

THE WEEKLY WRAP

ISSUE NO. 82 | JULY 16, 2021



NYS SENATOR DAPHNE JORDAN
(R, C, IP, REF) 43RD SENATE DISTRICT



Dear Friend:

Happy Friday and welcome to the July 16 edition of my Weekly Wrap!

BIG happenings this week:

- Rensselaer County facing serious storm damage from Wednesday night
- I'm hosting a blood drive on Thursday, August 12 and I hope to see you there!
- I wrote a letter to the OTDA Commissioner regarding the need to fix the ERAP online portal

Other important news:

- Two ceremonies this week to honor a Marine veteran and an Army veteran
- Troy Police Chief Brian Owens retires after nearly 24 years of service
- I visited the beautiful Olana State Historic Site and met with Sean Sawyer, President of the Olana Partnership, and Amy Hausmann, Director of the Olana State Historic Site
- The Promenade Apartments affordable housing project is complete!
- Saratoga TODAY Newspaper celebrates opening of a new location
- Faith's House for Saratoga Springs Race Course backstretch workers will provide daycare services for children this summer

As always, I want to hear from YOU. If you have a comment, question, or concern, please email me at jordan@nysenate.gov or call my office at (518) 371-2751. Thank you for reading and subscribing to my Weekly Wrap. It's an honor and a privilege serving you!

– Senator Daphne Jordan, 43rd District

Honoring Marine Veteran James J. Connell



On Monday morning we honored Private James J. Connell Jr. at the Rensselaer County Honor a Vet Ceremony. Private Connell was a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, who later served in the New York Army National Guard. He lived in East Greenbush with his wife and four children, and sadly passed away on July 23, 2019. We honor Private Connell's life and service to our country & community.

I want to see you on August 12!

Senator Daphne Jordan and the American Red Cross



Invite you to their Columbia
County Blood Drive:

**Thursday, August 12
1 p.m. – 6 p.m.**

**Hudson Elks #787
201 Harry Howard Avenue
Hudson, NY 12534**



Appointments for blood donations need to be made online.
Please visit redcrossblood.org to book your appointment and
take part in this community blood drive sponsored by Senator
Daphne Jordan and the American Red Cross!

Due to a nationwide shortage, there is an urgent
need for blood donations. Please join NYS Senator
Daphne Jordan and the American Red Cross for
this special community event on August 12 at the
Hudson Elks #787. Blood donors save lives!



Contact

Senator Daphne Jordan

Phone: (518) 371-2751

Email: jordan@nysenate.gov



I will be sponsoring a blood drive on August 12 and have 52 spots available! With a nationwide shortage, there is certainly someone out there whose life could be saved with YOUR help. I hope to see you on Thursday, August 12 at the Hudson Elks Lodge!

[Register Here!](#)

Severe Storm Damage in Rensselaer County



Serious storm damage in Rensselaer County from Wednesday Evening. Cleanup has already started. Reviewing the damage yesterday with County Executive Steve McLaughlin, Assemblyman Jake Ashby, Congressman Antonio Delgado, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, county officials, emergency officials, and members of the Highway Department.

My letter to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Commissioner Michael Hein regarding the need to fix the OTDA online portal so that constituents can access the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

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SENATOR DAPHNE JORDAN
43RD SENATE DISTRICT

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July 8, 2021

The Honorable Michael P. Hein
Commissioner, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, New York 12243

RE: Urgent need for Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to fix its online portal so individuals can access the Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Dear Commissioner Hein:

I write requesting that the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) take all necessary steps to fix its malfunctioning online portal for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). A constituent from South Glens Falls who shared his frustration – and utter exasperation – with the continued inability of OTDA's ERAP online portal to work properly recently contacted my office sharing myriad problems with the portal, and the continued inability of OTDA's website to work properly.

As you may be aware, last week I convened a press conference with my colleague Senator Jim Tedisco and several area landlord small businesses to call attention to the failure of ERAP to provide timely assistance to landlord small businesses, some of whom have been waiting 17 months for relief. During our press conference, I noted that ERAP's unrealistic, unworkable requirements are making a bad situation even worse for landlord small businesses who are struggling financially because of the unintended consequences of this misfiring state program. On June 17, 2021, I wrote Governor Cuomo urging his Administration to take immediate action to address the serious, significant, and systematic shortcomings identified within ERAP. A copy of my letter to the Governor is included with this correspondence.

While ERAP was supposed to provide economic relief to help low and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance, and utility arrears assistance, the program's real-world deficiencies have severely financially hurt landlord small businesses. ERAP currently requires active tenant cooperation for a landlord to secure the money they are rightfully owed. New York State, as it typically does, far exceeds federal paperwork requirements regarding landlords and their tenants.

There are multiple programmatic and practical impediments with a landlord ever receiving all the money due to them, including the cooperation needed between the tenant and the landlord in the application process. Both have required documents and information to enter into the program portal. In addition, the tenant's rent will

be paid only if the household's current income or calendar year income is at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income. Tenants may find out in the application process that they don't qualify, therefore, leaving the landlord unpaid.

Only up to 12 months of rental arrears payments for rents accrued on or after March 13, 2020, can be paid, and up to an additional three months of rental assistance can be paid if the household is expected to spend 30% or more of its gross monthly income to pay for rent. This is problematic considering that many landlords are owed more than 12-15 months rent and the number of months owed may continue to add up since the Eviction Moratorium was extended until August 31 of this year. Furthermore, no late fees can be charged, which helps to pay late fees owed by the landlord.

The practical reality of these provisions, as shared with me by landlords throughout my district, is that they will not be able to recoup their total losses and that some rent scofflaws have absconded from rental premises without sharing necessary information. Their failure to do so – the lack of active cooperation as required under ERAP – can prevent the processing of rightful claims by landlords to recoup any of their losses via ERAP. The result is that landlords are essentially being denied the financial relief they deserve and were promised by New York State. Without question, this serious deficiency within ERAP must be rectified. Absent rightful, active, and wholly appropriate cooperation by their tenant, landlords unable to secure necessary documentation from their tenants should be granted a good faith exception by the state so they can receive their rightful financial relief.

Adding to these serious problems, as reported by my constituent and many others, is OTDA's malfunctioning online portal that is incredibly difficult to navigate, overly complex, lacks technical support and document submission verification, often times out on users, and repeatedly indicates error messages necessitating a restart of the entire time-consuming application process. Commissioner, these concerns are not merely isolated to my constituent's difficult experiences accessing OTDA's ERAP portal; they are endemic.

In fact, The Real Deal – the premier real estate news outlet in the country reaching millions of real estate professionals – reported the following on June 1, 2021, as to the depths of chronic problems associated with OTDA's malfunctioning ERAP portal:

“Landlords and tenants awaiting the launch of New York’s rent relief program Tuesday morning were met with error messages and a busy helpline. Lisa Fitzgerald, the owner of a two-family home in Albany who’s seeking \$15,000 in back rent, was ready to submit her application materials at 9 a.m. when the portal, operated by the state’s Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, opened. She was prompted to set up an account, but got a 403 error message when she tried to do so. “I tried over and over,” Fitzgerald said. “I switched from Safari to Chrome. I cleared my browser. And then I tried the help chat, and nobody ever came on to the chat.” She then tried giving the call center a ring, but was disconnected. She called back and a recording told her it’d be a 62-minute wait. Fitzgerald is one of many who’d hoped to apply for the state’s long-awaited rent relief program, but hit technical issues on the day it launched. Portal users complained of error messages when attempting to verify their email or upload required documents. Some landlords have said they’re unable to verify whether documents are uploaded for the correct apartment. Others can’t make it past the apply now button, receiving a “request is blocked” notification.

All of these identified deficiencies – programmatic, anecdotal, and independently reported – with ERAP and OTDA’s online portal to access the initiative should be fully examined and quickly corrected so my constituent and other landlord small businesses may finally access the state program that’s supposed to be providing them real relief. Thank you for your attention to my request.

Sincerely,

Daphne Jordan
State Senator, 43rd District

CC: Governor Andrew Cuomo

Enclosure: Correspondence to Governor Cuomo from Senator Jordan re: ERAP,
June 17. 2021

Correspondence to Governor Cuomo from Senator Jordan re:
ERAP, June 17. 2021

Troy Police Chief Walkout Ceremony



Congratulations to Troy Police Chief, Brian Owens, on his service of nearly 24 years in the Troy Police Department. On Monday morning, he was honored with a walkout ceremony while the street was lined with his colleagues, loved ones, and city leaders.

A Visit to the Beautiful Olana State Historic Site



Martin Johnson Heade (1819-1904)

Tropical Orchids, 1870-1874

Oil on canvas

Olana State Historic Site, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, OL.1981.39

This is one of Heade's earliest paintings of orchids. In contrast to Church's South American scenes, Heade gives only the vaguest indication of landscape, focusing instead on the natural world's intimate details. The two species of orchid shown here grow in completely different parts of the planet, Brazil and Southeast Asia, indicating Heade's use of botanical gardens to gather his materials rather than the difficult field research on which Church staked his reputation.





It's always exciting to visit Olana State Historic Site in Hudson, Frederic Church's greatest masterpiece! I was happy to present a Senate Certificate of Recognition to President of the Olana Partnership, Sean Sawyer, and Director of the Olana State Historic Site, Amy Hausmann. They took me on an electric vehicle tour of the full site and then into the house and Heade exhibition. Thank you for a wonderful afternoon!

Visit Olana!

Honoring Army Veteran Elmer Moran



On Tuesday morning, we honored United States Army Veteran Elmer Moran in the Town of East Greenbush Honor a Veteran Program Ceremony.

Elmer Moran enlisted in the United States Army at Camp Upton, NY on March 11, 1942 and was honorably discharged on July 11, 1947 at the rank of Private First Class.

For his courageous service he was awarded with the European African Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with a Bronze Star, the American Theater Ribbon, World War II Victory Medal, the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct Medal, and the combat infantry badge.

Elmer lived in West Sand Lake with his wife and son before passing away on April 6, 1978.

Thank you to my Community Liaison, Halie Northrop, for presenting this Legislative Proclamation on my behalf to honor this man who lived his life in service to our country.

RIBBON CUTTINGS

Promenade Apartments



The Promenade Apartments Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Tuesday afternoon marked the completion of a \$20 million affordable housing development in Saratoga Springs. Promenade Apartments offers 63 affordable homes to working family households earning at or below 80% of the area median income which is \$70,000 in Saratoga Springs. This will allow workers in the huge hospitality industry in Saratoga Springs, Healthcare workers in Saratoga Hospital, young teachers in the Saratoga Springs School District and other workers starting out to live where they

work.

As a sitting member on the Senate Committee for Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs, I am very glad that 10 of these apartments are reserved for veterans who need supportive services or might otherwise be homeless. God Bless those that served and His blessings come with the help of the Veterans & Community Housing Coalition - Vethelp in conjunction with the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority.

This project comes with Federal & State support, and the great work of Norstar Development USA, the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority, Bonacio Construction, Inc., Miller Rosentel Associates, Inc., The La Group Landscape Architecture and Engineering, P.C., and the many people who met to make this reality. Thank you to everyone involved!

Promenade Apartments

Saratoga TODAY



Congratulations to Saratoga TODAY Newspaper on the kickoff of their new location in Saratoga Springs and thank you for your distribution of local Saratoga news for the past 15 years! I was honored to present Owner and Publisher Chad Beatty with a Senate Certificate of Recognition at the ceremony. You can subscribe for FREE here: saratogatodaynewspaper.com

More information is written below by Chad Beatty, Owner and Publisher:

“Saratoga Publishing is a locally-owned and operated boutique Media Company located in Saratoga Springs, NY. They are local people who live in the communities, shop at the stores and have children in the schools, and care about their clients, readers and local issues. They originally launched in 2006 to publish a grass roots local newspaper, and now they also produce a variety of high-quality lifestyle publications for niche markets. Their original publication is the, Saratoga TODAY Newspaper, the community’s weekly source of local news and information. The colorful, easy-to-read tab format and use of the dynamic headline, combined with our 100 percent local focus, makes Saratoga TODAY a must-have newspaper for homeowners and business people in the greater Saratoga Springs region. As the years passed and their loyal readership grew, they launched our magazine division. Their primary magazine is Simply Saratoga; A high-end, bi-monthly lifestyle magazine. Weaved throughout colorful pages are regular features that everyone loves as well. With over 500,000 hits a month saratogaTODAYnewspaper.com is a great way to reach online readers at affordable rates.”

Saratoga TODAY Newspaper

Faith's House

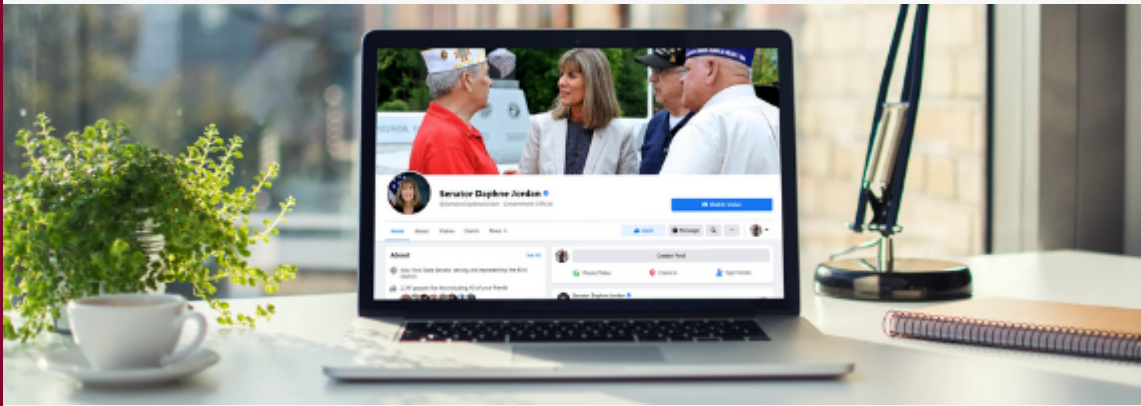


Congratulations to Faith's House in Saratoga Springs on their ribbon cutting this week! What an incredible project this is, led by Libby Imperio, BCCA President, and Michael Dubb, New York Racing Association, Inc. (NYRA) board member and founder & chairman of the Belmont Child Care Association (BCCA). Faith's House will provide daycare services to the children of backstretch workers, trainers, and front-side NYRA employees. There will be about 950 backstretch workers and families at the Race Course this season. What a wonderful organization that will greatly contribute to the economy and working families of Saratoga Springs. I was honored to attend the ceremony! Also in attendance were Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce President Todd Shimkus; Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner; The City of Saratoga Springs, NY Mayor Meg Kelly; Dave O'Rourke NYRA CEO and President; Robert Williams, Executive Director of the NYS Gaming Commission; and Joanne Adams, Executive Director, Belmont Child Care Assoc.

For more information click the article below:

NYRA CARES: Faith's House in Saratoga is Dubb's latest effort to benefit backstretch families

Stay up-to-date with me throughout the week
on Social Media!



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VISIT MY WEBSITE

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