

THANK HEAVEN

TRANSFORMATION OF WILSON FARMS TO 7-ELEVEN IS WELL UNDERWAY LOCAL/3A



FIVE-SET THRILLER

MEDINA OUTLASTS NEWFANE IN N-O GIRLS VOLLEYBALL THRILLER SPORTS/1B



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Public mum on possible payroll cuts

CITY OF LOCKPORT: Few take up Tucker's call for suggestions on cuttable public services.

BY JOYCE M. MILES
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A second public hearing on the proposed 2012 city budget will be held later this month, once the Common Council has solid expense and income figures to work with, Mayor Michael Tucker said Wednesday.

The first hearing, held Wednesday night in Council chambers, was sparsely attended and featured comments from only three residents.

There's not much to say about the proposed budget at this point, as all the bottom lines depend on decisions yet to be made by the Council after conference with five city employee unions on the topic of salary and benefit reductions, according to Budget Director Richard Mullaney.

Mullaney handed out summaries of the general, water, sewer and refuse

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— Budget Director Richard Mullaney

budgets as they stand now, but did not deliver his traditional half-hour presentation highlighting the purpose of and cost drivers in various departments.

Only the refuse budget is not subject to change, since the numbers simply reflect the city's new contract with a private hauling company

and debt service on a bulk cart purchase. The numbers in the rest of the funds are in flux as department heads take on the Council's challenge to try cutting their own budgets 10 percent while Tucker pops the question to union leaders.

"Usually, I call (the budget presentation) a dog-and-

pony ... but the dog died and the pony ran away," Mullaney said. "I don't have much to present" ahead of Tucker's talks with the unions.

Of those, Tucker said he's "optimistic (the unions) will work with us."

On paper, the general fund budget shown Wednesday reflects \$24.5 million in expenses, and drives a city tax rate of \$17.98 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. That's 18 percent higher than this year's rate.

SEE CUTS ON PAGE 4A



ON FIRE

Amazon is taking on the iPad with their latest Kindle.

NATION, 9A

3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY

1 Residents of Hong Kong braced themselves Thursday for the arrival of a powerful typhoon that brought death and destruction when it tore through the Philippines earlier this week. Hong Kong's stock market closed Thursday and shops and businesses shuttered as Typhoon Nesat made its way across the South China Sea from the Philippines, where the storm killed 35 people and that left another 45 missing.

2 A federal judge ruled Wednesday that the man accused of wounding Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in a deadly shooting rampage can eventually be made mentally fit to stand trial and should stay at a prison hospital for four more months.

3 Federal health officials said Wednesday more illnesses and possibly more deaths may be linked to an outbreak of listeria in cantaloupe in coming weeks. So far, the outbreak has caused at least 72 illnesses — including up to 16 deaths — in 18 states, making it the deadliest food outbreak in the United States in more than a decade.

WHERE TO TURN

STATE LOTTERIES
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• Page designer: Jocelyn Delmar
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TIME FOR HEALTH



HERE'S THE THING: Above, Stacey Enseleit, left, from Aspire Family Dental supplies attendee Gail Montedoro with free dental floss and toothpaste. The Dale Association and the Town of Lockport held the annual Health Fair Wednesday. The event brought together local health care suppliers to inform residents of the many services available. The Olmstead Center for Sight supplied resources for vision services. Right, Attendee Dave Bowler from Lockport gets a glucose test from Phlebotomists Stephanie Birkmeier, center, and Kim Fenzel, both from Eastern Niagara Hospital.



PHOTOS BY JOE EBERLE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SCHOOLS

Suicide prompts spotlight, caution

BULLYING: Williamsville North student's death highlights risk of creating an icon.

BY CAROLYN THOMPSON
The Associated Press

BUFFALO — Taunted since grade school for hanging out with girls, 14-year-old Jamey Rodemeyer told his parents things were finally getting better since high school started. Meanwhile, on a blog his parents didn't know about, he posted increasingly desperate notes ruminating on suicide, bullying, homophobia and pop singer Lady Gaga.

A few days later, he hanged himself outside his home in Williamsville, quickly gaining a fame like that described in one of his idol's songs. Activists, journalists and Gaga herself seized on the suicide, decrying the loss of another promising life to bullying. His cherubic school picture pervaded the Internet and television, as well as a video he had posted earlier about his experience.



Jamey Rodemeyer

SEE SUICIDE ON PAGE 4A

Hochul calls for common sense job creation

BY NEALE GULLEY
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Congresswoman Kathy Hochul met with business leaders from Niagara County Wednesday morning, where she stressed the need to create jobs and streamline federal incentives for small businesses.

"A lot of corporations nationally are sitting on good capital but they're not pulling the trigger and hiring," Hochul told a group of business people gathered at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development for a

stockholders meeting. Hochul discussed ideas to strengthen communication between the region's businesses and government aimed at helping the same businesses add to their payrolls.

Saying business leaders "need more certainty from government," she criticized the difficulty in finding and filling out federal loan applications and connecting with programs designed to help businesses among the reasons for a lag in hiring.

"How do you plan (for the future) when you don't

know if that program is going to be there in the future?" she asked, explaining why federal programs are under-used.

But Hochul also cited successes along those lines, like federal assistance recently tied to Verizon and the recent \$25 million expansion of Pyrotek in Sanborn, a company that manufactures power systems for electric cars that will add 50 jobs with the help of \$11 million through the Department of Energy.

Citing her belief that



DOUG BENZ/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

JOBS DISCUSSION: Congresswoman Kathy Hochul met with the business community Wednesday at the Niagara County Industrial Development Authority to discuss how new jobs can be created in Western New York.

SEE HOCHUL ON PAGE 4A

Did you work at one of these plants?
 • Carborundum
 • Hooker Chemical
 • Ashland Oil
 • Niagara Mohawk Huntley Steam Station
 • Tonawanda Coke (formerly Semet Solvay)
 • Durez Plastics
 • Union Carbide - Linde Division

Have you or a loved one been diagnosed with Mesothelioma or an Asbestos-Related Disease?
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 New York's Mesothelioma Attorneys 716-849-0701