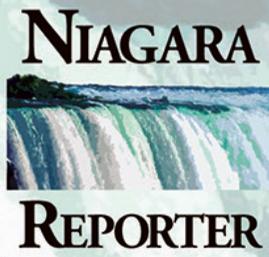


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THE NIAGARA REPORTER

FREE

December 23, 2020 - January 5, 2021

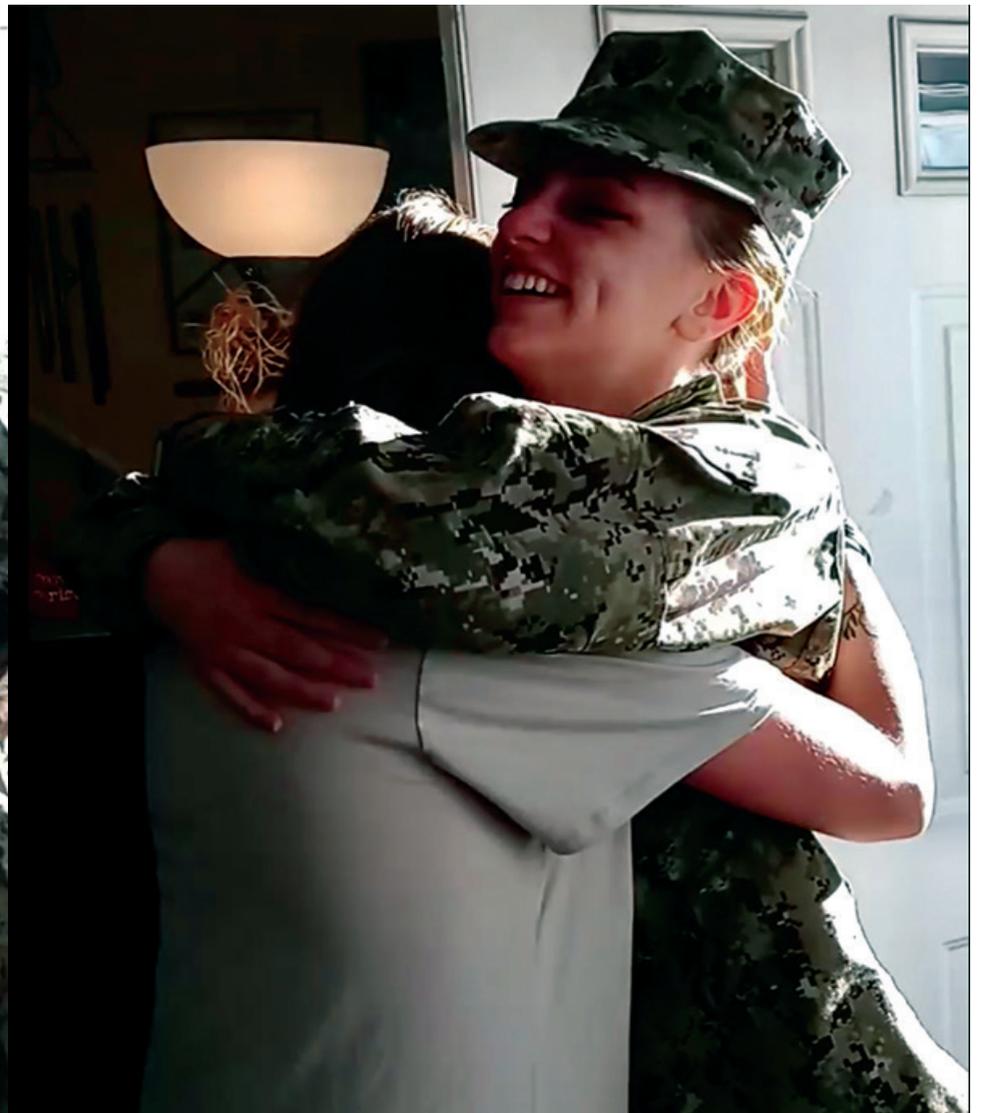
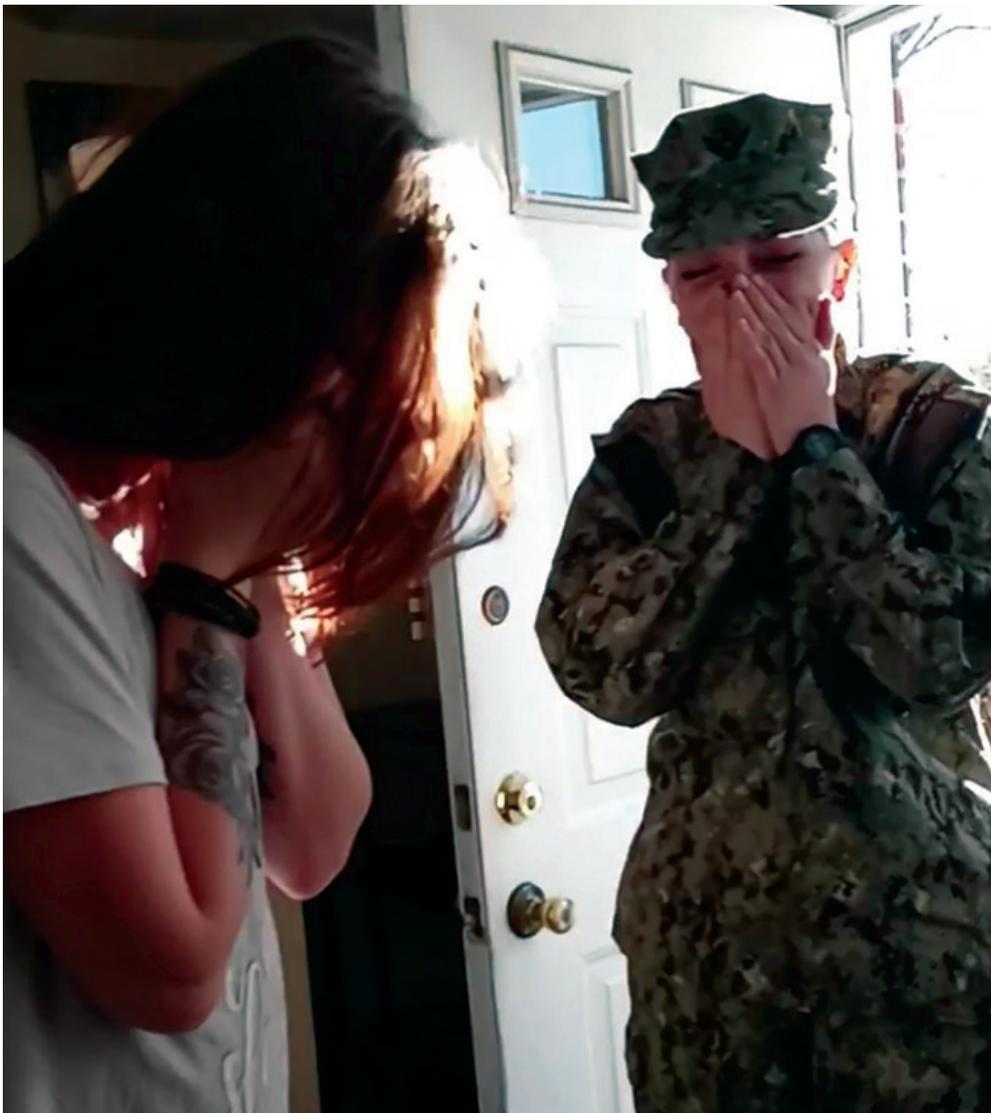
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TEARS FLOWING IN NIAGARA FALLS WITH SURPRISE MILITARY HOMECOMING

Abigail, who is in the Navy and stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Station, makes trip to Niagara Falls to surprise her youngest sister Stephanie who is pregnant and worried Abigail would not be home for Christmas.



(Cont. on pg. 2)



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NIAGARA FALLS

Tears Flowing in Niagara Falls with Surprise Military Homecoming Cont. from Cover

Staff Reporter

In a year filled with challenges, it is even more important to recognize moments that make life special.

This Christmas was different for Stephanie Snyder, of Niagara Falls, who is pregnant with her first child. Not only does Stephanie have to protect her unborn baby from exposure to COVID-19, but this is the first Christmas that she would spend apart from her sister, Abigail Snyder, who is in the Navy and stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Station.

Unbeknownst to Stephanie, Ab-



Abigail Snyder.

igail made a surprise trip to Niagara Falls on Friday, December 11th, 2020, to spend the holidays with her family.

Stephanie has no idea as Abigail knocks on the door and she answers. Stephanie's eyes are immediately filled with tears as her sister, and best friend, has returned home.

A link to the full video can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/niagaraaction/videos/434064151097767>

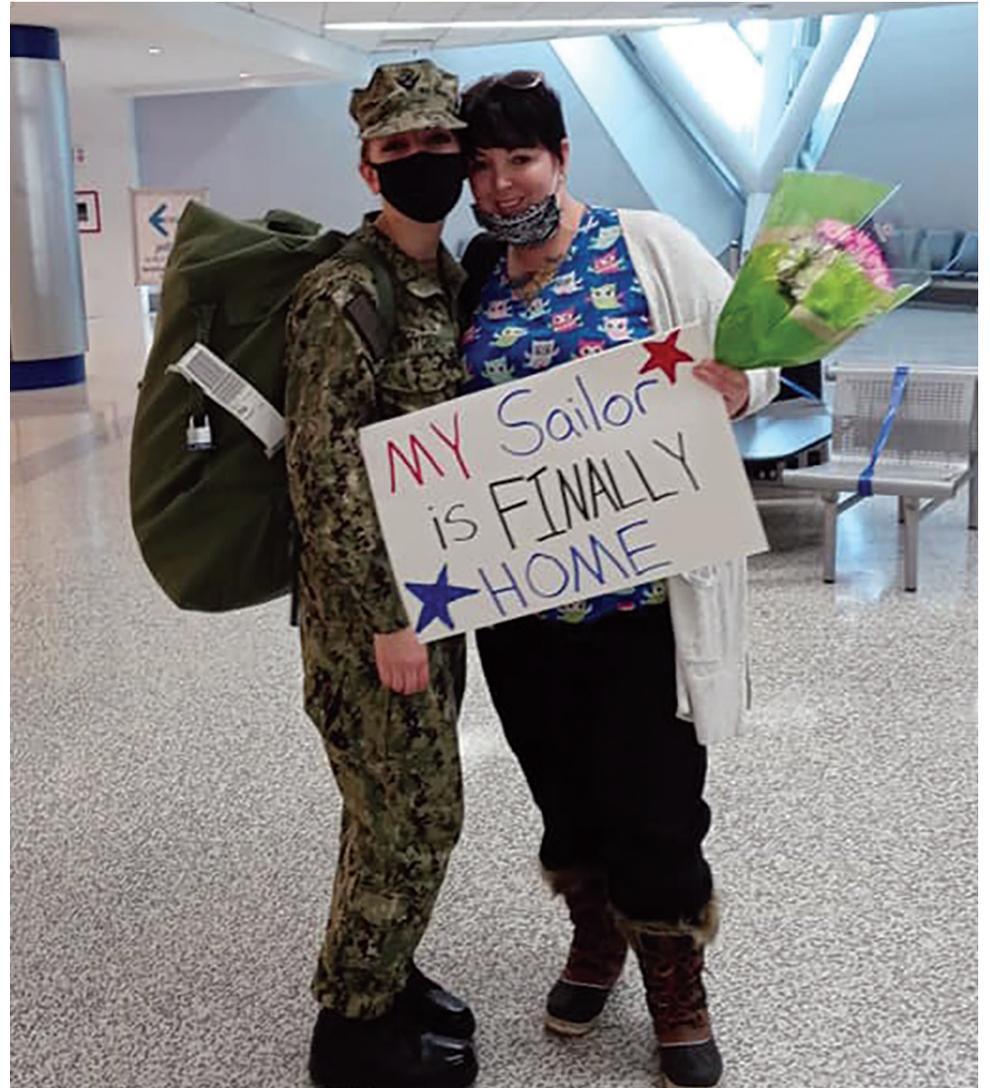
"This is the best Christmas present I could have asked for," said Stephanie.

Their mother, Beverly Parr, told the Niagara Reporter that her daughter Stephanie was having a hard time not having her sister there while being pregnant and depressed.

"We planned this surprise for almost a month," said Parr. "It was so hard keeping it secret."

When the day finally came for the surprise, Beverly said all she could feel was pure joy.

"That moment when she saw her sister, its like all the sadness went away in her face. Yes she cried, but they were happy tears. There's nothing on this planet that could have made that day any better."



Abigail Snyder and her mother Beverly Parr.

NIAGARA



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Lockport: Lockport City Court, County Courthouse, Save-A-Lot & Tops

Niagara Falls: BankOnBuffalo, City Hall (basement), The Como (restaurant, deli, & airport locations), DiCamillo Bakery (all locations), Dollar General (Portage, Military, & Pine) Frankie's Donuts, John Duke Center, Key Bank (800 Main St.), Memorial Medical Center (entrance to lobby), Michael's Restaurant, Marketside Restaurant, Mom's Restaurant, Niagara Towers, Niagara Falls Family Court, Niagara Falls Police Station, Niagara Falls Public Library (both locations), Rite Aid (7804 Buffalo Ave. & 4407 Military Rd.), Save-A-Lot, Spallino Towers, Supermarket Liquor, Tops (all locations), Tim Hortons (all locations), Wedge Liquors, Wrobel Towers, and 7-Eleven (Hyde Park, Pine and Niagara Falls Blvd.).

North Tonawanda: Bishop Gibbons, Broadway Hotel, Budwey's Market, Carousel Park Apartments, City Hall, DMV, Kimek's Tavern, Lou's Diner, Platter's Chocolates, Public Library, Olympia Restaurant, Tops, Roman Café & Save-A-Lot

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

Mayor Robert M. Restaino Issues Statement Regarding Congress' Incomplete Relief Package

Robert M. Restaino

At long last, Congress has negotiated an economic relief package, nearly six months after the House version was passed, and it terribly misses the mark. While there is no doubt that the families, businesses, schools, and other programs that made it into the relief package are all in need of help, it is impossible to explain why local governments were left out- except if you recognize that it was a callous political act.

As businesses were impacted by the pandemic, resulting in many being forced to close, perhaps permanently, leading to layoffs of workers and families suffering to make ends meet, local governments continued to provide essential services- public safety, public works, and sanitation, to name a few. Local governments were forced to terminate programs

for youth and seniors as a result of falling revenues due to the shut-downs caused by the pandemic. Public employees continued as essential workers to keep city-systems working all while suffering the same risks as all frontline workers.

Local governments provided frontline support to their residents and responded to federal and state directives in the management of the health crisis, and to be forgotten as an essential institution in this relief package is outrageous and short-sighted. As cities struggle to make their way out of the pandemic, more cuts to personnel and reductions in services become the only method Congress has given us to avoid tax increases to maintain services- increases that will further impact the working families Congress claims to care about.

While we know that there are those in Congress who understand



Niagara Falls Mayor Robert M. Restaino.

the plight of local governments, it is unfortunate that the voice for local government was ignored. It is not enough to suggest that this is just "a beginning" or a "first installment" and "The new administration and Congress know they need to do

more." These promises hold out as much hope as the comments over the last six months that "something has to get done." Ultimately local economies will continue to suffer if local governments continue to be ignored.

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center Administers First Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine



Dr. Rajinder Bajwa, Chief of the Infectious Disease Division at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, receives the COVID vaccine.



Schoellkopf Health Center resident Clotee Robinson is the first nursing home resident to receive the vaccine.

Staff Reporter

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center on Friday began administering COVID-19 vaccine to front-line hospital caregivers and residents and staff members at its nursing home, the Schoellkopf Health Center.

Receiving the first doses of the vaccine were Dr. Rajinder Bajwa, the chief of Memorial's Infectious Disease Division, and Schoellkopf Health Center resident Clotee Robinson.

A partial allocation of the vaccine was received by the medical center Thursday and is being distributed in accordance with state Department of Health instructions regarding the priority of recipients. It is hoped the balance of the allocated doses will be received from the Health Department next week.

The vaccine is being stored in a secured ultra-cold freezer at the required temperature of minus 70 degrees Celsius.

SOURCE: Water Board Will Pass Proposed 5.5% Rate Increase



Staff Reporter

The Niagara Falls Water Board is set to hold a public hearing on Monday, December 21st, 2020, regarding a 5.5% rate increase for residents which would go into effect in 2021.

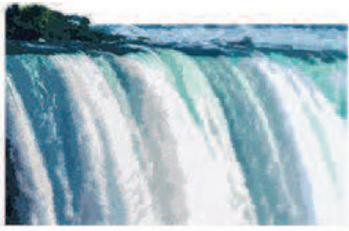
Although a vote is not expected on the rate increase until Monday, December 28th, the Niagara Reporter has confirmed from a source familiar with internal Water Board discussions that the proposed 5.5% rate increase will pass.

"It is going to pass," said the source.

This means that the rate increase will go into effect in 2021.

Unfortunately for residents of Niagara Falls, the Water Board is projecting rate increased over each of the next four years. This includes another 5.5% increase for 2022, 3.0% increase for 2023 and 3.0% for 2024. Overall, this would mean residents will face a rate increase of 17% between 2021 and 2024.

Projected			
2021	2022	2023	2024
5.5%	5.5%	3.0%	3.0%



THE CRIME

TOP HEADLINES



This puppy was stolen during a burglary on December 13th, 2020, from a home near 25th and Niagara Street in the City of Niagara Falls. As of Wednesday, December 16th, 2020, the puppy is still missing. Anyone with information about the whereabouts of the puppy should contact Officer David Bower NFPD at (716) 345-6431.



On Tuesday, December 15th, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. 49-year-old, Thomas James Anderson was stabbed near his home on the 600 block of 20th Street. At the time of this event, he was conscious and talking. He was taken by ambulance to ECMC for treatment.

Anderson was treated at ECMC. The following day, detectives attempted to follow-up with him at the hospital, but Anderson was no longer admitted as a patient at that time.

On December 17th, 2020, at approximately 4:30 a.m. Anderson died at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center Emergency Room. Following an autopsy, the death is being ruled as a homicide resulting from the injuries sustained in Tuesday's stabbing. At this time, the investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Niagara Falls Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division at 716-286-4553.



In the afternoon of Friday, December 18, 2020, Niagara Falls Police Department Patrol Officers responded to the LaSalle area of Niagara Falls for reports of a male suspect stealing packages from people's porches. Officers located the suspect, 27-year-old George Brinson, in the 7500 block of Buffalo Avenue. During the course of the subsequent investigation, Brinson was charged with stealing packages from homes in the 2600 block of Walnut Avenue and the 100 block of 57th Street. Brinson is also a suspect in a number of other porch thefts in the Lasalle and Deveaux areas. Officers were able to recover some stolen property and return it to the owners. Other property, including children's toys, has been recovered but the owners have not yet been identified. Consistent with the new state criminal justice reform laws Brinson was released on his own recognizance after arraignment in Niagara Falls City Court.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1600 block of 16th Street in the evening hours of Saturday, December 12th, after reports of a shooting. According to police, an individual was shot at least once and was transferred to the hospital for treatment.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 600 block of Pine Avenue on Tuesday, December 14th, 2020, after reports of a shooting. According to police, a Buffalo man was shot while walking across the street. He is expected to survive and the injuries are not fatal.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 600 block of 20th Street in the evening hours of Wednesday, December 15th, 2020, after reports of a stabbing.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 3700 block of Walnut Avenue on Monday, December 21st, 2020, where a man is now facing charges, including DWI, after a vehicle crash where a house was struck.



NIAGARA COUNTY

Signs of the Season: Christmas Decorations Across Niagara County Impress



Niagara County Director of Emergency Services Jonathan Schultz Recognized

Staff Reporter

Jonathan Schultz, Director of the Niagara County Department of Emergency Services, has been recognized by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) as being among the group of professionals who have maintained their Certified Emergency Manager® (CEM®) designation. The CEM® designation presently is held by only 2,000 men and women globally in the emergency management profession.

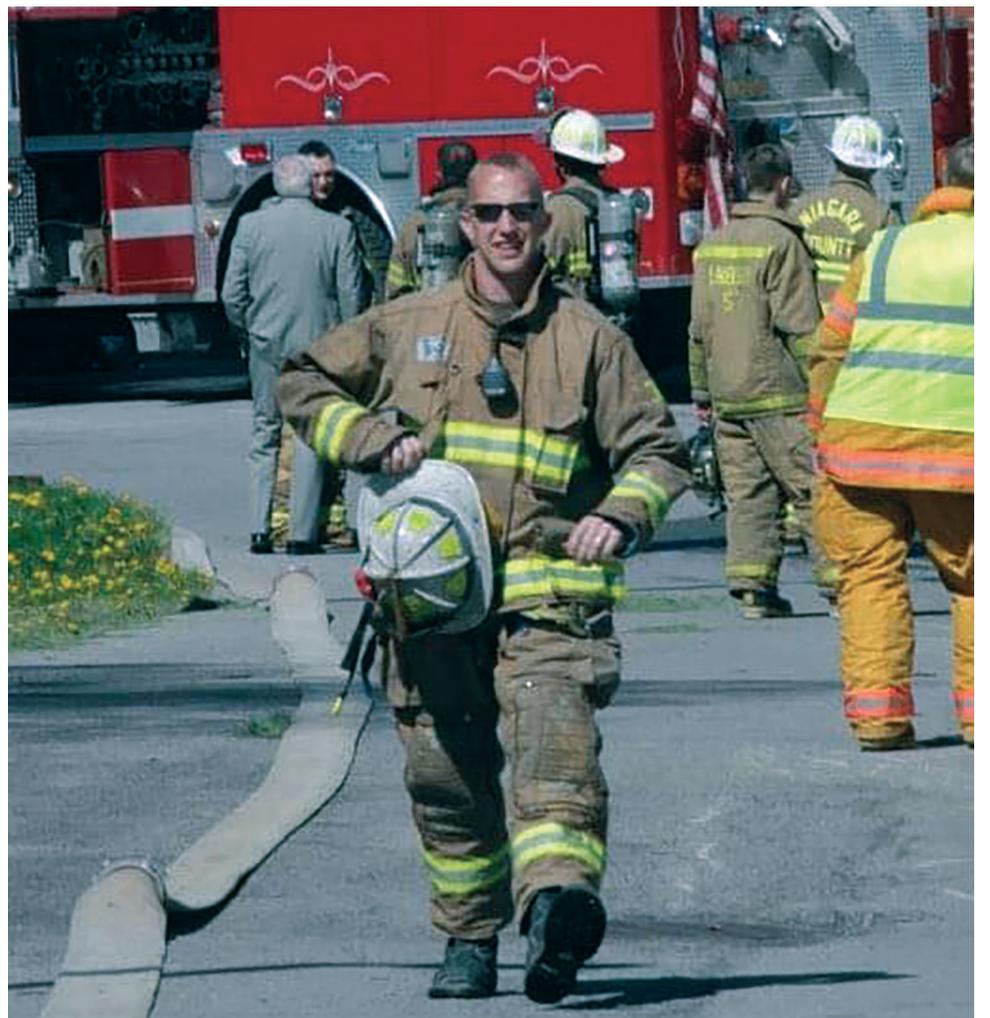
“Every Niagara County resident should be proud that we have someone of Jon’s talent and character running our Emergency Services Department,” said Niagara County Legislator Dave Godfrey, Chairman of the Community Safety and Security Committee. “This recognition proves what we already know, that be it battling Lake Ontario flooding, procuring the PPE and other supplies to deal with pandemic, or handling some other emergency,

there is no one better than Jon.”

The CEM® designation is the highest honor of professional achievement available from the association which represents professionals whose goals are saving lives and protecting property and the environment during emergencies and disasters.

Previously Jonathan qualified as a CEM® by submitting an extensive credentials package giving personal and professional background achievements and successfully completing a Management Essay and a written examination. In order to maintain certification, a person must continue a program of professional development over successive five-year periods.

“As the IAEM said in their letter to Niagara County, this is an honor neither easily earned nor maintained under normal circumstance, yet Jon was able to finalize his re-certification during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Godfrey. “That speaks volumes about his dedication.”



Niagara County Sheriff's Office Joins Santa and Mrs. Claus Delivering Gifts to Children



Reporter Staff

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office joined Santa and Mrs. Claus in delivering toys to children and supplies to Veterans and Military Families throughout Lockport and

North Tonawanda on Monday, December 21st, 2020.

This effort was made possible by SERV Niagara, Senator Rob Ort and local law enforcement partners including the Lockport City Police Department, New York State Police



and the City of North Tonawanda Police.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office will continue to parade

throughout the community traveling to Niagara Falls on Tuesday, December 22nd, 2020.



NORTH TONAWANDA

North Tonawanda Police Help Box of Hope Outreach Deliver Gifts

Staff Reporter

Over 200 North Tonawanda families will be getting help from Box of Hope again this Christmas. Every child in all of the registered households received a gift along with boxes of non-perishable food items delivered to their home on December 17th.

"This is about more than food and gifts," said Pastor Chad from Lumber City Church in North Tonawanda. "It's about showing our community what can happen when we unite and work together. Especially this year. The need is so great. We're excited that the North Tonawanda Police Department is lending a hand volunteering and making deliveries for us."

Individuals, families, schools, and organizations gather the food items and shop specifically for gifts for close to 500 children in close to 200 households in the North Tonawanda School District for the "Holiday Box Delivery" outreach project. This year over \$20,000 worth of help was being delivered to struggling families. Many of the

deliveries are done by the sponsors, but this year The North Tonawanda Police Department added a new look to some of these deliveries.

"Our department is glad to help," said Chief Tom Krantz of the NT Police. "We love this community. It's not often enough that we get the opportunity to knock on someone's door with good news and a smile and some presents and food. It's a great change of pace for our officers too. It's a great opportunity to show the people in our community that we're here to serve. Especially the kids."

Rieselman added: "We don't need to imagine anymore what can happen when an entire community rallies together to love their neighbor. It's a miracle that close to \$50,000 worth of goods gets distributed to struggling families in our city through the various projects we do. And not a penny spent shows up on any church, school, or city budget. It's amazing to see our dream coming true."

North Tonawanda Police were thrilled to assist in the deliveries throughout the community.



Merry Christmas

BEST WISHES

❄️ And a Very ❄️

Happy

New Year