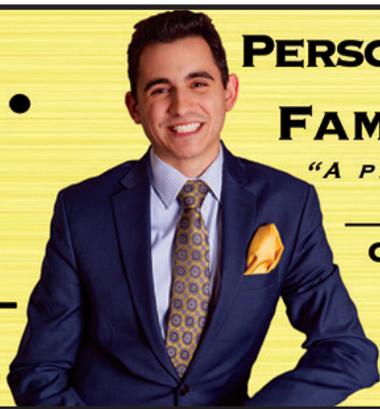


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Restaino Putting Final Touches on New Cabinet



(Cont. on pg. 2)

HAMILTON: Wounded Knee and Niagara Falls' Sgt. Toy Says Rescind the Doggone Wounded Knee Medals!

By: Ken Hamilton

In light of Massachusetts' Senator Elizabeth Warren's former but now debunked claims that she was indeed part

(Cont. on pg. 3)

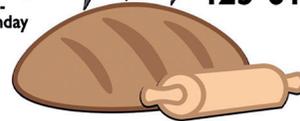
Chris's Corner: City Employees and City Workers

By: Chris Voccio
Niagara Falls City Council

I learned shortly after my last column was published that a lot of city workers read it and understood

(Cont. on pgs. 6)

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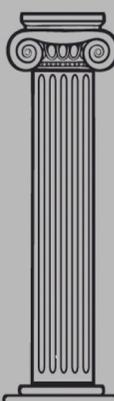
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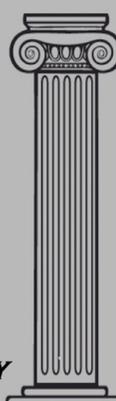


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NIAGARA FALLS

Restaino Cont. from Cover

Tony Farina

There will be a lot of new faces around Niagara Falls City Hall next year as Paul Dyster exits the mayor's office after 12 years and Robert ReStaino takes over the reins of government.

"Yes, there will be changes," said the mayor-elect during a brief interview on Monday as he begins a final week of interviews to finalize his cabinet, adding there have been applications from far and wide, not just Niagara Falls.

Restaino, president of the Niagara Falls School Board and a former city judge, said he expects to be able to announce his team before Christmas.

"We should be ready by Friday, Dec. 20, to announce the new team," said Restaino, saying that's a target date although leaving open the exact timing of his announcement but emphasizing it would be before Christmas.

"It is definitely an exciting time," said Restaino, although cautioning that in his preparation to take over city government he

has found much unfinished work connected to the budget to be dealt with and that is cause for concern to a city already struggling with financial issues.

But while the challenges are many, Restaino seems focused on fixing the cracks in the budget plan he has found as best he can as he prepares to lead the city to a better future, knowing full well that changes won't happen overnight.

Restaino, a tested leader and vote getter, won a narrow Democratic primary over top Dyster aide Seth Piccirillo last June and then scored an overwhelming victory in November over three candidates including Republican Glenn Choolokian.

As we reported in this newspaper several years ago, Restaino had been thinking about the mayor's office for a long time before he finally committed to making the run, saying he wanted to offer the citizens of Niagara Falls a vision for a better future. He now has that opportunity but he's taking over a city with serious financial problems, an unpopular garbage

user fee enacted to keep the city from going under, and a still uncertain future when it comes to slot revenue sharing from the Senecas.

"I'm continuing to meet regularly with the Seneca leadership," said Restaino on Monday, a far different approach than the one taken by the Dyster Administration which took its cues from the governor who has had two major gaming wars with the Senecas.

Native sources suggest in private conversations with this newspaper that a joint marketing strategy between Niagara Falls and the Seneca Nation would be a great place to begin. The Seneca Nation employs more than 4,000 people at its three Western New York casinos and joining a world wonder city like Niagara Falls with an exciting casino venue in a major economic marketing strategy would seem like a good fit for all.

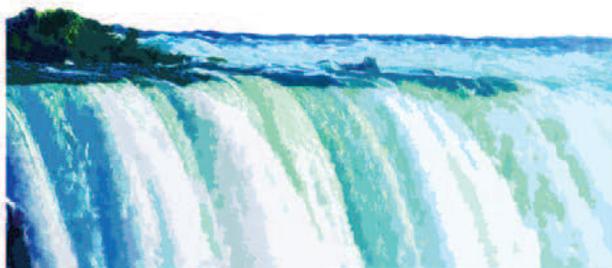
There are probably many more joint venture opportunities between the Senecas and the new administration and there is hope

around town that those opportunities can come to fruition under Restaino's leadership.

Of course, it would get off to a great start if the Senecas end their battle with New York State over sharing slot revenue as part of the gaming compact of 2002 and pay the \$256 million an arbitration panel and a federal judge says it owes the state. That would be mean an important infusion of revenue-sharing dollars to Niagara Falls and the other two host casino gaming cities (Buffalo, Salamanca) and certainly help Restaino in his efforts to rejuvenate Niagara Falls.

For now, all eyes will be on the team that Restaino is assembling to help him lead the city to that brighter future that he envisions. It looks like we'll get the first look at that team before Christmas, and then we'll see how the new mayor can make it all work and bring Niagara Falls back from the walking dead and give citizens hope for better days to come.

NIAGARA

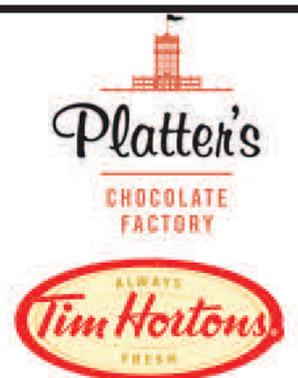


REPORTER

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Sanborn: Smokin Joes (gas station and store) & Tim Hortons

Wilson: Lakeside Market

Youngstown: Anchor Spirits & Wines, Bandanas Bar & Grill, Public Library, Rite Aid, Village Diner

Wounded Knee and Niagara Falls' Sgt. Toy Says Rescind the Doggone Wounded Knee Medals Cont from Cover



Ken Hamilton

Native American, it is still humorous to hear President Donald Trump refer to the very white, female, presidential candidate as Pocahontas. What isn't funny is the "Remove the Stain Act" bill for which the politician Warren waited until Thanksgiving Eve of 2019 to introduce into the US Senate to rescind what is seemingly the obviously politically-motivated rescinding of 20 Medal of Honor Medallions that were handed out to the soldiers that killed nearly 400 Native Americans at the terrible Wounded Knee Massacre in December of 1890.

Correcting the sins of our past history should be an important enough issue to all Americans so much so that it remains above politicization. While some Americans might say that it all happened in the past and that it is time to move on, other Americans believe that one day we will overcome our racial bigotry in this nation. But because America is simply the manifestation of an ideal idea that is embodied in its beautiful Constitution and isn't a biological entity with a limited lifetime, there is but "one day" in America – a very long, long, continuous day that hopefully will be measured by those who follow us in the same terms that we now measure periods like the Stone Age, Iron Age, Middle Ages, Age of Renaissance, Industrial Age and other such long historic experiences that constitute a single period in history.

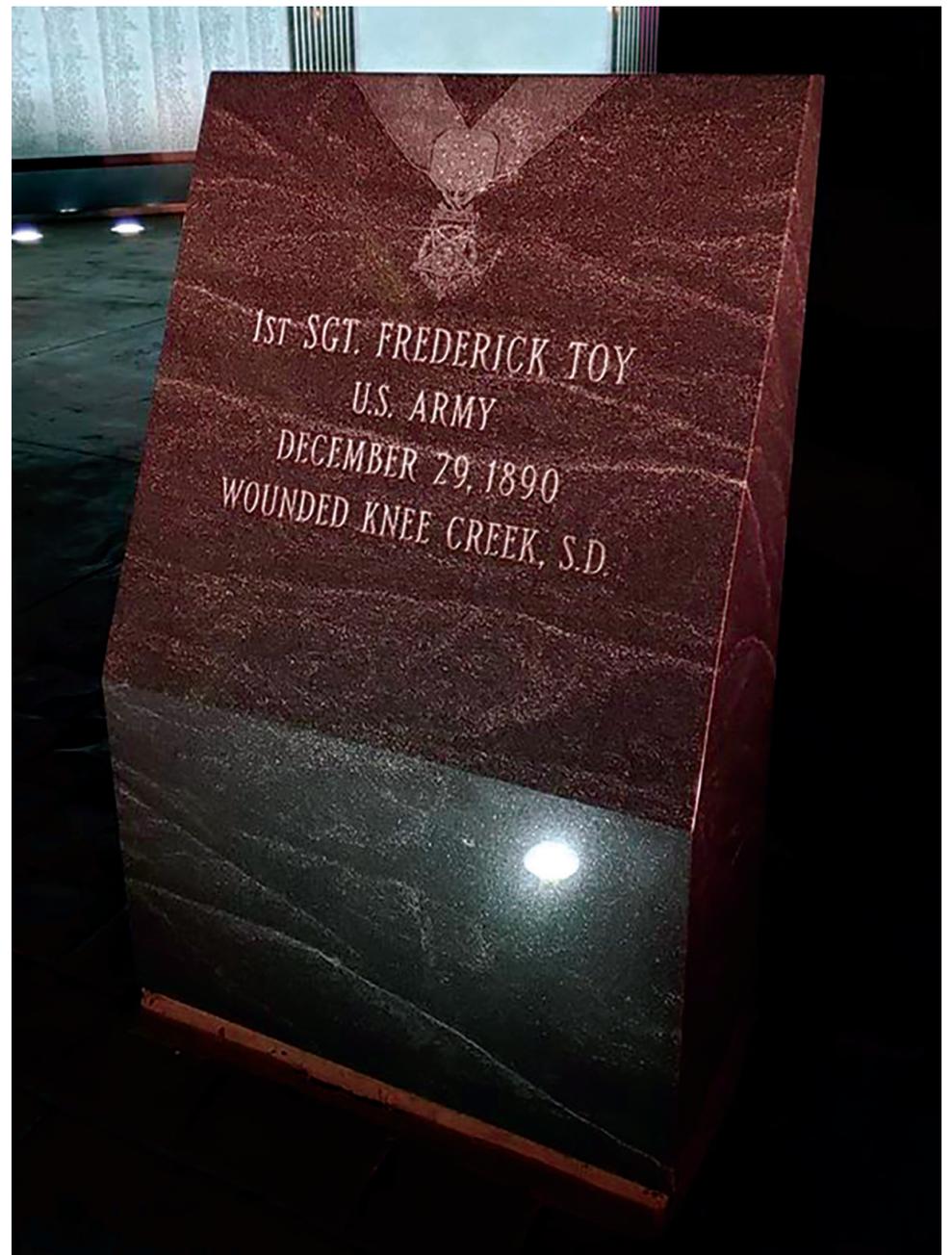
If Warren gets her way, despite her obvious politicization of the issue, then it will call for the removals of one such medal that was awarded to the now-deceased Niagara Falls native 1st Sgt Frederick Toy. His name is on one of seven small black dedicated granite monuments at the Niagara Falls Veteran Monument Commission's American Veteran Monuments at the city's Hyde Park.

It sits in a cluster eight such symmetrical monuments that include the one engraved to honor Marine Corps Lt. John P. Bobo. Bobo undisputedly earned his award in Vietnam by surrendering to eternity his already mortally wounded life on March 30, 1967 while providing covering gunfire onto an encroaching enemy and thereby saving the retreating lives of the men under his command.

While there's no question that Bobo earned his honors, there have long been questions about Toy and the other soldiers that were involved in the massacre at Wounded Knee; and I agree with Warren and others that the 20 medals should be rescinded. And there's both criteria and precedence for such as well.

For instance, it is recorded that in both of the American Civil Wars – one being the war of Southern secession, and the other being that even longer civil war (long been dismissed as such) that is simply labeled the Indian Wars – that the bloodiest in the number of loss in a single battle was September 17, 1862's Battle of Antietam. There, nearly 23,000 American brothers were killed, wounded or went missing. In the case of the massacre at Wounded Knee, a battle of such, between 250 – 300 Miniconjou Indians and 25 US Cavalry soldiers were killed with almost each of the number being killed by the Cavalry's gunfire. There has long been resistance to rescinding the 20 Medals at Wounded knee where white men killed largely unarmed red men; but in the case of Antietam, where white men killed other white men and the Medal of Honor was liberally issued, and in World War One, where likewise was the case, Congress in 1918 reviewed the cases of awards and rescinded 900 such medals, creating both criteria and precedence for such a move. Clearly the only difference between the white-on-red 20 Wounded Knee-given medals and the 900 white-on-white medals was race, a stain that can only be removed in the same manner as it was in 1918.

Let me say this; while Frederick (Friedrich) Ernest Toy was no less than an honorable soldier and man of his era, whose post-military life was no less honorable than his mili-



tary life, we can give him praise. On at least two occasions he returned to the service of his country during times of war. He was even a captain in World War One. and is buried at Riverdale Cemetery in Lewiston, New York. Toy's grave marker identifies him as a captain. His situation was no different than, but opposite of that of Army LT William Calley who was severely punished for his role in Vietnam's My Lai Massacre on March 16, 1968 where reportedly 500 people were killed. Had news cameras been allowed Wounded Knee, Toy's fate may have been the same as Calley's and no medals would have been issued to his comrades and him.

But they were issued; and it all kind of takes us back to Toy and Bobo. Bobo was in Vietnam on the day of his death because of WWI and II when the US took on the issue of saving Europe, creating allies in the interim, and the people of French Indochina (Vietnam) wasn't one of them. The US ignored the pleas of Ho Chi Minh and his desire

to create a Jeffersonian government in the area, and decided to aid the French who eventually left the South-East Asian issue to the US under the cover of the spread of communism. The conservative Martin Luther King, failing to get support from conservative democrats in his efforts for civil rights at parity with them, likewise made alliances with the political left. Had the US aided in negotiating with France on their withdrawal from Vietnam, though Bobo's medal was well deserved, it would have been unnecessary.

And in the case of Sgt. Toy, Warren and others gives America an opportunity to address the cyclical mistakes it has often made, and to look to a paraphrased saying of Star Trek's Mr. Spock, who said, "The good of the many outweighs the good of the one", then surely, the good of all Americans as a nation, outweighs the need of 20 now-deceased persons.

Rescind the doggone medals!



THE CRIME

WEEKLY HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Cocktail Bob's Tavern on Cudaback Avenue on Sunday, December 1st, 2019, after reports that a female was lying on the floor bleeding from trauma to her head and face. The bartender told police that a group of females attacked the victim by kicking her, punching her, and even throwing a glass bottle at her. A pregnant woman was taken to Oishei Children's Hospital early Sunday after she was assaulted inside a Cudaback Avenue tavern, Niagara Falls police said. Police are hoping to identify the suspect through surveillance video. The victim was taken to a hospital for treatment and to make sure her baby was safe.

-Niagara Falls Police and Fire responded to the 2700 block of Willow Avenue in the evening hours of Monday, December 2nd, 2019, after reports of a vehicle crashing into a house. Police are investigating whether drugs or alcohol played a role in the crash.

-Samantha Klein, who pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the death of 3-month-old Alaya Foster, was sentenced in the morning hours of Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019, to 25 years to life. Klein was also sentenced on charges of robbery and the sale of narcotics to a uncover law enforcement officer. Sadly, it was learned during statements made by the District Attorney's Office that Klein took to Google regarding what to do with the child rather than calling 911. According to County Court Judge Matthew Murphy, Klein will serve her sentences concurrent with the one for manslaughter.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1600 block of Pine Avenue in the morning hours of Friday, December 6th, 2019, after reports of criminal mischief. According to police, at some point during the prior night someone broke windows of the store. Police are continuing to investigate the incident.



-Niagara Falls Police, assisted by Border Patrol, executed a warrant in the afternoon hours of Friday, December 6th, 2019, at 7716 Buffalo Avenue. According to reports, Border Patrol was involved so that they could assist with KP units. Police say that two people were arrested as a result of the warrant and multiple bags of evidence was taken out of the building. Although this is the address of Submasters, they were not the subject of the warrant. Rather, it was the apartment above Submasters that was the subject of the warrant.

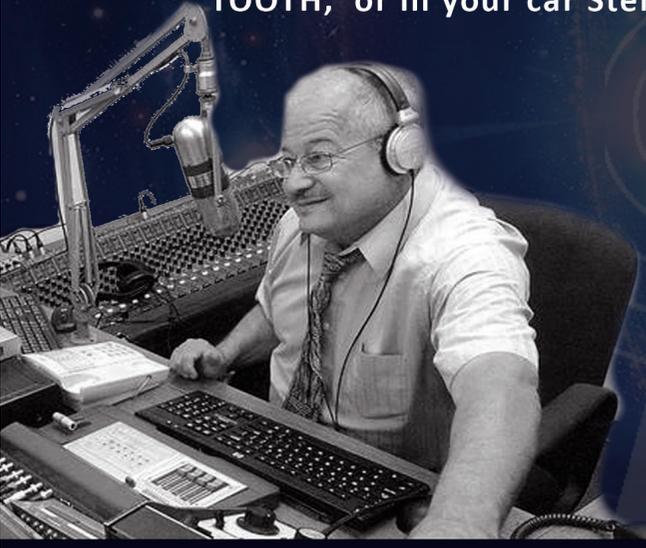
-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1800 block of 16th Street in the evening hours of Sunday, December 8th, 2019, after reports of shots fired. In addition to police, Niagara Falls Fire Department personnel, along with several AMR ambulances, were on scene where at least one person was transported to the hospital after sustaining serious gunshot wounds. Police are continuing to investigate the incident.



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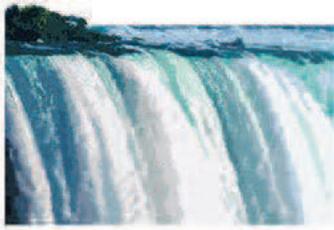
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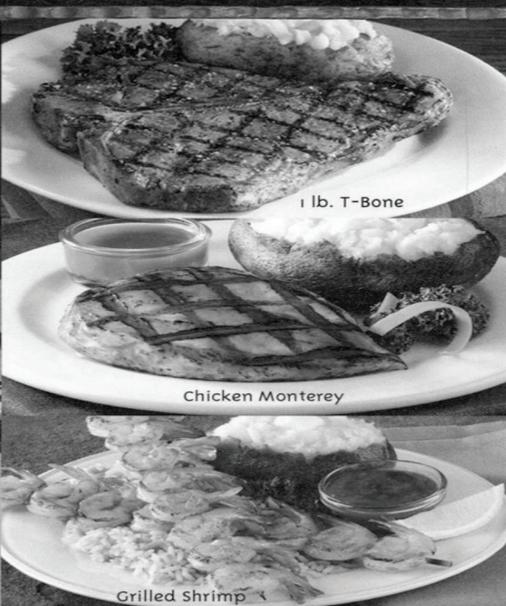
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Chris's Corner Cont. from Cover

Chris Voccio is a Niagara Falls City Council member and can be reached at ChrisVoccio@gmail.com.



Chris Voccio
NF City Councilman

believe we all know, but sometimes we let stereotypes cloud our thinking.

The city worker in question said, "there are city employees, and there are city workers." That is a profound statement.

I believe the vast majority of city employees are also city workers. They love their city, they want to serve it as best they can, and they want to help out where they can as they know the city is in a financial bind.

People who mock public employees or suggest they don't work hard are simply wrong. Sure, there are some employees who try to milk the system and take advantage of dual union/civil service protections. Mismanagement may cause inefficiencies that people may witness and then blame the employees, instead of man-

where I was coming from. They understand our financial predicament, and they want to be part of the solution, and not victims of the solution.

I was at a city facility shortly after the column was published and a city worker there told me that he and others agreed with my thinking, and he pointed out something that I



Niagara Falls City Hall.

agement. And of course there are union contracts that have work rules that sometimes make city employees seem inefficient.

On the issue of public employee unions, there's some confusion there as well. There are seven different unions that represent city workers. Making things even more confusing, there are two separate unions representing fire department employees and two separate unions represent police department employees. Each department has a union representing the front-line employees and a union representing the brass. When we lump all city employees together and comment on them, we do the hard working city workers a terrible injustice.

I wrote a column on the police and fire brass unions back in September of 2018, and took a good drubbing from the head of the police brass union. (In the interest of transparency I posted his broadside of me on my own Facebook page, so my supporters could see not only my column but also the other side of the story.)

Whatever you think about government employees, the vast majority of our city employees are working hard

every day to keep us safe, to keep our streets clear, to keep our local government operating. So let's not look at city workers with scorn. Let's celebrate them and thank them for what they do for us.

But let's also push to make government more efficient, to improve how we manage government functions and to renegotiate union contracts that cause government to be much more expensive than it needs to be.

The taxpayers simply can't afford inefficient government. City workers know it, and many want to help. Let's work together on solutions that streamline government and reduce expenses without resorting to threats and scare tactics about public safety.

With a new Republican majority Council coming in January, I'll push to form a bi-partisan Budget Committee to investigate expense reduction opportunities.

Working in a bi-partisan fashion with the new administration, we'll try to find savings that will help us get our spending under control. Or as I've been saying for a while now, we'll put government on a diet.

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BankOnBuffalo Opens New State-Of-the-Art Niagara Falls Branch



BankOnBuffalo held a ribbon cutting today to celebrate the opening of its most technologically-advanced and customer-centric branch and its first branch in the City of Niagara Falls.

Located at 7121 Niagara Falls Blvd, the new branch office is the first solely constructed for BankOnBuffalo, and has been designed as the “bank of the future,” offering state-of-the-art features to make financial transactions and information gathering easier for bank customers.

“This is truly a flagship branch for our Niagara Falls customers, who will be the first to experience the technological advancements that will become the hallmark of 21st Century banking,” said Martin T. Griffith, BankOnBuffalo president. “This dynamic setting for banking will be complemented by the highly personal approach BankOnBuffalo brings to helping area businesses and residents successfully address their financial issues.”

A major feature offered by the branch, and one of the first in Western New York, is an Enhanced Teller Machine (ETM), which provides customers with the convenience of talking with a banker via interactive video about their accounts before and after normal banking hours. They can use the drive-through lane to access the ETM to perform such transactions as making deposits, withdrawals, and loan payments, transferring funds and checking on account balances.

Other key customer amenities include ready access to a wireless café-style lobby, open teller areas, digital signage, cash recyclers, coin counter, and free coffee station. Drive-up banking and ample parking is also available.

In anticipation of this new branch office, BankOnBuffalo initially established a temporary Niagara County branch at 6947 Williams Road in the Town of Wheatfield.

That branch will continue to remain open for business during the launch of the new Niagara Falls branch.

“The reception we’ve received over the past 16 months of operation from Niagara County businesses and residents has been overwhelming and makes us excited about what this new permanent branch will do for the betterment of the Niagara Falls community,” Griffith said.

Leading a homegrown team at both local branches is Niagara County and Lewiston native, Annette Tomlin, who is serving as Niagara Regional community office manager for BankOnBuffalo.

The 3,400-square-foot Niagara Falls branch building was designed by LaBella Associates and its architect, Rich Nardini. It is part of a plaza developed by Consumer’s Beverages President Neil Kavanaugh. BRD Construction was the general contractor.

BankOnBuffalo began as a start-up division of CNB Bank with a loan origination office and in February 2017 opened a full-service bank branch on the first floor of the Electric Tower in downtown Buffalo. Since then, BankOnBuffalo has opened full-service branches in Orchard Park, Williamsville and Wheatfield, and created a private banking and wealth management service called BankOnBuffalo Investment Advisors.

Primary banking services available include consumer and business deposit accounts, real estate, commercial, industrial, residential and consumer loans and lines of credit, treasury services, online banking, mobile banking, merchant credit card processing, remote deposit, and accounts receivable handling.

BankOnBuffalo established its regional headquarters on the historic, renovated seventh floor of the Electric Tower in February 2019.



Reducing Risk for Lower Back Injuries

Back injuries, especially those affecting the lower back, are the most common injury in construction. Lower back pain is a leading cause of lost workdays and disability. Many construction workers develop lower back pain as a result of tasks that require excessive force, such as lifting, and prolonged awkward positions or repetitive motions, such as tying rebar. The resulting pain can range from a dull, constant, burning ache to a sudden, sharp sensation that radiates into the legs and feet and can be incapacitating. While it can be debilitating, lower back pain isn’t always serious. Rest, ice, compression and elevation (RICE) and over-the-counter medications, including acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, naproxen and aspirin can often help someone recover in a matter of weeks. Lower back pain often gets better on its own over time with proper rest. But sometimes lower back pain lingers. If it continues past three months, it’s considered chronic. In these instances, physical therapy and complementary health approaches, including chiropractic care and massage therapy, can often help people manage. Surgery is usually a last resort as there is no guarantee it will be effective. When it comes to lower back pain, there’s no silver bullet. If you experience chronic lower back issues, it’s wise to try different solutions and do what works best for you and your recovery.

As many people know from experience, sometimes lower back pain can seem to develop out of nowhere. This is especially true among older workers, those who are overweight and those with sedentary lifestyles. Sitting is especially hard on the lower back because it puts excess pressure on the joints, muscles and discs. Research finds that 80 percent of adults will experience lower back pain at some point in their lifetime. The first episode usually occurs between the ages of 30 and 50 and is often a byproduct of aging. As people grow older, flexibility and muscle tone decrease and discs dry out, making them brittle and more susceptible to injury. The senior years are also when common conditions that can lead to back pain, like sciatica and spinal stenosis, are more likely to develop. All workplace injuries, including lower back injuries, can potentially contribute to the opioid epidemic because workers who are suffering from pain are often prescribed these powerful drugs and some become addicted. When workers are aware of all of the non-addictive options for pain management, they can devise a treatment plan with their health care provider that does not involve being prescribed a highly addictive opioid, which could show up on a drug test and possibly get them taken off a job. Awareness of all the treatment options can reduce their risk for becoming addicted to opioids.

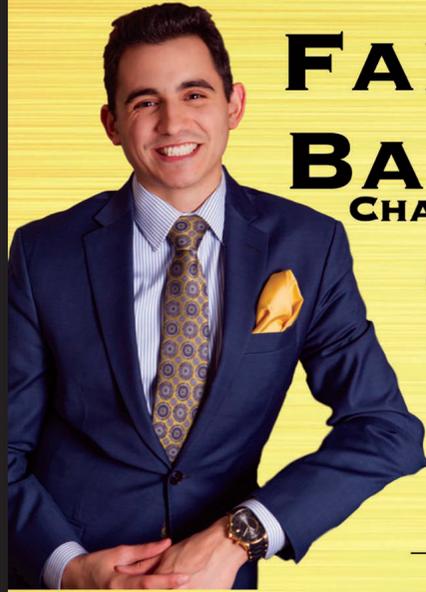
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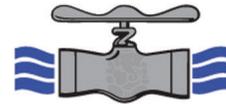
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