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Gray Line aims to bring amphibious tour to Lewiston

BY JOSHUA MALONI
 GM/Managing Editor

A regional tourism company is looking to add a new attraction along the Niagara River.

Gray Line Niagara Falls/Buf-falo has presented the Village of Lewiston with a proposal for amphibious tours.

In written correspondence, the year-round Niagara Falls/Buf-falo-based receptive tour operator stated, "We are proposing a combined land and water tour of the area. An amphibious adventure that would introduce the highlights of Niagara Falls and Lewiston from the seats of a best-in-class amphibious vehicle. With over 70 units operating world-wide – we would not propose any vehicle other than the Hydra-Terra (HT) for the region."

Trustees have not yet formally addressed this plan. They will first meet with a Gray Line representative at the Lewiston Landing docks to ascertain navigational and docking logistics.

Mayor Anne Welch said the board is concerned about the vessel's ability to get in and out of the main launch area. That said, if the routing winds up not being an issue, then, "Anything that brings people to Lewiston is a good thing."

She added, "It's not a thrill



Gray Line Niagara Falls/Buf-falo submitted this amphibious vessel photo to the Village of Lewiston.

ride, like the jet boat, but it gives people a chance to go out into the water, too. It's like a bus – it's more like a bus than a boat.

"We'll just have to wait and see."

The Gray Line proposal explained, "Our proposed tour would start at the One Niagara Welcome Center in Niagara Falls, where people will board the HT for a 60-90-minute tour. The HT would proceed along the Niagara River (and) enter the water at the Lewiston Landing docks. The water component of the tour will go upriver and head toward Youngstown for an ap-

proximate 20-minute loop, then returning to Lewiston Landing to exit the water portion of the tour resuming the tour by land.

"The entry into the water is the most anticipated part of the tour and often the most fun. The opportunity to tell the history of Lewiston NY and the formation of Niagara Falls while viewing it from the water and land is unique for tourists and locals.

"Following the exit from the water, the HT will continue with its land tour through some of our most beloved areas of Lewiston

SEE LEWISTON, on Page 8



UPWARD NIAGARA
 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 Serving Lewiston & Surrounding Communities

Upward Niagara unveiled at reception

Leaders of the business, marketing and tourism agency overseeing Lewiston, Porter, Ransomville, Sanborn and Youngstown unveiled a new name and logo at a reception Wednesday at the Brickyard Brewing Company. The Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce has rebranded to become the "Upward Niagara Chamber of Commerce."

President Jennifer Pauly emceed the reception, with the assistance of chamber employees Suzanne Raby and Susie Reinhardt, and welcomed board members, community advocates and elected officeholders.

She explained, "What better way to unveil a new logo and a new name than during National Small Business Week."

Pauly added, "Tonight's reception gives you a chance to see the new logo, the brand, before we unveil it to the membership and community."

"Thank you, board, for your leadership and courage in dealing with a lot of change, and a lot of opinions," she said. "It was a tough process, and you should feel very proud of what you have accomplished."

She closed by saying, "Susie took my line, but I'm going to use it. When we started the chamber 18 years ago, it was the Lower Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce. So, isn't it much better to be upward than lower? I think so, too."

• See related on Page 4.

Lewiston-Porter to present \$54.539 million budget plan

Budget review and 'Meet the Candidates' on May 8

BY TERRY DUFFY
 Editor-in-Chief

The Lewiston-Porter School District will hold two meetings of interest to residents on Monday, May 8, beginning with 6 p.m. budget hearing, as the district presents its proposed \$54,539,312 spending plan for the 2023-24 school year.

The district will then hold a "Meet the Candidates" session as it introduces this year's slate for open seats on the Lewiston-Porter Board of Education. Candidates include incumbent Danielle M. Mullen, a four-year board member and current president; and newcomers Jack G. Waugaman III and Joseph J. Palermo.

Both events will take place in the Lew-Port Community Resource Center, located at the north end of the campus at 4061 Creek Road.

Michael F. Lewis, Ph.D., assistant superintendent of administrative services, said the district's \$54.539 million budget proposal represents an increase

of \$1,475,714, or 2.71%, over the adopted 2022-23 spending plan of \$53,117,598. This reflects a 6.40% increase in the consumer price index.

The budget addresses \$38,721,086 in spending under the program component, \$9,578,208 in the capital component, and \$6,294,018 in the administrative component.

Lewis presented a "budget at a glance" review, which offers a look inside the numbers.

"It's a glance at Lew-Port's categories and larger numbers," he said.

Broken down, the budget covers 16 categories. It leads off with \$13,670,314 in spending that is delegated to teaching/instruction. Included are salaries for Lew-Port's teachers, aides and monitors, plus supplies and materials.

Next, a total of \$10,985,634 is assigned to employee benefits. This includes the district's teacher retirement system, employee re-

tirement system, plus Lewiston-Porter's health insurance, Social Security, worker's compensation and unemployment insurance costs.

Other higher number expenses include the district's special programs, budgeted at \$7,280,135. This includes such areas as salaries for Lew-Port's special education teachers and aides, as well as supplies and materials. A total of \$5,691,321 is budgeted for district capital debt and bond payments. This includes Lew-Port's outstanding bonds and bond anticipation notes principal and interest payments associated with its capital projects.

Lewiston-Porter's transportation costs total \$3,728,385 and include such areas as contracted services, fuel, bus monitors and other costs associated with the transporting of district students.

Still more numbers include \$3,343,549 for central services, which includes costs for district building operations, maintenance,

printing and mailing; \$2,683,775 for special items, including costs for district insurance, assessments, BOCES administrative charges and organizational fees; and \$2,243,153, for such items as instructional administration and staff development.

Also, \$1,736,047 for pupil services, covering expenses for such areas as guidance counselors, nurses, psychologists and social workers, plus extracurricular and interscholastic athletics; \$993,543 for instructional media, covering such areas as librarians, aides, computer technology salaries, supplies and materials; and \$845,000 toward occupational education, for career and technical education programs at Orleans Niagara BOCES.

Broken down, the remaining costs include \$473,619 for the office of finance, covering expenses for assistant superintendent and secretary salaries, supplies and materials; \$306,224 for district legal, personnel and records ex-

penses; \$290,896 for central administration, covering the salaries for the superintendent of schools and secretary plus supplies and materials costs; \$153,594 for the Lewiston-Porter Board of Education, covering BOE membership and required training costs, the district clerk plus supplies and materials for regular BOE meetings and the annual district meeting; and \$55,000 for transfers to federal aid, covering general fund expenses related to special education summer school.

As far as its impact on property owners in the Lewiston-Porter School District, which includes the towns of Lewiston and Porter, plus the villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, Lewis said the proposed levy to support Lew-Port's \$54.593 million plan would total \$29,608,316, an increase of \$764,365 over what the district levy total supported in 2022-23.

He went on to present the district's 2023-24-tax rate estimates.

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