

# Briefly noted

News of New Paltz, Highland, Gardiner Rosendale & beyond

## Public information session concerning the new municipal center in New Paltz

The town and village of New Paltz will hold a public information session concerning the new municipal center on Thursday, January 21, 6:30 p.m., at the New Paltz Town Community Center on Veterans Drive.

## Lieutenant governor visits SUNY New Paltz, announces new statewide broadband plan

New York State Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul visited SUNY New Paltz on Friday, January 8 to announce a New York broadband initiative to expand high-speed internet access to all New York residents and businesses.

"Today we take the first major steps to take our state out of the dark ages and into the light," Hochul said. "I'm here to announce this proposal to put up more money than any state in the nation to make not only broadband, but access to high-speed broadband, a reality for people all over the state, because the governor believes that all New Yorkers deserve a chance at economic opportunity."

Spearheaded by Governor Andrew Cuomo, the new plan proposes to use a combination of public and private funds to bring high-speed internet access to all unserved and underserved communities in the state, and to provide faster, affordable internet access to those who already have it.

"In today's economic landscape, high-speed internet and internet connectivity is essential to all of our life, work and businesses, including for the operations of a top educational institution like SUNY New Paltz," said SUNY New Paltz President Donald Christian. "Our teaching, learning and research missions rely on this capability, and our students will continue to rely on it as they leave our campus and join the world of work. I support the governor's initiative and applaud New York State's leadership in broadband expansion, increasing economic and social opportunities for our students and children."

While the primary purpose of her visit was to announce the broadband plan, Hochul took the opportunity to speak with faculty and staff of the Hudson Valley Advanced Manufacturing Center (HVAMC), the focal point of the 3D printing movement at SUNY New Paltz and in the Hudson Valley, and The Benjamin Center, a statewide think tank that publishes impactful applied research for improved government and governance in New York.

"I love coming to communities like this," Hochul said. "It was striking to come outside today and encounter the beauty of the nature here. Strolling around campus this morning with President Christian, his pride in this great institution was so apparent -- not just in its integration with the neighboring communities, but also in how it gives young people great educational opportunities."

To commemorate Hochul's visit to campus, Christian concluded the day's program by presenting her with a topographic map of New York State, which

## SUNY | NEW PALTZ



The SUNY New Paltz campus.

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## SUNY minimum wage increase will boost incomes of 524 New Paltz student workers

**A**T A RALLY in New York City on January 4, governor Andrew Cuomo announced the first step of his 2016 agenda to make New York the first state in the nation to enact a \$15 minimum wage for all workers: directing the State University of New York to raise the minimum wage for its employees. The SUNY Board of Trustees is expected to approve this increase in its minimum wage at its January board meeting.

Upon approval of the increase, more than 28,000 SUNY employees -- including hourly paid staff, student workers and work/study participants alike -- will see their wages increase to \$9.75 an hour beginning in February of this year, and ultimately reach \$15 an hour on December 31, 2018 in New York City and July 1, 2021 statewide. The increase is projected to cost approximately \$28 million once fully implemented, and will be covered by SUNY.

Statistics released by the governor's office and the SUNY system estimate that in the Hudson Valley region, 281,104 individuals in all industries are currently earning less than \$15 an hour. According to the press release, the New York State Department of Labor projects that an increase to a \$15 minimum wage will mean a boost of over \$15.7 billion for the state economy.

Of those 28,000+ people employed for less than \$15 per hour by the SUNY system, 2,188 work in the Hudson Valley. At SUNY New Paltz, 524 workers currently make less than \$9.75 an hour. "All are students," said Melissa Kaczmarek, media relations manager at the college's Office of Communication & Marketing.

"At this time, the College is looking into the impact of this on our campus and our budget," Kaczmarek told the *New Paltz Times* on January 8. "The impact on the campus for this fiscal year is about \$77,000. The annualized figure for this increase is \$154,000."

-- Frances Marion Platt

had been 3D printed at the HVAMC.

Hochul was joined on campus by Audrey Zibelman, chair of the New York State Public Service Commission, and Jeffrey Nordhaus, executive vice president of innovation & broadband at Empire State Development Corporation, each of whom helped explain the details of the proposal and outline how a newly-approved merger between Time Warner Cable and Charter Communications would contribute to it.

## New Paltz man pleads guilty to stealing \$43,896 in benefits

Jeffrey Dimarco, 55, of New Paltz, pled guilty on Thursday, January 7 to illegally obtaining more than \$43,000 in welfare benefits in Ulster County, according to the county District Attorney's office.

For more than four years, Dimarco illegally obtained benefits in the amount of \$43,896 from the Ulster County Department of Social Services by failing to report all income being earned by members of his household.

Dimarco was sentenced to five years of probation, one year of disqualification of benefits and repayment of the remaining monies owed, \$23,896, as a special condition of probation. Officials said Dimarco's wife, Carmen, is also facing welfare fraud charges.

## SUNY New Paltz UPD sponsors active shooter trainings for local and state officers

The University Police Department (UPD) recently hosted regional law enforcement agencies for multiple days of active shooter training on the SUNY New Paltz campus.

"We can't prevent the unspeakable, but we can strive to be as prepared as possible if something like this were to happen here," said SUNY New Paltz



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