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# Lewiston Family Ice Rink on hold for holiday season

Town says rink equipment has reached its life expectancy, exploring options for open skating at NU

BY TERRY DUFFY

Editor-in-Chief

As the 2022 holiday season approaches, it appears the Town of Lewiston Family Ice Rink is being put on the shelf for this year. The Town Board announced last week that, due to a number of concerns – most notably the condition of the ice rink cooling systems and related equipment, plus uncertainties with the rink's Academy Park site – it has decided to suspend the annual holiday feature for this year.

"We all have been talking about the ice rink for well over a year, as to what the future holds" Councilman Bill Geiben said. "I commend the board for supporting the ice rink all these years. It's a true asset to the Lewiston community. But regrettably, I think it's reached its life expectancy."

Geiben said town officials met with town Highway Superintendent Mitch Zahno and Recreation Director Cathy Cvijetinovic, and reached a decision not to operate the rink this year.

"After many years of operation, the ice rink has reached its life

expectancy," Cvijetinovic said in a communication to board members. "There are a number of repairs, that include coils and manifold replacement. We would also have to update the current ice-skating equipment. This would cost approximately \$50,000.

"Additionally, the current location of the ice rink is not finalized, due to the approval from the Village of Lewiston. Our recommendation is not to operate the ice rink this winter, due to the feasibility we are faced with. We are hopeful to operate a brand-new (rink) for the winter of 2023 and bring back the joy of the ice rink, as it has brought to families for many years."

Geiben said he discussed the matter with Supervisor Steve Broderick and board members, and all are in agreement.

"Basically, the ice rink has outlived its life expectancy, it's done," he said. "If we're going to have an ice rink, we're going to have to find a new solid location where we can leave it up permanently, and not tear it down, put it up, tear it down, put it up. Basically, doing that

shortened the life expectancy of the coils. So, it's to the point where we're done."

Geiben said he was disappointed on the news, but was being realistic: "I know when it's reached the end of the road; it's time to turn the page and move forward. There will be no ice rink for the winter season of 2022-23."

Broderick said he discussed the matter with Cvijetinovic on the chance of the town holding public skating nights, possibly twice a week during the holiday season, at Niagara University's Dwyer Ice arena. NU currently offers open skating at the arena. Broderick said the state of the current ice rink's related equipment was a factor in the town's decision.

"Part of the equipment is the ice skates themselves – the rental ice skates. They're shot, rusty, have mold on from storage. It would have been \$50,000 just for the ice skates," Broderick said.

He said last year, when the rink was installed, the boards were failing, thus necessitating short-term fixes by the town to even open it.

"It wasn't safe, kids got their hands cut, and it just wasn't a viable option to throw good money after bad," he said. "So, unfortunately, we're going to take one year and reassess."

Geiben said Zahno and Cvijetinovic would be working on a solution for the rink's future over coming months, with recommendations expected by March 2023. Areas to be reviewed include the rink's future location, ice surface and its auxiliary equipment, "so that we can move forward with securing recreation grants, and Greenway grants, to have a facility that will be able to stay up throughout the year, and we don't have the extensive wear and tear of tearing it all down every year."

He said the town is discussing the matter with NU officials for skate nights this year.

"Hopefully, Niagara University will be our site," Geiben said. "We would probably have to staff it. So, Cathy is going to put (this) into the works as soon as possible."

## OPINIONS

# Piper looks to add to Lewiston cemetery, potter's field

As the Village of Lewiston bicentennial year comes to a close, I have decided to embark on one more important project relevant to Lewiston's history.

With the overwhelming support I received to make the potter's field monument and memorial bench, I am again asking for donations to help finish raising the remaining funds needed to make the Lewiston Cemetery historical plaque to be placed in the Oakwood section of the cemetery near the oak trees that line the perimeter of the newer section. With the assistance of Mayor Welch

and Tom Collister of HAL, we are working together on the final draft outlining its history from 1812 to the present. It will be of cast bronze mounted onto a boulder provided by the Village DPW.

With the remaining funds from the potter's field fund, and the generous donations that have been received to date, I am still \$900 short of my goal to complete this project.

As village historian, it is important to me to be able to record and preserve the history of the oldest cemetery in Niagara County. The vast majority of the early settlers

in the village are interred here, and they need to be honored and remembered for their part in Lewiston's history. The same as the unknown interred in potter's field.

I am hoping for a May 2023 dedication ceremony, if I can raise the final funding to start the project. I am using the same foundry that created the statues for the Freedom Crossing and Tuscarora Heroes monuments. Looking at a three- to four-month timeframe to have it created and shipped here for mounting on the boulder. Hoping to have the funds in place as soon as can be deemed possible.

As village historian, I welcome one and all to come to the Red Brick Building and view my personal collection of local history on display on the first floor offices and hallway, as well as the museum room itself. I would be more than happy to share the background of the various pieces.

Again, thank you in advance for any support that might be afforded me to make this project a reality.

*Russ Piper*  
Village of Lewiston historian/  
cemetery gatekeeper

## IN THE NEWS

### Niagara Falls USA: Public Employees Federation citywide convention brings business to region

Destination Niagara USA and the Niagara Falls Convention Center will welcome the 44th annual Public Employees Federation (PEF) convention from Sunday, Oct. 23, through Wednesday, Oct. 26.

Since 1979, PEF has been certified as the collective bargaining

agent for the members of the professional, scientific and technical units of New York state. Today, it represents more than 50,000 workers in job titles including nurses, accountants, engineers and hundreds more.

The convention is expected to draw approximately 1,000 attendees to Niagara Falls, with attendees staying at four host hotels in the immediate downtown area. Sessions and meetings will primarily take place at the Niagara Falls Convention Center. Attendees will enjoy meals on their own at local busi-

nesses in the area. The estimated economic impact for this event is more than \$1.5 million.

Destination Niagara USA President and CEO John Percy said, "Niagara Falls USA was the host city for PEF in 2021, as well, and we are happy to welcome them back for the second year in a row. Their repeat business is evidence of the quality of service provided by the Niagara Falls Convention Center and other businesses downtown, and it brings a vital economic boost to the destination, too."

In addition to the economic im-

act of hosting the PEF convention, organizers have included a community service component to the event. On Tuesday, Oct. 25, the Niagara Falls Convention Center will host a Connect Life blood drive from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., so attendees may donate blood in their free time.

The mission of Destination Niagara USA is to expand the economic prosperity of the Niagara Falls USA communities by generating individual and group visitation. For more information, visit niagarafallsusa.com.

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