

QUARTERLY ISSUES AND PROGRAM LIST
STATION: WEBR AM/FM
JULY 01, 2023 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

View Point is a 60 minute locally produced program that airs Monday – Friday, 9am – 10am Hosted by Tom Darro covering various topics of the day, serving both Erie & Niagara Counties Community Issues include education, economy, health care, crime, environment, and tourism

DATE: July 05, 2023
GUEST: Chris Voccio – Niagara County Legislator – 6th District
DESCRIPTION: Mr. Voccio discussed the redrawing of legislative districts in Niagara County and how they change every ten years per U.S. Constitution. Anything with a boundary must change to conform to the new census. May change where people go to vote. Check the card you receive from the Board of Elections. Also addressed were Medicare benefits and how more of the burden shifted to the counties. Money that normally would come down from the state to help the counties pay for Medicare funding will now be held back by the state and taxpayers at the county level would have to fund it, however, the county has a surplus and is fiscally well-managed, so it won't impact Niagara County at this time. The Legislator commented on asylum seekers and how Niagara County declared a county of emergency to prevent them from coming from New York city because they do not have the resources to care for them. There is already a homeless population to care for that needs lodging and they want to take care of them before welcoming new refugees from other countries. He stated that New York State does not have residency requirements, so if you come to this state you are covered by Medicaid.

DATE: July 19, 2023
GUEST: Anthony Restaino – Niagara Falls City Administrator
DESCRIPTION: He commented on the Walnut and Ferry Road projects and how the city was not asked for input on the redesign of the two. No room for emergency vehicles and no target date for completion. Mr. Restaino addressed the Sheriff Traffic cameras in the city and how they will be used for monitoring criminal activity and not traffic infractions. He discussed projects now that COVID is over. The city is looking for replacements for the SPCA who will no longer be providing animal control services and for contractors for garbage removal. Callers were concerned with the issue of lots with high grass and what the Department of Public Works can do. Their procedure is to notify the property owners to clean up debris and if not done; the cost is added to the owner's taxes. Mr. Restaino reviewed the Hotel Niagara and Old St. Mary's hospital projects and the lack of progress on either of the two dormant properties. He expressed the success of the 311-system implemented by the city for reporting potholes and getting them filled.

DATE: **July 27, 2023**
GUEST: Mike Filicitti – Niagara County Sheriff
DESCRIPTION: Sheriff Filicitti talked about the new Police Academy at the NCCC grounds. It is a 15,000 square foot building, with four classrooms. They will have a “use of force” simulator which has thousands of scenarios offering training in communication, recognizing threats, handling stress, de-escalation skills, and use of force guidelines. He also addressed the use of traffic cameras in Niagara County. Location of the cameras is based on population, traffic, and crime rate in different areas. They will have access to other police departments that also have cameras. Cameras only take pictures of back license plates and will only send alerts if the car or person in car is on the police hot list. Data is only kept for 30 days. The Sheriff also commented on No Bail reform and his continued disagreement with state officials on no bail laws currently in effect. He explained that in N.Y. State a person can violently resist arrest and get an appearance ticket or be detained briefly and R.O.R. and how criminals feel bold because the system allows them to take advantage of it. He expressed his desire for changes in the current no bail laws.

DATE: **July 28, 2023**
GUEST: Joseph Jasyrzemski – Niagara County Clerk
DESCRIPTION: Mr. Jasyrzemski discussed the Purple Heart Ceremonies honoring all Niagara County Purple Heart recipients that will take place on August 6th. The day’s events will include American Legion bands, the local Vietnam chapter, a formal ceremony, and guest speaker Rocky Bleier. The County Clerk also reviewed new changes regarding pistol permits. Permits in NYS are obtained on-line, and you won’t receive a new card. You will have to recertify every 3 years instead of 5 years. If you want a new card, you must go to the clerk’s office, however, it is not required. Just writing your new expiration date on your card is acceptable. He also covered the topic of appointments at the DMV. People with appointments are taken ahead of walk-ins. There has been more positive feedback than negative – people love scheduled appointments and comment on the good customer service they are receiving.

DATE: **August 03, 2023**
GUEST: Henry Wojtaszek – CEO Batavia Downs
DESCRIPTION: Mr. Wojtaszek discussed how revenues have increased due to larger attendance at Batavia Downs Gaming entertainment including both outdoor and indoor concerts, events, gaming, horse racing and clubhouse, and the hotel. They have seen a decline in OTBs with on-line sports betting (i.e., FanDuel and DraftKings). There are more ways to bet than going to an OTB. He explained how Western Regional OTB shares its profits with the municipalities of the counties and cities. \$13 million dollars was given back in the last two years. A new board of directors has been appointed. Mr. Wojtaszek commented on how they are getting good reviews for their customer service and friendly staff, providing a pleasant experience. They are open 20 hours a day and he suggested visiting their website for a complete list of concerts and events.

DATE: August 10, 2023
GUEST: Heidi Wichlacz – Social Security - Local Office Representative
DESCRIPTION: Ms. Wichlacz discussed full retirement age changes. While it is currently 66 and several months, some are waiting until 70 for the “delayed retirement credit”. People who have other means of income to rely on from full retirement age to 70 would receive an 8% return per year for not taking the benefits early. She also explained that benefits are based on the best 35 years of employment. Mr. Wichlacz covered “spousal” benefits as they pertain to those who are divorced or widowed. Since everyone’s circumstances are unique, it is recommended that you make an appointment for a personal interview. She encouraged those listening to make an appointment at the Social Security office rather than walk in. She explained that you can set up an account at any age so you can monitor your benefits as they grow over the years.

DATE: August 16, 2023
GUEST: Robert Restaino – Mayor – City of Niagara Falls
DESCRIPTION: The Mayor discussed the shelter issues and that the SPCA is no longer under contract. The issue of cameras on private property infiltrating neighbors’ property. The city is seeking legislation to prevent prying cameras from one homeowner’s property to another’s property. He covered code enforcement on private and commercial properties in disrepair and the procedures involved. First, cite people for not keeping up their property. If nothing is done, the city will clean up the property and then bill the owner. The city has added two entry-level positions – Building and Safety inspectors to go out and cite properties that violate the codes. Code enforcement goes through the courts to set fines. The Mayor gave updates on the Centennial Park project. If all goes well, architecture and design will happen in 2024 and then the park would be completed around 2025. There will be a multi-purpose Event Center for sports and concerts. Mr. Restaino talked about how all municipalities working with Niagara County, Emergency Services, NYS Power Authority, and First Responders all participated to create strategies and put an emergency plan in place to use in the event of a disaster.

DATE: August 25, 2023
GUEST: Mark Laurie – Niagara Falls School Superintendent
DESCRIPTION: Mr. Laurie reviewed a rundown of the activities planned for the 2023-24 school year which begins in two weeks. He commented on the issues that are being addressed regarding migrant students in the city including the need for special language teachers to handle the language barrier. Another concern regarding students is the use of cell phones in schools. Should they be permitted? They are considering a program in one of the district schools to eliminate cell phones to study the reaction – pros and cons. Mr. Laurie also addressed the need for school bus drivers and how to apply.

DATE: **September 01, 2023**
GUEST: Mike Filicitti – Niagara County Sheriff
DESCRIPTION: Sheriff Filicitti described his department's work on the 2024 budget, a process that is currently underway before it is presented to the County Manager and the Legislature for approval. He spoke about the 9-11 stair climb and how the Sheriff's department will be taking part in the event along with first responders. Participants will be in full gear walking along the stairs in the lower gorge to commemorate the events of 9-11. They will also take part in local parades including the Peach Festival parade on September 9th. The Sheriff also talked about how their office will be in local schools again this fall to educate students on the hazards of drug use, smoking, and vaping.

DATE: **September 05, 2023**
GUEST: Chris Voccio – Legislator – 6th District
DESCRIPTION: Mr. Voccio talked about his door-to-door campaign and the issues voters want to discuss – crime in the area, torn-up sidewalks, rundown properties, abandoned houses, blight in the area. He discussed another concern – illegal immigrants coming into Niagara County. He explained that the county cannot afford to take in more people when there are so many people in this community who are in need. That they don't have a budget to support more coming from New York City. He commented on the New York State changes to Medicaid and since the state is more lavish with their benefits, the county will end up paying more for benefits, and as a result, the taxpayers will pay more as well. Mr. Voccio also spoke about the county's police academy being built at the NCCC campus. Construction is underway with completion set for next fall.

DATE: **September 06, 2023**
GUEST: Gerry Gismondi – Chairman – 65th Annual Niagara County Peach Festival
DESCRIPTION: The Chairman presented an outline of events for the 65th annual Niagara County Peach Festival to be held in Academy Park in Lewiston. On Thursday, peach tasting with Mary Alice Demler as the Mistress of Ceremonies. Entertainment will be Nerds Gone Wild. On Friday, a cheerleading competition, and Brothers Band. On Saturday, a parade will take place with marching bands. Terry Buchwald will perform his Elvis Tribute. On Sunday, the Peach Queen Finals. There will be a memorial tribute to Gerald I. Wolfgang who passed last year and who volunteered at the festival and organized many of the events over the past 52 years. Mr. Gismondi talked about all the wonderful volunteers and sponsors including Tops Markets who provide parking and shuttles along with Artpark and Greyline. Additional sponsors are WGRZ, 97 Rock, Tim Horton's and others. He spoke about how the Lewiston Kiwanis Club raises money from the festival and donates it to various charities including hospitals, local schools, youth football, and so many more.

DATE: **September 12, 2023**
GUEST: Joseph Jaszyrzemski – Niagara County Clerk
DESCRIPTION: Mr. Jaszyrzemski discussed the state DMV proposal to get dangerous drivers off the road by increasing the number of points associated with hazardous driving and adding points to previously point-free offenses. Tougher regulations for speeding in work zones, drug related violations, and driving without a license, to name a few. He also covered the topic of background checks on people buying a gun or ammunition. The background check would require a fee from the buyer every time a purchase was made. Fees would go to the State Police, and this has already gone into effect in New York State. Mr. Jaszyrzemski spoke about changes in New York State regarding license and registration renewal. Beginning in 2024, the county will receive a flat 10% of that cost regardless of how the renewal was made – by mail or at the DMV. He also gave an update on Notary renewal and electronic notary signatures. The renewal will no longer be done through the County Clerk’s office but must be done online through the Department of State.

DATE: **September 19, 2023**
GUEST: Bob Koshinski – President of All Services WNY
DESCRIPTION: Chef’s Restaurant will celebrate 100 years of food and friendship on September 22, 2023. Mr. Koshinski produced a documentary film to be screened at the North Park Theater on the eve of the anniversary. He interviewed 54 people for the film, which took six months to complete. The feature will include the history of Chef’s told by the Bilittier family featuring over fifty cameos from well-known customers. The proceeds from the night will go to Joey – the “Buffalo blizzard survivor” and will honor the woman who took him in and cared for him during the storm.

DATE: **September 20, 2023**
GUEST: Anthony Restaino – Niagara Falls City Administrator
DESCRIPTION: The Administrator discussed the status of properties in the city. He commented on the empty stores on Pine Avenue – how the city is actively looking for a new tenant for the old CVS building. Also, a study is being done to look at how to revitalize the city. They are getting bids for demolition for 12 – 14 buildings that are city properties. He explained how the process is different for privately owned properties that are deemed unsafe. The city must give owners the opportunity to correct whatever violations they determined to make the property a safety hazard. Mr. Restaino covered the procedures to deal with property owner violations. First, Code Enforcement officers issue a code violation letter to the property owner. Next, the owner has 30 days to respond and if they don’t, then Code Enforcement officers go out again and issue a final notice. If they don’t respond, it goes to the court system. He gave updates on the street light conversion program. The first part of the process will begin in October. A company has been hired to inspect all streetlight poles, wattage, condition of the lights, and tree trimming if needed. It will be a 9-to-12-month construction process and will target approximately 6,000 streetlights.

DATE: **September 21, 2023**
GUEST: Henry Wojtaszek – CEO Batavia Downs
DESCRIPTION: Harness Racing season is going extremely well. He confirmed that winter racing will be there in January and February. OTB is down across the country, but live racing is still a good product. Mr. Wojtaszek talked about the hotel and restaurants and how they have been at 95% occupancy for the last few months. They get the highest grades for quality and cleanliness of rooms and exceptional customer service. Good location between Buffalo and Rochester. He discussed what future plans they would like to see including more gaming machines on the floor and the opportunity to engage in the sports betting portion of the gaming industry in New York State. Dave Hart of Hart Hotels (the managing company of the hotel) will be addressing the board members regarding future expansion of gaming operations. Mr. Wojtaszek covered some of the attractions available at Batavia Downs including the concert series, comedy shows, festivals, restaurants, hotel, gaming, bus excursions for seniors, and much more. They offer an enjoyable experience at reasonable ticket prices.

DATE: **September 22, 2023**
GUEST: Heidi Wichlacz – Social Security - Local Office Representative
DESCRIPTION: She covered the subject of Social Security increases per year. While some years have had no increase, the benefits will never decrease. Increases are based on what Congress determines looking at the Consumers Price Index for the year and movement in inflation. The benefits are based on cost-of-living adjustments. Ms. Wichlacz discussed the pros and cons of filing for SS benefits at 62. The benefit grows only up to age 70 – which is three years past full retirement age. If you take benefits at 62, you can keep working, but there is a ceiling of what you can earn. If you make more than the allotted amount, then Social Security takes back benefit money in your checks. Once you reach full retirement age, there is no cap on how much money you can make. She encouraged people even at an early age to activate a Social Security account to project their benefits and review their earnings record. The website is Social Security.gov.

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The Station also aired the following Public Service Announcements during the quarter:

Type of Issue	Duration	Title or Narrative
Health	30 seconds	PSA – American Cancer Society – Road to Recovery
Health	15 seconds	PSA – American Cancer Society – Road to Recovery