

Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel

August 27, 2021 FREE 20 Pages Vol. 30 / No. 36 • Vol. 34 / No. 27

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Kiwanis gears up for Peach Festival



The Kiwanis Club of Lewiston held a news conference Wednesday at Academy Park in Lewiston to announce what's new for the 63rd annual Niagara County Peach Festival. The event returns after having to be canceled in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The 2021 edition will take place Sept. 9-12 at Academy Park on Center Street.

The first Peach Festival was held in 1958 and, since then, the Kiwanis Club of Lewiston has contributed more than \$1.4 million to area charities and organizations from event proceeds.

Niagara County Peach Festival Chairman Dean Beltrano, veteran Peach Festival Advisory Chairman Jerry Wolfgang, former Peach Festival Chairman Marty Pauly and Jim Bittner of Bittner Singer Orchards addressed the media. Samples of the Peach Festival's "new-look" famous peach shortcake were distributed by the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute.

Beltrano said he anticipates a crowd of 38,000 over the four days, weather-permitting. He noted the famous peach shortcake would feature diced peaches this year due to a change in the processing facility where the freshly picked fruit are shipped.

Advance ride tickets are on sale at 40 locations at a 50% discount. Locations can be found on the Peach Festival website at www.lewistonpeachfestival.org/ride-tickets. The full schedule of events is available at www.lewistonpeachfestival.org. (Photos by Mark Williams Jr.)



Top: Peach Festival Advisory Chairman Jerry Wolfgang addresses the media. • Middle: Students from Niagara County Community College's Niagara Falls Culinary Institute are assisting the Lewiston Kiwanis Club in peach food-tasting events. Pictured with the famous peach shortcake is Myriah Meyer. • Bottom: Niagara County Public Health Director Daniel Stapleton announced a free COVID-19 vaccination tent on the Peach Festival grounds from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare celebrates milestone

Eye care group marks 10,000th successful patient treatment



STORY AND PHOTOS BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare celebrated its 10,000th successful patient procedure on Tuesday.

The milestone event at the group's ambulatory surgery center on Portage Road in Niagara Falls signified a major achievement and celebrated the practice's decades of service to the Western New York community.

"Our mission is your vision and we strive to provide top-notch eye care care in a comfortable, professional atmosphere," the Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare website proclaims.

The group, founded by Dr. Claus Fichte in 1985, includes partners Michael J. Endl, M.D., and Thomas L. Elmer Jr., M.D. Each doctor maintains this approach while working alongside a staff of 74 eye care professionals trained in the latest techniques and procedures to serve patient needs in both Erie and Niagara counties.

"Human dedication and talent are the most valuable resources we have," Fichte said of the group's services.

For North Buffalo resident Brian McDonough, an avid skydiver, the successful surgery now means a whole new chapter in his life – and the ability to continue doing what he loves.



Top: Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare staff members joined with elected officials from the City of Niagara Falls and the Town of Niagara at a 10,000th procedure celebration on Tuesday. • Above: Patient Brian McDonough with Dr. Michael Endl, who presented a plaque celebrating the achievement.

Cataract issues are a common affliction as one grows older. McDonough, 62, underwent a dual-eye cataract procedure at Fichte's Niagara Falls location to address vision problems. He said it has already changed his life.

"I'm struck, absolutely struck. Their dedication and it's miraculous work – it's changed my life; SEE PORTAGE, continued on Page 8

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