

THE POST STAR

Est. 1904

Groundbreaking

Adirondack Winery readies new facility

LOCAL, B1



Police reform

City eyes funding to pay for
GFPD social worker LOCAL, B1



SUNSHINE, PLEASANT 71 • 51 FORECAST, A8

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2021

poststar.com

2009 Pulitzer Prize winner

School in limbo on mascot

Commissioner Rosa orders stop in use of Indian name, images

EVAN LAWRENCE
Special to The Post-Star

CAMBRIDGE — State Education Commissioner Betty Rosa's Sept. 15 demand that Cambridge Central School immediately stop using its Indian nickname and remove related imagery "as expeditiously as possible" has left the school in a "weird holding pattern," said school Superintendent

Douglas Silvernell.

The district doesn't have to dispose of anything it's already bought, such as sports uniforms, but it can't reorder anything with the Indian name or image, he said.

He's had the Indian taken down from the school's website and Facebook page. He instructed staff and volunteers to stop using the Indian name and imagery in classrooms and at school events. When announcers at school games stopped referring to the Cambridge team as the "Indians," fans noticed.

"People are not happy" but

there's been no resistance, Silvernell said.

The school board voted 3-2 on June 17 to retire the nickname and related imagery, most notably a profile of a Native American man that appears throughout the school and its grounds.

On July 1, the composition of the school board changed, and at its next meeting, on July 8, the board voted 3-2 to overturn the previous resolution, restore the Indian name and set up a committee to review the imagery.

In August, eight parents in the school district petitioned Rosa,

asking her to annul the July resolution and halt its enforcement while she reviews the situation.

The school's attorney, Jeffrey Honeywell, responded that the petitioners failed to show they had been directly injured by the reversal, one of the three criteria for a stay. The school board had not violated any state statute or regulation, nor had it acted "arbitrarily or capriciously," the other two criteria, Honeywell said.

Rosa granted the stay on Aug. 23.

At its regular meeting on Sept. 9, as the school was reopening

under COVID guidelines, two of the three board members who had voted to restore the mascot counseled Silvernell to hold off on doing anything about removing the mascot until they received more guidance.

Rosa fired back with the order to carry out the June 17 resolution and report by Sept. 22 on what the district was doing to comply. Non-compliance could result in "removal of school officers," most likely school board members, and withholding of state funds — a

Please see **MASCOT**, Page A4

LOCAL & REGION

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2021 | poststar.com/news/local | SECTION B



MICHAEL GOOT PHOTOS. MG00T@POSTSTAR.COM

Brad Casacci, winemaker for Adirondack Winery, shows off the tanks in the existing business's existing plant. The company held a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday for its new \$2.6 million winemaking plant and tasting room.

Building big enough to make lots of wine

Adirondack Winery breaks ground on plant, tasting room

MICHAEL GOOT
mgoot@poststar.com

QUEENSBURY — Brad Casacci, winemaker for Adirondack Winery, said it's difficult to get everything to fit in the current plant.

"It's really a game of Jenga," he said referring to the popular game where wooden blocks are pulled from a stack until everything topples. "This pallet goes here. These barrels go there."

Casacci is expecting more room soon as construction is underway on the company's \$2.6 million 14,000-square-foot winemaking plant and tasting room at 395 Big Bay Road.

A ceremonial groundbreaking was held Thursday.

Sasha Parody, who co-owns Adirondack Winery with her husband, Michael, said they've followed a long road from the company's 2008 start, making wine in the back room of a small storefront on Canada Street in Lake George. They were making the wine in glass jugs and their testing space couldn't fit more than 15 people.

"A few people told us it wouldn't work. A microwinery without a vineyard. What a crazy idea," she said.



Adirondack Winery owners Sasha and Michael Parody share a laugh after a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday for the company's new \$2.6 million winemaking facility and tasting room.

The company produces more than 35 fruit-infused and traditional wines, using grapes that are grown almost entirely in New York.

The business sold 17,000 cases of wine in 2020, Parody said. This project will allow the company space to triple production, bringing in state-of-the-art winemaking equipment, new barrels and a lab.

"It will allow us to not only make enough wine to keep up with current demand, but to also make way for future growth — bringing our wine to more people and new markets," she said.

"One day, we will be producing and selling about 50,000 cases here — making us one of the largest wineries in New York state," she said.

In addition, the new 2,600-square-foot tasting room will allow them to host events and private functions, she said.

"This means that we will finally be able to say yes to so many of the things that we have had to say no to our customers for all these years," she said.

A 2,000-square-foot outdoor space will be used for outdoor seating and light dining.

"We will also be serving not only our wine by the glass and bottle, but also the beers and ciders of other local craft producers," she said.

The target for completion is April 2022, which would be in time for the winery's 14th anniversary.

Gotler Architecture of Latham designed the project, which has created 12 new construction jobs. The winery plans to add 13 more employees during the next two years, Parody said.

The company has a tasting room at 285 Canada St. in Lake George and one in Bolton Landing at 4971 Lakeshore Drive.

Sen. Dan Stec, R-Queensbury, said he is personal friends with the Parodys and is pleased to see them become successful and contribute to the local economy.

"Sasha is a force of nature — her drive and her enthusiasm is infectious," he said.

Rachel Seeber, chairwoman of the Warren County Board of Supervisors, praised the company's efforts to bolster the community such as creation of the Adirondack Wine and Food Festival.

"It is because of your vision, your dedication, your energy that we continue to thrive in Warren County," Seeber said.

Assemblyman Matt Simpson, R-Horicon, also praised the company's efforts.

"The wine and food festival has been a tremendous success in exposing our area to people who have never been here," he said.

Michael Goot covers politics, crime and courts, Warren County, education and business. Reach him at 518-742-3320 or mgoot@poststar.com.

Police reform plans advance

CHAD ARNOLD
carnold@poststar.com

GLENS FALLS — The city is looking into using money from the American Rescue Plan Act to hire a police department social worker, fulfilling one of the primary obligations laid out in its police reform plan adopted earlier this year.

News of the city's planned use of the funds, which is not yet certain, came during a meeting of the police reform committee Wednesday.

An executive order last year from then-Gov. Andrew Cuomo required all municipalities to adopt police reform plans in the wake of the death of George Floyd, who was murdered by police in Minneapolis.

Much of the city's 10-page plan, drafted by around a dozen stakeholders over a five-month period, focuses on increasing transparency within the department, expanding recruitment efforts and tackling mental health issues by, among other things, hiring a social worker who can assist on calls.

"I think we are going to try and fund that through the stimulus that we got from COVID, at least ... for the first years, just because there is a big emphasis on effects of mental health," said 3rd Ward Councilwoman Diana Palmer.

The American Rescue Plan Act, the \$1.9 trillion COVID relief bill approved by Congress earlier this year, set aside millions in funding for local municipalities that can be used to recover lost revenues and pay for infrastructure projects relating to water, sewer and broadband.

Funds can also be used to assist residents and businesses hurt by the pandemic, provide premium pay for essential workers and address a number of other health-related concerns, including those pertaining to mental health.

Glens Falls received more than

See page B2

Cash will help village present its history

AARON CERBONE
Adirondack Daily Enterprise

SARANAC LAKE — Historic Saranac Lake has been awarded \$70,000 in state and federal grants to recuperate from the coronavirus pandemic, support its ongoing "Pandemic Perspectives" exhibit and produce a new film, showing the history of the region.

The money comes from the federal American Rescue Plan stimulus package — \$50,000 of it funneled through the National Endowment for the Humanities and \$20,000 through New York Humanities.

Film

A portion of the \$50,000 grant will go toward producing a new short film on the history of the region to be shown to visitors at the museum.

Historic Saranac Lake's director, Amy Catania, described the region as the land inside the Saranac Lake school district, which is the largest, geographically, in the state.

The film will include a segment on the history of Indigenous peoples who lived here for thousands of years before white settlers arrived.

"In the past, we have failed

See page B2

See page B2

Changes gird river for storms

EMILY RUSSELL
North Country Public Radio

Ten years ago, Hurricane Irene dumped nearly a foot of rain in sections of the Adirondacks. Rivers and towns were flooded and roads and bridges ripped apart.

The Ausable, one of the rivers hit hardest by Irene, has since been re-engineered to handle more extreme storms.

Along a stretch of the Ausable River north of Wilmington, tall pine trees tower over one bank, while on the other are little yellow and white wildflowers and green bushes and shrubs. Whiteface Mountain rises up in the distance. This place is known as the "dream mile."

"It's pretty gorgeous," said Kelley Tucker, standing along the riverbank. "Look, you've got a wetland and a flood plain and a river."

Tucker is executive director of the Ausable River Association and recently led a tour along sections of the river that the group has helped restore in recent years.

"There's a little problem," Tucker said about one section of the river. "The problem's been



The East Branch of the Ausable River in Jay is seen here in the spring, running fast.

here since about 1780. You're standing on it. It's the road."

If the road weren't there, the river could flood occasionally, as rivers do, and no one would worry. But when you build roads along the wild rivers — and homes along the roads — flooding becomes a problem that can upend people's lives.

Numerous lives were upended a decade ago during Hurricane Irene, when the Ausable overflowed and flooded towns like Keene and Jay. But Tucker said the Ausable River had already been eroding for years, and Irene took advantage of that.

"There was nothing new in Irene for the river," said Tucker.

"It was just like, 'Oh, vulnerability. I got this.'"

Destructive conditions

The floodwaters from Irene and other storms widened the river's banks. When a river gets wider and more shallow, the current doesn't move rocks and other debris downstream as well, which leads to more destruction during a flood.

"It was flat and still and silent," Tucker said.

Engineering nature

In 2015, local landowners partnered with the association to return the river to its previous state. They wanted the trout to return and a river that could handle more flooding.

Over the next three summers, a crew re-engineered this stretch of river, digging out the middle to deepen it and building up the sides to make it more narrow. They placed huge rocks and tree stumps at certain points to direct the flow and provide habitat for fish.

Now what you see standing on the banks of the dream mile is what looks like a wild,

See page B2