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STAR-GAZETTE

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Waga Energy is partnering with Casella Waste Systems, Chemung County and Valley Energy on a new facility that can convert methane and other gases from Chemung County Landfill into renewable natural gas. JEFF MURRAY/ELMIRA STAR-GAZETTE

How energy is being created from waste

Jeff Murray
 Elmira Star-Gazette
 USA TODAY NETWORK

If you drive past the Chemung County Landfill in Lowman, you might have noticed a shiny new facility on one portion of the landfill property. On Thursday, May 14 officials from

several cooperating partners cut the ribbon on the new facility and unveiled its purpose — to capture methane and other waste gases produced by the landfill and convert them to renewable natural gas.

On hand for the ceremony were officials from Waga Energy, which developed the process to transform landfill

gases to usable energy, Chemung County, which owns the landfill, Casella Waste Systems, which manages the landfill for the county, and Valley Energy, which provides natural gas to several communities in Chemung and Tioga counties.

See ENERGY, Page 2A

Couple charged in death of infant

Neal Simon
 Hornell Evening Tribune
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Authorities have charged a Steuben County couple in the death of an infant earlier this year.

Bath Village Police on May 14 announced the arrests of Dakota J. Abeel, 27, and Jessica A. Abeel, 23, both of Bath.

Each was charged with criminal negligent homicide, a class E felony, in connection to the March 18, 2026 death of a 12-day-old infant at a May Street residence in the village, police said in a news release.

In the release, police said an investigation determined the infant died allegedly as the result of negligence involving an unsafe sleeping arrangement.

According to officials, emergency crews, including Bath police, the Steuben County Sheriff's Office, and Steuben County EMS, responded at about 8 a.m. on March 18 to a report of an unresponsive baby.

Emergency personnel administered CPR before the child was taken by Bath ambulance and Steuben County EMS to Ira Davenport Hospital, where the child was later pronounced deceased.

Dakota and Jessica Abeel were processed on the charge and released with appearance tickets for Bath Village Court.

Everyday citizens become heroes

12 from Southern Tier honored with Red Cross awards

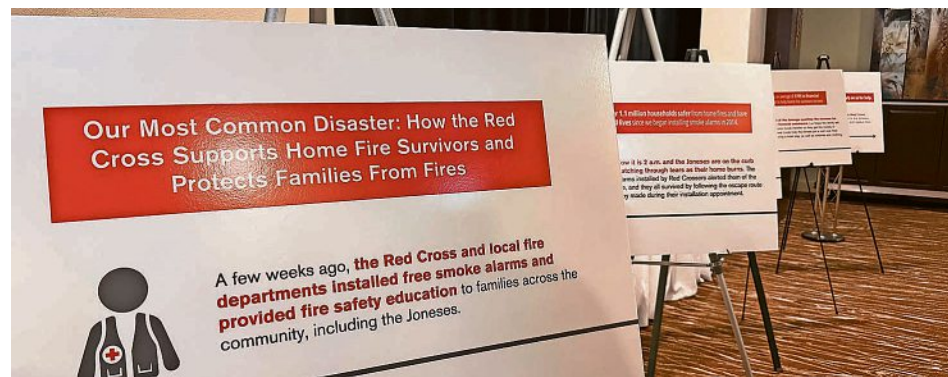
Jillian McCarthy
 Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Hundreds of people from across the Southern Tier gathered to honor local heroes at the annual American Red Cross Southern Tier Chapter's Real Heroes breakfast in downtown Binghamton.

From veterans to law enforcement to nurses and good Samaritans, tables were filled with everyday heroes on May 14 at Binghamton's DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in recognition of local efforts to save lives and protect the Southern Tier community.

The Southern Tier Chapter recognizes people and groups from Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Sullivan, Tioga and Tompkins counties in New York and from Susquehanna County in Pennsylvania in 12 different categories each year.

This year, award recipients ranged from children as young as 4 who helped their mother during a medical crisis to New York State Police troopers who used their training to save the life of a



The Red Cross has helped 400 families affected by natural disasters, installed 250 smoke alarms, collected 32,000 units of blood and provided over 350 critical services to veterans and members of the military.

stranger.

Here are some of the 2026 award recipients and their heroic stories.

Johnson City firefighters took life-saving actions to rescue resident trapped during house fire

The Johnson City Fire Department was dispatched to a house fire with a possible entrapment in the early morning hours of Nov. 18, 2025. At the scene, the crew entered with a firehose when Lt. AJ Eaton and Firefighter Alex Kocan were told someone was trapped inside a bedroom.

The two sprang into action, entering

the house, conducting a search and locating the victim in a bedroom where the fire appeared to have started. When they attempted to open the door, the victim was backed up against it and they couldn't get in.

Johnson City Firefighter Josh Williams was able to enter the bedroom through a first-floor window, but had to leave by jumping headfirst out the window due to rapidly deteriorating fire conditions. It was the "hottest conditions" he had ever faced.

Kocan and Johnson City Fire Inspector Sean Meaney were eventually able to break down the door, suppress the fire and drag the victim to safety. In such a



Hilton Binghamton hosted the 2026 Southern Tier Real Heroes Breakfast where community members and essential workers are recognized for their selfless acts on May 14.

PHOTOS BY KALYN GRANT/PRESS & SUN BULLETIN

dangerous situation, Williams said he and the crew are trained to "do what they're supposed to do and do it well."

Endicott workers save family pets, and alert emergency services at house fire

On Aug. 28, 2025, a day like any other, National Pipe and Plastics employee Jason Mundell was taking his break outside when smoke emanating from a neighboring house caught his attention.

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