

FINGER LAKES

SUNDAY TIMES

MARCH 13, 2011

BUCKNELL DROPS HOBART
— Sports, Page 1B



Unsung Hero
— Page 3C



WEATHER
High: 38
Low: 24



115th Year

Geneva, N.Y. — Serving Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates Counties www.fltimes.com

\$1.50

Also inside today ...



Finger Lakes Flavors
The Irish and potatoes go hand in hand, so it's not surprising this is the time of year many cooks want to expand beyond mashed potatoes.
— Page 2C

Village election
Four candidates are running for two at-large trustee seats on the five-member Waterloo Village Board in Tuesday's election.
— Page 4A

Misconduct alleged
The Red Jacket school board has charged one of its members with misconduct.
— Page 5A

Assault guilty plea
A second man accused of beating another man at the Wendy's restaurant in Newark last year will serve three years in prison.
— Page 5A

LESS AID CUTS DEEPER FOR SOME

Education groups say poorer school districts suffer more

By **SUSAN CLARK PORTER**
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The drumbeat about inequitable school funding is getting louder, but whether the noise will lead to real change remains to be seen.

Several educational groups — including the Four County School Boards Association and the Statewide School Finance Consortium — have been compiling data to illustrate how education aid cuts vary across the state and have a greater impact on poorer districts that are much more dependent on that state aid.

According to the Statewide School Finance Consortium, the average per-pupil cut under Gov. Andrew Cuomo's proposed state aid package is \$1,019. In seven of the state's counties, school districts on average will see per-pupil cuts below that threshold — among them downstate districts in Westchester, Nassau, Putnam and Rockland counties.

Westchester districts come in with the smallest cut, an average loss of \$722 per pupil.

The remaining counties exceed the \$1,019 per-pupil cut average, including the districts in the four Finger Lakes counties. In Yates, the average cut is \$1,332; in Ontario, \$1,333; in Wayne, \$1,456; and in Seneca \$1,619.

And those figures are just averages, with variations among individual districts.

In Ontario County, the Phelps-Clifton Springs (Midlakes) school district will see the largest cut at \$1,928 per pupil under the governor's proposal. It's Williamson in Wayne County at \$1,926, Seneca

■ See AID CUTS on Page 7A



Michelle Bixby / Finger Lakes Times

Midlakes school district Superintendent Mike Ford addresses a packed house during Wednesday's board of education meeting, which had to be moved to the Intermediate School gymnasium because of the number of people who attended. Ford has been outspoken about the difficult situations faced by rural districts like Phelps-Clifton Springs when compared to some wealthier downstate districts.



WHAT'S AT STAKE

About this series

Each Sunday for the next two months, the *Times* will be publishing an in-depth look at the budget crisis local school districts are facing.

Other stories in the series will include topics such as how the state aid formula really works, the problem of declining enrollment, how your school taxes are spent, the role of the teacher's union and more. We'll also explore what it's like to be a teacher — and a student — in a time of cuts.

Next week: Administrative salaries

Study: Some area schools among poorest in Western NY

By **HEATHER SWANSON**
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A recent study ranks several Finger Lakes school districts among the poorest, economically speaking, in Western New York.

A Buffalo Business First study compared the socioeconomic climate of 67 districts in the Rochester area, including Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates counties.

Rochester came in dead last, while Geneva did marginally better, in 56th place.

Of the districts in Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES, those worse off than Geneva were Dundee (60th place), Lyons (61st), Red Creek (62nd) and Clyde-Savannah (63rd).

The study ranked districts

based on three categories:

- Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch.
- Students ages 5 to 17 living below the federal poverty level.
- And the combined wealth ratio (CWR), which factors in property and income wealth.

Although the study draws on older figures, Geneva Superintendent Robert Young said he believes it is a reasonably accurate assessment.

"In as much as it's old data, it's the same time frame for everybody," he said.

There is ample research that "poverty has an adverse effect on student achievement," Young said.

Some struggle academically, and some may be more likely

■ See POOREST on Page 6A

IN MONDAY'S EDITION

A Conversation With ...



Peter Parts, founder, Finger Lakes International Wine Competition.

Time change



Did you remember to set your clocks ahead one hour at 2 a.m. this morning?

Check out our newly redesigned website at www.fltimes.com and sign up for an account today. It's free for subscribers!

TIMES POLL

This week started with gas at a nationwide average of \$3.50 per gallon. What is your take on the rising price at the pump?

Go to www.fltimes.com and scroll down to answer. A new poll runs each week with the answers the following Monday.

Feeling squeeze, wine maker to reduce grape intake

By **AMANDA FOLTS**
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VICTOR — Constellation Brands Premium Wine and Spirits Co. plans to drop 15 percent of its grape purchases for the 2012 harvest.

Eric Thomas, Constellation's corporate communications manager, said consumers are trading up to more premium wines, and Constellation is seeing weaker sales in some of its large-volume generic table wines.

"This decrease in demand is causing an oversupply, and we need to reduce our contracted tonnage," Thomas said.

He said the grower community

is important to Constellation and that it's giving growers as much advance notice as possible.

"We're making the contract cuts in early spring 2011," he said.

He couldn't say specifically how many growers Constellation buys from. But he said the company would be cutting about 5,000 tons of grapes from the 2012 harvest but still purchasing 25,000 tons.

Thomas said Constellation is working through the details now

with impacted growers and soliciting advice from its grower advisory council.

"After we have those discussions, we're going to be working with our grower partners who are affected to help them find alternate markets where possible," Thomas said.

Don Tones, president of New York State

Wine Grape Growers, said growers don't know where they stand right now with Constellation, and

they're on pins and needles waiting.

"Everybody's shook up pretty good because it's going to be a hefty cut in the Finger Lakes. Really because of the variety mix that they're cutting, a lot of it's right here in the Finger Lakes," he said.

Tones said the affected varieties include aurora, elvira, catawba and other white hybrids.

Growers have been warned for a while that inventory levels weren't where they needed to be, Tones said.

"Some of the small wineries

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