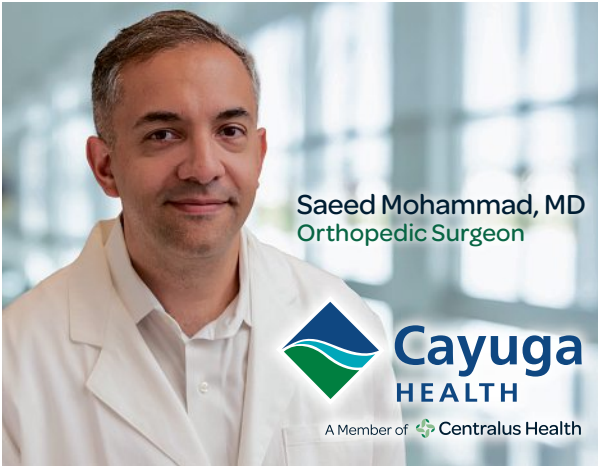




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In AI era, skilled trades workers in high demand



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Need for laborers exists across nation, but varies

Rachel Barber and Jessica Guynn
USA TODAY

White-collar workers in AI-exposed fields are looking at the skilled trades and asking themselves whether they made the right career choice.

New research suggests it may be reasonable for them to wonder. Americans fear AI could lead to job losses, so they’re looking to fields they think are more secure.

Demand for workers in the skilled trades remains substantial and the pipeline of new entrants is not keeping pace as older workers retire, according to a new national report from the Alliance for America’s Skilled Trades.

If that demand is not met, Ford CEO Jim Farley said Americans may start to notice the worker shortage. It’ll start small. A local highway may take longer and cost more to build. An auto technician shortage could mean

drivers face longer wait times when getting their car repaired.

But when a plumber or electrician is needed at a water-treatment plant, or to keep an ambulance running in an emergency, their absence could have “life or death” consequences, he said.

Farley is one of several industry leaders trying to “break this myth” that attending college to prepare for a corporate 9-to-5 is superior to a career in the skilled trades. Hands-on work “awakens something that’s kind of pretty self-evident that we’ve lost as a society,” Farley said in an interview with USA TODAY.

After Farley’s teenage son Jameson told his dad he didn’t see a need to go to college, the pair landed on a solution: Jameson would learn to weld in the summer and go to college. On the weekends, he’s working as a

See TRADES, Page 5A

Man given parole in killing of classmate

Jeff Murray
Elmira Star-Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

A former Watkins Glen resident who has been in prison since admitting he brutally killed a high school classmate 26 years ago could soon be a free man.

Joshua Horein, now 42, has tried unsuccessfully several times to win early release since he first became eligible for parole in 2019, but this time the state Parole Board — tentatively — said yes.

Horein was 16 when he bludgeoned 15-year-old Amber Brockway to death in August 2000.

Horein was only days away from going to trial early in 2001 when he pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to 20 years to life in

See PAROLE, Page 2A

NY reports repairing 1 million potholes

Thomas C. Zambito
New York State Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

New York filled in a million potholes this year, a milestone Gov. Kathy Hochul celebrated by grabbing a rake and shovel and pitching in with a maintenance crew repairing craters in the backyard of her Republican challenger in this year’s governor’s race.

Hochul made a stop along Long Island’s Meadowbrook Parkway in Hempstead on Saturday where she dumped asphalt on potholes to tout the state Department of Transportation’s “unprecedented” repair efforts — 180 paving projects across 2,150 lane

See POTHOLE, Page 4A

Blakeman uses Albany’s commuter tax in Hochul attacks

Emily Barnes
New York State Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

New York Governor’s Race This Week is a weekly column by USA TODAY Network-New York reporters highlighting aspects of the 2026 campaign to lead the Empire State.

With less than two weeks until Elec-

tion Day, Republican gubernatorial candidate Bruce Blakeman is using Albany’s recent commuter tax push as another attack on New York Gov. Kathy Hochul.

Albany’s Common Council passed a resolution that asks the state Legislature to allow the city to tax the earnings of nonresidents who work within Albany’s city limits. According to the mea-

sure, the city sees a “massive influx of nonresident workers every workday” that benefit from city services without contributing to the funding of them through annual property taxes.

The proposal asserts the tax would open a new revenue stream for the city by increasing city revenues “at a time of grave financial uncertainty, helping (Mayor Dorcey) Applyrs administration

in its efforts to close the existing fiscal gap.” City Auditor Sam Fein says a 0.25% tax rate could bring in \$15.7 million annually and a 0.45% tax rate option could bring in \$28.2 million per year.

However, the measure would require both the state Legislature and Hochul to

See GOVERNOR, Page 3A

