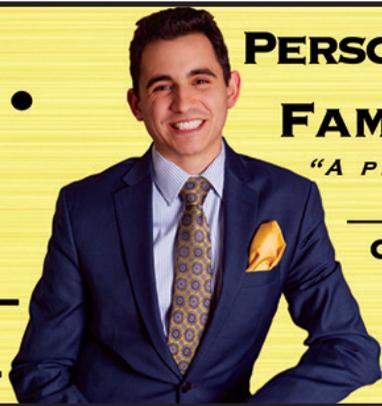


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# THE NIAGARA REPORTER

FREE

June 19th, 2019 - June 25th, 2019

NiagaraReporter.com

Vol. 20, No. 6

FREE

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## Senior Citizens to Blame for Niagara Falls' Woes Says Mayoral Candidate Seth Piccirillo

By: Frank Parlato  
*Analysis*

Niagara Falls Democratic candidate for Mayor, Seth Piccirillo, 40, took to Social Media to pin down the cause of the problems faced by Niagara Falls.

It's senior citizens.

Responding to an elder critic of his, Piccirillo wrote, "My generation is dealing with the terrible decisions of your generation of leadership. Internet comments don't mask that stark fact. We are cleaning up those messes, while you criticize with misleading half truths."

Piccirillo was appointed by Mayor Paul Dyster to head Community Development and Code Enforcement and is Dyster's handpicked successor.



(Cont. on pg. 2)

## "Campaign Gimmick"

County legislator says GOP legislature hasn't the "slightest appetite" for LVT. Will not support Seth's home-rule message.

By: Tony Farina  
*Analysis*

Still hoping for a magic bullet to escape from Paul Dyster's shadow, Seth Piccirillo is pushing for reform of the city tax structure in Niagara Falls that would require New York State to enact a pilot Land Value Tax program in downtown tourist areas as, according to him, a new solution to old problems.

(Cont. on pg. 2)

## Pay Problems in the NT Parks Department

By: Brendan McDonough

Park Department Director Alex Domaradzki pleaded with the City to increase the salary of temporary summer workers. Domaradzki says people have already turned down working for the City because of the low pay. The salary for summer workers is \$11.10 per hour.

(Cont. on pg. 6)

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# NIAGARA FALLS

## Campaign Gimmick Cont.

As next week's primary approaches, Piccirillo, a top aide in the faltering and nearly broke Dyster Administration, is hoping to defeat School Board President Robert Restaino in the Democratic primary for mayor and he is hoping his land value tax notion will help him cross the finish line first.

As Frank Parlato reported last week, Piccirillo's land value tax is hazy at best and residents would be hard-pressed to figure out what it would mean in terms of their property taxes in the future.

According to Piccirillo, the current two-tiered tax system punishes small businesses and allows land speculators to comfortably occupy acres of vacant land that could be used for development. His solution: a Land Value Tax.

But he's not likely to get any support from the Republican-controlled County Legislature (11 - 5) in seeking Albany's help to reform the tax structure.

"It looks like an election campaign gimmick," says North Tonawanda Republican Richard Andres, one of the members of that GOP majority. "I haven't heard anyone with even the slightest appetite for it, and given its complexity, it would take a great deal of study to determine if it would be helpful."

So if Piccirillo's notion has no support in the county, the likelihood of a home-rule message to Albany asking for help is a long shot at best and tends to support Andres' contention that it is nothing more than an election gimmick to help him carve out some political support in next week's primary (Tuesday, June 25). In the end, the voters will decide, as it should be.

## Piccirillo Says Senior Citizens to Blame for Woes Cont.

Piccirillo is one of the highest paid city hall workers with a salary with benefits well over \$100,000.

Most seniors in Niagara Falls live on a fixed income of around \$30,000 per year.

Nowhere has Piccirillo pointed out that the city's current \$12 million annual budget deficit occurred on his and Dyster's watch.

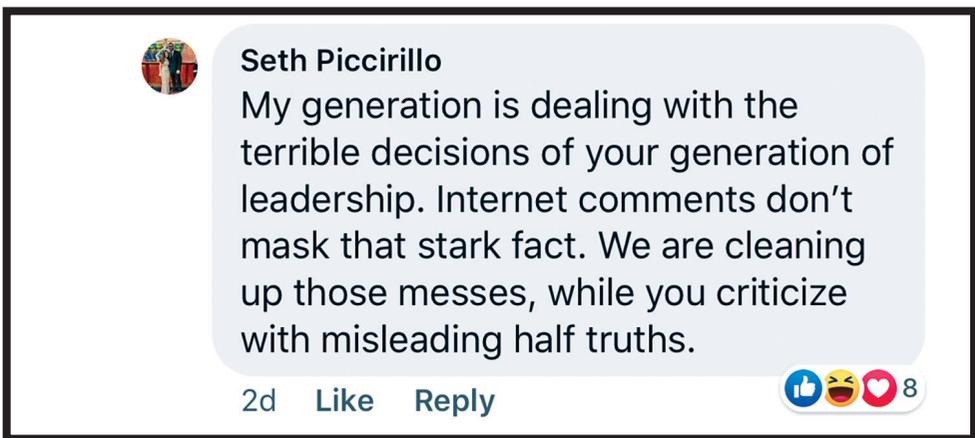
As bad as senior citizens are in this community – according to Piccirillo - at the end of the administration of the last mayor, a senior citizen named Vince Anello – there was a surplus of \$6.7 million.

In 12 years, Dyster and Piccirillo blew up a budget - larded with \$100,000 salaries and boondoggle expenditures - that is now \$12 million more than what the city takes in. The city has a \$100 million plus annual budget serving less than 47,000 people – making it one of the most expensive governments in the US for a city this size.

But is it really senior citizens and their "disastrous decisions" of the past that caused the present crisis in Niagara Falls?

If so, hopefully, these same seniors will not make yet another disastrous decision and fail to go to the polls on June 25 and vote to get Piccirillo out of city hall.

Imagine him blaming senior citizens – many of whom are try-



**Seth Piccirillo**  
My generation is dealing with the terrible decisions of your generation of leadership. Internet comments don't mask that stark fact. We are cleaning up those messes, while you criticize with misleading half truths.

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Mayoral Candidate Seth Piccirillo responding to a Niagara Falls resident on Facebook and referring to the terrible decisions of the older generation.

ing to stay afloat on fixed incomes, while Dyster has a spending spree party. He spent over \$200 million of casino cash with almost nothing to show for it. He raised taxes to the point that the city now has the highest property tax rates in New York, along with the highest crime rate.

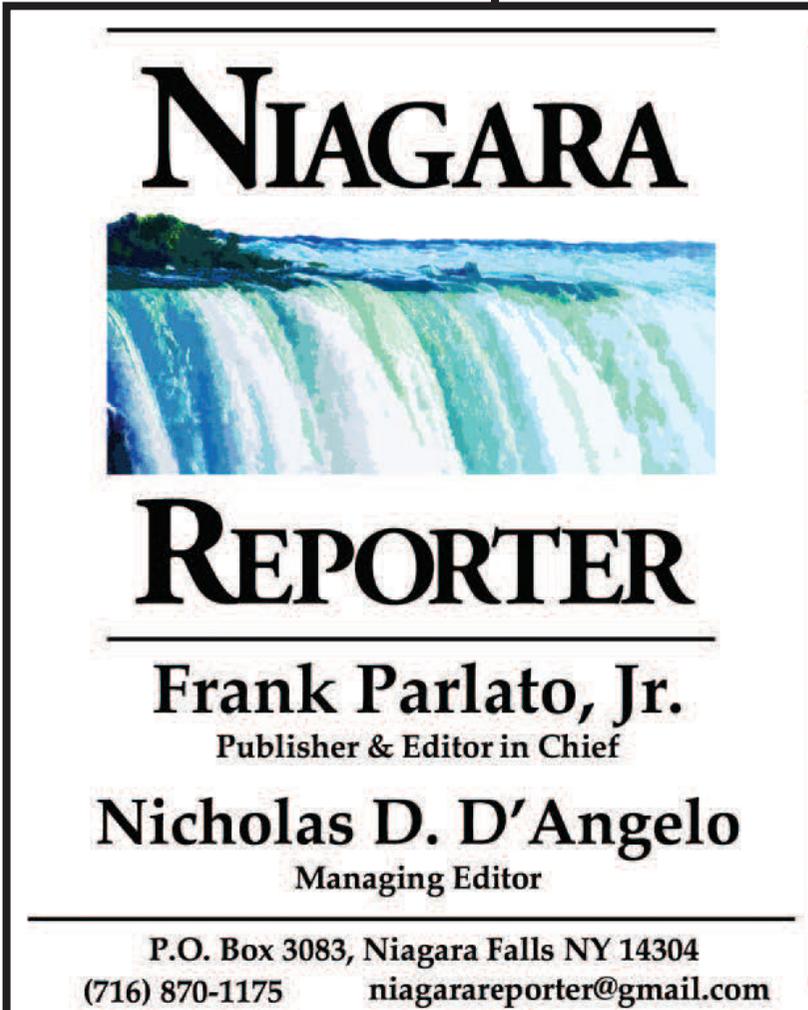
Yet Piccirillo says, "My gen-

eration is dealing with the terrible decisions of your generation of leadership."

If Piccirillo really wants to look at who caused the present crisis – he might look in the mirror and at the man who hired him and now desperately wants him to become the next mayor.



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# Parental Example A Motivating Factor Behind Spanbauer Candidacy

By: John Spanbauer  
Candidate for City Council

With the primary election only a few days away, I want to share with the citizens of Niagara Falls some of my background in the hope that they will better understand why I am seeking a seat on the City Council.

First and foremost, I am a lifelong resident of Niagara Falls. My wife Holly and I have raised our two children, Eric and Brooke, here. I grew up on 20th Street and LaSalle Avenue and was fortunate to be raised in a family with two parents who led by example. They were hard workers who instilled moral and ethical values in their children.

My mother, Patricia "Pat" Spanbauer, was very active in the community, in addition to holding many part-time jobs to make ends meet. Though she passed away at the young age of 48, my sisters, brothers and I are very proud of what she accomplished in her lifetime. She was president of the Niagara Catholic Parents Association, Mount Carmel Mothers Club, Niagara Falls Federation of Home School Associations, Parochial School Basketball League, and a treasurer of the Cataract Little Loop Football Association. She was also a member of the Mount Carmel Parish Council, Niagara Catholic High School Advisory Council, and held a seat on the task force for the Bishop's Committee on Secondary Education. She also was a volunteer for numerous community events.

My father, John Spanbauer, attended Niagara University. During his time at NU, he captained the freshman and varsity basketball teams. After graduation, he served in the Marines. "Span," as he was known, was very involved in the Niagara Falls sports scene and was inducted into the Niagara Falls Old Timers Hall of Fame in 1997. He worked as a Niagara County probation officer for 30 years. He also held many part-time jobs to make ends meet. He worked for the city's recreation department and officiated softball and basketball games. He also coached Our Lady of Mount Carmel's basketball team for many years. He passed away in 2004.

In addition to the enormous impact my parents had on me, so, too, did my five siblings, Karan, Mike, Tricia, Tom, and James. Growing up in the Spanbauer house was both fun and challenging, with one bathroom for eight people. We were taught that if you wanted something, you had to work for it. It was tough love, but good love.

Since my high school years, I have been a person who has given back to the community. I have often dedicated my free time to assist non-profit organizations such as the Police Athletic League, Special Olympics, Niagara University's Brothers and Sister's in Christ, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, St. George's Food Kitchen, and assorted community events. After high school, I attended Niagara University, where I worked my way through college with no financial support from my parents. I know they wanted to contribute, but there were just too many kids and not enough money to support the expenses



Niagara Falls City Council Candidate John Spanbauer.

of college.

After college, I was hired by the Niagara Falls YMCA as the director of youth. After five years with the Y (1983-88), I was hired as an administrator at Niagara University, where I worked for 30 years on a full-time basis. After retiring from NU, my inherent work ethic has kept me involved in a number of part-time jobs such as adjunct professor, limo driver, seasonal golf course work, officiating basketball, and mail order assistant. My years at the YMCA and Niagara included providing education and recreational programs for the less fortunate.

I provide this information because my roots and family background have made me who I am today. My parents were always doing more than they had to to make the community better. I have tried to follow their example, as I now dedicate my time and energy to making the City of Niagara Falls a better place in which to live.

Although new to politics, I am not naïve. I understand that making Niagara Falls better is going to be a challenging task. The city has problems: budgetary, crime, infrastructure, lack of adequate equipment for public safety, a poor sense of community, lack of confidence in the city's leadership, etc. But the good news is that problems have solutions, and I want to be a part of the solution. I will work with all parties to find the solutions that are so desperately needed to move this city forward and make it better. No matter whether city leaders are Republicans, Democrats, Conservatives, or whatever party they are affiliated with, all must work together to find remedies for the things that are preventing our city from thriving.

My reason for writing this letter is not to speak about my political platform. That can be viewed on my Facebook Page "John Spanbauer for City Council." Rather, my purpose is to allow the community to know where I came from and who I am.

This year's primary election is Tuesday, June 25. Please mark the date on your calendar and vote. Voting for John Spanbauer will provide this city with a new leader, a new vision, and a new direction.



## Tyrell Lynch

I have been watching the Niagara Falls Mayoral election with great interest because I plan to live, work and co-parent my son here in the city.

As 31 year old African American male, I find the current job market in the Falls severely lacking in job opportunities with a livable wage. More specifically, over the last 11 years, I've had to work elsewhere in the area because it's been almost impossible to find a job during the current administration.

As I watch the various candidates take aim at each other, I am looking for a candidate who is compassionate enough to make a difference as the people's Mayor yet, has the intestinal fortitude to make the tough decisions about the budget and stand up to Albany when it comes to New York State seemingly taking advantage of Niagara Falls assets such as the New York State Parks and NYPA and Niagara Falls share of casino revenues.

Why am I writing this and what does all this have to do with me one might ask?

I was considered a basketball prodigy with a lot of promise at 14. I was good enough to be offered a Division I scholarship at that age. In my teens I traveled the country playing basketball for PAL here in Niagara Falls, & the GC Ballers in Buffalo. Both are very reputable and respected AAU travel teams. All through high school I was invited and attended elite camps such as Adidas, Five Star & Eastern Invitational. At Niagara Falls High School I was a starting Forward on the team that won the NY

State & Federation Championship as well as the National Championship in 2005.

Almost none of this would never have happened without the compassion and kindness of Judge Robert Restaino. The details of my offense aren't important however, I had to appear before Mr. Restaino because of a youthful indiscretion when I was 15 years old. My court appearance could have resulted in my life taking a different turn as I have seen with other African American males around the country. However, after Mr. Restaino (correctly) admonished me for my offense he dismissed the case telling me I better never appear in his courtroom ever again and, in effect, this act of compassion allowed me to finish High School and receive a basketball scholarship to the University of Massachusetts.

More recently, I recently on tour in South America playing against NBA talent in Panama City Panama. As I looked at the beaches and mountains that surrounded me I couldn't help but to think, how blessed I was and what would have happened to me if the Judge made a different decision all those years ago? Where would my life be right now if I had been incarcerated?

I really don't know Mr. Restaino and never really had the chance to thank him but, I'd like to thank Mr. Restaino for a second chance. I hope Mr. Restaino will see this letter and know how grateful I am to have appeared before his court as a misguided 15 year old who needed advice from a good, wise Christian man.

Thank you Mr. Restaino for a second chance. You have my vote because you are the kind of leader I can respect.

## Gaming Commission Gives Batavia Downs Green Light on Alleged Ticket Giveaways, Finds No Cause for Concern

### Tony Farina

Claims earlier this year by former State Sen. George Maziarz of irregularities in promotional activities involving ticket giveaways at WROTB/Batavia Downs have not resulted in any action from the State Gaming Commission, which in fact has approved the ticket giveaway programs, known as "Suitestakes," for the 2019 year.

"Recently, there has been speculation about the propriety of our promotional activities that benefit our customers and whether tickets for sporting events and concerts have been used properly," said Henry Wojtaszek, president and CEO of WROTB/Batavia Downs. "After those reports, we invited the Gaming Commission to examine our records and interview WROTB officials regarding these allegations. Two gaming inspectors accepted our invitation and we complied expeditiously. Following this review, the inspectors advised WROTB that they were pleased with our cooperation and fully satisfied that the records they reviewed and interviews they conducted did not raise any issue of concern for the Gaming Commission."

In effect, despite the attacks by Maziarz against WROTB and his former top assistant, Wojtaszek, it would seem the State Gaming Commission has found no merit to those allegations and has given the ticket promotion a clean bill of health to move forward.

Batavia Downs management announced in a news release on Monday their

commitment to expand their ticket giveaway programs in the wake of the favorable review by the State Gaming Commission and a vote is expected by the board this month.

As part of that expansion, Batavia Downs plans to enter into a three-year agreement with Pegula Sports Entertainment for a suite at New Era Field for events as part of the ticket promotion program.

According to the news release, the "Suitestakes" promotion has expanded since it began in 2014 as part of the marketing plan with the purchase and use of all tickets approved by the Gaming Commission. It was honored, according to Batavia Downs officials, for its success in generating revenue and enhancing patrons' relationship with Batavia Downs.

"Our Suitestakes program has and continues to help us achieve record results," said Ryan Hasenauer, director of marketing for WROTB/Batavia Downs.

Hasenauer said in the news release "we will be expanding the number of times and methods with which we distribute tickets to ensure future success."

Revenues generated are distributed to the shareholders of WROTB including 15 counties and the cities of Rochester and Buffalo. WROTB owns and operates 19 branches as well as Batavia Downs Gaming and the standardbred racetrack. Since its inception, according to officials, Western Regional OTB has generated over \$231 million in operating and surcharge revenues to the taxpayers of the participating municipalities.



# THE CRIME

## WEEKLY HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Packard Court in the evening hours of Wednesday, June 12th, 2019, after police received reports of a group of people fighting. According to reports, one person was arrested and officers were required to use force to restrain the woman after she became combative and confrontational with police officers.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 3100 block of 9th Street in the late hours of Wednesday, June 12th, 2019, after receiving reports of a large group of females fighting. According to reports, one female had to be treated for burns on various parts of her body. The individual was transported to ECMC.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 2700 block of Grand Avenue in the early morning hours of Thursday, June 13th, 2019, after receiving reports of a suspect with a gun. Upon arriving at the scene, police confirmed that the suspected did indeed have a gun and engaged on a foot chase. Police were able to seize him and he was arrested.

-Niagara Falls Police, with the assistance of Lewiston Police, the FBI and ATF, conducted a series of raids throughout the morning and afternoon hours of Thursday, June 13th, 2019. At 620 17th Street, one person was arrested. At 1114 17th Street there were no arrests but police seized a shotgun, handgun and narcotics. At 2603 Walnut Avenue police seized a shotgun, ammunition, cocaine, and one person was arrested.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 200 block of 69th Street in the evening hours of Thursday, June 13th, 2019, after receiving reports that a juvenile was throwing hockey pucks at people.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Ferry Avenue and 19th Street in the evening hours of Thursday, June 13th, 2019, after receiving reports that juveniles were walking up to random people and punching them.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the Dollar Tree on Portage Road in the afternoon hours of Friday, June 14th, 2019, after receiving reports that a man with a shopping cart walked into a wall and was



yelling and hitting it.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 200 block of 24th Street in the afternoon hours of Sunday, June 16th, 2019, after receiving reports that juveniles had vandalized and stole items out of a church van. As of the date of this compilation, none of the items have been recovered by police and the investigation is continuing.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Pizza Oven located at 1903 Niagara Street in the evening hours of Sunday, June 16th, 2019, after receiving reports that a man had bought a pizza, threw it at the door, and then began rolling a joint and yelling at other customers.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1700 block of Whitney Avenue in the late evening hours of Sunday, June 16th, 2019, after receiving reports of shots fired. According to police, a two-family home was struck by multiple bullets. Nine shell casings were collected in all. Police believe that there were several people in the targeted apartments but no one reported any injuries. One of the apartments has a family in it including three young children. Fortunately, none of the children were home at the time of the shooting.

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<b>July 17 International Festival &amp; Community Day</b> Fun starts at 3:30 pm. See right for details.	<b>August 21 White Chocolate</b> Sponsored by Frenchy's Pizza & Restaurant   Agee Towing
<b>July 24 Junk Yard Dogs</b> Sponsored by Tom Jacob Towing	<b>August 28 ITALIAN NIGHT with Formula Band</b> Sponsored by Robert M. Restaino, Candidate for Niagara Falls Mayor
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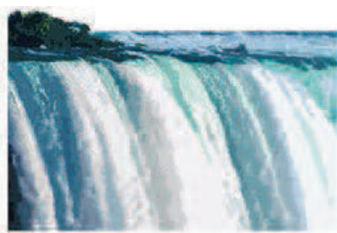
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4:00 to 8:00 pm Niagara Falls Fire Department Safety Unit/Smoke House	7:00 to 9:30 pm The Famous USA Band Sponsored by George Edwards Jewelers & Small World Child Care
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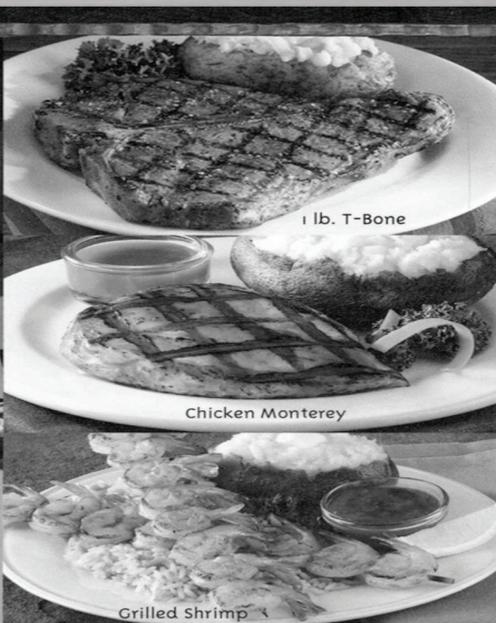
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# NORTH TONAWANDA

## Parks Cont.

“Whether you are at a park with kids or out in the hot sun with the weed whacker, the pay is the same across the board,” said Domaradzki. “People can make more money working at a fast food place.”

He says two people have already said no to job offers leaving the City scrambling to find workers to maintain the 580 acres of parkland across the Lumber City.

The Department at one time had fourteen full-time workers and are now down to only five. One of which is a mechanic.

“It is frustrating because when machines break down, he is actually pulled from his job as a mechanic and he has been out doing cutting and all that stuff,” said Domaradzki.

That combined with all the soaking rain has made it a tough spring. Another problem is that the City adding amenities to the Parks all the time but not increasing the funding or the staff to maintain those areas.

“We have been asking for a couple of trucks for the past four years,” said Domaradzki. “We just don’t have enough vehicles.”

What’s also frustrating he says is that seasoned summer workers



who is coming back year after year are being paid the same as a new person coming in creating tension with workers.

“When it comes to the Parks Department, if you hand in your application, pass the background check and are living and breathing, we will take you,” said Domaradzki.

Domaradzki says he wants to get at least a 50 cent increase in the hopes of getting more seasoned workers to help out at the Parks Department.

## Pumper Repairs



### Brendan McDonough

This past week Fire Chief Joe Sikora told members of the Common Council some startling news about one member of his fleet. It turns out that one truck is unsafe to operate and repairs could be as much as \$20,000.

“I have the money in my budget to get this repair done right now because it is the middle of the year,” said Sikora, “but what I don’t know is if I will still have it at the end of the year or if I will come up short.”

The truck is Engine 7 and was purchased in 2002 for more than \$400,000. At issue is rusting where the aluminum cab meets the truck’s

steel frame. The truck is housed at the fire station on Nash and Deerfield Drive and was taken out of service after it was deemed that it should not be on the road.

“This is a front-line pumper and we are running just shy of four thousand calls a year,” said Sikora. “All of our trucks are very busy and this is a need repair.”

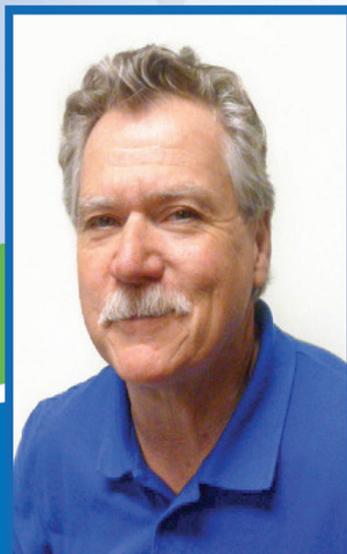
Once the repair work is done Sikora says the truck should last another 10 years. Sikora says he has found a local company in North Tonawanda that can do the repair work and says the repair could take anywhere from three weeks to a month to complete.

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## Fireman's Parade in North Tonawanda



### Brendan McDonough

Firefighters across North Tonawanda were honored this past weekend at the annual Fireman's Day Parade. Organizers have been holding it for the past 38 years. For many, it is a day to recognize those who put their lives on the line to help others.

"I come here every year and I like knowing that the firefighters are there when I need them," said Mary Martin, North Tonawanda Resident.

This year only a handful of people came out to watch the parade and while less people may have been here to watch it, many say it's important to take time out to celebrate the local firefighters.

"I had a small kitchen fire in my house last year and they were great," said Dave Sampson, North Tonawanda Resident. "They came fast and helped me when I needed them the most."

In the parade this year there were politicians, firetrucks and even some old pumpers. For many it is a day they say they won't soon forget.

"My kids love coming here and my 2-year-old son keeps saying he wants to be a firefighter when he grows up," said Sandra Nichols, North Tonawanda Resident.

It is just a one-day event, but organizers are hoping people will remember the valuable work firefighters do every day. Helping to celebrate firefighters and the valuable work they do all year long.

## HEAT STRESS CAN BE LIFE THREATENING

KNOW THE SIGNS  
AND PREVENT IT



### Here Comes the Sun: Getting a Handle on Heat Stress

Summer brings waves of rising temperatures and stuffy humidity during the busy time of year for the construction industry. It's not uncommon to see sweating workers toiling in high-heat conditions on steaming asphalt. Heat and humidity are a serious health threat to workers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 20 construction workers die from heat-related illnesses each year. The risk of heat-related illnesses depends on many factors, such as the worker's fitness, the weight of their clothing, their amount of exposure to direct sunlight and how strenuously they are working. But it is rising environmental temperature and humidity that tips the scale toward a clear and present danger for workers. Heat-related illnesses can range from cramps and rashes to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Fortunately, LIUNA's members and signatory contractors can work together to prevent heat-related illnesses. Water, shade and periodic rest breaks are what workers need to stay safe and perform their best when heat sets in.

The body naturally builds up heat when working, then sweats to get rid of this excess heat. However, when the body is also being heated by external sources, such as placing hot asphalt on a highway job, it becomes difficult for the body to cool off. Hot environments also increase the risk of injury, as they can result in sweaty palms, fogged safety glasses or burns. Heat also leads to fatigue, slowing down workers and lowering job performance.

According to OSHA, there are three non-negotiable fundamentals when it comes to protecting workers from heat illness:

- Provide cool water and encourage workers to drink it all day. Workers should drink at least a cup of water every 15 minutes during high-heat conditions.
- Provide shade or a cool environment for workers to take breaks.
- Put workers on breaks frequently during high heat. Allow workers who observe or experience heat illness symptoms additional rest breaks.

There are no federal OSHA standards or requirements to protect workers from heat illness. There are only the general guidelines provided by OSHA and the CDC that are listed above. The LHSFNA's Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses in Construction pamphlet and Heat Stress Prevention toolbox talk can help LIUNA signatory employers reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses on site. Use sunscreen towelettes, lip balm, neck cooling clothes and neck protectors available at the training facility to protect you from as much sunlight and heat as you can. This summer, let's make sure we all work together to protect one another from this common but preventable hazard.

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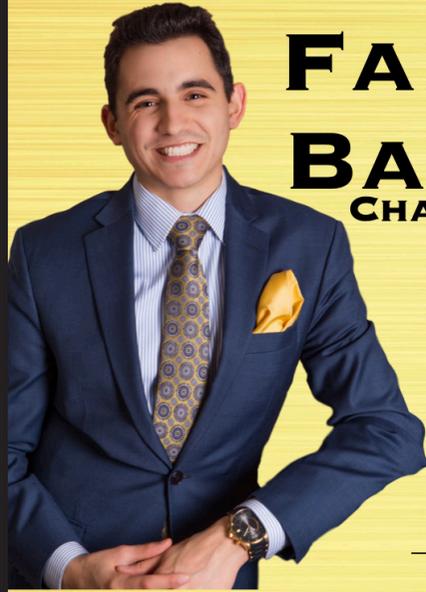
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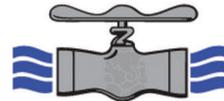
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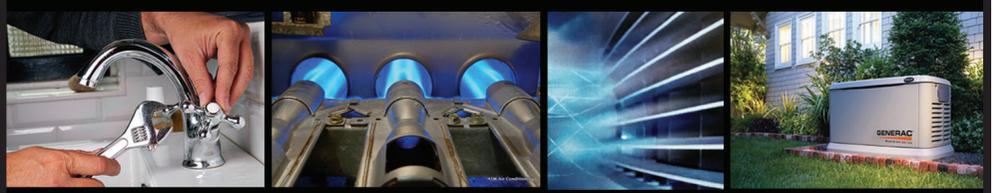
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