

WPPA AM POTTSVILLE QUARTERLY ISSUES 10/2023-12/2023

Submitted: January 2024

The following is a listing of significant issues responded to by WPPA Pottsville, PA. Significant programming issues for the period October to December 2023 and aired during Scheduled Newscasts 6am to 9am Weekdays and other program times. WPPA also airs CBS News Monday through Friday 6am to 6pm.

<u>Issue:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Type and Description:</u>
Job fair for Amazon Facility	10/2/2023	PA CareerLink Schuylkill County has announced two upcoming hiring events for the new Amazon facility set to open near Tremont. One of the most enticing aspects of these job opportunities is the competitive starting wage. Employees at the new Amazon Facility can look forward to earning a minimum of \$18.75 per hour. Job seekers can choose from early morning, night, and weekend shifts, ensuring that there's a schedule to match their preferences and commitments. According to Skook News the Schuylkill County CareerLink is hosting two job fairs to help interested candidates learn more about these exciting opportunities: Tomorrow October 3rd 10a-4p and Tuesday October 10th noon-4. Both Amazon job fairs will be hosted at the Schuylkill County CareerLink office on East Arch Street in Pottsville.
"The Market" opens in Fairlane Village Mall	10/3/2023	This past Sunday was the debut of "The Market" at the Fairlane Village Mall, near Pottsville. Anybody who remembers Black Diamond Antiques from the Schuylkill Mall will be in for a treat as "The Market" continues the tradition of providing a platform for artisans and vendors to showcase their unique wares. The Market is a diverse haven featuring an array of specialty shops and it can be found within the former Schuylkill Valley Sporting Goods store space. Skook News says the shop is open 7 days week and follows mall hours.

Schuylkill County
will own a records
building

10/5/2023 Schuylkill County WILL soon own a building in the city that it will use for records storage. At their meeting yesterday the commissioners approved a budget resolution of just over \$381K to purchase the property in the 300 block of Prospect St. The RH says the amount includes closing costs for the sale and the money will come from the general fund. Chairman Barron Heatherington said the building is in a good location since it's less than a mile from the courthouse. As early as the end of this month the county could start moving items to the new site from a 15,000-square-foot property it was leasing about 2 miles from the courthouse on Bulls Head Road in Norwegian Twp.

Something different
for this General
Election in the County

10/6/2023 Some Schuylkill County voters will make history when they go to the polls Nov. 7. For the first time, they will be able to cast a write-in vote by using an ink stamp. A test conducted Thursday morning by the Schuylkill County Election Board found no reason to prevent county commissioner write-in candidate and Republican Mary Jo Moss from handing out stamps with her name on them at the polls. According to the RH the Pennsylvania Election Code allows stamps to be used for write-ins, but prevents the use of stickers or labels. But why a stamp? Moss says using a stamp instead of a pen or pencil will eliminate misspellings or ambiguities about the voter's intent. Moss finished 3rd behind the party's nominees Barron Heatherington and Larry Padora and is not listed on the ballot.

Living and Learning
after 50

10/9/2023 Diakon Living & Learning After 50 will hold its 13th senior expo geared to older adults interested in staying active, productive and healthy. The event, free and open to the public, will be held in Fairlane Village mall from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 17. In addition to exhibitors, there will be flu shots administered by Lehigh Valley Physician Group; glucose screening by HNL Lab Medicine; and balance testing by Lehigh Valley Health Network Rehab Center Schuylkill. Lunch will be available to those who register by calling 570-624-3010. According to the RH Boscov's Travel also will share safe travel tips and information about the Diakon Living & Learning October 2024 Cruise to Bermuda. Visitors will be able to dispose of unused prescription drugs as well as learn gardening tricks from Penn State Master Gardeners.

Coal Cracker
Christmas

10/11/2023 The annual Coal Cracker Christmas, sponsored by the revitalization group Downtown Shenandoah Inc., will return on Black Friday, Nov. 24, the day after Thanksgiving, that at one time was regarded as the biggest shopping day of the year. DSI Executive Director Susan Williams characterized Coal Cracker Christmas as a "free-to-attend family-friendly event that kicks off the holiday season in Shenandoah." Williams added it is a way to "thank the community for all their support throughout the year." She added that it will include the community tree lighting, singing of Christmas carols, horse-drawn trolley rides, cookies, hot chocolate and a visit from Santa Claus. The RH says CCC is held right outside the DSI office at Veterans Memorial Park on N main Street.

Tamaqua Area
Hunger Campaign

10/16/2023 The 12th annual Tamaqua Area Hunger Campaign is in full swing, with events scheduled throughout October and ending Nov. 5 with a Tamaqua Hunger Walk at the Community Arts Center. All donations and food collections benefit the Tamaqua area, specifically food pantries at American Primitive Methodist Church, Stokes Ministries and Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. The pantries provide food for more than 300 families a month in the Tamaqua area. The RH says last year's campaign raised more than \$15,000 and collected 85 boxes of food. This year's goal is \$18,000 and 125 boxes of food. The pantry operates with food distributions twice a month on the second and third Wednesdays.

PA Turnpike
Increasing tolls

10/17/2023 Schuylkill River Greenways will be holding a public meeting called "Have Your Say on the Future of Schuylkill River Trail's Frackville Section"! It'll be held Tuesday, October 24th at 7pm at the Frackville Elks Lodge on S. 3rd St in Frackville. Attendees can ask questions, comment, and provide input. SRG staff will also be available to discuss the trail building process. The Schuylkill River Trail Frackville Section is 2.6 miles long and includes a proposed trailhead on PA Game Lands #326. It travels through woodlands and the center of Frackville. Skook News says 80 miles of the Schuylkill River Trail are complete across the five counties of the Schuylkill River Watershed. When the trail is complete, it will connect Frackville to Philadelphia with over 120 miles of multi-use trail. Schuylkill River Greenways is the non-profit organization that has been tasked with completing the Schuylkill River Trail in Berks and Schuylkill County.

W/PPA AM QUARTERLY ISSUES
4TH QUARTER 2023

Fire Companies

10/20/2023 Three Schuylkill County Fire Companies have been awarded a grant from Pennsylvania American Water.

awarded grant

The company announced yesterday that it has awarded \$85,000 in grants to 167 fire and rescue organizations serving communities in 30 Pennsylvania counties through its annual Firefighting Support Grant Program. Three Schuylkill Counties Fire Companies were part of that list and the program is meant to help local fire departments purchase emergency gear, life-saving equipment, training materials and essential firefighting apparatus. Skook News says on the grant list are Friendship Fire Company in Englewood, Good Will Hose Co #1 in Frackville and Altamont Fire Company anlo in Frackville.

Schuylkill County drug buyback

11/1/2023 A total of 751 pounds of drugs were collected Saturday during National Prescription Drug Take Back Day in Schuylkill County. It was the 19th time the county participated and Sheriff Joseph G. Groody said "It's a very successful one again." He also thanked everyone who took part in the event. According to the RH a representative of the Drug Enforcement Administration picked up the drugs Monday. They will be incinerated at a plant in Philadelphia. Residents were told they could drop off unused or expired medications at 25 sites countywide. The collection is held in the spring and fall. The April take back event collected 685 pounds of drugs.

Pottsville Shade Tree Commission plants new trees

11/3/2023 Environmental enthusiasts got together yesterday afternoon to welcome more than 20 new trees — 11 different species — to Pottsville. The Pottsville Shade Tree Commission and Schuylkill County Conservancy members broke soil and dirtied their hands for the yearly event. This year, the groups welcomed assistance from Gillingham Charter School students and Pottsville Area High School ecology club members to plant trees in Pottsville. Similar greening efforts took place in Orwigsburg, with more to continue today in Shenandoah and Sweet Arrow Lake County Park. The RH says grants to plant the trees were awarded by the nonprofit TreePennsylvania. Jane Kruse, chair of the tree commission reported a total of 22 trees were planted throughout Pottsville.

Veterans Day Events

11/7/2023 Veterans Day is Nov. 11 and there's a large schedule of tributes coming from students to hospitals to businesses to civic/service organizations and range from meals to ceremonies, speeches and salutes. Not all of those tributes are on Nov. 11th which is Saturday but they all have the same message of thanks to all who have served. The RH says the Mahanoy City at the Elks Lodge 695, East Centre Street, Veterans Day dinner at 6 p.m. Saturday. Minersville Area School District complimentary breakfast, 8:30 a.m. Friday, high school cafeteria, for all veterans who reside in the district, followed by a commemorative program. And there's Free chicken barbecue meals for any veteran and guest, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, Schuylkill Haven American Legion post, Parkway, eat-in or drive-thru, sponsored by post auxiliary.

New Auburn
Bridge dedicated

11/10/2023 About 200 people were out in the sunshine yesterday and saw 30 years of blood, sweat and tears come to life at the newly unveiled Auburn Bridge.
It was three decades of advocating, physical labor and grant applications which totaled around \$2.3 million. Cindy Dunn who is Department of Conservation and Natural Resources secretary said it was a top 10 priority trail gap in the state.
In fact it landed in third.
Now, the bridge is open to the public for bikers and outdoor lovers to enjoy and it came complete with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the occasion.
The RH says the bridge helps connect Berks and Schuylkill counties, making a continuous 9.5-mile long section from Hamburg to Auburn.

Santa to
parachute in to
Shenandoah

11/14/2023 Mrs. T's Pierogies is gearing up for a festive leap into the holiday spirit with its highly anticipated 16th Skydiving Santa event set to take place on Friday, November 24.
The event is scheduled to kick off at 10:30 a.m. when the gates open to the public at Veterans Memorial Stadium, on Stadium Road in Shenandoah. The first 200 children under the age of twelve to arrive at the event will be treated to a complimentary gift.
Santa's elves will also be on hand, offering face-painting for attendees. Additionally, the concession stand will be open to host a hot chocolate fundraiser courtesy of the Shenandoah Valley School District Band Boosters.
Skook News says the highlight of the day is set for 12:00 p.m., pending favorable weather conditions. Santa is set to make a grand entrance, parachuting into the stadium.

Help with heating
bills this winter

11/15/2023 Help is available for people who struggle to pay heating bills now that colder weather has arrived.
The Low Income Home Energy Assistance program, known as LIHEAP, is accepting applications for the 2023-24 heating season. People of any income level might be able to save money on heating costs by choosing an alternate supplier of electricity or natural gas.
Some consumers find it useful to enroll in budget billing through their utility company to avoid their bills spiking during peak heating season.
There are two ways to apply for LIHEAP: Online via compass.state.pa.us. Or using a hard copy application submitted to a local county assistance office.

WPPA AM QUARTERLY ISSUES
4TH QUARTER 2023

Solar array

11/16/2023 A 3-megawatt solar array proposed by Reading Anthracite Co. cleared the first hurdle in a lengthy approval process Tuesday

clears first hurdle

at a hearing conducted by the Foster Twp. supervisors. The supervisors voted 2-1 to grant the project preliminary approval, subject to a host of conditions, including compliance with a township ordinance governing solar projects. After a lengthy hearing in which representatives of Reading Anthracite testified on the details of the project, the supervisors met briefly in executive session before voting. According to the RH the Foster Twp. project is one of six that Reading Anthracite has on the drawing boards for former mining sites throughout Schuylkill County. The move is the company's first venture into solar energy and is part of a larger initiative to turn former mining sites into productive use.

Williams Valley
will receive \$1,500
donation

11/20/2023 The Williams Valley High School Class of 2025, the current junior class, will receive a \$1,500 donation from the Tower Porter Improvement Organization, even though their combined Halloween event didn't happen. The RH says the school board accepted the donation, which came about after the cancellation of the Haunted Trail during the annual Halloween at the Midway event. Typically it's a collaboration among area students, teachers and the organization and raises money to go toward prom, but due to weather this year and scheduling problems, the trail couldn't be held. District Superintendent David Hatfield said "This donation will go towards hosting the 2024 junior senior prom, giving our students the ability to focus their efforts on planning the prom instead of continuing to fundraise. This is just one of the many ways TPIO gives back to the community."

COVID-19
vaccinations

11/21/2023 Winter is coming whether we like it or not and PA's top health official is calling on Pennsylvanians to get their seasonal flu and updated COVID-19 vaccines, as well as a new vaccine for those at increased risk for RSV. The RH says acting Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen visited Pottsville's state health center "We want people to get vaccinated. We know that getting vaccines for flu and COVID reduces people's risk of getting hospitalized for those infections and reduces the spread." Bogen also stressed the importance of the RSV vaccine, which was recently made available for older Americans. While the adult RSV vaccine is currently unavailable at the Pottsville health center, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration are working to increase its availability across the country. As for COVID-19, Bogen encourages people to get the new vaccine that addresses the latest variant of the disease. COVID-19 and flu vaccines are available at the state health center at One Norwegian Plaza, Pottsville.

WPPA AM QUARTERLY ISSUES
4TH QUARTER 2023

Tree Lighting

11/28/2023 On Saturday evening, Mahanoy City welcomed Santa Claus for the annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony

Ceremony

at the intersection of Centre and Catawissa Street. The evening began with a choral program featuring performances by both Mahanoy City residents and local organizations. At 6:00 pm, Santa made a grand entrance down Centre Street, riding in a horse-drawn carriage led by the Mahanoy Area Marching Band. Upon reaching the gathering of over 100 attendees, Santa listened to a few songs then officially lit the borough's Christmas Tree. According to Skook News following the tree lighting, Santa posed for photographs before making his way to the Humane Fire Company.

UGI Gas bills will be lower

11/29/2023 People who heat their homes with natural gas supplied by UGI Utilities should see a reduction in their bills. UGI Utilities announced its purchased gas cost rates will decrease Friday. According to the company, the average residential heating customer's monthly bill will be dropping by 20%. The company said in a statement "UGI is pleased to pass along significant savings to our customers during the winter heating season. UGI knows that affordability is important to our customers, especially when so many families are experiencing the impact of inflation." However UGI recognizes some customers may still have difficulty paying their heating bill. The company offers budget billing, as well as multiple payment options through its online account center and its automatic pay program to assist customers in managing bill payments. To find out more go to ugi.com/customerassistance or call 800-UGI-WARM.

Canine Respiratory Illness is in PA

11/30/2023 Yesterday Pennsylvania joined a growing list of states with cases of an unknown canine respiratory illness. The state Department of Agriculture confirmed reported cases of what is sometimes referred to as canine infectious respiratory disease complex, saying that affected dogs may show symptoms of lethargy, coughing, sneezing and eye and nasal discharge. Press secretary Shannon Powers said because most testing and treatment is done at private veterinary labs, the state doesn't know how many dogs might be ill. Dr. Cheryl Lagana of the Abington Veterinary Center in Lackawanna County said it's "tricky" to identify and properly diagnose the illness separate from typical cases of kennel cough. The RH says it's recommended that dog owners watch for symptoms and keeping all pets up to date on vaccines for "a good spectrum of protection."

Sch. Conservation
District awarded \$277k

12/6/2023 State Rep. Tim Twardzik announced yesterday that the Schuylkill Conservation District has been awarded a little over \$277k as part of the 2024 Countywide Action Plan implementation grants.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection awarded \$19.3 million in 2024 CAP grants to counties across the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The grants support their efforts to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution to restore the health of local streams, rivers and lakes.
Twardzik said in a news release "I look forward to seeing the progress that will be achieved by this year's grant recipients. Their efforts not only benefit our local communities but also make a positive impact on the entire commonwealth and beyond." The latest round of CAP grants involved applications for 226 projects that will be completed in the next 12 to 18 months.

Schuylkill County
teen winner of
Farm Show contest

12/7/2023 Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding announced Wednesday that, for the third consecutive year, a teen from Schuylkill County has won the "Oh, Say Can You Sing?" contest, becoming the star performer for the daily rendition of the "Star-Spangled Banner" at the 2024 Farm Show.

Skook News reports Thirteen-year-old Thea Sten, from Schuylkill Haven, became the winner by getting the highest number of social media votes. She will take center stage at the 108th Farm Show Opening Ceremony, scheduled for 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 6, 2024.
A panel of judges sifted through 55 qualified entries from all corners of Pennsylvania to select 25 finalists. These finalists, including Thea Sten, showcased their vocal prowess in videos posted on Facebook, where fan voting determined the ultimate winners.
The chosen vocalists will grace the GIANT Expo Hall at 8:00 AM daily from January 6 to 13.

Solar Panel
bill for PA
public schools

12/12/2023 A state House bill with bipartisan support that would incentivize solar among schools throughout Pennsylvania is scheduled for a voting meeting of the Committee on Economic and Recreational Development today.
House Bill 1032 would establish the Solar for Schools Grant Program and would cover solar project costs, among "any other costs approved by the department," for eligible applicants.

According to a report on solar at K-12 schools in Pennsylvania just 38 public school districts utilized solar. That's 8% of 500 public school districts.
Three districts in Schuylkill County utilize solar: Pottsville Area School District, Schuylkill Haven Area School District and Tamaqua Area School District.
While Pottsville Area School District hasn't implemented learning enhancement opportunities surrounding solar energy, Superintendent Sarah Yoder told the RH the district is thankful for the savings that solar panels offer.

WPPA AM QUARTERLY ISSUES
4TH QUARTER 2023

Pottsville City Council approves 2024 budget 12/13/2023 Pottsville City Council had their meeting on Monday and gave formal OK to a 2024 budget that does not increase taxes and also hired two police officers. This is the third consecutive year without a tax increase. The one in 2021 was blamed on costs associated with the pandemic and a large pension contribution payment.

Pottsville Mayor Dave Clews said after the meeting that he was "proud" to be the mayor for another year without a tax increase. He said city leaders and the administration worked hard toward that achievement. The RH reports the budget retains funding to fill three vacant police positions. Two of those spots were filled Monday with the hiring of Matthew Waite of Schuylkill Haven and Tonya Ebling, of New Philadelphia. Nineteen officers were on the force, including Chief John R. Murrow, as of late November.

PA Attorney General talks with High School students about gun violence 12/14/2023 Pennsylvania Attorney General Michelle Henry had a message before asking students at Hazleton Area High School how guns affect them. That message was a bullet can wound victims it never strikes. Henry attended school yesterday so students could be her teacher as she prepares a report about reducing gun violence and helping young people deal with the psychological and physical aftereffects. In earlier discussions at schools in Allegheny, Dauphin and Philadelphia counties, Henry said students told her that their worries ranged from gangs to friends with guns to shooters inside schools.

When the attorney general met with students the RH says counselors and a psychologist also were present. If the forum raised feelings that students wanted to talk about, they could leave the circle to talk with a counselor in private.

Verizon offers reward for information about copper theft 12/19/2023 Verizon is offering up to a \$5,000 reward to help find those responsible for stealing copper communication cables right off utility poles in Schuylkill and Northumberland counties. An email yesterday from communications manager Chris Serico said the thefts have "caused significant service delays and public safety concerns for Verizon customers and thousands of dollars in damage to local communities." He said Verizon is working with police on cases in Foster and West Penn townships and his email was actually in response to questions from the Republican Herald about two cases in Schuylkill Twp. State police at Frackville on Monday reported the theft of 600 feet of copper phone lines that occurred Friday or Saturday, and the township police chief said there was another theft of about 500 feet of wire on Dec. 5 or 6. Anyone with information on these thefts should call State Police at Frackville.