

# THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

## COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

AUGUST 23, 2024 EDITION

*"Obstacles don't define us. Rather, it is the unparalleled courage and character of us that defines us as a people. So my confidence in the future is steeped in our glorious past - in the face of adversity, we always persist. We persevere, we prevail." Governor Kathy Hochul*



## *In the News-New York State*

### **Governor Hochul Addresses the DNC**

*Describes former President in New York Language – gets fact checked*

New York Times reporters Benjamin Oreskes and Nicholas Fandos reported that “Ms. Hochul made a forceful case that Vice President Kamala Harris was best positioned to lead the Democratic Party and the nation into the future.” (*NY Times*, August 19, 2024). During her speech, which lasted approximately five minutes, the Governor said:

“Donald Trump was born a New Yorker but ended up a fraud, a philanderer, and a felon. He wasn’t raised with the New York values that I know. He never had to worry about child-care costs or groceries or rent; he never had to worry about anything or anyone but himself. Trust me, America. If you think you’re tired of Donald Trump, talk to a New Yorker. We’ve had to deal with him for 78 long years. The fraud, the tax dodging, the sham university, the shady charities. We’ve seen him stiff contractors, rip off workers. He abuses women, brags about it, and then takes away their rights.

And New Yorkers are sick of it. It’s no wonder he had to flee to Mar-a-Lago. Sorry about that, Florida, sorry about that! Trump hasn’t spent that much time in New York lately, except that is to get convicted of 34 felonies. And that’s just fine with us. Because New York’s motto is “Excelsior,” ever upward, and Trump takes us ever downward”. (*transcribed from <https://youtu.be/97ASVvZXCwE?feature=shared>* )

In additional convention coverage, New York Times Economics Reporter Jeanna Smialek fact checked the Governor. The Governor said: “Trump talks big about bringing back manufacturing jobs, but you know who actually did it? President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.” Ms. Smialek asserted that “This needs context. It is true that manufacturing employment is up sharply under the Biden administration, but much of the gains are simply a recovery from job losses early in the coronavirus pandemic. Manufacturing employment is just slightly above its 2019 level. And factory employment also climbed somewhat from when Donald J. Trump took office in early 2017 and the onset of the pandemic in 2020”.

## New York State Fair Butter Sculpture Revealed



For those who are regular readers of this newsletter, you will recognize our annual paean to the New York State Fair and the dairy industry. According to the NYS Department of Agriculture, the dairy industry is the largest single segment of New York's agricultural industry. The state has nearly 3,000 dairy farms, is the fifth largest producer of milk, and is the largest producer of yogurt and cottage cheese. In 2023, the state's processors made more than 308 million pounds of cream cheese, ranking New York number one in the United States, 221 million pounds of creamed and low-fat cottage cheeses, 880 million pounds of yogurt, and 109 million pounds of ricotta. But, at the Fair, butter gets the attention!

Nobody put the story together better than Charlie Miller ( [cmiller@syracuse.com](mailto:cmiller@syracuse.com) ) in his coverage for the Post Standard. Rather than repeat the story – I urge you to follow the link: <https://www.syracuse.com/statefair/2024/08/spoiler-alert-dont-click-unless-you-want-to-see-the-2024-nys-fair-butter-sculpture-photos.html> .

The New York State Fair butter sculpture has an annual theme. As reported by Mr. Miller, the annual sculpture has been created by Jim Victor and Marie Pelton since 2003. The themes for the past twenty years (including 2024) per Mr. Miller's report:

2005: Milk, Moms and Morning (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2006: Healthy Goals (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2007: Dairy Farming Today (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2008: Cow Jumping Over the Moon (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2009: Cow Power (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2010: Dairyville 2020 (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2011: Feeding Our Future (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2012: New York Goes for the Gold with Greek Yogurt (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2013: Getting Fresh with Local Dairy (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2014: The Great American Milk Drive (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2015: Thanks for the Milk, Moo York! (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2016: Milk Life Celebrates The Success of Team USA and the Athletes of New York State (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2017: Dairy Farmers' Tribute to New York State Troopers (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2018: Your Milk Comes From A Good Place (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2019: Milk. Love What's Real (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2020: Nourishing Our Future (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2021: Back to School, Sports and Play ... You're Gonna Need Milk for That (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2022: Refuel Her Greatness—Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Title IX (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2023: Dairy Every Day is a Healthy Way — Keeping Kids' Health on Track (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

2024: Dairy: Good for you. Good for the planet. (Jim Victor and Marie Pelton)

# *In the News-New York City*



## **Mayor Adams Issues Order Requiring City Agencies to Review City Owned and Controlled Land for Potential Housing Development Sites**

New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced executive order 43 requiring city agencies to review their city owned and controlled land for potential housing development sites. New York City faces a generational affordable housing crisis with an estimated 1.4 percent rental vacancy rate, the Adams administration is proposing bold, forward-thinking solutions and using every possible tool available to deliver the affordable housing that New Yorkers need. The executive order will help support the Adams administration's goal of building 500,000 new homes by 2032.

“If there's any land within the city's control that has even the remotest potential to develop affordable housing, our administration will take action,” said Mayor Adams. “To solve a generational affordable housing crisis, we must bring new innovative ideas to the table and activate all city agencies, whether they are directly involved in creating housing or not, to help deliver for New Yorkers”.

The order includes the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Sanitation, the Department of Transportation, the Fire Department, the Police Department, and the Office of Management and Budget, and representatives from other agencies or entities designated by the Chair including the New York Public Library, the Queens Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York City Department of Education, the New York City Housing Authority, and the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.

“Mayor Eric Adams' new executive order is an important step in addressing New York City's affordable housing crisis,” said New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) Commissioner Sue Donoghue. “This effort ensures that we can carefully balance the need for housing with the thoughtful use of the valuable facilities under NYC Parks' jurisdiction. By evaluating those park facilities that may support housing development, without compromising green spaces, we can advance Mayor Adams' ambitious goal of building 500,000 new homes by 2032 while maintaining the quality of life for all New Yorkers.”

The Task Force will be chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce.



## MTA looking to close Meredith Avenue Bus Depot on Staten Island

*Will Cause Busses to Park Near Other Depots*



As reported by Mike Matteo in the Staten Island Advance, the MTA has decided not to renew the lease on one of Staten Island's bus depots which is scheduled to be closed in 2025. "100% it's going to impact service, there's no question about it," said Daniel Cassella, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union's Local 726 chapter, which represents Staten Island's bus employees who operate 23 local routes and 22 express routes between Staten Island and Manhattan.

Despite the outreach of Staten Island elected officials, who are concerned that the closure will reduce routing efficiency, increase congestion and impact the neighborhoods with the remaining depots, the MTA has not satisfied the critics of the infrastructure reduction. The Meredith Avenue depot, which is home to express buses on the SIM3, SIM4X, SIM15, SIM30, SIM32, SIM33, SIM33C, SIM34, and SIM35 routes, first opened in Chelsea in 2009.

Initially, it was built as a stopgap while the South Shore's Charleston Depot was under construction. At the time, the MTA entered into a \$637,000 per year, 15-year lease for the property, with an option to terminate after 10 years. After Charleston was up and running, Meredith Avenue remained in operation, offering more space and alleviating crowding at the Island's other depots, Cassella said. In the years since, the Meredith Avenue Bus Depot has become one of the Island's most efficient. According to Cassella, the depot in Chelsea has some of the best driver availability and maintenance operations on Staten Island. By scattering those crews across the Island, the MTA will stretch resources at the already overcrowded depots even thinner. "[The MTA's] not looking at it that way," said Cassella. "They're looking at it as 'how much money can we save?'"

The union president said that one of his concerns about the shuttering of Meredith Avenue is the impact on neighborhoods surrounding the remaining depots. Extra space is hard to come by at these yards, and adding the additional staff and vehicles will cause spillover into the surrounding areas.

"These depots, like Yukon and Castleton, are in neighborhoods, and you're talking about 30,40,50 more drivers and mechanics going to them. They're going to park on the street, the buses are going to be in the street," Cassella said. "There's a lot of impact here; it's not just the bus operator that's being impacted, it's the neighborhoods too."

When asked, the MTA said that the Meredith Avenue depot was built to absorb the overflow of buses from Yukon and Castleton. According to the transportation authority, after the construction of the Charleston depot in 2011, Yukon and Castleton's capacity was in line with that of the other depots in the bus system. "Meredith Depot is no longer necessary to support bus operations in Staten Island due to right sizing of capacity and Yukon, Castleton and our most recent Charleston Depot," MTA Spokesperson Meghan Keegan said in a statement. "The termination of its lease will have no impact to bus service."

Staten Island's political leadership has campaigned to keep the Meredith Avenue Bus Depot open. Borough President Vito Fossella, along with all of the Island's city, state and congressional representatives, penned a letter last month to MTA Chair and CEO Janno Leiber, asking that the authority reverse its decision and not hamstring bus transportation on Staten Island. While the borough president shared the union's concerns about space at the other depots and surrounding neighborhoods, he also said he believes that the MTA should make things easier, not harder, for the Island's express bus commuters. "In a time when Staten Island's population has grown since that bus depot was built, we should be looking at a minimum to maintain what we have, and seek ways to enhance, improve and provide better service," said Fossella during a phone interview. "I don't think you go about that by shutting down one of the depots."

## *Briefs*

### **Democratic National Convention**

The Democratic National Convention concluded with Vice President Kamala Harris's acceptance speech late Thursday night. The convention was notable in that it was structured to provide entertainment and proselytism as opposed to the corporate mechanics of nominating a candidate. Many of the speeches were noteworthy and well worth watching – even for those who are not ardent followers of the political process. It is very easy to find the individual presentations on YouTube. We have selected several of the many noteworthy speeches together with links below.

President Joseph Biden <https://youtu.be/np6ZGonecFE?feature=shared>

Congress Member Alexandria Ocasio Cortez <https://youtu.be/ZQYrbcO1Qu0?feature=shared>

United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain [https://youtu.be/HZ4W9\\_TMi\\_c?feature=shared](https://youtu.be/HZ4W9_TMi_c?feature=shared)

Rev. Al Sharpton, Korey Wise and Yusef Salaam <https://youtu.be/DXkmKNgTPbs?feature=shared>

Congress Member Hakeem Jeffries <https://youtu.be/KnunTuXrIc4?feature=shared>

Governor Tim Walz <https://youtu.be/Mf0u5MJEjhw?feature=shared>

Vice President Kamala Harris <https://www.youtube.com/live/o10x76nSDEY?feature=shared>

### **Become a Certified Junior Gardener this School Year**

Queens County Farm Museum's [Certified Junior Gardener Volunteer Program](#) is open to middle and high school students between the ages of 12-18. This popular volunteer program is a 9 month, bi-weekly program, where participants will learn new skills, work on various projects primarily outdoors (weather permitting), spend time in nature, and make new friends. Participants will learn about gardening, hydroponics, colonial and regenerative farming, livestock, forestry, companion planting, pollination, botany, composting, and environmental conservation. Projects include: seeding, planting, transplanting, harvesting, composting, participating in and preparing for Education department workshops, clearing to create and expand our green spaces, creating rock borders and flower beds, and lots of weeding.

**Application Deadline: September 5th, 2024**

# Coming Up

## New York State

*There are no meetings scheduled for the week of August 26<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup>*

## New York City

*Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>*

*Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.*

*Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions,  
Committee Room – City Hall, 11 a.m.*

*Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Committee Room – City Hall, 12:30 p.m.*

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