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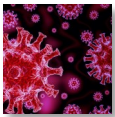
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from
Adams County

written by: Commissioner Randy Phiel

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SGT MAC Wreath Project

There was tremendous angst in the Adams County community, when after 14 years of allowing and participating in the SGT MAC Wreath Project, the National Park Service (NPS) administration deemed that having a short ceremony in the National Cemetery prior to the laying of wreaths was against regulations. Despite community outrage and appeals, until last week the SGT MAC Wreath Project was not going to happen. I am happy to report that appeals to the Department of the Interior were finally heard – and the Department of the Interior made the correct and sensible decision - reversing the NPS troubling decision. I admit, I may be slightly prejudice on this matter, since Eric was in our Scout Troop and was an Eagle Scout with my son Shaun, and like many others, I have supported this effort almost since its inception. This project not only honors Eric, and all our Veterans, but educates and brings our community together for a common cause.



Per what has become a tradition, this morning, hundreds of community volunteers will gather at GIANT to organize and put bows on 16,000 wreaths. The number has increased by 1,000 each year since the McColley's went to Quantico to place a wreath on Eric's new grave in 2006 - and observed all the graves with no wreaths. After the bows are attached wreaths are then stacked by the volunteers in semi-trailers and prepared for transport to Gettysburg National Cemetery and Quantico National Cemetery. There will be 1,600 wreaths placed at Gettysburg this afternoon and 14,400 will go to Quantico on Saturday. Several hundred volunteers and school groups will gather at Gettysburg and 600-800 individuals and organizations normally gather at Quantico on Saturday.

The traditional short ceremony, preceding the laying of wreaths, will be held at the cemetery rostrum at 1:00 this afternoon. Marine John McColley, Eric's father, will address those attending. Adams County Veterans Director & Marine Stan Clark will remind the volunteers and school children "that placement is not a race, but a time for reflection, to take the time to pause, and read the headstone before placing the wreath, place the wreath a 25-degree angle and make sure the bow is secure to survive the next month." There will be an opening and closing prayer. Then the placing of 1,600 wreaths at Gettysburg begins, and our community reflects on the moment, breathes a sigh of relief that this fitting and appropriate event honoring our native son Eric, and symbolically honoring all of our Veterans, continues to flourish in Adams County!

COVID Increases in Adams County

In an update on Wednesday, WellSpan reported they are currently experiencing some of the highest number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients since the start of the pandemic – about 300 across their six acute care hospitals in recent days.

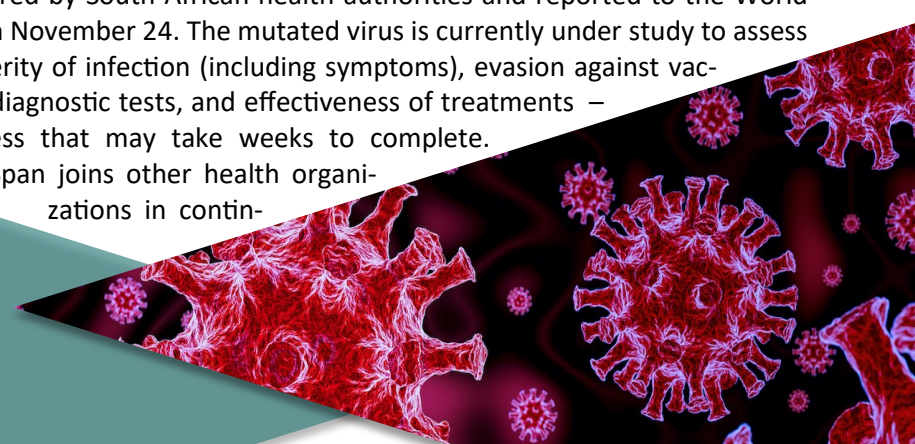
Of particular note:

- **88%** of hospitalized COVID-19 patients across our six WellSpan acute care hospitals are unvaccinated.
- **92%** of COVID-19 patients hospitalized in WellSpan intensive care units are unvaccinated.
- **93%** percent of WellSpan hospitalized patients requiring a ventilator to breathe are unvaccinated.

The WellSpan update referenced that this same time last year they saw the largest surge of COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic. This again appears to be a factor as people spend more time indoors and with those who may be unvaccinated.

WellSpan has implemented several protocols to manage the volume and severity of this situation and are currently re-deploying resources and delaying non-emergent care across our system of 200+ care locations.

Also, the WellSpan update provided information regarding the new COVID-19 variant, B.1.1.529 or Omicron as follows: The Omicron variant was discovered by South African health authorities and reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) on November 24. The mutated virus is currently under study to assess transmissibility, severity of infection (including symptoms), evasion against vaccines and diagnostic tests, and effectiveness of treatments – a process that may take weeks to complete. WellSpan joins other health organizations in contin-





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...ing to advise individuals within our communities to take measures to reduce their risk of COVID-19. This includes proven public health and social measures, such as wearing well-fitting face masks, hand hygiene, physical distancing, improving ventilation of indoor spaces, avoiding crowded spaces, and getting vaccinated.

A reminder that COVID Testing is on-going at the Adams County Department of Emergency Services (911 Center). Drive thru hours are Monday – Friday 8 AM-8 PM and Saturday - Sunday 8 AM-12 PM. Appointments are required but readily available. Go to mywellspan.org to schedule an on-line appointment or call 885-851-3641.

2022 Tentative Adams County Budget Proposed

At Wednesday's Board of Commissioners Public Meeting the 2022 Tentative Budget was adopted. After a Budget Department presentation, with a menu of options for a balanced budget; the Board voted to utilize \$4M in reserves and the lowest tax increase option of 0.25 mills for projecting and visioning a budget for the next 4 -years. The last tax increase was 4-years ago. This tax increase for the average homeowner is \$4.17 per month. Besides increased costs of goods and services, hiring, retention and salaries have dramatically altered this budget landscape . Having sufficient qualified staff, to provide the essential services for the safety and welfare of Adams County residents, has become significantly more difficult and expensive since the pandemic; but cannot responsibly be diminished. The 161-page 2022 Tentative Budget can be accessed on-line at www.adamscounty.us or by hard copy at the Commissioners office.

Federal Infrastructure Bill Slated to Provide Billions to PA

On November 15, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which provides \$973 billion over five years from FY 2022 through FY 2026, including \$550 billion in new investments for all modes of transportation, water, power and energy, environmental remediation, public lands, broadband and resilience.

According to White House estimates, over the next five years Pennsylvania will receive \$1 billion for bridge replacement and repairs, \$2.8 billion for public transportation, \$171 million for electric vehicle infrastructure and networking and at least \$100 million for broadband deployment. Additionally, there will be funding for the Affordability Connectivity Benefit, which will help low-income families afford internet access, \$26 million for cybersecurity and various programs for flooding pre-mitigation and community resilience. While many of these pots of funding are designed to become grant programs at the state and local level, details on exactly how funding may come down to Pennsylvania counties is still undetermined. The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania states they will continue to keep counties informed as more details become available.

PA County Commissioners Association Sets 2022 Priorities

At the recent Fall Conference, the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania set their priorities for 2022. Commissioners voted on their top 6 priorities. Mental Health Funding was voted as the top priority, replacing Election Reform in 2021. Elections still garnered 2 top priorities in 2022. This current year 2021 priorities were: Election Reform, Broadband Expansion, Emergency Medical Service Crisis Solutions, Funding For Human Services & Increase Funding For Community Based Mental Health. Here are the top 6 CCAP priorities for 2022:

1. Human Services Workforce Crisis
2. Broadband Expansion
3. CYS Funding Reform
4. Election Integrity
5. 911Funding and Reauthorization in 2024
6. Funding Resources for Elections



The End

Tonight at 7:30PM, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (30 Chambersburg Street) will host Gettysburg native Dr. John A. Wolfe, who will perform a recital on the church's recently expanded Schlicker Organ Company pipe organ. Dr. Wolfe's program will juxtapose Baroque and Modern music to portray a spiritual journey from darkness into light. Featured on the program will be *Chasm* by American composer William Albright, *The Ascension* by French composer Olivier Messiaen, and two works by Johann Sebastian Bach: *Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee* and *Before Thy Throne I Now Appear*. The concert will be free and open to the public and is presented in conjunction with Gettysburg First Fridays. A freewill offering will benefit the artist. Dr. Wolfe is a New York City-based organist, choral conductor, and music educator. He serves as Organist and Music Director at St. Philip's Episcopal Church and as Organist at Horeb Seventh Day Adventist Church, both in Brooklyn, New York. His recent performance highlights have included the Aspen Music Festival in Aspen, CO, the Sunday Afternoon Kilgen Organ Recital Series at St. Patrick's Cathedral in NYC, and an appearance on the Naxos Records release *Songs of Peace and Praise: Choral Music from Queens College*. Dr. Wolfe is a recipient of the Organ Historical Society's E. Power Biggs Fellowship and has served as the Dean of the American Guild of Organists Brooklyn Chapter. Dr. Wolfe is the son of John Wolfe and Kristin Rice.

The Gettysburg Outlets is offering *free carriage rides* through the Land Of Lights each Friday & Saturday evening through Christmas. Beginning November 26, experience *Five Christmases At The Historic Shriver House* on Baltimore Street. Hear and see how very different each of five Shriver Christmases were affected by the civil war. Price is \$12 for adults and \$10 for children. *James & The Giant Peach*, from December 3rd-12th at The Gettysburg Community Theater is perfect for young audiences and the entire family. Tickets should be purchased in advance for \$15 and are \$20 at the door. Go to www.gettysburgcommunitytheater.org This afternoon at 3:00 PM the *Gettysburg College Symphony Orchestra* will perform a large variety of music at the Majestic Theater. Price is \$5 for Adults and Children are free. This Friday & Saturday head to *Hollabaugh's 12TH Annual Holiday Open House*. There will be products to sample, refreshments, sales, and specials. Kids can make holiday crafts while they last.

The Phiel family had a great time last Saturday taking our granddaughters to Showers Tree Farm in Aspers for our Christmas trees. Besides nice fresh trees that they shake, wrap and drill, the girls get to see turkeys, pigs, and goats up close, got a picture taken with Santa, went to the playground, and finished our adventure by going on a hayride through the orchards to see the live "reindeer." Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol* returns December 9 to the Majestic Theater. This is a don't miss Christmas tradition. Tickets are \$32-\$38. Another don't miss is the *Annual Christmas Tuba Fest* on Lincoln Square. This is a free event so bundle up and enjoy this magical performance while enjoying some hot chocolate.

No matter what you do, get out there and enjoy all the historic, recreational, agricultural, natural, and cultural opportunities that beautiful Adams County has to offer!