

# Cuomo: New York will decide on fall school reopening during first week of August; malls to reopen Friday

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Wednesday announced New York will decide whether schools will reopen in the fall during the first week of August. The state is now consulting with stakeholders on guidance, which will be finalized on July 13. Plans to reopen schools are due July 31.

"We have been consulting all stakeholders on guidance on how a school would reopen in September," he said. "We have 700 school districts in this state. They range from rural districts to urban districts, suburban districts. Localities are very involved in their schools and school decisions. ... We'll have finalized guidance pursuant to those conversations on July 13.

"On July 31, local school dis-

tricts will submit their plans on how they would reopen; what their precautions will be; if they want to have a phased reopening; if they want to have a partial reopening. Those plans would come in on July 31. Aug. 1 to 7, the state will announce a decision on whether or not those schools reopen. We want to make that decision with the best available data.

"The facts change here day-to-day, week-to-week. I understand there's a drop-dead date where you have to make a decision by a certain date. But wait until that date to make a decision, because the facts may change. As we see, a week can be a lifetime with this COVID virus, because everything changes so quickly. The schools say they need a decision made

by the end of the first week in August, so they can then turn on the switches and get everything ready for September. And we'll look at the data in that first week and then we'll make a decision."

•Cuomo also announced that, beginning Friday, malls (including Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls) can open in regions that have entered phase four of reopening if they have implemented an enhanced heating, ventilation and air conditioning – or HVAC – filtration system and follow proper ventilation protocols. HVAC systems will be required to include filters with a minimum efficiency reporting value – or MERV – rating of which filters out the COVID-19 virus, but can, if the system makes additional protections, run

on a minimum MERV of 11. Ventilation protocols include increased outdoor air, reduced air circulation, longer system run times and frequent filter checks.

"We've had a lot of consultation, done work on air filtration. There are air filtration systems that can take COVID out of the air. There then winds up a series of questions, what filters work on what HVAC systems. But the filters are rated. The HVAC systems are rated by what they call a MERV rating," Cuomo said. "So, what we're saying is – the best filter that we would like to see installed is what's called the MERV-13. It goes to the density of the filter and what it can actually filter out. MERV-13 filters out the COVID virus. Some systems can't take

MERV-13, so it's either 13, 12 or 11. But one of those three filters – and then we have ventilation protocols. And the mall reopening date is July 10 in phase four (regions)."

On Monday, Cuomo announced casinos and movie theaters will currently remain closed as the state government continues to review the science and facts on their safe reopening.

That decision does not apply to the Seneca Gaming Corp. properties, which operate on sovereign land.

•The governor said all county fairs will be canceled until further notice out of an abundance of caution. Cuomo previously announced the New York State Fair will be canceled this summer.

## Higgins announces grants for first responders in Niagara County & Amherst

Congressman Brian Higgins announced federal funding for the Niagara County Department of Emergency Services and Ellicott Creek Fire Co. to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19.

Niagara County Department of

Emergency Services was awarded \$77,295.45. Ellicott Creek Fire Co., which serves the towns of Amherst and Tonawanda, received \$3,750.39 in federal funding.

Higgins said, "This emergency funding provides necessary re-

sources to protect those who protect our community."

FEMA lists the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as eye protection, isolation gowns, protective coveralls, gloves, respirators and face masks, as the primary funding

priority for these grants.

The CARES Act included \$100 million in COVID-19 supplemental funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program to support first responders during the coronavirus outbreak. This is in addition to and separate

from the \$350 million appropriated in 2019 for the AFG Program. Awards are made through a competitive application process reviewed by a panel of fire and emergency personnel peers.

## LEWISTON POLICE BLOTTER

- 800 block of Oriole Lane, harassment** – Caller to 911 suspected a female neighbor was harassing her and had damaged property around her apartment. Caller reported some type of "white spray" found around the doorway and wanted it noted. Patrol responded.
- Niagara Scenic Parkway service road, MVA** – injuries – Caller to 911 reported the vehicle she was driving was struck from behind. Patrol said the female swearing at the radio and complaining of head pain. Ambulance requested for a female with back pain. Report taken.
- Lewiston Road/Hyde Park Boulevard, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. One female in custody; charge(s) not listed. Appearance ticket issued for Lewiston Town Court.

**Wednesday, June 24**

- 300 block of S. First Street, check welfare** – Female caller to 911 wished to report damage she did to a neighbor's house. Dispatch reported the caller who sounded intoxicated stated that she threw a tire at a neighbor's house. Tire secured by patrol; no damage to the neighbor's house reported.
- Saunders Settlement Road/Campbell Boulevard, traffic complaint/investigation** – Officer initiated call. Patrol reports encountering a vehicle pursuit for a burglary.
- 1290 block of Saunders settle-**

**ment Road, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. Driver cited for speed in zone. Uniform traffic ticket issued for Lewiston Town Court.

•**800 block of Pletcher Road, theft** – Caller to 911 reported a vehicle was entered overnight, with items missing. Complainant stated a young male, listed as a teen with a thin build went through an unlocked pickup truck and removed specified items, including cash. Suspect also attempted to enter another vehicle that was locked and had entered a neighbor's pickup truck that was unlocked; unknown on any items taken. Suspect's activity viewed on a doorbell camera.

•**4400 block of Townline Road, harassment** – Caller to 911 reported her ex boyfriend has been harassing her. Suspect reportedly beeping horn as he passes her house and throwing garbage in her yard. Complaint an ongoing issue.

•**1100 block of Saunders Settlement Road, MVA-injuries** – Caller to 911 reported an erratic driver went off the roadway. Male seen moving around in the vehicle but said he was OK. Patrol requested an ambulance for an evaluation due to airbag deployment.

•**Saunders Settlement/Mayflower roads, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. Patrol reported a male as showing a warrant out of Georgia; no extradition, in-state pickup only.

**Thursday, June 25**

•**5200 block of Lewiston Road, assist** – Patrol requested via dispatch to accompany Mercy Flight EMS for a female patient that was being argumentative with staff. Patrol reported the female refused transport.

•**200 block of N. Water Street, burglary** – Caller to 911 reported a residence was broken into sometime from January to current day; unknown entry and numerous items missing. Patrol determined that an animal/raccoon had entered the house through a fireplace. Damage reported to the interior of the residence; no items removed.

•**Saunders Settlement/Miller roads, suspicious activity** – Caller to 911 reported a male with a denim jacket and a helmet was in the roadway walking and yelling. Male who was listed operator of a motorcycle advised patrol that he dropped money in the roadway and his bike stalled when he attempted to pull over and retrieve it.

•**200 block of N. Fourth Street, forgery** – Caller reported an unemployment claim had been opened up in her name; complaint linked to a data breach at Lockport High School. Complainant reported that personal information including her bank account and Social Security number had been compromised. Patrol found the loss of information occurred from the Lockport City School District. Report taken.

•**5300 block of Military Road, MVA-property damage** – Caller to 911 reported a minor two-vehicle accident involving a medical van. Caller stated the vehicle left prior to patrol's arrival; plate and accident exchange information was unavailable. Patrol advised the accident victim to contact the medical van provider.

•**1100 block of Swann Road, theft** – Female caller reported a neighbor had taken her cat and kittens and placed them in foster care; text messages provided as evidence. Patrol made contact with the suspect via phone and to follow up.

**Friday, June 26**

•**100 block of Niagara Street, suspicious activity** – Caller to 911 reported a credit card fraud. Male suspect listed as a former friend had threatened the caller not to file a complaint.

•**Locations on the 1200 block of Saunders Settlement Road and the 700 block of Upper Mountain Road, vehicle/traffic stops** – Officer initiated calls. Both drivers cited for speed in zone. Uniform traffic tickets issued for Lewiston Town Court. Patrol cleared.

•**Calkins Road/Sattle Drive, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. One suspect in custody for driving while intoxicated; blood alcohol content testing performed; BAC result, .14 of 1%. Driver also cited for failure to obey a traffic control device and related DWI charges.

•**700 block of Raymond Drive, harassment** – Officer initiated call. Patrol reported that neighbors were harassing the complainant after she had asked children to stay off her property. Patrol spoke with the parents who agreed to better control their children; complaint listed as an ongoing issue.

•**5000 block of Bronson Drive, ordinance violation** – Caller to 911 reported extremely loud fireworks, possibly coming from The Circle/Dana drives area.

•**500 block of Main Street, assist** – Caller to 911 reported 100 teens at a party; subjects reportedly drinking, smoking pot, possibly other drugs. Parents appear to be at home.

•**Lewiston Road/Mountain View Drive, vehicle/traffic stop** – Officer initiated call. One male in custody for driving while intoxicated.

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