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State Parks plans improvements to Artpark

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

At Tuesday's Village of Lewiston Board meeting, trustees approved the prepared State Environmental Quality Review Act Environmental Assessment Form for the development plans for Artpark State Park improvements.

So, what exactly does that mean?

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is working on reshaping the South Fourth Street entrance to the popular Lewiston location.

As part of the SEQRA EAF, State Parks included the following details:

"NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is proposing two adjacent and concurrent projects at Artpark State Park. The purpose of both projects is to create a comprehensive set of trails in Artpark State Park and to improve pedestrian and vehicle flows. When complete, the park will be better connected to the Village of Lewiston and the existing trails of the Lower Niagara River Region."

On Friday, a representative explained, "This project is a priority for State Parks. We are working with Artpark & Company's master plan ('Artpark Vision Plan: Artpark Power 2030') and joining a partnership with NYPA and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation."

And, "Patrons will see a dramatic improvement when visiting. The new pedestrian connections and overall accessibility will create beautiful scenic views overlooking the park and Niagara River Gorge. The construction will be completed by mid-May 2024."

Artpark State Park Improvements Project Description

Per the SEQRA EAF, elements of Project A include:

- Installation of a new scenic overlook adjacent to the shoreline trail;
- Creating a sloped switchback trail that connects the shoreline trail to the upper Artpark parking area; and
- Incorporating a direct scramble that will create an adventurous climb to the overlook on the escarpment.

State Parks stated, "The new scenic overlook will be on the top of the slope next to the shoreline trail at the southernmost tip of Artpark upper lot No. 1."

What's more, "The 'switchback trail' is a ramp, an (Americans with Disabilities Act)-accessible asphalt pathway, connecting the park to the overlook and shoreline trail. The 'scramble' is a more direct route utilizing boulders in an irregular pattern building steps to connect the park to the overlook and shoreline trail."

Elements of Project B include:

- Improvements at the South Fourth Street entrances to the park to create a more appropriate sense of arrival and assist with circulation;

√ Improving and extending the multi-use path running through the park; and

√ Transforming the existing Fourth Street parking lot into a sustainable parking area and multipurpose space.

SEE ARTPARK, **continued on Page 11**

New Capitol Theatre receives positive response from moviegoers

Moviegoers pick up snacks during "Bargain Tuesday" at the new Capitol Theatre in Niagara Falls. From left are Rockee, Nissee and Bowee Poodry, and River Hallett of Akron.

BY LAUREN ZAEPFEL
Contributing writer

Capitol Theatre in Niagara Falls welcomed scores of moviegoers last weekend, with approximately 345 people turning out to see Marvel Studios' "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania."

"As far as our first big weekend went, we are happy with the attendance. Everything went very smoothly," said Jordan Clement, division manager at Dipson Theatres Inc., the company that took over the former Regal Cinemas theater earlier this month. "I have received a lot of positive response, and many people were impressed with the cleanliness, the way that things looked and the prices for everything."

Capitol Theatre General Manager Peter Lambert said, "So far, I have liked to see the people who were regulars coming here and saying they are so glad we are open. People were afraid they were going to have to drive all the way to the (Regal Walden) Galleria to see a movie in theaters."

Since opening Capitol Theatre, Dipson has implemented new changes, including lowering ticket prices "drastically," Clement said.

"We believe that going to the movies should be affordable and fun," he said. "We want to meet people half way and allow them to experience movies on the big screen."

General adult tickets cost $7 before 5 p.m., and $9 after 5 p.m. The ticket cost for students, seniors, veterans and children is $7. The theater will also offer a $7 ticket price for select studio films.

Capitol Theatre also offers "Bargain Tuesdays," which includes a 50% discount on all popcorn and fountain drinks every Tuesday.

More updates include new menu screens, along with additional food options – including pizza logs, funnel cake fries, boneless wings, French fries, brownies and mozzarella sticks.

Clement said increasing accessibility for patrons and expanding the company's presence throughout the local region were main reasons Dipson decided to purchase the theater.

SEE DIPSON, **continued on Page 12**

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