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**Slate Belt Heritage Center Welcomes Tim Betz as This Month's Historical Speaker**

The Slate Belt Heritage Center & Museum will hold their monthly historic presentation on Sunday, March 8th at 2:00PM.

Tim Betz is Curator of Exhibitions at the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society in Easton, PA. His book, Making History: Makerspaces for Museums and Historic Sites, explores how learning and teaching historic trades and crafts is an important way to learn about the past for museum goers, museum professionals, and scholars. He teaches art history at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania and is completing his PhD in history at Lehigh University, where he focuses on the role of collections and material culture in the shaping of the Spanish Empire.

The Untold American Revolution in Northampton County. This talk explores what the lived experience of the American



Revolution was like for people who lived it in Northampton County. Moving beyond famous figures and battlefield stories, this talk reveals how ordinary people in Northampton County experienced war, uncertainty, and dramatic social change. Drawing on

local records, objects, and firsthand accounts, it offers a vivid, human look at how the Revolution unfolded close to home.

The Center is located at 30 North 1st Street, Bangor. The public is invited to this free program.

**Slate Belt Chamber of Commerce's 2026 Achievement Award Scholarship Applications Are Now Open**

The Slate Belt Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce applications for Scholarship Achievement Award 2026 are available at the guidance departments of Bangor High School, Pen Argyl High School, Faith Christian & Career Institute of Technology. The Chamber will award one scholarship to a senior from each

of these schools. Applicants must reside in the Slate Belt to apply.

The scholarships will be presented to the students based upon the following criteria; academic accomplishment, demonstrated service to school and/or community, demonstration of leadership capabilities and future college or vocational plans. Please note: A separate

award, The Frederick R. Curcio, Jr. Scholarship Award, may also be applied for at this time. To qualify a senior must be enrolled in a computer science related course or planning to attend a Technical School of their choice or majoring in computer science.

Applications must be received by April 9, 2026.

**New Freshwater Fishing Regulations Effective In New Jersey**



The anticipated 2026 Freshwater Fishing Regulations have gone into effect on February 17th. The new rules are designed to provide more angling opportunities and to simplify the regulations, all while providing adequate protection of our precious fisheries resources.

The most substantial change is that the traditional preseason closure will be lifted on all lakes and ponds. This change will result in the following benefits:

- An additional 19 days of fishing per year on all trout stocked lakes and ponds.
- Anglers will be able to keep up to 2 trout per day during this time, rather than be outcompeted by predatory birds such as cormorants for up to 3 weeks.
- Warmwater anglers will benefit as well, as they will be able to fish for bass, crappie, and everything else during this time. For those of you that like the traditional preseason closure, it will remain in effect on all rivers and streams.

Other Trout related changes include:

- Opening Day is now established as the second Saturday in April.

- 23 new small ponds, primarily in highly populated areas, will be stocked with trout. Small ponds are a family friendly way to introduce children to fishing and catch rates are typically high.

- The daily creel limit of 6 trout per day will remain in effect from Opening Day thru May 31, however the limit for the rest of the year will be reduced from 4 to 2. This reduction should make more trout available to anglers for a longer period of time, especially the 14 to 16 inch trout stocked in the fall.

Greater protection will be provided to wild Brown Trout residing in the Pequannock River, as the minimum length will be increased from 9 to 12 inches and only 2 may be taken per day rather than 6.

That's not all! Lake Trout regulations have been changed to allow for more harvest, which should help to preserve trophy **FISH con'd on pg 2**

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# FISH

Continued from page 1

fisheries at Round Valley and Merrill Creek Reservoirs. There is also no closed season.

Round Valley and Merrill Creek Reservoirs are now managed under Lunger Bass regulation set.

Ryker Lake and Rainbow Lake are now managed under the general statewide regulations.

11 native fish species have been added to the Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern list.

Please see the Freshwater Fishing Digest – 2026 Complete for these and other regulation changes.

## Senate GOP Budget Members Release Letter To New Jersey Governor Urging Her To Embrace Specific, Long-Ignored Budget Savings Ideas

Senate Republican Budget members, Budget Officer Senator Declan O'Scanlon (R-Monmouth), Senator Michael Testa (R-Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland), Senator Doug Steinhart (R-Hunterdon, Somerset, Warren), and Senator Carmen Amato, Jr. (R-Ocean) released the letter they sent to Governor Sherrill on February 13, encouraging her to embrace dozens and dozens of reforms, restraints, and creative non-tax revenue ideas that the Murphy Administration dismissed or ignored.

An excerpt from the letter reads:

"These eleven proposals won't fully fix the \$4 billion budget imbalance left to you by the outgoing Administration, but they will make a substantial dent. We may have spirited and respectful disagreements about how to address the rest of the problem. But we shouldn't be fighting about proposals that the overwhelming majority of overburdened taxpayers expect before accepting more difficult choices."

Below are summaries of just some of the budget savings that have been ignored:

1.) CANCEL \$400 MILLION OF OLD PORK BALANCES AND/OR RESPONSIBLY MANAGE GRANTS THAT MOVE FORWARD.

Freeze and review \$400 million of balances sitting in State accounts from hundreds of pork line items that were never explained in violation of rules governing the State budget adoption. Propose repurposing grants that remain unexplained by sponsors and put in place sound oversight of any grants allowed to move forward to protect against waste, fraud, and abuse.

2.) ELIMINATE ALL UNJUSTIFIED SPECIAL GRANTS TO COUNTIES, SCHOOLS, MUNICIPALITIES, AND NONPROFITS FROM THE PROPOSED BUDGET EXCEPT IN RARE CASES WHERE A STRONG PUBLIC JUSTIFICATION IS PROVIDED.

Governor Murphy was the first Governor of either party to propose special pork barrel line-items in the Governor's proposed budget. The Governor should be advocating for State-wide fairness where funds are disbursed based on reasonable formulas or open/competitive grant programs. Governor Sherrill needs to lead by example, or she will encourage a feeding frenzy of pork spending which has bal-

looned in recent years to include a French art museum, tiki bar, stadium luxury box, and worse.

3.) REFINE AND IMPLEMENT PUBLIC EMPLOYEE UNIONS' AND OTHER PEOPLES' PROPOSALS TO CONTROL PUBLIC EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE COSTS.

Consider proposals from public employee unions and others who have suggested—to deaf ears—ways to control public employee and retiree health insurance costs. Proposals have included: capping payments at reasonable rates to protect against price-gouging and proposals to make greater use of third-party claims auditing. Their proposals should be refined and implemented.

4.) REDIRECT SOME OF THE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF STATE CASH CURRENTLY LOANED TO THE US GOVERNMENT AT LOW INTEREST RATES TO NJ MUNICIPALITIES INSTEAD, GETTING BETTER INVESTMENT RETURNS FOR THE STATE BUDGET AND HELPING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BY LOWERING THEIR BORROWING COSTS.

When the New Jersey Division of Investments makes short-term investments, they routinely lend money to the US Government at very low interest rates. They won't loan money to New Jersey municipalities which can sometimes pay as much as three or four times the interest rate paid by the US Government. We should offer to lend money to NJ municipalities at interest rates that get our State budget more investment revenues AND at rates that get savings for municipalities. Embracing this proposal is a win/win for the State budget and local property taxpayers. The only reason it hasn't

been done—in even modest amounts—is due to the bureaucracy not wanting to exert the time and energy necessary to offer local borrowing loans at competitive rates.

5.) END SPECIAL KIDGLOVE STATE TAXPAYER BAILOUTS FOR NEWARK, AND DON'T PROVIDE NEW CASH BAILOUTS TO OTHER PLACES WITH SELF-INFLICTED FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.

The Murphy Administration gave more than \$50 million to Newark over the past two years to bail out budgets their Mayor and Council wouldn't balance themselves. No application, no conditions on aid receipt, and no ongoing oversight was required to protect against waste—all required of the other municipalities seeking special help. Newark's problems are largely self-inflicted due to unchecked spending. Jersey City's new mayor is now asking for a State bailout because of willful recklessness by the previous Mayor and certain council members. If aid it is to be given at all, it should be based on applications, restraints, and ongoing State oversight, the same requirement applied to every other municipality.

You can read the full letter at [https://www.senatenj.com/DocumentCenter/View/4737/Senate-Budget-Committee-Members-to-Gov-Sherrill---Reforms-and-Restraints-2-13-26?utm\\_source=New+Jersey+Senate+Republicans&utm\\_campaign=168cbd-c69c-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2025\\_10\\_10\\_12\\_38\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_-e8a0c8f649-463344182](https://www.senatenj.com/DocumentCenter/View/4737/Senate-Budget-Committee-Members-to-Gov-Sherrill---Reforms-and-Restraints-2-13-26?utm_source=New+Jersey+Senate+Republicans&utm_campaign=168cbd-c69c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2025_10_10_12_38_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-e8a0c8f649-463344182) To speak with any members of the Senate GOP Budget Committee, contact Kyle Fischer, SRO director of communications, at [kfischer@njleg.org](mailto:kfischer@njleg.org).

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## Parks & Recreation Program To Be Held at Charles Chrin Community Center On Barred Owls of the Minsi Lake Greenway

Northampton County Parks & Recreation will sponsor a program about a local nest box project that's been providing homes for Barred Owl families in the Minsi Lake Greenway since 2021. Join us for this illustrated presentation from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 28 at the Charles Chrin Community Center with Jim Wilson of Northampton County Parks.

Come learn about this exciting project, how it benefited local Barred Owls and contributed to raptor conservation science, and how you can create habitat for owls while discovering Penn-



sylvania's eight owl species. The Chrin Center is located at 4100 Green Pond Road, Palmer, PA

18045. Northampton County Parks staff have been coordinating this project with community conservation partners—including Lehigh Valley Audubon Society volunteers and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary scientists—for the past seven years. During that time, five Barred Owl pairs have raised 12 owlets in nest boxes that were built and installed across the sprawling Minsi Lake Greenway in Upper Mount Bethel Township. This presentation is full of candid photos and video clips of the lives of those five Barred Owl families and behind-the-

scenes looks at the project and its partners in action.

This program is free of charge; however, registration is required. Go to [www.norcoparks.rec-desk.com/Community/](http://www.norcoparks.rec-desk.com/Community/)

Home and click on programs to register. For questions, contact Jim Wilson, Northampton County Parks Recreation Specialist, at 610/829-6404 or at [jwilson@norcopa.gov](mailto:jwilson@norcopa.gov).

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### New to the Blue Mountain Community Library

Located at 216 S. Robinson Ave. in Pen Argyl, open Mon.-Sat. 10am-12pm and Mon. and Thurs. 6pm-8pm. A library card is free for residents of Pen Argyl, Plainfield Township, and Wind Gap. Call 610-863-3029 with any questions.

**Blue Mountain Community Library News for Early March:**

- The board of directors has lowered the library card eligibility age to 3. Residents of Pen Argyl, Plainfield Township, and Wind Gap are encouraged to bring proof of residency and get a FREE library card today. (Annual membership is just \$12 for non-residents).

The library is in need of adult volunteers for all shifts. This is a great opportunity to serve the community and meet like-minded individuals! Commitment involves just 4.5 hours each month. No special skills are required, and all training is provided. Pick up an application at the circulation desk. Email [info@bmcl.org](mailto:info@bmcl.org) or call 610-863-3029 for more information.

- There's a new scavenger hunt in the children's room, and the prize basket is fully stocked with tiny treasures. Children are invited to find the insects and pick a prize!

- The magazine swap rack and craft/art supply swap basket are both overflowing. Come take some magazines and supplies!

- A limited number of 1040 tax booklets is available at the library.  
- The adult book discussion group will meet on Tuesday, March 10 to discuss David Baldacci's *Strangers in Time*. Email [info@bmcl.org](mailto:info@bmcl.org) or call 610-863-3029 to reserve a spot.

- Order a special from Potsy's on Broadway on Tuesday, March 24, and Potsy's will donate a portion of the bill back to the library. Potsy's is located on 21 S. Broadway in Wind Gap. Visit their Facebook page or call 610-881-4261 for details.

- Pen Argyl yearbooks, going back decades, are for sale at \$25 each.

**New to the circulating collection:**

**Adult fiction:** *Dear Debbie* (Freida McFadden), *Woman Down* (Colleen Hoover), *It's Not Her* (Mary Kubica), *Jigsaw* (Jonathan Kellerman), *Nash Falls* (David Baldacci), *Vigil* (George Saunders), *The Wife Upstairs* (Freida McFadden), *We Do Not Part* (Han Kang), *Last Twilight in Paris* (Pam Jenoff)

**Adult nonfiction:** *Neptune's Fortune* (Julian Sancton), *Framed* (John Grisham)

**Large print:** *Overkill* (J.A. Jance), *Code Blue* (Fern Michaels), *Your Eyes and Count to 10* (Lisa Unger)

**Young adult fiction:** *War Stories* (Gordon Korman)

**Juvenile fiction:** *Let's Go for a Drive!* (Mo Willems)

**Juvenile nonfiction:** *What a Waste* (Jess French)

### New to the Bangor Public Library

**Adult Fiction:**

*Her Last Breath* by Taylor Adams; *Agnes Aubert's Mystical Cat Shelter* by Heather Fawcett; *This is Not About Us: Fiction* by Allegra Goodman; *The Hard Line* by Mark Greaney; *Nine Goblins* by T. Kingfisher; *When I Kill You* by B. A. Paris; *The Astral Library: A Novel* by Kate Quinn

**Adult Non Fiction:**

*Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of the Inspiration* by Ed. Catmull; *Tarot: A Graphic History: Pamela Colman Smith's Story of Arcana Symbols & Magic* by Valentina Grande; *Haunted History of Philadelphia* by Josh Hitchens; *Winter: The Story of a Season* by Val McDermid; *Lauren Bacall: The Queen of Cool* by Anthony Uzarowski; *Don't Stop Praying: The God Who Hears is Just a Breath Away* by Matthew West

**Large Print Adult Fiction:**

*Jigsaw* by Jonathan Kellerman

**Easy Non Fiction:**

*Alberto Salas Plays Paka Paka Con La Papa: Join the Quest With Peru's Famed Scientist and Potato Expert* by Sara Andrea Fajardo; *A-Ztec: A Bilingual Alphabet Book* by Emmanuel Valtierra

**Easy Reader Fiction:**

*The Tunneler Tunnels in the Tunnel* by Michael Rex

**Junior Fiction:**

*Minecraft: Volume 1* by Ste R. Monster; *Minecraft: Volume 2* by Ste R. Monster; *Minecraft: Volume 3* by Ste R. Monster; *Minecraft: Wither Without You: Volume 1* by Kristen Gudsruk; *The Island of Forgotten Gods* by Victor Pineiro; *Kilala Princess: The Collection: Book 1* by Nao Kodaka

**Junior Non Fiction:**

*A World Without Summer: A Volcano Erupts, A Creature Awakens, and the Sun Goes Out* by Nicholas Day

**Young Adult Non Fiction:**

*American Spirits: The Famous Fox Sisters and the Mysterious Fad that Haunted a Nation* by Barb Rosenstock

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## Project Self-Sufficiency Hosts Unique Event for Expectant and New Parents in New Jersey

Pediatrician Dr. Christian Canzoniero will headline a special Pregnancy & Infancy Summit at Project Self-Sufficiency, Saturday, March 14th, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. This unique event will spotlight critical issues faced by expectant and new parents during pregnancy and through a child's early years, including vital information about maternal and child health, safety, and education. A generous grant from the New Jersey Department of Children & Families has made it possible to offer free baby items to attendees, including essential supplies for infants, comfort care for mothers, and toys which support early child development. Professional photographer Julian Huarte will also take photos of parents and children.



**Pediatrician Christian Canzoniero, MD, will offer the keynote presentation at Project Self-Sufficiency's Pregnancy & Infancy Summit in March.**

"The Pregnancy & Infancy Summit invites expectant parents and mothers and fathers of young children to gain valuable information about pregnancy and child development,

along with expert advice about health and wellness," explains Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency. "We are excited to be able to offer an opportunity for these families to

gain the information and resources they need to become successful parents."

In addition to pediatrician Dr. Christian Canzoniero, representatives from several organizations will offer ex-

pert advice about child development and health, including Project Self-Sufficiency's Nurse Family Partnership team, Center for Family Services, and Zufall Health Center. Free and reduced cost activities for families will also be explored. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

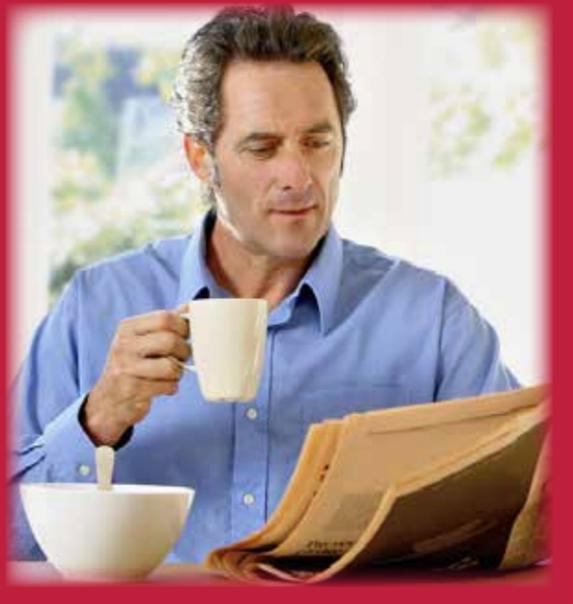
The Pregnancy & Infancy Summit supplements Project Self-Sufficiency's robust programs for pregnant women and parents of young children, including home visitation programs, Baby Beginnings events, Mommy Parties, and Parent Cafes. To register for the Pregnancy & Infancy Summit, to discuss your parenting needs, or to find out more about other programs and services available at Project Self-Sufficiency, call 973-940-3500.

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.projectself-sufficiency.org](http://www.projectself-sufficiency.org) or call 973-940-3500.

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# New Jersey Congressman Kean Announces Sherry Nelson as State of the Union Guest



Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07) announced that Basking Ridge resident, Sherry Nelson, will join him as his guest for President Trump's 2026 State of the Union Address. Each member of Congress is invited to bring one guest to the annual address. Sherry will be seated in the House Gallery during the speech.

and steady presence in our community. Her work to improve opportunities for those with special needs and disabilities has touched countless lives," said Congressman Kean. "She is incredibly dedicated to strengthening her community and connecting her neighbors, and I am honored to have her join me as my guest at President Trump's State of the Union tonight."

"I am honored to join Congressman Kean in the House Chamber for the State of the Union and to witness President Trump's address firsthand," said Sherry Nelson. "As a mother of two sons with autism, I know personally how important it is that individuals with special needs and disabilities are cared for and that they have every opportunity to be valued members of our community. Every family deserves the peace of mind that critical programs and services will be there for their loved ones."

"Congressman Kean has been an incredible leader for New Jersey families, especially for us families in the special needs community," Sherry continued. "He understands that protecting Medicaid for its intended beneficiaries is crucial. I am grateful for his partnership and proud to stand with him as he continues fighting for families like mine."

A tireless advocate for disability rights and academic standards in Bernards Township public schools, Sherry is the mother of two

autistic children and has championed disability rights for more than two decades. She is the former Co-President of the Bernards Parents for Exceptional Children, a local nonprofit dedicated to advancing disability rights in local schools. Currently, Sherry is working alongside Bernards Township leadership and the Somerset Hills YMCA to expand recreational program-

ming for disabled adults. She is also advocating for greater housing and employment opportunities for disabled adults in the community.

Sherry is a strong supporter of Congressman Kean's efforts to introduce federal legislation to establish the nation's first ombudsman for people with disabilities. While serving in the New Jersey State Senate, Congressman Kean spon-

sored legislation creating the state's ombudsman office for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ensuring that families had a dedicated advocate in government to connect them with resources and help navigate complex systems. As a member of the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus in Congress, Kean is now working to model this type of office at the federal level.

**To the man who completes me,  
You have been such a rock for me in all parts of  
my life, when things get tough, when I am sad or  
mad, you're always the hug and kiss I need. You  
are so amazing, you're all I ever want.**

Love, Megan

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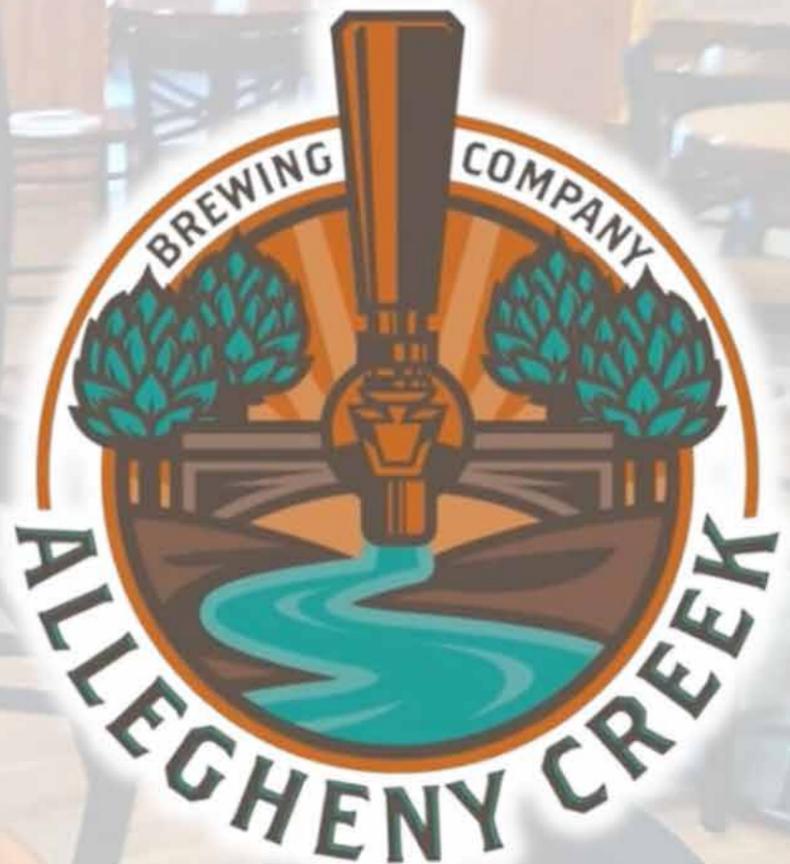
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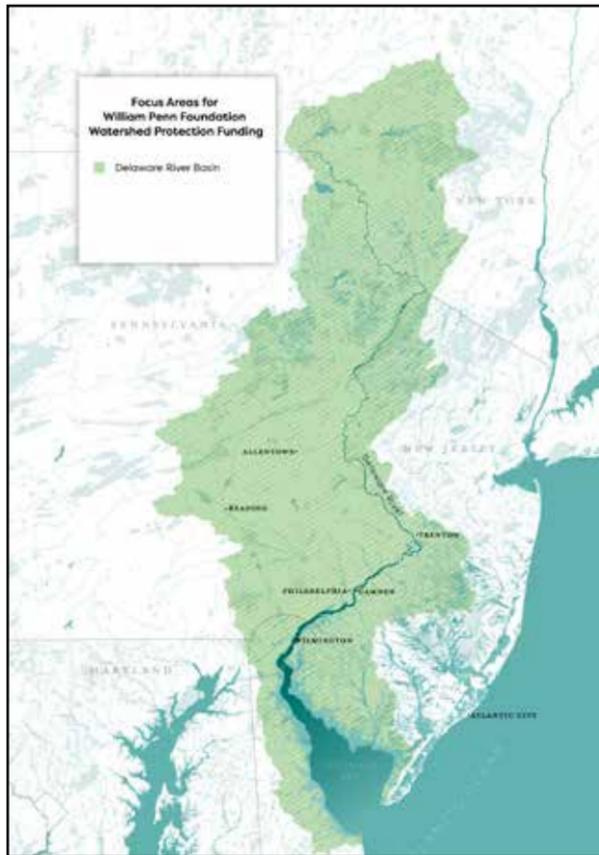


For more information: ☎ 570-897-5900 ✉ [management@alleghenycreekbc.com](mailto:management@alleghenycreekbc.com)

# Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Awarded Grant To Benefit Conservation And Recreation In The Delaware River Watershed

Pennsylvania projects will benefit from a significant new investment in conservation and outdoor recreation announced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Delaware River watershed.

In 2026, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) will receive \$500,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) through the Delaware River Watershed Conservation Fund to enhance public access and recreational opportunities throughout the Pennsylvania portion of the Delaware River and watershed. The PFBC will provide required matching funds and administer sub-grants to local governments and nonprofit partners to advance priority improvements to



public boating facilities, strengthening access and supporting outdoor recreation throughout the region.

“The Delaware River watershed is one of Pennsylvania’s greatest natural assets,” said Tim Schaeffer, PFBC Executive Director. “Thank you to our federal partners for their continued investments to improve public access, strengthen conservation efforts, and expand recreational

opportunities for anglers and boaters across the region.”

The grant awarded to the PFBC is part of a \$4.3 million investment that will benefit Pennsylvania projects through this program in 2026, which includes multi-state partnerships in the Delaware River Watershed. When combined with \$4.7 million in matching partner funds, the total investment in the Commonwealth will

total \$9 million. In total, \$12.5 million has been awarded across Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware in 2026.

From 2020-2025, the PFBC has received \$2.1 million dollars in grants from NFWF through the Delaware River Watershed Conservation Fund, which has been leveraged to generate more than \$12 million in total investments in the Delaware River Watershed.

## Senator Rosemary Brown Introduces “Residents First” Data Center Legislative Package

Over the past several months, our region has increasingly been targeted for large-scale data center development.

While final approvals of any development lie with local governments under Pennsylvania law, I believe that legislative action at the state level is also appropriate to protect the interests of our communities and communities across the state facing similar circumstances.

That is why, several months ago, I introduced legislation establishing

data center pre-application requirements to ensure transparency and accountability before a project could even formally begin. But I am not stopping there.

Last week, I announced three additional proposals to build out a comprehensive legislative package focused on protecting our communities.

This package is the culmination of a formal policy hearing, one-on-one conversations with hundreds of impacted constituents, discussions with industry representatives, and meetings with state and local government officials. I have listened carefully to concerns about water usage, utility capacity, zoning, and the long-term viability of this rapidly evolving technology.

Here is a recap of my full, “Residents First” legislative package:

- Require data center developers to provide “will-serve” letters confirming utilities can handle a project at full build-out BEFORE a formal application is submitted.

- Limit large-scale data center development to only properly zoned industrial areas.

- Mandate an independent, third-party water impact study and analysis at least 30 days prior to any formal application.

- Direct the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to study emerging data storage technology and evaluate whether this current technology will be obsolete and if any new data technology may be emerging that will impact communities less.

I will continue to work diligently at the state level to put stronger safeguards in place since I, too, have been frustrated by local government decisions and processes. This legislation is designed to answer the many questions residents and I share regarding water protections, infrastructure durability, long-term sustainability, and overall community impacts.

Responsible growth requires transparency, thoughtful planning, and putting our neighborhoods first.

I appreciate your continued engagement on this critical issue for our region and remain personally available to discuss this with any resident.



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# Medical Students Bake Brownies Spread Warmth at Hospice House

Every Friday afternoon, students from the Temple/St. Luke's School of Medicine get together to bake brownies. They meet at the Brian D. Perin Hospice House in Bethlehem to fill the communal kitchen and adjacent halls with the scent of warm chocolate and nostalgia. The weekly baking visit accents a space whose mission is to make families feel at home.

"The Hospice House is such a wonderful place," said Natasha Joglekar, a second-year medical student in the St. Luke's University Hospital program. "It's so peaceful. It's just like a warm hug."

The Brian D. Perin Hospice House has served the Lehigh Valley for two decades, caring for those receiving end-of-life support and their families. The Hospice House conveys its purpose through a place that patients can call home.

With 24-hour visitation and inpatient hospice teams, the facility provides much more than palliative care. The Hospice House can introduce aromatherapy, massage therapy and pet therapy to a patient's care plan. The staff even arranged a penguin visit from the Lehigh Valley Zoo. And now, the house offers a weekly brownie hug.

Through an elective class taught by Dr. Ric Baxter of the Temple/St. Luke's School of Medicine, students began visiting the Hospice House in 2024. After one class, Joglekar and several students stayed to bake.

"The simple act of doing something for someone else with no intention for acknowledgement or self-gain makes these students remarkable, and I am honored and humbled to be associated with

them," Dr. Baxter said.

The baking excursion provides an opportunity for medical students to connect their education to a sense of place. The communal kitchen sits in the center of Hospice House, and families can visit students and chat if they choose. The afternoon gives medical students insight into how environment enhances care.

"I appreciate being in the physical space and seeing how wonderful it is and how much it brings the emotional volume down for people," Joglekar said. "People can really just relax, families and patients."

The activity also ties medical students to their community, a key function of the Temple/St. Luke's School of Medicine. Based at St. Luke's University Hospital in Fountain Hill, it is the Lehigh Valley's only four-year medical school, an example of the unique culture that has made St. Luke's the top-ranked health care system in the country. In 2025, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ranked St. Luke's #1 ahead of Houston Methodist and Mayo Clinic as the nation's top health system for quality, safety and patient experience—an objective recognition reaffirming St. Luke's preeminent position as a leader among the largest and most respected health care providers in the country.

"We got feedback from people at Hospice House that the smell just seemed to make the environment more homey, so we kept it up," Joglekar said. "It's a really simple activity, but people have a certain nostalgic attachment to baking. It brings up feelings of being cared for.



L-R St. Luke's School of Medicine students Casey Clark, Emily Adams, Natasha Joglekar, Maia Clayton

It's for the environment, because it benefits the families and the staff."

By cultivating medical students who have Lehigh Valley roots, St. Luke's is helping to train more doctors and secure the region's health and well-being. And by visiting the Brian D. Perin Hospice House, those students are contributing more than medicine to the community.

Founded in 1872, St. Luke's University Health Network (SLUHN) is a fully integrated, regional,

non-profit network with annual net revenue of more than \$4.5 billion. With 23,000+ employees at 16 hospital campuses and 350+ outpatient sites, it is the Lehigh Valley's biggest employer.

The Network's service area includes 11 counties in two states: Lehigh, Northampton, Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Montgomery, Monroe, Schuylkill and Luzerne counties in Pennsylvania and Warren and Hunterdon counties in New Jersey. St. Luke's hospitals

operate the largest network of trauma centers in Pennsylvania, with the Bethlehem Campus being home to St. Luke's Children's Hospital.

Dedicated to advancing medical education, St. Luke's is the preeminent teaching hospital in central-eastern Pennsylvania. In partnership with Temple University, the Network established the Lehigh Valley's first and only four-year medical school. It also operates the nation's oldest continuously operated School of Nursing, established in 1884, and 50+ fully accredited graduate medical educational programs with 500+ residents and fellows.

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nent position as a leader among the largest and most respected health care providers in the country.

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### Significant Unclaimed Property Returns to Pennsylvania Residents



Pennsylvania Treasurer Stacy Garrity announced that the Pennsylvania Treasury Department returned more unclaimed property in 2025 than ever before: \$334.1 million.

Unclaimed property can include dormant bank accounts, abandoned stocks, uncashed checks, and more. Property is always available for the rightful owner to claim. Tangible property – often the contents of forgotten safe deposit boxes – may be auc-

tioned after three years, but proceeds remain available to claim perpetuity.

Among the reasons for the record property returns was the General Assembly's passage of a law that allows Treasury to automatically return unclaimed property valued up to \$500. In the program's first year, nearly \$50 million was returned this way. To see if any unclaimed property is available for you, visit [patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property](http://patreasury.gov/unclaimed-property).

### Clean Team Workforce Is Proud To Announce Cory L. As Employee of the Month for February

The Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for February, Cory L.

At 14 years old, Cory lost his 12-year-old brother in a tragic drowning accident. Cory's brother, Ryan, tried to rescue Cory, who was struggling in the water, and sadly lost his own life. Ever since, Cory has harbored guilt for his brother's death and has lived believing his parents blame him for the accident.

When Cory was 17, he moved from Oregon to Florida to live with his aunt for three years. Eventually, he moved back to Oregon and lived with friends and family while working odd jobs to pay for rent. But Cory's emotional struggles overwhelmed him, and he turned to drugs to cope with his pain.

Last August, Cory recognized that he needed a change in his life. He left everything in Oregon behind and took a bus to Pennsylvania to visit a friend. Once here, his friend recommended the Allentown Rescue Mission, and thankfully, Cory took his advice.



At the Mission, Cory heard about its Transformation Program and wanted to enroll to learn more about himself, how to manage his emotions, and develop a relationship with God. He enjoyed the program's classes and, for the first time, felt hopeful for his future.

After graduating from the Transformation Program, Cory was eligible to be hired with the Clean Team Workforce and started working

immediately. He began street cleaning but was quickly offered a job disassembling appliances and equipment at a metal recycling company. He breaks down items into component pieces and separates the metals. The work isn't easy, and the weather this winter has been hard, but Cory is just as tough. He shows up on time, every day, and is willing to get dirty and work his hardest.

Cory isn't sure what

the future holds, but he knows God has a plan for him. "I'm just focused on the present right now. I want to keep working and save as much money as possible," he said.

The Allentown Rescue Mission, a 501c3, 145 bed non-profit homeless shelter has been providing shelter to men in crisis since 1900. In addition to emergency shelter services (365 days a year), the Allentown Rescue Mission offers a faith-based 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](http://www.allentownrescuemission.org)

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## St. Luke's Participates in Read Across America Celebration

St. Luke's University Health Network will once again participate in Read Across America, continuing its long-standing commitment to promoting early literacy and a lifelong love of reading among children in the communities we serve. Volunteers will read to children at 20 partner schools throughout the community during Read Across America week, which begins on the birthday of author Dr. Seuss, Monday, March 2.

Read Across America is an annual nationwide celebration dedicated to the joy and importance of reading for children. The initiative encourages early literacy and language development, helps children build imagination, comprehension and critical thinking skills, creates positive and engaging experiences around books, and supports educators and families in fostering a lifelong love of reading.

St. Luke's partners in promoting literacy throughout the year include the Carbon County Community Foundation, which has supported the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and the evidence-based Reach Out



**St. Luke's Monroe Campus President Don Seiple reads to children during a Read Across America event.**

and Read Program. Additionally, St. Luke's collaborates with Reach Out and Read at Star Community Health Sigal Center as well as the Cops 'n' Kids Program in the Lehigh Valley.

Cops 'n' Kids is a community-based program that brings the gift of reading to children while encouraging positive relationships between children and law enforcement officers. Through literacy-focused outreach

and events, Cops 'N Kids places books directly into the hands of children and creates welcoming environments that support early learning, trust-building and community connection.

Temple St. Luke's School of Medicine students have been actively involved in this partnership, participating in Cops 'n' Kids events at the Reading Room, located within the Northampton Community College

Fowler Family Southside Center, where they engage children through shared reading experiences. These efforts reflect St. Luke's broader mission to address social determinants of health and support children and families beyond traditional clinical settings.

Beverly Bradley, President, Cops 'n' Kids Children's Literacy Program, said, "We have found that this program has been as meaningful for those on the 'giving' end as it is for those on the 'receiving' end of our efforts. Together, we have made a difference, and our hope is that we will continue to do so. We all believe that being able to provide the tools for our community's children to be successful will impact their lives and our community for many years to come."

Judith Dickerson, Director of Cops 'n' Kids of Easton, added, "Reading shapes how well people learn, work and stay healthy and keeps them learning on their own."

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of more than \$4.5 billion. With 23,000+ employees at 16 hospital campuses and 350+ outpatient sites, it is the Lehigh Valley's biggest employer.

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In 2025, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recognized St. Luke's ahead of nationally renowned Mayo Clinic and Houston Methodist as the nation's

three highest performing health systems for quality, safety and patient experience – affirming St. Luke's status as a leader among the largest and best-known health care providers in the country.

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<p><b>SIDES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bacon \$4.00</li> <li>• Sausage \$6.00</li> <li>• Taylor Ham \$5.00</li> <li>• Corn Beef Hash \$8.00</li> <li>• Pastrami \$8.00</li> <li>• Homefries \$6.00</li> </ul>	<p><b>KIDS MENU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Waffle \$12.00</li> <li>• 1 Egg \$6.00</li> <li>• 2 Pancakes \$7.00</li> </ul>	<p>Call For Reservations 908-854-5300</p>  <p><b>Buck Hill</b> BREWERY AND RESTAURANT 45 State Route 94 Blairstown NJ, 07825</p>	

### Garden Dilemmas? Ask Mary?



**Mary E. Stone**  
Stone Associates  
Landscape Design  
& Consulting,  
Blairstown, NJ

Hello, fellow readers,  
In last week's chat, Steve Rettke of Rutgers Cooperative Extension cited research showing that urban gardens, after 10 or 15 years of cultivating plant diversity and habitat stability, often become essentially pest-free. When stability takes root, nature balances herself. His reference to urban gardens reminds me of a visit to Pittsburgh several years ago that shaped how I think about cities, plants, and belonging.

Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh highlighted that trip. The mist from the 150-foot fountain — where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers meet to form the Ohio — offered relief from the heat. Native species grace the 36-acre park — many I love

to include in landscape designs.

One that captures my heart is our native Common Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*). I adore its smooth gray bark and graceful vase shape. Witch Hazel blooms far longer than most flowering trees — up to eight weeks — a remarkable adaptation because fewer pollinators are active when it blooms.

Along the paths are evergreen Christmas Fern and the beloved Eastern Redbud, admired for its early spring pink blossoms before leaves emerge.

Native plants are increasingly celebrated — and rightly so. But there is another point of view when it comes to cities.

I had the privilege of hearing Peter Del Tredici speak about Urban Nature: Human Nature. He challenges traditional notions of what “belongs.” One question from his talk lingers: “What is native to filled land such as New York City or Boston?” His answer? “Nothing.”

Restoring a pre-colonial ecosystem in heavily altered urban land, he suggested, may not only be unrealistic — it may be misguided. In *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast*, he documents



222 plant species commonly found in cities — many originating from Europe and Asia. “The vegetation of cities is as cosmopolitan as its people,” one slide read. His tone was encouraging — embrace the change. Our world adapts.

Still, many of us feel a pull to hold onto what we perceive as native — plants, insects, and landscapes. Is it an ecological concern? Or simply wanting things to remain as they once were? Cu-

riosity led me to his Boston Globe essay, “Amnesty for Plants.” He opens boldly: “Yank or spray all you want; the dandelion is here to stay.”

He reminds us that dandelions and other so-called weeds arrived with European settlers in the 1600s, their seeds tucked in hay and grain. The arrival was both cultural and ecological. He asks: How long must a plant reside somewhere before it earns belong-



ing?  
European botanists classify long-established non-native plants introduced before 1500 as “archaeophytes,” granting them quasi-native status. Del Tredici proposes a similar idea for North America — that plants documented as growing here before 1800 could be considered naturalized residents.

He argues that globalization and urbanization have reshuffled ecology. Novel ecosystems — mixtures of species thriving in human-disturbed habitats — now cover vast portions of the planet. So where does that leave us? Perhaps between restoration and acceptance. Between honoring native biodiversity and recognizing that the world — like us — is always changing.

Plants and people have always moved. Seeds travel by wind, wildlife, and human hands. Some cause real environmental damage. Social tension from different points of view is real, too. But perhaps

the deeper lesson is this: Belonging is not always about origin. Sometimes it is about contributions. About integration. About how adaptation occurs over time. Cities — like ecosystems — become multicultural. Multifaceted yet intertwined.

Perhaps the question is not simply “native or not?” but “How do we cultivate balance?”  
Urban gardens teach us that after years of thoughtful planting, pests diminish. Diversity strengthens the web.

The rivers converge in Pittsburgh just as cultures converge in cities. Seeds travel. People travel. Adaptation unfolds.

Maybe our role, as stewards of gardens and of life, is to tend with curiosity rather than fear — to restore where we can, accept where we must, and remember that we, too, are part of this evolving ecosystem. We are all one in this world.

Garden Dilemmas? AskMaryStone.com or tune in on your favorite Podcast App.

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## Letter To The Editor: Summary of the Knowlton Township Committee “Workshop” Meeting on February 23, 2026

Lackawanna Cutoff/ Passenger Train Public Hearing Committee-woman Starrs reported on the public hearing on February 19, 2026, regarding PennDOT’s plans to restore passenger rail service between Scranton and New York’s Penn Station. As part of this project, the rail line in Knowlton will be repaired—and once complete, trains will once again travel through Knowlton an estimated three times daily. Currently, the planned stops nearest to us include East Stroudsburg and Blairstown.



(Editorial note: PennDOT is the lead agency for the project with the Pennsylvania NE Regional Railroad Authority and NJ Transit serving as co-applicants. The project is still in early stages, but it already received federal funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. It is one of only five rail expansion projects in the United States to advance to its current phase of development. The next steps include preliminary engineering and environmental review, so there is still a good bit of work ahead before construction can begin.)

Committeewoman Starrs reported that her biggest takeaway from the public hearing was that many aspects of the proposed railway are open to change. The hearing made clear that the proposed stops in Blairstown and East Stroudsburg may shift, and PennDOT expressed a desire to “maximize use of the line,” stating that it could be used for freight in addition to passenger service. There was also discussion that the existing rail corridor, much of which is publicly owned,

may need to be expanded to accommodate parking and other infrastructure. A resident expressed her confidence that parts of the rail line in Pennsylvania may be used for freight service, but noted that the overhead structure in Knowlton would have to be modified to accommodate it. Committeewoman Starrs expressed her disappointment that the line will not provide direct service to Newark Liberty Airport, explaining that while there will be a stop at Newark’s Broad Street, passengers will still need to transfer to reach the airport.

The Committee, who passed a resolution of conditional support for the rail project in 2024, discussed using the opportunity to have the agencies make improvements at Tunnel Field that would benefit all of Knowlton. Committeewoman Starrs asked the Committee to submit a list of questions, which would be codified via resolution at the next Township Committee meeting, to clarify issues like how often the train might travel through Knowlton if freight is involved, if haz-

ardous materials could be carried on the line, etc.

Plowing on Decatur Street: During public comment, a resident complimented the Knowlton Township DPW for their hard work keeping up with the recent snowstorms, but asked what could be done to improve plowing on Decatur Street. Mayor Shipps shared that she had received a similar complaint and visited the area to look into it personally. She noted that she believes the staff from the nearby nursing home may be using the street to park, and the DPW is having difficulty plowing around the cars with the volume of snow. She noted that Decatur Street is not a municipal road, but the Township plows it through an agreement with the county. The Committee discussed using Nixle alerts and flyers to remind residents to move their vehicles at designated times to allow for plowing, though some doubted that would work. Committeeman Baley offered to use his skid steer to assist with snow removal if needed.

Purchases for the Township: The Committee re-

viewed three quotes to replace all of the locks in Knowlton Township’s municipal and DPW buildings. The clerk explained that, currently, four keys are required to get through to her office, and Mayor Shipps added that, over time, not all keys have been returned by former employees, creating security problems. The Committee had previously explored electronic locks, but those options were found to be too costly. The new quotes ranged from \$2,300 to \$15,900. Committeeman Lembeck noted that the pricing for two of the quotes seemed high. After discussion, the Committee agreed to take more time to review the options and revisit the

issue at a future meeting. Affordable Housing: The Committee introduced, on first reading, an ordinance required by the state that establishes development fees for the Township’s affordable housing obligations. The Committee also discussed renewing its agreement with Warren County to administer Knowlton Township’s affordable housing program. Under this arrangement, the county would manage individual projects, oversee inspections and construction coordination, and ensure all documentation and reporting requirements are met so the Township can obtain and maintain its rehabilitation credits.

The Township would contribute \$3,500 per

project, and in return, the county would provide \$15,000 toward each project. Committeewoman Starrs also noted that former Committeeman Rene Mathez had generously volunteered to serve as a liaison to assist with project oversight at no cost, working alongside the county administrator. Committeewoman Starrs will prepare a resolution for consideration at the next meeting.

—Adele Starrs

*Please note the summaries are intended only to inform residents of issues that might be of interest to them. The summaries are not the official minutes and have not been approved by the Township Committee. They reflect the views of the author only.*

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### Department of Justice Awards 3-Year Competitive Grant for the Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center Project to the Philadelphia Children's Alliance After a Four-Month Long Furlough of Staff

Recently, funding was restored to the Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center (NRCAC), which has been operated by Philadelphia Children's Alliance since it was established in 1992. The NRCAC supports professionals working with victims of child sexual abuse throughout the Northeast region of the US. For the last four months, the staff of NRCAC was furloughed as the program awaited funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This put a halt on the training, technical assistance, products, and resources provided to over 100 partners each year. Last week's award will cover the next three years of operations for NRCAC.

Sue Ascione, Project Director from NRCAC stated, "I cannot express how grateful I am to have our team back on the ground, supporting the work of child advocacy centers. The impact our staff provides makes an incredible mark on the lives of child victims of sexual abuse, their families, and their communities." The team at NRCAC works with partners in 9 states, including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. NRCAC services include team development, organizational development, professional role development, and accreditation support to state chapters,

child advocacy centers, and multi-disciplinary teams. In collaboration with other regional child advocacy centers, NRCAC also facilitates peer forums, executive coaching programs, and victim advocacy forums. Benita Williams, Executive Director of Philadelphia Children's Alliance commented, "The team at NRCAC is a fundamental piece to the work child advocacy centers do across the region. We are thrilled to have them back, supporting us and other chapters and centers with their expertise, resources, and connections." For more information, visit [philachildrensalliance.org/nrcac](http://philachildrensalliance.org/nrcac). For media inquiries, contact Helen Bradley at [hbradley@philachildrensalliance.org](mailto:hbradley@philachildrensalliance.org)

### Boscola Announces \$250,000 State Grant for Brownfield Redevelopment Project in Glendon Borough

State Senator Lisa Boscola announced today that the Commonwealth has awarded a \$250,000 PA SITES (Pennsylvania Strategic Investments to Enhance Sites program) grant to Greystone Capital, Inc. for the 400 Island Park Road Industrial Brownfield Redevelopment Project, located in Glendon Borough. "This state investment will assist in transforming a legacy brownfield site into an industrial campus that will create family sustaining jobs and have a tremendous economic impact for Glendon Borough," Boscola stated. "The PA SITES program is a critical piece to our Commonwealth's economic development strategy that will help attract businesses, private investment and, most importantly, create family sustaining jobs here in the Lehigh Valley." 400 Island Park Road is a legacy brownfield site that currently contains 39 aging structures with some being unsafe and obsolete with a great



amount environmental concerns that prevent its reuse. Greystone Capital is currently completing a comprehensive real estate plan for developing the 54-acre site into a shovel-ready industrial campus. PA SITES funds will be used for design services including surveying, floodplain analysis, an environmental assessment, geotechnical reporting, preliminary land development planning and permitting. "Two years ago, I stood with Governor Shapiro here in the Lehigh Valley when he announced his 10-year economic development strategy and I stated that the Commonwealth needed to be in the economic development business," Boscola said. "In the last month, the Lehigh Valley is witnessing the success of our efforts, first with the historic announcement of Eli Lilly and Company's \$3.5 billion investment in our region and now this second important investment through the PA SITES program in Glendon." Statewide, it was announced today that the Commonwealth is investing over \$31 million in seven projects through the PA SITES program, which was established to provide grant and loan funding to eligible applicants to develop competitive sites for businesses to relocate or expand within the Commonwealth. The funding for the program provides both Planning Grants and Construction Grants and Loans that support the development of competitive sites within the Commonwealth.

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### *A Special Thank You From Chocolates On Broadway*

As we reflect on the services for Shirley and the weeks now behind us, I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude. This has been a difficult journey, but the outpouring of support from our family, friends, and this entire community has meant more than I can put into words. I want to extend a special thank you to those who provided such exceptional care and support:

To the medical teams at St. Luke's (Anderson) Campus, St. Luke's Cardiology Associates, Lehigh Valley Hospital, and Suburban EMS: thank you for your wonderful care and compassion.

To the Washington Township Police: thank you for your assistance and for treating our family with such genuine care.

To Rick Weaver (Weaver Chiropractic): thank you for the years of care you gave my mom. I truly believe that if it wasn't for you, she would have lost her ability to walk years ago. Your support allowed her to keep moving and stay active, and we are so grateful for that gift.

To John Fiore and the Fiore Funeral Home: thank you for guiding us through this process with such dignity.

I also want to recognize our incredible employees. You are so much more than staff; you are family. Knowing the business doesn't lose a beat when I'm away is a testament to your dedication and the love you have for this shop.

Finally, a very personal thank you to my three daughters, Caitlin, Lexi, and Madelin. Whether it was running to pick up medicine or helping her navigate her phone and computer, you never batted an eye. You made sure to be there every Sunday and every holiday, making every family dinner and outing special for her. Your love and devotion to your grandmother was a gift to both of us. Shirley was the heart of our world, and seeing how much she was loved by all of you has been a true comfort.

With sincere gratitude,  
Steve Bussenger  
Chocolates on Broadway



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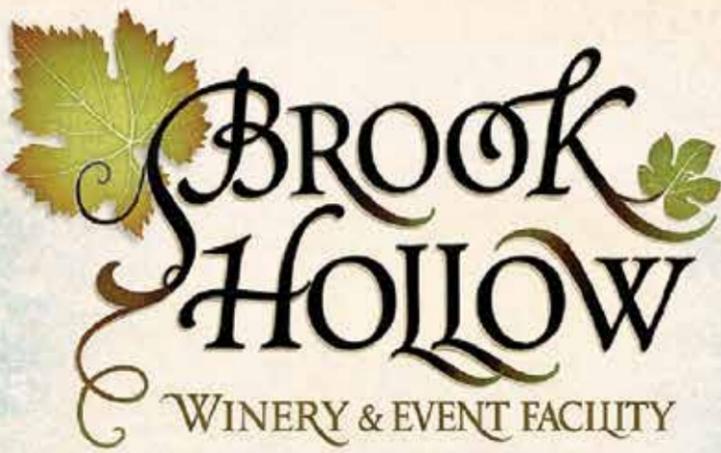
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