



Epstein controversy could sink Starmer

NEWS, 4A

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Corning police recruit arrested

Jeff Smith
Corning Leader
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Corning City Police Department recruit, Dylan J. Ellsworth, was arrested Wednesday, Feb. 19 by New York State Police at the Southern Tier Law Enforcement Academy in Big Flats.

New York State Police started a crim-

inal investigation involving Ellsworth at the request of City of Corning Police Chief Kenzie M. Spaulding.

The request followed allegations of domestic-related incidents reported by Ellsworth's former partner, police said. The reported incidents occurred between August and December 2025. The case was referred to the New York State Police to ensure an independent review,

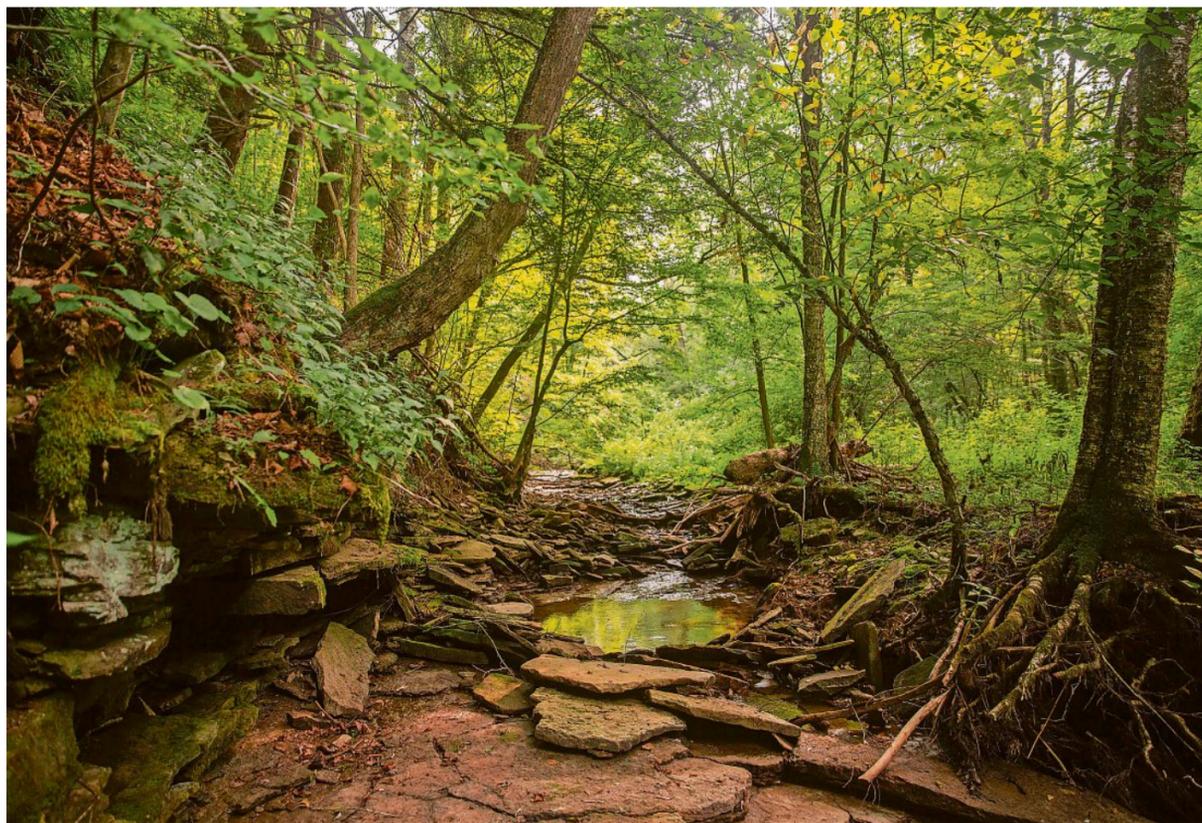
and the Steuben County District Attorney's Office authorized the State Police to proceed with the investigation.

On Feb. 19, members of the Troop E Violent Crime Investigation Team arrested Ellsworth at the Southern Tier Law Enforcement Academy in Big Flats. He was transported to State Police barracks in Painted Post for processing. Ellsworth was charged with third-

degree criminal mischief, a felony, along with misdemeanor assault, criminal obstruction of breathing, and endangering the welfare of a child.

Ellsworth will be arraigned in the Steuben County Centralized Arraignment Court, and an order of protection will be requested for the victim and child, according to State Police. The investigation is ongoing.

DEDICATION TO CONSERVATION



The Genesee Valley Conservancy bought 108 acres of land as part of a strategic enhancement of Jersey Hill State Forest in Allegany County. PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN GAJEWSKI/SPECIAL TO THE SPECTATOR

Conservancy expands Allegany County state forest

Neal Simon Hornell Evening Tribune | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Genesee Valley Conservancy purchased 108 acres of field and forestland as part of a strategic enhancement of Jersey Hill State Forest in the Allegany County town of Birdsall.

The acquisition is part of the Conservancy's cooperative conservation program that focuses on acquiring critical pieces of land to fill-in and connect existing conservation areas, the conservation organization said in a release.

The new parcel closes much of the gap between Jersey Hill and Gillies Hill state forests. Both conservation areas are owned by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for wildlife habitation and recreation.

Purchase protects 500 feet of scenic road frontage

According to the Conservancy, the parcel sits on the western edge of Jersey Hill State Forest. It brings ownership out to county Road 1, where 500 feet of scenic road frontage is now protected.

The acquisition ensures that views of the state forest can be enjoyed while traveling on this road, the Conservancy said.

See CONSERVANCY, Page 2A



The acquisition protects 500 feet of scenic road frontage of the Jersey Hill State Forest in Birdsall.

FAFSA tool shows area college grads' income levels

Sunshyne Lynch and Kelly Meyerhofer
Hornell Evening Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

Federal earnings data published in December 2025 shows how much money U.S. college graduates make four years after graduation, including graduates from Southern Tier institutions.

The U.S. Department of Education recently rolled out a new feature that puts this earnings data in front of more high school students making important decisions on where to go to college. Students filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, also known as FAFSA, will see median earnings for each school they have expressed interest in attending.

Crucially, the department also flags if a school's earnings fall below what the average high school graduate earns.

The data itself isn't new, and it shows graduates from all of the Southern Tier colleges and universities make more than those with only a high school diploma. But the new earnings indicator comes at a time when public confidence in higher education is plummeting. About 35% of Gallup poll respondents said a college education was very important in 2025, down from 75% in 2010.

"More than half of all Americans now say a college degree is not worth the price, and total outstanding student loan debt is approaching \$1.7 trillion," U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon said in a statement. "Families deserve a clearer picture of how postsecondary education connects to real-world earnings, and this new indicator will provide that transparency."

Here's what to know about the new earnings indicator, and how Southern Tier schools stack up.

What does the new FAFSA earnings indicator show for Southern Tier-area schools?

Median high school earnings across the Southern Tier fall somewhere between \$35,000 and \$36,000. SUNY school graduates make anywhere from \$2,500 to \$33,000 more than high school graduates four years after graduation, according to median earnings data.

The disparity is even greater for other colleges and universities, with grads bringing in \$51,000 to over \$90,000 more than high school graduates.

See FAFSA, Page 2A

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