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TOP STORY

EDITOR'S PICK

## Couple turn historic Springville train depot into inn

**Samantha Christmann**

Apr 26, 2024



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Samantha Christmann

Matt and Valarie Retzlaff didn't mean to fall in love with the historic Springville Train Depot at 227 W. Main St.



Valarie and Matt Retzlaff recently opened the Springville Depot Inn in the historic property they have been renovating since they moved in a couple of years ago.

Derek Gee, Buffalo News

They were looking for a new home with space for Matt's metal art workshop when Valarie saw the listing for the depot on a commercial real estate website. After touring it with a real estate agent, they knew they had to have it.

"You walk in, and you're in awe. I was in love," Valarie said.

But the locals weren't so sure about the Retzlaffs and their plan to turn it into an inn.



Valarie and Matt Retzlaff recently opened the Springville Depot Inn in the historic property they have been renovating since they moved in a couple of years ago, Monday, April 22, 2024. (Derek Gee/Buffalo News)

Derek Gee/Buffalo News

"They were very skeptical of us and what we were going to do with the building," Valarie said. "We had to come in very delicately. We really had to earn their trust."

The Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad built the Springville Railroad Depot in 1910 for \$25,000. It welcomed its last passenger in 1955 and saw its last freight train in 1977.

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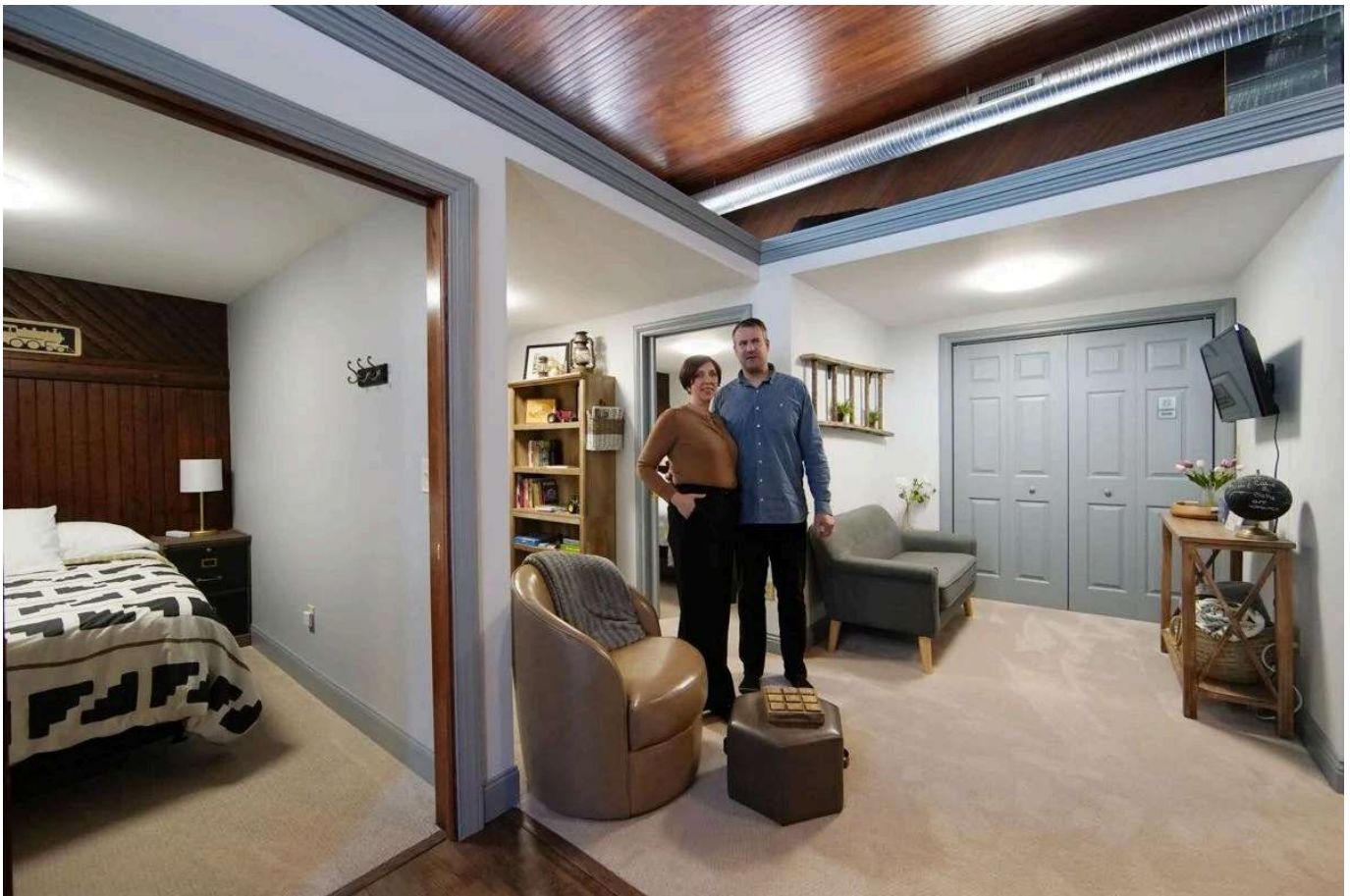
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Leo and Linda Lubke rescued it from disrepair in 1991 when they bought and restored the depot, converting it into a travel agency and gift shop. Two years later, it was added to the state and national registers of historic places. Afterward, it was home to Spring Creek Pharmacy for 10 years, then sat vacant for four years.

The community was very protective of the building and felt a sense of ownership of it. But they started to come around when they saw the Retzlaff's tirelessly working to restore its former glory while adding modern living quarters for themselves and a 600-square-foot apartment that they **rent out for about \$200 a night**. It overlooks the former railroad track, which is now a walking trail.



Valarie and Matt Retzlaff recently opened the Springville Depot Inn in the historic property they have been renovating since they moved in a couple of years ago, Monday, April 22, 2024. (Derek Gee/Buffalo News)

Derek Gee/Buffalo News

"We really did not know what we were getting ourselves into," Valarie said. "It was bug-infested. You'd turn the water on, and it was all black. The floor was just gross."

The Retzlaffs maintained the red and black oak that covered the walls and 13-foot ceilings. The ticket window, with its Florentine glass, is stunningly intact in their personal living space. And the English brick train platform now makes up a private patio for the rental space, which takes up a rear portion of the building that was used to deliver luggage, mail and parcels.

The have erected a pole barn on the property, which is larger than an acre, and may add a second rental space in the future.

"We feel very responsible for what's left here," Valarie said. "It's a lot of pressure because we take it so seriously."

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## **Party City closing in North Buffalo**

Party supply chain Party City will close its location at 2141 Elmwood Ave. next month. The company already has closed locations at Boulevard Consumer Square in Amherst and at 7220 Niagara Falls Blvd. in Niagara Falls.

The company emerged from bankruptcy in September. It has locations in the Eastgate Plaza in Clarence, on Galleria Drive in Cheektowaga and in the BJ's Plaza on Milestrip Road in Blasdell.

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## **Wicked Jimmy's coming to Jamestown**

Wicked Jimmy's, a \$2.35 million restaurant, craft brewery and banquet facility, will open this summer in the former Jamestown Brewing Co. site at 115-121 W. Third St. in Jamestown. It will feature music, a "speakeasy room" and, eventually, a rooftop bar.

It is owned by Robert Roth, who also owns Wicked Warren's, a brewery and pizzeria based in Warren, Pa.

The property has been vacant for four years. Wicked Jimmy's was granted \$243,000 in tax breaks for the project from the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency on Tuesday. Wicked Jimmy's previously received a \$950,000 low-interest loan for the project from the board.

The property is at a prime location for a craft brewery and restaurant, close to the National Comedy Center, Northwest Arena and other downtown Jamestown attractions. The former Jamestown Brewing Co., which was located in the facility, steadily grew its customer base until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, when it closed.

"We are confident that Wicked Warren's will do the same, based on what they're doing in Warren, and bring new life to downtown Jamestown," said Mark Geise, deputy county executive for economic development and chief executive officer of the CCIDA.

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## Wabuz launches furniture designs

**Wabuz**, a female Indigenous-owned furniture brand, launched its first collection this week at K Art Gallery, 808 Main St.

Growing up, designer Ashley J. MacDonald said she knew about only totem poles, moccasins and other traditional Indigenous designs. She studied Indigenous materials, history, food and art and created her take on modern Indigenous art.

She calls them "furnitur(ish) objects," which take elements from pop art and street culture.

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*The Buffalo Next team gives you the big picture on the region's economic revitalization. Email tips to **buffalonext@buffnews.com** or reach Buffalo Next Editor David Robinson at 716-849-4435.*

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**By Samantha Christmann**

News Business Reporter

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