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Area news in brief

Two sentenced for theft of goats

FONDA — Two men were sentenced last week in connection with the theft of several goats from a Canajoharie farm in December.

Michael Sumner, 27, and Brandon Hume, 21, were both sentenced July 22 on counts of third-degree grand larceny after pleading guilty.

The two men were accused of stealing goats from a Canajoharie farm and trying to sell them online.

Sumner was sentenced to 2 1/2 to five years in state prison, while Hume was sentenced to four months of weekends in jail and five years of probation upon release. Both men will also have to pay \$1,400 in restitution to the farm.

The goats the pair were convicted of stealing were show goats and family pets, authorities said.

The sheriff's office in December received information from a man in Endicott, Broome County, stating he learned of the stolen goats through social media, authorities said. He said he purchased the goats from this area. He provided deputies with detailed information, as he had responded to a Craig's List ad.

Sumner and Hume were charged by the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office with third-degree grand larceny, third-degree criminal trespassing and fourth-degree criminal mischief in December.

County seeks bids for property lease

JOHNSTOWN — Fulton County is seeking proposals until Aug. 19 from anyone interested in leasing the county-owned building at the county airport to operate a restaurant or another acceptable airport-related use.

The lease for the Grandma Millie's bakery site expires by year's end. It is routine for the county to seek public proposals for prospective future users of the building. The bakery has a right to submit another proposal.

The county Planning Department on Friday issued a news release indicating the building was constructed in 1993 and has been used ever since as a restaurant. The building contains about 1,200 square feet of floor space and includes handicapped-accessible restrooms, a dining area, a kitchen and utility room. The facility is not furnished.

Those interested in leasing the airport building must obtain a copy of the county's request for proposal. Copies can be obtained from the department by calling 736-5660 or emailing a request to: planning@fulton-countyny.gov. Proposals are due by 2 p.m. Aug. 19.

City rejects 'paper street' offer

GLOVERSVILLE — City officials recently decided against allowing a local homeowner to take over a "paper street" due to concerns about safety.

Joni Dennie, sole assessor, advised the city at July 14's Common Council meeting against selling the unused paper street to a private homeowner.

A paper street is a street that is on the map but has no official road on it.

According to Dennie, a homeowner wanted to buy Dodge Street, which is off of South Boulevard.

"When I first looked into this, everything seemed fine," Dennie said.

However, several concerns arose as she looked more closely into the matter, she said.

Dennie said the paper street connects South Boulevard and South Nassau Street. Selling the Dodge paper street would lead to landlocking a property in the area, she said.

The homeowner who wanted to buy the property wanted to use it as a driveway, Dennie said.

Correction

A story published Sunday about an increase in the minimum wage for fast-food workers requires correction. Kelly Snyder is the owner of DrewDog's.

Five charged with welfare fraud

By ARTHUR CLEVELAND
The Leader-Herald

Five Fulton County residents were charged last week with various counts of welfare fraud.

According to a news release from the Fulton County Sheriff's Department, the following people were charged after an investigation by the Fulton County Department of Social Services Fraud Unit and the Sheriff's Investigation Unit:

- Karen A. Curry, of 172 Second Ave., Gloversville, was charged with offering a false instrument for filing,

petit larceny and fifth-degree welfare fraud. Deputies said Curry made out an online Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program application for assistance and failed to report her daughter's income on the application, receiving \$858 she was not entitled to.

- Shelly R. Smith, of 17 N. Water St., was charged with second-degree criminal use of a public benefit card. Deputies said Smith used the benefit card of a deceased person.

- Rebecca L. Cook, of 109 Summit Ave., Caroga Lake, was charged with third-degree grand larceny, third-

degree welfare fraud and first-degree offering a false instrument for filing. Deputies said Cook submitted several SNAP and public-assistance applications starting in 2011 and continuing until 2014, and failed to report her daughters were working and bringing income into the home. Cook received \$4,622 in food stamps and \$1,025 in Home Energy Assistance Program benefits she was not entitled to.

- Nicole A. Laverdure and Bruce VanWagner, both of 170 Bleecker St., Gloversville, were both charged with third-degree grand larceny, third-

degree welfare fraud and first-degree offering a false instrument for filing. Deputies said the pair made out several temporary assistance claims and SNAP applications between 2012 and 2015, failing to list income coming into the household. They received more than \$4,132 in SNAP and \$560 in HEAP benefits they were not entitled to.

All five were arraigned in Johnstown City Court and released on their own recognizance.

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Ensemble on the water



Photo submitted

The Caroga Lake Music Festival ensemble performs on a pontoon boat at the Canada Lake Store and Marina. About 100 people attended the event, many listening from their boats nearby. This group has other events planned for the summer. For more information, visit the group's Facebook page.

Hagaman company to close

By ARTHUR CLEVELAND
The Leader-Herald

HAGAMAN — A local insulation plant plans to shut down, putting nearly 40 people out of work.

GreenFiber will close as part of a company-wide move to consolidate three separate factories into one location.

Richard Lenyk, plant manager, said the company, based in Charlotte, N.C., informed its 37 Hagaman employees in June. Lenyk said the company will consolidate three factories into one in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Lenyk said he was unsure when the Hagaman factory would close.

Ken Rose, Montgomery County Business Development Center chief executive officer, said in an email the county had previously worked with GreenFiber and its predecessor, Bonded Insulation.

Rose said the county Industrial Development Agency worked with GreenFiber in 2008 to obtain a \$300,000 grant to buy machinery "to keep the facility competitive," Rose's email said.

"The closing of the facility and consolidation to Pennsylvania shows how manufacturers in upstate New York have a hard time remaining competitive due to the myriad of taxes and regulations that New York state has," Rose's email said.

Rose said the Business Development Center will work with Hagaman officials to see what can be done with the site.

Rose and Mark Kilmer, Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce president, said they are concerned about the job loss.

"The loss of 37 manufacturing jobs and the effect it has on those individuals is unfortunate, and I'm sure the [Fulton-Montgomery-Schoharie] Workforce Solutions Center will work with those employees to look for available job openings that match the skill sets of those that have been laid off," Rose said in his email.

"That [job loss] is going to have quite an impact; that's 37 families," Kilmer said.

Established in 2000, GreenFiber makes cellulose fiber insulation, and fire and sound products, all made with a minimum of 85 percent recycled paper fibers. The company has seven manufacturing plants in the United States, according to the company's website.

State audit praises Fultonville

FULTONVILLE — A state comptroller's audit of the village's claims auditing procedures found the village has an adequate system for approval and payment of claims.

"We commend village officials for designing and implementing this system of controls over the approval and payment of claims," the audit states.

The state randomly selected 115 claims totaling \$257,816 out of the 604 claims totaling \$1.7 million paid to the village during the audit period of June 1, 2013, to Dec. 31, 2014.

"Except for minor discrepancies, which we discussed with village officials, we found that the board conducted a complete and thorough audit of the claims and that claims were adequately supported and for legitimate village pur-

poses," the audit states.

Mayor Robert Headwell responded to the audit in a letter.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the comptroller's office for conducting an audit of the village of Fultonville's claims. It is apparent that the comptroller's office recognizes a municipality when it is compliant and ends up with a clean audit," Headwell said in the letter.

"We are very appreciative of your staff that spent time with the village and looked at over 600 claims for a period of 18 months," Headwell said in the letter.

The village board is responsible for auditing and approving claims. The board should ensure each claim contains sufficient supporting documentation, the comptroller's office says.

District divides capital project into two parts

By MICHAEL ANICH
The Leader-Herald

JOHNSTOWN — The Greater Johnstown School District decided to break its \$39.6 million capital project into two distinct segments because of the enormity of work involved.

The project's ongoing design phase was detailed Thursday by the Board of Education's Facilities/Capital Project Committee.

The committee met last week with Albany-based CSArch architects to go over the plan.

"Because it's such a big project, we're going to do it in two phases," committee Chairman Scott Miller said.

Miller said the first phase of the project will include such jobs as roof and asbestos work — "stuff that needs to be done." He said the second phase will involve many of the additions that will be done at the school buildings.

The district's \$39.6 million capital projects plan referendum passed 551-129 on Dec. 9. The state is paying for 95 percent of the cost of projects. Initial construction for the project isn't scheduled to start until summer 2016, with most construction not happening until a couple years later. The district is trying to modify all its buildings and

sites to keep up with safety and technological changes. Submissions of individual projects to the state Education Department for approval are expected to occur later this year.

Miller said his committee and the architects have done walk-throughs, met several times and reviewed evolving drawings.

"We're working hard at it," Miller said.

He said the district was recently \$3 million over budget on the capital plan, but not anymore.

He said the committee, working with the architects and schematic drawings, was able to

bring the figure back to \$39.6 million.

Superintendent Robert DeLilli said the district is better off paring down items now rather than having the state Education Department "knock down" projects in the plan.

"It's important putting time in now," DeLilli said. "I would be concerned if we had this conversation next January."

Committee member Kathy Dougherty stated, "If it seems like it takes a little longer, there's a reason for that."

"We want to get everything we can for our dollar," Miller said.

In her Extra-Curricular Committee report, Chairwoman Evamarie Mraz said her committee reviewed the district's existing 72-page coaching manual.

"We literally went through it line by line," she said. "A lot of things need to be changed."

Mraz said the committee has reviewed forms, job descriptions, Section 2 rules and codes of conduct. She said a draft of the revisions should be ready by the time board members meet in August.

Michael Anich can be reached at manich@leaderherald.com.

City holds off on water request

By MICHAEL ANICH
The Leader-Herald

JOHNSTOWN — The Common Council last week heard a request from a town of Johnstown resident seeking a water hookup for her residence, but the council put off taking action.

Public speaker Robyn Guzielek, of 157 County Highway 131, requested the hookup. She said her neighbor on one side has city water and the one on the other side has well water.

"City water would ensure our quality of water is good," Guzielek said.

She told the council she would like to hook up a water line from an area reservoir, although she is not in a permissive-use zone. Guzielek said one of her neighbors has well water with sulphur in it, and she would be concerned about digging a well.

Guzielek said her house is being built and she needs a decision as soon as possible on whether she can tap into city water.

"It's well outside of the city," 1st Ward Councilwoman Cindy Lakata said of

Guzielek's property.

Mayor Michael Julius told Guzielek that city officials will have to get back to her with a decision.

In another matter, the council approved a city water connection for Eric and Emily Cheney, of 708 S. Perry St., whose property is located on Route 67 in the town of Johnstown as part of the Aspen Hills Development.

"This is in the Aspen Hills permissive area," Lakata said. "Aspen Hills does have a contract with the city."

Any connection fees or charges assessed by the city Water Department will be paid for by the Cheneys.

The council also approved a sewer connection for the Cheneys into the city's existing sanitary sewer.

Any connection fees or charges from the laying of a sewer lateral to the city's sewer main will be paid by the Cheneys, city officials said.

Michael Anich covers Johnstown and Fulton County news. He can be reached at manich@leaderherald.com.



The Leader-Herald/Michael Anich

Town of Johnstown resident Robyn Guzielek requests city of Johnstown water for her residence during a Johnstown Common Council meeting last week at City Hall.