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Cuomo: Decision on festivals coming soon

Will large-scale outdoor festivals and concerts be back this summer – and if so, what will the safety requirements look like? Toward the end of a press event Wednesday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo was asked when coronavirus guidelines for such outdoor events will be made public. He commented briefly, before handing the question off to his staff.

Niagara County residents are anticipating the return of the Lewiston Art Festival in August - but the Lewiston Council on the Arts is still awaiting further guidance from New York state. (File photo)



“Let me just say outdoors is safer than indoors. That is true,” Cuomo said. “You have people now talking about, ‘Well, why do we even need to wear a mask outdoors?’ As I said before, let’s not get cocky with COVID. If we do what we have to do, we do the vaccines, we’re safe. As we get into the summer, I think you’re going to see more progress. But the big if – I F – we’ve been there, done that. It’s only if we do these things. So let’s stay sharp; let’s stay committed.”

New York State Budget Director Robert Mujica said, “We’ve been revising the guidance periodically.

The most recent revisions actually went into effect this week, and the guidance for outside has been increasing. We just did revisions for large arenas that were actually indoors; we expect to now follow that over the next week with revisions

to the guidance for outdoor events. “And we are increasing the numbers outdoors but, as you point out, this is largely tied to the number of people that are getting vaccinated, and the infection rates and the testing in those areas. But we are increasing the amounts on the outdoor events. But as you point out, governor, just because it’s outdoors, there are other restrictions in place and there are still people gathering, and there’s still the possibilities of infection. So, it really relates to the number of people that are being vaccinated. “But at the pace that we are vaccinating – if we continue along that pace – then those numbers can get revised. If there’s a drop-off, which I think is what we’re seeing, then it will take longer.”

Cuomo said restrictions ease as better behavior is seen – and he doesn’t see that right now in Western New York.

Highest New Infection Rate in Western New York

The governor again singled out this region for having the highest percentage of new coronavirus cases in all of New York.

Though the statewide COVID-19 positivity rate has dropped to 2.14% – the lowest level since Nov. 5 – Western New York registered a 4.47% on Tuesday.

“(You) have a variance among regions in the state where some regions are three times the positivity rate of other regions – four times the positivity rate of other regions. Why?” Cuomo asked. “One state – everybody hears the same message; everybody has the same resources; everybody gets the same proportionate share of vaccine.

SEE RESTRICTIONS, on Page 8

Chamber Chicken BBQ Fundraiser!
SATURDAY, May 22nd
12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas
254 Sweeney Street, NT



\$12.00 Pre-Sale Tickets • **\$13.00** Day of Event
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Date for pickup will be selected by the purchaser at the time of order.

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WNY Stormwater Coalition





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