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from
Adams County

written by: Commissioner Randy Phiel

December 6, 2024

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Adams County Preserves 25,000 Acres of Farmland

On Wednesday, November 13, I had the pleasure of being at the Adams County Township Association annual meeting and heard one our own distinguished Adams Countians, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russel Redding, recognize our great state of Pennsylvania for being #1 in the nation for farmland preservation, and all our Adams County municipalities, and especially our Adams County families and residents for the State and County preservation milestones we have achieved. Two days later, on Friday, November 15, at the Maring Farm in Cumberland Township, I had the distinct pleasure of participating in Adams County's milestone of preserving **25,000 acres of farmland in Adams County.**

Preserving 25,000 acres doesn't just happen. I would like to take a moment to recognize all the Adams County staff that played a part. It takes a village! I especially want to recognize Adams County Ag Land Preservation & Rural Resources Manager Ellen Dayhoff for her tireless and passionate advocacy for the



past 32 years.

Also, thank you to the members of the *County Ag Preservation Board*, both past and present, for their service to our community. For those that have been around awhile, they know that our current Board members walk in the footsteps of some giant preservation visionaries before you!

I can recall when this Board of Commissioners took office 13-years ago, and there just may have been some nervousness about these New Guys commitment to Agriculture and Preservation. I am proud to look back and report Agricultural Land Preservation has always been a priority of this Board since Jim, Marty and I took office. When we first took office, I was often asked, what one of the most difficult parts of our job was? The answer was easy – and the answer wasn't raising taxes! It was balancing Adams County's rich history, agrarian culture and panoramic viewscapes, with the need for appropriate housing and economic development at appropriate locations.

One of the first projects we embarked on was prioritizing with the Planning Department the development of the *Preservation Priority Areas Map* as well as *Economic Development Areas* which helps us identify the area's most suitable for preservation and economic development. During our tenure, I am pleased to say that together we have preserved more than 6,000 acres and allocated \$5,285,080 in county funds to the Ag Preservation Program. But, without other partners we would never have achieved this milestone, such as Cumberland Township for the Maring Farm preservation.

As secretary Redding pointed out on Wednesday evening, although we need to celebrate a significant and notable milestone in Adams County farmland preservation, loss of farmland in PA is outpacing farmland preservation by almost a 3/1 margin. It rests upon the shoulders of our generation, and future generations, to support farmland preservation for the *sustenance, economic, environmental, cultural, and spiritual* necessities that it provides - and that we too often take for granted!

Election Recount

We were asked many times why we had to spend 2-days re-counting the ballots for the Casey/McCormick race. Pennsylvania recount law *requires* automatic re-counts under certain guidelines. No matter how one personally feels about the outcome, the value, or the cost of the re-count, Pennsylvania state law requires when the margin for a statewide office is less or equal to 0.5 of the total votes, a re-count is mandated!

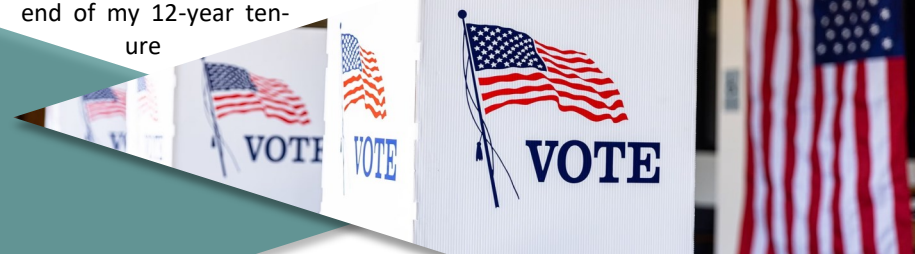
After conducting an exhausting and flawless Presidential election in Adams County, none of us looked forward to the 2-day recount. Poll watchers from both candidates were in attendance taking notes from start to finish. The process was also live-streamed and took us about 14-hours. Naturally, about 2-hours after we completed the re-count on Thursday, November 21, Senator Casey conceded. I can report that in Adams County the few allowed provisional and the allowable post-election arriving military ballots did not move the needle for the outcome in Adams County.

Again, a big shout out to our Elections office staff, and our Administrative Staff, that rolled up their sleeves per usual to assure this fundamental plank of democracy is carried out efficiently and effectively in Adams County!

CCAP Fall Conference - Phiel Stepping Down from CCAP Board of Directors

The Fall County Commissioners Association Conference in Hershey, the week before Thanksgiving, is always a welcome diversion after 3-months of tax appeals, budget, and elections. The opportunity to attend topic specific breakout sessions and confer with other commissioners around the state is invaluable to gain information, insight and to network. All 3 commissioners and County Administrator Steve Nevada attended this year.

The 2024 Fall Conference also marked the end of my 12-year tenure



as
the Region 3 Representative on the CCAP Board of Directors. Region 3 is Adams County and 9 counties to our west. To be elected and then re-elected after my 1st year in office for 12 consecutive years by my Region 3 peers, was certainly an honor and privilege. It was also a very gratifying professional and personal life-time experience. It made me a better Commissioner by garnering a wealth of additional knowledge and establishing a state-wide network of resources and contacts. I announced to Region 3 colleagues last Spring that I was considering stepping down if anyone was interested in stepping up. I was happy to receive feedback that 2 newer commissioners expressed an interest in the position if I was not seeking re-election. I wish Blair County Commissioner Amy Webster the best in her new role as CCAP Region 3 Board Representative beginning in 2025. She is also an attorney, real estate agent, and a graduate of the CCAP Academy of Excellence. I am sure she will do a fine job of representing Region 3!

Weather Closure Reminder (Staff Please Read)

For the past few mild winters, we have been fortunate that delays and closures have been minimal. I am not complaining! I have not missed my alarm going off at 5AM! With the recent cold weather and forecast of some snow, it is time to again review that mystery of how those liberal leave, 1-hour delay, 2-hour delay and closure calls are made for Adams County government.

Making a call the night before during a blinding blizzard is easy. But most times during forecasted inclement weather, I am up at 5:00 AM checking existing conditions, weather forecast, weather radar, local delays/closures, and taking several operational realities into consideration. By 5:30AM, I confer with the President Judge, and we come to terms with the best safety/operational decision based on the information we have at the time. Most of the time we get it right – but it is not an exact science with changing conditions. A few degrees one way or the other, or miscalculations on when precipitation begins and ends, can make a difference between being a genius or a Bozo! Also, what's happening in the Gettysburg area may be somewhat different in Upper Adams, Buchanan Valley, Mt Carmel, Chambersburg, Hanover, or Dillsburg.

Then comes the next step of calling IT Director, Phil Walter, to put the information on the website and notifying numerous staff and media outlets. We strive to have these notifications and postings all done by 5:45AM, in consideration of staff that needs to travel some distance, and consideration of maintenance staff that need to address parking lots and sidewalks. So, next time there is inclement weather event, and you wake up and look at the County website or WGAL for Adams County government delays or closures, and you don't agree – I used to say it was Judge George's fault, but now I can say - it is Judge Campbell's fault!

Adams County Real Property Value Announced

Do you lie in bed at night wondering what the total value of all taxable real estate in Adams County is? Well stay awake no more. The Adams County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the Board of Assessment Appeals, and with the recommendation from Daryl Crum, Director, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Consolidated Assessment Law, (53 Pa. C.S. § 8844(f), certify the assessed value of real property, value of occupations and the number of persons subject to personal taxes as follows:

- Assessed Value of Real Property = \$10,167,554,600 (Yes -That's Billion)
- Value of Occupations = \$17,582,000

Number of persons subject to personal taxes (per capita) = 77,997. That's from a total population of approximately 106,000.

Property

Location →

Condition →

Market →



← Neighborhood

← Age

← Energy Efficiency

Land Preservation & Parks/Recreation Funding Projects

- **Land Conservancy of Adams County –**

- ⇒ This Agreement grants \$87,250.00 for the purpose of preserving approximately 83.5 acres located at 2291 Emmitsburg Road, Gettysburg. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.
- ⇒ This Agreement grants \$12,976.00 for the purpose of preserving approximately 14.76 acres located at 190 Mason Dixon Road, Gettysburg. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.
- ⇒ This Agreement grants \$39,740.00 for the purpose of preserving approximately 44.51 acres located at 146 Mason Dixon Road, Gettysburg. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.
- ⇒ This Agreement grants \$9,086.00 for the purpose of preserving approximately 10.87 acres located at 50 Mason Dixon Road, Gettysburg. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.
- ⇒ This Agreement grants \$20,000.00 for the purpose of preserving approximately 39.85 acres located at 1380 Cash-town Road. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.
- ⇒ This Agreement grants \$46,000.00 for the purpose of preserving approximately 119.20 acres located at 660 and 760 Winding Road, Biglerville. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.

- **Abbottstown Borough** – This Agreement grants \$12,110.24.00 for the purchase and installation of a 9-hole disc golf course, gazebo, and two (2) prefabricated bridges at the Borough's Park. This Agreement is effective November 27th, 2024, for a term of 3 years.
- **Oxford Township** - This Agreement grants \$25,000 for the purchase and installation of a pavilion at the Township's Park. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.

Hamiltonban Township – This Agreement grants \$5,807.00 for the purchase and installation of a water fountain, lattice, and fencing at the Township's Park. This Agreement is effective November 27, 2024, for a term of three (3) years.



The **End**

Remember Pearl Harbor Day. Saturday, December 7.
Please pause to remember!

- **A Gettysburg Christmas Festival.** Today thru Sunday numerous activities, music, entertainment, food, retail specials. There are 4 stages throughout the town that will host a multitude of performances. County staff should be aware that the north 2 blocks of Baltimore St. (meaning in front of the Courthouse) will be closed for the duration.
 - **A Christmas Carol.** Majestic Theater. The Totem Pole Playhouse presents this Christmas classic beginning this evening thru December 15. There is no better way to kick off the Christmas season while supporting community theater. Tickets \$34-40.
 - **Hollabaugh Bros. Holiday Open House.** Today, Saturday & Sunday. Refreshments, seasonal gifts, holiday music, crafts for kids and of course Santa Claus.
 - **Christmas House Tours At The Daniel Lady Farm.** This evening and Saturday evening 5:30p-8:00p. The Guided Historic Christmas House Tours showcase Christmas traditions from 1861-1864. Guests even meet a Civil War Santa. After the tour sit by the bonfire, listen to carolers, roast smores and have a warm beverage. Tours every ½ hour. \$20 Adults, Youth \$10. info@gbpa.org
 - **Gettysburg College Winter Choir Concert.** Christ Chapel at Gettysburg College. Tonight from 8p-10p. Featuring seasonal music from the 4 college choirs. \$5 Adults over 18.
 - **Gettysburg Garden Club Annual Christmas Greens and Gourmet Gifts Sale.** Saturday from 9a-2p. Gettysburg Fire Hall.
 - **Adams County Historic Society. Christmas At The Museum.** This Saturday & Sunday. Kids get to enter the museum for free and adults are 50% off. Hot chocolate bar, kids' crafts, and a brand-new holiday scavenger hunt. mschaffer@achs-pa.org
 - **An Eisenhower Christmas. December 1-31.** See the home of President Eisenhower decorated in the 1950's style for Christmas. Having started my NPS career there, I can tell you Mamie liked poinsettias. Open 10a-4:30p. You can now drive your vehicle on-site.
 - **Tuba Carol Fest. Friday,** 5-7, December 6th & 13th in front of the Gettysburg Hotel.
 - **A Christmas Offering.** Music Gettysburg concert. At the Lutheran Seminary. Sunday, December 15, 7PM. Free to public
- No matter what you do, get out there and experience all the historical, recreational, agricultural, natural, and cultural opportunities that beautiful Adams County has to offer!**