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HOCHUL: Stay safe and support local businesses with a 'staycation' in Niagara County



Plan to have a vacation at home

GUEST EDITORIAL BY LT. GOV. KATHY HOCHUL

If you've ever thought of a "staycation," now is the time to do it.

Many of our local industries are taking a hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism, a substantial part of New York state's economy, is certainly one of them.

I recently hosted a discussion with tourism leaders in Niagara Falls to highlight the safety precautions they are taking.

If you follow the necessary precautions, your family can have a safe and fun vacation right here in New York state and at Niagara Falls – a landmark gem to the world. These sites offer exciting new amenities:

- √ New York recently invested \$70 million improving viewing areas at Niagara Falls State Park.
- √ The Maid of the Mist takes you right to the base of the falls. Once powered by steam, a new electric fleet will be unveiled soon.
- √ The Niagara Region is steeped in history – experience Old Fort Niagara or the Underground Railroad Heritage Center.
- √ Meet the penguins and all their aquatic friends – sea lions, octopus, jelly fish and more – at the Aquarium of Niagara.

There is a vibrant downtown with restaurants, shops and attractions.

It's on us to keep these businesses going during these tough times – they are the bread and butter that give this great community its identity.

I encourage you and your family to start your "staycation" right here in Niagara Falls. This is how we build back better.

Kathy Hochul is the 77th lieutenant governor of the state of New York

Niagara County: Wydysh, Stapleton provide updates on eateries, travel advisory, school reopening & TTP

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Niagara County Legislature Chairwoman Becky Wydysh provided her weekly update Monday on LCTV. She was joined by Public Health Director Daniel Stapleton. Among their topics of conversation:

Crackdown on Business, Eateries Not Utilizing Safety Protocols

Since the middle of March, New York state and local government officials have been suggesting, urging and telling locally owned businesses to follow safety protocols related to the coronavirus. Those that still refuse to enforce (or follow) the 6 feet of social distance/wear a mask/clean your hands regulations are subject to penalties.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently compiled a multiagency task force to combat violations of COVID-19-related regulations at bars and restaurants. The State Liquor Authority and New York State Police

task force issued 105 violations to establishments downstate on Friday and Saturday.

"Gov. Cuomo seems determined to not let (positive case spikes) happen here, and really has been demanding an increase in the enforcement of the guidelines here by local government," Wydysh said. "That enforcement can involve state agencies like the State Department of Health, and the State Liquor Authority, or our local government, like (the Health) Department and our local police departments and the sheriff."

Stapleton said, "Enforcement is a big issue. We're getting calls around the clock, seven days a week, complaints about businesses not following the rules; people not wearing masks.

"For example, a local restaurant that we're dealing with right now, we're working with them. We're working to make sure that businesses understand what the rules are, but then we also need to make

sure that they comply with those rules. So, if their staff, for example, aren't wearing masks, that's a big issue. We will work with them to educate them, but we'll only do that once or twice. After that, we come in for a hearing, and we'll have a penalty if they can't comply.

"We don't want people putting their business at risk by not following the rules. And I think most people follow the rules, but we believe a big part of what we do is educating people, helping them protect their customers. That's really what it's all about. And for the most part, people know the rules and they follow them. But there are some businesses we continue to work with and that's taking a lot of our time."

Wydysh said, "I think it's important to remind residents, again, those mask guidelines for being out in public and having your mask on are still in place by the state, and very important if you want to be able to go to the businesses that you like. You know, it's not just

about keeping yourself healthy, keeping others around you healthy, but really helping those businesses to follow those guidelines.

"If there's a restaurant that you love to go to, you want them to be able to stay open – and they're trying to keep you safe, just like you're trying to keep everyone else safe. So again, I remind you, please, if you are out and about and you want to be at those businesses that you enjoy, do your part; and have your mask on; and follow the rules in the business. They've been put in place for your safety, and you want to help them stay open."

The state coronavirus infection rate has declined since Cuomo began his "New York Forward" reopening process in May – even with myriad establishments not conforming to safety protocols. This has led some to question why bars can't reopen.

Cuomo addressed that point on Wednesday.

SEE CUOMO, continued on Page 5

Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel

Founded December 6, 1990

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The **Tribune** is published weekly.

Display Ads Deadline: MONDAY 5 PM

New York State Press Association, Niagara County Builders Association, Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, Wheatfield Business Association Inc., Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, The Niagara USA Chamber.



NIAGARA FRONTIER PUBLICATIONS

