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Poughkeepsie Journal

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020 | POUGHKEEPSIEJOURNAL.COM

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'It's already a nightmare'



GETTY IMAGES

Why a potential STAR rebate change is causing angst among homeowners

Joseph Spector New York State Team | USA TODAY NETWORK

ALBANY – State lawmakers are criticizing a proposed change to the state's popular STAR program that would expand who gets checks rather than upfront savings in homeowners' school tax bills. In his state budget proposal last week, Gov. Andrew Cuomo recommended that New York send STAR checks to all homeowners who earn \$200,000 a year or above. They have been receiving the exemption upfront in their school tax bills since the program's inception in the mid-1990s.

The move comes after the state Legislature and Cuomo agreed last year to switch everyone with an adjusted gross income between \$250,000 to \$500,000 to a check.

"It's already a nightmare," Sen. Pete Harkham, D-Yorktown, Westchester County, said.

"The number one complaint I get in my office is from constituents regarding the STAR program. So to further exacerbate those problems, rather than streamline and have a solution to those problems, is very frustrating."

About 3 million New Yorkers get breaks each year on their school property taxes through STAR, averaging about \$800 a year. It is available on homeowners'

primary residence if their income is under \$500,000 a year.

Senior citizens enrolled in Enhanced STAR can continue to get an upfront savings. About 665,000 income-eligible senior citizens get Enhanced STAR, which averages \$1,400 a year.

Proposed STAR change draws criticism

Cuomo's proposal is his latest attempt to tinker with the STAR program as a way to move it from the state's expense side of the ledger to the revenue side.

See STAR, Page 2A

East Fishkill Fire District sues truck's builder

Ryan Santistevan Poughkeepsie Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

In mid-January 2015, the East Fishkill Fire District received the fire truck it purchased for more than a million dollars from a Louisiana-based company, Ferrara Fire Apparatus.

Within two months, the district began experiencing problems using the truck's bucket. About a month later, the district noticed the truck's check engine light had turned on. Around two months after that, the truck needed to be shipped to Nebraska for the installation of other repairs, after conferring with Ferrara.

In the past five years, the truck has needed to be repaired more than 20 times, making it unavailable "for the numerous mechanical failures for approximately one calendar year."

All of that is according to a lawsuit the East Fishkill department has filed against Ferrara, claiming the truck has been defective all along.

The complaint was filed in U.S. District Court Southern District of New York on Wednesday. The department is seeking the original price it paid – \$1,002,351 – plus interest.

Representatives of the East Fishkill Fire District declined comment. Attempts to reach Ferrara Fire Apparatus were unsuccessful.

Repairs have been needed due to problems with

See EAST FISHKILL, Page 4A

Another lawsuit aims to prevent an Amazon warehouse in region

Helu Wang Times Herald-Record

Another lawsuit filed by Montgomery property owners is challenging the proposed Amazon warehouse, claiming the developer misrepresented the nature and character of the area as well as the environmentally sensitive nature of the site.

The lawsuit, filed with the Orange County Supreme Court, seeks to vacate the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) approval the town's board and planning board granted for a proposed 1,010,880-square-foot warehouse on about 190 acres at the intersection of Routes 17K and 747.

The development has been given the green light

See AMAZON, Page 2A

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USA TODAY

GOP senator: If John Bolton is called, the Bidens will be, too. 8A

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DUTCHESS COUNTY REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FEBRUARY 2020

40 UNDER *The* BottomLine

Complete list coming soon!

Rep. Antonio Delgado to speak at breakfast

The Chamber's February Contact Breakfast will feature a keynote speaker on Wednesday, February 19 at 7:30 AM at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel & Conference Center. The speaker for that day will be Congressman Antonio Delgado, representative of the 19th district of New York, and is sponsored by Vassar Brothers Medical Center, now part of NuVance Health.

NuVance Health will offer free blood pressure screenings before and after the Contact breakfast. These screenings will be offered on a first come, first serve basis at the breakfast so get there early!

Congressman Antonio Delgado was born and raised in Schenectady. Congressman Delgado attended

Colgate University where he graduated with high honors and earned a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford. From there, he went to law school at Harvard, which is where he met his wife, Lacey, a native of Woodstock and Kingston. Rep. Delgado's professional experiences include a career in the music industry focused on empowering young people through Hip Hop culture, as well as working as an attorney in the complex commercial space, where he also dedicated significant time to pro bono work in connection with criminal justice reform. From improving access to quality, affordable health care



Antonio Delgado

to expanding rural broadband to protecting our agricultural interests, Rep. Delgado is dedicated to working across the aisle, according to his website. NuVance Health is a family of award-winning nonprofit hospitals and healthcare professionals in the Hudson Valley and western Connecticut. NuVance Health has a network of convenient hospital and outpatient locations — Danbury Hospital, New Milford Hospital, Norwalk Hospital and Sharon Hospital in Connecticut, and Northern Dutchess Hospital, Putnam Hospital Center and Vassar Brothers Medical Center in New York — plus multiple primary

and specialty care physician practice locations. For more information about NuVance Health, visit their website at www.nuvancehealth.org.

Tickets are \$25 for Chamber members with advance reservations or \$30 at the door. Nonmembers can attend for \$35. Payment in advance is required in order to expedite the check-in process. Cancellations less than 24-hours from the event and no-shows will be charged the full ticket price. Call (845) 454-1700, ext. 1000 or visit dcrccoc.org to RSVP.

Contact Breakfast sponsored by

CHAMBER WINTER WEATHER POLICY:

In the event of inclement weather, visit the Chamber's website and Facebook page by 6:30 AM for updates regarding events and committee meetings. The status of afternoon meetings, ribbon cuttings and events will be posted accordingly.

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Networking will bloom at the next Business After Hours

Hop into an early spring and join us at the next Business After Hours event on Thursday, March 5, from 5-7 pm at Adams Fairacre Farms in Wappingers Falls. This is the February Business After Hours, but it's being held the first week in March to coincide with the annual Adams Lawn and Garden Show. Chamber members and guests will get a sneak preview of the show the day before it opens at the Wappingers Falls store.

This is a complimentary event thanks to our sponsor, Ulster Savings Bank, and Adams Fairacre Farms. Pre-registration is required, and walk-ins may not be able to be accommodated. Please register online at dcrccoc.org or by calling 845-454-1700 ext. 1000 by March 4. Cancellations less than 24 hours from the

event and no-shows will be charged a catering fee.

Each year the Adams' landscaping crews orchestrate walk-ways of hundreds of flowering bulbs, patio displays, ponds, and bountiful greenhouses. This event attracts vendors and garden experts from across the Hudson Valley area. Founded in Poughkeepsie in 1919, Adams Fairacre Farms now has additional locations in Wappingers Falls, Kingston and Newburgh. Visit them online at adamsfarms.com.

Ulster Savings Bank is a locally focused and operated bank, with locations throughout the Hudson Valley. Every year, Ulster Savings Bank supports hundreds of local organizations throughout the community, close to home. Their profits are re-invested back into the communities



they serve, and they are proud to be the recipient of numerous community awards reflecting the belief that helping community changes lives. For more information please visit ulstersavings.com

Business After Hours sponsored by

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Choice Words' clients win \$4.87 million in NYS funding for 7 Hudson Valley projects

New Paltz-based Choice Words LLC handled the grant writing for seven projects that received \$4.87 million in collective funding via the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). The awards will help fund development, infrastructure, and capital improvement projects for companies, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations located in Dutchess, Orange, and Westchester counties.

Some of the projects awarded funding include the Walkway Lighting Project in Poughkeepsie/Lloyd (\$588,562), Bow Tie Cinemas building of a multiplex in downtown Poughkeepsie (\$2 million), a Complete Streets Project for New Rochelle (\$500,000), and an engineering study for the Town of Cornwall (\$100,000). The CFA is the primary conduit for state funding of not-for-profit agencies and economic development initiatives.

For more information, contact Steve Densmore at 845-234-8713 or visit www.choicewordspr.com.

F. Michael Tucker named Chairman of Ulster Savings Bank Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of Ulster Savings Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of F. Michael Tucker as its new Chairman. Mr. Tucker is President of Tucker Strategies, Inc., an energy, real estate, and economic development firm, providing services throughout the Hudson Valley. Mr. Tucker previously served as President and CEO of the Center for Economic Growth and was a principal with Mercer Companies, a

real estate development firm. A graduate of Villanova University and Villanova School of Law, he is active in economic development and not-for-profit organizations throughout the Hudson Valley, including the New York State Economic Development Council and Pattern for Progress.

For more information about Ulster Savings Bank, visit www.ulstersavings.com.

LaGrange Library to move in 2020

The LaGrange Library Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that the Library will be moving to the heart of Town Center, at 1110 Route 55 in LaGrangeville, in the summer of 2020. Phase 1 of the renovations is anticipated to begin in January 2020. Phases 2 and 3 will follow as additional space becomes available, thanks to the cooperation of the new landlord, 1110, Route 55 LLC. Highlights of the initial renovations include a large community room, a children's activity room for the families of LaGrange, a dedicated passport processing/picture taking area, a larger, more efficient check-out area, and a public restroom. The new facility will be fully compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

For more information about LaGrange Library, visit laglib.org or call (845) 452-3141.

Astor Services for Children & Families appoints new CEO

The board of directors of Astor Services for Children & Families has appointed Yvette Bairan as its chief executive officer (CEO). Ms. Bairan had been serving as interim CEO of Astor, after former CEO, James McGuirk, PhD., stepped into a new role as president of The Children's Foundation of Astor in July 2019.

A dedicated employee of Astor for 11 years, Ms. Bairan had previously served as chief quality and compliance officer. The organization conducted a search process involving a board search committee, with assistance from a profes-

sional executive search firm.

To learn more about Astor Services for Children & Families, visit www.astorservices.org.

Collins appointed Equity Partner of Feldman, Kleidman, Coffey and Sappe LLP

Feldman, Kleidman, Coffey & Sappe LLP (FKC&S), a Fishkill based law firm specializing in personal injury law and professional liability defense, announced that medical malpractice and personal injury attorney, Kathryn C. Collins, will be appointed equity partner of the firm. FKC&S has successfully tried cases at all levels of state and federal courts throughout the Hudson Valley and the Capital District for more than 33 years. FKC&S has also been selected as a "Best Law Firm" by U.S. News & World Report for 11 years in a row.

To learn more, visit www.fkcs.law or call (845) 897-5199.

FREE class offered by Greystone Programs

Greystone Programs' Wappingers Falls based Turning Over Stones Employment & Resource Center is a hub for people of ALL abilities to expand vocational skills, receive job readiness training and explore career options. Opportunities for FREE monthly class offerings by experienced professionals include: Resume Building Mock Interviews, Computer Training, Stress Management and Career Assessments.

Contact Gina Zullo, Employment Services Supervisor, (845) 452-5772, ext. 102 or at gzullo@greystoneprograms.org.

READ AND SUBMIT NEWS AT DCRROC.ORG/NEWS

Three-Day Gospel Festival planned for February

The Hudson Valley Gospel Festival is a new three-day festival, February 21-23, that welcomes gospel enthusiasts to celebrate the musical genre's impact on the world. The festival includes performances on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and workshops for all ages, with youth sessions just announced. Those interested in participating in the full weekend's itinerary can purchase a Weekend Pass, while separate daily performance tickets are also available. Pricing begins at \$50.

Hudson Valley Gospel Festival 2020 is sponsored by Stewarts Shops and Rhinebeck Bank.

Please visit www.dutchess-tourism.com/gospelfestivalsponsors for sponsorship information.

Alzheimer's Association to hold Subzero Heroes ice jump

On Saturday, Feb. 8, the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter will hold its 10th annual Subzero Heroes ice jump at Borean Lake.

Heroes, who must raise a minimum of \$200 to take the plunge, will jump into the lake to show their support for families living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Heroes are assisted by Sidekicks, who do not jump themselves, but help with fundraising and stand by with towels for the Heroes as they emerge from the water.

Those who would like to support the cause may visit subzeroheroes.org to donate. Sponsorships for the 10th anniversary events are also available; contact Lauren Vorhees at lvorhees@alz.org for more information.

Arthur May redevelopment advances with town approvals

Moving forward a development that will transform Poughkeepsie's Arlington Town Center, Arthur May Redevelopment, LLC, (AMR) an affiliate of Poughkeepsie based PAZ Management, Inc., will redevelop the former Arthur S. May Elementary School located at 25-31 Ray-

mond Avenue in Poughkeepsie, NY. Following three years of coordinated work with local authorities, AMR recently received conditional site plan approval from the Town of Poughkeepsie Planning Board. Construction is projected to commence later this year.

Honoring the architectural heritage of the Arlington Town Center, AMR will transform the 6.8-acre site into a mixed-use center that will include 187 modern, energy efficient, market rate rental residences in six buildings. The infill project will also bring approximately 18,000 square feet of commercial and retail space to the area, along with a 110-key hotel to meet the needs of nearby colleges and visitors to the region. The first phase of the site, which will include the residences, is slated to debut by the end of 2021.

Visit www.pazhealth.com for more information.

MLK 2020: Organizations of the Year announced

Astor Services for Children & Families and Hudson Valley Hospice have been named as the MLK 2020: Organizations of the Year by Catharine Street Community Center (CSCC), a nonprofit dedicated to promoting and coordinating educational, health and cultural programming that enriches and enhances the lives of individuals, children and families in Dutchess County. Each organization was recognized at the Annual MLK Breakfast at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel.

Heroes, who must raise a minimum of \$200 to take the plunge, will jump into the lake to show their support for families living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Heroes are assisted by Sidekicks, who do not jump themselves, but help with fundraising and stand by with towels for the Heroes as they emerge from the water.

For more information please visit astorservices.org or call (845) 871-1117.