



RUNNING ON EMPTY

THE SU BACKFIELD WAS DEALT ANOTHER BLOW TUESDAY WHEN A THIRD ORANGE RUNNING BACK, YASIN WILLIS, ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM. B1

CENTRAL NEW YORK

‘Serious challenges’ ahead if residents don’t conserve water



Onondaga County officials and OCWA’s executive director are urging people in Manlius, DeWitt and Pompey to conserve water after a major water main break. From left: OCWA Executive Director Jeff Brown, Emergency Management Commissioner Dan Wears, County Executive Ryan McMahon and Health Commissioner Kathryn Anderson. Look for updates to this report in The Post Standard’s online Extra. Jon Moss, jmoss@syracuse.com

Without cutting back, some areas could lose water in less than a week, McMahon says.

Glenn Coin and Jon Moss Staff writers

If residents and businesses in six Central New York towns affected by a water pipe rupture keep using water as normal, some could run out of drinking water in less than a week and some businesses could be temporarily shut down, Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon said.

McMahon said the Onondaga County Water Authority can provide about five to six days of water at current usage in the six towns, but it could take two weeks to repair the pipe. That means businesses and people in the towns, including DeWitt, Manlius and Pompey, need to conserve now, he said.

“We have to do better or else we have serious challenges ahead,” McMahon said at a news conference Monday. “To be crystal clear, if the amount of gallons per day do not change out of this service area, there will be days where there will likely not be water.”

Residents in the area have started receiving public safety alerts on their phones that read: “OCWA has announced a major water break that requires a mandatory water conservation order.”

OCWA Executive Director Jeff Brown said the water authority is monitoring usage after issuing an alert Saturday that a 42-inch diameter pipe burst and water reserves for the six towns quickly fell. He said the next steps in conservation guidance and orders will be dictated by how people and businesses react in the coming days.

“The next several days will be very, very telling,” Brown said. “Are we getting the level of water conservation that we need to keep everybody in water, or are people con-

tinuing to operate as normal? That will be really the tipping point.”

OCWA has already told car washes to shut down for now. McMahon said the county could use its emergency powers to temporarily close water-using businesses such as restaurants and coffee shops.

McMahon said the county is preparing for the possibility that water could run out. The county has secured sufficient drinking water for the affected area, he said.

OCWA announced over the weekend that the transmission main ruptured in Cicero and would need to be replaced. That pipe carried about 5 million gallons a day of Lake Ontario water to the six towns.

Those towns are DeWitt, Manlius, Pompey, Sullivan, Lenox and Lincoln.

The agency is scrambling to repair the ruptured concrete pipe that delivers water to 27,000 customer accounts in those towns. The complicated repair could take

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ALBANY

Hochul: Applications open for Excelsior Scholarships

Eligible students from families earning up to \$125,000 a year can now apply through Feb. 3.

Sydney Maldonado Advance Local

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced that applications are now open for New York’s Excelsior Scholarship, which offers tuition coverage to qualifying SUNY and CUNY students as part of the state’s effort to expand college affordability.

The Excelsior Scholarship application for the Spring 2026 semester is now open. Eligible New York students from families earning up to \$125,000 who plan to enroll full time at a SUNY or CUNY college can apply for tuition coverage.

The program helps fill tuition gaps that remain after federal and state financial aid is applied, allowing eligible New York residents to attend college without paying tui-

tion out of pocket.

“Each year, the Excelsior Scholarship helps transform the lives of tens of thousands of New York students by making tuition-free college a reality and strengthening affordability across the State,” Hochul said. “This program cements our commitment to ensuring every eligible student can earn a degree without the weight of debt. When we invest in our students, we invest in the families, communities and future of New York State.”

Students must complete the FAFSA and New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) applications and meet the following criteria to qualify for the Excelsior Scholarship, according to the state:

- Have a combined federal household income of \$125,000 or less.
- Pursue a full-time undergraduate degree at a SUNY or CUNY college or university.
- Complete at least 30 credits per year in an approved program of study (12 credits per term).
- Live and work in New York state for the

same number of years they receive the scholarship

Applications for the Spring 2026 semester will be accepted through Feb. 3.

The Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) is New York State’s student financial aid agency and a national leader in providing need-based grants and scholarships. Each year, it helps nearly 300,000 students by distributing more than \$935 million in grants, scholarships and loan forgiveness programs.

HESC oversees more than 30 programs, including the New York State Tuition Assistance Program and the Excelsior Scholarship, and offers guidance to students, families and counselors to make college more accessible for New Yorkers.

Since 2017, the Excelsior Scholarship program has allowed New York students to attend SUNY and CUNY colleges tuition-free. By helping remove financial barriers, it has made higher education more accessible to middle-class families and supported the state’s workforce.

WASHINGTON

Feds suspend five wind projects off East Coast

Administration says the Pentagon has identified national security risks.

Matthew Daly Associated Press

The Trump administration suspended leases for five large-scale offshore wind projects under construction along the East Coast due to what it said were national security risks identified by the Pentagon.

The suspension, effective immediately, is the latest step by the administration to hobble offshore wind in its push against renewable energy sources. It comes two weeks after a federal judge struck down President Donald Trump’s executive order blocking wind energy projects, calling it unlawful.

The administration said the pause will give the Interior Department, which oversees offshore wind, time to work with the Defense Department and other agencies to assess the possible ways to mitigate any security risks posed by the projects. The statement did not detail the national security risks. It called the move a pause, but did not specify an end date.

“The prime duty of the United States government is to protect the American people,” Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said in a statement. “Today’s action addresses emerging national security risks, including the rapid evolution of the relevant adversary technologies, and the vulnerabilities created by large-scale offshore wind projects with proximity near our east coast population centers.”

Wind proponents slammed the move, saying it was another blow in an ongoing attack by the administration against clean energy. The administration’s decision to cite potential national security risks could complicate legal challenges to the move, although wind supporters say those arguments are overstated.

The administration said leases are paused for the Vineyard Wind project under construction in Massachusetts, Revolution Wind in Rhode Island and Connecticut, Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind, and two projects in New York: Sunrise Wind and Empire Wind.

The Interior Department said unclassified reports from the U.S. government have long found that the movement of massive turbine blades and the highly reflective towers create radar interference called “clutter.” The clutter caused by offshore wind projects can obscure legitimate moving targets and generate false targets in the vicinity of wind projects, the Interior Department said.

National security expert and former Commander of the USS Cole Kirk Lippold disputed the administration’s national security argument. The offshore projects were awarded permits “following

SEE WASHINGTON, A3

CRIME AND SAFETY

Rescued from cold

Two Department of Environmental Conservation forest rangers trekked a frigid Catskill Mountains trail to rescue two hikers who had gotten lost. A2

NATION

Strong quarter

The U.S. economy grew at a surprising 4.3% annual rate for the third quarter, the Commerce Department reported on Tuesday, outpacing expectations. A4