

Wayne County

NEWS *for* YOU

Volume 1 | Issue 2

NEWSLETTER



FEATURES

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Indian Orchard River Access Complete

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Wayne County NEWS for YOU NEWSLETTER

was designed to help you learn more about who the Wayne County Commissioners are, what they do for your community, and give you more ways to communicate with them.

Jocelyn Cramer Brian W. Smith James Shook



Commissioners Chair Brian Smith,
Jocelyn Cramer and James Shook

You may email them @

- bsmith@waynecountypa.gov
- jcramer@waynecountypa.gov
- jshook@waynecountypa.gov

Or, call them at 570-253-5970 x 4050

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HANKINS POND PARK

A Gift to WAYNE COUNTY



View of industrial era dam

A small piece of paradise in Mount Pleasant Township known as Hankins Pond, is being transformed into a recreational area for all to enjoy.

The 1000-foot-long bluestone Hankins Pond dam, constructed by hand prior to the American Industrial Revolution as one of some 200 reservoirs designed to feed the Delaware & Hudson Canal, stands 26 feet at its center, and the pond was once used to propagate trout for the Pleasant Mount State Fish Hatchery.



Rendering of future public pathways

Dubbed a high-hazard dam, the pond was drained back in 2013. However, engineers at the PA Fish and Boat Commission said the hazard still exists because in the event of a major flood event, the remaining dam structure would hold back enough water to threaten people and property downstream.

In 2016, the state planned to demolish a significant portion of the historic structure but the County Commissioners at the time, Brian Smith, Wendell Kay and Joe Adams worked to develop a plan that would keep as much of the beloved, historical dam intact, while meeting safety requirements. The county successfully delayed the PA Department of Environmental Protection's plans to breach the dam. Since that time, the County acquired approximately 35 acres from the Fish and Boat Commission and signed a long-term lease for an adjacent 73 acres. Plans currently include a process to breach the spillway to prevent significant water retention. The County and the PA Fish and Boat Commission have worked well together to create this public park. Next steps include a gravel trail around the grounds with trail spurs, access to the abandoned hatchery grounds, access to natural streams and water resources, ADA compliant parking area and comfort station, and a picnic pavilion where partners can host educational events. The final result will be a beautiful recreational area that features a very important, and preserved piece of our local history.

The Hankins Park is the result of a great deal of time and vision from county leaders and staff, Woodland Design and PA DEP and PA Fish and Boat Commission and lots of grant funding. Although the full project will take a couple years to complete, the public is able to currently access and enjoy the property.



24/7 FREE *Mental Health Crisis* *Services ARE HERE*

Wayne County and Center for Community Resources (CCR) are excited to announce the anticipated December opening of the Northeast Regional Crisis Stabilization Center at 100 Park Street in Honesdale. The center will provide immediate help to those experiencing an active mental health crisis. There will be skilled behavioral health staff available 24/7, who aim to de-escalate crises, assess individuals' needs, and provide them with additional referrals.

This new center will significantly enhance crisis intervention services for residents of Wayne County and the surrounding areas. Several programs will be housed within the new building. The walk-in stabilization center offers a safe, comfortable space for those in crisis to receive prompt assessment, stabilization, and referral to after care services.

This service is comparable to an "Urgent Care", but for behavioral health. Individuals of all ages, who want help, can utilize this service rather than the Emergency Department when in crisis. Emergency Departments across the nation do not have the necessary staff or specific providers needed when someone presents with a mental health crisis, so they are often unassisted for long periods of time, while concurrently impeding emergency service care for others. Individuals can stay in the walk-in center for up to 24 hours. If longer treatment and stabilization is needed (for adults, up to 5-7 days), the 8-bed, 24/7 crisis residential program, is staffed by a multidisciplinary team of professionals comprised of therapists, nurses, and peer specialists and is located in the same building. Lastly, a state-of-the-art call center is located in the building where staff will answer telephone crisis calls from Wayne County and overflow calls from other counties CCR serves. Mobile crisis services are also available- crisis intervention specialists dispatched by the call center can come to your home or meet you in the community.

As a part of the larger Recovery To Work project, Wayne County successfully gathered state and philanthropic grant funding, as well as a federal appropriation to purchase and renovate the former women's health building in Honesdale. Wayne County Office of Behavioral & Developmental Programs & Early Intervention and Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health & Developmental Services partnered to apply and secure a large grant to cover startup and operation costs. Once fully operational, the crisis center will bring 45 jobs to Wayne County.

CCR has been providing crisis intervention services in Wayne County since 2021 in partnership with Wayne County Office of Behavioral & Developmental Programs & Early Intervention. Please stay tuned for an announcement on an opening date for the new center. While we wait for an official opening date for the new center please be assured 24/7 telephone, mobile and walk-in crisis services are available now by calling 1-833-55REACH (1-833-557-3224) or texting 63288.

In addition to crisis services, an array of mental health services are available here in Wayne County. For information and/or referral to services please contact Wayne County Office of Behavioral & Developmental Programs & Early Intervention at 570-253-9200. You can also visit us online at: waynecountypa.gov/155/Behavioral-and-Developmental-Programs



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AMBULANCE RESPONSE Times *A Growing Concern for Our Community*

In 2023 the average response time in Wayne County for an ambulance was 23 minutes, now it is over 40 minutes. Here's why.

Wayne County has a population of approximately 51,200 and is just over 750 square miles. In warm weather months, our population nearly doubles with the addition of summer campers, seasonal residents and tourists. For these reasons alone, emergency response in Wayne County is a challenge, but lately, ambulance services are losing volunteers, vehicle costs have surged, and vital employees are harder than ever to attract and retain. This is a reality for rural counties across our nation. Here in Wayne County, there are good people trying to improve this situation. You can help too.

Over the past few years, ambulance response times have gotten much longer. Fewer ambulance providers are in our area because they can't financially sustain the cost of serving a rural community. Those that are here are working harder than ever to respond to the calls that come in. Although ambulance providers can bill insurance companies, many calls are not eligible for reimbursement, and most of the time, premiums paid do not cover their costs. Fire and emergency medical services are the responsibility of townships and boroughs in Pennsylvania, including the appropriate financial and administrative assistance for these services. However, every municipality doesn't need its own firehouse or ambulance, as some townships have fewer than 25 emergency calls a year. At a recent Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors meeting in Wayne County, there was much discussion on this growing concern and how municipalities might help secure the providers that are here in our community.

The county is responsible for 911 operations. Our Emergency Operations Center is staffed with 911 dispatchers and emergency management personnel. In recent years, the county has invested in significant upgrades to the 911 communication services to help save lives. When a 911 call comes in, dispatchers are aided with the best available technology to locate All available resources (Ambulances, Quick Response Vehicles, Firetrucks, etc.) and to dispatch as necessary. This dedicated team is also trained to assist callers with their emergency as responders are on route, and they have helped save countless lives.

On a positive note, Wayne Memorial Hospital has a 24/7 emergency department, and labor and delivery services, and has been serving this community for over 100 years. According to the PA Department of Health, 22 of PA's 67 counties (33%) do not have labor and delivery services. At least ambulances have a hospital option right here in Honesdale.

As community leaders work hard to improve ambulance response times, we ask everyone to help. If you receive donation or membership requests from any emergency response providers, please support them. Your donations are needed now more than ever. And volunteers are always welcome! If you have questions about the providers in your area and what your municipality is doing to provide adequate emergency medical services, please attend your local meetings and support your municipal leaders as they work to improve this situation for all.

911 CALL IF YOU CAN, TEXT IF YOU CAN'T (did you know you can text 911, too?)

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PROVIDER	TOTAL CALLS DISPATCHED IN WAYNE COUNTY in 2025
Northern Wayne Ambulance	168
Pleasant Mount Ambulance	176
Newfoundland Ambulance	210
Tusten Ambulance	221
Damascus Ambulance	480
Forest City Ambulance	576
White Mills Ambulance	1,347
Hamlin Ambulance	1,492
Cottage Ambulance	2,306
Pennsylvania Ambulance	3,122
Total	10,098
Monthly average	842
Daily average	28



Remembering **WENDELL KAY**



Attorney Wendell Kay died unexpectedly on June 30, just hours after returning home from a long-desired family vacation to Ireland to do some genealogy research, explore the quaint villages and countryside and to share a pint with newfound friends at several local taverns.

Wendell, who resided in Honesdale, was a County Commissioner from 2008-2019 and then served dutifully as the appointed County Solicitor from 2020-until his untimely passing. He has a long list of community involvement and achievements, had a long and influential career as an attorney, an elected official and a coach and was always proud of the way things operated here in Wayne County, especially our Elections and Human Services.

He served on the boards of the Wayne County Public Library Board, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program of Wayne, Pike and Berks counties, the YMCA and St. John's Roman Catholic Church. Wendell was a lot of things to a lot of people. His storytelling was what drew people in but his genuineness, his friendship and his sense of humor were what kept people coming back. He is survived by his wife Karen, his three children, Susan, Kevin and Maureen and eight grandchildren.

WAYNE COUNTY HAS BENEFITED GREATLY FROM HIS DECADES OF PUBLIC SERVICE, AND HE WILL BE DEEPLY MISSED BY MANY IN OUR COMMUNITY.



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INDIAN ORCHARD *River Access* COMPLETE

Did you know that Wayne County has more bodies of water than any other county in Pennsylvania, including a sizable portion of Lake Wallenpaupack? We are fortunate to have the mighty Delaware, the Lackawaxen, the Dyberry and other rivers run through our county, but public access was limited.

NOT ANYMORE!

Have you stopped to enjoy any of the river access parks along the Lackawaxen River? Even if you aren't a fisherman or a paddler, they are wonderful places to sit and enjoy the peace of the water flowing by, maybe have a picnic, and watch for wildlife such as ducks and eagles.

SYCAMORE POINT PARK IS ON 12TH STREET IN HONESDALE, AND THERE ARE RIVER ACCESSES IN WHITE MILLS ON WHITE MILLS ROAD AND IN HAWLEY ALONG PARK PLACE.

A FOURTH RIVER ACCESS PARK IS NOW ADDED TO THIS LIST! It is in Indian Orchard along Route 6, next door to The Dime Bank building near Route 652 in Texas Township. **THE ADDITION OF THIS RIVER ACCESS IS PERFECT FOR THOSE LOOKING FOR A QUICK TRIP ON THE RIVER AND FOR FIRST-TIME PADDLERS, AS IT IS ONLY ABOUT 2 MILES TO THE WHITE MILLS ACCESS.** The whole river trail from Honesdale to Hawley is roughly 9 miles.

We are most grateful to the PA Fish and Boat Commission, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund, The Dime Bank, the Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau, the Wayne County Commissioners, Grimm Construction, Honesdale Lions Club, Honesdale Rotary Club, Honesdale National Bank, Wayne Bank, Human Resources Foundation, John and Helen Villaume Foundation, Roark Family Fund, Top Notch and the Jurgensen Family, Wayne County Community Foundation and all the volunteers of the Lackawaxen River Trail for making this project happen. Thanks to all of them for making this river access area...

Yours to enjoy!






Thank You!

The 4th public access is complete
along the Lackawaxen River between
Honesdale and Hawley!



1059 Route 6 - Indian Orchard

LackawaxenRiverTrails.org

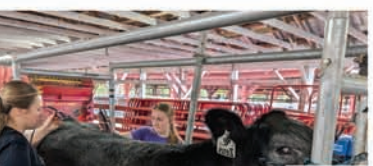


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GROWING LEADERS WHO ARE BEYOND READY

The Impact of

4-H IN WAYNE COUNTY

"I pledge my Head to clearer thinking, my Heart to greater loyalty, my Hands to larger service, and my Health to better living, for my Club, my Community, my Country, and my World". For over a century, Wayne County 4-H members have worked hard not only to build their own personal skills and achievements, but they have also been positively supporting our local community. 4-H is a non-formal educational program that gives its members the opportunity to develop hard and soft life skills through hands-on experiential learning. Members who age out of our 4-H program had the opportunity to gain skills to transition them into well-rounded, compassionate, successful adults who want to give back to their communities.

Part of a 4-H member's experience involves joining at least one 4-H club, where they participate in monthly meetings to plan and execute a plethora of community service projects, learn about their 4-H projects, and complete educational activities. As youth get older, they get the opportunity to take on a leadership role to be able to make the decisions on how their club is run. Meetings are conducted using parliamentary procedure, and the President of the club is responsible for running the meeting while being supported by the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and club leaders. Some clubs also have other leadership roles, such as news reporter, game/activity leader, or snack leader.

Members gain responsibility through selection and completion of 4-H projects throughout the program year, which runs from Oct. 1st to Sept. 30th. Our program offers over 100 different projects that members can choose from in areas such as: Animal Science, Plant Science, Health/Safety, Environmental Science, STEM, Expressive Arts, Food/Nutrition, and more! For full project completion, members are to complete record books to gain organization, goal-setting, financial, and marketing skills they can use throughout their lives.

I like to say that our youth, especially those who take a market livestock project and could participate in our Wayne County 4-H & FFA Livestock Sale, are small entrepreneurs. They get to experience what it is like to have a small business in a more controlled environment with the guidance of leaders, Extension Staff, and mentors along the way. **THE WORK ETHIC, SELF-RESPONSIBILITY, DILIGENCE, DECISION-MAKING, AND SELF-CONFIDENCE LIFE SKILLS THAT OUR MEMBERS GAIN THROUGHOUT THEIR 4-H CAREER OPENS DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO CONTINUE TO GROW AS THEY MATURE INTO ADULTHOOD.**

Visit our Penn State Extension- Wayne County Facebook page to see what our clubs are up to and help us celebrate National 4-H Week! Clubs will be putting up displays in local businesses to show the community some of the awesome things they do throughout the year.

Submitted by Chelsea Hill, Penn State Extension-Livestock and 4-H Animal Science Educator and Jessica Scull, Penn State Extension 4-H Educator. For more information about the Wayne County 4-H program call the Wayne County Extension Office at 570-253-0880 or email wayneext@psu.edu.



WAYNE COUNTY'S BRIAN SMITH

Named 2025

COMMISSIONER OF THE YEAR

THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA (CCAP) NAMED WAYNE COUNTY COMMISSIONER CHAIRMAN BRIAN W. SMITH AS COMMISSIONER OF THE YEAR during its annual conference in Somerset County in August. He is the first Commissioner from Wayne County to receive this honor. Smith, of Damascus Township, has served as Commissioner since 2008. CCAP officials lauded him for his ability to put the good of the county ahead of politics and personal gain and his ability to govern with common sense and compassion.

While the list of accomplishments under his tenure is long, he was specifically praised for the role he played in the formation and success of the Wayne Tomorrow! initiative; the Wayne Economic Growth Fund; the opening of multiple county waterways, trails and parks projects; broadband improvements, the Stourbridge Project and his efforts in getting the agriculture curriculum restarted at Honesdale High School. At CCAP, Smith serves as chairman of the Agriculture Committee and the 11-county consortium that encompasses District 7.

"HEARING THAT WAS AFFIRMATION THAT ALL OUR EFFORTS OVER THE PAST 18 YEARS HAVE BEEN WORTHWHILE AND I'M GLAD OTHERS ARE RECOGNIZING THE WAYNE COUNTY WAY TRULY WORKS." Crediting all the commissioners, chief clerks and solicitors he's served with, he also thanked county employees for all they do and contributing to making Wayne County a great place to live, work in, visit and raise a family.



AGROLEGACY'S FOOD LOCKER *Pilot Program* **BEGINS**

The Wayne Tomorrow! Agriculture Task Force has a prime focus on helping our local farmers earn a livable wage and getting fresh, locally grown products on the plates of our residents. The AgroLegacy brand is one way we are preserving the business of farming in our community, providing local producers, processors, markets and eateries with a stronger voice and consumers with an easier way to support local business and their families.

THE AGROLEGACY BRAND BENEFITS ALL WHO PARTICIPATE, SINCE THE EASILY RECOGNIZABLE LABEL TELLS EVERY CUSTOMER, THIS IS GROWN IN BEAUTIFUL WAYNE COUNTY, AND ASSURES HIGH QUALITY FARM PRODUCTS SUPPORTING RURAL FARMERS.

AgroLegacy is proud to announce the rollout of our Food Locker Pilot Program, helping extend farmers' reach beyond markets. With the rise in popularity of online shopping and food delivery, the Food Lockers will help farmers and local grocers keep up with demand. **PLACED IN WAYMART, HAWLEY AND NORTHERN WAYNE COUNTY, FOOD LOCKERS WITH THREE TYPES OF TEMPERATURE-CONTROLLED STORAGE LOCKERS:** dry (ambient), refrigerated, and frozen will allow sellers to reach more customers. This ensures not only food storage safety, but also more options for the consumer – ordering both fresh and frozen products at the same time for one stop shopping. **The Lockers are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**, creating more access to fresh, nutrient-dense foods, on any schedule.

Wayne County is proud of its AgroLegacy and is working hard through **Wayne Tomorrow!** to secure a vibrant and prosperous legacy for generations to come. To watch instructional videos, learn more about the Food Lockers, or to stay up to date on local agriculture news, visit www.AgroLegacy.org.



PROTECTING *Vanishing* FARMLAND



While Wayne County is known throughout the region for its natural beauty and rich agriculture, only 17% of land in the United States is ideal for farming, making the protection and preservation of our farmland here in Wayne County of utmost importance. Being one of the fastest growing counties in Pennsylvania coupled with the dwindling number of farms and acres that are devoted to farming gives rise to concerns for our future of agriculture and emphasizes the importance of preserving our remaining farmland.

In 1989 the Wayne County Commissioners created the Agricultural Land Preservation Program to aid in this effort. The program was designed to prevent the development of agricultural land through the purchase of perpetual conservation easements. The development rights of these easements are purchased from the current owner and remain in perpetuity, leaving the land available for agricultural use, for all future generations. This process supports our local farm families while also supporting our local economy.

SIMPLY PUT, THEY AREN'T MAKING ANY MORE FARMLAND.

Additional information on preserving farmland can be found by scanning the QR code or visiting waynecountypa.gov and searching "Agricultural Land Preservation" in the search bar or call 570-253-5970 ext. 1311.





\$5 VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEE *to help* WAYNE COUNTY BRIDGES

Wayne County owns and operates only 3 roads: one to the Wayne County Correctional Facility, one to the Wayne County Recycling Center and the newly acquired Hankins Pond gravel trail, as a part of the Hankins Park project (see Hankins Pond article in this issue). However, the county owns and must maintain 37 bridges. On average, these bridges are over 50 years old, and a few are much older than that. Earlier this spring, after consecutive heavy water events, an old stone arch bridge washed out on Fairmont Road in Starrucca and remains closed while design work is being completed for its restoration. The County must inspect, repair and replace these bridges to keep travelers safe. With no adequate source of income for these bridges, the County Commissioners implemented the PA Department of Transportation's Fee for Local Use.

ON NOVEMBER 1, 2025, ALL NON-EXEMPT VEHICLES REGISTERED IN WAYNE COUNTY WILL BE SUBJECT TO AN ANNUAL \$5 FEE THAT WILL APPEAR ON YOUR ANNUAL REGISTRATION RENEWAL WITH PENNDOT. All funds collected from this fee, made possible under Act 89 of 2013, must be used by the county to fix or replace county-owned bridges. Rather than having to take out bonds or increase taxes to pay for their repairs or replacements, these funds can be used to offset those options. Wayne is the 25th county (out of 67) in the state to enact this fee.

HAVING A DEDICATED INCOME STREAM FOR THESE BRIDGES WILL ALLOW THE CURRENT COMMISSIONERS AS WELL AS FUTURE COMMISSIONERS THE ABILITY TO REPAIR BRIDGES AS SOON AS REPAIRS ARE DEEMED NECESSARY, AND AVOID BRIDGE CLOSURES, WHICH CAN BE DEVASTATING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEARBY RESIDENTS. Annual income expectation to Wayne County from the Fee for Local Use program is approximately \$300,000 - \$350,000.



CONNECT WITH US!



The Wayne County **website** has a great deal of information and **6 short videos** that provide a virtual tour of Wayne County.



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Wayne County NEWS for YOU

Volume 1 | Issue 2

NEWSLETTER



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FEATURES

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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& more!

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