



Carbon credits demand fueling supply crunch

BUSINESS, 4A

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The Community Bank branch at 113 N. Main St. in the Village of Wellsville closed Sept. 12. The property may be placed for sale in the coming months. PHOTOS BY CHRIS POTTER/THE SPECTATOR

Community Bank on what's next

Chris Potter
Hornell Evening Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

Two significant pieces of Main Street real estate in Allegany County may be on the market in the coming months.

Community Bank closed its branch offices at 113 N. Main St. in Wellsville and 50 S. Main St. in Belfast in September. Both buildings have since sat empty, but the company is currently exploring what's next for the properties.

Community Bank typically markets properties for sale six months after a closure, said Chris Humphrey, Community's Western New York Regional President. Humphrey addressed the fate of the Wellsville and Belfast buildings during Allegany County's recent Economic Development Summit.

Humphrey noted there are no deed restrictions and "it's entirely feasible" another bank could acquire the properties.

See **BANK**, Page 2A



Steuben County's proposed spending budget

Jeff Smith
Corning Leader
USA TODAY NETWORK

Steuben County's near \$277 million 2026 county spending plan is in.

Steuben County Manager Jack Wheeler recently presented a proposed \$276.6 million budget before the Steuben County Legislature.

The proposed 2026 budget, which includes a 1.96 percent increase in the property tax levy, outlines a financially responsible plan that maintains essential services while preserving the county's long-standing commitment to stable taxation and conservative budgeting, Wheeler said. The budget comes in below the New York State Property Tax Cap.

A public hearing on the proposed 2026 budget will be held on Monday, Nov. 24 at 11:30 a.m., with adoption by the Legislature expected to follow.

"This proposed budget reflects Steuben County's enduring commitment to fiscal responsibility and service to the public," Wheeler said. "Despite significant increases in mandated costs and uncertainties at the federal and state levels, this plan protects essential services, prioritizes public safety and infrastructure, and maintains stable taxes for our residents. It is the result of thoughtful planning and the collective efforts of our dedicated staff and Legislature."

Wheeler said the proposed 2026 spending plan supports mandated programs, public safety operations, infrastructure maintenance, and community services across Steuben County.

If adopted, the budget would result in the 13th consecutive year of a declining average county tax rate.

Over the past five years, Steuben County has maintained an average annual levy increase of 1.5 percent, significantly below inflation. Strong fund balance management, conservative revenue forecasting, and department-level cost control continue to support a stable long-term financial outlook, Wheeler said.

Primary expense drivers in Steuben County budget

Wheeler outlined several major factors contributing to cost growth in the

See **BUDGET**, Page 2A

New York hospitals receive mixed safety grades

David Robinson
New York State Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

New York hospitals, including those in the Southern Tier, received mixed safety grades as the state's health care system ranking nationally rose slightly in fall 2025, a consumer watchdog group reported.

A total of 33 hospitals across New

York, or about 23%, received the highest A safety grade from Leapfrog, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, while 16 hospitals received the second-lowest D grade. Two hospitals received an F.

The review looked at a variety of serious health-related issues, from infectious disease prevention measures to surgical errors, while also highlighting some of the top-performing health systems.

New York state overall ranked 30th worst in the country in terms of hospital safety, according to Leapfrog's latest fall 2025 grades. New York's overall fall ranking was a slight improvement from its spring ranking, where it was listed as 31st worst in the country.

New York's statewide performance also fell far short of top-performing states that had A percentages ranging between 40% and 60%, including Utah,

Virginia, New Jersey, Connecticut and North Carolina.

What goes into the national hospital safety rankings?

New York has historically had some of the worst rankings for hospital quality and safety in the country, despite

See **HOSPITALS**, Page 2A

