

T.G.I.F. *from Adams County*

WRITTEN BY: COMMISSIONER PHIEL



State Passes Late Budget

What's New

OAK LAWN CEMETERY PASSES TO
OAK LAWN FOUNDATION

PA AMERICAN LEGION 107TH
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

GREAT JOB EMS & FIRST
RESPONDERS

ADAMS COUNTY ANNUAL TAX
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AGREEMENT RATIFIED

REFLECTIONS ON TURNING 75

On July 13 a state budget was passed! Hallelujah! Well, that was at least an improvement from previous years! A passed budget is always a relief to county government as many of our human service programs are funded or partially funded by the state. This 12-day late compromise avoids broad based tax hikes and human service programs in jeopardy, and leaves the Commonwealth \$8 billion emergency Rainy Day fund untouched. The large takeaways are more money toward education, pension increase for retirees, statewide road and bridge repairs, and requires data centers to report their annual energy and water consumption. What did not happen was an increase to minimum wage, long-term funding for mass transit, legalization of recreational marijuana, and the regulation of "skill" games.

Oak Lawn Cemetery Passes To Oak Lawn Foundation

The long-awaited transfer of Oak Lawn Cemetery from Adams County caretaker status to the non-profit Oak Lawn Foundation took place at the office of Attorney David James on Friday, July 10. Oak Lawn Foundation President Al Moyer, Oak Lawn Foundation Secretary Cathy Kunkel and Adams County Industrial Development Authority President Jim Williams executed the transfer as one very pleased county commissioner looked on.

The transfer is bringing to a close the cemetery's 10-year hiatus of neglect and uncertainty. When followed by hundreds of complaints, the community was rocked when the owner was charged with theft and fraud. It is anticipated that the cemetery will soon return to a fully functioning cemetery recognizing and honoring thousands presently interred and serving the greater Adams County community in the future. The Oak Lawn Foundation is a non-profit organization with a volunteer board of directors formed to operate and sustain Oak Lawn Cemetery. The Oak Lawn Foundation plans to hire a part-time cemetery administrator and maintenance worker with an office on-site for the convenience of clients.



PA American Legion 107th Annual Conference

The 107TH American Legion Department of Pennsylvania Annual Conference is taking place from Thursday through Sunday at the Eisenhower Hotel in Gettysburg. We are pleased and honored to welcome these veterans to Adams County. The Annual State Convention is the premier event for Pennsylvania Legionnaires to discuss organizational policies, elect leaders, and celebrate service to veterans and the community. As an American Legion member, I am honored to deliver opening remarks this morning to this esteemed group that we owe so much. If you see these folks out in our community, please help me welcome them to Adams County!

Great Job EMS & First Responders

A local resident Warren Sheppard asked me to recognize the outstanding work that Adams County First Responders did over Bike Week given the volume of calls. He personally witnessed the serious motorcycle accident on Emmitsburg Road that blocked the parade as emergency units responded. I asked Adams County Department of Emergency Services Director for the call volume for that period. During the time period of 7/9 to 7/12, inclusive, the Department of Emergency Services processed approximately 1287 telephone calls. The County had approximately 752 Police responses, 51 fire responses, and 205 EMS responses. Folks that is a ton of calls and responses. A shout out to all the paid and volunteer emergency responders that respond every day, but especially during this extremely high call volume that occurred last weekend!

Adams County Annual Tax Assessment Update

Adams County Tax Services Department has completed the updating of the Adams County Tax Assessment Rolls to be effective July 1, 2026. The Assessment Rolls are open and available for inspection in Room 202 of the Adams County Courthouse during normal business hours. All Adams County property owners or others with an interest in such real estate, have a right to file a property tax appeal in writing for any real estate assessment on or before the close of business Monday, August 3, 2026 (deadline of August 1 falls on a Saturday). The following summarizes the Tax Rolls as of July 1, 2026:

- Total County Real Property Assessed Value = \$10,548,433,800 (45,890 Taxable Parcels)
- Total County Exempt Assessment = \$1,249,151,700 (1,997 Exempt Parcels)
- Total County Per Capita = 78,880

Adams County Hazmat Agreement Ratified

Hazmat incidents are both guaranteed and unpredictable. Given the limited use of extensive resources that are required for different hazmat responses, Adams County contracts with eastern neighbor York County for this service. The ratified agreement at the July 8th public meeting provides that York County will maintain a certified HazMat Response Team on behalf of Adams County for the purpose of responding to emergency incidents and mitigating hazardous materials within Adams County. The transformer fire at the power plant on Granite Station Road was a recent example. The cost of the service is \$8000 annually.



Reflections On Turning 75

As a few of you know I turned 75 on Monday. That's 3/4 of a century! I am now in the 4TH quarter of life! It is certainly a milestone that does cause you to pause and reflect. I was born on Friday 13TH – my lucky day! When I'm told I don't act or look that old – my response is that's the good news - the bad news is that I am that old! My first car at 18 was a 1959 white Thunderbird CP, with a hood scoop and white leather with black trim and wide whitewall tires. I paid \$275 for it and sold it a year later for \$375. It had an 8-track with 4-Tops, Smokey Robinson, Temptations and Led Zeppelins Stairway to Heaven. Gas was 25 cents a gallon. I always thought about that car. Well, I unexpectedly found a great deal on an exact twin to mine in Western Maryland - and got a birthday present for myself. Happy Birthday to me! You just may see it parked in the back lot occasionally.



I am fortunate to have not only one, but two different public service careers that I dearly cherish and embrace. One as a 30-year U.S. Law Enforcement Ranger for NPS and now 16 years as County Commissioner in my beloved Adams County. You can also throw in 25 years as event operations manager and a principal for the Gettysburg Anniversary Committee who organized and executed the very large civil war reenactments from 1995-2019. In 1998 at the 135TH reenactment there were 22,000 reenactors and 60,000 visitors. I am very proud that we locals joined forces to do those mega events better than anyone in the nation. We made the dusty old history books come alive and created memories for over 500,00 visitors, 100,000 reenactors and hundreds of local staff in those 25 years, not to mention promoting and bringing in multi-millions of revenues to our community! Two of many highlights have been transporting Lincoln's Gettysburg address in my patrol vehicle between Gettysburg and the Library of Congress 6 times, and I have hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon 5 times. I am extremely proud of this Boards record, from the new digital 911 system when we walked in the door, to the Human Services Building, to the recent transfer of Oak Lawn Cemetery to a non-profit foundation, to name just a few consistent accomplishments.



HAPPY 75TH!

I count myself as blessed that Adams County voters put their trust in me for the past 16 years to do the work that I do for the community, and am very proud of the numerous achievements we as a team have produced. I work with a great team who are both colleagues and friends. Kathy and I are uniquely fortunate that all 4 of our children, and thus our 4 grandchildren, all live within 1 mile of the homestead. I could never have predicted that happening. There are going to be some highs, lows, and having to deal with the cards you are handed, but in the end it's about family, friends, colleagues and hoping that you have contributed to making everything within your reach better than you found it!

The End

- **Leaded Glass-Stained Window Tour Trinity Church:** Discover the artistry and history behind the leaded stained glass at Trinity United Church of Christ, 60 East High Street, Gettysburg. Every Friday at 2:00 & 3:00 PM beginning today through August 28.
- **1776 The Musical:** Gettysburg Community Theater present 1776 The Musical to celebrate America250 in Adams County. Features John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson as they attempt to convince the 2nd Continental Congress to vote for independence. Runs today through August 2.
gettysburgcommunitytheater.org
- **Friday's On Seminary Ridge – Remember The Ladies:** The Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center takes a closer look at the role of women in America's most crucial moments. Today 3:30PM. This is a free event that meets outside weather permitting.
- **Gettysburg National Military Park Campfire Programs:** Held at the Pitzer Woods Amphitheater on West Confederate Avenue every Saturday evening through August 8. Each program is about 60 minutes with a different presentation. Admission is free and pets are welcome. Bring your own chair or bench seating.
- **Gettysburg Battle Walks:** July 18, 25, August 1 & 8. Explore areas of the park interpreted by an NPS Ranger or Battlefield Guide. Each walk begins at 10:00AM and the meeting location changes for each walk. These walks are free and very popular. Wear appropriate attire, walking shoes and bring a bottle of water.

- **Adams County Farmers Market:** This Saturday the market theme is Homesteading & Sustainability. Topics such as rainwater collection, electric vehicles, home canning and composting will be addressed. Neil & Shannon will also provide live music.
- **Gettysburg National 19TH Century Baseball Festival:** The old-time baseball festival returns to Pumping Station Road this Saturday & Sunday. See 2 dozen teams from across the United States compete. Bring a blanket, bring the family and settle in for a weekend of history and baseball.



Photos from: [Evening Sun](#)

NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, GET OUT THERE AND EXPERIENCE ALL THE HISTORICAL, RECREATIONAL, AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT BEAUTIFUL ADAMS COUNTY HAS TO OFFER !