

Economic Concerns

10-03-2016 THERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS FOR ROME LAB IN A DEFENSE BILL PASSED BY CONGRESS THIS WEEK. THE LATEST ROUND OF MILITARY FUNDING INCLUDES A FIFTEEN PERCENT BUDGET INCREASE FOR THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OPERATION AT GRIFFISS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE BILL ALSO PUSHES BACK THE NEXT ROUND OF BASE REALIGNMENTS AND CLOSINGS TO AT LEAST 2017, GIVING SOME BREATHING ROOM TO THE REMAINING MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ROME, INCLUDING THE NORTHEAST AIR DEFENSE SECTOR HEADQUARTERS AND DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE.

10-03-2016 A ROME FARM IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HARVEST A QUARTER MILLION POUNDS WORTH OF PRODUCE THIS WEEKEND. WAGNER FARMS PLANTED NINE ACRES WORTH OF SQUASH FOR CHARITY AT THE START OF THE SEASON. NOW THEY LITERALLY HAVE TONS OF THE STUFF, AND ARE LOOKING FOR HELP HARVESTING IT FOR CHARITY GROUPS. YOU'LL FIND MORE DETAILS AT THE WAGNER FARMS FACEBOOK PAGE.

10-04-2016 ANOTHER MILLION DOLLARS IN STATE FUNDING IS FLOWING INTO GRIFFISS BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY PARK. THE MONEY WILL HELP SUPPORT OPERATIONS OF THE CYBER RESEARCH INSTITUTE, WHICH IS GETTING 650-THOUSAND DOLLARS, AND THE CENTRAL NEW YORK DEFENSE ALLIANCE, IN LINE FOR 350-THOUSAND DOLLARS. BOTH NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS HELP PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYERS WITHIN THE PARK. THE MONEY WILL HELP FURTHER DEVELOP HIGH TECHNOLOGY ASSETS AT GRIFFISS, INCLUDING THE BURGEONING TEST SITE FOR UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS AND DRONE TECHNOLOGY.

10-05-2016 THE AREA'S GAS PRICES CONTINUE TO FLOAT AROUND RECORD LOWS, BUT THAT COULD ALL BE ABOUT TO CHANGE THANKS TO HURRICANE MATTHEW. THE MASSIVE STORM IS CURRENTLY ON TRACK TO HIT FLORIDA AND THAT COULD DISRUPT GAS PRODUCTION IN THE GULF STATES, DRIVING UP PRICES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE UTICA ROME AREA HAS SOME OF THE HIGHEST GAS PRICES IN THE STATE THANKS TO NEW YORK'S ZONE PRICING SYSTEM, BUT THE PRICE PER GALLON IS STILL HOLDING NEARLY TWO CENTS LOWER THAN IT WAS A YEAR AGO.

10-06-2016 HEMP COULD BECOME ONE OF UPSTATE NEW YORK'S BIGGEST CROPS. STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORS ARE FINALLY ALLOWING TEST CULTIVATION OF THE CROP FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. THE PLANT WAS ONCE A MAJOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT ACROSS THE NATION AND HERE IN THE MOHAWK VALLEY, USED FOR MAKING ROPES, FABRICS, AND ANIMAL FEED. BUT CULTIVATION WAS BANNED WHEN MARIJUANA BECAME A SCHEDULE 1 DRUG. INDUSTRIAL HEMP IS THE SAME PLANT AS CANNABIS, BUT FARMED STRAINS DON'T HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF THE T-H-C THAT PRODUCES MARIJUANA'S HIGH.

10-07-2016 HIGH TECHNOLOGY, AGRIBUSINESS, AND TOURISM. THAT'S THE FOUNDATION OF THE AREA'S ENTRY INTO THE GOVERNOR'S UPSTATE REVITALIZATION COMPETITION. TEN REGIONAL COUNCILS ARE VYING FOR THREE 500-MILLION DOLLAR AID PACKAGES. THE MOHAWK VALLEY'S PROPOSAL FOCUSES ON DEVELOPING THE AREA'S TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES, INCLUDING DRONE FACILITIES AT GRIFFISS INTERNATIONAL AND THE MARCY NANOCENTER. THAT'S COMPLEMENTED BY ENCOURAGING GREATER DIVERSITY IN THE AREA'S FARM PRODUCTS AND SPECIALTY PRODUCTION WHILE BUILDING AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY.

10-08-2016 THERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS AT GRIFFIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. PREMIER AVIATION SAYS IT'S SIGNED A TWO YEAR DEAL WITH ATLAS AIR TO HANDLE HEAVY MAINTENANCE ON THEIR FLEET OF BOING 747S, AND THEY'LL BE HIRING ADDITIONAL WORKERS TO HANDLE THE CONTRACT. THE NEWS COMES AFTER DOZENS OF WORKERS AT MIDAIR USA WERE LEFT JOBLESS AFTER THE COMPANY ENTERED BANKRUPTCY

10-10-16 MORE EXPENSIVE ELECTRICITY, CHEAPER NATURAL GAS. THAT'S THE PREDICTION FROM NATIONAL GRID FOR ENERGY COSTS FOR THIS WINTER'S HEATING SEASON. OFFICIALS SAY A STEADY SUPPLY OF NATURAL GAS AND FLAT DELIVERY RATES SHOULD SEE THOSE PRICES DIP TO A TEN YEAR LOW. AT THE SAME TIME CONSUMERS WILL BE PAYING ABOUT TEN DOLLARS MORE FOR ELECTRICAL POWER OVER THE SAME TIME PERIOD. FOR NOW NATIONAL GRID IS EXPECTING A RELATIVELY MILD WINTER SIMILAR TO LAST YEAR, AND NOT THE FRIGID TEMPERATURES OF THE 2013/2014 HEATING SEASON.

11-02-16

THE TIOGA DOWNS CASINO COULD BE OPEN BY THE END OF THIS MONTH, AND THAT COULD HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON THE UTICA ROME AREA. THE FINGER LAKES RACINO IS RUN BY THE SAME MANAGEMENT COMPANY AS VERNON DOWNS. DESPITE BEING THE LAST CASINO APPROVED BY STATE REGULATORS THEY'RE ON TRACK TO BE THE FIRST TO OPEN. GAMING TABLES HAVE ALREADYT BEEN INSTALLED AND NOW THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR THE STATE TO ISSUE LICENSES TO STAFF. WHAT'S TILL UP IN THE AIR IS HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT IT WILL HAVE ON THE TURNING STONE RESORT AND CASINO, THE AREA'S LARGEST EMPLOYER.

11-03-16

UTICA HAS ONE OF THE LARGEST IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS IN THE STATE, AND THE NATION. THAT'S ACCORDING TO A NEW REPORT FROM THE STATE COMPTROLLER, WHICH FOUND UTICA RANKED SECOND ONLY TO NEW YORK CITY IN THE PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS THAT ARE IMMIGRANTS. JUST OVER EIGHTEEN PERCENT WERE BORN IN ANOTHER COUNTRY, WHILE THAT NUMBER RISES TO 24 PERCENT WHEN FIRST GENERATION CHILDREN BORN IN THE UNITED

STATES ARE INCLUDED. NEARLY TWO THIRDS OF THE CITY'S IMMIGRANTS ARE FROM EUROPE, PRIMARILY BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA.

11-04-16

FILM AND TELEVISION PROJECTS SHOT AT THE STANLEY THEATER IN UTICA CAN GET A HEFTY TAX CREDIT. THE HISTORIC VENUE IS NOW A DESIGNATED FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION FACILITY UNDER RULES THAT ALLOW PRODUCERS TO GET UP TO 45 PERCENT OF THEIR EXPENSES REIMBURSED FROM THE STATE. OFFICIALS HOPE THAT WILL MAKE THE THEATER A DRAW FOR PROJECTS SHOPPING FOR A SHOOTING LOCATION. THE STANLEY HAS ALREADY MADE A NAME FOR ITSELF AS A REHEARSAL VENUE FOR TOURING COMPANIES OF BROADWAY PLAYS AND MUSICALS.

11-07-2016

IT MAY LOOK LIKE A FUTURISTIC VEHICLE OUT OF A VIDEOGAME, BUT THAT ODD LOOKING HELICOPTER FLYING AT GRIFFISS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS QUITE REAL. IT'S THE KAMAN K-MAX, A TWIN ROTOR AIRCRAFT THAT CAN BE FLOWN BY A PILOT OR UNDER IT'S OWN GUIDANCE SYSTEM. IT'S CURRENTLY UNDERGOING TESTING AT THE UNMANNSED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS TEST FACILITY AT GRIFFISS. RESEARCHERS ARE SEEING HOW EFFECTIVE IT IS AT NAVIGATING INSIDE COMMERCIAL AIRSPACE WHILE FIGHTING FIRES OR DELIVERING CARGO.

11-08-2016

THERE ARE SOME BIG CHANGES COMING TO THE TURNING STONE RESORT AND CASINO. OFFICIALS HAVE ANNOUNCED A NEW, TWENTY MILLION DOLLAR RENOVATION PROGRAM. THAT INCLUDES NEXT WEEK'S ROLLOUT OF CASINO BLU, A SMOKER FRIENDLY GAMING AREA FEATURING SLOTS AND TABLE GAMES. THE FACILITY IS ALSO ADDING SIX NEW RESTAURANTS AND REMODELING ALL OF THE ROOMS AT THE TOWER HOTEL. THE TURNING STONE IS CURRENTLY ONEIDA COUNTY'S LARGEST EMPLOYER.

11-10-2016

THE CONTROVERSIAL RAISES FOR ONEIDA COUNTY OFFICIALS VANISHED YESTERDAY. FOR MONTHS LEGISLATORS HAVE BEEN TAKING HEAT FOR SETTING THEMSELVES UP FOR PAY INCREASES AT THE SAME TIME THEY UPPEDED THE PAY OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE, SHERIFF, AND CLERK. BUT A LAST MINUTE AMENDMENT PULLED THE MONEY FOR THE RAISES FROM THE BUDGET YESTERDAY, LEADING TO SOME VERY FRUSTRATED LEGISLATORS. THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PAY HIKES UNTIL NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET.

11-11-2016

30 MILLION DOLLARS. THAT'S HOW MUCH THE STATE IS SPENDING TO BUILD UP A STATE OF THE ART AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BETWEEN GRIFFISS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND SYRACUSE. GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCED THE MONEY YESTERDAY, SAYING IT'S AN INVESTMENT IN MAKING THE AREA OF WORLD CLASS SITE FOR DRONE DEVELOPMENT. THE SYSTEM WILL LINK TOGETHER RADAR AND OTHER SENSORS TO TRACK AND CONTROL EVERYTHING FLYING WITHIN THE 50 MILE LONG CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES.

11-14-2016

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR BURROWS PAPER IN LITTLE FALLS? THAT'S THE QUESTION BEING ASKED AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT THE COMPANY'S LITTLE FALLS OPERATIONS ARE BEING PURCHASED BY TWIN RIVERS PAPER COMPANY. FOR DECADES BURROWS HAS BEEN THE LARGEST EMPLOYER IN LITTLE FALLS. BUT LOCAL OFFICIALS SAY THEY'VE BEEN REASSURED THE NEW OWNERS DON'T PLAN ANY MAJOR CHANGES, AND MAY ACTUALLY EXPAND OPERATIONS. THE SALE WILL BE FINALIZED NEXT MONTH.

11-15-2016

ONE OF THE LARGEST SOLAR GENERATION PROJECTS IN THE STATE COULD SOON BE GOING UP IN HERKIMER. OFFICIALS WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD ARE CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL FROM SOLAR CITY FOR A ONE MEGAWATT SOLAR FARM ON THE DISTRICT'S PROPERTY ON GROS BOULEVARD IN EAST HERKIMER. THE COMPANY WILL CONSTRUCT THE MASSIVE SOLAR FIELD AT NO COST TO THE DISTRICT IN RETURN FOR A LONG TERM POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT. THE PROJECT WILL PROVIDE POWER TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND BUS GARAGE FOR A FIXED PRICE OVER TWENTY YEARS.

11-16-2016

A BRAND NEW GROCERY STORE IS COMING TO DOWNTOWN UTICA. MAYOR ROBERT PALMIERI SAYS THE PRICE RITE CHAIN WILL BE OPENING A FULL SERVICE STORE AT 501 BLEECKER STREET. THE COMPANY PLANS TO SPEND SEVERAL MILLION DOLLARS RENOVATING THE EXISTING BUILDING. WHEN THE STORE OPENS NEXT SPRING IT'S EXPECTED TO EMPLOY ROUGHLY 85 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES. CITY OFFICIALS SAY THE PROJECT IS A BIG STEP TOWARD REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN, WHICH HASN'T HAD A FULL SERVICE GROCERY STORE IN DECADES.

11-17-16

THE STATE HAS APPROVED A MOHAWK VALLEY LAND BANK. OFFICIALS SAY THAT OPENS THE DOOR TO A UNIFIED APPROACH TO REDEVELOPING BLIGHTED PROPERTIES ACROSS THE AREA. THE LAND BANK WILL TAKE CONTROL OF ABANDONED AND TAX-DELINQUENT LAND AND BUILDINGS, MAKE SURE THEY'RE PROPERLY MAINTAINED, AND THEN CONNECT PROPERTIES WITH BUYERS. THE ORGANIZATION WILL OPERATE AS A PUBLIC AUTHORITY, LEAD BY A BOARD OF DIRECTORS DRAWN FROM PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES.

11-18-2016

HOW WILL THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IMPACT ROME'S DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE? THAT'S THE QUESTION LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE ASKING. THE FACILITY EMPLOYS CLOSE TO A THOUSAND WORKERS HANDLING PAYROLL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS FOR THE MILITARY. BUT IT'S FACED POTENTIAL DOWNSIZING OVER THE LAST DECADE AS THE ARMY CONSIDERS BRINGING THOSE FUNCTIONS IN HOUSE. MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL NEW YORK DEFENSE ALLIANCE SAY THEY'RE GEARING UP TO KEEP DFAS INTACT UNDER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.

11-21-2016

THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES USED BY SUNY POLYTECHNIC WILL SOON BE UNDER THE FULL CONTROL OF EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT. THAT'S ACCORDING TO THE HEAD OF THE STATE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION. FOR YEARS FULLER ROAD MANAGEMENT AND AND FORT SCHUYLER MANAGEMENT HAVE OPERATED WITH LITTLE STATE OVERSIGHT, BUT THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE. CHANGES IN THE BYLAWS WILL MAKE BOTH SUBJECT TO THE STATE'S FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAWS, PUT THEIR BOARDS UNDER STATE CONTROL, AND ALLOW OPEN AUDITS OF THEIR FINANCES.

12-04-2016

FEDERAL INSTALLATIONS IN ROME ARE SAFE UNTIL AT LEAST 2019. THE DEFENSE BILL JUST PASSED BY CONGRESS BARS ANY BASE REALIGNMENTS OR CLOSURES INTO 2018. THAT GIVES THE DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE, ROME RESEARCH LABORATORIES, AND EASTERN AIR DEFENSE SECTOR A REPRIEVE FROM ANY POTENTIAL CONSOLIDATION OR ELIMINATION. THE SO-CALLED BRAC PROCESS WAS USED TO SHUT DOWN GRIFFISS AIR FORCE BASE IN 1995, COSTING THE AREA HUNDREDS OF JOBS.

12-06-2016

THE UTICA SCHOOL OF COMMERCE IS SHUTTING DOWN AFTER OVER A CENTURY. OFFICIALS WITH THE PRIVATE, FOR PROFIT SCHOOL MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY, SAYING OPERATIONS WOULD END ON DECEMBER 23RD. THE MOVE COMES AFTER ENROLLMENT DROPPED TO UNSUSTAINABLE LEVELS AFTER HITTING A PEAK BACK IN 2010. STUDENTS WILL BE OFFERED HELP TRANSFERRING THEIR CREDITS TO OTHER COLLEGES IN TIME FOR NEXT SEMESTER. ALL OF THE SCHOOLS INSTRUCTORS AND STAFF, OVER FIFTY EMPLOYEES, WILL BE LET GO.

12-07-2016

UTICA IS ONE OF SIXTEEN UPSTATE MUNICIPALITIES THAT WILL BE GETTING WORKERS FROM THE STATE'S NEW EMPIRE CORP PROGRAM. THAT EFFORT USES STATE FUNDS TO PAY FOR MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL AMERICORP PROGRAM TO ASSIST LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. EMPIRE CORP STAFFERS WILL HELP RESIDENTS LIVING UNDER THE POVERTY LINE CONNECT WITH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, EDUCATION, AND

HEALTH PROGRAMS. THE 6.7 MILLION DOLLAR PROGRAM IS ALREADY FUNDED FOR THREE YEARS

12-08-2016

25 MILLION DOLLARS. THAT'S HOW MUCH MONEY IS UP FOR GRABS IN THE LATEST ROUND OF NEW YORK'S REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION. LOCAL OFFICIALS WILL FIND OUT LATER TODAY IF THEY'RE ONE OF FIVE AREAS DESIGNATED AS A TOP PERFORMER IN THE FACE OFF. IF THEY ARE THEY'LL BE IN LINE FOR 25 MILLION IN GRANT FUNDING IN ADDITION TO 15 MILLION DOLLARS IN EXCELSIOR TAX CREDITS TO HELP ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES. THE WINNERS OF THE COMPETITION WILL BE ANNOUNCED THIS AFTERNOON.

12-09-2016

THE MOHAWK VALLEY WILL BE GETTING OVER 81 MILLION DOLLARS IN STATE AID. THE MONEY COMES AFTER THE AREA WAS JUDGED ONE OF FIVE TOP PERFORMERS IN THE STATE'S REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION. DURING A PRESENTATION IN ALBANY YESTERDAY GOVERNOR CUOMO PRAISED THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, CREDITING IT WITH FUELING AN ECONOMIC TURNAROUND FROM SIXTY YEARS OF DECLINE. THE AWARD WILL FUND PROJECTS RANGING FROM INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE MARCY NANOCENTER SITE TO LOFT APARTMENTS IN DOWNTOWN UTICA

12-15-2016

THE BATTLE OVER RIDE SHARING SERVICES LIKE UBER AND LYFT IS ESCALATING ONCE AGAIN. THIS TIME THE ISSUE IS SAFETY. THE STATE'S POWERFUL TAXI LOBBY HAS BEGUN RUNNING AN AD THAT SAYS ALL UBER DRIVERS SHOULD HAVE TO BE FINGERPRINTED, THE SAME AS TAXI DRIVERS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT HAVE HAILED THE SAFETY OF RIDE SHARING SERVICES, POINTING TO REAL TIME G-P-S TRACKING AND THE ABILITY FOR RIDERS TO SHARE THEIR ROUTES WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS.

12-19-2016

WHAT HAPPENS NOW? THAT'S THE QUESTION BEING ASKED AFTER FRIDAY'S BOMB SHELL THAT AUSTRIAN COMPANY A-M-S CANCELLED THE MARCY NANOCENTER PROJECT. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS SAY THEY'RE ALREADY LOOKING TO FIND A REPLACEMENT, BUT AT THIS POINT THE AREA HAS NOTHING TO SHOW FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS OF WORK AND TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS SPENT DEVELOPING THE SITE. STATE OFFICIALS MAY HAVE MORE TO SAY ABOUT THE PROJECT'S COLLAPSE LATER TODAY.

12-20-2016

THE MARCY NANOCENTER PROJECT ISN'T DEAD. THAT'S ACCORDING TO HOWARD ZEMSKY, THE HEAD OF EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT. HE TRAVELED TO UTICA YESTERDAY TO ASSURE LOCAL OFFICIALS THAT THE LOSS OF

AUSTRIAN COMPANY A-M-S WASN'T A DEATH KNELL FOR THE PROJECT. CLOSE TO HALF A BILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEVOTED TO THE PROJECT, AND SITE DEVELOPMENT WILL CONTINUE THROUGH NEXT YEAR. ZEMSKY SAID E-S-D IS ALREADY LOOKING FOR ANOTHER COMPANY TO REPLACE A-M-S AS THE SITE'S PRIMARY TENANT.

12-21-2016

BOOZE IS TURNING INTO BIG BUSINESS IN NEW YORK. GOVERNOR CUOMO IS TOUTING THE SUCCESS OF THE STATE'S SMALL DISTILLERIES, WHICH HAS SEEN AN EXPLOSION IN THE NUMBER OF PRODUCERS. IN 2011 ONLY TEN FARM DISTILLERIES WERE MANUFACTURING BEER, CIDER, WINE, OR SPIRITS. THAT NUMBER HAS NOW GROWN TO 107, AND THE BESPOKE BOOZE BUSINESS HAS BECOME A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY. AND IT'S NOT JUST SALES OF BOOZE DRIVING THAT GROWTH. FARM BREWERS HAVE BECOME A MAJOR TOURISM DRAW FOR VISITORS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

12-23-2016

355 MILLION DOLLARS. THAT'S HOW MUCH MONEY ROME LABS PUMPS INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY ACCORDING TO A NEW REPORT. EIGHT HUNDRED PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OPERATION, WHICH STUDIES WAYS TO IMPROVE THE AIR FORCE'S COMMAND AND CONTROL AND CYBER WARFARE CAPABILITIES. IN ALL OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS IN DEFENSE SPENDING FLOWS INTO ROME LABS FROM VARIOUS DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CONTRACTS.

12-28-2016

LOCAL GAS PRICES ARE RISING ONCE AGAIN. AFTER HITTING A LOW OF 1-69 A GALLON BACK IN FEBRUARY WE'RE RINGING OUT 2016 WITH THE HIGHEST PRICES OF THE YEAR. THE LOCAL AVERAGE IS HOVERING AT 2-43 A GALLON, JUST A HAIR UNDER THE STATEWIDE AVERAGE OF 2-45. THAT'S A JUMP OF FOUR CENTS A GALLON OVER THE LAST WEEK, AND AROUND TWENTY CENTS MORE THAN WE WERE PAYING AT THE SAME TIME LAST YEAR. ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, PRICES SHOULD STABILIZE AS SUPPLIES OF WINTER BLEND GASOLINE BUILD UP.