

Youngstown Rite Aid to close next month

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

Youngstown residents learned this week the village would be losing its only pharmacy/grocery retail operation following Rite Aid's announcement it is closing the Lockport Road location effective this June.

The Youngstown store is among nine slated for closure in the latest Rite Aid announcement. Currently, there are 15 Rite Aid stores operating in Erie and Niagara counties. A Lockport store is also on the new list, and a Niagara Falls location closed in 2023. Rite Aid stores operating in Lewiston and Ransomville are not affected at this time.

According to the online source FastCompany.com, the latest round of announced closures stems from bankruptcy filings by the pharmacy chain that began in the fall of 2023. Rite Aid said its financial difficulties have been primarily the result of sluggish sales at under-performing locations nationwide, and continuing court litigation from opioid-related lawsuits.

In April, Rite Aid announced a series of closures affecting 53 additional stores across nine states. The latest announcement follows a January closure notice affecting eight stores in New York. Thus far, Rite Aid announced the closure of 31 stores in New York, many of them downstate. The company said the impacted stores were all found to be "under-performing, and the closures will help the company further reduce rent expense and strengthen overall financial performance," according to fastcompany.com.

Rite Aid said every effort would be made to ensure customers of its affected stores "have access to health services at another Rite Aid location or at a nearby pharmacy." It also said it would try to transfer its associates at closing stores to other locations wherever possible.

A check with a pharmacist at the CVS store in Lewiston found that prescription holders from the Youngstown Rite Aid are being encouraged to transfer their prescriptions.

News of the Rite Aid closure had immediate reactions from Youngstown. Deputy Mayor Rick Stortecky said he and Mayor Rob Reisman are reviewing options that may be available via the village.

"I've been doing some research to find what kind of pharmacy might be interested in coming in there, because I'm concerned about our retirees and seniors who get their medications there," Stortecky said.

He noted his concerns about the future of the Lewiston Rite Aid and the Ransomville location: "Normally, if Lewiston was going to be around, they (Rite Aid) would transfer their business to their own store."

He said has had conversations with the DeGiulio family, which owns the building housing both Rite Aid and the Marketplace businesses. The other building in the small plaza is wholly owned by the new Griffon Brewery.

He expressed hope that Youngstown Marketside might have an interest in taking over the soon-to-close Rite Aid space.

"I know the Marketside is looking for more space, and (they) want to put in an everyday grocery with a lower price point, which would be great; because I know a lot of folks love the Marketside," Stortecky said.

"They're a wonderful business; they're a local business. People love them; I love them. I'd love to see them stay there and I'd love to see them expand."

Stortecky said, "We have a very willing, very energetic grant writer that we work hand in hand with. She works for the village. ... There are like four New York grants (available) that we could work with. She formed the 501(c) Friends of Youngstown (committee), and there is like four New York grants where we could help.

"We're going to do whatever we can to keep a pharmacy in the village and work with other local businesses to provide what the residents need. They mayor and I were in meetings all day yesterday regarding this."

He said Dollar General also continues to have an interest in the Youngstown location.

*** ELECTION 2024 ***

Leandra Collesano running for Village of Lewiston Board

Submitted

Leandra Collesano is excited to announce her candidacy for Village of Lewiston trustee.

A village resident, fourth-generation Lewistonian and former Lewiston business owner, she graduated from Lewiston-Porter, and holds a B.A. in English from SUNY Fredonia. She is currently employed as a pricing analyst at Thermo Fisher Scientific on Grand Island.

"My heart is with the Village of Lewiston and my intention is to continue to give back to my community by running for village trustee," Collesano said. "I look forward to using my diversified experience serving our community as our next village trustee."

Collesano has been a past-president of the Historical Association of Lewiston, is a current executive board member of the Lewiston Kiwanis, and was honored as the chair of the Lewiston bicentennial committee. She is a lifetime member of the Historical Association of Lewiston, the Lewiston Council on the Arts, the Lewiston Kiwanis, and the Lower Niagara Moose Lodge 584.

"I volunteer in my community whenever possible, including Earth Day cleanups, the Bruce Sutherland Memorial Golf Tournament, both the former Lewiston Tour of Homes and Tour of Kitchens, at the Lewiston Museum, the Lewiston Kiwanis Peach Festival, Easter egg hunt and holiday basket deliveries, and I spearheaded a Village of Lewiston firework fundraiser," Collesano said.

Leandra resides on Plain Street – you can find her walking her dog, Finnegan, around the village.



Leandra Collesano was selected at last week's Democrat Party caucus to run for Village of Lewiston trustee.

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