

**January 3<sup>rd</sup>**

One person is dead and two others are hospitalized after a collision in the town of Hermitage Tuesday. At about 5 p.m. according to authorities, an older man had what Mercer County Coroner John Libonati called a sudden cardiac event which precipitated a three-vehicle crash in the middle of town yesterday evening; that man was killed and two others had to be airlifted from the scene. Authorities closed all lanes of Route 18 between Longview and Hann Hill Road while they were at the scene and until they had cleared away debris and victims from the accident. There is an unrelated closure on Route 18 in West Middlesex; the road was closed between Route 718 and 318 due to downed utility lines at about 10 p.m. last night and that closure was still in effect at press time.

Two missing persons in Venango County were found to be safe and sound by authorities. A 15-year-old girl who was declared missing on New Year's Eve was discovered safe on Tuesday. Aubrey Walters, a missing Oil City resident, was also found safe after he contacted authorities on his own last Friday to tell them he had checked into a mental health facility in Pittsburgh.

A Slippery Rock family reports a New Year's Eve fire at their home began with an attempt to keep their pet pot-bellied pig warm. The Painter family set Albert the pig up with a heat light to keep him warm Sunday night and say they put some extra hay in his enclosure. They believe the fire began when Albert knocked some of that hay into the lamp. The family home suffered extensive damage and their pig was sent to the Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center in Columbus for burn treatment.

Charges are moving forward against a Butler County daycare worker accused of throwing children. 29-year-old Taylor Titley caught the eye of investigators in June of 2023 when a 6-month-old boy that she had been caring for at Sheryl Buffington's Daycare and Preschool Palace in Center Township was treated at a local hospital for a fractured arm. From their investigation, authorities say they learned that Titley allegedly threw infants about 20 times from heights of three to four feet. Titley appeared in court for a preliminary hearing yesterday where it was decided that the charges against her would be held for trial.

**January 4<sup>th</sup>**

A Pennsylvania State Police Officer arrested a man for DUI and other charges after a foot chase in Oil City. On Saturday, December 30th, police say that Dale Provost (49) of Fairview tried to flee on foot after he was pulled over by a state police officer for a minor traffic violation. The chase ran through the parking lot of a car wash where Provost allegedly climbed a fence and dove into Oil Creek to get away from the trooper. The press release says Provost surrendered when he was lit up by the laser beam from a TASER. It is alleged Provost was in possession of cocaine and cash

From the office of Crawford County's Chief Assessor, Joe Galbo: School Districts will soon be sending out applications for Homestead/Farmstead tax abatements to property owners. If you use your primary place of residence to generate income through farming you may be entitled to a reduction in property taxes per Pennsylvania law. If you believe you qualify for the abatement and do not receive an application you should apply in person at the Assessor's Office in the Courthouse. The deadline for applications is March 1st.

**January 5<sup>th</sup>**

On Monday the City of Meadville Police Department officially took over law enforcement duties in Crawford County's Vernon Township. In October the two neighboring municipalities finalized a contract for the full-time police force from Meadville to take over patrolling Vernon Township, inheriting the job that was performed by a part-time local police force and the Pennsylvania State Police. Meadville's Police Department is a full-time force that is staffed 24/7 and can be reached any time of day or night by calling their non-emergency number at (814)724-6100 or 911 in an emergency.

A Florida woman has filed a class action lawsuit against The Hershey Company alleging false advertising because the specialty holiday products do not match their image with the carved-out artistic designs on the packaging. Cynthia Kelly has enlisted Del Ray Florida-based attorney Anthony Russo Jr. who has filed similar false advertising suits in the past. Russo's client seeks a class action suit for \$5 million.

The treasurer of Millcreek Township in Erie County has been put on administrative leave, at press time Township Supervisors have not revealed the reason for this. The supervisors of Millcreek Township voted 2-1 on Tuesday morning to set aside a motion to rehire Mark Zaksheske as the treasurer until next Tuesday, January 9th. No supervisor would comment on the reason other than to say it was personal and the township auditor said they would limit their comments because of the potential for litigation.

Mercer County's Coroner John Libonati revealed the identity of a man who died and caused a three car pile-up in Hermitage on Tuesday. On Thursday morning his office revealed that the man was 75-year-old David Chill of New Castle; who had a heart attack while driving through town on Tuesday. Mr. Chill was apparently already dead when his vehicle crossed the center line of Route 18 in Hermitage and collided with two other vehicles; the drivers of both those vehicles had to be airlifted to hospitals in other areas.

**January 8<sup>th</sup>**

A 41-year-old woman has been charged with aggravated assault on two state police troopers, resisting arrest, and other crimes after they were called to her boyfriend's house last week. Police say Laurie Vargusson of Titusville was hiding inside a closet when troopers arrived at her boyfriend's home after he called about her destroying things in the house. According to the Pennsylvania State Police she ignored the troopers and even took a shower, then violently resisted when they tried to place her under arrest; they say Vargusson kicked both troopers several times until they were able to restrain her in their cruiser.

Michael Burham, a man who abducted an elderly Warren County couple and then escaped from jail last year was sentenced in court on Friday. Burham pleaded guilty to a number of crimes related to both incidents in November; during Friday's sentencing hearing he was handed down a maximum sentence by Judge Gregory Hammond of 25 to 50 years and some months for crimes ranging from kidnapping, to terroristic threats, to escaping from jail. Burham will also be tried in New York for the murder of a Jamestown woman and some speculate his guilty plea in Pennsylvania was an attempt to avoid trial in that matter.

**January 9<sup>th</sup>**

The Pennsylvania State Police in Mercer County are asking for anyone who may have witnessed one of a string of thefts from vehicles in Grove City to contact them. On Friday, December 29th, several cars were broken into and items stolen from inside them; the primary suspect is described as a young man in his twenties with a skinny build. Anybody with information is urged to call the Pennsylvania State Police in Mercer at (724)662-6162.

The City of Meadville is still looking for applications from residents willing to serve on one of the borough's volunteer boards and commissions; there are currently three vacancies on the Beautification Committee and one on the Water Authority. Applications can be obtained in person at the Meadville City Building at the Diamond or found online through the link that will appear on our website when this story is published. The deadline for applications is next Friday, January 19th. For more information visit [CityofMeadville.org/abcs](http://CityofMeadville.org/abcs).

Operation Weather Alert is Active this morning as the National Weather Service has issued multiple wind and snow related advisories and warnings for Northwest and West Central Pennsylvania. Weather conditions have led to a number of school delays that can be viewed by visiting Operation Weather Alert on Facebook, this station's website, or at 7 Mountains Media's website [7mmnorthwestpa.com](http://7mmnorthwestpa.com) and clicking Operation Weather Alert. Operation Weather Alert will keep you informed about closings and delays for over 100 school districts and organizations across the region.

In Butler County, over 100 residents of Oak Springs Mobile Home Park in Cranberry Township are protesting a rent increase by the new ownership of 42%. The community is for senior citizens aged 55 and older and many of them are on fixed incomes. In November a Miami Florida-based company named COARE Communities purchased the mobile home park and in December gave residents only two week's notice of the massive rent increase. 118 residents are signatories of a letter demanding that the increase be reduced from its sky-high levels.

**January 10<sup>th</sup>**

A 14-year-old led police on a high-speed chase through Crawford County on New Year's Day, according to a press release from the Pennsylvania State Police. Troopers from Corry report that a few minutes before 7 p.m. on New Year's Day they attempted to initiate a traffic stop with a speeding motorist on Route 27 in Oil Creek Township. Instead of yielding the motorist sped up, reaching speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour in an attempt to escape from authorities before they gave up and pulled over just west of Titusville. The driver was a 14-year-old boy who had taken his mother's car for a joyride while she slept. At press time charges are pending.

A Lawrence County home was completely destroyed by fire in the midst of the rain and snow yesterday morning. In Mahoning Township firefighters from both Pennsylvania and Ohio braved the slush-covered roads to battle a housefire on Butch Circle Road near the town of Edinburg at 6 a.m. The entire house was involved by the time fire crews could begin fighting the blaze and was eventually destroyed. No one was living at the destroyed home and an investigation into the cause of the fire is ongoing.

**January 11<sup>th</sup>**

An employee at Harborcreek Youth Services was charged with institutional sexual assault last week after allegedly having sexual contact with a minor on the premises. Shaquon Thrower of Erie has also been charged with corruption of minors, indecent assault, and endangering the welfare of children. According to a press release by the Pennsylvania State Police on Monday, it is alleged that the incident took place in the TV room at the facility. Thrower, who was also contracted as a truancy officer, turned himself in on Friday afternoon after charges were filed against him.

Pennsylvania's insurance commission announced an extension for Pennie's open enrollment period until Friday, January 19th. Pennie is Pennsylvania's own insurance exchange that helps find health insurance coverage for residents of the Commonwealth. The initial cut-off date was Monday, January 15th. For more information or to purchase a policy visit [Pennie.com](https://www.pennie.com) or call (1-844)844-8040.

The Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County has undergone a change of name. The food warehouse now goes by the snappier name of Mercer County Food Bank, a name that according to Executive Director Rebecca Page better reflects the work they do in the county. The food bank is headquartered in Sharon and is partnered with Feeding America, the largest hunger relief organization in the United States. Mercer County Food Bank has provided over 1 million meals for neighbors in need, more information can be found online at [MercerCountyFoodBank.org](https://www.MercerCountyFoodBank.org).

A Lawrence County Woman has been charged with the theft of over \$1,000 of lottery tickets from the convenience store she worked in. The Pennsylvania State Police say a woman named Traci Dornan was caught on security footage taking the tickets when she left work at a Speedway in New Castle just before Christmas Eve. When confronted about the footage by a manager she denied taking the tickets. After reviewing the footage police charged her with retail theft, theft, and receiving stolen property - the stolen tickets had a total of over \$3,000 in winnings.

**January 12<sup>th</sup>**

20-year-old Aleisia Owens of New Castle has been charged for the June 2023 death of her boyfriend's one-year-old daughter by acetone poisoning. Baby Iris Alfera died of acetone poisoning at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh on June 29th, days after her father called 9-1-1 for an unresponsive baby. Owens was arrested Thursday after a months-long investigation by New Castle Police and the Pennsylvania Attorney General allegedly revealed that she had meticulously researched products that could cause death or serious harm to children for four months leading up to the death. Owens has been charged with criminal homicide, aggravated assault of a child, attempted homicide, and many other crimes.

Crawford County Planning has announced that more than 30 grants as high as \$24,000 are anticipated for this year's Whole Home Repair program. The application period starts on Monday, January 15th, for more information visit [CrawfordCountyPA.net/planning](https://www.CrawfordCountyPA.net/planning).

## January 16<sup>th</sup>

Four people were reported injured in a head-on collision near Wattsville in Erie County on Monday. The passengers and drivers in both vehicles were hospitalized Monday morning after a crash on Route 89 in Venango Township at about 7 a.m. The southbound lane of 89 was closed for several hours as the crash was investigated and debris cleared from the road. The Pennsylvania State Police have not released details of the crash and say they are still investigating the incident.

The Meadville Public Library begins hosting its Tween Winter Book Club tomorrow night at 4 p.m. The Tween Book Club is open to anyone aged 9 to 13 and lasts for six weeks, ending on February 21st. Registered club members can bring their own book from home or get one from the library and enjoy cookies and hot chocolate as they read and talk about their stories with other book club members. Online registration is still open at [MeadvilleLibrary.org/teens](https://MeadvilleLibrary.org/teens)

Pennsylvania's insurance commission extended open enrollment for Pennie until this Friday, January 19th. Pennie is Pennsylvania's own insurance exchange that helps find health insurance coverage for residents of the Commonwealth. The initial cut-off date was Monday. For more information or to purchase a policy for yourself and your family visit [Pennie.com](https://Pennie.com) or call (1-844)844-8040.

Last week, Governor Josh Shapiro announced that Pennsylvania would become the first US state to launch a pilot program to utilize generative AI to assist state employees in their day-to-day jobs. The governor announced that the first step in partnership with OpenAI, the makers of Chat GPT, and the Commonwealth's Office of Administration is working together to create a keystone OpenAI product designed to teach state employees about generative AI and how and when it can be used safely and be securely leveraged in daily operations. The eventual goal is that the commonwealth will use AI for creating and editing copy, making outdated policy language more accessible, and addressing duplication and conflicting language within hundreds of thousands of pages of state policies.

## January 17<sup>th</sup>

Authorities in Erie County are determining the cause of death for an 81-year-old man found during a Fairview house fire. Just before midnight on Monday multiple fire departments and the Pennsylvania State Police responded to a house fire on West Lake Road and discovered the remains of William Long alongside several deceased pets. Investigators are in the process of determining a cause for the fire and for Mr. Long's death but do not suspect foul play.

All of Western Pennsylvania is under a wind chill advisory today. In the local area, wind chills are approaching 15 to 20 degrees below zero with wind gusts up to 30 miles per hour. It's a good idea to dress warmly today and avoid exposing bare skin to the elements for very long as prolonged exposure to these wind chills can put you at risk for hypothermia or even frostbite. Operation Weather Alert is tracking multiple school delays and even a few closures and will continue to monitor the situation, providing updates on closings and delays for over 100 area schools and organizations, visit this station's website for our list of closings.

**January 18<sup>th</sup>**

Poaching related charges against Chase Cominsky were dropped last Thursday, according to the Mercer County Clerk's Office. Cominsky was convicted of fraud last May when he cheated to win a fishing competition in Cleveland and convicted of theft by deception in December for using fake \$100 bills at a bowling alley in Hermitage and is serving a six to 12 month sentence for that crime. No reason was given for the dismissal of charges for unlawful killing or taking of big game.

In State News, a Bedford County man was sentenced to as many as 14 years in State Prison for child rape on Wednesday. 39-year-old Caleb Schweikarth must also register as a sex offender for the rest of his life under SORNA, the Sexual Offender Registration and Notification Act, PA's version of Megan's Law. Schweikarth had a close and trusted relationship with the family of the girl he was convicted of sexually assaulting last October and was able to leverage that position of trust to be alone with his victim in her own home on multiple occasions.

**January 19<sup>th</sup>**

An out of state pilot and her mini pig were both injured when they crashed at the Venango Regional Airport on Monday. Shortly before 3:00 Monday afternoon a Cessna 150M missed the runway while making a landing approach and crashed into a grassy median near a taxiway. The pilot who remained unnamed was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment of a leg wound and a miniature pig named Pig was taken to Precious Paws Animal Rescue, she had a bloody snout but no serious injuries.

A Winter Weather Advisory and a Winter Storm Warning for the region have led to several school closings and delays for this morning, you can check closings and delays on this station's website or by visiting Operation Weather Alert on Facebook. In anticipation of worsening road conditions, PennDOT has issued several tier 1 and tier 2 restrictions for the Interstate Highways, at press time the majority are between Mercer County and the West Virginia Border; check with 511PA online or over the phone for more information.

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

A 58-year-old Corry Woman has been charged with first-degree homicide and related offenses after she told the police that she stabbed her husband. On Friday morning, about eight hours after the act, Kellie Hellmann walked into the lobby of the Corry Police Department, covered in blood, to tell the receptionists that she had stabbed her husband at about midnight on Thursday night then left the house and locked the door. Police discovered the body of her husband Paul inside the living room of their home with a single stab wound to his chest. She is being held in Erie County Prison and was denied bail.

Healthcare giant UPMC is looking to acquire Washington Health System, the largest medical provider in Washington and Greene Counties. UPMC is the largest healthcare provider in the commonwealth, as well as the largest nongovernmental employer. As part of its filing with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) UPMC claimed that it handles more than 40% of all the outpatient healthcare in Western Pennsylvania and runs 40 Hospitals in 29 counties. If the merger is approved UPMC would acquire two more hospitals and 24 associated clinics and laboratories.

An investigation is underway in Mercer County as authorities try to determine the cause of an Ohio teenager's death in Sharon on Sunday. According to Mercer County Coroner John Lobonoti, 16-year-old Zachariah Croom of Youngstown was found deceased on an outdoor stairwell not far from West Hill Elementary School Sunday afternoon. Zachariah's remains will be taken to Erie County for a forensic investigation; in the meantime, anyone who may have information should call the Sharon Police Department at (724)983-3210 or Mercer County Dispatch's non-emergency number at (724)662-6110.

In State News, a Hatboro man has been accused of murdering his next-door neighbor over a dispute about loud snoring. Christopher Casey was charged with third-degree homicide; police say that after a months long dispute about snoring became physical he stabbed the man whose apartment abutted his own with a large cutting knife.

**January 23<sup>rd</sup>**

A Centerville woman has been charged with DUI after causing a four vehicle collision in Venango County's Pine Grove Township. Police allege that Lindsey Sitarz was under the influence of drugs or alcohol when she lost control of her vehicle while making a left turn on Route 157 and hit the left driver's side of a vehicle in the opposite lane and continued into a driveway where she hit two other vehicles. The occupants of the first vehicle she hit were both taken to a nearby hospital for evaluation and Route 157 was closed for about an hour while debris was cleared from the roadway.

It's very icy this morning! Freezing rain has blanketed the area with a thin layer of ice that has created a slippery outdoor hazard for motorists and pedestrians; conditions have led to a number of closings and delays across the region that can be checked by visiting this station's website or Operation Weather Alert on Facebook. At press time PennDOT has reduced the speed on every Interstate Highway in the region to 45 miles per hour due to the weather conditions. If you are commuting to work this morning please give yourself ample time to reach your destination, slow down, watch for icy roads, and stay well behind the nearest vehicle.

**January 24<sup>th</sup>**

A Butler County man named Thomas Clark has been arrested for allegedly beating another man with a piece of rebar in Connoquenessing Township. Police say that Clark attempted to cover up his attack by telling emergency services that the victim had been in a dirt bike accident, but witnesses came forward to testify differently. The rebar used in the attack was found inside Clark's car and he is being held on \$150,000 bail. The victim was taken to UPMC Presbyterian where he was diagnosed with a brain bleed and major damage to the skull.

In State news; in Blair County, a man is being held with \$1 million bail for allegedly agreeing to murder a woman's family by burning down their home. Zachary Sellers says he was offered money and drugs by Heather Dibert to kill her estranged family and attempted to burn down their home with a Molotov cocktail in October of last year. Dibert is also in custody with a million dollars in bail, she denies ever hiring Sellers to commit a contract killing but authorities say that the pair's phone records say otherwise. Dibert was in West Virginia in an attempt to create an alibi on the night of the attack.

An autopsy revealed that hypothermia played a part in the death of an Ohio teenager whose remains were found in Mercer County on Sunday morning. The body of 16-year-old Zachariah Croom was discovered in Sharon on Sunday morning and transferred to the custody of the Erie County Coroner's office on Monday. An autopsy was performed by pathologist Eric Vey on Tuesday but some results may not be available until late February or early March. The Sharon Police Department is continuing to investigate the circumstances behind Zachariah's passing but does not suspect foul play.

Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) says that the number of employed Pennsylvanians has risen for the 11th straight month in a row despite a small increase in the unemployment rate. According to L&I in the month of December about 12,000 new people entered the labor pool and about 6,200 people started in new jobs causing the unemployment rate to reach 3.5% in December, an increase of 1/10th a percent. At the same time a new record 6,182,700 residents of the commonwealth are working at least part-time. The national unemployment rate sits at 4.6% for the month of December.

**January 25<sup>th</sup>**

Two calls to the police about active shooters in Meadville Wednesday morning were both false alarms. The Meadville City Police are investigating two Swatting incidents against Meadville Medical Center that were called in to local authorities on Wednesday morning around 11 a.m. According to information shared by Meadville Medical Center and MCPD: shortly after 10 a.m., credible threats were received to the people and property of Meadville Medical Center and shortly before 11 a.m. the first of two calls about active shooters in MMC campuses was made to police. First, the clinic on Alden Street was the target of a false report and then a second report was made about a shooter at the Terrace Street facility. In each case, officers from MCPD and the Crawford County Sheriff's Department responded quickly to the scene to secure the buildings and MMC security personnel locked the clinics down. In either case were there actual threats to the safety of any of the patients or caregivers at either one of the medical clinics. An investigation is ongoing.

A man was shot twice on Tuesday night near Neshannok Village in the town of New Castle. Police say that 19-year-old Caden Cox was struck in the leg and shoulder when someone shot him at around 9 p.m. Tuesday night and they are looking for suspects in the crime. Caden was taken to a hospital in Youngstown Ohio for surgery after being wounded in the attack. If you have any information that could help please call Newcastle PD at (724) 510-0125, and/or leave a tip on the New Castle Police Department website at [www.newcastlepd.com](http://www.newcastlepd.com).

In State News, an Upper Darby woman has been arrested by authorities for torturing and killing animals to get views and likes on her YouTube Channel. 28-year-old Anigar Monsee has been charged with four felony counts of aggravated cruelty to animals after authorities say she mutilated and killed chickens, pigeons, rabbits, and frogs while live streaming content on social media in a gross violation of Pennsylvania's animal welfare laws. Monsee is being held in Delaware County Jail until she can raise \$20,000 for bail.

**January 26<sup>th</sup>**

A member of the Butler Area School Board is accused of pointing a gun at another vehicle in a road rage incident in Center Township. Police are accusing Phil Heasely of following another vehicle and pointing a gun at the couple who were inside during an altercation spurred by traffic. Heasely, who is Vice Chair of the Butler County Democratic Party and director of Butler Area School Board, denies the allegations and says he was on his phone at the time. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for February.

In state news, Zachary Baum was sentenced to as many as 25 years in state prison for the sexual assaults of four young women in Katanning. The 25-year-old was convicted in October of multiple crimes against four women between 16 and 20 years of age. He stalked or harassed the women and girls on social media until they agreed to meet him in person and then physically and sexually assaulted them. Baum is suspected of attacking more women between the years of 2020 and 2022, but only four victims were willing to testify.

**January 29<sup>th</sup>**

A seven-year-old Titusville boy was injured by a bullet on Thursday evening. According to the Pennsylvania State Police based in Corry, a child injured his hand with a .22 caliber round while playing on West Oak Street. They say that the boy wanted to make a whistle with the brass casing of the cartridge and struck it with a hammer. After the hammer set the cartridge off ricocheting bullet fragments struck him on the hand. Police say an investigation is ongoing.

After a series of arrests, the Pennsylvania State Police have updated their most wanted fugitives list for the Commonwealth. The most wanted man in Pennsylvania is now a former Erie resident named Michael Edward Akerly who has been in the top 10 for some time. Akerly is wanted for aggravated rape and indecent assault in 1998 and has yet to be captured. Five new men have been added to the list, most of them for the rape of a child with one homicide. The list can be viewed online at [PSP.PA.gov](https://www.psp.pa.gov).

**January 30<sup>th</sup>**

The Pennsylvania State Police are searching for a missing Erie resident named Daniel Patrick York. Daniel is a 39-year-old white male who stands about 5'9" tall and weighs around 190 pounds; he has brown hair and eyes. Daniel was last seen by friends and family at about 5:30 Sunday evening and was on his way to his father's lake house on Cowell's Beach road. Anybody who may have information on the whereabouts of Daniel York should contact the Pennsylvania State Police in Erie at (814)898-1641.

The United States Department of Labor says it has over \$16 million in unclaimed back wages owed by businesses to Pennsylvania Workers. The money is owed to more than 16,000 Pennsylvania residents who may not know they are owed money by current or former employers. If you are a worker or a worker's advocate who knows you or your client are owed money for hours worked you can contact the US Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division office in Philadelphia at (215)597-4950. If you are unsure, you can use the WOW tool on the Labor Department's website [DoL.gov](https://www.dol.gov).

Authorities have released details about the 2023 arrest of a Greenville man for sexually assaulting two children and of a woman who tried to cover the assaults up. On December 22nd the Pennsylvania State Police arrested John Hoffman for the sexual assault of two girls aged 10 and 15 and Cherie Hoffman for attempting to prevent the girls from reporting their assaults to the police. Court records indicate that John and Cherie remain in jail after failure to post bail until their preliminary hearings next Thursday. John has been charged multiple times with aggravated indecent assault of a minor and related crimes and Cherie has been charged with obstruction of justice, witness intimidation, and related crimes.

Western Pennsylvania can claim Pennsylvania's River of the Year for the second year in a row. Last year's River of the Year was French Creek, one of the biggest tributaries to this year's winner - the Allegheny River. The Allegheny River flows across six Western Pennsylvania counties on its way to forming the Ohio River in Pittsburgh and is one of the major shapers of the Pennsylvania landscape. The River of the Year competition is a public competition held by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

**January 31st**

Parking in Downtown Meadville has become more convenient for people who aren't always carrying quarters, but it will come with a cost for that convenience. The City of Meadville has partnered with MeterEZ, the same company that handles parking in downtown Erie; using the MeterEZ application on a smartphone will allow anyone to pay digitally for any spot monitored by a parking meter in downtown Meadville, but will come with an additional processing fee of up to 40 cents. For more information about the MeterEZ app, you can call the Meadville City Building at (814)724-6000.

A 47-year-old man from Brooklyn New York was hospitalized in Erie County after crashing his pickup on Interstate 90 in McKean Township. Crash scene investigators say that he lost control of the vehicle and a towed trailer then collided with two large trees. He was rushed to UPMC Hamot for surgery due to his injuries. The police report indicates he will be charged for careless driving.

According to records obtained by the Butler Eagle and Pittsburgh's Action News 4, new details about a fatal October crash have come to light. A police report indicates that David Faulx had a blood alcohol level in excess of three times the legal Pennsylvania limit when he and his grandson Zane Rupert were killed in a head-on collision on October 14th of last year. According to the report Faulx had a blood alcohol level of .246 on the night he was driving with his grandson; he steered his vehicle into the path of a semi-truck while driving to the northwest of Saxonburg in Butler County.

In State news, a Buck's County man was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly decapitating his father. 33-year-old Justin Mohn has been charged with first-degree murder and abuse of a corpse after he posted a video on Youtube where he allegedly displayed his father's severed head in a plastic bag. Mohn's father was found beheaded at his Bucks County home in Levittown. Mohn allegedly claimed he was the leader of a militia and killed his father for being a traitor to the United States because he was a federal employee.

**February 1<sup>st</sup>**

An Oil City couple has been arrested for charges of identity theft, device fraud, forgery, and more after OCPD and parole agents found ample documentation of their crimes at their home. Kody Wilkins and Kaitlyn O'Brien failed to respond to a visit from their parole officers so officers from the Police were dispatched to their residence on Friday to enter the home; inside they found Wilkins and O'Brien hiding among a collection of credit cards with other people's names on them, drugs, and paraphernalia.

Democratic State Representative Mark Rozzi is leaving politics behind. Representative Rozzi, of the 126th district, announced on Wednesday that he was dropping out of the race for Auditor General and would not be seeking re-election in the PA General Assembly. Rozzi explained that he was suffering from severe depression and couldn't handle the stress any longer. He endorsed his opponent Malcolm Kenyatta for Auditor General, and his ex-wife Jacklyn Rusnock for his seat on the Assembly.

In Ohio, an officer of the Warren Police Department has been arrested for rape and burglary. Michael Edwards Jr. faces two counts each of burglary and rape for incidents on January 14th and 19th and is being held in jail with bail set at \$750,000. Warren Ohio's Police Chief Eric Merkel said at a recent press conference that the 44-year-old was arrested on Saturday the 20th and that the alleged crimes happened while he was on duty; he also said the 18-year veteran's employment was terminated on Monday. Edwards pleaded not guilty to all charges on Tuesday morning.

In state news, two cousins in Lancaster County named Joy Cleveland and Ta'Jhon Veal have been charged with first-degree murder in the January 6th homicide of Cleveland's boyfriend Elliot Corbin. Investigators say that Cleveland and Veal planned the crime through text messages that police were able to read thanks to a warrant for their phone records. Cleveland pleaded with her cousin to kill Corbin after her boyfriend allegedly choked her and threw her into a TV set. Both suspects will have their first court appearance tomorrow.

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

A crash caused by an illegal U-Turn Hospitalized a Venango County man on Saturday afternoon. 78-year-old Milton Beach of Franklin was transported by ambulance from the scene of an Oakland Township collision on Saturday the 27th for injuries of unknown severity. Crash scene investigators say Mr. Beach was attempting to make an illegal U-Turn on Woods Road when he was hit on the driver's side by another vehicle whose driver did not have time to stop and avoid a collision. The driver of the second vehicle also suffered injuries in the crash but refused medical treatment.

Today is Groundhog's Day, the day of the year when the whole nation takes a moment to pay attention to a small Western Pennsylvania town and its purportedly immortal marmot mascot Phil. Punxsutawney Phil made his one-day-only command performance on Gobbler's Knob at 7:23 this morning. Tradition holds that if Phil sees his shadow then there will be six more weeks of winter weather, but if he does not, then we will experience an early spring. Today Pennsylvania's chief prognosticator and groundhog mascot did not see his shadow, predicting an early springtime for North America.

**February 5<sup>th</sup>**

A Philadelphia woman was trapped in her car and dragged the length of a football field by a semi-truck in Mercer County. On Interstate 80 in Lackawannock Township, the 56-year-old woman lost control of her Toyota Camry while in the passing lane on Saturday afternoon and became wedged beneath the trailer of a semi-truck in the cruising lane. Crash scene investigators say she and her car were dragged about 100 yards until the truck driver could safely pull his vehicle to the shoulder of the road.

The FBI, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) are investigating a Denial of Service Attack that shut down portions of the Pennsylvania Courts Website on Sunday. A Denial of Service or DDoS attack, uses a large network of computers or simulated computers called bots to flood a website with fake traffic that locks out legitimate users. The attack blocked access to docket sheets, online payments for fines and penalties, and the Guardianship Tracking System.

**February 6<sup>th</sup>**

In Sharon, authorities are investigating the suspicious death of a man found injured on the 700 block of New Castle Avenue. While responding to a trespassing call at about 8:30 Monday night, officers from Sharon PD discovered an unconscious white man with head injuries and he was rushed to a nearby hospital where he died. The Sharon Police Department is asking anybody who may have information about this case to call their non-emergency number, (724)983-3210, or Mercer County Emergency Management at (724)662-6110.

52-year-old William Show of Seneca was charged with indecent assault of a minor under 13, possession of child pornography, and related crimes last Thursday. Authorities say that a warrant served on Show revealed a collection of child pornography that even included him assaulting children himself. This case is being prosecuted by the office of the Pennsylvania Attorney General and anyone who may have further information about William Show's alleged illicit activity should call the Child Predator Section at (1-800)385-1044.

**February 7<sup>th</sup>**

The mother of a two-year-old child who was found dead in December has been criminally charged. Caleigh Gladfeather has been charged with child endangerment, involuntary manslaughter, and other crimes in connection to the death of her son. Gladfeather had waited two whole days when she told police on December 20th that she had left her toddler son with her boyfriend Travaughn Stribling-Jackson while she went to work and he was missing; Oil City Police found the body of her son in her basement, stuffed in a canvas bag that same day. Stribling-Jackson was charged with homicide in the case, both he and Gladfeather are being held without bail.

The identity of a man who died under suspicious circumstances in Sharon has been revealed. 35-year-old Edward Reedy of Sharpsville was discovered on Monday night with head trauma and died at a hospital. Mr. Reedy's remains will be autopsied at about noon today in Erie County. Anyone who may have information should contact Sharon PD by calling (724)983-3210, or Mercer County Emergency Management at (724)662-6110.

In Youngstown Ohio, the Driver of a car was shot and killed on Sunday night and police are investigating. According to sources and authorities, an 18-year-old man was driving along South Tuesdale Avenue at about 10 p.m. when they were struck by a bullet. They lost control of their car which then caught fire when they crashed into a tree. The victim died from his wounds at St. Elizabeth's Health Center. The only known witness was a passenger in the driver's car, they were not harmed in the shooting or crash.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is hiring game wardens. The Pennsylvania Game Commission says that qualified applicants must have a high school diploma or GED and must have completed the Hunter-Trapper Education course by the application deadline date of March 7th. Those accepted into the training can expect classes to begin in March of next year with graduation in February of 2026. More details can be found at [pgc.pa.gov](http://pgc.pa.gov).

**February 8<sup>th</sup>**

The University of Pittsburgh in Titusville will hold an open house at its Educational Training Hub next Saturday, February 17th. Starting at 9 a.m., interested prospective students and their families can take a tour of the facility and learn about its many two-year programs including its top 10 ranked Associate Science in Nursing program as well as information about its partners, Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, Swanson, School of Engineering, and Manchester Bidwell Corporation. Learn more about the open house or schedule a personal visit at [Titusville.Pitt.edu](http://Titusville.Pitt.edu).

In a story that is still developing, six or eight people are unaccounted for after a shootout and a fire in the Philadelphia suburb of East Lansdowne. According to authorities, when police responded to a call about a child being shot Wednesday afternoon two officers were injured in an ambush by an unidentified assailant. As other officers from nearby departments responded to the distress calls and dragged the injured police away someone started a fire inside the residence. But firefighters were unable to fight the blaze because of the active shooter inside.

**February 9<sup>th</sup>**

The Pennsylvania State Police are in possession of a firearm that was found lying on a road in Crawford County. The weapon is a .22 caliber Cricket rifle found on Highway 8 south of Centerville in Crawford County. Police surmise that it must have fallen off of a vehicle and describe it as having a minor case of road rash. If you have information about the owner of this found rifle please contact the Pennsylvania State Police in Corry at (814)663-2043.

In state news, there is more information about Wednesday's chaos in East Lansdowne that resulted in the injury of two police officers and the total destruction of a house by fire. A woman named Chin Le has told authorities in the Philadelphia suburb that the home belonged to her son Xuong and that the gunman was her other son Cahn and that after an argument with his niece, Cahn got a gun. She believes that Cahn killed his brother, sister-in-law, and three nieces and nephews before shooting at police and setting the house on fire; she and her husband were in the house when things turned deadly but managed to escape and call the police.

**February 12<sup>th</sup>**

The trial of a Butler County man accused of murdering his mother's boyfriend begins today. 23-year-old Dakota Hughes shot and killed his mother's boyfriend in the village of Eu Claire in early March last year; he shot the man three times in the chest during a confrontation in the kitchen of his mother's home. Hughes does not deny the shooting, he and his defense counsel are claiming it was an act of self-defense and he called the police to report the shooting on his own. Authorities do not agree, they believe the act was premeditated and he has spent the last year in Butler County Jail.

In state news, a Montgomery County woman has been implicated in the January 20th robbery and murder of her boyfriend; police say she guided the men who robbed and killed him to his location. Katherine Emel has been charged with murder in the second degree, robbery, and conspiracy to commit robbery in the death of her boyfriend William Carter. William had recently won a \$3,000 prize and police say that Emel gave his location information from an Airtag to four other suspects who then robbed and killed him while he was visiting his son in Norristown.

**February 13<sup>th</sup>**

A Waterford man was hospitalized after his van collided with a school bus early Monday morning. First responders mechanically extracted Matthew Eastman from the ruins of his vehicle after he collided with the back of a school bus just west of Union City at about 6 a.m. Police say Eastman was driving at an excessive rate of speed when the collision occurred and that his van was forced underneath the bus's rear bumper; he was taken to UPMC Hamot by helicopter for serious injuries. None of the occupants of the bus were injured in the crash.

A special election in Bucks County will determine whether control of the PA House of Representatives belongs to the Democratic Party or remains in a deadlock between Democrats and Republicans. The PA House has 203 seats for representatives and was deadlocked in a tie with 101 Democrats and Republicans each after Democratic Rep John Galloway was elected to a Judgeship; today's election will fill his seat. On Friday, Republican Joe Adams vacated his House seat for family medical reasons, meaning there will still be a vacancy in the PA House after this contest.

**February 14<sup>th</sup>**

Authorities in Mercer County are asking for witnesses that may help solve an armed robbery that occurred on Osborn Road outside Greenville at about 11:30 a.m Monday morning. According to the Pennsylvania State Police a white male, about 5'5 inches tall and weighing around 150 pounds wearing dark clothing, a hat, and a mask attempted to abduct a female employee of E&E Supplies at gunpoint. When the employee ran away the robber took an undisclosed amount of cash from the register and drove west along Osborn Road in a dark gray sedan. Anybody who may have information should call the Pennsylvania State Police in Mercer at (724)662-6162.

An Amber Alert has been issued and police in Ohio and Pennsylvania are searching for a black woman named Pammy Maye. She drives a gray 2015 Jeep Cherokee with vanity license plates that read JIGGZII. She was last seen wearing a blue floral nightgown and pink shoes and is believed to have abducted five-year-old Darnell Taylor of Columbus Ohio. If you encounter Pammy Maye call 911.

**February 15<sup>th</sup>**

Nearly a year after his disappearance the remains of a missing Ohio man were discovered in Lawrence County Pennsylvania. Paul Kepp had been missing since March of 2023, the 41-year-old was a resident of Boardman Ohio, and was discovered in the village of Hillsville by the property owner of a wooded area by Main Street. Over the weekend Lawrence County Coroner RJ Johnson identified the remains. The cause of death was determined to be a self-inflicted wound from a crossbow and a number of Mr. Kepp's personal belongings were found in plastic bags at the location.

In State News, police revealed that the son of a Pennsylvania State Senator was arrested for charges related to a hit-and-run crash last month. Sharif Street Jr. was arrested on January 29th and charged with aggravated assault by a vehicle and related crimes for a hit-and-run collision that caused a 14-year-old girl to suffer a concussion in August 2023. According to police security footage of the incident shows the car hit the girl, stop for nearly a full minute, and then speed away. Street maintains that he was in Atlantic City and had lent his car to someone else.

Anyone who may have information about the burglary of an Amish residence near Centerville is being asked to contact the Pennsylvania State Police in Corry. Last Friday, February 9th, an unknown actor entered an Amish residence on Firth Road in Rome Township, Crawford County, and stole over \$1,000 worth of possessions from the owner. Among the items stolen were \$80 in cash money, a jar with an estimated \$500 in change, and a Husquerna 390XP chainsaw. Please call (814)663-2043 with any information that can help solve this crime.

In Mercer County, several fire departments were summoned to a fire at a VFW post in Reynolds. At press time multiple fire departments were still attempting to stop the fire at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7599 in Pymatuning Township and a third alarm to summon more departments was sounded. It's been reported that flames were bursting through the roof of the building hours after the first crews arrived. The fire started in the early morning hours, around 2 - 3 a.m. and the cause is unknown.

**February 16<sup>th</sup>**

A woman and her five-year-old child were both hospitalized when their car went airborne after hitting an icy patch of road in Venango County. Crash scene investigators say that Heaven Daugherty of Tionesta and her child were traveling along Route 62 in President Township when her car began to slide on ice, Heaven overcorrected which caused the car to slide into a ditch, and then bounce out of that ditch and travel about 40ft through the air. The vehicle hit a boulder and then rolled one time before coming to a stop. Both mother and daughter were taken to UMPC Northwest.

A VFW post in Mercer County has been called a total loss after a fire gutted the building yesterday morning. A three-alarm fire began at VFW Post 7599 in Reynolds around 2:30 a.m. on Thursday morning and despite the best efforts of firefighters from multiple departments using 300,000 gallons of water, it could not be stopped in time. The post has about 800 members and plans are already being made to build a new structure, in the meantime, a pavilion across the street will serve as their temporary headquarters.

**February 20<sup>th</sup>**

We have an update on an Amber Alert issued last Wednesday. On Friday morning, the body of five-year-old Darnell Taylor was discovered stuffed in a culvert in Franklin County Ohio; Darnell was the subject of an Amber Alert in Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. Pammy Maye, the suspect in the Amber Alert, revealed the location of Darnell to authorities after she was arrested in Cleveland on Thursday night. Maye was the foster mother and legal guardian of Darnell and it was her husband who called police when she left with the boy at 3 a.m. Wednesday morning; authorities are weighing appropriate charges in this case.

In State News, a 27-year-old woman will serve two to four years in a Pennsylvania prison after pleading guilty to involuntary manslaughter and other crimes related to the overdose death of her five-year-old daughter. Volaura Askew of Johnstown exposed her daughter to heroin and fentanyl in October 2022, leading to the child's overdose and death. Two other adults are charged in this case; Albert Spicer and Elyse Young, also of Johnstown, face charges related to selling the drugs to Askew.

**February 21<sup>st</sup>**

Adrienne Hennessee of Cleveland Ohio has been charged with crimes in two states after fleeing police and causing a collision that lead to the injury of a Rochester New York man on Monday. Police allege Hennessee was DUI when she fled the Highway Patrol in Ohio and traveled into Pennsylvania along I-90 East at a high rate of speed. By the time Troopers from Girard caught up to her she had collided with the rear end of another vehicle and caused life-threatening injuries to the other driver; Hennessee's injuries were only superficial. She is charged with aggravated assault by vehicle while DUI and related offenses in Pennsylvania and more crimes in Ohio.

Parents and Guardians, if you have young children who will reach the age of five before August 1st, it is nearly that time of year when you need to register them for Kindergarten classes. Local School Districts begin the registration process in March and April; you should check with your school district for the times and places for registration at your child's future school. All public schools will require you to provide your child's birth certificate and an immunization record, as well as proof of your residential status and any applicable custody papers; it is well-advised to gather those documents and keep them in a safe place ahead of time.

**February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

In Venango County, the Pennsylvania State Police are searching for a firearm stolen in Cranberry Township. The weapon is a black pistol, a Smith & Wesson SD40 VE that was stolen from inside a car on Orange Street in the South Side of Oil City. The pistol was reported stolen last Monday, February 13th and the owner had not checked on it in about two weeks before then. Anybody who may have information can contact the Pennsylvania State Police in Franklin at (814)676-6596.

In Crawford County, the commissioners will soon determine whether to open the Crawford County Fairgrounds to campers during what's being called the Great American Eclipse. Meadville and the surrounding townships will be in the totality of the eclipse which has drawn attention from people elsewhere in the United States and they are searching for accommodations while here; every local hotel is virtually booked solid from April 7th to the 9th in anticipation of the eclipse on Monday, April 8th. The matter may be decided as early as the next full session, next Wednesday.

Customers of AT&T are experiencing outages in our region and across the entire United States. At around 4 a.m. on the morning of Thursday, February 22nd large portions of the carrier's cellular phone network went completely dark; customers are unable to use any of the services or even contact 911. At press time AT&T has responded to customer complaints that have occurred everywhere from Philadelphia to Las Angeles California, but has not acknowledged a widespread outage of services; thousands of local residents are without services.

In Mercer County, the Veterans of Foreign Wars post 7599 of Reynolds was completely destroyed by fire one week ago, but thanks to help from the residents of Pymatuning Township it was able to hold a scheduled event on Saturday night. With the post's home destroyed members of the VFW relocated the clubhouse to a pavilion across the street and with the eager assistance of over 100 volunteers transformed the space into a bar and venue in less than a day. By Saturday night, Post 7599 hosted a concert at their new temporary clubhouse dubbed the Glenn "Mickey" McKnight Pavilion.

**February 23<sup>rd</sup>**

41-year-old Jacob Wike of Harisville has been charged with strangulation and assault after allegedly turning violent during an argument with a girlfriend in Venango County's Irwin Township. According to police, Wike threatened the woman with a loaded shotgun before strangling her to unconsciousness; when she came too he was allegedly stomping on her head and hips. The attack was reported later in the day after the victim slipped away from Wike. Court records indicate Wike was released on bail after spending about three days in jail.

A Pennsylvania woman was arrested last week on a staggering 649 felony and misdemeanor warrants. Ahyoka Keith, who also goes by Carol Anne Summer, was arrested in Columbus Ohio on February 16th, about two weeks after authorities in Centre County authorized warrants for literally hundreds of crimes involving theft, identity fraud, access device fraud, and more. Keith works as an over-the-road trucker and has ties across the country and was attempting to use those ties to avoid arrest.

**February 26<sup>th</sup>**

Pathologists in Erie County will be performing an autopsy to determine the cause of death of a young man found near the Allegheny River in Oil City. 23-year-old Oil City resident Michael Austin was found dead late Saturday morning in Sage Run, a small stream that trickles into the Allegheny River near the Warehouse Mall. Witness accounts seem to indicate that the body was in rigor mortis when it was found. The autopsy will take place this afternoon at about 1 o'clock and is intended to determine the cause of death; at this time police do not seem to be treating this as a suspicious incident.

Attorney General Michelle Henry has filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania against what they allege is a fake internet service provider in York County. The suit is filed against Davis Communications Internet Inc. and its owner David Davis; the AG alleges that Davis was conning rural York County residents into believing they were purchasing direct internet services from his company when they were actually being sold unauthorized access to business internet plans from another service provider.

**February 27<sup>th</sup>**

The Pennsylvania State Police are investigating a death in Crawford County as a criminal homicide. On Monday just before 12:30 p.m. (noon thirty), Troopers arrived at a home on Fish Flats Road in Sparta Township and located a dead woman. At press time authorities had not revealed any further information about the victim's age or identity, but they are asking for anyone who may have witnessed a suspicious person, vehicle, or activity on Fish Flats Road to contact them by calling (814)663-2043.

Franklin Area School District is hosting a Parent Information Night for kindergarten registration about a week from now at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6th. Parent Information Night will be held in each of the district's three elementary schools and parents are asked to kindly attend the event at the school where their child will be going. At Parent Information Night you will receive an information packet and be able to schedule an appointment time for the registration.

A medical emergency led to a car crash in Mercer County. Investigators say that 76-year-old Joseph McConnel of Kennerdell lost consciousness while driving along Scrubgrass Road in Wolf Township. His out-of-control vehicle crashed headlong into a support beam of a cattle fence and came to a complete stop, suffering disabling damage. Mr. McConnel was taken to UPMC Northwest for treatment of his medical condition but was not believed to have suffered any injuries.

Pennsylvania State Representative Tim Bonner is hosting several Property Tax and Rent Rebate Clinics throughout the 17th district in Mercer and Butler Counties. The Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program benefits qualifying senior and disabled citizens and can be as much as \$1,500 based on income. Bonner's Next Clinic is Thursday at the North Trails Library in West Sunbury, Butler County from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and more clinics are planned throughout March and into April. For more information visit [RepBonner.com](http://RepBonner.com) or call (724)458-4911.

**February 28<sup>th</sup>**

The Pennsylvania State Police have released the identity of a woman killed near Spartansburg. The victim is 23-year-old Rebekah Byler and her death is being investigated as a homicide. Rebekah was a member of Sparta Township's Amish Enclave and pregnant, she was discovered Monday afternoon by a family member and a friend. The Pennsylvania State Police based in Corry are handling the murder investigation and have asked anyone who may have seen suspicious activity or anything out of the ordinary in the area of Sportsman's and Fish Flats Roads to contact them by calling (814)663-2043.

PennDOT has promoted two new heads of maintenance in counties located in District 1. New Senior Highway Maintenance Managers have been promoted in Crawford and Mercer Counties. Jason Warner has been promoted in Crawford County, he is a 20-year PennDOT veteran, has served as acting Manager since last April, and lives in Kennerdell. Zachary Miles has been promoted to head up Mercer County, he is a civil engineer with a degree from Youngstown University and has worked for PennDOT since 2015; Mr. Miles is a PennDOT Star of Excellence winner who served in the US Navy.

A Butler County woman has been accused of hacking the website of her former employer and holding it for ransom. It has been alleged that Kelly Yockey of Cranberry Township accessed the website of Harmony Family Chiropractic about a week after she was terminated from her job there. Yockey, it is said, changed the website's passwords and then demanded \$36,000 in ransom on top of her final paycheck; she also allegedly threatened legal action against the firm. The owner of the clinic did not wish to make any public comments on the matter and a preliminary hearing is scheduled for next Wednesday.

Bucks County authorities are searching for a man who stole a felonious amount of Lego toys. Five boxes, over \$1,000 worth of specialty Lego sets were stolen from Barnes & Noble in the Neshaminy Mall on February 10th. The suspect is a heavyset white man in his forties who was wearing a puffy winter jacket and gray sweats during the theft; he drove away in a gray pickup after the heist. Surveillance photos released on Friday showed the man taking five Star Wars Lego sets and leaving the retailer.

**February 29<sup>th</sup>**

The homicide of Rebekah Byler, the pregnant 23-year-old Amish woman from Spartansburg is now receiving national news attention. Crawford County's Coroner, Eric Coston announced yesterday that the preliminary results of an autopsy have been produced but he had decided not to make information about her cause of death available. The Pennsylvania State Police based in Corry are the primary investigators of this case and have continued to ask anybody who may have information about suspicious activities around Sportsman's and Fish Flats roads in Sparta Township to call them at (814)663-2043.

Make it Meadville is hosting a community meeting tonight at the Lew Davis Community Center also known as Active Aging about the possibility of forming a community revitalization corporation for Downtown Meadville. The meeting begins at 6 o'clock tonight and runs until 7:30 to discuss a revitalization corporation and seeks public commentary to help create a unified vision. For more information, you can visit [MakeitMeadville.org](http://MakeitMeadville.org).

**March 1<sup>st</sup>**

Butler County's Newest Millionaire says he plans on paying off his house and investing the majority of the leftovers. 26-year-old Jake Parkinson was presented with his gigantic novelty check from the Pennsylvania Lottery for being one of the winners of the New Year's Millionaire Raffle Wednesday. Jake didn't even check his numbers until he saw a sign declaring they sold a million-dollar ticket at the Sheetz on New Castle Road where he purchased his ticket. According to Sheetz Public Relations manager Nick Ruffner, it's the largest prize out of \$4 million in lottery winnings purchased at their Pennsylvania stores.

Pennsylvania Lawmakers have produced over a dozen bills seeking to regulate the use of AI in the commonwealth. Proposals in these bills cover a large swathe of current and potential uses for AI as the legislature tries to catch up with the rapidly evolving technology of Generative AI like Deepfake, Chat GPT, and others. One bill with a lot of support seeks to regulate AI voice and image fakes, another proposal would create a special advisory commission with the job of leading and analyzing studies on the impact of AI in Pennsylvania.

The death of an Erie toddler is being investigated by authorities.

A two-year-old girl was found deceased outside of her home on the 600 block of East 16th Street early Thursday morning.

Erie County Coroner Lyell Cook is waiting for a number of tests to be complete before he declares an official cause of death, but it seems likely that exposure to the elements is the culprit; the child was wearing a t-shirt and shorts while outside in the sub-freezing temperatures.

At press time the girl's name was not yet released and Erie's Major Crimes Unit is investigating.

Pennsylvania State Representative Brad Roae is holding an open house at his brand-new office located in Meadville's Park Avenue Plaza. The new office was chosen to be more handicap accessible and also more centrally located in Pennsylvania's 6th voting District.

Today's open house will last for the entire business day from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and you can stop in at any time. You can contact the office of Rep. Brad Roae at any time during office hours by calling (814)336-1136 and walk-ins are also welcome during that time.

**March 4<sup>th</sup>**

A suspect was arrested for the murder of Rebekah Byler in Spartansburg. Shawn Cranston, a 52-year-old resident of Corry was arrested Friday night and charged with homicide, homicide of an unborn child, burglary, and trespassing. The Pennsylvania State Police allege that it was Cranston who attacked and killed Rebekah by shooting her and then slashing her throat last Monday, February 26th. He is being held in Crawford County Jail without a chance for bail and his preliminary hearing is scheduled for the 15th.

Zemina Smith is the name of the Toddler who was discovered dead on Thursday morning in Erie. She was discovered outside of an apartment building on East 16th Street at about 7 a.m. after police were called about a missing child. An autopsy was performed on Friday, but Erie County Coroner Lyell Cook has not determined an official cause for Zemina's death and is awaiting the results from several laboratory tests. Erie's Police are investigating the incident, but do not suspect foul play.

**March 5<sup>th</sup>**

The Mercer County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has announced its plans to open a cost-free youth golf club. Mercer NAACP has teamed up with several sponsors to cover the costs and local amateur and professional golfers have already signed on to mentor and chaperone children and teens who join the club. The golf club will be available for children of all ages from five to 17 who live in Mercer County and it comes with a year-long membership of the youth NAACP paid for by the program's sponsors and community partners.

A man was injured when a military vehicle crashed in Butler County. Around 4 p.m. Saturday, a heavy transport truck collided with a guardrail on Interstate 79 near the town of Harmony and trapped the driver within the truck. The man was pinned beneath the vehicle's dashboard and firefighters were able to extricate him from underneath it. The man, whose name was not revealed, was taken to a nearby hospital for the treatment of minor injuries.

**March 6<sup>th</sup>**

Authorities have confirmed details about the death of Rebekah Byler, the Amish mother killed outside Spartansburg last Monday. Rebekah's injuries included a gunshot to the head and a deep laceration to her throat; there was a wound described as a scalping wound which may have been from the gunshot. Which one of the injuries was the cause of death hasn't been revealed by the Crawford County Coroner. 52-year-old Shawn Cranston of Corry was arrested outside of a Dollar General on Friday for the slaying.

The Oil City Library is hosting a cost-free self-defense seminar from 7 to 8:15 p.m. next Monday, March 11th. Join certified self-defense instructor, Nelson Figueroa for more than an hour of free self-defense training with easy-to-learn skills and movements appropriate for men and women of all ages and skill levels. This evening is absolutely cost-free and no registration is required, just arrive at the Oil City Library by 7 p.m. Call (814)678-3072 for more information.

A former deputy named Anthony Tedesco has sued the Mercer County Sheriff's Department, alleging that he was illegally retaliated against after running for Sheriff. Anthony Tedesco was a deputy in the sheriff's department who ran for the office as a Republican last year but was defeated in the primary by the current sheriff, Tim Callahan. Tedesco's suit alleges that he was terminated from the department without cause within days of Callahan being sworn into the office.

As part of a settlement, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will pay \$85,000 to an inmate currently serving a sentence in SCI Albion. Cain Peltzer has spent the last 15 years locked in the solitary confinement wing of SCI Albion and had sued the commonwealth in Erie's Federal Court for violations of his 8th Amendment right preventing cruel and unusual punishments and his 14th Amendment right to due process. The 45-year-old Peltzer was convicted of robbery in 1998 and in 2009 the Department of Corrections moved him into solitary confinement indefinitely without any trial for allegedly fighting with other prisoners.

**March 7<sup>th</sup>**

A man was hospitalized after being pulled out of a housefire in Sharon Wednesday at around noon. The identity of the man was not released and his injuries were likewise not made public, but firefighters did provide a few details about the incident. Fire Chief Bob Fiscus related that the fire was in a single-story home on Charle's Street and two other men had made it out of the building before emergency services arrived; a rapid search by the department recovered the trapped man. Firemen from Sharon, as well as Hermitage, Patagonia, and Farrel, had the blaze under control within 15 minutes.

Bear attacks are rare in Pennsylvania, but a Butler County woman discovered that they aren't impossible. 55-year-old Lee Ann Galante suffered injuries to her arm, head, and face when she was attacked by a black bear in her backyard, just outside of Butler on Tuesday night; the mama bear was protecting her cubs from perceived aggression. Game Commissioners were able to track the bear and had to euthanize her when she tried to attack them and her three cubs have been relocated. This is the first bear attack in Pennsylvania since a bear attacked two children in Luzern County in May 2023.

In Beaver County, students at Lincoln Park Performing Arts School are planning a mass walkout for today. Students are protesting what they call the school's failure to adequately address bullying that has led to four suicides in the last two years. The charter school's CEO claims that the school's faculty is not aware of any connection between bullying and the student's rate of suicide and that they have strong anti-bullying policies they enforce when any situation arises. A [Change.org petition](#) alleges that the school has actually fostered an environment rife with bullying by students and staff alike and begs for systematic changes.

Pennsylvania's Attorney General Michelle Henry has written a letter to the parent company of Facebook, Meta, to demand they take stronger action against account takeovers. Account takeovers involve hackers taking over a user's social media account, often stealing their personal information, and then using their accounts for purposes like scamming other users. According to the Attorney General's research, account takeovers on Meta platforms have increased by more than 250% in the last year; she demands to know what steps the corporation is taking to prevent these from happening.

**March 8<sup>th</sup>**

A resident of Spartansburg has launched a [GoFundMe campaign](#) to help Andy Byler, the husband of Rebekah Byler, the young mother who was murdered in the area in late February. The campaign was created by a family friend and hardware store manager Kelsey Bova who is also taking direct donations for Andy at her store Bova's Hardware on 307 Main Street in Spartansburg; Bova is also accepting donations of sanitary products and diapers size 6 and 7 for the Byler's two toddler-aged children. In Erie County Sander's Markets in Corry and North East are also accepting donations of money and baby items.

The Pennsylvania State Police will be ditching the gray cruisers and returning to white as part of the transition from Ford to Dodge as their vehicle provider. The State Police switched from Ford to Dodge because Ford has stopped making Sedans in the USA, leaving Dodge as the last producer of the vehicles PSP needs in the nation. 2024 is the year that the first of the brand-new white Dodge Chargers and Dodge Durangos will debut.

Clocks should be set one hour ahead on Saturday night thanks to Daylight Saving time. Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday morning at 2 a.m.; it's time to spring ahead on our clocks.

Speaking of hot garbage, an exploding garbage truck damaged several homes in the Allegheny County town of Imperial on Thursday. An unknown substance inside the truck combusted and caught the truck on fire; as firefighters attempted to extinguish the flames something inside the truck exploded, creating a shockwave that destroyed windows in several homes.

Lee Anne Gallante, the survivor of a bear attack on Tuesday Night, was allowed to return to her home in Butler County this morning. The 55-year-old woman who lives on the outskirts of Butler was attacked by a mother bear in her backyard when she tried to stop it from threatening her dog and suffered injuries to her head, face, and arms. The bear had to be euthanized by authorities, but all three of her cubs were healthy enough and old enough to be released together on game lands in Warren County.

**March 11<sup>th</sup>**

Icy and snowy conditions have led to a number of delays for schools in Northwest Pennsylvania this morning. Check on this station's website for a comprehensive list that monitors over 100 local schools and organizations through Operation Weather Alert.

Police in Venango County arrested a man in Cranberry Township and charged him with disorderly conduct, drug possession, and three counts of terroristic threats. 36-year-old Justin Graham was allegedly wandering around Seneca in the dawn hours of Thursday morning, banging on people's doors and causing a disturbance. When the Pennsylvania State Police found Graham, he claimed that he was the owner of Cranberry Township and he had inherited the entire township 2,000 years ago, he also allegedly claimed he was god and could do what he wanted, and threatened the officers and their families.

Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry released its preliminary employment results for January on Friday. According to L&I Pennsylvania's unemployment rate held steady at 3.4% for the fourth month in a row and just shy of 15,000 new jobs were added which continues a six-month streak for record numbers of Pennsylvania residents with employment. The National unemployment rate is holding steady at 3.7% for the third month.

**March 12<sup>th</sup>**

Erie County Coroner Lyell Cook has released the identity of a man who was found dead after a Corry housefire in early March. 65-year-old Mark Perry was identified as the name of the victim; a cause of death has yet to be officially determined while the results of certain chemical tests are being processed. The fire was reported at about 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 2nd, and originated in the back of Mark's apartment situated on the top floor of a building on Spring Street. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

PA CareerLink will be present at the Franklin Public Library today for a Resilience in Job Searching seminar. The free seminar begins at 3 o'clock this afternoon and is open to anyone. Attendees will be given some basic training on the foundations of being more effective at job searches and applying for jobs online. The Franklin Public Library is part of the Oil Region Library Association and is located at 421 12th Street in Franklin; call (814)432-5062 for more information.

Mercer County authorities provided details about a crash on Interstate 80 earlier this month. Crash scene investigators say Lisa Madison of New Castle was injured when she lost control of her Jeep Compass. She was traveling west through Shenango Township shortly before midnight on Sunday, March 3rd when her vehicle left the highway and rolled onto its side in the median between lanes. Madison was transported to UPMC Horizon where she was treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

The deadline for Pennsylvanians who wish to register to vote or update their voter registration ahead of the primary election on April 23rd is only four weeks away. The cutoff date to register is on Eclipse Day, Monday, April 8th. To be eligible for voting in the primary you must be a US Citizen and resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the voting district where you live for at least one month and 18 years of age or older. Registration is quick and simple and can be completed at your county voter services office, online at [vote.pa.gov](https://vote.pa.gov), or when you update or receive a License or ID from PennDOT.

**March 13<sup>th</sup>**

The westbound lane of Interstate 80 was shut down between Sharon PA and Hubbard OH Tuesday night after a human body was discovered in the median. In Shenango Township, Mercer County, the Pennsylvania State Police shut down the entire stretch of Interstate for several hours to investigate the death of Devin Habib, a 37-year-old man from New Castle. Authorities believe that Devin had suffered fatal injuries after being struck by an unknown vehicle in a hit-and-run while attempting to cross the highway sometime on Friday night or Saturday morning. The interstate reopened at about 11 o'clock Tuesday night. If you may have information please contact the Pennsylvania State Police in Mercer by calling (724)662-6162.

President Judge John Spataro has ordered a change of venue for the preliminary hearing of Shawn Cranston, the suspect in the murder of Rebekah Byler and her unborn child. Cranston will now have his preliminary hearing at the Court of Common Pleas in Meadville's Judicial Center, Courtroom 1 at 1:15 p.m. on Friday.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>**

A recall has been issued on cashews sold in Walmart stores in 30 states including Pennsylvania. The recall is for Great Value Honey Roasted Cashews with a use by date of July 8th, 2025; the use by dates are printed on the bottom of the plastic container. The recall is because the cashews may contain contaminants from coconut and dairy products that are processed in the same packing plant and may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Please discard or return the product to the nearest Walmart location for a full refund.

Butler County District Attorney Richard Goldinger has re-filed sexual assault charges against a former member of the Butler School Board. Bill Halle was accused last year of sexual assault and other offenses when it was alleged he had had an inappropriate sexual relationship with a teenage girl who worked for him at his restaurant. In January this year, a judge dismissed the case against Halle for lack of sufficient evidence, but nearly two months later Goldinger has re-filed the same charges, claiming that he has found new evidence.

**March 15<sup>th</sup>**

54-year-old Brent Hanley of Sharpsville has been accused of stealing nearly \$40,000 from the Girl's Fastpitch Softball League in Mercer County during his time as the league's treasurer. According to authorities, Hanley stole \$38,000 from the league for more than six years during his tenure by writing checks to his personal bank account between January 2017 and November 2023. The criminal complaint goes on to allege that Hanley presented the league's president and other officers with falsified information to hide his thefts. He's charged with five felonies including theft by deception and previously pleaded guilty to writing bad checks in 2019.

A former employee of UPMC is suing the nonprofit, alleging racial discrimination, workplace harassment, and retaliation. 34-year-old Caleb Ferguson claims that he was fired from his job at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh after he alerted management that he felt as if he was being harassed by a co-worker who named a plush monkey after him. He alleges that within two weeks of his complaint, he was suspended, and then fired from his job.

After 44 years of exemplary service to the City of Erie, Fire Chief Joe Walko is finally retired. Chief Walko worked his way up to the top of the fire department from the very bottom, starting as an EMT in 1980 and becoming the head of the department in 2020 after seven years as assistant chief. On Thursday, Assistant Fire Chief Leonard Trott officially ascended to the top spot; he has been part of the department for nearly 30 years and says he plans to continue the legacy of his predecessor. Congratulations are in order to both men.

According to the United States Attorney for the District of Western Pennsylvania Eric Olshan, 16 of the 17 members of a drug ring that distributed cocaine in Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania are in custody as of yesterday morning. One man, 50-year-old Roberto Sanchez of New Castle, is still on the loose and anybody who has information on his whereabouts should call the police. Members of the drug ring which was run out of Puerto Rico were responsible for as much as half of the cocaine sold in Lawrence County. Other members of the drug ring have been arrested in Youngstown, New Castle, and Ellwood City.

**March 18<sup>th</sup>**

On Friday, a jury decided that a Grove City man was not guilty of attempted murder against a police officer. The jury did however convict 60-year-old John Barlow Junior of two of five assault charges, aggravated assault of a law enforcement officer, reckless endangerment, resisting arrest, and other crimes. In March of 2022, Barlow led State Troopers on a chase as they attempted to serve an arrest warrant against him, during that chase he drove his truck toward an officer on foot who was forced to shoot at him. Barlow will be sentenced on March 29th.

Faced with a federal funding shortfall of \$21 million for LIHEAP, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Human Services Val Arkoosh has ceased cash payments for the time being. According to Secretary Arkoosh in a recent press release, the Commonwealth will continue to pay crisis grants through LIHEAP but will halt paying cash until they receive their funding from the United States Congress. PA's LIHEAP program will still accept and process all applications and continue to run until its cutoff date on Friday, April 5th.

In Butler, a man has been arrested in connection to a stabbing that happened on Friday evening. 42-year-old Marcus Roman of Lyndora has been charged with multiple crimes for the stabbing of a 21-year-old man whose name is being protected by authorities. Roman is charged with attempted voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault with a weapon, reckless endangerment, harassment, and other crimes in connection with the stabbing. Roman has a criminal history which includes the robbery of a woman's purse outside her home in 2020.

The Northwest PA Radio Auction began today at 6 a.m.! This year's auction is entirely online and runs until noon on Monday the 25th. The Radio Auction is your chance to get deep discounts on some items that are for immediate sale, including as much as 50% on gift certificates for a variety of local stores and restaurants. Visit [RadioAuctionNWPA.com](http://RadioAuctionNWPA.com) and make your first bid your best bid for everything from cases of wine, to hot tubs, to four wheelers, jewelry, firearms, and much more.

**March 19<sup>th</sup>**

A former coach of wrestling and football in the town of North East is accused of stealing thousands of dollars from a youth sports organization. Christopher Galloway was once the coach of North East High School wrestling and an assistant football coach, he has been charged with theft by failure to make the required disposition of funds and other crimes after allegedly spending \$8,632 and some change from the accounts of The North East Football Foundation. According to the North East Police Department, Galloway used the league's bank accounts to pay for bars, clothes, bills, and even online gambling.

A panel of judges from the Commonwealth Court ruled on Friday that a former staffer of the House Republican Caucus can move forward with a lawsuit against Pennsylvania's Republican Party based on PA's Whistleblower Laws. Marcel Nichole Ingram alleges she was fired from her job on the staff of Representative Eric Devanzo when she reported the presence of mold in his office in West Newton after being directed to test for its presence by a member of the caucus's legal counsel.

**March 20<sup>th</sup>**

At least one person was killed in a multi-vehicle pile-up on the Emlenton Bridge in Clarion County shortly after midnight on Monday night. The crash involved around eight tractor-trailers and a few passenger vehicles as well; authorities closed 11 miles of the eastbound lane of I-80 between exits 42 and 53 for more than 9 hours while investigating and cleaning the scene of the crash. A press release from the Clarion State Police about the investigation into the crash listed the event as fatal.

Police officers in Hermitage are investigating how a 5th-grade student was able to bring a firearm into school on Monday. According to Superintendent Dan Bell, The police were called to investigate when some students told a bus driver they were shown a handgun by an 11-year-old while returning home on Monday afternoon. The Hermitage PD recovered a handgun as well as a magazine and ammunition, and Chief Adam Piccilorio was quick to relate to the public that the student did not threaten anyone. As a 5th-grade student, they would be attending Ionta Elementary School.

A driver in Mercer County had to climb through the sunroof of their car to avoid sinking into a marsh on Tuesday morning. At about 9 a.m. on Tuesday, a car traveling along North Liberty Road just outside of Grove City slid into a roadside marsh after hitting a slippery patch of ice. The vehicle sank up to its doors in the muck and the unidentified motorist was forced to climb through the sunroof of their car and call for a rescue. The Pennsylvania State Police and Pine Township Rescue Squad were able to pull the sedan out of the mud.

The friends and family of Anthony Allegrini Jr., a teenager killed by the Pennsylvania State Police, have filed a \$50 million lawsuit. Anthony Allegrini Jr. was watching a street race near Penn's Landing in Philadelphia from his car when police came to break up the disturbance. He was shot once in the chest by a State Trooper while trying to drive away. Friends and family say he died crying for help while police handcuffed everyone in his vehicle; police say he hit two officers with his car while fleeing.

**March 21<sup>st</sup>**

Clarion County's Coroner, Dan Shingledecker, released information about the individual killed in a multivehicle pile-up along the Emlenton Bridge on Tuesday morning. The singular person killed was Joga Singh, he was a long-haul truck driver out of New York. Coroner Shingledecker said Mr. Sing was killed by blunt-force trauma. Sources inside the Emlenton Fire Department told reporters on Wednesday that there were 20 vehicles involved in the crash and seven people had to be hospitalized. The Pennsylvania State Police are still thoroughly investigating the crash.

Women's Services Inc. in Crawford County was the recipient of a \$1 million grant from Yield Giving, the charitable foundation run by author and philanthropist Mackenzie Scott. Yield Giving officially announced the \$1 million gift on Wednesday, one of the 361 such grants announced by Ms. Scott. Women's Services has been helping the survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Crawford County since 1977 and maintains shelters in Meadville and Titusville, they can be called 24/7 at (814)333-9766. 7 Mountains NWSA has reached out to Women's Services to ask for more information about this grant.

PennDOT has temporarily restricted access on South Main Street bridge in Bessemer to a single lane while crews work to install a new water line. According to PennDOT the closure will alternate between the left and right lanes as needed and will last, weather permitting, until Next Friday, the 29th. This is the first step in a \$1.6 million upgrade to the bridge that will see it receive new drainage, railings, and surfaces that will require a complete closure starting at the beginning of construction season in April.

It's called Avian Metapneumovirus and it is the latest epidemic affecting poultry farms and backyard flocks in Pennsylvania. The metapneumovirus can infect chickens and turkeys and shows different symptoms in different birds; they may suffer swelling around the eyes, nasal discharge, and neurological symptoms, though it does not alter a hen's eggs the way avian influenza does and some birds may display no symptoms at all. Veterinarians say that the primary threat of metapneumovirus to backyard flocks is secondary bacterial infection which can be avoided by ensuring your chickens have good ventilation and warm, dry bedding.

**March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

The Pennsylvania State Police suspect that alcohol was a factor involved in a crash that hospitalized two young women in Crawford County. Crash scene investigators say Leann Sterling (23) of Harmonsburg and her passenger Makayla Mcbryar (22) of Cochranon were both seriously injured in Summit Township shortly before midnight on Monday the 18th. Investigators say that Sterling's Jeep Cherokee veered off of Harmonsburg Road and drove through a utility pole; both women were rushed to Meadville Medical Center.

On Monday, some Penelec customers in Erie County should be experiencing a planned power outage. Electricity for about 514 customers will be disconnected from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 3 to 5 p.m. while workers replace wires and cross arms at their substation on Millfair Road between McKean and Fairview. Another 400 Penelec customers in the area will experience brief blackouts as their power is rerouted. Those affected will be reminded of the outages by a call to the phone number on their account.

**March 25<sup>th</sup>**

The Third Circuit Court dismissed a Meadville Police Officer's appeal that seeks to end a long-running lawsuit against himself and the City of Meadville for the wrongful arrest of a former Allegheny College Student. The Federal Appellate Court dismissed the appeal by Patrolman Jared Frum seeking to remove him from the ongoing litigation in the case of falsely accusing and arresting the student for a barroom assault in 2019. The court determined the patrolman was not protected by qualified immunity.

The Franklin Police Department announced charges against a woman who is accused of threatening the employees of a downtown pizzeria in January. Melissa Mix has been charged with terroristic threats and harassment for a January 19th incident during which police say she accused employees of stealing her debit card and threatened to come across the counter and fight with them. When the victims called the police, Mix also called the police about the stolen card, but security footage showed it being returned to her after it was used in a transaction.

**March 26<sup>th</sup>**

Beginning this fall, Slippery Rock University will change its residency policy to require all freshman and sophomore students to begin living on campus. Slippery Rock's chief Student Affairs Officer David Wilmes, says that studies show that sophomores who live on campus perform better academically and are more likely to finish their degrees than students who live off campus. At the beginning of the 2024 fall semester, the University expects to be over capacity by 1% to 3% and is working to find alternative accommodations and build new dorm rooms. They are also planning to provide help for Juniors and Seniors with off-campus housing.

The second day of recovery operations to locate the remains of a six-year-old girl in Delaware County begins at first light. Li'Najah Booker of Chester fell into Chester Creek at around 7 p.m. on Saturday night and was swept away by currents that were bolstered by a recent rainstorm. Rescue workers spent Saturday night and Sunday searching for the girl, and on Monday morning changed their strategy to a recovery operation. Today's search will use underwater SONAR and cadaver dogs to search for the girl.

A company that manages seven Domino's Pizza franchises in Crawford, Erie, and Mercer Counties has been fined nearly \$350,000 for violations of child labor law. PA's Department of Labor and Industry fined NWPA Pizza Inc. \$344,000 for 715 violations of The Pennsylvania Child Labor Act for a variety of offenses. An investigation by Labor and Industry began after an employee at one of the locations made a complaint and discovered that NWPA Pizza Inc. was routinely failing to provide breaks for their minor employees and scheduling them to work beyond the legal hours and for excessive amounts of time among dozens of other violations.

The American Red Cross is as always in need of blood donors to prevent their national blood supply from falling short. In an effort to entice more donors the American Red Cross is teaming up with unlikely allies, Godzilla and King Kong. Anyone who donates within the next two weeks can receive a special shirt depicting the two titanic monsters doing battle while wearing donor bandages on their arms in partnership with Warner Bros Pictures. T-Shirts are available until April 7th, or while supplies last - visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) for more information.

**March 27<sup>th</sup>**

The Pennsylvania State Police based in Franklin are looking for a suspect in connection to the robbery of an Arby's restaurant located in Barkeyville on Sunday. Police say the man nearly stabbed an employee with a knife after she tried to stop him from reaching into a cash register at about 8 o'clock Sunday night. The suspect is described as a black male, about 6 feet tall, between 225-250 lbs. He was wearing a black hoodie, dark gray sweatpants, and black shoes; his face was obscured by a burgundy colored facemask. Anyone who may have information should contact State Police Trooper Harriger by calling (814)676-6596.

Two municipalities in Clarion County received a total of nearly \$800,000 in grants from the Commonwealth Financing Authority. Monroe Township received about \$600,000 to pave three roads by the Trinity Point development and New Bethlehem received \$178,000 for their Route 28 connector project.

Rape and sexual assault charges were dropped against a Mercer County man. Robert Hazen of Hadley pleaded guilty to multiple charges related to the sexual assault of two minors who were 13 and 16 years old in February. He also pleaded to charges of escape for fleeing to Arizona to avoid an arrest warrant and criminal use of a communications facility; he was scheduled to be sentenced on Tuesday. On Tuesday his charges were modified; Hazen still pleaded guilty to escape and criminal use of a communications facility but the charges related to the sexual assaults were dropped. The sentencing for this new plea has not been scheduled.

A Federal Court dismissed a lawsuit by Pennsylvania Republicans that sought to end automatic voter registration in the Commonwealth. The January lawsuit filed by 24 PA lawmakers was dismissed by U.S. District Judge Jennifer Wilson who wrote in her decision "A vague, generalized allegation that elections, generally, will be undermined, is not the type of case or controversy that this court may rule on under the Constitution".

**March 28<sup>th</sup>**

In Erie County, authorities recently revealed the details of a crash involving a school bus in LeBouef Township that led to the hospitalization of one driver last month. 38-year-old Matthew Eastman of Waterford was taken to UPMC Hamot for what first responders suspected was serious injuries when his Toyota Sienna collided with the back of a school bus that was stopping to pick up students. Crash scene investigators say Eastman was driving at excessive speed before the crash; firefighters had to cut him from his vehicle before he could be transported. None of the four students aboard the bus were injured.

Meadville Medical Center will be closing its Alden Street Clinic on Friday. The March 29th closure of the facility is so that electricians can perform an upgrade of the electrical systems.

Reverend Rudolph Babcock is inviting anyone who wishes to attend communion on Easter Sunday to join the congregation at Community Bible Church, located on Erie Street in Centerville at 11 a.m. for open communion. All who come will be welcomed.

On Monday, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania honored fallen State Trooper Jacques Rougeau Jr. by renaming a traffic interchange where he used to patrol in Juniata County in his honor. Jacques was raised in Erie County and grew up in the town of Corry. He was killed by a gunman who ambushed him on June 17th of last year; he is the 104th State Trooper who gave his life while on duty. Jacques Rougeau Jr. Memorial Interchange crosses US Routes 322 and 22 near Mifflintown Pennsylvania.