

A Year of Progress and Safety in Clarence

This year, the Town of Clarence completed several significant projects, the most notable being the construction of a new Highway Garage. Recognizing the outdated and unsafe conditions of the previous facility, some of which dated back over 100 years and were constructed of wood, Highway Superintendent James Dussing spearheaded the initiative to build a modern and secure workspace for the department's 40 employees. The new 68,000-square-foot building provides improved facilities for our Highway workers and ample space to house critical equipment.

In the old garage, plow trucks were parked haphazardly, creating inefficiencies during snowstorms. Last week, when snow only affected the southern end of Clarence, the new single-lane parking system enabled trucks servicing that area to exit the garage swiftly and begin plowing without delay.

This project—one of the largest in the Town's history—was made possible through the leadership and dedication of a remarkable team. Superintendent Dussing, along with Deputy Superintendent Paul Englert, who brought 30 years of experience to the design process, ensured the new facility met the department's needs. Town Engineer Tim Lavocat managed the project with exceptional skill, delivering it on time and under budget. Tim's tireless efforts extended beyond this project to include managing the Town's other engineering priorities. His leadership on the Highway Campus project was invaluable.

I am proud to say that we fulfilled the promise to build the new Highway Garage without raising taxes. Director of Administration and Finance Kimberly Ignatowski and Town Attorney Larry Meckler, who brought experience from building airports, expertly managed the \$23 million project. Despite rising interest rates, our finance team secured bonds for the project at under 4%, saving the Town millions of dollars over the 30-year term.

On Thursday, we will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony and blessing for the new Highway Campus and Garage. This achievement represents a true team effort, and I extend my gratitude to everyone involved, including the Town Board, for their support in approving this project. This facility will serve the Town for the next 100 years.

Holiday Safety Reminders

As the holiday season approaches, it is important to prioritize safety. This time of year is often referred to by fire service professionals as the "Burning Season." Last year, we tragically lost a resident in a house fire. Many holiday-related fires are caused by open flames from candles and fireplaces, overloaded holiday lights, and unattended cooking.

Decorations, including Christmas trees, can add fuel to accidental fires. Our local fire companies respond to numerous incidents involving fireplaces during the winter months. Chimney fires, carpets ignited by open hearths, and misplaced hot embers are common hazards. Even extinguished chimney fires can leave behind unseen heat extensions, posing a risk of reignition

hours later. For this reason, I urge caution when using fireplaces and recommend avoiding wood burning whenever possible. Additionally, ensure your holiday lights are not overloaded, and extinguish all open flames before going to bed.

Wishing You a Joyful Holiday Season

We are fortunate to have such dedicated residents, volunteers, and Town employees who make Clarence a wonderful place to live. As we celebrate the holidays, let us remember those we lost this past year. I wish all of you a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season. May the new year bring joy and prosperity to you and your families. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!