

Chamber of Commerce a welcome center, source for members

The Chamber of Commerce office is located in the Village of Lewiston at the corner of Academy Park. We are fortunate to operate out of a historic building that is owned by the Village of Lewiston. There is plenty of parking for visitors, and we are visible as one of the first buildings you see coming into the village. There is a new electric vehicle charging station located outside of the office, a bike repair station created by an Eagle Scout, and a bike rack ready for the summer bicyclists looking for an adventure.

The office of the Chamber also serves as a welcome center for tourists. We have a welcom-

ing wrap around the porch with four rocking chairs reminiscent of Cracker Barrel days – actually, they are Cracker Barrel Rockers! The front entryway has a digital screen with local announcements, events and festival information, which is updated weekly. We have a variety of maps, brochures, business cards and promotional items available, and complimentary water, coffee and Wi-Fi are also available.

New brochures and maps are replacing last year's info, and we have reorganized our member-to-member information. Do you have a brochure, poster or flyers that you want to make avail-

able to visitors? We go through maps, "Come & Play" event listings, Discover Niagara Shuttle brochures, Niagara Falls visitor guides and Wine Trail brochures on a daily basis from May through December! Drop off your latest brochure to the Chamber office, and we will make

sure it gets into visitors' hands. The office also is a stamp-holder for the National Heritage Area Passport to Your National

Parks program, coordinated by America's National Parks, a National Park Service partner. You can collect free cancellation stamps at cancellation stations in national parks and NPS-affiliated areas nationwide. Lewiston, Niagara Falls and Youngstown are NPS affiliated areas. There are hundreds of stamps to collect from all over the country.

Having a visible and accessible office and welcome center helps our organization stay connected and on top of changing needs of visitors, member businesses/organizations and the community. Referrals to local businesses and services are given daily, with members'

information handed out first. Many businesses use our fax services (yes – there are some businesses that need fax service), copier, laminating and notary services. We have a small conference room upstairs, ideal for meetings of four to six people that members are able to use when available.

Stop by the office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday. As the tourist season progresses, our office hours will increase, with accessibility into the evening hours and on weekends. For more information on Chamber operations, visit www.NiagaraRiverRegion.com.



Jennifer Pauly
President

Traffic safety is public safety

BY SHERIFF MICHAEL P. FILICETTI
Niagara County Sheriff's Office

I have heard many times from individuals that traffic enforcement is thought of as a revenue generator or unnecessary. My hope in this column is to offer a perspective on traffic enforcement that shows you the need for this function of law enforcement. Traffic enforcement can save lives, reduce traffic collisions, have positive impacts on the community, and offer crime reduction.

Over the last few years, we have experienced a severe uptick in aggressive driving in Niagara County. We are not alone in this increase, as counties across New York state have seen this, as well.

It can possibly be attributed to many bad driving habits, which came about during COVID. With less vehicles on our roadways, drivers started to take some liberties in their motor vehicle operation. Increasingly, we saw motorists passing red lights, going through stop signs, driving distracted, speeding and committing lane violations.

Following COVID restrictions, many drivers returned to the road, and now the problems were compounded by adding more vehicles to this aggressive driving behavior.

Law enforcement across Niagara County recognized this issue and acted to deter the problem. A significant aggressive driving campaign was put into place in the fall months of 2022. With every law enforcement agency engaged in this enforcement, we saw over 1,300 traffic tickets issued during a one-week period for the driving habits I detailed above.

This shows that we have a significant issue with risky driving behaviors. We are committed to continued enforcement to reduce incidents of aggressive driving and make our roadways safer.

I believe it is helpful for our residents to understand why enforcement is done in certain areas, and how we decide to target certain locations. Areas of enforcement are determined by traffic crash data, observations by patrol units and complaints from our residents. We have been

receiving an increasing number of civilian complaints regarding aggressive vehicle operation.

Niagara County also experienced an increase of over 250 motor vehicle crashes from 2021 to 2022. Based on all of these factors, patrols are assigned to provide additional enforcement for violations in those areas.

Enforcement does not necessarily mean that every operator will receive a ticket for their offense. I am a firm believer in proactive enforcement and conducting traffic stops. There may be circumstances that dictate other action than a traffic ticket. Traffic stops can be used as an opportunity to educate the public and also offer reminders of traffic laws.

The goal of traffic enforcement is to reduce incidents of traffic violations and reduce collisions. Data has consistently shown that traffic enforcement can reduce incidents of traffic crashes. Additionally, certain causation factors remain constant as the leading contributors to crashes. Failure to yield right of

way, driver distraction and unsafe speed are three of the top contributing factors that lead to motor vehicle crashes. This is one of the key reasons our patrols enforce violations of these sections of the vehicle and traffic law.

Traffic stops can also lead to a reduction of crime in our community. Law enforcement is well aware that criminal offenders use vehicles to commit crimes. Traffic stops and enforcement can lead to the discovery of activity that is far more serious than a traffic violation. Stops can be instrumental in interrupting criminal activity and reducing criminal activity in our county.

I hope this information offers you some insight as to why traffic enforcement is critical to public safety, and also explains the purpose behind the vehicle stops we conduct daily.

Law enforcement in Niagara County is a partnership, and we are all committed to safer roadways. Safer roadways lead to safer communities.

CAN YOU HELP?

Lewiston-Porter BOE member's family impacted by fire

It was learned this week that Lewiston-Porter Board of Education member Julie Donnelley and her family were displaced in a house fire that occurred Saturday on Michelle Court in the Town of Lewiston. A fundraiser was announced Tuesday by the school district to help the family get back on its feet.

According to a report from Lewiston Fire Co. No. 1, at approximately 3:02 p.m. Saturday, firefighters were dispatched to a residential structure fire. The Niagara County Communications Center received multiple additional calls reporting flames visible in the structure.

Lewiston No. 1 Fire Chief Spencer Lilly arrived shortly thereafter, finding an involved residential structure with flames coming out the front window. Crews from Lewiston No. 1 were able to make a quick entry into the residence and extinguish the fire. A ladder truck from Upper Mountain Fire was deployed in the front of the structure. An additional engine was called for FAST, from the Niagara Falls Fire Reserve Station. Crews worked throughout the afternoon to extinguish the fire.

cause is investigating the incident further. The cause continues to be under investigation at this time, but appears accidental," Lilly said. "There were no reported injuries, and everyone made it out of the house safely."

LFD No. 1 said additional aid was provided by the Lewiston Police Department.

In a letter to the Lew-Port community on recipients@lew-port.parentlink.net, Lewiston-Porter Schools Superintendent Paul Casseri, stated, "As many of you may be aware, the Donnelley family (Julie is our Board of Education vice president) suffered a horrific house fire that has been deemed a total loss. The family is currently living out of a hotel while they work with their insurance carrier for temporary housing.

"As some of may know, fire insurance covers many aspects of the rebuilding process but ultimately there are many out of pocket expenses. Many individuals and groups have reached out to me asking what they can do or how they can donate to help the family. To that end, we are starting a donation fund here at (the) district office (not through GoFundMe). "Individuals that wish to do-

nate to help the family may send or drop off a donation (if by check – made out to Lewiston-Porter) or a gift card (Tops, Wegmans, Home Depot, Lowes, etc.) to the district offices. Donations should be sent to Toni Marie Waldeck – Tax collector at district office."

Casseri said the district would collect donations until noon, Friday, March 31.

"We will deposit all checks and cash at the credit union and present one donation along with any gift cards to the family," he said. "Please indicate on the envelope with the donation your name or organization's name and if you wish to remain anonymous."

For more information on how to assist the family, contact Casseri's office at 716-286-7266.

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