



YEARS OF STORIES

THE GEM HAS BEEN AROUND SO LONG ALMOST EVERYONE HAS A STORY ABOUT IT. STAFFING ISSUES MEAN IT'S NO LONGER OPEN 24 HOURS, BUT SEATS ARE FULL FOR BREAKFAST AND LUNCH. C1

SYRACUSE

Micron sign goes up on prominent downtown office building



A crew from Kassis Signs has been installing a 320-square foot Micron sign on the One Lincoln Center tower at the corner of West Fayette and South Clinton streets. The work is scheduled to be completed next week, the company said. The sign is being installed on the south side of the building, facing Fayette Street. "The addition of our logo to One Lincoln Center represents a key milestone for Micron in Central New York," said Scott Gatzemeier, Micron's corporate vice president of front end U.S. expansion, in a news release. Micron has been renovating offices and a welcome center in the 18-story building. Those are expected to open "later this year," the news release said. Photos by Dennis Nett and George Owens



NEW YORK STATE

County jails paying the price for prison system chaos

State guard firings are forcing counties to hold state-ready inmates longer.

Chris Gelardi New York Focus

The New York state prison system has been running on fumes since its corrections officers walked off the job in February. The three-week wildcat strike ended with the prison agency firing some 15% of its guards, while other officers resigned or retired early, grinding prison operations to a halt. Despite a thousands-strong National Guard force deployed to assist remaining staff, facilities have canceled or cut back on programming and recreation, stripping incarcerated people of educational and

work opportunities and leaving many lingering — and baking — in their cells and dorms for upwards of 20 hours a day. Now, more than five months after the strike's conclusion, New York's prison system is trying to prevent its ongoing crisis from trickling down to the local level: Jails have had to hold thousands of people meant to be in prison, leading to difficulties staffing housing areas, running programs, and paying for the influx. At issue is a jam in the jail-to-prison pipeline. Amid February's chaos, the state prison agency stopped accepting new prisoners. That left local jails, which hold people who haven't yet been sentenced to prison time, to pick up the slack and hold people technically serving state time. The prison system resumed intakes for all facilities in May, but progress in tackling the backlog has been slow. In July, jails

across the state held eight times as many so-called "state-ready" people on average as they did in 2024, a New York Focus analysis of recently released data shows. Jail capacity varies widely across the state, and some counties have been well-equipped to handle the backlog. The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office told New York Focus that it has had no problems housing the increased population. The Cayuga County Sheriff's Office complained of increased costs and space issues during the height of the backlog, but reported that the number of state readies it houses has almost returned to normal. Western New York's Chautauqua County, on the other hand, is struggling to keep up. Sheriff James Quattrone told New York Focus at the beginning of August that the uptick in his jail's population has

SYRACUSE

EPA report: City must improve its lead testing, and communication

Federal agency issues findings after spring inspection that was triggered by elevated lead test results in 2024.

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Syracuse must improve the way it notifies the public about lead levels in water and tighten its testing procedures, under an order issued last week by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In more than 50 pages of an order and inspection report obtained by The Post-Standard, the federal agency does not view Syracuse's situation as a health emergency. It will spare the city a \$50,000 penalty if it complies with the order. The EPA issued findings from an inspection it conducted in the spring in collaboration with the state Department of Health. The comprehensive system review was the EPA's first on-site review in Syracuse in at least a decade. It was triggered by the results of lead testing in the first half of 2024, which found alarming lead levels at more than five times the federal standard. Subsequent testing returned results below the federal standard. Although the city mailed notices to all residents about its 2024 high lead levels and posted information on its website, it failed to conduct additional outreach required by the federal lead rule, according to the inspection. That included delivering materials on findings, risks and mitigation steps to public and private schools; Women, Infants and Children and Head Start programs; hospitals and medical clinics; pediatricians; family planning clinics; child care centers and obstetricians-gynecologists and midwives. Information also should have been included on water bills. The city is being directed to conduct this outreach regarding the 2024 results and explain why the information is going out now. In addition, the city must formulate a future communication plan in coordination with the EPA. The city also must increase the frequency with which it tests water in the system for the appropriate level of orthophosphate, which is added to the water during treatment to prevent pipe corrosion and reduce the potential for lead to leach into the water. City officials are in the process of reviewing the EPA's report and order, said Greg Loh, Syracuse's chief policy officer. "The city will work with the EPA, New York State Department of Health and the Onondaga County Health Department to respond fully to the findings and the order," he said in an email. Two months after the city first disclosed its elevated lead results in 2024, national

SEE EPA REPORT, A9

SYRACUSE

Father sentenced

Rykelan Brown's foster parents and mother spoke at the sentencing of the child's father, who killed him after he was given custody despite red flags. A3

SPORTS

Ripe for the taking?

Syracuse could be catching Clemson at just the right time when the two teams face off Saturday. The Tigers are "in a hole" says coach Dabo Swinney. B1

