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from  
*Adams County*

written by: Commissioner Randy Phiel

November 12, 2021

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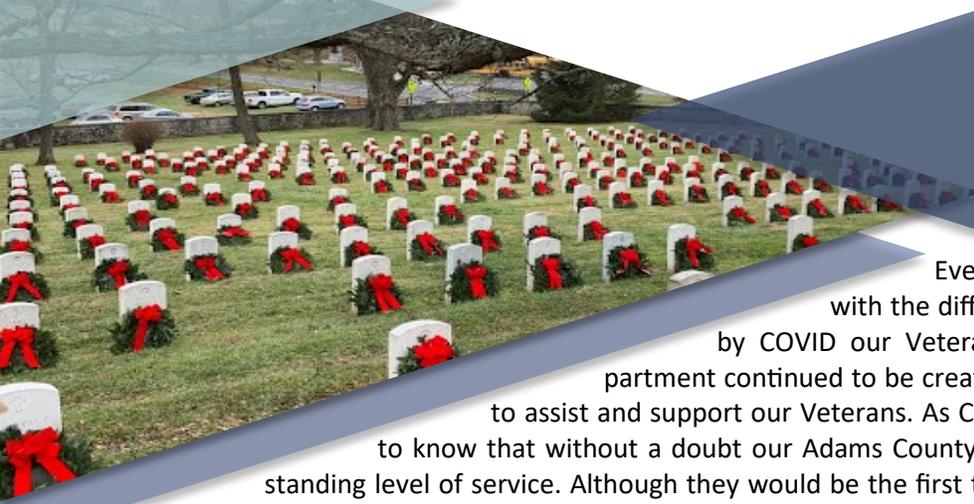
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## *Veterans Recognition*

Yesterday was a specific and dedicated day to recognize and honor our nation's veterans. Many of us attended Veteran's Programs as a gesture of our appreciation and a significant number of businesses recognize veterans on November 11 with discounts and giveaways to show their support. That recognition is well deserved!

It is also an appropriate time to recognize and salute the unwavering support that Adams County Veterans Affairs Department provides to our Adams County Veterans every day of the year. One hard measure of that commitment is that Adams County Veterans Benefits have quadrupled in the past 7-years - increasing each year. The benefits have gone from \$568,000 in 2014 to \$2,800,000 for the fiscal year ending June 2021. While that is great news, the other human measure is the consistent flow of sincere and heartfelt notes plus verbal expressions of gratitude that come across the Commissioner's desks from veterans and their families.



Even with the difficulties caused by COVID our Veterans Affairs Department continued to be creative in finding ways to assist and support our Veterans. As Commissioners, it is satisfying to know that without a doubt our Adams County Veterans are being provided an outstanding level of service. Although they would be the first to recognize and thank our county veterans, I am sure you will join the Board in thanking Stan Clark & Sonny Freeman for their superior service to those that have served our nation!

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## SGT MAC National Wreath Project

For 14 years an early December tradition for our community has been the SGT MAC National Wreath Project. Several hundred community members, including many County Staff, gather at GIANT the 1st Friday in December at 8AM, place bows on thousands of wreaths and load them into trailers for distribution on graves that Friday afternoon at Gettysburg National Cemetery, and Saturday morning at Quantico National Cemetery, in recognition of Marine Sgt. Eric McColley and all of our veterans. I have been privileged to help support SGT MAC Wreath since its inception. Eric was an Eagle Scout with my son Shaun in our troop. One highlight of that relationship was several week-long wilderness adventures.

For the past 14 years the Administration at Gettysburg National Military Park has been very supportive of the SGT MAC Wreath program and has even participated in the program on the rostrum or as speakers. The program and wreath laying are important, poignant, appropriate and provide many tangible and intangible benefits - not to mention honoring our veterans. This year Park Administration has decided not to allow this solemn ceremony and program. This is a program attended by scores of veterans, community residents and school groups. The action is very puzzlingly, frustrating, and disappointing indeed – especially when such activities take place in other National Cemeteries on non-designated dates? At this time appeals to Congress and the Department of the Interior have been initiated.

As it stands today, the plan is to still assemble the wreaths for Quantico Cemetery on Friday, December 3, at 8AM, minus the Friday afternoon program and wreath laying at Gettysburg. If you have ever had the opportunity to watch the school children place their wreath on the Gettysburg graves, and make sure the bow is straight, or walk through the wreath strewn cemetery after a light snow fall, you will understand the void that has nonsensically been created.

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## Election Recap

The November 2nd General Election is in the books, and we are happy to report the process in Adams County went well. The total voter turnout was 31.02% from a registered voter pool of 70,519, which is an increase of turnout from the last Non-Presidential General Election in 2019 of 26.29%. Absentee/Mail-in ballots total was 6,037. Unlike the much larger Presidential General Election, the Elections office, supplemented by other county staff, was able to process all ballots on election day. We were just informed today that due to the closeness of two open seats on Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court between Dumas (D) and Crompton (R) there will be a statutory recount. This will be the 5<sup>TH</sup> time the automatic re-count provision under Act 97 of 2004 has been triggered. The recount will begin on November 17 and must be completed by November 23.

A shout out to our Elections Staff for the extra effort put

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in to assure our election in Adams County went smoothly. Kudos also go out to the other county staff that provide additional support during the high-volume times and the many dedicated poll workers that answered the call. We owe these folks our deepest gratitude and thanks for going above and beyond to ensure that one of our most coveted and fundamental rights could be exercised!

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## Broadband Taskforce

The County recognizes the importance of internet connectivity as critical infrastructure necessary to promote economic development, not only to sustain the county's existing employment and tax base, but also to attract new employers to the county and encourage entrepreneurship. Internet connectivity is a key factor in the well-being of citizens of Adams County in every aspect of their lives, including but not limited to education, health care, recreation, and communications.

On November 4th, 2021, the Commissioners passed a Broadband resolution. The Resolution establishes an Adams County Broadband Task Force whose vision is a connected community in which all sectors of the community have access and ability to utilize dependable, high speed affordable broadband services. The Task Force is charged by the Board of Commissioners with developing a proposed strategy to address the development and implementation of an affordable countywide broadband network, based upon the countywide broadband assessment conducted by the appointed consultant. The Task Force will comprise ten individuals representing the following sectors: Adams County Council of Governments, K-12 education, post-secondary education, representative from an underserved population, major employer, community member at-large, small business (preferably one that is home office based), health care, agricultural industry, tourism industry, and a County Commissioner will serve in an ex officio role. Residents interested in serving who believe they qualify to represent one of the categories are asked to email a resume to County Manager Steve Nevada at [snevada@adamscounty.us](mailto:snevada@adamscounty.us).

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## Oak Lawn Cemetery Update

It has been widely reported that Cumberland Township and Adams County are collaborating to take control of Oak Lawn Cemetery in an effort to sustain the cemetery into the future and conclude this perplexing, troubling, painful, and sad chapter in our community's history. It has also been accurately reported that there is no statutory authority for Adams County to initiate condemnation proceedings - so Cumberland Township began condemnation proceedings (with no protest from the owner). Once condemnation proceedings are processed and approved by the Courts, Cumberland Township will take possession of the property and expeditiously turn it over to the County.

The County, with the assistance of Cumberland Township, will provide oversight of the cemetery until a 501(c) 3 non-profit board is expeditiously formed to manage the cemetery moving forward.

Currently, the condemnation process is before the Adams County Common Pleas Court. Own-

ership remains with the current owner until the condemnation proceedings are approved by the Court. At this point there are too many community groups and individuals to mention that deserve recognition for their various contributions to Oak Lawn. This is a tribute to our community. Once this entire process is complete and the non-profit is formed, a new phase of Oak Lawn Cemetery and non-profit Board support begins. The need for community support will not diminish, it will need to grow for a truly sustainable model to flourish from the beginning. The Board of Commissioners will keep you updated on the progress.

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## Land Conservation Easement Opportunities



On November 4th the Board of Commissioners approved the donation of a conservation easement on a 123.57-acre crop farm owned by Doyle and Jennifer Waybright in southern Cumberland Township. Landowners have the ability to donate their Land Conservation Easements to either the County or the Land Conservancy of Adams County, thus being able to receive charitable contribution deductions for their easement. We are very excited to accept this easement donation, which will bring the County total of Conservation Easements to 24,469 acres. For information pertaining to the conservation easement program contact Ellen Dayhoff, Adams County Planning, [edayhoff@adamscounty.us](mailto:edayhoff@adamscounty.us) or 717- 337-9824.

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The **End**

The past several days of fall has been making a gracious exit with some superb weather. I hope you have taken advantage of those balmy days to get your pre-winter tasks around the house completed. My porch and pool furniture are stored, all the dead outside flowers have been removed, and the boat is covered and back in the garage. I still need to cut back the rose bushes which just stopped blooming last week with the first frost and stack some wood on the porch for when I get the urge to stoke up the fireplace insert. The approach of Thanksgiving also means snow may be around the corner, so it's time to put the plow on the Case Tractor and pickup, make sure the plow pump is working and make sure the snowblower is running up to snuff. I must admit - I would rather be opening my pool and planting flowers!

This Saturday, the *8TH Annual Linda Kranias 5K Memorial Run* takes place with a 9:30AM start time at the Gettysburg Recreation Park. Race information can be found at <http://www.lk5k.com>. On Friday, November 19, the *158TH anniversary of The Gettysburg Address and the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery* is observed annually on November 19. The observance begins at 10:15AM in the cemetery and includes wreath laying, nationally prominent historian/speaker Dr. Gary Gallagher, civil war music, the Gettysburg Address, soloist Wayne Hill, and a U.S. Naturalization oath being administered to immigrants. If you have not had the opportunity to experience this moving tradition, consider attending. On Saturday, November 20, the *Remembrance Day Parade* commences at 1PM on Middle Street, and then proceeds to Baltimore Street and Steinwher Avenue. Its time for the Heidlersburg Fire Company once a month Roast Beef & Oyster Dinner with all the sides. It will be held in November on Saturday 20<sup>TH</sup> from 3-6. At this time the dinner is carry-out only. Orders are accepted on-site that day with no pre-orders.

Get your December started with the Adams County Arts Council *Jingle Ball Jam* on December 4 from 6:00PM-11:30PM. This is a major fund raiser for the Arts Council and a highlight of the holiday season. Break out the tux and evening gown to eat, drink, be entertained and dance the night away at the Gettysburg Park Visitor Center. Email [aa@adamsart.org](mailto:aa@adamsart.org) or call 717-334-5006. A *Gettysburg Christmas Festival* returns this year for two weekends on December 3-5 & December 10-12. The streets and shops of Gettysburg come alive with Christmas lights and festive activities. For complete schedule of events visit [www.mainstreetgettysburg.org](http://www.mainstreetgettysburg.org) or call 717-337-3491. The *Tuba Carol Fest* seems to get more popular each year. This year it is on Friday, December 4, from 6:00PM-8:00PM on the square in front of the Hotel. I advise you to get there early to get in. The classic Totem Pole adaptation of Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol* returns to the Majestic Theater for 10 performances December 9 thru December 19. This shows evokes the true magic of Christmas and my family goes at least every other year. Hopefully, Pops will be taking his three granddaughters this year.

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!