

T G I F

from
Adams County

written by: Commissioner Randy Phiel

December 20, 2024

In this issue...

Page 2



2025 Adams County Final
Budget Approved
Historic Courthouse Steps
To Be Repaired
U.S. Marshall Housing Rate
Increase

Page 3



County Facilitates Land
Preservation Easement
Adams County Resident
Board Appointments
The End



President Judge Michael A. George Day in Adams County

The Adams County Court of Common Pleas 51st Judicial District has four Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas Judges. President Judge Michael A. George will be retiring at the end of this year and was recognized at the December 18 Commissioners public meeting.

After serving as Adams County District Attorney in 1996, Judge George was elected to serve as Judge in 2001, embarking on a 23-year distinguished tenure on the bench. In 2013, Judge George succeeded President Judge John Kuhn in the 51st Judicial District. Judge George received many awards and honors during his time on the bench, including the Golden Crowbar Award by the Pennsylvania Conference of Trail Judges for his significant contributions to advancing the goals of the judicial system. In 2015 Judge George had the distinction of winning the Republican Primary for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Judge Thomas Campbell will be stepping up as the new President Judge. Until the vacated position is filled next year via the



May Primary and November General Elections, Senior Judges George & Kuhn will hear most of that docket, supplemented by other Senior Judges.

At the Commissioners public meeting on Wednesday, Judge George was recognized by the Commissioners, other Judges, staff, and Children & Youth Services. Along with a Commissioners Proclamation declaring December 18, 2024, as *Judge Michael A. George Day in Adams County*, the Adams County Bar Association portrait of Judge George, that will hang with the other Adams County President Judges, was unveiled. Judge Mike George's leadership, wisdom, firmness, detailed preparedness, and compassion has had a profound and lasting impact on the Adams County Community. Judge George, we thank you and wish you well in retirement!

2025 Adams County Final Budget Approved

The 2025 Adams County Budget was approved at the December 18th Commissioners public meeting. As we have done successfully the previous 4-years, our fiscal strategy is to project expenses and revenues for the next 4-years. After examining all projected costs and revenues, and cutting costs where prudent, the Board determined a 7/10 of a mill tax increase was required to meet that projection. No different from our personal lives, an overwhelming and undeniable dynamic of this budget was the recent extraordinary impact of increased costs of goods, services, wages, and benefits. Overall, I am proud to report that Adams County is in good shape fiscally with an Aa2 bond rating indicating a very strong fiscal position.

As we Pennsylvania property owner's project our total annual 2025 Property Tax, some newer Pennsylvania residents are reminded that there are three separate taxes in Pennsylvania. They are *County Tax*, *Municipal Tax* and *School Tax*. School Tax, which is due in the Fall, comprises roughly 2/3rd of your total tax bill. Municipal Tax and County Tax combined generally comprise the other 1/3rd. Municipal Tax and County Tax are combined on one tax bill in the Spring.

Historic Courthouse Steps To Be Repaired

You may have noticed that unsightly yellow caution tape blocking off the front steps of the historic courthouse. A large crack, where the top step meets the building opened, causing an unsafe, perplexing, and costly situation. The root of the problem is an historic structure that will require stabilization underneath steps before the repair can be made. The granite steps will have to be lifted with a crane in order to put stabilization materials underneath. Finding a contractor to tackle this project was difficult. Hopefully, a solution is on the horizon. At our December 11th public meeting, an agreement was approved for Conewago Contractors to stabilize and repair the granite steps for \$13,430. The cost is being funded by a CCAP Safety Grant.

U.S. Marshall Housing Rate Increase

The largest line item in the Adams County Budget is the Prison. Certainly, revenue is an important component of the Budget to offset expenses – especially at the prison. With space availability at the Adams County Correctional Facility, housing prisoners for the U.S. Marshall's Service has enabled us to generate significant revenue. When it comes to seeking a rate increase for that service, the Feds do not come to us and offer it, we must make a request and justify it with a lot of work and documentation. We have now successfully made that happen for the 2nd time during our tenure.

At our November 13 public meeting, the New Intergovernmental Agreement with the Marshall's Service was approved by the Board of Commissioners. The new per diem rate is \$101.00 per day which is a 26% increase, and the Guard/Transportation rate is \$45 per hour which is a 40% increase. The effective date is Feb-



ruary 1. Thank you to Warden Hileman and her staff, as well as the Solicitor and her staff, for making this additional revenue reality!

Adams County Resident Board Appointments

The contribution of Adams County residents who volunteer their time, knowledge and experience to various County boards and committees that benefit our community is to be commended. When you see some of those folks, please take the time to say Thank You!

Adams County Broadband Task Force, Two-year terms, effective January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026.

- Re-appoint Isaac Bucher, Gavin Foster, Yeimi Gagliardi, Danijel Lolic, George Mauser and Karl Pietrzak
- Appoint Kathy Gaskin (replacing Megan Shreve) and Marty Karsteter Qually (ex officio)
- Re-appoint Isaac Bucher as Chairman and George Mauser as Vice-Chairman

Adams County Planning Commission, Four-year terms, effective January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028

- Re-appoint Melvin Lebo, Charles "Skip" Strayer and William Smith, Jr.

Parks, Recreation and Green Space, Four-year terms, effective January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2029.

- Re-appoint Stephanie Haley, George Taughinbaugh and Craig Yingling.
- Appoint Deb Steckler (replacing David Sites)

County Facilitates Land Preservation Easement

You may recall that several weeks ago we celebrated hitting the milestone of preserving 25,000 acres of farmland in Adams County. We are not about to rest on our laurels! On December 18, the Board of Commissioners approved the Agreement for the sale and purchase of an Agricultural Conservation Easement between Shirley J. Mummert, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Adams County. This Agreement provides for the purchase of a conservation easement on 104.13 acres of agricultural land located in Reading Township and owned by Shirley J. Mummert. The total purchase price of the easement is \$307,391.76, with \$292,022.17 to be paid for by the Commonwealth, and the remaining \$15,369.59 to be paid for by the County. Worth noting is what our contribution enabled us to leverage!



The End

- **Free Holiday Carriage Rides.** Village Outlets. Today, Saturday & Sunday. 4-8

- **AN Eisenhower Christmas.** See the home of President Eisenhower decorated in the 1950's style. 10-4 through December 31. Eisenhower National Historic site. You can now park at the farm!

- **Daniel Lady Farm New Year's Eve at the Wyndham.** Includes dinner, Big Band Live Music, casino night and lots of fun as you celebrate the New Year while you benefit The Daniel Lady Farm. Cost \$150 per couple. Call 717-398-2019 or visit www.DanielLadyFarm.com

- **Gettysburg Sports Card Show.** 80 vendor tables. Saturday, December 28. Aspire, Emmitsburg Road. Free entry.
- **New Years Eve In Gettysburg: Time Square to Lincoln Square.** Celebrate New Years Eve on the Gettysburg Square with crafts, live music, food trucks, and a screen projection showing live festivities from Times Square in NYC. Will culminate with the raising of Abe Lincoln's hat.
- **Thaddeus Stevens New Year's Eve.** At the stroke of midnight, the wig will be raised of the Thaddeus Stevens statue in front of the Courthouse. Before the rising, at 11:00 there will be a Thaddeus Stevens lookalike contest. (No, I am not making this up). To enter the contest call 717-347-8159 or you can go to thaddeusstevenssociety.com

Ring In New Year At The Barn Resort. DJ, fireworks, dancing, complimentary appetizer buffet, and free champagne toast and party favors. \$30 in advance, \$40 at the door. sales@thebarncellar.com

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!