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INSIDE, 5A

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Child care shortage

Kids participate in Summer Day Camp child care at the Rome Family YMCA during the summer of 2026. The YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley has been awarded a \$1.8 million state grant to improve and expand capacity in the child care area of the Rome Y to address a regional shortage of child care. PROVIDED BY YMCA OF THE GREATER TRI-VALLEY

State grants to expand programs in Utica, Rome

Amy Neff Roth
Utica Observer Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

The YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley plans to expand its school-age child care program in Rome. And Upstate Caring Partners plans to expand its preschool for kids ages 3 to 5, both with and without disabilities, in Utica.

Both projects are being aided by grants from the

state through its Childcare Capital Construction Funding Program.

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced on June 30 that 37 organizations — nonprofits, public authorities, and both public and private colleges —would receive more than \$106 million in funding for shovel-ready projects that will add 5,000 child care

See SHORTAGE, Page 3A

1 dead after industrial accident in Sangerfield; investigation ongoing

Casey Pritchard
Utica Observer Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

A 45-year-old woman from Ilion died after an industrial accident in the town of Sangerfield and the Oneida County Sheriff’s Office is investigating. According to a statement from the sheriff’s office, just before 9 a.m. on July 9, deputies and medical personnel from Waterville Fire Department, Oriskany Falls Fire Department, Central Oneida County Ambulance and Mercy Flight responded to Titan Homes, located at 951 State Route 12 for a

report of a woman who had fell and was not responsive. Upon arrival, first responders located a Heather Gantz, 45, of Ilion, and began CPR and other life saving measures. Gantz was transported to Wynn Hospital where despite all efforts, was pronounced dead. The Sheriff’s Criminal Investigation Unit and the Onondaga County Medical Examiner’s Office are currently investigating the circumstances of the incident to determine exactly what happened. The investigation is ongoing.

Oneida County remembers William E. ‘Bill’ Bryant 1938-2026

‘We are grateful for his service’

Cara Dolan Berry
Utica Observer Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

The only Democratic candidate ever elected to serve as Oneida County Executive has passed away. William E. “Bill” Bryant was twice elected to the office of Oneida County Executive, serving in the role from 1972 to 1979. The Oneida County Executive’s office has confirmed that he was, in fact, the only Democrat to ever serve in the role. Bryant died peacefully at his current home in Clairsville, Ohio on June 7, according to a statement shared by his son, Eric. He was 88 years old. In what he called “a mark of respect,” Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. has directed that flags at all Oneida County facilities be lowered to half-staff in Bryant’s honor. “I was saddened to learn of the passing of former Oneida County Executive, Bill Bryant,” said Picente. “Although we came from different political parties and served in different eras, we shared a deep commitment to Oneida County and the people who call it home.”

See BRYANT, Page 3A

William “Bill” Bryant, the only Democrat to ever be elected and serve in the office of Oneida County Executive, passed away June 7 at the age of 88. PROVIDED BY FAMILY OF BILL BRYANT

Superintendent files complaint of discrimination

Casey Pritchard
Utica Observer Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

Utica School Supt. Christopher Spence has filed a complaint with the New York State Division of Human Rights against the Utica City School District Board of Education, according to a statement from the superintendent’s attorney. Spence went on a personal leave of absence to last until the end of July, with Kathleen Davis, who served as acting and later interim superintendent for a year before Spence, taking over.

See COMPLAINT, Page 2A

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