

BY DAVID AUSTEN

WATKINS GLEN—The Finger Lakes Wine Festival in Watkins Glen expands this year as 11 wineries join the event to make a total of 80 wineries in attendance from July 18 to 20.

The festival will take place at Watkins Glen International where not only the "Corkyard" area has gotten bigger, but a third food court has been added featuring micro-brews. Festival Director Wendy Brubaker explained that this was done to offer a bigger variety of beverages to attendees.

"The festival is more than just wine; we offer an arts, music, culinary and wine festival all rolled into one," said Brubaker.

The new wineries include Crooked Lake Winery, Baldwin Vineyards, Damiani Wine Cellars, Hudson-Chatham Winery, Imagine Moore Winery and Passion Feet Wine Bash.

Also new to the festival

camping grounds will be a "Townhall."

"Every community has a firehouse, police station and hospital," said Brubaker. "Now we do too."

The "Townhall" concept is that the campground area has become a community over the years and the festival staff wanted to help it grow. The addition to the campground area will include an ambulance, police and any



The Finger Lakes Wine Festival and cooking demonstrations Saturday.

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PHOTO SUBMITTED

The new Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel.

New hotel is open in Watkins Glen

WATKINS GLEN—The construction of the new \$14 million hotel in Watkins Glen overlooking Seneca Lake is now complete and the impressive waterfront complex is open for business.

David Hart, president and chief executive officer of Hart Hotels, said, "The new Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel was designed to enhance and support the extensive tourism needs of this famous community. Our goal was to match the world class reputation of Watkins Glen International, the wineries and Seneca Lake while

providing our guests with a relaxing, memorable experience."

The hotel includes 104 luxury guestrooms, a restaurant, indoor pool and Jacuzzi along with a fitness center, a grand ballroom accommodating up to 300 people, an executive boardroom and a business center. Rooms have HDTV and high-speed internet access is available throughout the hotel.

Kelsey Jones, executive director of the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPE), was one of

the Schuyler County executives involved in getting the hotel to locate in Watkins Glen. Jones said, "I think it (the new hotel complex) will open up huge opportunities for our businesses in the area. It's very exciting."

Hart Hotels operates franchise, franchise affiliated and boutique hotels. The company owns and operates six hotels in the Greater Buffalo, N.Y. area, two hotels in the Finger Lakes region of New York, along with hotels in Vermont, Utah and Portland, Maine.

County fare goes up 80 percent

BY BETH BEGANY

SCHUYLER COUNTY voters will wake up to the reality of escalating bus costs for bus service in the county, the Schuyler County Legislature voted Monday. The vote significantly increases the monthly pass to \$130, and a single fare will increase to \$5 each starting Aug. 1.

The county's transportation budget with First Transit includes several contracts with the county, totaling more than \$100,000. Next year, the cost is projected to increase by approximately \$100,000.

Local ridership is expected to be anywhere from 100,000 to 180,000 people each year.

The legislature is currently studying the issue of public transportation in the county. The current contract expires in 2010, but the county has no idea what it will do after that.

"We've got to be able to provide service in being able to

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DEC proposes ban on all backyard burning

BY BETH BEGANY

ALBANY—In order to safeguard public health

A recent study by the EPA found that almost 60 percent of dioxins in the environment are the result of backyard burning.

