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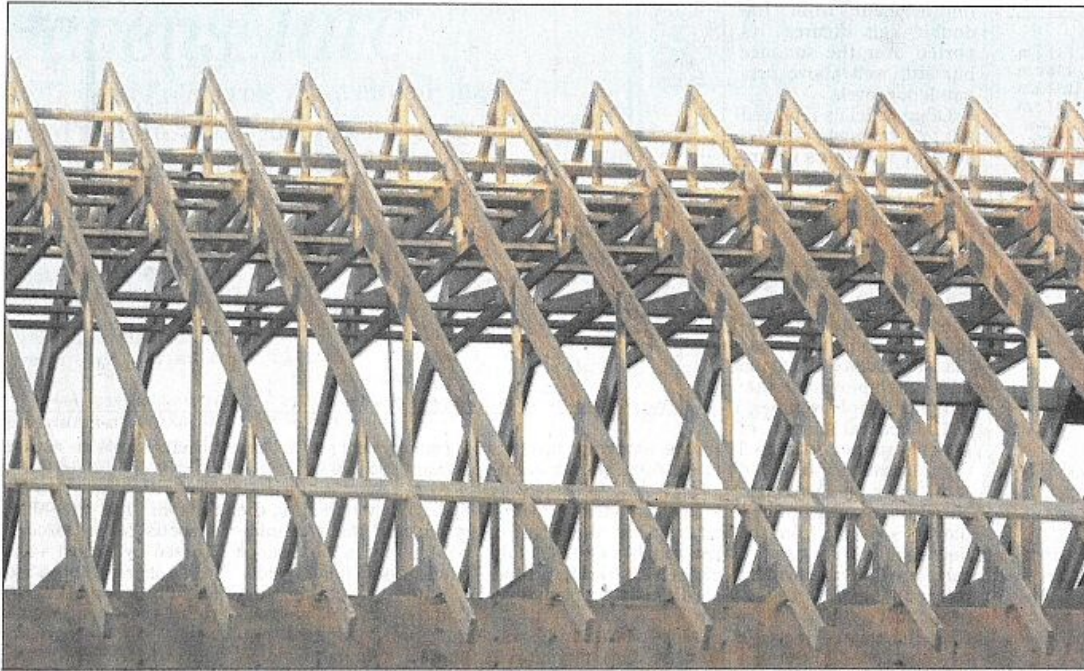
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BILLERICA



JULIA MALAKIE PHOTOS / LOWELL SUN

The supporting structure for the new roof for 2 Old Elm St., in Billerica, is shown. The Community Preservation Act-funded renovation of the 1870s woolen storage building will be the new Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center.

Middlesex Canal Museum hopes to turn the tide

Pandemic has slowed project for new facility, driven up costs

By Stefan Geller
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BILLERICA » It has been a three-year process for officials with the Middlesex Canal Association to construct a new museum commemorating Billerica's historic waterway, but due to setbacks resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, the expected completion date has been pushed back four to five months and has put the association under even more financial strain.

"This has been a very challenging project with a very tedious process," said Betty Bigwood, the association's lead director of the building committee. "I seriously wonder

whether we would've started if we had known it would take so long."

Since the early 2000s, the nonprofit association has run the Middlesex Canal Museum and Visitor Center out of its current location at 71 Faulkner St., paying \$1,700 in monthly rent, but offsetting the costs through visitor fees and by hosting lectures, children's programs and walks along the canal, according to Bigwood.

In 2014, Pace Industries donated a dilapidated building on Old Elm Street to the MCA — situated just across the canal from the museum's current spot — which not only provided them with a rent-



Gabriel Bigger of Worcester stacks rafters that have been measured and cut, ready to use, as he and other workers finish up a day's work on 2 Old Elm St.

free space, but with a location that had historical significance, as it is where the ceremonial groundbreaking for

the canal took place in 1794. After Bigwood and her fellow MCA directors spent two

MODERNA COVID-19 VACCINE APPROVED

'Science has done something amazing'

Approval puts second shot in U.S. arsenal to fight coronavirus

By Lauran Neergaard and Matthew Perrone
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. added a second outbreak so dire that the nation is regularly recording more than 3,000 deaths a day.

Much-needed doses are set to arrive Monday after the Food and Drug Administration authorized an emergency rollout of the vaccine developed by Moderna Inc. and the National Institutes of Health.

The move marks the world's first authorization for Moderna's shots. The vaccine is very similar to one from Pfizer Inc. and Germany's BioNTech that's now being dispensed to millions of health care workers and nursing home residents as the biggest vaccination drive in U.S. history starts to ramp up.

The two work "better than we almost dared to hope," NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins told The Associated Press. "Science is working here, science has done something amazing."

Early results of large, still unfinished studies show both vaccines appear safe and strongly protective although Moderna's is easier to handle since it doesn't need to be stored at ultra-frozen temperatures.

A second vaccine represents a ray of hope amid despair as the virus continues to spread unabated even before holiday gatherings that are certain to further fuel the outbreak.

The scourge has claimed more than 312,000 U.S. lives and killed 1.7 million people worldwide. New cases in the U.S. are running at over 216,000 per day on average. Deaths per day have hit all-time highs, eclipsing 3,600 on Wednesday.

California has emerged as one of the