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CRIME

SUDDEN SHUTDOWN



KEVIN RIVOLI, THE CITIZEN

Pipekeepers in Montezuma.

Cayuga County smoke shop raided by state police

DAVID WILCOX
david.wilcox@lee.net

A Cayuga County smoke shop with a contentious history is closed after being raided by law enforcement on Friday.

Pipekeepers at 7153 Route 90 in Montezuma, next to the Circle K at the intersection with Routes 5 and 20, was the sight of a heavy law enforcement presence that morning, according to witnesses.

Details on the raid remain scarce. Both the Cayuga County

Sheriff's Office and the New York State Office of Cannabis Management told The Citizen their organizations were involved, but that the raid was led by New York State Police and therefore they wouldn't comment further. State police have not responded to multiple requests for comment by The Citizen since Friday afternoon.

The Cayuga Nation issued a press release on the raid, as it has been embroiled in legal disputes with Pipekeepers since it opened

in 2022. The shop was operated by Dusty Parker, a citizen of the nation.

In the Friday release, the nation noted that the shop is not affiliated with the nation nor approved by its leadership despite any claims otherwise.

"Illegal operations such as Pipekeepers defy the nation's laws, our regulatory authority, and our community's standards," it said.

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GOVERNMENT

County budget debate persists

Legislature chair warns of 'massive cuts'

ROBERT HARDING
robert.harding@lee.net

The Cayuga County Legislature on Tuesday voted to table a resolution to override the property tax cap — a move that handcuffs Chairman Jonathan Anna as he prepares his 2026 budget proposal that will be released next week.

The proposed local law to override the property tax cap was a late addition to the meeting agenda, but Anna, I-Sterling, believed it was necessary to finalize his proposal. Several legislators have discussed that the county will need to exceed the property tax cap to balance the budget.

However, not all legislators agreed that Tuesday was the day for that action.

The Legislature initially tabled the resolution in June. After it was brought up for reconsideration, Legislator Mark Strong, R-Moravia, motioned to table it again on Tuesday. His preference is to get more information about the budget proposal at the Nov. 5 special meeting, when Anna will present the 2026 spending plan.

But Anna explained he is requesting the property tax cap override, which requires support from 60% of the Legislature, to help him prepare the budget proposal. Without it, he must submit a budget that stays within the county's estimated 2.87% tax cap for 2026.

Anna revealed the county is facing a budget deficit of up to \$9.9 million, a revised figure from the budget meetings this month. After reviewing the departmental requests, he said the county has cut \$4 million out of the 2026 budget.

"If I have to present a budget that does not override the tax cap, I will do

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INFRASTRUCTURE

State directs \$6M to Cayuga County roads

ROBERT HARDING
robert.harding@lee.net

New York will invest \$6.1 million to pave two state roads in southern Cayuga County.

The projects include \$3.6 million to repave Route 34B from Route 90 in King Ferry north to county Route 43B (Poplar Ridge Road) and Route 90 from Route 38 in Locke to Route 34 in Genoa.

The state will also pay \$2.5 million to pave Route 34 between Long Hill Road and Mosher Road in the towns of Scipio and Venice.

The infrastructure projects will improve important roadways in Cayuga County. The stretch of Route 34 has average annual daily traffic totaling 3,036 vehicles, according to the state Department of Transportation, while Route 34B averages 1,525 vehicles a

day. An average of 359 vehicles travel Route 90 between Genoa and Locke every day.

Cayuga County Legislature Chairman Jonathan Anna lauded Gov. Kathy Hochul's administration for the "historic investment in our roads."

"The resurfacing and rehabilitation of routes 34 and 34B will make travel safer, strengthen connections between our rural communities and support the local economy that depends on these vital corridors," Anna, I-Sterling, said in a statement. "This is a major win for Cayuga County residents and businesses alike."

Hochul announced last week that the state Department of Transportation will pay \$600.4 million to pave 185 roads. In central New York, eight



KEVIN RIVOLI, THE CITIZEN

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Route 90 between Genoa and Locke.

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