

# Percy: 'We feel that we are very well suited for a strong rebound'

Continued from Page 1

The Aquarium of Niagara issued a press release Wednesday that said, in lieu of an immediate opening, it would mark its 55th anniversary this weekend with a special "look-back" video and a commemorative T-shirt that will be for sale at [www.aquariumofniagara.org](http://www.aquariumofniagara.org).

Old Fort Niagara Executive Director Robert Emerson said, "Over the centuries, Old Fort Niagara has withstood famines, sieges, surprise attacks and the storms of Lake Ontario. If you've wondered how Old Fort Niagara has been doing during the pandemic, it's been tough. On March 20, our doors closed in the interest of public health. Like other closed museums and historic sites right now, our resources are dwindling. Without visitors, we're without revenues that sustain us." The Youngstown historic site is offering a series of virtual distance-learning programs in June.

NFP reached out to Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours operator John Kinney. He did not provide a response as of press time. The WJBT website states, "Our updated opening date is scheduled for July 1st, 2020 in Lewiston, New York. We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will make changes to our operating dates if necessary."

Niagara Falls' Rainbow Air Helicopter Tours also is delayed. A Facebook post stated, "Safety has always been #RainbowAirInc first priority. With saying that, until further notice we will hold off on opening day for #Season2020 Please check back to see when we are going to kickoff our XXV Season! In the meantime, please stay home, stay safe and most importantly, stay healthy."

Not having these attractions open to the public has struck a significant blow to the area.

"This crisis has hit our local tourism economy incredibly hard," Percy said. "As an example, the most recent hotel data shows a nearly 80% decrease in occupancy year over year for April."

## If You Build It, They Will Come

... But Maybe Not This Year

When attractions do reopen, the next question is will people come and patronize them this summer?

Travel across the northern border bridge is limited until July. A May 10 article in the New York Times, citing a study from Airlines for America, stated airline "passenger traffic is down about 94%, and half of the industry's 6,215 planes are parked at major airports and desert airstrips."

Percy said, "Based on government restrictions and traveler sentiment, we don't anticipate overseas visitors coming to Niagara Falls USA until 2021 and beyond. This could change once restrictions are lifted, as well as other factors affecting inbound travel to the United States."

Though a smaller-scale tourism season isn't ideal, Percy said, "Once the attractions are able to reopen, we feel that we are very well suited for a strong rebound. Industry research suggests that once consumers begin to travel again, they will likely do so within a six-hour drive from their home. We have always been an extremely strong drive-market destination and that's where we are placing a heavy marketing focus. We also have an abundance of outdoor attractions and activities, which make us a particularly attractive destination right now due to social distancing and safety guidelines."

## Niagara Falls is Open

State parks have remained open throughout the course of the coronavirus pandemic, and Cuomo's "New York State on PAUSE" order – which closed all nonessential businesses in late March. He shifted to "New York Forward" in mid-May.

Niagara Falls State Park is gradually reopening and welcoming tourists.

Delaware North handles the concession and retail operations. Director of Corporate Communications Glen White said, "Delaware



Maid of the Mist and Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours patrons are eager to get back on the water.



North on June 5 reopened some retail shops and food and beverage outlets at Niagara Falls State Park."

General Manager Michael Barnes oversaw the creation of a safety plan, working in partnership with New York State Parks.

White said, "Open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays are the snack bar, ice cream shop and gift shop at the Cave of the Winds Pavilion, the gift shop at the Top of the Falls at Terrapin Point and the snack shop near Prospect Point. It should be noted that the Cave of the Winds, Top of the Falls restaurant and Maid of the Mist have not yet opened for the season."

"For its operations at the park, Delaware North has implemented a comprehensive program in response to COVID-19. The Rest Assured Commitment to Care program features new health and safety standards aimed at helping keep guests and employees safe. Delaware North has reengineered operating procedures to minimize contact risk and bolster hygiene protocols to meet or ex-

ceed best-practice guidelines of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"The Rest Assured program at Niagara Falls State Park includes:

- √ "Upholding current social distancing guidelines as directed by local and state health officials and in compliance with the CDC.

- √ "Enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols for all high-touch surfaces in common areas.

- √ "Most points of sale accept touchless mobile wallet payment options such as Apple Pay and Google Pay.

- √ "Hand-sanitizing stations.

- √ "Plexiglas dividers at points of sale.

- √ "Rest Assured signage, including for social distancing.

"In addition, our employees:

- √ "Take a health check when they report to work.

- √ "Sanitize their hands when they report to work and are required to wash and sanitize their hands frequently throughout the shift.

- √ "Undergo a comprehensive Rest Assured training program.

- √ "Wear face coverings while they are on duty."

State Parks previously announced new camping reservations can be placed for check-ins starting June 22.

## Seneca Niagara Reopening Next Week

Seneca Gaming Corp. will reopen Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino on Thursday.

In a press release issued earlier this week, Seneca Nation President Rickey Armstrong Sr. said, "After being closed for nearly three months, we are now ready to move forward with the safe, responsible and systematic reopening of our gaming facilities. This is a signature moment in our region's economic recovery from the circumstances that arose as a result of this unprecedented public health crisis."

Interim CEO and CFO David Sheridan said, "The health and safety of our team members, guests and their families continues to be our highest priority."

To that end, the company stated, "The Seneca Resorts & Casinos team has established a comprehensive plan informed by public health experts and CDC guidance to adapt all front-facing and back-of-house procedures to maintain a safe and fun environment. The plan, which can be accessed in full at [SenecaNiagaraCasino.com](http://SenecaNiagaraCasino.com), includes protocols for social distancing, disinfecting measures, and wellness screenings for both team members and guests."

"We are confident in opening Seneca Resorts & Casinos in phases while implementing the most comprehensive steps across all of our departments to ensure an effective return to operations while protecting everyone in the facility," Sheridan said. "We look forward to reconnecting with our extended Seneca family ... from a distance."

The casino PR team noted hotel operations and the spa and salon will remain closed, as will most restaurants. Some slot machines will open, but there will be no table games.

STIR and The Lobby Bar are closed. Morrie's will offer grab-and-go options, as will Blues Burger, which is also able to provide sit-down dining in the front wing.

## Meanwhile in Lockport

Lockport Locks and Erie Canal Cruises opened Thursday, according to a tweet sent earlier in the day.

## Porter Empty Return Center

Beat-the-Heat  
**DEALS**

Bring in Those Cans & Bottles & Receive an Extra

**15%**

Now thru June 30

Bring In Your Wine Bottles too!  
(6¢ each up to 20 per visit!)

3628 Ransomville Road (Next to Rite Aid), Ransomville • 791-1113  
HOURS: MONDAY & SATURDAY 9AM TO 3:30PM / TUESDAY THRU FRIDAY 10AM TO 6PM

## Thank You...

On behalf of the Town of Lewiston Senior Center, thank you to all who supported our food drive for the Ransomville Care & Share pantry. A special thank you to the Northern Niagara County Kiwanis and their members for embracing the true meaning of care & share.

## LEWISTON-PORTER CHURCH DIRECTORY

### Lutheran Church of the Messiah

915 Oneida Street, Lewiston  
Phone: 754-4944 Fax: 754-0903  
[www.messiahlewisston.org](http://www.messiahlewisston.org)

The Reverend Ashlin Marchese, Pastor  
The Reverend Thomas R. Mason, Pastor Emeritus  
Sunday Worship Service 8:15am & 10:00am

Sunday School / Adult Bible Class 9:00am  
2nd Sunday in September to third Sunday in May (Dates can vary)

Messiah Lutheran PreSchool Rose Aloian, Director

Share Your Message Call us at 773-7676

## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR

Tuesday, June 23, 2020 AT 6:30 PM

VILLAGE OF LEWISTON

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing will be held before the Zoning Board of Appeals at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7167548271>, Meeting ID: 716 754 8271, on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 6:30 PM on the advisability of granting appeal to David Giusiana, owner of 625 Center Street, Lewiston, NY (SBL #101.10-3-20) who is requesting a side and rear yard setback variance for a shed and chicken coop.

All persons interested in this matter may attend the virtual meeting and be heard.

Shannon Fundis

Village Clerk

Publish

Sentinel

June 12, 2020