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Erie Times-News

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The U.S. Brig Niagara sails on Presque Isle Bay leading the Tall Ships Erie Parade of Sail in Erie on Aug. 22, 2019.

GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS

THE NEXT BUILD BUILDS

Key Erie County construction projects expected to move ahead in 2026

Jim Martin

Erie Times-News

USA TODAY NETWORK

The year ahead promises plenty of change in Erie — along with some red, white and blue festivities as the United States celebrates 250 years.

Across the state, the 250th will be marked with concerts, tree plantings and the placement of replica Liberty Bells in all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

In Erie, a familiar symbol of our history should be at the center of the celebration.



Erie County Executive-elect Christina Vogel, left, and Erie Mayor-elect Daria Devlin be sworn in to their offices in January 2026. PROVIDED BY CHRISTINA VOGEL AND DARIA DEVLIN

The U.S. Brig Niagara, the historic recreation of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's relief flagship in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812, is expected to sail back into port after the completion of \$5 million in upgrades at a shipyard in Maine.

But a look back is only part of what we can expect from 2026.

The year will bring big changes in the political landscape as Christina Vogel steps in as Erie County executive after unseating Brenton Davis. Daria

See **CONSTRUCTION**, Page 4A

GANNON-BLASCO LAWSUIT

Case ends with shorter lease, tighter oversight

A.J. Rao

Erie Times-News

USA TODAY NETWORK

A lawsuit over Gannon University's new education and research center at Blasco Memorial Library has ended in a settlement — the center will stay open, but the lease will be shortened,

See **GANNON-BLASCO**, Page 2A

Court addresses early dispute in Woodard case

Ed Palattella

Erie Times-News

USA TODAY NETWORK

The Erie County District Attorney's Office has just started prosecuting the case of a Pennsylvania state parole agent charged less than two weeks ago in the fatal shooting of parolee Marchello D. Woodard in Erie in July.

A critical dispute is already taking

shape.

The District Attorney's Office is contending that Woodard's death could have been the result of a murder — including the possibility of first-degree murder, an intentional killing.

The defense is countering that the defendant, Kevin J. Seelinger, should at least not face a first-degree murder charge.

Immediate consequences grew out

of District Attorney Elizabeth Hirz's decision to include first-degree murder as a possibility. The decision has kept Seelinger in prison with no bond since he was charged and arraigned on Dec. 19 in the killing — a case that generated protests and other events to call for justice for Woodard, 43, who was Black.

See **WOODARD**, Page 3A

Note to readers

We will not be printing a paper on Thursday, Jan. 1, but will be providing it to you via the eNewspaper. You can always find the latest news on our website, mobile app, newsletters and social media. Subscribers can access the eNewspaper by going to our website and clicking on eNewspaper in the black navigation bar.

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