

WOODSTOCK

Facility to meet growing need

Community food shelf moves to larger location

By LIZ SAUCHELLI
Valley News Staff Writer

WOODSTOCK — The Woodstock Community Food Shelf has moved to a larger location, which will enable volunteers to serve a growing number of families.

The nonprofit organization is now located at 21704 Maxham Meadow Way Unit 1E, a short distance down the road from its previous location. Its new home, a former childcare center, is 1,900 square feet —

“We’ve settled in quite comfortably and we’re using every square inch.”

more than double the 700 square feet of space it had rented since 2009.

“We’ve settled in quite comfortably and we’re using every square inch,” said Judi Greene, food shelf’s director and board chair.

JUDI GREENE
Woodstock Community Food Shelf

The new location officially opened July 13.

The organization will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house from 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesday.

The nonprofit organization purchased the unit for \$415,000, using money from an angel donor, the Acadia Fund, the Green Mountain Foundation and Lynn and Phil Rauch, Greene said.

“The space is so much more welcoming,” board member Ann Jones, of Woodstock, said during a tour last Thursday. In its previous location, the aisles were narrower, allowing only two shoppers to walk through at a time. “Now as long as there’s a flow, you can send people through.”

The move came at the perfect time: In the last five years, the number of people visiting the food shelf has more than doubled. In June 2026, volunteers served 675 household members versus 252 household members in June 2021, according to data provided by Greene. This June, the food shelf served 145 households, compared to 52 in June 2021.

“In June 2026, 14 new individuals signed up for food, which translates to 255 more non-perishable items per week that we need to provide based on the size of their households,” Greene, of Pomfret, wrote in a follow-up email.

Each household can visit once a week: Mondays, 4 to 6 p.m.; Wednesdays, 1 to 3 p.m.; or Saturdays, 10 a.m. to noon.

“A guest may choose non-perishable items, plus a dozen eggs, a loaf of bread, 2 sticks of butter, a block of cheese, ½ gallon of milk, and meat,” Greene wrote. “In addition,

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ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF

Voters offer advice



ALEX DRIEHAUS / Valley News

Democratic candidates for Orange County Sheriff Mike Tkac, of Corinth, second from right, and Sean McRae, of Bethel, right, talk before a meet-the-candidates event at Town Hall in Randolph on Thursday. During the event both candidates spoke about their respective careers in public safety and discussed how they would address the funding and staffing problems the Orange County Sheriff’s Department faces in order to make it “something people can depend on,” McRae said.

Democratic candidates discuss their vision to revive troubled department

By ALEX EBRAHIMI
Valley News Staff Writer

RANDOLPH — Orange County residents had the opportunity to hear from the two Democrats vying for Orange County Sheriff at a meet-the-candidates event on Thursday evening at town hall ahead of the Aug. 11 primary.

Taking questions from an audience of eight Orange County residents, the two candidates, Sean McRae and Michael Tkac, discussed their visions for the future of the department, including improvements in

bookkeeping, accountability and approachability.

“I hope to make the sheriff’s office ... something that people can depend on a lot more than its current state,” said McRae, a Bethel resident and part-time Royalton police officer with seven years of law enforcement experience.

Tkac, a Corinth resident and former detective sergeant at the Hartford Police Department who has worked in law enforcement for over 40 years, is seeking to fill gaps in policing services across the county.

“There is a disconnect between what

law enforcement was offering and what the residents wanted,” he said.

The two candidates addressed the challenges faced during the tenure of current Sheriff George Contois, a Democrat who defeated longtime Sheriff Bill Bohnyak in the 2022 election, inheriting a woeful financial state and a mass exodus of staff, previously reported by VtDigger.

Contois did not file for reelection this year.

Merradee Lyons, a Randolph resident,

SEE SHERIFF A8

VERMONT

Pharmacy chain’s AI rollout has problems

By TSEHAI ALFRED
VtDigger

In voicemails, spam folders and text messages across Vermont, an artificial intelligence tool is filing through years of pharmaceutical records, incoherently listing drugs and requesting the wrong refills on sensitive medication.

And customers often have no idea they agreed to it.

“He calls you all the time, and he doesn’t say what the drug is,”

said Kathy Callaghan, a Vermont customer of Kinney Drugs, referring to a new AI tool recently put to use by the Vermont and New York pharmacy chain.

Nearly every day, she recalled, her phone rings and she hears an incomprehensible mutter of a drug from the AI voice. Confused, she approves the refill order, thinking the request is legitimate and she really is out of a prescription.

So far, it hasn’t been, she said. “I’ve got four bottles of some-

thing that I take twice a week sitting here,” Callaghan said.

Earlier this summer, amid a nationwide wave of AI technology entering healthcare systems, Kinney Drugs implemented a new AI assistant for prescription refill services, lauding the tool as a way to improve communication and efficiency. But customers say it’s doing the opposite.

According to nearly a dozen Kinney Drugs customers across its stores in Vermont and New York who spoke to VtDigger, the

AI rollout has coincided with a range of problems. Delays have grown between physicians ordering drugs and the pharmacy processing them. The system has been unable to locate longtime customer accounts, has ordered incorrect dosages and has failed to notify customers when refills were ready for pickup. And these inaccuracies are raising privacy concerns amongst customers.

Their mounting frustrations

SEE PHARMACY A3

A LOOK BACK

Remembering Maxima, the record-breaking dairy cow

Today, robotic milking machines have changed the game

By STEVE TAYLOR
For the Valley News

Three and a half decades ago, arguably the two most famous females in the Upper Valley were living in Orford. One was a woman who had served in the New Hampshire Legislature and later ran spirited but unsuccessful campaigns for governor and then Congress.

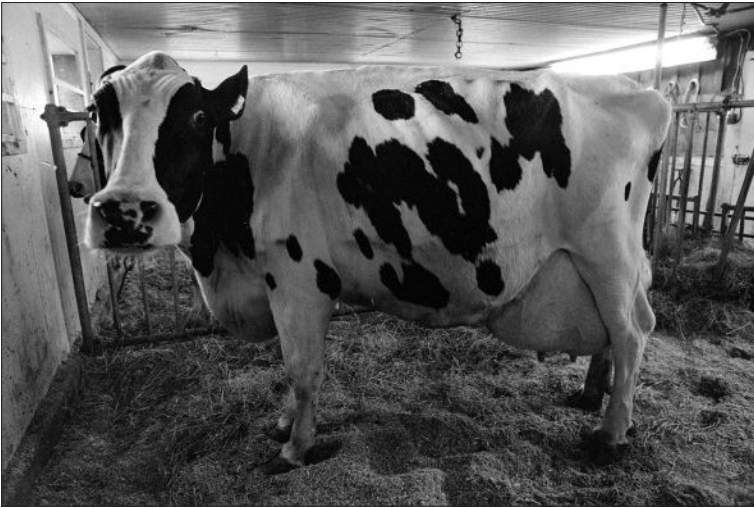
The other was an ornery cow named Tullando Royalty Maxima that had blown the doors off milk production records and had the dairy industry across the United States and Canada agog over her amazing performance and itching to get in on her genetic prowess.

And the Orford community was so excited about the cow’s spreading fame that people got together and put on a fest that drew in hundreds for barbecue, free ice cream, wagon rides, barn tours, speeches

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GEOFF HANSEN / Valley News file

At Orford’s Tullando Farm in 1992, Maxima was one of the top-producing dairy cows in the United States for two years. On a good day, she could produce about 438 glasses of milk.



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