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## Sherman is planning for big changes

By David Prenatt

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**SHERMAN** — Paul Simon wrote "Everything's the same back in my little town," but that's not the case with the little town of Sherman.

Former residents returning to Sherman may think the village still looks the same, and might even note a few empty store fronts as a sign of decline. However, there's an array of new things going on behind the scenes and just under the surface.

Overall, work is progressing on a comprehensive plan for the future of Sherman. Committees have already been formed and, while only village residents can be on the planning board or the steering committee, anyone in the greater Sherman area is invited to add their input, said Sherman Mayor Colleen Meeder.

Everyone in the Sherman



Photo by David Prenatt

**Sherman Village made many physical improvements this summer, including work on the sidewalks on Main Street.**

community is invited to participate in the first Visionary Workshop, which will be held at 6 p.m. on Oct. 1 in the fire hall, Meeder said. "People are getting excited about it," she said. "The steering committee is going to gather and recap right

after the workshop."

Visitors to Sherman will likely notice the Dollar General store that opened in 2017. However, Meeder said, the groundwork is being laid to bring an actual grocery store back to Sherman. "We're hoping we can

have a grocery store by the end of the year," she said.

There are new things going on in Sherman's infrastructure as well. The village is in the process of obtaining grants for a \$6.2 million upgrade to the wastewater treatment facility. The public was recently invited to a plant open house, which celebrated 40 years of public service and familiarized residents with plans for the future of the facility, Meeder said.

Plans are also underway to upgrade the village's water system, as well. The village is currently applying for a WIA grant which will pay for 60% of the project and provide a 0% loan for the remaining 40%.

The surprise donation to the village of several buildings on Main Street, which was announced on Aug. 19, has given Sherman a great opportunity for development, Meeder said.

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The buildings, donated by businessman Van McConnon, include the properties at 129 W Main St., 123 W Main St., 121 W Main St., and 130 W Main St. "We just signed the contract for the donated property," she said.

The process is underway to move the food pantry into one of these properties so it will be more visible and better able to serve the people, Meeder said. "The Western New York food pantry came and inspected today," she said on Friday. "We're hoping to have it open next week."

Other plans for these properties include housing the rural center and creating space for family and social services and other needs, Meeder said.

Additionally, the Chamber of Commerce has been working on putting together a mural on the outside wall of the Ox and Rooster restaurant at the intersection of Route 76 and Main Street, Meeder said. "Members of the Chamber and the Historical Society are really excited," Meeder said. "We're really hoping we get a good turnout at the Visionary Workshop



Photo by David Prenatt  
**The Sherman Wastewater Treatment Plant, recently dedicated in honor of Edward Sprickman who was mayor when it was constructed, will soon undergo a \$6.2 million upgrade.**

to get input from the community."

Much work has already been done to improve the sidewalks on Main Street, which were cracked and uneven, and the village has been working with Chautauqua Rails to Trails to improve the Sherman section of the 28-mile trail, a portion of which was recently named the Rosie Billquist Nature Trail. A \$500 donation from Rosie's husband will be used for maintenance and support of the trail.

With so much happening in the village, Meeder is quick to say that "the school is the anchor in the community. We're definitely committed to working together."

Sherman Central School, which has been ranked the No. 1 over-achieving school district by Buffalo Business First

for 12 years in a row, has seen a striking increase in enrollment. Superintendent Michael Ginestre said that 62 new students registered for school this year and "we could not be happier to maintain and expand our programming."

The enrollment of so many new pupils is due in part to the approval of a new tuition policy for out of district families. The new three-year rate structure, approved by Sherman Board of Education members, is intended to attract new families to Sherman Central School.

"Our low tuition rate program over the past three years has been highly successful, as we have added new students, received additional state aid, kept and added to cutting edge programming, and kept our expenses flat with accommodating new students," Ginestre said. "We offer high quality academics, expansive college credit bearing courses,

championship level athletics, and extracurricular programs that fit any student, Ginestre said.

In a related matter, Ginestre said construction of the new entrance should begin in May or June. The new entrance will have many safety features, including a two-door entry procedure and new security cameras, he said.

"As far as the building projects, we have been approved by the State Education Department in regards to our Smart School project," he said. "We also plan to open bids for our capital outlay project that will continue with flooring work inside classrooms."

There are many more plans for both the school and village to keep promoting the Sherman area. Some are far distant ideas and other have begun to take shape. Under any circumstances, however, it's clear that everything's NOT the same back in the little town of Sherman.



## National Alpaca Farm Days