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October 31, 2024

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Vol. 52, No. 15



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TRICK OR TREAT
Plainfield Township: Thursday, Oct. 31 from 5 to 7pm;
Bushkill Township, Easton, Forks, Nazareth, Pen Argyl, Stocker-
town & Wind Gap: Thursday, Oct. 31 from 6 to 8pm.

Bangor Pulls Off a One Point Win Over Pen Argyl in 105th Annual Slate Belt Rivalry Game



Bangor and Pen Argyl took to the gridiron on October 26th for the 105th Annual Slate Belt Rivalry Game. Bangor won the extremely close game, 14 to 13. Pen Argyl's MVP was Caident Faust, and Bangor's MVP was Jacob Hillis. This year's game MVP was also awarded to Jacob Hillis. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

Project Self-Sufficiency Receives National Recognition as Blue Ribbon Affiliate

Agency Demonstrates High-Quality Implementation of Evidence-Based Home Visiting

Project Self-Sufficiency has earned a prestigious endorsement from Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., (PATNC) as a Blue Ribbon Affiliate, making it one of the top-performing home visiting affiliates within Parents as Teachers' international network. The official designation was made in October 2024.

Being named a Blue Ribbon Affiliate affirms that Project Self-Sufficiency is a high-quality member of the home visiting field, implementing the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model with fidelity. Families in Sussex and Hunterdon Counties are positively impacted by the services delivered by this program.

The program includes home visits, group connections, child screening, and connections to community resources. It equips parents with knowledge and resources to prepare their children



for a stronger start in life and greater success in school.

"To earn the Blue Ribbon Endorsement, we underwent a rigorous self-study and review process from the National Center. The process confirms that we are meeting Parents as Teachers' standards of fidelity and quality," said Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon. "Blue Ribbon Affiliates are exemplary programs, delivering the highest quality services to children and families."

Implementation with quality and fidelity is vital in home-visiting programs as it determines a program's effectiveness in accomplishing its original goals and intended outcomes. It also verifies that a program is being implemented as designed. Parents as Teachers' rigorous endorsement process demonstrates an affiliate's accountability and credibility to the community, its funders, elected officials, and the partner organizations with which they work. PSS continued on page 3



Wind Gap Legion To Host Veteran's Day Luncheon



Wind Gap Legion Post 724 is hosting a Veterans Day Luncheon on Saturday, November 2nd from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Legion Hall. This event is free for all Veterans and one guest. The meal will be turkey, ham and all the fixings plus dessert.

North Warren Takes On Kinnelon High School in Football



North Warren took on Kinnelon High School on October 25th in football. Kinnelon High School won, 40 to 20. Photo by Dale Young/The Free Weekly Press

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The Senior Choir at Christ Episcopal Church in Newton will present a performance of Gabriel Faure's Requiem during the celebration of All Saints Day on Sunday, November 3rd, 4:00 p.m. Under the direction of Joseph Mello, Director of Music, featured soloists will include soprano, Jessica Marquard Caruso, and baritone, the Reverend Chris Streeter. Accompaniment will be provided by organist Diana Greene, as well as an orchestra. Faure's composition features seven movements and is scored for soprano and baritone soloists, mixed choir, orchestra, and organ. The performance will be followed by a reception. The event is free and open to the public, although a free will offering will be taken. Christ Church is located at 62 Main Street in Newton. Doors will open at 3:30 p.m. for the 4:00 p.m. concert. Questions can be directed to Joe Mello at 862-268-4720. For more information, call Christ Episcopal Church at 973-383-2245 or visit www.christchurchnewton.org.

Free Pet Resource Launched for Bangor, PA, Locals



Bangor locals can now access a new free pet resource. This new platform offers a wide variety of content, including essential safety tips, nutritional guidance, and fun ideas for pet names. It is made to be helpful for both new and long-time pet owners and covers all stages of

pet care.

View informative articles such as the Hamster Bedding Guide, Questions To Ask Yourself Before Adopting a Cat, Can Dogs Eat Sauerkraut, and more. This free resource serves as a helpful tool for creating a healthy, caring bond with pets.

In addition to providing valuable content, Pawfect Journey wants to connect with local shelters, non-profits, and other pet-centered organizations. By building a network of resources, Pawfect Journey aims to create a positive impact in the community for both pets and their owners.

Bangor residents can visit pawfectjourney.com today to access a wide range of pet resources. Whether you're looking for training tips, pet care advice, or product recommendations, Pawfect Journey has it all. For additional details, contact info@pawfectjourney.com.

Cutler: Pennsylvania Supreme Court Ruling Allows Double Voting - Court Violates Own Rule, Causes Confusion Days After Voting Is Underway

House Republican Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Peach Bottom) issued the following statement in response to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's 4-3 ruling on provisional ballots for voters who incorrectly return their mail-in ballots.

"As accurately stated by the Commonwealth Court in two separate opinions earlier this year, the objective of our election code is 'advanced by ensuring that each qualified elector has

the opportunity to vote exactly once in each primary or general election. However, after the Supreme Court's latest intrusion into the legislature's sole authority over time, places and manner of elections, it's clear that the Democrat-controlled Supreme Court wants to provide some voters in our Commonwealth with more than one 'opportunity to vote,' increasing the possibility of double voting."

"This decision, issued just days before the majority of voters will vote in person and after mail-in voting has already started, violates the court's own pronouncement on Oct. 5 of this year that it 'will neither impose nor countenance substantial alterations to existing laws and procedures during the pendency of an ongoing election.' That sound principle, which the court's own opinion had said was 'common sense,' lasted 18 days.

"Once again, the court continues to engage in constitutional overreach. As Justice Mundy directly explained in her dissent, 'the decision to direct the counting of provisional ballots in cases where the electors' mail-in ballots

have been timely received, in direct contravention of existing law, is an unconstitutional intrusion upon the role reserved to state legislatures by the Federal Constitution.'

"This ruling does nothing but promote more election day chaos. As Justices Brobson, Wecht and Mundy accurately point out in their dissenting opinion, this ruling essentially allows ALL mail-in voters to also vote provisionally, since a mail-in ballot is never truly received until it is canvassed by the Board of Elections post-election.

"One person, one vote, one time. When a voter opts for mail-in voting, and they return their ballot to their county election office, the voter has exercised his or her right. The same way if someone votes in person and puts his or her vote in the machine - the process is completed. That's what the law says.

"Pennsylvanians demand safe, secure and accurate elections with results delivered in a timely manner. The continued actions by this partisan Supreme Court to re-write the law continues to erode the trust voters have in our electoral process."

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(Please note due to certain holidays, supplies will be offered on the 3rd Saturday of the Month)

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

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PSS

Continued from page 1

“We are looking forward to strengthening our outreach to mothers of young children in need and continuing to help these families to develop the skills they need for success,” added Berry-Toon.

In addition to Parents as Teachers, Project Self-Sufficiency offers the Nurse Family Partnership® program to pregnant women who are expecting their first child in Sussex, Warren, and Hunterdon Counties. Personal nurses visit participants in their homes throughout the pregnancy, immediately after birth and during infancy and early childhood. All Project Self-Sufficiency home visitation programs are free, voluntary, and confidential.

Participants in the agency’s family support programs receive free parenting tips, baby items, information about childhood health, childhood development assessments, and other topics from certified nurses or family support workers. The programs combine one-on-one discussions with educational outings for mothers and children to help parents boost literacy levels, address health issues, and help prevent potential devel-

opmental delays. Project Self-Sufficiency has assisted low-income individuals and families in northwestern New Jersey since 1986. Services offered at Project Self-Sufficiency include high school equivalency education, computer courses, employment skills training, job placement services, support groups, parenting classes, childcare and preschool, legal assistance and education, counseling and advocacy, referrals, and help with emergency basic needs, like food and clothing. For more information about the programs and services offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, visit www.projectsselfsufficiency.org or call 973-940-3500.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) builds strong communities, thriving families, and children that are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. The internationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting model is backed by more than 40 years of research-proven outcomes for children and families. Parents As Teachers National Center, Inc., is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Parents as Teachers affiliates operate in various settings, including health departments, hospitals, and schools, faith-based and non-profit organizations. For more information, visit www.parentsasteachers.org or @NatPAT.

10th Annual Operation Jersey Cares Kicks Off November 11th

This year’s Operation Jersey Cares, held every year in Washington Borough, will be extra special.

The Washington Business Improvement District’s Operation Jersey Cares campaign, this year presented by Visions Federal Credit Union, begins on Veteran’s Day and continues into December. The program benefits service men and women from New Jersey deployed around the globe. This year’s campaign marks the 10th annual drive.

The drive has annually drawn hundreds of boxes of products collected through generous donations from businesses and the community at-large, not just in the Borough, but throughout the region. Over the past nine years, thousands of items have been collected.

“Of all our events and programs throughout the year, Operation Jersey Cares is the one that we are most proud of,” said Melanie Thiel, Executive Director of the WBID. “Our troops deserve our support in any way we can. It’s an effort that resonates throughout the community, with businesses and residents. The response every year is just incredible.”

While the campaign “officially” starts on Nov. 11, you may already see collection boxes throughout the Borough. The Toys for Tots campaign also starts in November and collec-



tion boxes for that campaign can also be found around town.

Warren County Dental Center led the Operation Jersey Cares collection drive last year with 19 fully packed boxes of items. Gibsons Fitness Center, which has either been No. 1 or No. 2 in the drive since its inception, collected 14 boxes. Hairmazing was close behind with 11 boxes. In all, 122 boxes were collected last year and delivered to Operation Jersey Cares headquarters in Flemington with the help of Jeff Smith of Smith Tractor.

The list of items that are collected include toiletries including razors, toothbrushes, shampoo, shaving cream and female hygiene products, food such as snacks, peanut butter, canned spaghetti or ravioli,

soups, batteries, notebooks and pens and pencils.

The WBID’s annual campaign is always among the state’s top collectors for Operation Jersey Cares, which has recognized Washington numerous times..

Among the participating businesses and groups that collected items this year were Allie’s Cupcakery & Cafe, David Santini, CPA, Direct Millwork, Fur the Love of Dogs, Butzville Brewing Co., GST Transportation, Juanito’s Mexican Restaurant, Laughing Goat Coffee Bar & Eatery, New Jersey School of Woodwork, Next Level Hair Designs, Scotty’s Stadium Club, Stew’s Autobody, Towing and Recovery, Today’s Family Dental, Visions Federal Credit Union, Esoteric Jiu Jitsu, Gibson’s Fitness Cen-

ter, Gaia’s Gifts, Philberts Pub, Warren County Dental Center, Andy’s Barber Shop, Fliegauf Jewelers, Get A Grip & More, Lina’s Chop Shop & Color Studio, Two Country Chicks, Castle Family Dentistry, Smith Tractor, Pasta Grill by Enzo, Habitat for Humanity Office (Belvidere Ave.), Frantoni Fashion for Men, Rossi Chevrolet, Park Avenue Consignment, Serendipity Gift Shop, Free Spirit Salon, Hairmazing Le Crepe Cafe, Creations Salon, Good Impressions Print Communications, West Washington Family Dentistry, Home Instead Senior Care, Belvidere American Legion, and the Warren Hills Baseball Booster Club.

In addition to Visions Federal Credit Union as the Presenting Sponsor, this program is also sponsored by the Washington BID, Smith Tractor, Get a Grip & More, The Meat Shoppe by Arctic Foods, Abilities of Northwest Jersey, Swift Print Solutions, Good Impressions Print Communications, Michael F. Yates & Co., and West Washington Family Dentistry.

For more information about other WBID initiatives and special events, visit www.washington-bid.org or call 908-689-4800. You can also check out the Washington BID Facebook page for a variety of Washington BID and Washington business news.

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Commissioners Cut Ribbons to Open Two Buildings in One



Ribbon-Cutting on the Social Services Agency side of the building. Left to right are Public Works Director Emily A. Hammer; Commissioner Director James R. Kern III; Commissioner Lori Ciesla; Warren County Division of Temporary Assistance and Social Services Director Lauren Burd; Commissioner Jason J. Sarnoski; Rhonda Thomas-Boothe, County Alliance Coordinator, Warren County Department of Human Services; county Chief Financial Officer Kim Francisco; and former freeholder Richard D. Gardner.

To open a just-completed facility that is actually two buildings in one, the Warren County Board of County Commissioners held a ceremonial ribbon-cutting for new Warren County Social Services Agency offices, then headed to the other side of the structure to cut the ribbon at the front door to the new home of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Warren County.

The new building at 3 Shotwell Drive just off Route 519 in White Township joins a growing complex of County government facilities, next to the existing Human Services building and the Richard D. Gardner Branch of the Warren County Library that opened in April 2013. Nearby are the main garage of the County Road and Bridge divisions, the Warren County Correctional Center, and the Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building. Staff will be moving into the new facility in the coming weeks.

Joined by representatives of the project team and some municipal officials, Commissioner Director James R. Kern III and Commissioners Jason J. Sarnoski and Lori Ciesla wielded oversized scissors to snip red ribbons that adorned the entrances to the building.

Kern noted that the COVID pandemic showed the increased demand for human services programs and the need for more space to provide those services.

Saying "It really took a team to make this happen," Kern saluted the project team: Warren County Administrator Alex J. Lazorisak; Public Works Director Emily A. Hammer; architect Raymond E. O'Brien; Finelli Consulting Engineers; Settembrino Architects, Construction Manager; and De Sapio Construction, Inc., General Contractor, who "did an absolutely beautiful job on this building."

The Commissioners stressed that the project was accomplished through the County's long-standing "pay as you go" policy, without borrowing money and spending on interest payments.

Warren County "has a history of doing the right projects for the right reasons with the right people," Sarnoski said. "When we build, we build with a purpose" and not to expand government but to consolidate, which results in lower operating costs, he explained.

Sarnoski noted the building includes secure entrances for the public and for employees, and is set up to enable safe interaction. Meanwhile, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Warren County will be moving to "fresh, bright offices" for serving youth involved in 4-H programs and to provide services to farmers and other residents, Sarnoski said.

Ciesla pointed out that once again, Warren County is able to construct a new facility without incurring any debt. "It helps us help our residents with whatever they need," Ciesla said. "I can't wait for you all to see it," she added, noting a tour of the building would follow the ribbon-cutting.

The new building is approximately 10,000 square feet, designed for operational efficiency and energy conservation, with state-of-the-art technology to provide program access, safety and security.

The Warren County Social Services Agency side of the building will be used for Intake and Client Services for programs administered

by the Warren County Department of Human Services, as a point of public service and in-person interface for all social services resources. Programs provided include temporary cash assistance and other support services through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for families and General Assistance (GA) for single adults and couples without children; homelessness assistance and prevention; the NJ SNAP food assistance program that helps low-income individuals and families buy the groceries needed to eat healthy; the New Jersey Child Support Program; and Medicaid programs, including NJ FamilyCare and NJ FamilyCare Aged, Blind, Disabled Programs.

Meanwhile, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Warren County helps the diverse population of New Jersey adapt to a rapidly changing society and improve their lives and communities through an educational process that uses science-based knowledge. The office provides research-based information to county residents in the areas of:

- 4-H Youth Development
- Agriculture and Resource Management
- Family and Community Health Sciences

Programs are delivered in a variety of modes including: classes and conferences, telephone and in person consultations, newspaper columns, fairs and clubs, field meetings and demonstrations, newsletters, fact sheets, exhibits and displays, and websites.

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NORTH WARREN (20) VS KINNELON (40) HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



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Season of Hope Toy Drive to Benefit Children in Northwestern New Jersey

The annual Season of Hope Toy Drive was launched by Project Self-Sufficiency and a consortium of businesses, schools, and social service agencies today. The massive undertaking aims to provide gift cards and new, unwrapped toys to parents and caregivers of more than 2,500 children and teens in the New Jersey counties of Sussex and Northern Warren. The toy drive is a joint effort which is driven and coordinated by Project Self-Sufficiency, along with its community partners, to benefit local families in need. Donations are needed immediately and can be made in-person at the Newton agency. Additional toy drop off sites throughout the area will be added shortly. Monetary donations are also accepted online.

The annual Season of Hope Toy Drive has served thousands of children and teens in northwestern New Jersey for many years. The initiative solicits donations from individuals, businesses, civic organizations, schools, youth groups, athletic teams and other groups from October through mid-December.

“We are inviting individuals, businesses, and organizations to coordinate drives for gift cards and toys on behalf of the low-income families in our area,” noted Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. “The Season of Hope Toy Drive directly benefits Sussex and Northern Warren County families in need. The items collected here stay right here. It truly is a way for neighbors to help each other during a

time which can be stressful for many families.”

“The Season of Hope Toy Drive is a testament to the strength and generosity within our communities,” said Senator Parker Space. “This initiative brings families in Sussex County together to ensure children and their families experience the joy and magic of the holiday season, regardless of their circumstances. I am grateful for the dedication of Project Self-Sufficiency and our community partners, who work tirelessly to spread goodwill and remind families that they are valued and loved.”

“Project Self-Sufficiency’s Season of Hope Toy Drive provides a unique opportunity for families who struggle with holiday expenses to have a joyful and merry Christmas,” said Senator Doug Steinhart. “The Season of Hope Toy Drive is a great way to give back to the community to help more kids, and their families, have a memorable holiday. I am extremely thankful for the hard work they are doing to spread cheer and goodwill this upcoming holiday season for the families of Warren County.”

Michael Inganamort, New Jersey State Assembly, concurs, saying, “Project Self Sufficiency provides critical support to families twelve months out of the year. Now is the time for us to add our support, given the added financial burden families face during the holidays. I’m grateful for Project Self Sufficiency’s partnership in support of stronger, healthier, happier families.”

Ron Tappan, Sussex County Administrator, notes that “Sussex County



is a better place because of Project Self-Sufficiency.”

“Each year during the holidays, the Season of Hope campaign helps bring joy and happiness to thousands of disadvantaged children. I am always pleased to take part in such an enriching and joyful event,” said former New Jersey State Senator Steve Oroho. “The Season of Hope is always a shining example of how the people of our community look to help their neighbors. I hope those who are able can contribute again this year to bring much good cheer and smiles to many needy children and their families.”

Area elementary schools, middle schools and high schools have been invited to participate in a competitive “Stuff the Stocking” campaign. Toys are picked up and counted in early December; 45 schools participated in 2023 and organizers hope to surpass that number this year. “I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the Season of Hope Campaign,” remarked Denise Current, owner of Stocker Bus Company which supplies buses and drivers free of charge to pick up toys at every school in December. “It fulfills the hopes and dreams of many children and families during

the holiday season.”

“The Sussex County Superintendents’ Roundtable Association is proud to support the Season of Hope Toy Drive again this year,” commented Dr. Joseph Piccirillo, Newton School District Superintendent and President of the Sussex County Superintendents’ Roundtable Association. “As superintendents, we interact with countless families each day and we know firsthand how many are struggling to make ends meet. We are grateful for the work that Project Self-Sufficiency does in our schools throughout the year and particularly thankful for the joy the Season of Hope Toy Drive brings our less fortunate families this time of year.”

“The Season of Hope Toy Shop relies on the contributions of countless individuals, businesses, and organizations every year,” explains Berry-Toon. “We are particularly grateful to Sussex County Community College for providing the resources which enable us to serve thousands of families, including the culinary arts students who

bake thousands of cookies for distribution to the patrons of the toy shop.”

“The college is honored to participate in and support the Season of Hope every year,” noted Sussex County Community College President Jon Connelly. “The message of generosity, supported by all, in this event speaks to the values of Sussex County. We are proud to be a part of it.”

In addition to the hundreds of volunteers who sort toys and assist patrons, the Season of Hope Toy Shop benefits from the talents of numerous musicians who donate their time each year; music for the kick-off press conference was provided by a capella group Harmony in Motion. Individuals and ensembles perform holiday tunes in multiple locations on the Project Self-Sufficiency campus throughout the duration of the two-day toy shop in December.

“Selective is proud to once again support Project Self-Sufficiency’s Season of Hope Toy Drive. This event spreads joy and magic across the local community and within Selective,” said Cate

Terwilliger, Communications Manager, Selective Insurance. “Our nearly 20 years of participation is a unique holiday tradition, as employees are already gearing up to assemble and donate more than 50 bikes, contribute toys and clothes, and volunteer in the Toy Shop to help make the holidays special.”

“We welcome the assistance of hundreds of volunteers, law enforcement personnel, and musicians as we help thousands of parents select toys for their children,” explains Project Self-Sufficiency Executive Director Deborah Berry-Toon. “Given the volume of children we will be serving, we are hoping that donations of funds, gift cards, and toys can be received by early December.”

Project Self-Sufficiency Leadership Council member Tim Parker donned a Santa suit and was accompanied by his wife, Project Self-Sufficiency Board member and retired jurist Lorraine Parker, at the kickoff event. “The compassion demonstrated by this community is overwhelming and we are looking forward to bringing these toys to local children in December.”

Donated items can be dropped off at Project Self-Sufficiency, 127 Mill Street in Newton, Monday – Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. For information about the Season of Hope Holiday Toy Drive, call Project Self-Sufficiency at 973-940-3500 or visit www.projectsufficiency.org.

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NORTH WARREN (O) VS HOPATCONG (O) SENIOR NIGHT BOYS SOCCER



Riley Cowell with his parents, Trish and John



Logan Iwaszczuk with his parents, TJ and Clare



Anthony Jarski with his parents, Sylwia, Rafal, and his brother, Frank



Nikko Maniace with his parents, Doreen and Ed, and his brother, Joey



Justin Mulch with his parents, Chris and Katie, and his sister, Maya



Captain Robbie Pignotti with his parents, Mark and Karen



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Wyatt Wartman with his parents, Bert and Melissa



Randell Wester with his mother, Jenn, his brother, Alexander, sister, Eleva, and his grandmothers, Donna and Susan.

Photos by Dale Young/
The Free Weekly Press

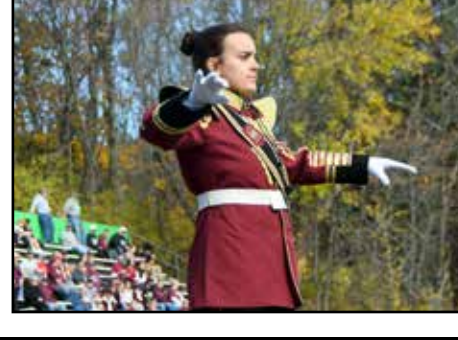
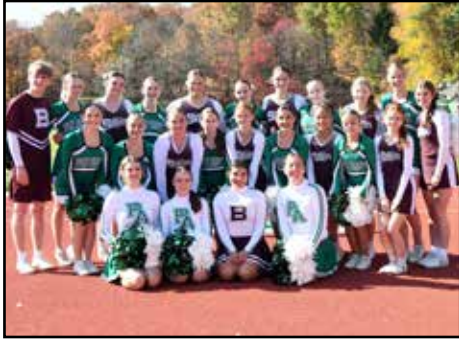
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Finelli Family Holds Reunion To Honor Their Roots



In the tradition of celebrating our heritage and family for the bravery that was displayed when our family left the small hill-town of Roseto Valfatore and came to America, we wanted to continue to celebrate those before us. That's why we had our Finelli family reunion a few Sundays ago. It was such an amazing night to meet new cousins and distant relatives from all over the US and Canada and to share our young children with the previous generations of proud Italians. We decided to ask each of our relatives to bring a food that reminded them of someone special in their family or what it was like to be an Italian. They were so excited to share memories, even the children, as we sat in the backyard, in the evening air, under the string lights. We were fortunate enough to have a wonderful performer from Lehigh Valley, who formally played with Frank Sinatra, grace us with classic songs all night. There was singing, music, laughter, children playing and of course, plenty of food and wine. We will forever remember our relative's faces of joy and nostalgia when we showed them our wine "Roseto Effect" Super Tuscan from our local winery that proudly showed a photo of Great Grandpa Finelli our Patriarch. It allowed us to take a moment to remember those before us and to prepare the next generation to appreciate those before them also. That respect starts with us and is taught by us to our children. It's never too late to show your appreciation and have it rub off on our family...but more importantly in this crazy world please remember to love the ones that are present with you today. Life is fleeting, but memories last forever. Salud! (Photo Courtest Matthew and Misty Stallard)

Motorists Need To Stay Mindful Of Ramped-Up Deer Activity

With deer becoming increasingly active, and daylight-saving time soon to put more vehicles on the road during the hours when deer move most, the Pennsylvania Game Commission is advising motorists to slow down and stay alert.

Deer become more active in autumn with the lead-up to their fall breeding season, commonly referred to as the "rut." Around this time, many yearling bucks disperse from the areas in which they were born and travel, sometimes several dozen miles, to find new ranges. Meanwhile, adult bucks more often are cruising their home ranges in search of does, and they sometimes chase the does they encounter.

When daylight-saving time ends Nov. 3, there also will be increased vehicular traffic between dusk and dawn – the peak hours for deer activity.

"As the rut approaches, whitetails are ramping up their activity levels and expanding their home ranges," said Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith. "We would like to encourage all drivers to be extra mindful of intensified deer movement this time of year."

Data from around the country indicates Pennsylvania drivers face some of the highest risks of a vehicle collision with a deer or other large animal. A recent report shows Pennsylvania led the country in animal-collision insurance claims in the fiscal year 2023-24. Meanwhile, Pennsylvania drivers, according to



the report, have a 1-in-61 chance of a vehicular accident involving a big game animal – one of the highest rates nationwide.

Drivers can reduce their chances of collisions with deer by staying alert and better understanding deer behavior. Just paying close attention while driving on stretches marked with "Deer Crossing" signs can make a difference.

Deer often travel in groups and walk single file. So even if one deer successfully crosses the road in front of a driver, it doesn't mean the threat is over. Another could be right behind it.

A driver who hits a deer with a vehicle is not required to report the accident to the Game Commission. If the deer dies, only Pennsylvania residents may claim the carcass. To do so, they can call the Game Commission at 1-833-PGC-HUNT or 1-833-PGC-WILD and an agency dispatcher will collect the information needed to provide a free permit number, which the caller should write down.

A resident must call within 24 hours of taking possession of the deer. A passing Pennsylvania motorist also may claim the deer, if the person whose

vehicle hit it doesn't want it.

Those taking possession of road-killed deer also are advised of rules related to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) that prohibit the removal of high-risk deer parts – essentially the head and backbone – from any Disease Management Area (DMA) or Established Area (EA). Those parts must be removed before the deer is transported outside a DMA or EA. For maps of these areas, the complete list of high-risk parts and other information on CWD, visit www.pgc.pa.gov.

If a deer is struck by a vehicle, but not killed, drivers are urged to maintain their distance because some deer might recover and move on. However, if a deer does not move on, or poses a public safety risk, drivers are encouraged to report the incident to the Game Commission or another law-enforcement agency. If the deer must be put down, the Game Commission will direct the proper person to do so.

To report a dead deer for removal from state roads, motorists can call the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation at 1-800-FIX-ROAD.

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A Sunday Sermon - By Michael Nelms

“The great illusion of leadership is to think that man can be led out of the desert by someone who has never been there.” “When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers.” --Henri J.M. Nouwen, The Wounded Healer

Hebrews 7:23-28 Christ, the merciful high priest

Furthermore, the former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests humans, who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Jeremiah 31:7-9 The remnant of Israel is gathered

For thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, “Save, O

LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel.” See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor together; a great company, they shall return here.

“Centaur, Chiron, Christ, & Church”

October 31st is Reformation Day, the anniversary of the Protestant Reformation when a German, Roman Catholic priest and Augustinian friar by the name of Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg, a town fifty-six miles southwest of Berlin. Luther had some complaints about the spiritual condition of the Church of his day, and in the absence of Twitter and Facebook he posted his complaints on the door of the church. A French lawyer by the name of John Calvin would, around the same time, also see the need for the Church to be better than it was, and Calvin, the so-called father of Presbyterians, would give voice to the hybrid idea that the Church should be Reformed and always reforming.

Centaur are hybrid mythical creatures with a human face and upper body and the lower body and legs of a horse. One of several theories about the origin of such mythical creatures is they are the result of primitive people thousands of years ago first encountering other primitive people riding horses. Imagine a

time when riding horse did not exist, and then imagine one tribe of primitive people taming wild horses and using them for faster travelling and then that group of people on horseback travelling into a new region where this had never before been seen. The sight of heads and torsos on top and horses underneath: encountering such an unusual sight for the first time would have seemed supernatural, magical, god-like.

In Greek mythology, which developed simultaneously with the Hebrew Scriptures, centaurs were wild, violent, lusty savages with the exception of Chiron. Unlike other centaurs, Chiron had godly parentage and was immortal, and he was known for his gentleness and goodness. He was the master of the healing arts, helping and saving others. However, he willingly gave up his immortality in order to save Prometheus from his wrong doing. Chiron was wounded and died for the transgressions of another, and for this noble act Chiron was placed among the stars as part of the constellation Centaurus, one of the largest constellations identified by Ptolemy about a hundred years after the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

In the reading from Hebrews last Sunday, the writer made the remarkable claim that Jesus was spared death, and listeners should immediately think of the cross and tomb and ask ourselves, “In what way did the cross and tomb spare Je-

sus from death?” This remarkable paradox alerts us to another example of the Gospel radically redefining reality, as in the last shall be first, and the greatest among you shall be servant of all. The tortuous cross and the dark, cold and lonely tomb Christ agonizingly experienced spared him from a worst kind of death, death of the soul. Christ’s dying spared him from death. A paradox, like Bertrand Russell’s paradox concerning set theory in mathematics, is a statement that seems to contradict itself or go against common sense. Paradoxes are used to challenge conventional thinking. The paradox of the Gospel only makes sense to people of faith, people who by a gift of the living Spirit are able to see beyond what is visible.

In today’s reading from Hebrews, we are told Christ, having being spared death by dying, now lives forever. Unlike human priests from Moses and Aaron to Pope Francis today, this eternal Christ’s death (notice again the paradox) was, like Chiron in Greek mythology, in order to heal others. “By his wounds we are healed.”

Too often Church is seen as a place for people who have it all-together, a place for people who, instead of a paradox, have the answers and who have life pretty much figured out. Therefore, church is often seen as the place where we should dress our best and put on our best faces, listen politely but don’t ask difficult questions or talk about difficult subjects. Church is where we are supposed

to celebrate marriage but avoid talking about divorce, except in whispers to our closest friends. Church is where we are to celebrate motherhood and fatherhood but avoid talking about parental abuse and neglect. Church is where we might tell a joke about the priest, the rabbi and preacher walking into a bar, but we avoid talking about the pain and pervasiveness of alcoholism. Among the many unfortunate consequences of this there are two I will mention today. First, it leads to a lot of pretending on Sunday mornings, pretending everything is wonderful when it is not, and this pretending represses what is most real and authentic, and the lack of authenticity is immediately sensed by those who visit churches looking for help with their wounds. They immediately discern such an inauthentic place is not for them. Second, it leads to a lot of smugness on the part of those already in the church, smugness in the form of, “I can help you with your problems because I have it all together.”

As opposed to this, if we are ever to be helpful to others, it is by a recognition of our own wounds and imperfections, our own struggles and questions, our need to be helped as well as to help. This is what makes AA and similar meetings so effective for those willing to be honest about themselves and with others.

In the reading from Jeremiah notice those being gathered by God are the blind and lame and those who are weeping. God is

gathering the wounded, not those who are whole. God, and when the Church is truly God’s house, is for those whose lives are not all-together, those who know and accept their own woundedness as well as the wounds we at times create for others, sometimes unintentionally, sometimes, sadly, intentionally. Whatever wounds you carry with you today, whether grieving the death of a loved one, grieving the loss of a relationship, whether stressed by demands of work and family, whether worried about your health or the health of a loved one, whether the wound of not being sure you were ever truly loved by the mother and or father who should have love you, whether the wound of guilt and shame for something did that cannot be undone, whether the wound of worry for a child, or the wound of a marriage not going as you hope, whatever wounds you carry with you today know that such limping and blindness and weeping are exactly why God is calling you, calling you home to God’s eternal rest. Until that eternal rest, God is calling you home to places like Yellow Frame Church where you can come as you are, lame, blind and weeping, come as you are and receive as well as give, give not from your strength and perfection but from your weakness and imperfection. Reformed and reforming, hybrid, paradoxical Centaurs of joy and weeping, laughter and tears, life and death, let the Church limp together into the kingdom into which God calls us.

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Emrick Announces More than \$2.2 Million in State Grant Funding for 137th District

Rep. Joe Emrick (R-Northampton) has announced more than \$2.2 million in state grant funding to support critical safety and infrastructure improvements in the 137th Legislative District.

Among the key projects benefiting from this funding are \$500,000 for the Upper Nazareth Fire Department to purchase a pumper tanker truck; \$521,029 for the Colonial Regional Police Department to upgrade its cardiac monitors and police radios; and \$350,000 for Nazareth Borough to purchase a 39-acre tract of land known as Black Rock Woods, which abuts the borough's park, and place it into land preservation with Northampton County.

The fire and police grants represent a vital opportunity to enhance the capabilities of local first responders, providing them with the tools and equipment necessary to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies.

The pumper tanker truck will significantly bolster the Upper Nazareth Fire Department's ability to maximize the safety of the population the department serves, while the Colonial Regional Police Department will benefit from upgraded equipment to be compatible with Northampton County 911's communications systems.

"Ensuring our first responders are well-equipped is essential to the safety and security of our communities," Emrick said. "These grants will help provide the necessary resources to support our firefighters and police officers as they continue to protect and serve our residents."

In addition to these three major grants, the following projects have also received funding:

Bethlehem Township – \$85,000 to purchase police vehicles.

Hanover Township –

\$570,467 to construct a multipurpose field house at First Responders Park.

Lower Nazareth Township – \$40,000 to purchase a new cardiac monitor.

Lower Nazareth Township, on behalf of Hecktown Volunteer Fire Company – \$75,000 for the purchase of training equipment.

Lower Nazareth Township – \$50,000 to purchase a power stretcher and loading system.

Nazareth Borough, on behalf of Nazareth Regional Ambulance Corps – \$50,000 for the installation of an electronic sign in front of the ambulance headquarters.

The grants were approved this week by the Commonwealth Financing Authority, which was established as an independent agency that holds fiduciary responsibility over the funding of programs and investments in Pennsylvania's economic growth.

Game Commission Asks Rabbit Hunters To Help

Calling all cottontail rabbit and snowshoe hare hunters: the Game Commission needs your help, not on one front, but two.

The agency has questions about Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2), and about snowshoe hare distribution and coloration. By providing answers this fall and winter, hunters can help shape rabbit and hare management in the future.

It's easy to get involved, too.

Report mortality events

RHDV2 is a highly contagious virus posing a serious threat to the state's rabbits and hares because it can cause mass die-offs – 75-100% of local populations – when and where it becomes established. There is no specific treatment for RHDV2 and it can remain on the landscape for months.

Early detection of RHDV2's possible presence, and the immediate removal of suspect carcasses, is the best way stop its spread.

The Game Commission is asking hunters – and anyone else, really – who finds two or more dead hares or rabbits at the same location with an unknown cause of death to report that by calling 1-833-PGC-WILD or by using the Game Commission's online Wildlife Health Survey reporting tool at <https://www.pgcapps.pa.gov/WHS>.

Domestic hare and rabbit owners with questions

about this disease should contact their veterinarians, who can in turn report suspect animals to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Health at 717-772-2852, option 1. Calls can be made anytime 24/7.

RHDV2 poses no human health risk. Multiple sick or dead hares in one place also can be an indication of tularemia or plague, though, and those diseases can cause serious illness in humans. So the public should not handle or consume wildlife that appears sick or has died from an unknown cause. Keep pets away from such specimens, too.

The virus has only been detected in Pennsylvania once before, in a domestic facility in Uniontown, Fayette County. It has never been found in wild populations.

Become a snowshoe hare cooperator

The Game Commission is trying to better determine just where snowshoe hares exist on the Pennsylvania landscape and if they're still turning all white in winter, as they've traditionally done to better blend in with snow and thereby escape predators.

The vehicle for getting answers is the agency's snowshoe hare cooperator program. Entering its third year, it works like this: hunters sign up to participate by emailing their CID number or

name, mailing address and phone number to hares@pa.gov. They're provided a pocket card, among other things, on which they're asked to record the dates they hunt hares, the county or Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) they hunt in, the number of hours hunted, and the number of hares flushed and number harvested.

Additionally, they're asked whether those hares were all white and, if not, what they looked like. That's because Pennsylvania is one of the few states where brown hares have been reported in winter and the only state where unique winter pelt patterns, such as brown eye rings and brown ears, have been detected.

Hunters send in answers using a postage-paid mailer at season's end. In return, they get a newsletter each fall providing summaries of survey results (see last year's at <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Education/WildlifeNotesIndex/Documents/HARE%20NEWS-LETTER2023.pdf>) and updates on hare management and other relevant topics.

The cooperator program has already revealed some interesting data, such as hunters are flushing and harvesting hares in more places than had been detected using other methods. But the more hunters who participate in the program, the better, more complete, the information collected will be.

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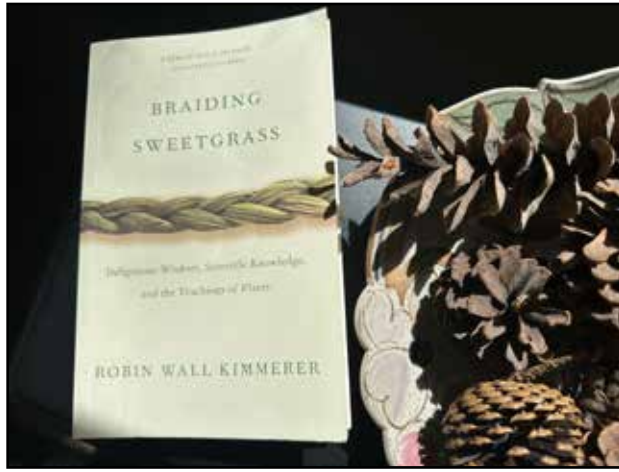
Hello, fellow readers,
Nights are dipping to freezing, although we haven't had a hard frost yet. I still have bell peppers and three young zucchini in the garden. Having had only one zucchini despite two planting cycles, I am wishful that the baby zucchinis will mature enough to eat. And there are green tomatoes left on the vines. Each day, I check to see if there is a color shift. When tomatoes turn lighter and have a gel-like substance inside two growth hormones change and cause the production of ethylene gas, which ages the cells, resulting in ripening. Then, you can ripen them indoors.
But if the baby zucchini don't mature, and only green tomatoes remain (I am not a fan of fried green tomatoes, though I adore the movie), I will do as I open

the netting before tidying things up and invite the deer and other animals to dine. I share the bounty during the growing season by tossing green beans into the yard too mature for my taste or tomatoes pecked by our feathered friends or nibbled by insects but certainly edible.

Native Americans believed in the Honorable Harvest, as Robin Wall Kimmerer, the author of Braiding Sweetgrass, eloquently describes. Dr. Kimmerer, Associate Professor of Environmental and Forest Biology at the State University of New York, combines her heritage as a Potawatomi with her passion for science and the environment. Hence, the subtitle of Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants.

Sweetgrass, Hierochloa (meaning "holy grass") odorata (meaning "fragrant"), is native to North America. It is part of Native American rituals and healing. Braiding Sweetgrass is a metaphor for respecting and being grateful for our Earth and the interconnection of all living things.

Kimmerer lists the guidelines for The Honorable Harvest on page 183. Though our indigenous peoples did not write or regularly speak



them. "—They are reinforced in small acts of daily life. But if you were to list them, they might look something like this: Know the ways of the ones who take care of you so that you may take care of them. Introduce yourself. Be accountable as the one who comes asking for life. Ask permission before taking. Abide by the answer."

Later in the section, I adore how she used the example that, as a child, you'd thank your grandma if she made cookies and offered you a few.

And wouldn't later go into the pantry and take them all without permission.

"Never take the first. Never take the last. Take only what you need. Take only that which is given. Never take more than half. Leave some for others."

"Harvest is a way that minimizes harm. Use it respectfully. Never waste what you've taken. Share. Give thanks for what you have been given. Give a gift in reciprocity (exchange) for what you have taken. Sustain the ones



who sustain you, and the Earth will last forever."

Sadly, Kimmerer describes that "the dishonorable harvest has become a way of life—we take what doesn't belong to us and destroy it beyond repair: Onondaga Lake... the rainforests of Malaysia, the list is endless. They are gifts from our sweet Grandmother Earth, which we take without asking. How do we find the Honorable Harvest again?"

There are initiatives for what we call renewable energy or clean energy—taking advantage of the wind that blows, the sun that shines, the ocean waves,

and the earth's warmth. But are we doing so without negatively impacting our planet? What about the mining of minerals to make car batteries? The dead whales washing ashore. The list goes on. We know there are tragedies despite our good intentions. Yet, without answers and solutions, we continue with our heads in the sand. May big business and each one of us find the Honorable Harvest again. It seems overwhelming, but we can start in our backyards.

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Slate Belt Rising Unveils Completed 'Painted Kayaks of Portland' Project as Route 611 Expected to Reopen in November

Slate Belt Rising is thrilled to announce the completion of the "Painted Kayaks of Portland" project, a public art installation now displayed throughout Portland Borough. As the community prepares for the expected reopening of Route 611 in November, this project aims to attract visitors and restore local pride after the challenges posed by the road's closure.

The kayaks, generously donated to Slate Belt Rising by Edge of the Woods Outfitters, were painted by local artist, Sarah Lanier, who also

completed the 2023 Portland mural on the side of the Portland Auto Repair building. Over the summers of 2021 and 2022, Lanier transformed the kayaks into vivid depictions of Portland's natural beauty and historic charm, particularly along the Delaware River. While the kayaks had only been displayed a few times before, they are now a seasonal attraction available for residents and visitors to enjoy throughout much of the year, with the exception of the winter months.

The project was com-



pleted thanks to a Main Street grant from the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

There are seven kayaks in total, spread throughout the Borough. Their

locations are mapped as part of another Slate Belt Rising initiative, the Slate Belt Heritage & Art Trail. You can view the locations of the kayaks and other notable sites in the Slate Belt region via

the online map.

"The closure of Route 611 has undoubtedly been difficult for Portland," said Brian Fenstermaker, Director of Slate Belt Rising. "However, we believe that projects like the Painted Kayaks will draw new visitors to the Borough and boost local morale as we look ahead to better days with the expected reopening of the road. It's about creating opportunities and pride for the community."

The Borough of Portland has faced significant challenges due to the closure of Route 611, which has reduced the flow of visitors and impacted local businesses. With the expected reopening in November, Slate Belt Rising hopes the Painted Kayaks will inspire renewed interest

in the Borough, drawing people to experience its scenic beauty and unique history.

The project's completion also aligns with Portland's preparations for its 150th anniversary in 2026.

"These kayaks perfectly capture Portland's charm and the Delaware River's beauty, making them a perfect addition as we look forward to celebrating the Borough's founding," added Fenstermaker.

The "Painted Kayaks of Portland" project is part of Slate Belt Rising's mission to enhance the region's quality of life by fostering economic development, supporting local businesses, and celebrating the area's heritage through public art and community-focused projects.

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Boscola Announces \$9,066,260 in State Grants for Public School Facility Improvements and Public Safety, Community & Economic Development Projects

State Senator Lisa Boscola announced state funding totaling \$9,066,260 for projects in the 18th Senatorial District through the new Public School Facilities Improvement Program and the Local Share Account - Statewide (LSA). "I am pleased to an-

nounce these grants that will improve school facilities that are in need of improvements and upgrades to improve the learning environment for our students and teachers along with projects that will enhance public safety and quality of life for residents throughout

my district," Boscola stated. "I will continue to fight hard to make sure our local communities get their fair share of statewide dollars to complete priority projects as identified by local government leaders," Boscola added. Boscola said she was

pleased to work with her colleagues in the Lehigh Valley legislative delegation to secure the state funds, approved by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA), for investment in the following projects:

- Public School Facilities Improvement Program
- Bangor Area School District - \$1,000,000
- High School HVAC Improvement Program
- Bethlehem Area School District - \$750,000
- Elementary School Facilities Room Replacement Project
- Bethlehem Area School District - \$400,000
- Liberty High School Lab Center Facilities Upgrade Project
- Pen Argyl School District - \$500,000
- High School Roof and HVAC Improvements Project
- Saucon Valley School District - \$307,009
- High School Health & Safety Upgrades Project
- Local Share Account Statewide
- Bethlehem Township - \$85,000
- Purchase of Police Patrol Vehicles
- Easton - \$547,123
- Mill at Easton Phase III
- Forks Township - \$500,000
- Frutchey Hill Road Project
- Freemansburg - \$485,000
- Community Center - Phase 2 Construction
- Hellertown - \$86,444

- Dewey Fire Co. Stormwater Improvements
- Hellertown - \$71,555
- Traffic Signal Video Detection
- Lower Nazareth - \$40,000
- Cardiac Monitor
- Lower Nazareth - \$521,029
- Colonial Regional Police Radios
- Lower Nazareth - \$75,000
- Hecktown Fire Company Training Equipment
- Lower Nazareth - \$50,000
- Power Stretcher and Loading System
- Lower Saucon - \$125,000
- Saucon Valley Trailhead Restroom
- Nazareth Borough - \$50,000
- Nazareth Regional Ambulance Headquarter Sign Proposal
- Nazareth Borough - \$350,000
- Acquisition & Preservation of Black Rock Woods
- Northampton County - \$40,000
- Regional Multimodal Trails Planning Project
- Palmer Township - \$102,900
- Suburban EMS Chase Truck
- Pen Argyl - \$750,000
- Fire Apparatus Purchase
- Pen Argyl - \$350,000
- Phase One Weona Park Aquatic Facility
- Pen Argyl - \$150,000
- Slate Belt Regional Police Radio Upgrades
- Roseto - \$100,000
- Public Works Equipment
- Upper Mount Bethel -

- \$350,000
- Mount Bethel Volunteer Fire Company Emergency Shelter Expansion
- Upper Nazareth - \$500,000
- Upper Nazareth Fire Department Pumper Tank Truck
- Washington Township - \$40,000
- LED Electronic Sign
- West Easton Borough - \$90,000
- New Public Works Trucks
- Wind Gap Borough - \$650,000
- Male Road Bridge Superstructure Replacement & Pedestrian Improvements
- The Public School Facility Improvement Grant Program was created to provide grants to public school districts and area career and technical schools for eligible facility improvement projects. The Program was established Act 34 of 2023 (P.L. 251, No. 34).
- The Local Share Accounts (LSA) were established by the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming (Act 71 of 2004). The funds are generated by the state gaming funds and may be used to support projects in the public interest within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The grants were approved today by the state Commonwealth Financing Authority Board in Harrisburg.

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