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from  
*Adams County*

written by: Commissioner Randy Phiel

April 4, 2025

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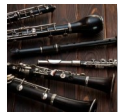
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# PENNSYLVANIA AGRICULTURAL DISCOVERY CENTER

*WHERE IT ALL BEGINS*



## PA Ag Discovery Center Headed To Mt Joy Township

It has been almost three years since the Adams County Board of Commissioners, Adams County Planning Department, Destination Gettysburg and the Adams County Economic Alliance collaborated to highlight Adams County's attributes to the Pennsylvania Ag Discovery Center (PADC) search committee. The process concluded with Adams County being selected from a pool of several surrounding counties. A feasibility study was done, an executive director was selected, and the search for a suitable location along the Rt. 15 corridor commenced. Unfortunately, the search for a suitable location got bogged down for a variety of reasons.

I finally have good news to report! I was pleased to attend the March 20th Mt. Joy Township



meeting, with PADC Executive Director Tom O'Connor, to announce that a location for the center has been identified in open fields to the south of the Gettysburg Outlets. A contract between the parties has been executed. The area had previously been identified as Phase 2 of the Outlet Project and has the necessary infrastructure to support the project. Beside the stand-alone appeal, the PADC should bring fresh energy to that area of Mt. Joy Township.

Given the potential benefit to both Adams County's Agricultural & Tourism communities, at the Commissioners April 2 public meeting, the Board approved providing \$190,000 of dedicated pillow tax funds to support the scoping and land development of this site. The main goals of the PADC are to highlight Pennsylvania's broad range of Agriculture, make the public aware of the many careers in agriculture, and to educate youth to the importance and scope of the industry.

I have said many times that this is a big deal for Mt. Joy Township, Adams County and Pennsylvania!

## Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Program

As of 2023, over 7 million Vietnam Veterans live in the United States and abroad. It wasn't until 2017 that The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act designated March 29<sup>TH</sup> as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Unlike other conflicts such as WWI, WWII, Korea, and the Gulf War, soldiers returning home from Vietnam, were sometimes greeted with anger or hostility and received a lack of recognition.

This past Saturday it was my pleasure to attend the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Program at the Gettysburg VFW. Among other recognition, Vietnam veterans in attendance were presented Vietnam War Pins by retired Colonel Doug Mastriano. A selection of patriotic music was thoroughly enjoyed by the attendees. The program concluded outside with a 21-gun salute and the playing of Taps.

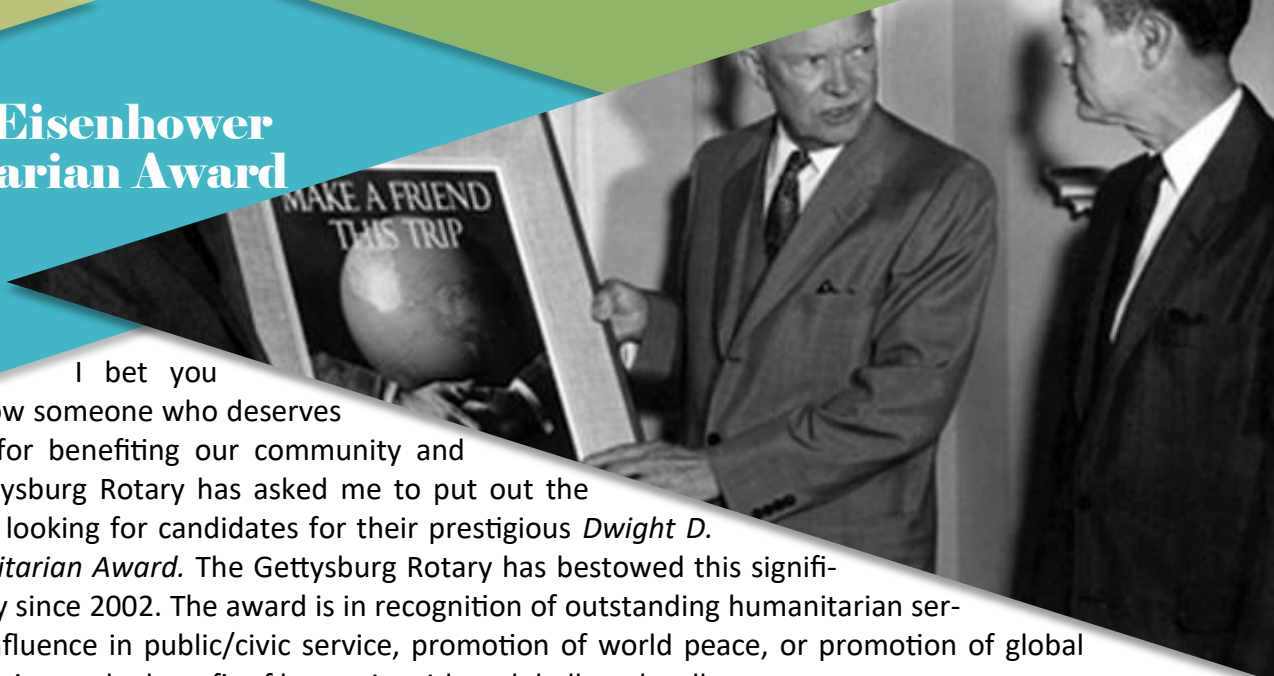
## AC Receives GFOA Financial Excellence Budgeting Award

We are proud to report that Adams County received the *Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* for its budget. As taken from the release: "It reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff in meeting the highest principles of government budgeting. Budget documents must be rated proficient in all 4 categories, and in the 14 mandatory criteria within those categories to receive the award."

Creating a superior budget is a Team Effort with many processes. A shout out to Department Directors, Department of Office and Budget, Treasurer, Controller and County Administration for their efforts to make and keep Adams County a fiscally superior County!



# Rotary Eisenhower Humanitarian Award



I bet you know someone who deserves recognition for benefiting our community and residents. The Gettysburg Rotary has asked me to put out the word that they are looking for candidates for their prestigious *Dwight D. Eisenhower Humanitarian Award*. The Gettysburg Rotary has bestowed this significant award annually since 2002. The award is in recognition of outstanding humanitarian service and positive influence in public/civic service, promotion of world peace, or promotion of global knowledge contributing to the benefit of humanity either globally or locally.

Nominations must be submitted by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Nominees must be residents of Adams or Franklin Counties. The award will be presented at a special meeting of the Rotary Club in October. For further information go to [gettysburgrotary.org](http://gettysburgrotary.org) or contact a Gettysburg Rotary Club member.

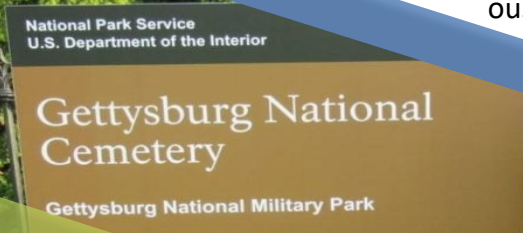
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## Wendy Allen Receives Award At Dest. Gettysburg Annual Meeting

On Monday evening at the Destination Gettysburg Annual Meeting, Gettysburg artist Wendy Allen received the Jim Getty Award for her service, support and facilitation of the tourism industry in Adams County. Besides her art, Wendy is best known for her conception and administration of *100 Night Of Taps* program, that takes place in the Soldiers National Cemetery each evening between Memorial and Labor Day. Buglers come from across the country to volunteer to have the honor of playing Taps in the National Cemetery. The playing of Taps in the cemetery is preceded by a National Park Service Interpretative Program. According to GNMP Chief of Interpretation Chris Gwinn, *100 Night of Taps* has been rated as the favorite program by visitors for the past 7 years. Wendy best described the experience simply as "Good for the Soul." There is no doubt it is a moving experience! Having received the award in 2023, I can attest that it is both a proud moment and humbling to receive this award.

Several new additions to our local tourism industry were introduced at the meeting. Renovation and expansion of the *Barn Resort*, along with the acquisition of All Star Resort by the same owners promises to energize the Greenmount corridor. The site acquisition of property for the *Pennsylvania AG Discovery Center* is a hot off the press exciting new development. The renovation and revitalization of the historic train station on North Washington Street will bring *excursion trains* back to Adams County. Regular and theme runs will go 10 miles to Aspers, and charter runs can go 25-miles to Mt. Holly Springs. Five original Barnum & Bailey Circus cars from the 1950's are being restored for service. Trains are expected to begin running late this summer.

Its Not Just About The Battle Anymore! It is quite evident that tourism opportunities in Adams County are stimulating, varied and expanding continuously, enhanced by forward thinking businesses and collaboration with the folks at Destination Gettysburg!



## Adams County Recognized For Superior Workman's Comp History

Being just 1 of 67 counties in Pennsylvania, and recently receiving the *Terry Barham Claims Experience Award* for the lowest Workman's Comp experience in the State, is quite an achievement that has multiple benefits. As the saying goes, "It takes a village", or in this case folks from several departments within the County and a good claims staff at CCAP to manage the County's Workers' Comp claims.

But in acknowledging this award, we would be remiss if we did not recognize the time and effort that Assistant Human Resources Director Danette Laughman puts into following up and managing each and every work injury experienced by County employees. Danette is fair in her approach and balances the best interests of the injured employee with the County's need to return injured workers to productivity. During her tenure Danette has fine-tuned her understanding of the statutory duties of the employer, and the timeline associated with a successful return to work. Danette has had a material impact on helping the County achieve the experience mod of 0.617 that resulted – illustrating once again that Adams County is not just #1 because our name starts with an A!



*The* **End**

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- **Lydia Hamilton Smith & Thaddeus Stevens.** ACHS. This Saturday 2-3. Smith was the mixed-race woman who came to live in Lancaster and share life with Stevens. Based on the book titled "*An Uncommon Woman: The Life of Lydia Hamilton Smith*" by Dr. Mark Kelly. This presentation is a ticketed event. To reserve your tickets, go to [www.achs-pa.org](http://www.achs-pa.org)

- **Black Bag.** Majestic Theater. A gripping spy drama about legendary intelligence agents George Woodhouse and his wife Kathryn.
- **Wind Symphony: Masterworks & Premiers.** Tonight at 8PM. Majestic Theater. Gettysburg College Sunderman Conservatory. \$5 Adults. Students no charge.
- **Grand Opening of Thaddeus Stevens Annex.** Saturday 5PM. Tour the main museum on Chambersburg Street and attend a Thaddeus Stevens presentation at 6:30PM at Christ Lutheran Church. Hear about Thaddeus Stevens, the Emancipation Proclamation, the history of the church and the kidnapping of black citizens during the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863.
- **23<sup>RD</sup> Annual Blessing of the Bikes.** Join Battlefield Harley on Sunday for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Blessing of the Bikes. The first 300 riders will get Blessing Pins. Live music and food trucks. All bikes welcome. Rain date April 27.
- **Welcome To The 60's Piano Bar.** This evening 7PM. **Broadway Teens Concert.** Saturday 7PM. **Disney's Jungle Book.** Last weekend in April and first 2 weekends in May. Tickets selling fast for this one!

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