



JOEY'S LEGACY

THE TOP LACROSSE RECRUIT IN THE CLASS OF 2022 BRUSHED OFF THE PURSUIT OF THE GREATEST INDIVIDUAL MARK IN AN EFFORT TO BRING SU ANOTHER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP. **B1**

SYRACUSE

Equitable Towers get new and local owners who have big plans



The INSPYRE Innovation Hub stands next to Equitable Towers in downtown Syracuse. Rick Moriarty, rmoriarty@syracuse.com

They plan to sink tens of millions of dollars into rebuilding the skyscrapers.

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Local investors with a track record of successful projects have bought the half-empty Equitable Towers and plan to transform them into a mix of modern office space and luxury apartments with some of downtown Syracuse's highest views.

The group, which is calling itself Syracuse Towers, said it plans to sink tens of millions of dollars into rebuilding the guts of the decades-old, 21-story twin office buildings while converting the majority of one tower into 200 apartments.

The ambitious move could resurrect a key part of Syracuse's skyline, whose former owners defaulted on its mortgage.

Instead, the group led by the owners behind Meier's Creek brewery and the ren-

ovation of the former Addis Department Store envision rebuilding 14 floors of the east tower into apartments.

Those residents would also have a New York City-style door attendant, a rarity in Syracuse.

"We want people to feel they are in classy apartments," said Jeremy Thurston, president of the Hayner Hoyt construction company and a member of the ownership group. "I think it will be a unique feature."

The rest of the east tower and all of the west tower closest to South Warren Street would remain office space. Upgrades, however, are planned for the mechanical systems and common areas of both buildings to make them more attractive to office tenants.

Boasting 650,000 square feet of space, the skyscrapers are among the city's most recognizable landmarks, second only to Syracuse University's JMA Wireless Dome.

"I think everyone sees them when they're traveling into Syracuse," said Thurston.

Demand for housing has been strong in downtown Syracuse. Office space, by con-

trast, has struggled for years, a situation made worse by the work-from-home trend that followed the COVID-19 pandemic. Only about 50% of Equitable Towers is occupied.

But Thurston said the ownership group is optimistic demand for office space will grow with the arrival of Micron Technology, which is building a large semiconductor manufacturing plant in nearby Clay.

"Our goal is to bring it back to life as a destination for commercial offices," he said.

A grocery store and a bar and restaurant would go into the towers' plaza level, the group said.

Renovations will cost about \$100 million. They are expected to start late this year or early in 2027 and take 18 months to complete.

Apartment rents would be at the upper end of downtown Syracuse's market, with the units on the highest floors in the \$3,000 range, Thurston said.

The group purchased the towers from **SEE TOWERS, A4**

CLAY

Micron buys land for complex from county for \$30M

The county has pledged to spend the money on the Micron campus in Clay.

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Micron Technology has paid Onondaga County \$30 million to buy land for its chip-making complex under construction in the town of Clay, according to records filed with the county.

The deal to buy the land from the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency was struck in 2022 when Micron announced it was coming to Central New York. That agreement said Micron would pay \$30 million for the land needed for the first two of up to four chip factories.

The agreement also says the county agency will turn around and spend the \$30 million on the Micron site. No details were provided on how the county would spend



This rendering filed by Micron Technology Inc. with the town of Clay shows Micron's proposed semiconductor factory on Route 31. Micron Technology

that money.

OCIDA has bought 1,400 acres at Route 31 and Caughdenoy Road over the past three decades. The purchase is for about half of the site, on the west side of Burnet Road.

Micron plans to spend about \$50 billion

constructing two massive factories that will produce billions of memory chips for electronic devices and artificial intelligence. The company could get up to \$25 billion in taxpayer subsidies for those two factories.

Micron won't pay property taxes on the land, but it will make what are called payments in lieu of taxes to the county, town and North Syracuse school district. Micron and the county signed a 49-year deal that would allow Micron to pay a fraction of the taxes it would owe if the factory complex were assessed at full value.

The first factory is scheduled to start producing chips in 2030 and the second in 2033. If Micron builds two more factories, it will buy the remaining land from OCIDA "for a nominal amount," according to the 2022 agreement.

Micron contractors started clearing the site in January. More than 300 acres of trees have been cut down, and contractors are now scraping away topsoil and hauling in gravel to level out the swampy site.

DEWITT

Developer says Town is working to 'sabotage' new Goodwill store

About 20 neighbors have complained about putting the store in the former Tops spot.

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Town officials are trying to sabotage plans for a Goodwill retail store in a prominent retail strip, a local developer is claiming in a lawsuit.

The Widewaters Group, based in DeWitt, wants to put a new Goodwill thrift store in the former Tops grocery store at the corner of East Genesee Street and Jamesville Road, an area that includes popular restaurants and a couple of small salons. The grocery store closed a year ago after a 40-year run at that spot.

Widewaters claims in the April 10 lawsuit that DeWitt officials are putting up unnecessary roadblocks and requirements for the project.

The developer's argument is over a site plan: DeWitt is demanding a full site plan submission and subsequent approval from the planning board for the new use. That process would also require a public hearing.

Widewaters' representatives say the additional paperwork isn't needed because the building was previously used as a retail spot for decades. Although they reluctantly submitted a site plan, they say it wasn't necessary.

"Widewaters believes the shift from one obstacle to another suggests a bad-faith effort on the part of the town to sabotage the proposed Goodwill," Marco Marzocchi, Widewaters' general counsel, said in an email.

DeWitt town officials, however, say they are following the same rules covering any business development proposal. The town planning board requires all alterations, modifications or improvements to properties other than one and two-family home to submit a site plan application and secure site plan approval, according to their guidelines.

Plus, part of the parking lot property is zoned for residential use, not commercial, DeWitt Town Supervisor Max Ruckdeschel said. Tops was grandfathered in as a nonconforming use. So that must be addressed before installing a Goodwill store, he said.

Yet the developer has balked at taking those steps and appears to want to fly under the radar to get the project approved, Ruckdeschel said.

"They have been a very difficult applicant to deal with," he said.

More than 20 neighbors have complained about the idea of a Goodwill store in emails to the town and planning board saying they believe it would be detrimental to their neighborhood. They brought up people who dump donations in parking lots and also increased truck traffic. **SEE GOODWILL STORE, A12**

MANLIUS

Tax breaks

The developer of a large apartment project on North Burdick Street wants to cut its property tax bill in half. **A3**

LIFE

Streaming fame

Mia Cavallaro, an eighth grade student at Bishop Ludden-Grimes, was cast "Young Popular Girl" in "Pizza Movie," a sleeper streaming hit on Hulu. **C1**

