

Reflections of 2023 from Town of Wheatfield supervisor

Guest Editorial by Town of Wheatfield Supervisor Don MacSwan

Looking over the past year, much has been accomplished in our town. Many of our accomplishments were aided with the help of ARPA funds (federal funds provided to municipalities to assist in the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic).

New high-efficiency windows were installed in the Town Hall. The original windows were single pane and non-insulated. This led to extremely high energy bills. In the long run, this will be a huge savings to the taxpayers.

The original boiler, from 1973, was replaced with a high-efficiency boiler – again, saving the taxpayers money in the long run.

A generator has been installed at our community center. With this installation, it makes the facility a place of refuge in the event of a major storm or catastrophe. We have added a new storage building at the Town Hall complex for use by our veterans, and the Wheatfield Enhancement Group for storage of their equipment and decorations.

Work has been completed to



Town of Wheatfield Supervisor Don MacSwan (Submitted photo)

the water tower on Niagara Falls Boulevard, removing the old steel cables that were used to support the water tower when filled with water, and a fresh coat of paint was added to the outside of the tank – including the Town of Wheatfield logo for all to see.

Fairmont Park had numerous upgrades. New playground equipment was added to include a beautiful all-inclusive playground for all to use. The park-

ing lots on Stieg Road and Nash Road were rebuilt and paved. In addition, many drainage improvements were completed at the park.

The town purchased a high-capacity pump to be used in areas that are prone to flooding in high-water storm events. It is portable and can be moved to any location at any time.

The Highway Department resurfaced over 8.5 miles of roadway on 19 town roads in the past year. In addition to the paving, the department continued to work on drainage projects, as well as their normal routine of picking up brush and leaves in the fall. The outdated fuel system was replaced with a much safer, aboveground fuel system at the highway garage. The town purchased a Kubota tractor with an extended boom, which will allow us to cut grass on both sides of the ditches and creeks – allowing for better visibility when entering the roadways.

On the corner of Niagara Falls Boulevard and Nash Road, the town upgraded the stone wall and added the illuminated letters

of “Wheatfield.” Other upgrades were also done to make the wall and sign more visible.

The Niagara Falls Boulevard project between Witmer and Ward roads had progressed slower than expected. The relocation of some of the utilities had some additional difficulties. Contaminated soil was located at Ward Road and the boulevard. This had to be removed and replaced with clean, fresh soil. Further testing also had to be done to be sure that the contamination hadn't spread.

Let's hope that we get an early start in the spring on this project.

The town clerk's office is often thought to be the center of town government, as they provide a wide variety of services that are essential to our residents. The clerk's office processes water bill payments, tax bill payments, and other town fees; maintains all vital records (birth, death and marriage licenses) and provides copies of them when needed; issues hunting and fishing licenses, dog licenses, parking permits for people with disabilities, and freedom of information requests;

and maintains town records. Many of the required forms are available on our website, at www.wheatfield.ny.us, or at Town Hall.

There are several options available for residents to complete transactions and payments, by mail, drop box at Town Hall, online, and direct withdrawal for water payments.

Visit our website at www.wheatfield.ny.us to see options and for details.

We enjoy seeing everyone at Town Hall. However, should you have any questions, please call us at 716-694-6441 or email at kathyh@wheatfield.ny.us.

Regarding calendar year 2023, I am pleased to report that the town continues to be in a strong financial position. This is the result of an increase in revenues, particularly in sales tax revenues and by controlling expenditures, including a continued reduction of the town's outstanding debt.

In closing, the Town of Wheatfield will continue to provide quality services while keeping cost to our residents down.

May you all be blessed with a healthy and enjoyable 2024.

A year of accomplishment, and much more to come in 2024

By Niagara County Sheriff Michael J. Filicetti

In 2023, much was accomplished at the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, with much more planned for 2024.

You can imagine that much of our days were spent providing public safety services to our residents (after all, that is what we do); 56,435 calls for service were answered, 2,609 individuals were arrested, 5,676 traffic tickets were issued, 3,025 individual bookings took place in the correctional facility, 422 community events were attended, and 181,570 phone calls were answered in the communications center – with 101,513 of those being 911 calls. This is just a portion of the work that our staff completed in 2023. The many divisions that make up our office were all busy providing vital services to our community.

Along with administering public safety, it takes a steady hand at planning and projecting ahead to keep our office running smoothly. 2023 was certainly a busy year for projects and improvements. The much-anticipated Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy construction began at Niagara County Community College. This project is moving along and slated to open in June. This academy will be the center of excellent training for all public safety in our county and beyond. This project was made possible by funding from the Niagara County Legislature, SUNY and the City of Niagara Falls.

Radio communications are key to providing emergency services in our county. Three new emergency communication towers were completed in Wilson, Wheatfield and Barker. The new towers were constructed with Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant funding. Our communications system is used by all first responders in this county, with the Niagara Falls Police Department being the latest addition.

Text to 911 was added as a service for those unable to call 911 in an emergency. This enhances our ability to help those in need during an emergency.

Correctional facility programs were expanded to include more offerings from our partnership with Orleans-Niagara BOCES. A new program for a few select college classes has been made possible through Niagara County Community College. This program is supported through our inmate profit account and is not an expense to the taxpayer.

I firmly believe that we can help put some individuals back on the right path with the proper programs.

Lastly, our civil division successfully completed reaccreditation through the New York State Sheriff's Association. I am proud to say that our agency maintains accreditation through New York State and the New York State Sheriff's Association in our law enforcement division, civil division, communications division, corrections division and forensic lab. This is such an important accomplishment to maintain a high level of service.

Looking ahead to 2024, funding was approved by the Niagara County Legislature to make physical improvements at the

Sheriff's Office. Planning has started for a feasibility/design study for the older portion of the correctional facility. This portion of the complex was originally constructed in 1959 and showing signs of its age. The forensic lab and other portions of the law enforcement side of the house will see upgrades through a planned capital project, as well. It is important to upgrade and maintain the facility we depend on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We will also be adding five new deputy sheriff positions to the roster this year. These positions are partially funded by a COPS grant and will be used to supplement our current road patrol staffing. It is crucial that we keep our road patrol staffed at a level capable of responding to the community needs. We will continue our extensive community outreach efforts through social media, news outlets, TV segments, school programs and in-person events.

It is very important to me that our public knows who we are. I

believe that, when you are having one of those worst moments, it helps to know who is responding. We will remain focused on school safety, personnel training, technology advancement and preserving the peace in our beautiful county.

This year, we will continue to do what our community relies on us to do. We will work collaboratively with our law enforcement partners and other first

responders in Niagara County to provide you with the best possible public safety services. All of this is possible by having a dedicated and highly trained staff that we can depend on every day to get the job done.

I appreciate the hard work that my men and women put in making sure we keep our county safe.

Please be well, watch out for your neighbors and stay safe.

The Youngstown Village Diner
425 Main St., Youngstown • 716-745-9858

~ WEEKLY SPECIALS ~
MON CLOSED
TUE 6AM-2PM - Spaghetti and Meatballs, Chicken Parm, Eggplant Parm, Penne Parm
WED 6AM-2PM - Meatloaf or Fish - Haddock: Breaded-Battered-Baked
THURS 6AM-2PM - Chicken Milanese or Fish - Haddock: Breaded-Battered-Baked
FRI 6AM-2PM - Haddock, Fish Sandwiches, Tuna Melts & New England Clam Chowder
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March 20 Sprague's/Seneca Alleg. Casino w/\$25 free play \$5 food
April 12-14 Polka Weekend in Villa Roma-Catskills **BOOK EARLY**
May 6-8 DANIEL - Lancaster, PA
May 13-15 Ark & Ohio Riverboat Cruise
May 21-27 Memphis/Graceland/Nashville/Grand Ole Opry
June 8-16 Alaska Cruise (call for details)
June 24-27 Frankenmuth & Mackinac Island
June 30-July 2 Thousand Islands - 3 Castles, 2 boat cruises/Skaneateles
July 10 Grand River Luncheon Cruise
July 23 Sun & Stars Show- Walter's Ranch-show/lunch
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Thur 3am, 10pm • Fri 10:30am
Sat 3:30am, 5:30pm • Sun 11:30am, 10pm

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