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February 6, 2025 GOD BLESS AMERICA Vol. 52, No. 29



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Senator Boscola Announ- ces Nearly \$500,000 in PA State Grants for Local Trails, Parks Recreation and Watershed Protection Projects Through Act 13 Grant Program

State Senator Lisa Bo-
scola announced today
that \$441,085 in state
funding has been award-
ed for trails, parks, re-
creation and watershed
protection projects in
the 18th Senatorial Dis-
trict through the Act 13
Marcellus Legacy Fund
Grant Program.
“Nearly half a million
dollars in state funding
through the Marcellus
Legacy Fund will im-
prove the quality of
life in our communities
through increased recre-

ational opportunities and
protecting our environ-
ment,” Senator Boscola
stated. “I am particularly
pleased that funding will
assist Slate Belt commu-
nities in their recovery
from damage caused
by the flooding of July
2023,” Boscola said.
The Commonwealth Fi-
nancing Authority (CFA)
approved the following
projects:
- Greenways, Trails and
Recreation
- Skyline Investment
GRANT cont'd on pg 2

North Warren Takes On Ver- non Township High School in Girls Basketball



North Warren took on Vernon Township High School in Girls Basketball on January 28th. North Warren was defeated, 52 to 39. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Bangor Wins Big Over Moravian Academy in Boys Basketball



Bangor took on Moravian Academy in boys basketball on January 31st for their youth night game. Bangor won 57 to 24. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

North Warren Takes To The Mat Against South Hunterdon Wrestling Team



North Warren took on South Hunterdon High School in a wrestling match on January 30th. North Warren lost a close match, 39 to 36. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

**The Groundhog
Has Spoken!**



**Button Up Your
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Weeks of Winter!**



GRANTS

Continued from page 1

Goup Easton, LLC – Dixie Cup Site Regional Bike Trail and Public Space
 Connector - \$175,000
 - Lower Mount Bethel Township – LMBT Trail System Storm Damage Reconstruction - \$77,625
 - Pen Argyl Borough – Regional Aquatic Facility - \$76,708
 - City of Easton – Nesquehoning Memorial Park - \$50,000

- Washington Township – GTRP Dog Park - \$43,702
 Watershed Restoration - Washington Township – Steambank Restoration - \$18,050
 The grants were approved today by the state Commonwealth Financing Authority Board in Harrisburg. Funding through the Marcellus Legacy Fund uses revenue generated through Act 13 of 2012 that imposes an impact fee on the state’s unconventional natural gas wells.

Budget Committee Approves Space Bill To Add Deaf Designation On MVC Registration

The Senate Budget Committee approved legislation sponsored by Senator Parker Space (R-24) that would help law enforcement officers better communicate with individuals who have hearing impairments at traffic stops.

“It is absolutely essential that law enforcement can effectively communicate with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing,” said Sen. Space. “This designation would remove concern from the equation by ensuring police officers are aware that the person they’re interacting with at a traffic stop is deaf and can respond accordingly.”

Senator Space’s bill, S-1000, would require the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission to add a designation on an applicant’s motor vehicle registration indicating the registrant is deaf. The no-



tation would only appear when law enforcement officers access the vehicle’s license plate information.

To obtain the designation, an applicant would need to have a hearing

loss of 41 decibels or greater, verified by an otorhinolaryngologist (ENT) or an audiologist certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association or licensed by the State of

New Jersey.

You can read the full text of the bill online.

To speak with Sen. Space, contact Chris Sivel, SRO Deputy Director of Communications at csivel@njleg.org.

New in the Bangor Public Library January 24th to January 30th, 2025

Adult Fiction: More Or Less Maddy: A Novel by Lisa Genova; We Do Not Part: A Novel by Kang Han; Water Moon: A Novel by Samantha Sotto; Onyx Storm by Rebecca Yarros

Adult Non Fiction: Super Gut: A Four-Week Plan to Reprogram Your Microbiome, Restore Health, and Lose Weight by William Davis

Large Print Adult Fiction: The Farmhouse: A Hickory Grove Novel by Elizabeth Bromke; The Christmas House: A Hickory Grove Novel by Elizabeth Bromke; The Quilting House: A Hickory Grove Novel by Elizabeth Bromke; The Innkeeper’s House by Elizabeth Bromke; The Schoolhouse by Elizabeth Bromke; Robert B. Parker’s Hot Property: A Spenser Novel by Mike Lupica; Flying Angels: A Novel by Danielle Steel; Variation: A Novel by Rebecca Yarros

Easy Fictio: How to Be Romance With Bluey and Bingo The Little Puppy by Nicola Killen; How to Catch a Groundhog by Alice Walstead

Easy Non Fiction: I Spy Love: A Book of Picture Riddles by Dan Marzollo

Junior Fiction: Minecraft: Stories From the Overworld; The Ghost Next Door by R. L. Stine

Junior Non Fiction: Who is Simone Biles? by Stefanie Loh

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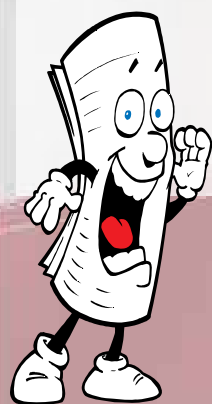
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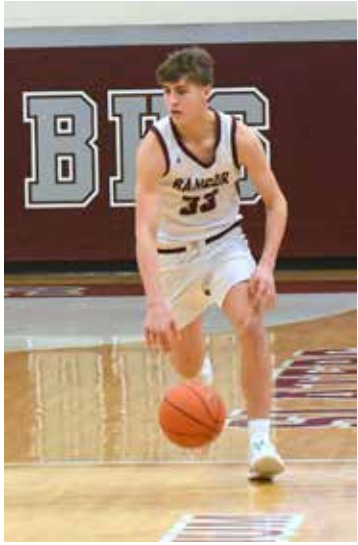
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BANGOR (57) VS MORAVIAN ACADEMY (24) BOYS BASKETBALL YOUTH NIGHT



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PEN ARGYL (16) VS WILSON (58) BOYS BASKETBALL



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December 21st 2024 | January 25th, 2025 | February 22nd, 2025

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NORTH WARREN (36) SOUTH HUNDERSON (39) WRESTLING



Photos by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press



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Boscola's Chapter 14 Reenactment Bill Passes Senate with Strong Bipartisan Support

With a broad bipartisan vote of 41-7, the Pennsylvania Senate today approved Senate Bill 154, legislation sponsored by Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Northampton) to restore and improve The Responsible Utility Customer Protection Act ("Chapter 14"). The bill now moves to the House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee for further consideration. "Chapter 14 has long been a critical tool to protect responsible ratepayers from absorbing the costs of unpaid utility bills while ensuring vulnerable cus-



tomers have safeguards during the termination process," Boscola said. "With its expiration, we lost certainty in these protections. Today's vote moves us one step closer to restoring that certainty."

Chapter 14, the law which provided protections like the winter termination moratorium and payment arrangements to customers with unpaid utility bills, expired on December 31, 2024. The Pennsylvania

Public Utility Commission (PUC) acted to extend these key protections until the legislature could act. SB154 reenacts these protections while strengthening consumer safeguards, including longer medical certificates, improved payment plans, and stronger notice requirements before shut-offs. "This bill is the product of bipartisan cooperation and a shared commitment to protecting utility customers," Boscola added. "I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to get this across the finish line."

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DEP Adds Nockamixon Site to Pennsylvania's Priority List of Hazardous Sites, Starts Process to Cleanup Contamination at the Source

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) listed the Nockamixon TCE Site to Pennsylvania's Priority List of Hazardous Sites for Remedial Response (PAPL) on January 18, 2025. Since 2009, DEP has conducted soil, surface water, and groundwater investigations on the contamination – and has worked with the impacted local homeowners to install protection measures to ensure they

can have clean air and pure water. While DEP has already addressed the immediate public health impacts, adding the Site to the PAPL allows DEP to address the problem head on and remediate the contamination at the source. "Adding this Site to Pennsylvania's priority list will allow our cleanup program to remediate the source of the contamination," said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "This

will help us protect residents' health and safety by finding a solution to minimize exposure to these harmful contaminants." DEP has identified a former 77.2-acre farm on Brennan Road as the source of the contamination. Property owners removed the drums that contained the harmful chemicals in 1980, but subsequent investigations revealed elevated concentrations of chlorinated solvents in the

areas where the drums had been stored. In 2009, the Bucks County Health Department notified DEP of Trichloroethene (TCE) contamination in wells serving a local restaurant and several homes. Between 2009 and 2011, DEP sampled more than 100 private drinking water wells in the area – finding that chlorinated solvents, TCE, and/or Tetrachloroethene (PCE) exceeded Safe Drinking Water Maximum Contaminant Levels in wells serving 45 homes. DEP subsequently installed carbon filter systems on 42 of those homes. Indoor air of two residential properties near the contamination source areas was impacted by vapor intrusion (VI). DEP subsequently installed vapor mitigation systems in those homes. Chlorinated solvents such as Trichloroethylene (TCE) and Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) are commonly used in circuit board manufacturing, the textile industry, and for the removal of grease from metal parts. PCE is also used for dry cleaning. Chlorinated solvents are among the most com-

mon soil and groundwater contaminants. Routes of exposure can include ingestion, inhalation, and skin contact. Surface water near a small section of Nockamixon State Park – northeast of Haycock Cove, near Park Drive West – was sampled by DEP and found to have slightly elevated TCE results. There are no parking lots or trails in this area of the park. "Staff at Nockamixon will continue to work with DEP to address this environmental issue, as it is our responsibility as stewards of the Commonwealth's public lands," Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) State Parks Director John Hallas said. The Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act was signed into law in 1988 to provide DEP the funding and authority to address hazardous substances and contaminants in the environment. Placement of a site on the PAPL is used to identify sites that need remedial response decisions to address threats to the public health, safety, or the environment. DEP personnel are currently working on 134 HSCA

Sites and are performing operation and maintenance activities at 110 sites. DEP has conducted over 360 HSCA actions in communities across Pennsylvania, cleaning up groundwater, capping or removing contaminated soil, and ensuring thousands of people have access to safe drinking water. A remedial response is an action that will cost more than \$2 million dollars and take longer than one year to complete. DEP is accepting public comments on the listing from January 18, 2025 to February 17, 2025. All written comments and DEP's responses will be placed into the Site file and will later be incorporated into the Administrative Record. More information can be found on DEP's website. Please submit written comments by mail to Dustin A. Armstrong, Environmental Protection Specialist at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 2 East Main Street, Norristown, PA 19401 or by email darmstrong@pa.gov and include "Nockamixon Public Comment" in the subject of the email.

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Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary!



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Hello, fellow readers,
 The ancient origin of Groundhog Day dates back thousands of years, and while its success in predicting winter's end is marginally accurate, it's a fun tradition that celebrates nature. Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow this year, which predicts we will have six more weeks of winter. As the folklore goes, it would be early spring if he didn't. Officially, the first Groundhog Day celebration occurred on February 2nd, 1887, in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. But

Groundhog Day stems back thousands of years when, in the portion of Europe now Germany, badgers (some sources say hedgehogs) were thought to anticipate the coming spring, indicating when farmers should plant crops. When Germans immigrated to America and established themselves in Pennsylvania, where badgers and hedgehogs are not native, groundhogs became the go-to.

It hadn't occurred to me that Groundhog Day, always February 2nd, is typically the midpoint of the first day of winter, the winter solstice, and the first day of spring, the spring equinox. And it's halfway between the summer solstice and the autumnal equinox in the Southern Hemisphere. Perhaps the reason for the date? Humm...

Groundhogs (Marmota monax), also called woodchucks, live two to three years on average but can live up to six years in the wild. Those in captivity can live longer. But according to the Punxsutawney



Groundhog Club, Phil has extraordinary powers. He continues to live since his first spring prediction in 1886, a year before the celebration became official, thanks to a secret "elixir of life" he sips every summer to give him seven more years.

There are other famous groundhogs besides the Phil. Two popular fellas are Shubenacadie Sam of Nova Scotia, Canada, and Beau (short for General Beauregard) of the National Weather Service near Atlanta.

Perhaps the most famous groundhog next to Punxsutawney Phil is Chuck at the Staten Island Zoo. Maybe Chuck came to fame when he bit Mayor Bloomberg in the 2009 festivities. Or was it when Mayor de Blasio dropped

"Chuck" in 2014? Chuck was a stand-in; her real name was Charlotte, who died a few days later. I don't believe the tradition of a mayor participating in Groundhog Day at the Staten Island Zoo hasn't happened since.

So why is the celebration always on February 2nd? According to the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club, it relates to Candlemas Day, a Christian Holiday held on February 2nd, when Christians celebrate the first bringing of baby Jesus to the Temple of Jerusalem to welcome him into Judaism. Traditions of blessing candles, symbolizing Jesus Christ as the Light of the World, continue in many religions. According to German folklore, Candlemas Day coincided with whether or



not the hedgehog saw his shadow. Snowdrops (Galanthus), those lovely little nodding white flowers that magically emerge through the last layer of winter's frosting, are also known as Candlemas Bells, representing Jesus bringing hope to the world.

Of course, we know about the famous movie Groundhog Day (1993), which gave a new significance to the words as something that endlessly repeats. One of the exciting repetitive tasks in anticipation of spring is purchasing seeds.

Early shopping is best as more and more folks have discovered the joy of digging in the dirt and growing non-GMO and organic food. Most seed packs have an abundance of seeds. So, share them

graciously. Seeds, like spring, represent the promise of new beginnings. And by sharing the promise, you'll be spreading hope.

The thing is, Punxsutawney Phil is more often wrong than accurate reports LiveScience.com. "Data from the Stormfax Almanac's data shows that Phil's six-week prognostications have been correct about 39% of the time, so less than chance." Still, Groundhog Day is a fun tradition, and spring is something to celebrate whenever it comes. Though not so much the garden damage caused by groundhogs, as cute as they can be.

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January Is Name One Health Awareness Month; NJ One Health Task Force Sets Meeting For February

In conjunction with January being National One Health Awareness Month, Secretary of Agriculture Ed Wengryn announced the inaugural meeting of the New Jersey One Health Task Force (OHTF) will take place at 11 a.m. on Friday, February 21, in the first floor boardroom at 200 Riverview Plaza, in Trenton.

New Jersey was the first state in the nation to legislate a One Health initiative by establishing the OHTF (P.L. 2021, Chapter 117). The OHTF will develop a strategic plan to promote inter-disciplinary communication and collaboration between physicians, veterinarians, and other scientific professionals and State agencies, and to promote the health and well-being of the State's residents, animals, and the environment.

"With diseases and viruses, such as Highly Pathogenic Avian

Influenza, having the capability to travel between humans, domestic animals, livestock, and wildlife, the One Health Task Force will emphasize the connectedness of our world," Secretary Wengryn said. "That New Jersey is at the forefront of this initiative shows the high level of importance the Murphy Administration places on the overall health and well-being of our State's residents, protecting our animals, plants and the environment. It is all one health."

One Health is a concept that recognizes the strong connections and interdependencies between human, animal, and environmental health and calls for a collaborative, multi-sector, and transdisciplinary approach. One Health issues include, but are not limited to, zoonotic diseases, vector-borne diseases, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), food

Why ONE HEALTH is Important

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A One Health approach tackles shared health threats by looking at all angles—human, animal, plant, and environmental

www.cdc.gov/onehealth

safety and security, environmental contamination, climate change, and other collective health threats faced by people, animals, and the environment.

"Safeguarding public health requires an integrated approach to better understand how diseases and health risks

move through our interconnected world," said New Jersey Health Commissioner Kaitlan Baston, MD, MSc, DFASAM. "New Jersey's One Health Task Force brings together experts across human health, animal health, and environmental science to better map,

monitor, and protect our shared environment and New Jersey communities."

"The One Health Task Force provides us with a unique and important opportunity to better understand the complex relationships between public health, our environment, and plant and

animal health," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette. "We look forward to collaborating with our state partners and the Task Force to advance scientific knowledge about these relationships. Through this work, we will aim to develop solutions to threats such as diseases that affect wildlife and agricultural commodities, as well as harmful algal blooms that impact drinking water quality."

New Jersey residents are encouraged to spread the word about One Health and the need for an interdisciplinary approach to address many of New Jersey's most pressing issues by sharing social media posts with the hashtags #OneHealth and #OneHealthAwarenessMonth. More information about One Health Awareness Month can be found on the One Health Commission website.

Read more about the New Jersey OHTF at www.nj.gov/agriculture/one-health.

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Northampton County Executive Lamont G. McClure Responds to Federal Funding Mandate

Northampton County Executive Lamont G. McClure has issued a statement in response to the recent memorandum from the White House imposing a temporary pause on federal funding for various assistance programs, a decision that will have significant ramifications for the county and its community partners.

“This directive from the administration is cruel, callous, and craven”; McClure stated. “By halting federal funding, the White House is causing needless harm and uncertainty to the citizens of Northampton County. This move directly undermines the essential services that our community relies on.”

While the specifics of the funding pause are still unclear, McClure emphasized the immediate impact this will have on the county’s ability to deliver services and support its partners. “As we seek clarity on which funds have been released and which programs are affected, we will ensure our departments and community partners have the information they need to continue serving our

residents”; he added.

The memorandum requires federal agencies to halt all financial assistance programs, including grants and loans that support critical local initiatives. This decision not only jeopardizes current projects but also creates an atmosphere of uncertainty for future funding opportunities that are vital for the welfare of our community.

“The citizens of Northampton County deserve better than this. In these times of uncertainty, we should be working together to strengthen our community, not creating obstacles that hinder our progress”; McClure said. “We will continue to advocate for our residents and strive to ensure that essential services are maintained despite this federal overreach.”

Northampton County remains committed to supporting its residents and will provide updates as more information becomes available regarding the implications of this federal mandate.

For more information, please contact Jessica Berger at 484-280-3751 JBerger@norcopa.gov

Space, Fantasia, Inganamort Commend Enactment of Laken Riley Act, Say America And NJ Will Be Safer For It

Senator Parker Space, Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia and Assemblyman Michael Inganamort (all R-Sussex, Morris, Warren) applauded President Trump and congressional leaders for enacting the Laken Riley Act – the first bill signed into law by the new Trump Administration.

“By having this bill be the first one signed by President Trump in this administration shows that America is taking border security seriously once again,” said Senator Space. “Illegal immigrants shouldn’t be allowed to roam free in our country, especially criminals. This is the start of a new era of diligent law and order where we put American safety and sovereignty first.”

The Laken Riley Act was named in memory of Laken Riley who was brutally murdered on a college campus in 2024 by an illegal alien. The assailant had previously been arrested for crimes, but released.

“If our immigration policies hadn’t been so lax under the Biden Administration, Laken Riley would be alive today,” stressed Assemblywoman Fantasia. “Laken Riley’s murder-



er should have been detained and deported due to his previous transgressions. Her tragic death highlights the danger in releasing criminal migrants back onto the streets without consequences, and the undisputable fact that porous borders make our communities less safe.”

The Laken Riley Act mandates that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detain illegal immigrants who commit serious

crimes and hold them until they can be deported. The legislation also grants states new legal standing to challenge federal immigration enforcement actions that harm its populace.

“Today’s signing demonstrates that our country is committed to securing our border, protecting our families and communities, and giving law enforcement the tools they need to effectively carry out the law,” said Assemblyman

Inganamort. “Illegal immigrants who commit crimes don’t belong on our streets; they belong on a flight out of the United States for good.”

The District 24 legislators sponsored state legislation (SR-95/AR-137) that called on the President and Congress to enact the Laken Riley Act. The three legislators also sponsor S-1326/A-3841 which prohibits the release of illegal immigrants from correctional facilities.

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(Snow Date Feb. 22, 2025)

NORTH WARREN (39) VS VERNON TWP (52) HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL



Photos by Dale Young/
The Free Weekly Press



Bill Enabling World Cup Team Doctors to Practice in PA Receives Senate Support



With World Cup soccer set to come to Philadelphia, the Senate approved legislation enabling international team doctors to treat their players in the commonwealth. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration. Philadelphia will host the FIFA Club World Cup this summer and the FIFA World Cup in 2026. In both of those contests, athletes will be supported by their traveling team doctors. Under current law, each international doctor would be required to obtain a medical license from the Pennsylvania State Board of Medicine to treat players, even for just a single match. Senate Bill 184 would exempt international team doctors from needing to obtain a Pennsylvania medical license to care for their athletes. Much like how the law treats team physicians licensed in other states, international doctors would be limited to treatment of just their players and would be prohibited from practicing in all health care facilities in the commonwealth.

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DEP Announces Winners of 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest, Encourages Pennsylvanians to Test for Radon During Radon Action Month

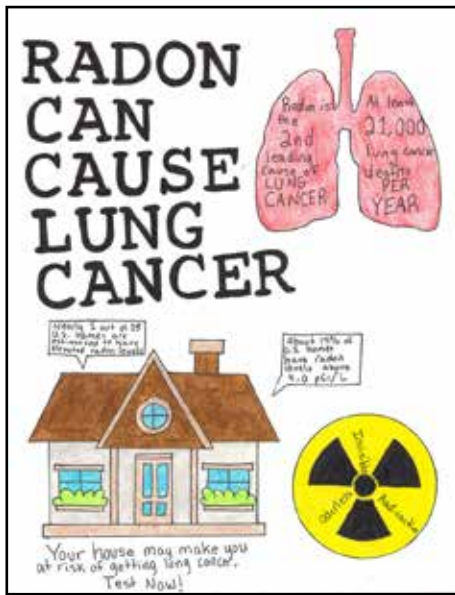
The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced the winners of the 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest and continues to encourage Pennsylvanians to test their homes for radon as part of the department's ongoing National Radon Action Month outreach.

First place in the 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest went to Regan Schall, a seventh-grade student at North Hills Middle School, whose poster will be entered into a national student radon poster contest. Audrey Rau, a ninth-grade student at Monroe Career and Technical Institute, earned second place. And David Culp, a fourth-grade student at Pittston Area Intermediate Center, earned third place.

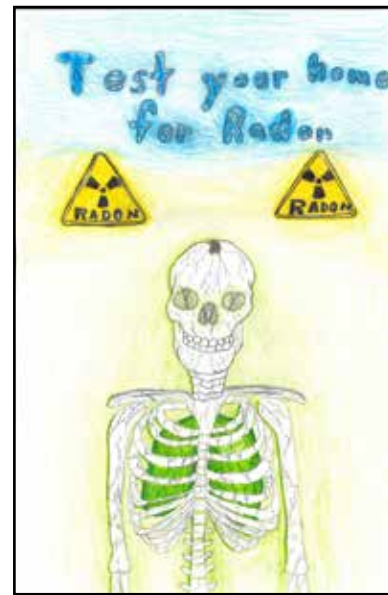
"We want to thank all the students who participated in this year's Student Radon Poster Contest," said DEP Radon Program Manager Bob Lewis. "We're pleased to include these winning posters as part



First



Second



Third

of our radon educational outreach to Pennsylvanians in 2025." Winners of the 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest are also helping DEP educate Pennsylvanians about the importance of testing their homes for the radioactive gas. Posters were judged by DEP staff on subject matter accuracy and other criteria.

Radon is an invisible, odorless, radioactive gas that enters homes from the ground as a result of the breakdown of uranium and radium

in rocks and soil. "Around 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes have higher levels of radon gas than federal guidelines consider safe. However, every Pennsylvanian should take radon awareness seriously, as it poses significant potential health risks. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, second only to smoking," DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley said. "What makes radon particularly concerning is that you can't see

it, smell it, or taste it. There are no symptoms to alert you to its presence in the home. That is why every Pennsylvanian should ensure their families are safe and test for radon." Pennsylvania is particularly prone to elevated radon levels, and the only way homeowners can know for certain if they have a radon problem is to test their home. DEP recommends that all homes, public and private buildings get tested. The best time to test is during the colder months, when

homes and buildings are closed and radon is most likely to be trapped and build up to higher levels. Radon is responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year in the U.S., according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and about 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes have radon levels above the EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/L (picocuries per liter). While radon problems may be more common in some regions, there is potential

for any home to have high radon levels. Radon test kits are also available at many home improvement and hardware stores, as well as from Pennsylvania-certified radon laboratories. Radon test kits typically cost approximately \$20-\$30. Completed test kits are sent to a Pennsylvania-certified lab where the sample is analyzed, and the results are sent to the home or building owner. Homeowners are also able to hire a state-certified radon testing company to do the testing for them. The public is encouraged to call DEP's Radon Division at 717-783-3594, or the Radon Hotline at 800-237-2366, for help with interpretation of their test results and what follow-up action may be necessary. Permanent radon mitigation systems typically cost between \$800 and \$1,200 and require minimal maintenance. A list of state-certified radon contractors, labs, and testers is available on DEP's website. The list is also available by calling 1-800-23-RA-DON.

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Live Music this Sat., February 1st at 7:30pm

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Newly Detected CWD Positives Found In Northeast PA

The Pennsylvania Game Commission, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, is announcing two deer have tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a new area of Pennsylvania. The two deer, one hunter-harvested and one from a captive facility, were detected in Luzerne County. Both deer were adult males. The Luzerne County detections are 40 miles from the nearest wild CWD detection. They

will ultimately result in Disease Management Area (DMA) changes later this spring – the details of which will be released following the Game Commission’s Board of Commissioners meeting in April. The captive deer that tested positive for CWD Dec. 16 was from a breeding deer farm in Luzerne County. Initial positive test results from the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic System Laboratory were confirmed in the USDA’s National Veterinary

Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa on Dec. 23. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture placed the farm under a quarantine order for five years. The order requires the farm to test any additional deer that die on the farm, and not transfer any deer on or off the farm. Any subsequent positive test results will extend the quarantine order requirements and restrictions for another five years.

Pennsylvania deer farms must participate in one of two stringent programs – the Herd Certified Program, or the Herd Monitored Program. The Herd Certified Program meets U.S. Department of Agriculture CWD standards and is required for any cervid farmer wishing to ship deer across state lines. Both programs require proper IDs; record-keeping on all animals moved on or off farms; annual herd inventories; reporting of CWD suspect animals and animals that die, escape or are stolen; maintaining a minimum 8-foot-high fence; obtaining permits

to import animals from out-of-state; and other measures to monitor herds for disease. Only farms enrolled in the Herd Certified Program are permitted to move live deer across state lines, with official identification that will aid veterinarians in tracking disease origins in the event remaining deer die and test positive.

Chronic Wasting Disease programs in captive deer are managed by the PA Department of Agriculture and are necessary to help slow the spread of the disease and allow these businesses to operate.

An always-fatal neurological disease caused by a misfolded protein called a prion, CWD is a threat to deer and elk. It’s classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) and is similar to scrapie in sheep, mad cow disease in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans.

CWD spreads through direct animal-to-animal contact, as well as indirectly through prion-contaminated environments. CWD-in-



fectured individuals shed prions through saliva, urine and feces, and infected carcasses contribute to environmental contamination. Once in soil, CWD prions remain infectious for decades. Therefore, feeding deer is strongly discouraged and is illegal within existing DMAs.

There is no evidence of CWD infecting humans or other species under natural conditions. However, much is still unknown about CWD, therefore the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends not eating the meat of a

CWD-positive deer. The Game Commission will host an informational meeting to answer any questions from the public. It is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 27, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Penn State Hazleton, Graham Building Room 115, Parking Lot F. Penn State Hazleton Campus address is 76 University Drive, Hazleton PA 18202. Contact the Game Commission’s CWD Hotline at 1-833-INFOCWD, email INFOCWD@pa.gov or visit www.arcg.is/1G4TLr for more information.

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Pennsylvanians Deserve the Truth About Electricity Costs

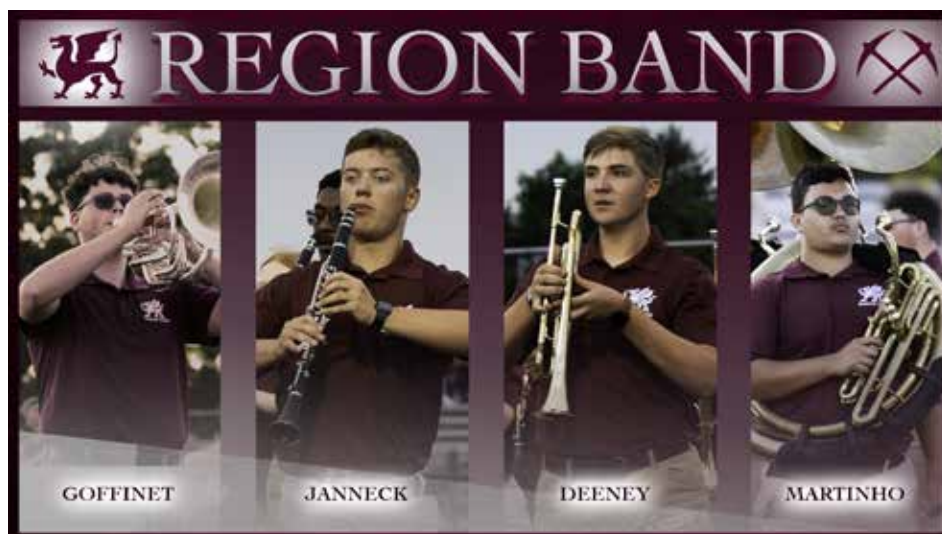
This week, Gov. Josh Shapiro made multiple announcements about the cost of electricity in Pennsylvania. One of those claims is that customers will save billions of dollars through an agreement he made with PJM, a regional transmission organization that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in all or part of 13 states and the District of Columbia.



The reality is that none of the governor's announcements will save any of us a single dollar on our electric bills. The truth is that his administration's policies have directly contributed to higher prices.

I have worked to prioritize the advancement of meaningful legislation to help address rising costs for consumers of electricity. It is unfortunate that many of the measures were not supported by the Shapiro Administration during the last two

years. We will continue working to enact energy policies which reduce costs for hardworking Pennsylvanians, ensure the future stability of our power grid, and help expand access to good, family sustaining jobs here in Pennsylvania.



Four Bangor Area High School students advanced to PMEA's Region V Band. Nicholas Janneck, Nathan Deeney, Eric Goffinet and Brandon Martinho. Region V encompasses 15 Pennsylvania counties from south central PA to northeast PA. The best of the District 10 musicians from northeast PA will join the best of District 7 musicians from south central PA for the Region V band. PMEA Region V Band will be held at East Stroudsburg High School South on March 6-8, 2025, Host Katy Clogg. The guest conductor will be Dr Travis Weller, Associate Professor of Music at Messiah University.

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MARCH 6TH 2025 6-9PM

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Senate Acts to Fight Waste, Fraud and Abuse in Public Assistance Programs



The Senate passed three bills to stop waste, fraud and abuse in Pennsylvania's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medical Assistance program (Medicaid). The bills will be sent to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for consideration.

Senate Bill 155 would prevent deceased people from receiving benefits by requiring the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) to check death certificates at the Bureau of Vital Statistics against recipients of public assistance. A state audit previously found 2,324 deceased public assistance recipients received benefits totaling \$700,000 in a 12-month period.

Senate Bill 156 would require DHS to compare wage records held by employers and the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue with

public assistance recipients quarterly to prevent fraud. From 2019-23, the Pennsylvania Office of State Inspector General filed more than 2,900 criminal complaints of welfare fraud, with more than \$15 million owed in restitution.

Senate Bill 157 would update the Public Assistance Integrity Act to require DHS to issue a yearly report on its efforts to ensure lottery winners are not receiving cash benefits. The Public Assistance Integrity Act, a bipartisan initiative signed into law in 2018, closed a loophole that did not require lottery winnings to be considered as income when determining eligibility for benefits.

Contact your state representatives and urge them to support practical, common-sense proposals like these—ensuring your tax dollars are used wisely, fairly, and efficiently.

Clean Team Workforce Names January Employee of the Month

The Clean Team Workforce announces its Employee of the Month for January, Custis C.

After being released from prison for selling drugs, Custis spent his free time racing radio-controlled (RC) battery-powered trucks. He learned everything he could about this type of racing. At one time, he had over 40 trucks, most of which he custom-built. However, his passion for racing turned into an obsession. His new addiction ruled his life in the same manner that drugs had earlier. Custis spent his social security benefits on racing without thinking about how he would pay his rent. Unfortunately, his addiction led him to becoming homeless.

Custis came to the Allentown Rescue Mission and immediately joined the Transformation Program. He knew in his heart that the Bible and life skills classes would help him change his life. Custis learned to let go of anger and frustration with things he couldn't control. He said, "All I had to do was 'drop the I' and give it over to God." Knowing God is in control, has made the

difference for him.

Custis also learned to budget his money in the program's finance classes. He reflected on his reckless spending and his addiction to racing and now realizes that controlling his finances will allow him to remain independent and live as a productive member of society.

Since graduating from the Transformation Program, Custis has been working for the Clean Team Workforce. Up until now, he didn't have any formal work experience. He admits most of his business activities were illegal, but he is embracing this opportunity. The enthusiasm and gratefulness that Custis exhibits working with the Clean Team Workforce brightens everyone's day. His happiness shines from within knowing that he is blessed with a new life, and he can be the person he always wanted to be.

Congratulations, Custis, and best of luck in the future.

The Allentown Rescue Mission, a 501c3, 123 bed non-profit homeless shelter has been providing shelter to men experiencing homelessness



since 1900. In addition to emergency shelter services (365 days a year), the Allentown Rescue Mission offers a residential life skills program, and transitional employment on the Clean Team Workforce that's available for hire to the community. The Clean Team Workforce pays the men above PA state minimum wage—helping them save a nest

egg to transition back into the community. In a typical year, the Allentown Rescue Mission provides shelter services for nearly 1,000 men and serves more than 60,000 meals to men in need.

To refer someone to the Allentown Rescue Mission for services or to learn ways you can help make a difference please visit www.allentownrescuemission.org

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