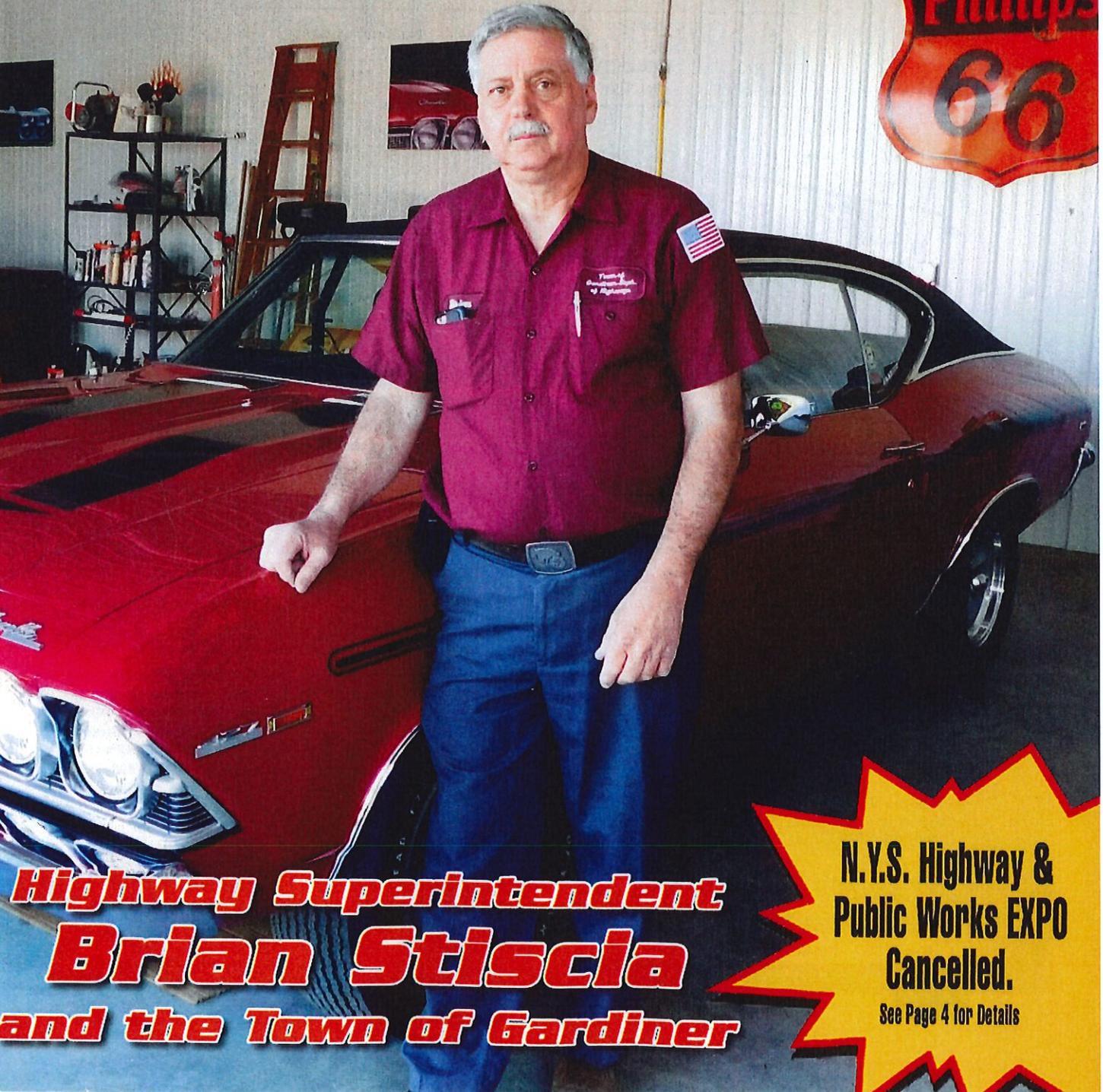


SUPERINTENDENT'S PROFILE

AND PRODUCT - SERVICE DIRECTORY

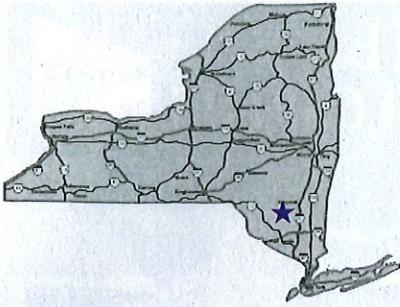
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**Highway Superintendent
Brian Stiscia
and the Town of Gardiner**

**N.Y.S. Highway &
Public Works EXPO
Cancelled.**

See Page 4 for Details



Highway Superintendent Brian Stiscia and the Town of Gardiner

By Lori Lovely

PROFILE CORRESPONDENT

To face the tough times and to celebrate the good ones, we turn to those closest to us, those who mean the most to us: family and friends. For Brian Stiscia, superintendent of highways of the town of Gardiner, that most important loved one is gone, so he celebrates and honors the achievements with his crew.

After more than 30 years of marriage, Stiscia lost his best friend — his wife Katrina — to cancer last year. Soul mates who met just after high school, the devoted couple dedicated their lives to community service — and each other.

“Katrina supported me,” Brian said. “She knew I was a servant to our community for the fire and highway departments. The sacrifices she made, with countless fire/EMS emergencies, highway calls and board meetings ... the many anniversaries, birthdays and holidays missed ... she was always there for me, to lend an ear or a helping hand. I could go on for hours talking about her.”

Now, he pours himself into his job and his hobby of drag racing while he decides on whether or not to stand for re-election when his term ends in 2022.

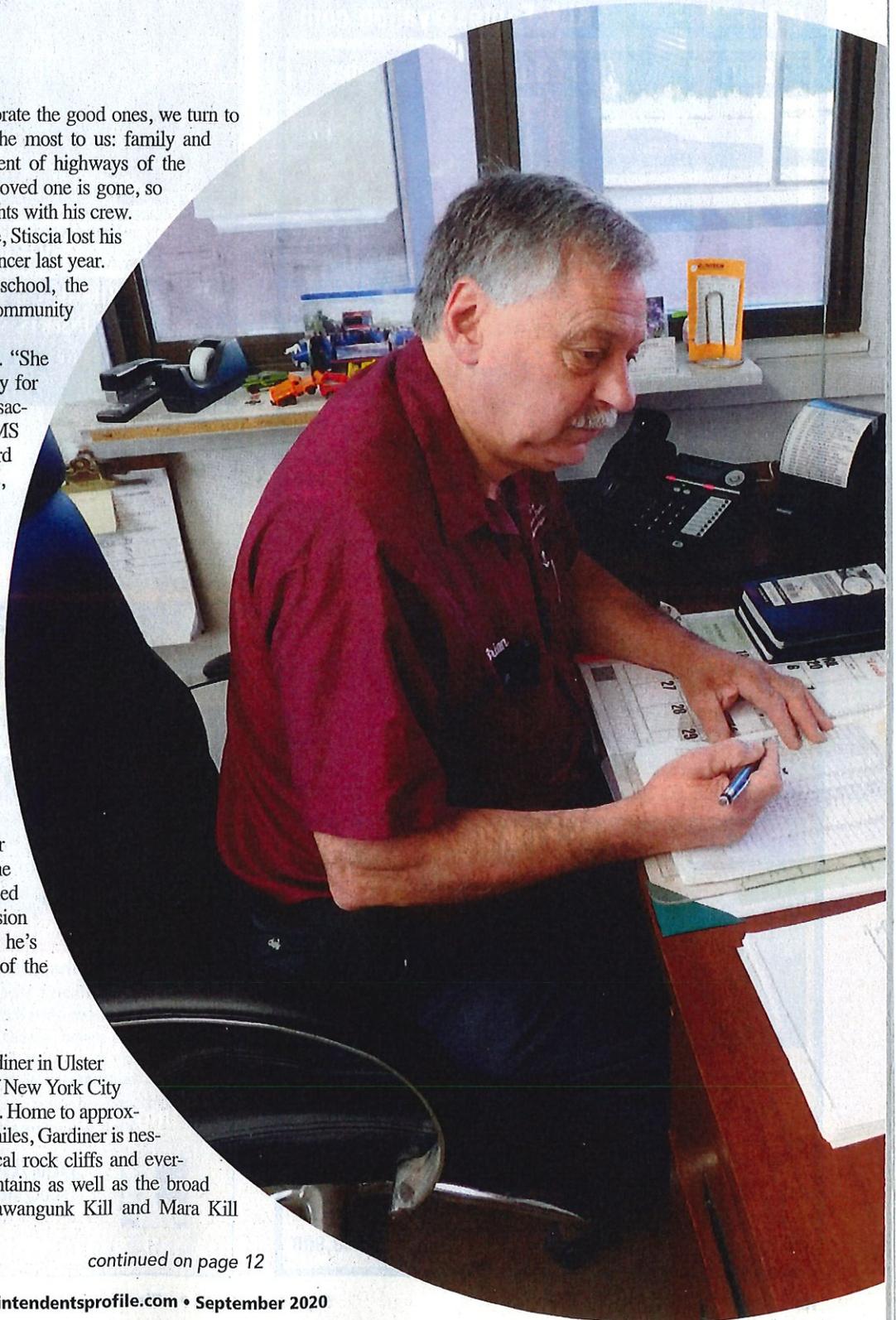
“My wife and I had future plans,” he said. “We were going to retire young and healthy enough to enjoy time, do things together and travel.”

Torn between fulfilling his promise to his wife to retire early to carry out their plans by walking away from a job he loves or staying at work with his extended “family,” Brian hasn’t yet made a decision about pursuing another term, but said he’s strongly considering fulfilling his end of the bargain he made with his wife.

A Life of Service

Born in Kingston, Brian grew up Gardiner in Ulster County, approximately 75 miles north of New York City in the upper region of the Hudson Valley. Home to approximately 6,000 people within 45 square miles, Gardiner is nestled in a scenic area featuring the vertical rock cliffs and evergreen forests of the Shawangunk Mountains as well as the broad flood plains of the Wallkill River, Shawangunk Kill and Mara Kill streams.

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John Lischinsky of the Gardiner highway department assists on the Capital Improvement drainage project on Tina Drive.

“The Shawangunk Mountains offer the most pristine views of the surrounding areas of New Paltz, Plattekill, Wallkill and Orange County,” Brian said, explaining that recreation is practically in their backyards, with some of the best rock climbing and hiking and biking trails in the “Gunks,” as the locals call the mountains. Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Mohonk Preserve and Palisades Park Preserve are also popular with tourists.

But that’s not all the outdoor recreation offered in the area. The Gardiner Rail Trail is part of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail system. There’s also Blue Sky Ranch skydiving and fishing, camping, biking, canoeing, kayaking and horseback riding in the area.

Restaurants, tasting rooms, wineries, brewing companies, distilleries and numerous farms that produce cider and organic vegetables dot the landscape, adding to the allure for locals and vacationers alike.

One of his first jobs was as a service manager for a busy outdoor power equipment dealer. In October 1993, the local boy began working for the town of Gardiner highway department, continuing what he called his “small engine repair hobby” at Majestic Hardware. He also became an active member of the volunteer Gardiner fire department.

In 2014, he was elected superintendent of the highway department.

“I saw an opportunity to take the highway department to a new level of service,” he said, explaining his decision to run for office. He wanted

to take on the challenging projects that had been set aside by previous administrations and he wanted the taxpayers to see the department’s work ethic and the pride they take in projects they complete for the town.

As a leader, Brian has relied on more than 20 years of hands-on experience with the highway department, where he worked his way up as a laborer and equipment operator. He also has leaned on his 35 years in the fire department, where, currently as assistant chief and previously as chief, he gained experience in training and supervising personnel, budgeting, maintaining vehicles, managing a department, delegating duties and interacting with the public.

“I deliver performance under fire,” he joked, but in reality, he backs it up with results.

Achievements

During his two terms, Brian has produced a range of results, from reorganizing the filing system to conducting an inventory of road and culvert signage to installing guardrail in several locations where safety necessitated. He also addressed flooding and drainage issues throughout the town, upgraded and relocated the fuel storage system and installed a 30 kW standby generator so the highway keeps functioning when the power goes out.

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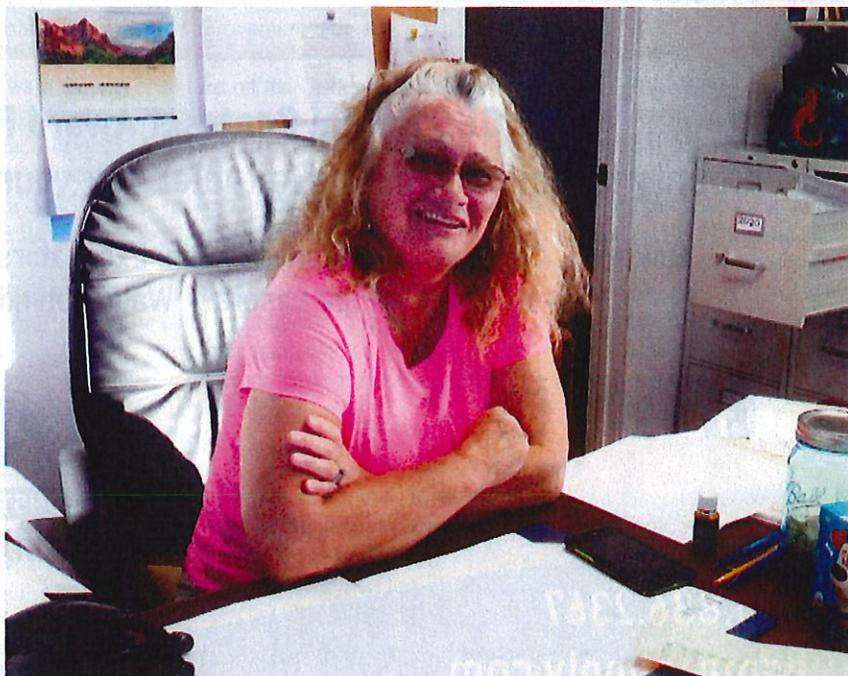


The town of Gardiner's highway garage, shop and office.

"We rebuilt a salt shed that was deemed unsafe due to a chemical reaction between the treated wood and the salt, [which] caused a fungus [and] deterioration of the main support beams," he said.

After research through the company that manufactured the beams and Cornell University, he developed a game plan of replacing the damaged wood and beams, shoring up the exterior and installing a membrane on the inside of the salt shed that acts as a barrier to keep the salt from coming into contact with the treated lumber, thus preventing a recurrence of the problem. By repairing the salt shed for under \$100,000 rather than replacing it for a whole lot more, he saved the town considerable money.

In another cost-saving measure, he replaced both furnaces in the garage building, a 100 by 54-ft. former cold storage building that was retrofitted and now features four bays: office, utility/parts room, bathroom and drivers' room. He also upgraded the compressor in that building and replaced shovels and rakes with equipment that came with a lifetime warranty. He said that now, he makes sure there is a warranty on all purchases.



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Hard at work is the department's secretary, Robin Kaufmann.



The town's fleet of Mack trucks (2014-2020) and one International 2009, all outfitted with wings, reversible plows and multi-purpose bodies, in front of the salt barn.

On the Job

Current 2020 capital improvement projects the crew is working on include reconstructing Lake Road and resurfacing Tina Drive, Lauren Drive and Halcyon Road.

"We prep each road first," Brian said, adding that prep work includes trimming and removal of trees and stumps, upgrading drainage and replacing failed driveway and cross pipes and applying grass seed and straw when the road work is completed.

Although not contractually obligated to fulfill duties with other departments, the majority of the highway department employees reside in Gardiner, and they assist other departments and districts upon request.

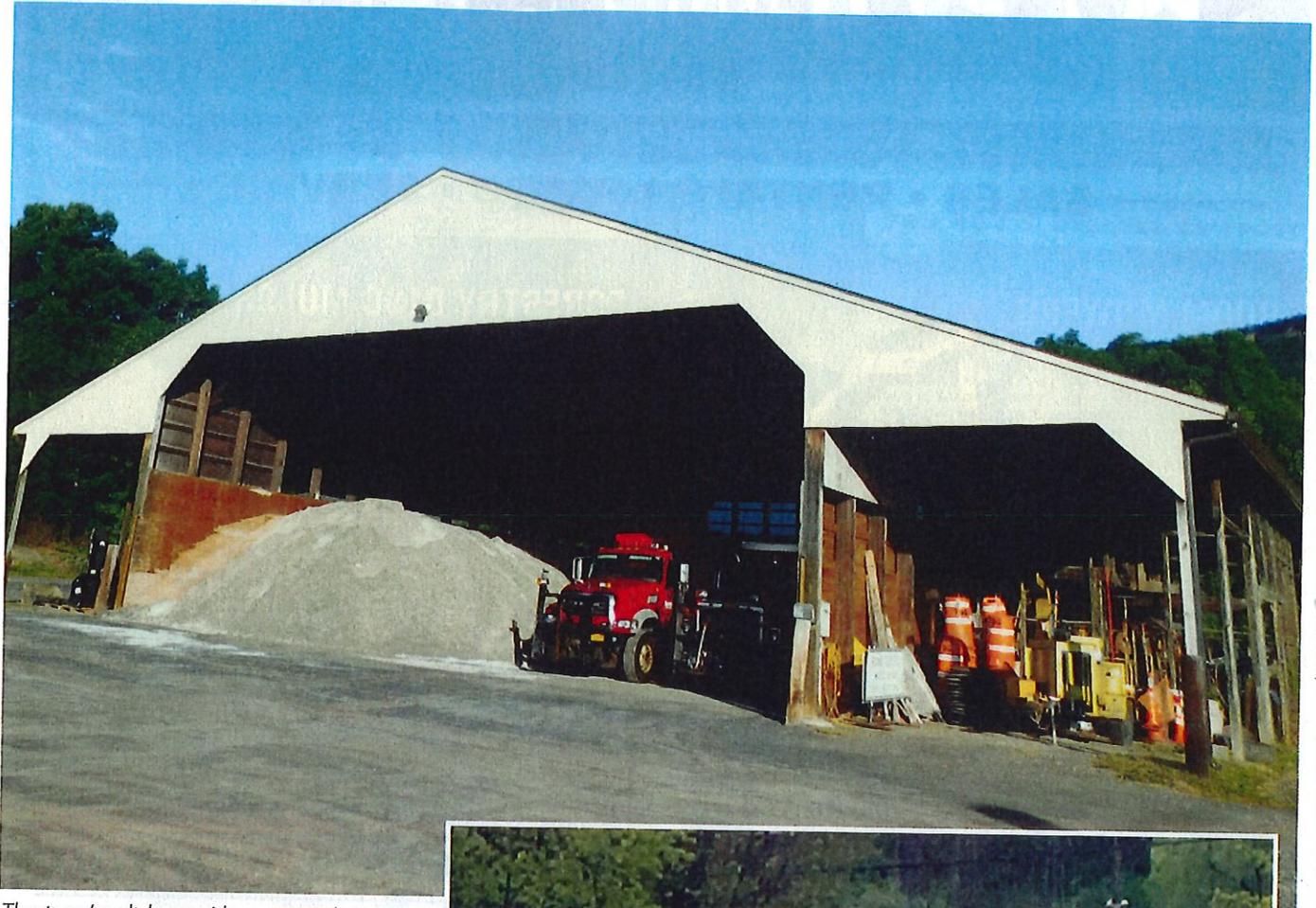
"We plow the town hall, library and transfer station," Brian said. They also maintain the Rail Trail by assisting with maintenance of signage, trees and all of their equipment, which is owned by the town and falls under the jurisdiction of parks & recreation. "Major tree work gets bid

out, as we don't have a big enough bucket truck."

Other tasks they take on in order to cut down on costs include taking office refuge and recycling from the town and highway offices to the transfer station and assisting with demolition of the old park pavilion, which was let to bid for replacement. They also maintain the decorative street lights and assist with holiday decorations for all seasons.

The town's board authorizes the highway superintendent to enter into mutual aid agreements with surrounding state, county and town highway departments, fire departments and police agencies, in accordance with New York State Highway Law. Mutual Aid Agreements range from crews hauling materials for other agencies to traffic control and assisting during catastrophic storms if any adjacent town was hit harder than them.

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The town's salt barn with a seasonal storage overhang.

"We have also reached out to ask to borrow other's equipment that the town doesn't have," Brian said. "They usually come with their own operator too."

Brian also assists the building department and planning department on new building sites, subdivision projects with site drainage, driveway permits and new roads.

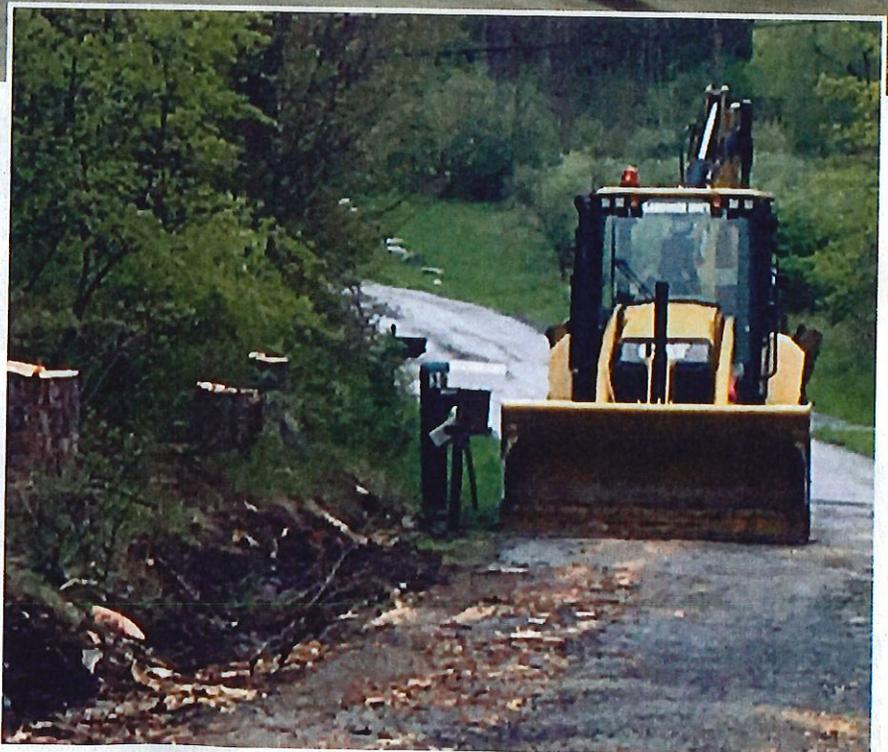
Hit the Road

One of the biggest ongoing jobs Brian oversees is road maintenance. He and his crew are responsible for three bridges and 111.21 lane miles of Gardiner roads. Out of 107 roads, one is gravel.

They also do winter maintenance on 10 lane miles on two Ulster County roads, per a shared service agreement.

"It has worked well for our town and Ulster County department of public works," he said.

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Seen here is a Capital Improvement project on Lake Road where crews remove old diseased Maple trees and relocate the ditch line and install a shoulder.

Altogether, that adds up to nine plow routes, which take three to four hours each.

They store about 800 tons of salt in a 100- by 60-ft. covered salt barn with sides, which was added in 1996.

Brian adds one or two part-time crew members to help with snow removal — his least favorite aspect of the job because changing weather patterns require around-the-clock attention, resulting in lost sleep. The seasonal crew members join a full-time staff of nine who work 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday: Tom Power, deputy superintendent/work supervisor; Matt Aube, road foreman; Terry DePiero, MEO; Adam Monteleone, MEO/fabricator; John Lischinsky, MEO/electrical; John Soltish, MEO/mechanic; Rob Scofield, MEO/operator; and Robin Kaufmann, secretary.

Brian praises them for bringing different skills to the department and takes a great deal of pleasure when residents compliment his crew for a job well done. He applauds the “dedication and pride my entire highway staff implements each day by doing their part [and] being professional.”

Fleeting Thoughts

When he first took office, Brian set a priority of upgrading trucks and equipment.

“For safety, productivity and morale, it’s a must to have good, working trucks and equipment,” he said.

His crew takes care of their vehicles, he added, with daily checks and preventive maintenance performed according to hours of use, mileage and yearly. That has allowed them to “push the life” on some of the equipment. For example, they have no plans to upgrade the 1987 Champion road grader.

“Trucks and equipment need to be updated constantly,” he said. “We changed how the prior administration approached surplus trucks and equipment at the end of their life, and basically scrap.”

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A Case excavator helps relocate the ditch, shoulder and removal of stumps on a Capital Improvement project on Lake Road.





Brian Stiscia supervises his crew, Terry DePiero, Tom Power and John Lischinsky, as they remove and install a catch basin on Farmers Turnpike.

What works for them is selling trucks and equipment while they retain value.

“We implemented a replacement schedule program. Selling them brings a return on investment.”

Income from sales is used toward purchase of new trucks and equipment.

He developed a vehicle replacement schedule that provides the town board with a list of each truck’s and equipment’s year, make, model, purchase date, lifecycle, projected replacement year, level of priority for replacement and approximate replacement cost.

“I’ve been lucky,” Brian said.

By providing factual information and details about the fleet when asked by the town board, he has managed the highway budget and periodically replace his fleet.

Much of the fleet is fairly new now, with the newest a 2020 Mack

Granite 42 FR diesel dump truck. Other equipment includes:

- 2016 Dodge Ram 3500 diesel dump truck
- 2018 Mack GU712 diesel dump truck
- 2018 Bobcat S560 T4 skid steer
- 1997 International S2574 diesel dump truck
- 2015 Ford 350 Super Duty truck
- 2017 Caterpillar 430F2 backhoe
- 1988 Champion 730A road grader
- 1980 custom 18-ton 18T101 equipment trailer
- 1997 homemade pipe trailer
- 2002 Big Tow B20 equipment trailer
- 2019 Ford 350 regular cab XL
- 2009 International 7500 diesel dump truck
- three 2014 Mack HD SA D with P & MP body trucks

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Brian and his dedicated crew (L-R) are Rob Scofield, John Soltish, John Lischinsky, Brian Stiscia, Adam Monteleone, Terry DePiero, Tom Power and Matt Aube.

With a relatively young fleet, Brian observed that they're in good shape regarding replacement of trucks, but said they're "way overdue" to upgrade other equipment. His list to address includes a 1986 Case 752 roller, the 1992 Brush Bandit 200 chipper, the 1996 Ford 350 VersaLift aerial bucket truck, a 2001 Daewoo 250III front-end loader, the 2002 LeeBoy 700 paver and a 2005 New Holland TN70DT sickle bar tractor they use for mowing.

The department recently purchase, a Bobcat with multiple implements.

"It's a sweet machine," Brian said.

The implements allow them to save time and simplify. For example, snow on state road sidewalks can be blown into the truck for quick clearing of the business district.

"We purchased other attachments for other applications, such as the milling head for grinding roads, a sweeper attachment for sweeping the roads and the brushcat attachment for brush removal."

One piece of equipment he believes the department lacks is an

excavator. In the interim, they rent one as needed, but he hopes to purchase their own. Within the past six years, they have signed lease-purchase agreements on trucks that he believes has worked well for their budget and rotation.



Brian and his wife, Katrina, whom he calls the "love of my life," in 2019 at Mohonk Mountain House fire department installation/awards dinner.

Park It

The highway department used to have a four-bay garage in the centrally located hamlet of Gardiner. As the town grew, so, too, did its need for more equipment. — and a bigger place to store it.

"The town owned a 20-acre parcel on South Mountain Road," Brian said.

In 1988, the town built a 100-by 54-ft. cold storage steel building to house equipment overflow.

Because the original location was in such need of repair or demolition, they decided to move everything to South Mountain. To keep costs down, the crew did a lot of the site work, installed the septic systems and had the building retrofitted, making it a fully operational highway garage with four bays, an office, a utility/parts room, bathroom and a drivers' room.

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Crews remove stumps along Lake Road.

Meanwhile, Brian noted that their original hamlet location is now home to the Gardiner library.

Pay It Forward

Other equipment the department uses includes radios — portable or installed — in every vehicle and piece of equipment, leased from New York Communications Company Inc. and computers in the office for tracking inventory. The computers also are used for e-blasts from the town supervisor to residents and the town's Facebook page.

Brian said they use Quicken to keep track of their annual operating budget of \$1,414,717.00, expenses and daily balances. Of that, \$102,000 is their annual CHIPS allocation, with another \$23,000 from PAVENY and \$18,000 from Extreme Winter Recovery.

Meeting budget on projects is one of the things that makes a day a good one for Brian. One ongoing project he's been working on is a bridge replacement on Clove Road because the 30-year-old single-lane temporary bridge has been yellow-flagged and was once issued a red flag. The weight limit has been reduced, and the town has applied for grants to replace this temporary bridge. Brian said the replacement will be a two-lane bridge and his department has been working on it, still

hoping to obtain a grant since he took office.

The town works with engineer Thomas Harvey of Clark, Patterson, Lee, who is working with the town on the bridge over the Rail Trail and various drainage and subdivision projects.

Family

In addition to being a member of the Gardiner fire department, Brian belongs to the Ulster County Association of Town Superintendents and the New York State Association of Highway Superintendents. He devotes a great deal of time to his job and his crew, to whom he is so bonded, he described his worst day on the job as one in which he had to fire an employee. "Working here is like being around family," he said.

He takes pleasure in seeing dedicated employees who have faithfully served the community reach retirement and be able to enjoy the rest of their lives. But it has to be a sharp reminder of his own retirement plans with his wife.

"We were sweethearts," he said. "Never had a bad day. We had what everyone wished for: to find your soulmate and have everlasting love with your best friend."

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He reminisced about her sense of humor, her tremendous strength and her love and support of him, which didn't go unnoticed. "She always had my back."

What his future holds is unclear. For now, he focuses on work. When he's not working, he's probably restoring or racing a muscle car.

"I own a '69 Chevelle Yenko, which was a calendar car, and a '70 Chevelle LS-6 that has been featured in numerous magazines," he said with pride.

If he's not at the track or a car show, he may be out with friends or at home with his two rescued cats, Tigger and Tiger, trying to figure out how to navigate the future without the woman he loves. **P**



The crew relocated a ditch and prepared the shoulder on Lake Road.



Brian Stiscia stands beside this V plow, which was made by Frink Snow Plows Inc. of Clayton Thousand Islands, N.Y., expressly for Walter Snow Fighter Trucks. The town owned two of these at one time.