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are in line  
for  
extensions?

SPORTS, 1B

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Another corrections officer pleads guilty

Daniel Burger may face four years in federal prison

Casey Pritchard  
Utica Observer Dispatch  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Another corrections officer involved in the Messiah Nantwi case has plead guilty and could face up to four years in federal prison. Nantwi, an inmate at Mid-State Correctional Facility, was brutally beaten to

death on March 1 by a Correction Emergency Response Team to the point of unresponsiveness and beaten twice more, with his hands cuffed behind his back. After the fact, the grand jury alleges corrections officers met together to plant evidence and submit false testimony. Daniel Burger stood before Judge Michael Nolan on Aug. 14 and had been scheduled for oral arguments, however

in the time since his last appearance and now, he accepted a plea deal and plead-ed guilty to offering a false instrument for file. Burger had been charged with first-degree manslaughter, first-degree gang assault, second-degree gang assault, fifth-degree conspiracy, and first-de-gree offering a false instrument for fil-ing. Three COs have already plead guilty in the Messiah Nantwi case: Nicholas

Vitale, Joshua Bartlett, and Nathan Palmer. Swearing to tell the truth Burger, the former corrections officer admitted that on March 1, he submitted a written re-port that contained false information and intended to defraud the state. Ac-cording to the Department of Correc-tions and Community Service, a 2014A form is a Use of Force report. See BURGER, Page 2A

District moves  
to enact Plan C



A flood on June 22 flooded Oneida High School and caused enough damage to close the school for the 2025-2026 school year. Three weeks before the start of school, parents and students are still waiting to hear the district's plan for high school students since a plan to hold high school in the former Bishop Grimes High School in East Syracuse didn't work out over safety concerns. ONEIDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Oneida, Bishop Grimes  
high schools both unsafe

Amy Neff Roth  
Utica Observer Dispatch  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oneida High School students have lost their school twice this summer, both times because the buildings simply weren't safe enough. Now, three weeks before the first day of school on Sept. 5, they still don't

know where they'll attend school, how they'll get there or any other logistical details. Oneida High School was flooded in late June and the district announced on July 21 that it would remain closed for the 2025-2026 school year because of extensive damage to its electrical and mechanical systems. The district then settled on a plan earlier in August to use the former Bishop Grimes High School in East Syracuse, which closed permanently in June, if it could reach a lease agreement with the

Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse. That hasn't worked out, either. "The Oneida City School District has been working tirelessly to create the best possible plan for our students during this challenging time," Superintendent Matthew Carpenter said. "While we were actively pursuing a lease agreement with Bishop Grimes, there were many factors that must be carefully considered when entering into a lease for a public school district.

See PLAN C, Page 3A

Lawyer:  
Area not  
marked  
as crime  
scene

Casey Pritchard  
Utica Observer Dispatch  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Corrections officers in the Messiah Nantwi were back before Judge Michael Nolan on August 14, and for one of the COs attorney, he argued for dismissal of charges. Nantwi, an inmate at Mid-State Correctional Facility, was brutally beaten to death on March 1 by a Correction Emergency Response Team to the point of unresponsiveness and beaten twice more, with his hands cuffed behind his back. After the fact, the grand jury alleges corrections officers met together to plant evidence and submit false testimony. Donald Slawson is charged with tampering with physical evidence after allegedly mopping up blood and cleaning the infirmary in which Nantwi was beaten. He was back in court before Judge Nolan on Aug. 14. Slawson's attorney, Kevin Lui-brand, argued that Slawson had not intent to tamper with evidence and that the grand jury indictment didn't allege that. "The factual evidence is that [Slawson] mopped up a room," Lui-brand said. "All the grand jury indictment says is that [Slawson], preventing an analysis of blood. It doesn't have the required element of intent or that it would be used [in the investigation.]" "It wasn't declared a crime scene five hours later, when originally it

See DEFINITIONS, Page 2A

Treasurer pleads guilty to stealing from VCFD

Cara Dolan Berry  
Utica Observer Dispatch  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Jonnell Rose pled guilty to stealing over \$300,000 from Vernon Center Fire Department while serving as its treasurer, according to a statement from the state comptroller's office.

Rose, of Vernon, pled guilty to second-degree grand larceny for stealing \$309,000 of department funds over a six-year period, the statement said. He is to be sentenced in Oneida County Court on Oct. 28. "This crime is particularly disturbing because of the victims that were targeted, the community and the fine men and

women who selflessly give their time and talent as volunteer firefighters," said Oneida County District Attorney Todd Carville, in a statement. Evidence showed that Rose abused his role as an officer of the fire department over the course of the sustained crime to deposit checks written to the department, as well as checks written

from the department account to vendors, into his personal account. He also wrote department checks to cash and personally cashed them, the comptroller's office said. A forensic examination revealed that the stolen funds were used for purchase See ROSE, Page 2A

