envelope filled with halogen gas, allowing the filament to run hotter and brighter than standard incandescents but still relying heavily on heat generation.

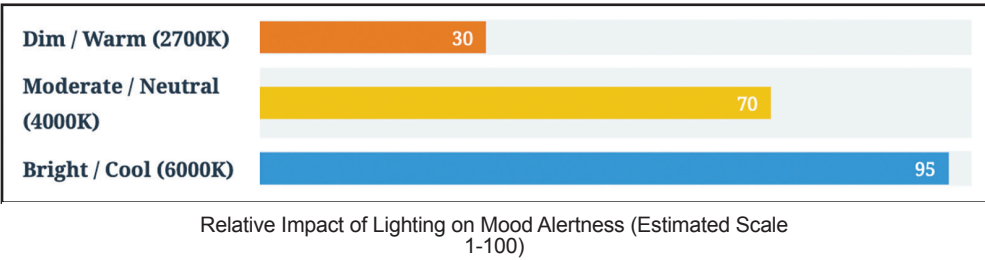
3. The Spectrum: Color Temps and CRI

Color is arguably the most critical psychological component of lighting. Light color is measured in Kelvin (K), referring to the Correlated Color Temperature (CCT). Imagine heating a block of black metal; first, it glows deep red, then orange, then yellow, and as it gets extremely hot, it glows a piercing blue-white. This physical phenomenon is why "warm" light actually has a lower temperature (2700K - 3000K), while "cool" light has a higher temperature (5000K - 6500K).

Furthermore, we must consider the Color Rendering Index (CRI), a scale from 0 to 100 that measures a light source's ability to reveal the colors of objects faithfully in comparison with an ideal or natural light source. The sun has a CRI of 100. Early LEDs suffered from poor CRI, making skin tones look sickly and food look unappetizing. Today, high-quality LEDs can achieve CRIs of 90+, making them suitable for art galleries and surgical suites.

4. Total Cost of Operation

When assessing sustainability and economics, looking solely at the purchase price of a bulb is a critical error. The Total Cost of Operation (TCO) encompasses the initial acquisition cost plus the electrical power consumed over the lifespan of the



unit, factoring in the replacement costs of inferior bulbs. This is where advanced technologies demonstrate their actual value.

If a facility runs 1,000 bulbs for 12 hours a day, the shift from 60W incandescents to 9W LEDs isn't merely an environmental gesture; it's a massive financial restructuring. Furthermore, the longevity of LEDs drastically reduces maintenance labor costs. Let's calculate the TCO over 25,000 hours of use (the average lifespan of one quality LED) given a conservative power cost of \$0.15 per kWh.

5. Power Sources: Plug-In and Hardwired

How we deliver power to our lights is just as critical as the bulbs themselves. Traditional residential lighting is hardwired into the home's electrical grid, functioning on AC (Alternating Current) power (120V in North America). Since LEDs inherently run on DC (Direct Current), every LED bulb contains a small driver to convert the high-voltage AC to low-voltage DC. This conversion process incurs an energy loss.

With the rise of renewable energy and battery storage, we are seeing a shift in power topologies. Plug-in and portable lights with built-in lithium-ion batteries are revolutionizing temporary and emergency lighting. Furthermore, Power over Ethernet (PoE) is emerging in commercial spaces, delivering both data and low-voltage DC power to lighting fixtures via standard network cables, entirely bypassing the AC conversion losses at the bulb level and integrating lighting deeply into smart building infrastructure.

6. Light and Biology: People and Aquariums

Lighting profoundly impacts biology. The human eye has intrinsically photosensitive retinal ganglion cells (ipRGCs) that are highly sensitive to blue light (around 480 nm). Exposure to this spectrum suppresses the secretion of melatonin, the sleep hormone. This is beneficial during the workday for alertness, but detrimental at night when it disrupts our circadian rhythms.

Beyond human health, specialized lighting is essential for biological habitats. Aquariums, particularly reef tanks, require meticulously tuned spectrums. Photosynthetic corals rely on zooxanthellae algae, which thrive under specific blue and actinic wavelengths (420-460 nm). A standard household bulb will literally starve a reef tank, while promoting nuisance algae growth. Full-spectrum lighting is also deployed in community pet care and veterinary environments to aid in animal recovery, ensuring natural day/night cycles to reduce stress in hospitalized pets.

7. Mechanics of Vision: How Eyes Adjust

The human eye is an incredible optical instrument, capable of operating across a vast dynamic range of illuminance, from stark starlight to bright midday snow. This is achieved through pupillary reflex and photochemical adaptation. The pupil acts as an aperture, dilating in darkness and

constricting in brightness. However, this mechanical adjustment is only part of the story.

True dark adaptation involves the regeneration of rhodopsin in the rod cells of the retina. When you move from a brightly lit room to a dark backyard, your cones (color receptors) quickly lose their utility. It takes up to 30 minutes for your rods to fully adapt, increasing your sensitivity to light by a factor of 10,000. Conversely, light adaptation happens much faster, usually within seconds. Designing lighting transitions—such as dimmable entryways or stepped outdoor lighting—can prevent the temporary blinding effect caused by sudden luminous disparity.

8. Selecting Lights: Home, Work, Backyard

Applying this knowledge practically means designing spaces with intentionality. One-size-fits-all lighting is a recipe for eye strain and wasted energy. The key is "layering" light: ambient lighting for general illumination, task lighting for specific work, and accent lighting for aesthetics.

For a home living room, ambient light should be warm (2700K) and output around 1,500 to 3,000 lumens total across the room. For an office workspace, the requirement shifts dramatically: task lighting on the desk should be cool (4000K) and highly concentrated, providing 400-500 lumens directly on the work surface to reduce errors and maintain focus. In the backyard, security lighting benefits from high lumens (1,000+) and motion sensors, while landscape accent lighting should be subtle (50-100 lumens) to prevent light pollution and preserve the aesthetic of the night sky.

9. Sourcing Locally in Erie & Niagara Counties

Applying the science of lumens, spectrum, and efficacy requires the right fixtures and local expertise. Fortunately, Western New York is home to exceptional lighting showrooms and suppliers that can translate these concepts from the page directly to your home or office. Whether you are seeking high-CRI LEDs for a kitchen remodel, energy-efficient landscape lighting, or custom artisan fixtures, local experts are ready to assist you in making the optimal choice.

For readers in Erie and Niagara counties looking to upgrade their illumination profiles, several highly-rated physical locations offer specialized inventories that go far beyond standard online purchasing. Sourcing locally ensures you can physically observe color temperatures and access expert advice for Western New York code compliance.

There is a lot more to lights than you think.

LIGHTING IMPACT AREA	PRIMARY MECHANISM	MEASURABLE OUTCOME
Workplace Productivity	Color Temperature & Intensity	Error rate reduction, focus duration
Energy Consumption	Efficacy (Lumens per Watt)	Kilowatt-hours (kWh) billed
Psychological Mood	Circadian Rhythm Entrainment	Reported alertness vs. relaxation
Biological Health	Melatonin suppression (Blue light)	Sleep latency, sleep quality index

About the Author:
Sumit Majumdar is the Vice Chairman & Chief Sustainability Officer of Verite Capital Partners. For over 20 years, he has been a leading voice in the fight against climate change, specializing in practical solutions for reducing carbon and methane emissions through sustainable fuel technology and industrial oversight.



NIAGARA HOROSCOPES, FUNNIES & PUZZLES

3				5		1	
7	2		4		1	3	8
1		5	2		8		4
5		9	8	1	7		
						9	
			9			8	5
4				7	9		2
		3		8		9	7
		7			1	8	

S
U
D
O
K
U

	1			4		2		9
7	2	4	9		8		1	6
6		5	7	2	1	8	4	3
8	4					9	6	
5		3	1	8	9	4		7
9	7	1				3	8	5
		9	6	5	7	1		
		7			4	6	5	
4			1		7			

Top 20 Most Popular Flowers

MVBMXJRRSBVUGHRNUNANIFRUM
WNFUJPRNPDCFNLTXXKQEHWTYUC
PLGISQBDKOTHROJCTZAVEPTZC
AUTWGSMBMBERLAVENDERZHNQ
NTUPPETUNIAUNYXYSOWECOZTT
SRNBAVSZBDJBGRSJJFLIXUSNR
YUQLNULNHKBCCARNATIONAWSEY
KTZBGCVVAIAAAIGHNYISZLNSJ
HJOFUTCCOPBYFOWGYTQJYIPAQ
GEIRROOMGLDIDAISYDHSPIGSE
MKWKOFGEUDKRSBJLNBREBPSIG
ZOUCSZINNIAIACFWVKNAMNWZU
PNODECPWVFEJBGURZBJMNUSSD
LTTTMMULWZHNZBTOSWLYIMGMGZ
CNEBPGCOYGGPFQMNDBGZHELF
VSUNFLOWERIQRBOAGRKENKUAZ
GVMYXAFGLPLVNEOFRRBIJDRQN
LPOJZWYAEFRIJGNAGIRTUEJSJ
TQROTZWPRHVDVDOOEDZGZUOGCQ
EQCWGUJOANOIJNURZWSOBLZVA
HZHQEWWHNYBVLIFLLYRLJIRC
KZ IABUPIIHANVAKNBQLSEDFPH
MXDPEONYUGLOFYOSHZDIRISPJ
DLUVYSRTMGSP OCTMKAJGYNUE
ISKIIDTGCLZHUSEWFOUEPGKFH

Chrysanthemum	Snapdragon	Sunflower	Tulip
Hydrangea	Carnation	Lavender	Rose
Marigold	Geranium	Hibiscus	Lily
Petunia	Orchid	Zinnia	Iris
Peony	Pansy	Daisy	
Begonia			

THE INTERACTIVE WNY SUMMER FUN ZONE!

POP QUIZ! (CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER)

- What natural event causes daylight to last longer in summer?
A) The Earth moves closer to the sun
B) The Earth's axis is tilted toward the sun
C) The sun stays in the sky all night
- Which summer meteor shower is most visible in August and often produces bright "shooting stars"?
A) Geminids
B) Leonids
C) Perseids
- Which butterfly completes its life cycle in summer and migrates through WNY?
A) Monarch
B) Swallowtail
C) Mourning Cloak

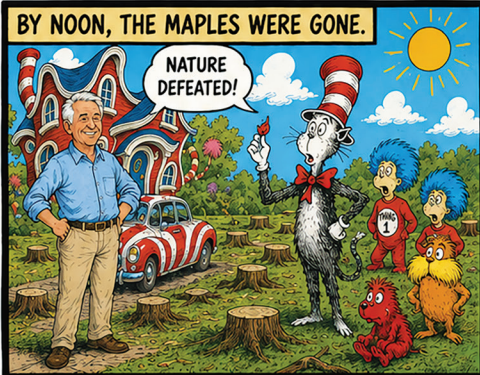
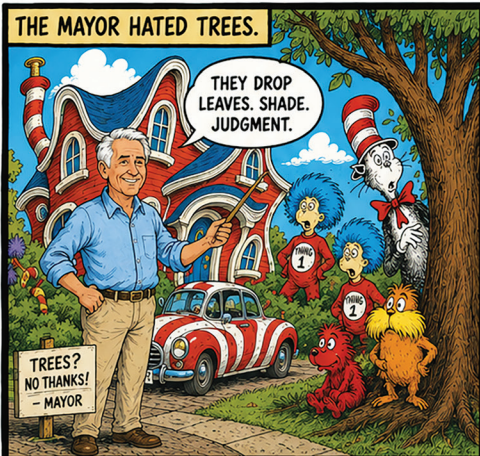
FLOWER SEARCH: SPEND 30 MINUTES OUTSIDE.

Take 30 minutes and write down all the different types of flowers you see. If you need help, download an app!

WNY SUMMER BINGO

Take this paper outside and cross off these local WNY summer phenomenons as you spot them!

B	I	N	G	O
Ice cream from a local ice cream stand	Farmer cutting hay in a field	Catching lightning bugs at dusk	Sunset at Niagara Falls	Seeing a great blue heron by the water
Fire pit night with friends	Fresh picked sweet cherries	FREE SPACE (You survived Winter)	Playing mini golf	Going fishing at a local pond
Discovering a hidden waterfall	Homemade lemonade stand	A wild raspberry worth stopping for	Hot dog from a ballpark	Paddle boarding at sunset
Attending a WNY fair or festival	Sleeping in a tent	Watching a boat go through the locks	Fresh corn on the cob	Wildflower field in bloom
Kayaking on the Isle of Wight Bay	Starry sky with no city lights	Hiking to a scenic overlook	Watermelon eating contest	Cooling off in a splash pad



THE TREES WERE HONEST.
THE REST OF THIS IS JUST NIAGARA FALLS POLITICS.



ARIES (March 21 – April 19)
Your drive and determination return in full force this week. A goal that seemed stalled may finally begin moving forward. Stay focused on priorities and resist the urge to take on too much at once. A practical approach to finances or work matters will pay off by week's end.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20)
Patience continues to be your greatest strength. This is a favorable week for building stability, improving routines, and making steady progress toward long-term goals. Someone may seek your advice or support. Trust your instincts, but remain open to new perspectives.

GEMINI (May 21 – June 20)
With your birthday season now behind you, it's time to put recent ideas into action. Communication remains strong, helping you connect with the right people at the right time. Stay organized as opportunities begin to multiply. A chance encounter could lead to an unexpected benefit.

CANCER (June 21 – July 22)
Your season is underway, bringing renewed confidence and focus. This is an excellent week to prioritize personal goals and make decisions that reflect your true priorities. Don't underestimate your intuition—it may guide you toward an opportunity others fail to notice.

LEO (July 23 – August 22)
A slower pace allows you to recharge and gain perspective. Not every battle needs to be fought this week. Focus on preparation, planning, and clearing away distractions. The groundwork you lay now will support bigger successes in July.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22)
Friends, colleagues, and community connections continue to play a valuable role. Collaboration brings fresh ideas and practical solutions. Be willing to delegate rather than carrying every responsibility yourself. A team effort may exceed expectations.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22)
Professional matters move into the spotlight. Your reliability and diplomacy help you navigate challenges that might frustrate others. Recognition could arrive through a supervisor, client, or important connection. Stay confident in your abilities and trust the process.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21)
Adventure, learning, and future planning become major themes. You may find yourself exploring new opportunities or considering a different direction. Stay curious and open-minded. A new perspective could reveal possibilities that were hidden in plain sight.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 21)
Financial matters deserve extra attention this week. Review commitments carefully and avoid rushing important decisions. Honest discussions help strengthen trust and clear up misunderstandings. Stability comes from preparation rather than guesswork.

CAPRICORN (December 22 – January 19)
Relationships remain an important focus. Whether personal or professional, cooperation will help you accomplish more than working alone. Be willing to compromise where appropriate. A meaningful partnership may become even stronger through open communication.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18)
Productivity and organization help you stay ahead of the curve. This is a strong week for improving habits, refining systems, and tackling lingering responsibilities. Small changes made now can have a lasting impact. Consistency beats intensity.

PISCES (February 19 – March 20)
Creativity and enjoyment brighten your week. Whether through hobbies, family activities, or social events, you'll find opportunities to recharge and reconnect with what inspires you. Don't be afraid to share your ideas—someone may see value in them that you overlooked.