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Volume 45
Number 8

Wednesday, July 29, 2026

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Clearfield Ministerium steps up with Stuff the Bus campaign

By Andy Stine
astine@altoonamirror.com

CLEARFIELD — The Clearfield Ministerium has been running a Stuff the Bus program at the Clearfield County Fair for about 12 years, with Pastor Bob Achey leading the project for about half of its years in existence.

Achey, a retired pastor of First Baptist Church of Clearfield, serves as the treasurer of the Clearfield Ministerium. The Stuff the Bus program is one that has great importance for everyone at the Ministerium.

“We know there are kids in this area who cannot afford what it takes (to succeed),” Achey said.

Each year at the Clearfield County Fair, a Fullington school bus is parked near the farm animals and visitors are invited to fill the bus with school supplies.

The Ministerium collects No. 2 pencils, crayons, colored pencils, markers, backpacks, notebooks, glue sticks, boys and girls underwear, socks, pencil boxes, index cards and paper. All supplies collected are donated to the Clearfield Area School District.

Not only are the stu-

dents of Clearfield taken care of through the program, but the Ministerium also collects money for nurses at Clearfield for their supply needs, as well.

“The schools just don’t supply like they used to,” Achey said. “We usually do fairly well with it here.”

Not only is the county usually ready to help donate, but everyone at the Clearfield County Fairgrounds and the Fullington Bus Co. also is willing to accommodate the Ministerium.

“The day I called to ask for permission (for the fair), they sent me to the fair director (Greg Hallstrom), and I said, ‘Greg, it’s Pastor Achey.’ He said, ‘Right up next to the cattle barn,’” Achey said. “He knew what I was calling about. When I called Fullington, they recognized my number and they said, ‘Hi, Pastor. What day and when?’”



Achey also noted that Fullington will also be donating school supplies collected to the Clearfield Area School District.

Achey said some will drop off full backpacks stocked with various

supplies. By the end of fair week, the Ministerium usually has around 18-20 boxes filled with various supplies.

About three years ago, Achey picked up an estimate of about 8,000 note-

books from the Walmart Distribution Center in Woodland.

“The principal just said we won’t need notebooks for a while,” Achey said.

The organization can

be found on Facebook at Clearfield Ministerium. They also maintain a website called Love-Clearfield.com, which is a growing directory of more than 125 resources around the borough.

Colonial Courtyard at Clearfield hosts Polish festival

Colonial Courtyard at Clearfield is inviting the community to experience an afternoon of Polish culture, food and family-friendly fun during its Polish Festival slated to be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday, July 31.

Guests can purchase authentic Polish cuisine, enjoy live music and dancing, and browse a variety of local vendors and artisans while spending time with residents, staff and members of the community.

Visitors will also have the opportunity to tour Colonial Courtyard.

“We always have a great time with everyone who comes out to celebrate these events with our wonderful residents and staff,” said

Robyn Womer, Life Stories Director at Colonial Courtyard at Clearfield.

“Our Polish Festival is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate culture while opening our doors to anyone who would like to experience the warm,

welcoming atmosphere that makes our community feel like home.”

For more information, contact Colonial Courtyard at Clearfield at 814-765-2246 or visit 1300 Leonard St., Clearfield.

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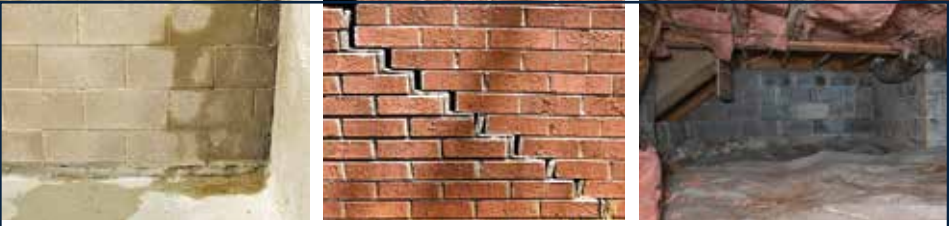
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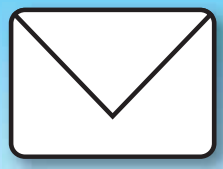
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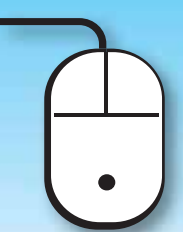
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PUBLIC ESTATE AUCTION

FORGY’S SPEED, SPORTS, & PAWN SHOP

Sunday, August 2, 2026 - 9 AM www.rgilliganauctions.com

Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner will conduct a Public Estate Auction for The Dick “Wild Man” Forgas Estate of the former Forgy’s Speed, Sports, and Pawn Shop that opened in 1972 located at 2814 Rte. 764 Duncansville, PA. 16635...This is a brief ad of a continuation of old speed shop items...Curtis Key Cutting Machine – Assorted Truck/Car Accessories & Performance Items - Battery Operated Hand Tools – CDs – DVD Movies – Gaming Items – Pawn Shop Items - Hunting & Fishing Items – Compound Bows – Tools – Misc. Items...No Internet, absentee, or phone bids will be accepted - no buyers' premiums. Terms: Cash or Check only by conclusion of auction. Food & Job Johnny Available day of auction - tents if needed. Auctioneers: Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner, #AU339-L & #AU3430-L & #AU5442-L.

All oral info day of auction takes precedence over any & all written ads.
Owner & auctioneers not responsible in case of accidents.

ESTATE COIN AUCTION

Saturday, August 1, 2026 – 9 a.m. (Centre Co., PA.)

www.rgilliganauctions.com

Morgan & Peace Silver Dollars - Proof & Uncirculated American Eagle Silver Dollars
Premier & Prestige Silver Proof Sets - US Mint Silver Proof Sets - Paper Money
Barber Halves - Many Silver Commemorative Dollars & Halves - Indian Head Cents
Columbian Exposition Silver Halves - V Nickels - Standing Liberty Quarters - State Quarters

Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner will conduct a Public Estate Auction located at the Ferguson Township Lions Club 424 W. Pine Grove Rd. Pine Grove Mills, PA. 16868. From State College, take Rt. 45 West to Pine Grove Mills & continue 1 mile to auction on left. To combat identity fraud: if you are not known by the auctioneer and want to pay with a check, we will hold your coins at our office until your check has cleared.

Morgan Silver Dollars: New Orleans 1883-1884-1885 3-pc. set in case, San Francisco 1880-1881-1882 3-pc. set in case, 1882 S Slabbed & Graded MS 63, 1882 O Slabbed & Graded MS 61, 1887 Slabbed & Graded MS 62...1879 - 1879 S - (2) 1886 - 1887 - (2) 1889 - 1880 - (3) 1880 O - 1881 S - 1882 - 1884 - 1885 - 1885 O - (3) 1886 - 1887 O - (2) 1889 - (2) 1889 O - 1888 O - 1889 - (5) 1889 O - 1890 - (2) 1890 CC - 1892 O - (3) 1896 - (2) 1896 O - 1898 S - (3) 1900 O - 1901 O - 1902 - (4) 1904 O - (12) 1921 - (4) 1921 S - (5) 1921 D...Peace Silver Dollars: (8) 1922 - (3) 1923 - 1923 S - (2) 1924 - (2) 1925 - & 1935 S; Colorized American Eagle Silver Dollars: 1999 - (3) 2000 - & 2001 Christmas; American Eagle Silver Dollars: 1987 - (2) 1988 - 1989 - 1990 - 1991 - 1992 - 1993 - 1995 - 1996 - 1997 - 1999 - 2000 - (2) 2002 - (2) 2003 - 2012 - 2014 - 2015 - 2017 - 2019 - & 2021; (9) American Eagle Silver Dollar Program coins, (7) Proof American Eagle Silver Dollars in boxes with paperwork, (30) Uncirculated American Eagle Silver Dollars in boxes with paperwork, 2-pc. San Francisco Silver Eagle proof set, (2) 1892 Columbian Exposition silver halves, 1888 Prestige set, 1995 & 1998 Premier silver proof sets, Barber silver halves, many assorted Franklin silver halves, book of (34) Franklin silver halves, Standing Liberty quarters, 50th Anniversary Kennedy silver half dollar collection, (5) 1966 & (6) 1967 Special Mint sets, Bicentennial 3-pc. silver sets, 1988 Olympia Commemorative silver set, 1964 silver Americana Series set, US Proof & Silver Proof sets, George Bush silver coin, many silver Commemorative dollars & halves, 2002 Liberty West Point Bicentennial silver coin, V nickels, Indian Head cents, Confederate \$100 bill, 1929 Brown Seal \$50 bill, 1934A Yellow Seal & 1963 Red Seal \$5 bills, 1935 Yellow Seal \$1 Bill, 1953C Red Seal \$2 bill, assorted \$1 silver certificates, Star Note \$1 silver certificate, Kennedy 40% silver halves, proof quarters, Thomas Jefferson coin/currency set, (2) Ben Franklin Coin in Chronicles set, National Community Service Commemorative coin & stamp set... No Internet, absentee, or phone bids will be accepted - no buyers' premiums. Terms: Cash or Check only by conclusion of auction. Food & Restrooms Available day of auction – Auction will be held indoors – Chairs will be provided. Auctioneers: Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner, #AU339-L & #AU3430-L & #AU5442-L.

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PUBLIC AUCTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4 @ 4:00 PM

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HOUSEHOLD & MISCELLANEOUS: (2)Sets of Rena-Ware Pots & Pans, Dolphin Cement Water Fountain, Drive Way Reflective Poles & Reflectors, 55 Gal. Drums, Steel Fence Posts, Galvanized Tub, (2)36" Steel Entrance Doors, Garage Chemicals & Fluids, Asstd. Flower Pots, Autolite 4 Door Cabinet, Garden Hose, Lawn Décor Wooden Wishing Well, Earth Way Garden Seeder, (1x4's, 2x4's, 2x10's, 4x4's,6x6's & Other Asstd. Wood), 10/3 Wire, **New** Elec. Boxes & Switches, 100# Propane Tank W/Multi Valve, Cement Seahorse Bird Bath, Towels, Bedding, Puzzles, Cake Saver, Egg Plate, Asstd. Clear Pattern Glass, Drinking Glasses, Pots, Pans, Cookware, Baskets, Apple Peeler, Octagon Braided Rug, Bag Chairs, Folding Lawn Chairs, Set of (4)Maple Dinner Trays, Lawn Buddy Garden Cart, Igloo Cooler, Home Interior Wall Décor, Jewelry Box, Rubbermaid & Igloo 5 Gal. Water Cooler, Pt & Qt. Canning Jars, Asstd. Holiday Décor, Too Many Smalls to List & Good Box Lots.

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TAG SALE:

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Sheetz
139 S Main Street

CLAYSBURG

Sheetz
12604 Dunning's Hwy.

Martin General Store
185 Arden Street

CLEARFIELD

JG Warehouse
200 River Road

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101 Nichols Street

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COALPORT

Leyos IGA Store
1564 Main Street

Nittany Minit Mart
1135 Main Street

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926 2nd Street

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Martin General Store
4057 Admiral Peary Hwy.

Sheetz
4375 Admiral Perry Hwy

Sheetz
818 West High Street

EVERETT

GIANT #6586
60 West Main Street

Sheetz
11 West Main Street

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Fisherstown Country Store
2095 Quaker Valley Road

FLINTON

Penny Wrens
2149 Beaver Valley Road

FRANKSTOWN

Sandy's
315 Rt. 22

Sheetz
678 Frankstown Rd.

HOLLIDAYSBURG

Hometown Market
810 Church Street

Sheetz
1100 Blair Street

Thompson Pharmacy
510 Blair Street

HOUTZDALE

Shop N Save
541 Spring Street

HUNTINGDON

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1330 Moore Street

Sheetz
9681 William Penn Highway

Sheetz
9894 Shaner Blvd.

JOHNSTOWN

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Sheetz
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Crossword Puzzle
Solution on page 6

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10
11				12		13			14		
15						16			17		
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59					60			61			
62					63				64		

- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Egyptian bull god
 5. Romanian monetary unit
 8. Santa's helper
 11. Fictional Pink Floyd corporal
 13. Sea eagle genus
 14. Broad volcanic crater
 15. Minneapolis suburb
 16. Actual commercial worth (abbr.)
 17. Exchange rate
 18. Ethnic peoples in Guinea
 20. Men's fashion accessory
 21. Craft material
 22. Offerings
 25. Early
 30. Large room
 31. Soviet Socialist Republic
 32. One who hauls
 33. Shorthand for accepting
 38. Promotional materials
 41. Loss of memory
 43. One who beholds
 45. Photographers
 48. Small, rich sponge cake
 49. White clerical vestment
 50. Partner to "ooohed"
 55. Abba __, Israeli politician
 56. Zero
 57. Owl monkey genus
 59. Lace bug genus
 60. Mild expression of surprise
 61. Storage devices
 62. Keyboard key
 63. Make a mistake
 64. One-time Korean president
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Bridge building degree
 2. Expression of sorrow or pity
 3. Large, stocky, lizard
 4. Rumanian river
 5. Missive
 6. Stout-bodied moths
 7. Brings out
 8. Bird of prey
 9. King of Thebes
 10. Cleaving tool
 12. African antelope
 14. Three are particularly famous
 19. Satisfy
 23. C. European river
 24. Dictator
 25. Portion of (abbr.)
 26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
 27. Consume food
 28. Woman (French)
 29. Scrape or wear away by friction
 34. Popular vegetable
 35. Pacific Standard Time
 36. Brazilian state capital
 37. Paddle
 39. Cause to become insane
 40. Drier and flakier
 41. Mimic
 42. ESPN host Kimes
 44. One who moseys
 45. Secret political clique
 46. Behind the stern of a ship
 47. Supernatural force
 48. Sanctuary in Orthodox churches
 51. Swiss river
 52. Grayish white
 53. Engrave
 54. UNC's chief rival
 58. Midway between south and southeast

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Paws & Claws

**Tips for successful
dog training**

After providing a safe home, veterinary care and nutritious food, the best thing a pet owner can do for a dog is provide adequate behavioral training. Some of the issues that result in pet surrenders can be traced to behaviors that might have been quashed had the dog undergone thorough obedience training.

All dogs can benefit from learning basic commands. Training is a rewarding part of dog ownership. These tips can help anyone successfully train their dog, leading to a an even stronger relationship between owner and pet.

- **Elect a dog trainer.** If a dog resides with many people in the household, select one person who will be the primary

trainer to establish the ground rules of the training sessions. If multiple people bring various styles to the dog training, that could result in inconsistencies that confuse the animal.

- **Use positive reinforcement.** Positive reinforcement training is the most effective method of training a companion animal. This type of training rewards good behavior rather than punishing bad behavior. Some dogs are very food-motivated, while others might be willing to work for play sessions or just verbal praise.
- **Consistency is best.** Always use the same word and intonation when asking a dog to do something. Everyone in the

home also needs to be on the same page with rules, which means that if one person says "no" to the dog on the furniture and another says "yes," the dog will end up confused.

- **Patience is key.** Although dogs can read human body language and gestures, they do not actually comprehend all language, says the AKC. It can be some time before a dog understands all training requests.
- **Start small and build up.** Teach a dog commands incrementally and reward each step of the learning process. For example, reward the "stay" command even if the puppy only stays for a second or two. Later on, build up to longer

durations of staying still.

- **Praise small things.** Praising the pet when he or she does something right, even if it is a small thing, will keep the motivation going.
- **Finish positively.** End all training sessions with something the dog knows so that the session will end on a high note.

If training does not come easily after many weeks of going it alone, pet owners may want to seek the help of a professional dog trainer. Professionals also can be helpful for those pet owners who want to break dogs out of unsavory behaviors, such as leash aggression or excessive barking.

Understanding food labels

Nutritious food is necessary to sustain life, and that's one reason why food packages contain lists of ingredients. But all ingredients are not created equal. A growing number of consumers desire greater transparency about the foods they are eating, including sourcing, production, preparation details, and nutritional content. While that can be challenging to ascertain when dining out, people have more control over what they eat at home.

According to the plant-based food advocacy company ProVeg International, 62 percent of people are paying more attention to ingredient lists now than they did five years ago. In addition, nearly two-thirds of adults say the ingredients in a food or beverage have at least a moderate influence on whether they buy it.

One of the ways to be mindful of food ingredients is to understand food labeling. Pertinent information is included on the label, and it pays to study these labels when choosing foods. Here's how to navigate the Nutrition Facts Label, according to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

● **SERVINGS PER CONTAINER:** The first thing people will come across is the servings per container. This tells a person how many servings are in the package.

- **SERVING SIZE:** The serving size indicates how much of the food equates to one serving. It maybe measured in cups, grams, ounces, or even pieces.
- **CALORIES:** The calories pertain to the number of calories in one serving. As a general guide for nutrition advice, 2,000 calories a day is used. A person's calorie needs may be higher or lower depending on variables like age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level.
- **% DAILY VALUE:** These numbers will appear next to the various nutrients in the product and show the percentage of each nutrient's recommended daily value is in the food. Daily values are listed in grams, milligrams or micrograms.

By understanding daily values, one knows how many nutrients to consume each day. As a general rule, 5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving is considered low, while 20% DV or more of a nutrient per serving is considered high.

Many older adults do not get the recommended amount of nutrients each day and can use food labels to create a more nutrient-rich diet. It's essential for seniors to look for foods that contain adequate dietary fiber, calcium, vitamin D, and potassium. Individuals also should consume less saturated fat, sodium and added sugars.

Seniors can use nutrition labels as a source of information that helps them make healthy food choices.

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Obituaries

Edward L. Myers

Edward L. Myers Edward L. Myers, 78, of Philipsburg, PA, died on Thursday, July 23, 2026 at his home.

Born on October 23, 1947, in Philipsburg, PA, Edward was the son of the late Paul W. Myers & Mary Ellen (Matthews) Myers. He married Lisa Marie (Yingling) Myers on August 22, 1997 in Winchester, VA. She survives at home. Edward attended the Grace United Methodist Church in Philipsburg, PA. He was also a life member of the B.P.O. Elks in Philipsburg, PA. He was a retired Penelec and First Energy Equipment Operator. Edward was a 1965 graduate from the P.O. High School. He also had his BS from Mansfield State University. In addition to his parents, Edward was preceded in death by a sister, Mary Jean Lee. In addition to his wife, Edward is survived by a daughter, Kimberly E. Ross & her husband Edward Ross of Philipsburg, PA; two sons, Aaron E. Myers & his wife Kimberly Myers of Media, PA, and Timothy G. Cartwright of Morrisdale, PA; a brother, Matthew Gerald Myers of Philipsburg, PA; and four grandchildren, Ava Myers, Conor Myers, Chloe Cartwright, and Makayla Ross. Ed enjoyed watching baseball, especially the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Philadelphia Phillies. Per Edward's wishes, there will be no viewing or funeral service.

Dolores L. Kifer

Dolores L. Kifer, 94, of Curwensville, passed away on Monday, July 13, 2026 at Penn Highlands DuBois.

Born September 5, 1931 in Clearfield, she was the daughter of the late Carl and Lydia Rowles. Mrs. Kifer was a graduate of Clearfield High School and worked at Brown's Boot Shop in Clearfield. She attended Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Clearfield where she was involved with the kitchen crew assisting with cooking and baking for various church functions. She was also one of the founders of 'JOY Fellowship Group' at the church. She enjoyed going for car rides to search for deer, elk and eagles. She loved people, whether it was being out among folks in public or at an event, she enjoyed being social. She was the matriarch of the family, and will be greatly missed by all who loved her. She is survived by two daughters, Sharon Caldwell and late husband William, and Carla Verelli and husband David; a son, Russell 'Rusty' Kifer Jr. and wife Patti; twelve grandchildren; and numerous great grandchildren and great great grandchildren. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Russell 'Pete' Kifer Sr.; two sons, Michael and Arthur 'Artie' Kifer; one grandson, Russell William Kifer; three great grandchildren, Karleigh Caldwell, Logan Lupton, and Emersyn Rowles; a sister, Geraldine Rowles; and a brother, Robert 'Bobby' Rowles. A funeral service was held at Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Clearfield, with Rev. Shayne Lumadue officiating. Burial: Bradford Cemetery, Woodland.

Celene Ann McCauley

Celene Ann McCauley, 86, of Bellefonte and formerly of Clearfield, was peacefully welcomed into the arms of her Savior on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at Christ the King Manor, in DuBois.

Remembered by all who loved her as an earthly angel, Celene was met by the hand of Jesus in all His glory and welcomed into heaven, where she will spend "all the rest of the days with the Lord." Born July 1, 1940 in Clearfield, she was the daughter of the late Gerald W. and Kathleen A. 'Cap' (Turner) Collins. Celene was a graduate of St. Francis High School, Clearfield and had been a Nanny to many children who called her 'Een'. She was a member of St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, Bellefonte. A truly bright and loving presence, Celene touched the heart of everyone blessed to cross her path. She leaves behind a legacy of pure love and light, and the reminder for all to "live in the moment." She is survived by her husband, John G. McCauley. Her four children: Valerie Bartol of St. Augustine, FL, Thomas G. Lanager of Hyde, Daniel G. Lanager of Grampian, and Christopher L. Lanager and wife Lisa of Clearfield; eight grandchildren, Jenna Bartol, Thomas G. Lanager Jr., Amber Quimby, Preston Lanager, Abby Izzo, McKenna Lanager, and Landyn Lanager; and nine great grandchildren. The oldest of nine children, Celene was affectionally known to her family as "Neen." She is lovingly survived by five of her siblings: Sandy Foust, Sue Stewart, Marty Collins and wife Donna, Kristy McQuillen, and Jimmy Collins and wife Shari; as well as many cherished nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by two sisters, Connie Rowles and Mary Gearhart; and a brother, Jed Collins. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Francis Catholic Church, with Fr. Robert Horgas as celebrant. Burial: Calvary Cemetery, Clearfield.

Scott C. Johnson

Scott C. Johnson, 62, of Clearfield, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, July 17, 2026, in Abingdon, VA while doing the job he loved.

Born May 30, 1964, in Clearfield, the son of Herschel Dean Johnson and JoAnn (Parlavacchio) Ross. He was a graduate of Clearfield Area High School. He enjoyed being on the football team – standing 6 foot 4 he was "A powerhouse on the field". During his teen years, Scott trusted in the Lord as his Savior and was baptized. On December 1, 1996, he became a member of the Clearfield Alliance Church where he faithfully attended while his father-in-law, Dr. Duane White ministered there. He was a United States Marine Corps veteran having served in Naples Italy as a guard for NATO. He was also a social member of the Clearfield Eagles. Mr. Johnson was owner, operator and president of Scott C. Johnson Trucking Inc. He was a hard and trusted worker, always taking pride in his work. He leased his truck to Long Haul of Clearwater, Minnesota and was often named as one of the top drivers for their company. He adored his family and grandchildren. He loved and cared for many pets over the years. He enjoyed going to his cabin, hiking, biking and loved life, as he was known to say, "Livin' it live". He wanted everyone around him to love life too and to spend each day living it to the fullest. He made his family a priority; he took great pride and enjoyment in being able to truck with his sons. He loved to spend time with his children anyway he could, and often times this looked like taking them in the truck with him during their summer vacation. He took them all over the country, as far as California and Mexico. He would make sure he could get work wherever his NICU travel nurse daughter was in the country to see her. He loved coming off the road and having a hot meal prepared by his wife and relaxing with his dogs. Scott is survived by his mother JoAnn of Clearfield, his wife, Esther R. (White) Johnson whom he married June 17, 1989, four children: Ethan Johnson (Chelsea) of Clearfield, Evan Johnson of Clearfield, Rachel Johnson (Gavin) of South Florida and Marc Johnson of Clearfield, four grandchildren: Dean, Warren, Charles and Jack Johnson, three siblings: Pam Farrell (Ray), Randy Johnson (Lisa) and Anthony D. Johnson, all of Clearfield, an uncle, Gerry Johnson (Pam) of Clearfield and a number of nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceded in death by his father and a stepfather, Charles Ross. Funeral services were held the Clearfield Alliance Church, with Pastor Scott Schultz officiating. Interment: Bradford Cemetery.

Edward J. “Cip” Cipollini

Edward J. “Cip” Cipollini, 94, of Chester Hill and formerly of Philipsburg, died Tuesday, July 21, 2026, with his daughters by his side.

Ed was born on December 17, 1931, in Lucerne Mines, Indiana Co., Pa., a son of the late Edward and Frances (Mizerak) Cipollini. Ed was married to Ethel (Bachman) Cipollini on February 15, 1957, in Hershey. She preceded him in death on October 3, 2021. He was a 1949 graduate of Homer City High School. Ed proudly served in the United States Navy (Korean War Veteran) for four years as a "Tin Can Sailor," spending most of his time on destroyers as he served his country and explored the world. After his time in the Navy, he joined the Pennsylvania State Police. During his time as a State Trooper, he participated in the Pennsylvania State Police Rodeo where he performed with a horse named Sonny as part of the recruiting exhibition. He advanced steadily and held the title of sergeant and station commander of the Woodland barracks before retiring after 35 dedicated years. In his retirement, he kept himself busy by driving cars to Manheim for Wilkinson Subaru and delivering guns and supplies for Grice Gun Shop. He enjoyed volunteering at the Grice Museum as well. Ed had his private flying license and enjoyed spending time at the airports in the local area. He was also an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed fishing, hunting, going to the shooting range with his grandsons and taking rides down Pennsylvania backroads with his friends. He was a lifelong member of the Philipsburg Elks Lodge and Country Club, Lodge #1173, the American Legion and the Fraternal Order of Police. In his later years, he especially enjoyed taking trips to Atlantic City, Cape May, the Outer Banks and Long Island with his family. What he enjoyed most, however, was gathering around the table to share a meal with his family, especially rigatoni and meatballs, where he would proclaim "Mangia Mangia" and "good vittles" after finishing his meal. He is survived by his two daughters, Mary Joy McCliment and her husband, James D. McCliment, PA-C, of Philipsburg and Diana L. "Dede" Coleman and her husband, Ernest (Jr.), of Chester Hill; four grandchildren: Nathan Lesko and his wife, Megan, Morgan Snyder and her husband, Charles, Lauren Lesko and Sarah Bryan and her husband, Drew; six great-grandchildren: Maggie, Natalee, Mason, Macie, Tanner and Sonny; his brother, Donald Cipollini and his wife, Elizabeth "Betty," of Waterman, Pa.; and several nieces, nephews and other extended family members. Ed was preceded in death by one brother, Frank E Cipollini, in addition to his parents, wife and many extended family members. A funeral service was held at the Beezer-Heath Funeral Home & Cremation Services, 719 E. Spruce Street, Philipsburg, with Tavis Stauffer, officiating. An Elks Memorial service was held at the funeral home. Interment with Military Honors and the Pennsylvania State Police Honor Guard: Juniata Memorial Park, Lewistown.

George Finley Richards, Sr.

George Finley Richards, Sr., 76, of Madera, passed away on Saturday, July 18, 2026 at his residence.

Born on November 10 ,1949 in Philipsburg, he was the son of the late John and Mona (Mullen) Richards. He was a 1967 graduate of Moshannon Valley High School, and we on to graduate from Penn State University with B.S. in Earth and Mineral Science. He worked as a heavy equipment operator out of the Local #66 in Clearfield. He also worked for a time in Pasadena, CA. He is survived by his loving wife, Patricia (McGary) Richards; a daughter, Piper Lee Richards; two brothers, John and Joseph Richards; and two grandchildren. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a son, George Richards, Jr.; a brothers, Charles Richards; and a sister, Carol Ross. Services will be private.

Kelly Ann (Cooney) Franks

Kelly Ann (Cooney) Franks, 59, of Blandburg, died Thursday, July 16, 2026 at her home following a lengthy battle with cancer.

She was born July 9, 1967 in Euclid, OH., a daughter of the late John Cooney and the late Elizabeth "Betsy" (Johns) Cooney Salsgiver. On July 5, 1986, in Pinescroft, she married David L. Franks who survives along with two daughters Nikki (Rhett) Trent and Brittany Franks, both of Blandburg, six grandchildren Kaiden Franks, Parker Belgin, Elijah Wombacher, Abigail Trent, Carter Wombacher and Aaron Trent. Also surviving are three siblings: John (Debbie) Cooney, Jr. in Ohio, Heather Cooney and her significant other Don Rickard of Blandburg and Tracie Greene of Bellwood, her stepfather Danny Salsgiver of Blandburg and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and a great-nephew Nash VanScoyoc. Kelly was an avid fan of the Ohio State Buckeyes and all the Pittsburgh sports teams, especially the Steelers. She cherished her many friends but, above all, she loved her family, leaving them with many fond memories. She was of the Catholic faith. A viewing for family and friends was held at the McQuown Funeral Home, Glasgow. Burial: Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Glasgow.

Richard Warner

Richard Warner, 58, of Blandburg, died Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at UPMC Presbyterian Hospital, Pittsburgh from complications of injuries he received in an ATV accident earlier this month, doing what he most enjoyed, riding his 4-wheeler.

He was born January 5, 1968 in Philipsburg, a son of the late Fred J. and Edna M. (Friday) Warner, Sr. He was also preceded in death by a brother Fred Warner, Jr. Surviving are three siblings Ernest P. (Wendy) Warner, Sr. of Blandburg, Peggy S. Warner of Houtzdale and Elizabeth A. Diehl and her companion Bob Downs of Coalport. Richie was a member of the Coalport Moose and an auxiliary member of the Coalport VFW. Everyone that knew Richie knew that his favorite mode of transport was his 2025 Polaris 450. A viewing for family and friends was held at the McQuown Funeral Home, Glasgow. Pastor Ben Warfel, Officiant. Burial: Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Glasgow.

Obituaries Courtesy of: Heath's Funeral Home

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026

Hollidaysburg musician inspires on the global stage

European program gives Ringkamp chance to play organ in historic settings

By MARY HALEY
For the Mirror

The field of engineering's loss became music's gain when a Hollidaysburg native switched his major in college and set the course for a career in playing the organ. Nathan Ringkamp, 25, is now studying the organ in France as part of a program paid for by a scholarship he won from a Boston-based music foundation. He has played organs in famous churches in America and in Europe, such as Notre Dame in Paris and Westminster Cathedral in London. Ringkamp said his goal is to perform and compose beautiful sacred music to uplift people in the congregation.

He said it's inspiring to play the organs in widely recognized churches here and overseas. Unlike churches in the United States, many of the organs in churches in Europe date back to the 1600s and 1700s. "It's amazing to play music by composers from three hundred years ago and perform it on their instruments," he said. He attended local schools growing up in the area and played the alto sax and the cello while attending Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School. He entered the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., as a freshman majoring in engineering. He wanted to go to a college where he could continue to pursue his musical talents on the side, such as singing with a choir.

But he didn't see himself making music as his full-time job.

"I always loved music but I wasn't sure how I could make it a full-time career," he said.

He started playing the organ at a young age after seeing a video tape of famous organist Diane Bish performing at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona.

"I would watch that tape on repeat," he said.

In addition to the other instruments he played, he had started lessons on the piano and also on the organ with local organist Jim Dengler using the organ at Ringkamp's parish, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Lakemont.

At Catholic University of America, Ringkamp took more organ lessons with Benjamin LaPrairie, another noted organist who is the associate director of music at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

"It was my goal to play that organ for my senior year recital and that was my first organ lesson, (on the organ at the basilica)," Ringkamp said.

His first semester, Ringkamp got to sit in the organ loft with LaPrairie during a Mass of the Americas, a two-and-a-half-hour service in Latin for about 4,000 people featuring top clerical figures such as Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone. Catholic cable network EWTN broadcasted the mass.

"It was the first time I'd ever experienced music that beautiful or music on such a high level of professional skill.

... I got goosebumps," Ringkamp said.

Making a major change

He started to consider changing his career path and when he asked LaPrairie about it, he got the reassurance he needed that he could be successful as an organist. So he switched his major from engineering to the organ.

"I knew it would be difficult but the opportunity to serve the Church and provide beautiful music overshadowed any hurdles," he said.

Since then, Ringkamp has played the organ in churches in Washington, D.C., and at the one at the basilica and in Baltimore, Md.

He served as organist and music director at St. Dominic Roman Catholic Church in Washington, D.C., and at the National Shrine of St. Alphonsus Ligori Church and Zion Lutheran Church in Baltimore. He held those posts while completing his master's degree at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, which opened in 1857 and is the oldest music conservatory in the United States.

But most recently, Ringkamp has played organs across Europe, including the organ in the Royal Chapel at the Palace of Versailles. The palace once was home to kings and queens of France, from 1682 until the French Revolution in 1789.

He currently lives in the city of Versailles while completing an Artist Diploma in Organ Performance. He is studying with another famous organist, Jean-Baptiste Robin, who is the organist at the Royal Chapel of Versailles. He received a \$25,000 scholarship from the Frank Huntingdon Beebe Fund in Boston to complete his studies. The fund supplies scholarships up to \$25,000 for young musicians to study music overseas.

Ringkamp, however, wants to not only play the organ in church but to compose music for cantors and choirs to sing in church. It was while working at St. Dominic Church that Ringkamp wrote his first liturgical music for the church. He said his faith had deepened during his time at the Catholic University, where he took theology courses. He wrote a responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation for a mass at the basilica celebrating the installation of the 16th president of the university. He also wrote a responsorial psalm that was performed recently by the festival choir at the cathedral in Altoona for the 125th anniversary of the creation of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese.

Writing music for the church is a special aspect of being a musician in the church that Ringkamp takes seriously.

"It's inspiring and humbling because you know it's so much more than you," he said.

Challenges in career choice

Before he made the decision to change his major, Ringkamp called his uncle, Robert Long, who is music director at the cathedral in Altoona, to get his opinion.

"I told him the pros and cons about it," Long said.

He told him he might have to serve as both organist and choir director, which can affect his personal life.

"For family life, it's challenging because you have to work every weekend and holiday," Long said. "It's a really constant schedule when it comes to that."

When Long first started as a music director in the 1980s and 1990s, participation in church and church activities reached a high point, with many people deciding to convert to Catholicism. The role of the music director, who acts as an organist and also choir director, developed during this time.

"Those jobs were starting to appear at that time," Long said.

But he noticed starting in the early 2000s that children's participation in church started to decline.

"I saw all of the kids' participation go way down, (in) the children's choir and summer Bible school," he said. "So the fact that they're having difficulty getting young organists doesn't surprise me."

Long at that time served as director of music at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Altoona and also taught music at the adjoining school.

"I thought the church was really dynamic and growing but then that dropoff happened," he said.

In his current job at the Cathedral in Altoona, Long said the congregation overall participates in the Mass, including singing during the service.

"I don't know the statistics but certainly here there's a lot more enthusiasm and that's important for young people," he said.

In some churches, there are separate organists and choir directors who usually work on a part-time basis. But other churches have a full-time music director who fills both roles, which can be both rewarding and also at times challenging. When Long was director of music and choirmaster at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, the church had two full-time organists, although at times Long played the organ.

When Ringkamp gave his senior recital at the basilica, members of St. Dominic's congregation came to hear him play. His parents, Chris and Melissa Ringkamp, were thrilled to hear him play the organ at the basilica. He also played the basilica's organ during the baccalaureate mass when he graduated from Catholic University.

"It was overwhelming to sit in that beautiful church and to listen to the music being played on that incredible organ and to know that was our child making that music," Melissa said. "All parents hope and pray their child finds a career that they enjoy and one that allows them to use their talents. We believe Nathan has done just that."

His father said he believes Nathan's switch from an engineering major to organ performance was divinely inspired.

"I believe our first thought was, 'We could have told you that,'" Chris said. "I can't think of another instrument that elevates the relevance of the liturgy for the purpose of glorifying God than the organ."

Chris said he thinks Nathan won't have too much trouble finding a job when he finishes his time abroad.

"I believe there will always be parishes that appreciate organists who have the educational background and personal passion for excellence in music," Chris said.

Melissa said she also has faith that her son will find a suitable job in the future.

"I believe he will be able to find a job where he can bless a parish with his organ playing skills and share his love for liturgical music," she said.

A diminishing field

Ringkamp was the last student to graduate as an organ major from Catholic University because it has since dropped that major.

That's an indication of what has become a shrinking profession in the United States, according to the American Guild of Organists, which has seen its members drop by half in recent years, from 20,000 to 10,000. Part of the reason for the drop is that people who play the organ are getting

older, with about 60% aged 58 or older, according to data from the organization.

But Ringkamp said he's not daunted by the statistics.

"There's an excitement in leading people in song and in prayer that I love," he said.

Long said he's very proud of what his nephew has accomplished and complemented his expertise as an organist. He termed him a "virtuosic" player, which means Nathan has mastered the organ and he plays and composes music

with ease.

"He's got the skills to play at all (types) of concerts," he said. "It takes a high level of skill to play at that level ... it's amazing to hear him play."

Long said the organ is a unique instrument, producing both "joyful and sorrowful" sounds. It can imitate the sounds of various instruments in an orchestra, such as the strings (violins, violas, cello and double bass) and the flutes and piccalos.

"When you're playing with

a big group of people singing, it gives a lot of variety of sound to lead the congregation," he said.

Long is hopeful about the future of upcoming organists. When young people visit the cathedral in Altoona, he asks those who are pianists to try out the organ to see the similarities in the keyboards.

"If we have young people see that, we might attract them to the organ and see that they already have a head start," he said.

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Courtesy photo

Nathan Ringkamp plays the organ at a senior recital at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, D.C., on April 25, 2023.

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**BIG BOY
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Norfolk Southern engines, painted to celebrate America250, are shown on display during the Big Boy's stop in Altoona from July 8-11. At right: Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014 is pictured on the Horseshoe Curve on July 11.

Photos courtesy Norfolk Southern

Tracking History

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Mirror photo by Patrick Waksmundski

Crowds gather at Norfolk Southern's Rose Yard to view Union Pacific's Big Boy steam locomotive.

More than a machine, Big Boy sparks nationwide reunion

In Virginia Lee Burton's classic 1939 children's book "Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel," Mulligan often boasted that his steam shovel, Mary Anne, "could dig as much in a day as a hundred men could dig in a week, but he had never been quite sure that this was true."

By the end of the story, Mulligan never gets the chance to prove his boast because electric, diesel and gasoline shovels have taken away nearly all of Mary Anne's work. Still, he finds an



Salena Zito

Creators
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ingenious way for the old steam shovel to remain useful.

When Burton wrote those words, she was capturing the painful sunset of an era. It was a lament for the living, breathing machines of American progress, cast aside for the newest efficient technology.

For more than half a century, that sentiment seemed final. The

same technological advances that displaced Mary Anne also rendered America's steam locomotives obsolete. The machines that had helped build our cities, transported critically needed goods during World War II, and connected the nation from coast to coast were, in a remarkably short time, dumped into gravel pits, relegated to history books, or left to rust in forgotten rail yards.

But from July 8-11 in Altoona, the Union Pacific Railroad's Big Boy No. 4014 offered a thun-

derous rebuttal. Much of the credit belongs to its engineer, Ed Dickens, who has spent his adult life serving his country, first in the military and now by helping bring this historic steam locomotive back to life. In doing so, he has shown that Americans still value hard work, shared history and community. Across the country, crowds have gathered along city streets, farmland and smalltown rail lines just to watch Dickens and Big Boy thunder past.

Rolling into town at 1.2 million

pounds and 133 feet long, this steel titan proved that steam engines are not just relics of the past; they still hold a profound utility. No, No. 4014 is no longer hauling daily commercial freight tonnage. Its modern utility is something much more vital to the nation's health: It serves as a massive, kinetic connective tissue for the American spirit, pulling a fragmented culture together in a way no modern diesel locomotive ever could.

See **Reunion**/Page 4

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REUNION: Fitting mechanical homecoming was in Altoona

(Continued from Page 3)

Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific coordinated their staff to manage the steady flow of rail enthusiasts. Engineers, mechanics and other employees directed visitors to free parking at Peoples Natural Gas Field, home of the minor-league Altoona Curve, where hundreds of school buses transported them to the railyard to spend time with Big Boy.

Jim Vena, CEO of Union Pacific, told the Washington Examiner at Norfolk Southern's Rose Yard that it has been remarkable to watch people across the country respond to Big Boy's journey. The locomotive has traveled 7,000 miles through 14 states, nearly 100 cities and countless small towns and stretches of farmland as part of America's 250th anniversary celebration.

"It has really exceeded our expectations," Vena said, adding, "Watching the young kids and the kids at heart show up has been absolutely wonderful. We need to do this again. Heck, we will do this again."

Like Mike Mulligan's beloved Mary Anne, the Big Boys were built for a crisis. First fired up in December 1941, these Western giants were engineered to haul heavy wartime freight over Utah's punishing Wasatch Range, keeping the veins of the American war effort pumping. But by the early 1960s, the fires were dropped. The railroad world, like the construction yards in Burton's book, chose the quiet efficiency of diesel.

The resurrection of No. 4014 is a fitting symbol of the enduring strength of the working-class communities it visits. Modern experts had widely dismissed the idea of restoring the 600-ton locomotive to working order as impossible.

Enter Dickens, now Union Pacific's senior manager of heritage operations. Serving as both an ambassador for railroad history and a tireless tinkerer, Dickens led a team that spent years dismantling the engine piece by piece in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and custom-machining obsolete components to bring it roaring back to life.

"We are all here for love of country, love of Pennsylvania and love of trains."

Gov. Josh Shapiro



Mirror photo by Patrick Waksmunski

Gov. Josh Shapiro waves to the crowd from the engineer's window on Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014 during its stop in Altoona.

Dressed unironically in bib overalls, Dickens and conductor Ted waved joyfully to the thousands gathered in Altoona, once the epicenter of American railroading and home to the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro, who was in attendance, told the Examiner that at one point, Altoona had more employees in the railroad industry than any other part of Pennsylvania.

"And of course, Pennsylvania Railroad was the largest, most profitable railroad in the world, and we still see its roots trace back to Norfolk Southern's operations here," he said.

"Trains are part of the fabric of who we are as Pennsylvanians, and I think ... with Big Boy making its way through Pennsylvania, with over a quarter of a million people so far having turned out to see it, (you) recognize that," he said.

Shapiro said the outpouring of people across the common-

wealth showed that Americans still want to come together. Events such as Big Boy's journey through Pennsylvania's towns, he said, demonstrate that the nation's social fabric is far stronger than social media would suggest.

"We are all here for love of country, love of Pennsylvania and love of trains," he added.

Operating a machine twice the size of a modern diesel requires months of logistical work, reviewing track clearances inch by inch so it can navigate overhead bridges and tight curves.

With 32,000 miles of track open to it, Dickens and his team turned this locomotive into a traveling testament to what American hands can build and maintain.

When Dickens waves to the crowd, they truly give him a hero's welcome. They don't see a corporate executive — they see a craftsman who refused to let America's inheritance die in a

scrapyard.

It was entirely fitting that this mechanical homecoming took place in Altoona, the legendary heart of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Founded in 1849, the city was built to help conquer the Allegheny Mountains. Five years later, immigrant laborers armed with picks and shovels carved out the Horseshoe Curve, opening a vital commercial route to the West.

By the mid-1920s, the Altoona Works had become the world's largest railroad manufacturing complex, employing more than 16,000 workers. The families who live there today still carry that industrial heritage. When they look at Big Boy, they do not see a strange relic — they see the same grit, sweat and pride their grandfathers brought to the work of building the nation.

Altoona Mayor Matt Pacifico could hardly contain his delight as thousands of visitors poured into the city — not only to see

Big Boy but also to patronize local businesses and attractions, including the Railroaders Memorial Museum, Altoona's distinctive style of pizza, the region's renowned trout streams and nearby DelGrosso's Amusement Park.

In the final pages of the children's book, Mike and Mary Anne find a new purpose, with the old steam shovel becoming the heating heart of Popperville's town hall. No. 4014 has found a similarly noble calling. As it leaves the railyard and winds through the historic curves of Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains, it will trail white steam across the blue sky and leave thousands of spectators with memories to last a lifetime.

The steam engine is still useful. It reminds an anxious nation that the sweat, ambition and community fabric that originally built America never truly went away. It was just waiting for the right whistle to wake it back up.

TYRONE STATION



Mirror photos by Michael Boytim

While Union Pacific's Big Boy locomotive did not stop in Tyrone, the town held a watch party complete with vendors and a small train for children to enjoy. As the Big Boy steam engine and train passed by the station, riders waved to the gathered crowd.



"This is likely the largest single event for visitations and spending in Blair County's history."

Stephen McKnight, president and CEO of the Altoona Blair County Development Corp.

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Photos courtesy Norfolk Southern

Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014 idles at Norfolk Southern's Rose Yard during the steam locomotive's stop in Altoona on July 8-11.

Thousands flock to Altoona to see UP's Big Boy

BY RACHEL FOOR-MUSSELMAN
rfoor@altoonamirror.com

Union Pacific's Big Boy made a big impact on not only Altoona, but the area in early July as the iconic steam locomotive attracted tens of thousands of tourists while shining a positive light on the city.

"All the visitors that came from out of town, the comments I received, everyone seemed to have a wonderful experience," Mayor Matt Pacifico said. "I think we might see some repeat visitors coming back."

Those at Tom & Joe's Restaurant, 1201 13th Ave., saw an almost 80% increase in sales during the time Big Boy was in town, according to owner George Batrus. The effect has remained, with sales still about 10% higher than usual.

A customer, who Batrus described as a train enthusiast, tipped him off to Big Boy coming

to Altoona before the locomotive's arrival was widely known. Batrus said he researched it and quickly realized "it was going to bring a lot of people to the area."

"My first gut instinct was to make a T-shirt," Batrus said. "Our T-shirts are very popular."

He gave his daughter, Anna Batrus, the task of designing the shirt. Her design managed to incorporate the 4th of July and America250 alongside Big Boy and Tom & Joe's.

George Batrus attributed the spike in sales to the diner's T-shirts and Anna Batrus doing "a lot of the social media marketing" to get the word out that the restaurant would be open.

"I put a very large order in, to the point they thought I was crazy," George Batrus said. The shirts sold out within two days and a reorder has already been delivered.

George Batrus said he and his daughter went down to see Big



Boy the first night it arrived.

"The whole thing was cool," Batrus said. "I got a bigger kick out of seeing the number of people it brought to the city."

Batrus said he got "a lot of feedback from people" who visited Altoona and that he heard "nothing but positive comments about how the event was run."

"The enthusiasm, hearing where people were from, hearing

different stories — I enjoyed listening to the stories from the people coming out of town more than anything," Batrus said.

He commended those involved for "how well organized everything was," saying it was "well put together."

Pacifico expressed a similar opinion, adding that "for our first large-scale event we hosted here, I thought everyone that helped did

a phenomenal job."

"There was lots of planning and preparation, with agencies working together, groups working together," Pacifico said. "It really worked out well."

Some of the groups that worked together were the Altoona Water Authority, the Altoona Fire Department and the Big Boy crew.

See **Altoona**/Page 8

TRAINSPOTTERS IN TIPTON

"To see it come across the country and go through all these different cities to celebrate America's 250th anniversary is a very great thing for the country and it just pulls us back to our roots."

William Jester,
Pittsburgh



Mirror photo by Kay Stephens

Trainspotters take photos and wave as the Union Pacific Big Boy steam locomotive passes through Tipton near Tipton Road on Wednesday afternoon. The watch party to benefit the Central Pennsylvania Humane Society was hosted by Loyal Gaming Rewards.

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ALTOONA: Standing beside the Big Boy 'was amazing'

(Continued from Page 6)

Jack Speece, the water authority's assistant treasurer, said that when Big Boy's onboard engineer realized the high quality of Altoona's water, he dumped the train's tanks and flushed the engine's boiler to make room for the city's water.

"Altoona is said to have some of the best water in the country," Speece said. "When Union Pacific's 'Big Boy' rolled into Altoona for public viewing, arrangements were made through the Altoona Fire Department in July 2026 for filling its tanks."

The process took about 1,100 feet of hose, a hydrant, several personnel and about five hours to complete, said Deputy Fire Chief Michael Hawksworth.

"Originally we were only supposed to put 20,000 gallons in," Hawksworth said. "They needed a specific hardness and pH to fill their tank to make it run correctly. Ours was right on, so they dumped all the water they had got in another town."

Big Boy ended up getting about 86,817 gallons of Altoona water transferred into its tanks, Speece said. It uses about 200 gallons of water per mile, or up to 12,000 gallons per hour.

"(Big Boy) holds 25,000 gallons of water in its tender, with an additional divided fuel oil tank," Speece said. "The boiler holds another 10,500 gallons. Two additional tenders are added on longer runs, holding 25,000 gallons each."

Hawksworth described Big Boy as "pretty impressive" and "just the size of it" was amazing.



"Steam locomotives aren't that common around here, so we don't get those requests too often," Hawksworth said. "We see locomotives every day in this town, but when you're standing beside (Big Boy), it was amazing."

Speece said the Altoona Water Authority "still uses the Kettle reservoir that was originally built

by the Pennsylvania Railroad." That water supplied the working shops and all the steam locomotives for over a century.

"The engines ran here without any problems or complaints of boiler scale," Speece said.

It's a history that Pacifico is hoping the city will now leverage in the wake of Big Boy's success-

Mirror photos by Patrick Waksmundski
Railfans take photos of Union Pacific's Big Boy steam locomotive in Altoona. At left: A railroad employee holds up a sign as the Big Boy train rolls into Altoona on July 8.

ful stay in Altoona.

"Seeing how many rail enthusiasts and train lovers will travel to see cool and unique locomotives like Big Boy, I think we should absolutely leverage that into more rail festival opportunities," Pacifico said. "Maybe even make it an annual event."

A rail festival could be "our sig-

nature event" in Altoona, Pacifico said, akin to Easton's Garlic Fest and Pittston's Tomato fest.

"That's our heritage, that's what we're known for," Pacifico said.

With both the CEOs of Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific coming to town and seeing the turnout for Big Boy, Pacifico is hopeful it could start a conversation about potentially partnering with the companies for future events.

He said the city was advised to prepare for an influx of about 30,000 to 60,000 people, but they "easily exceeded that number."

While he knew people were traveling to see Big Boy, actually seeing the crowds was another thing entirely. The same goes for seeing Big Boy for the first time.

"It's a lot bigger when you see it in person, just the sheer size of the wheels and everything," Pacifico said. "It was cool seeing a piece of history like that, especially a train that has never been this far east before."

Like Hawksworth, Pacifico said he was "fortunate enough" to get a tour of Big Boy. He was also able to climb into the cabin and pull its whistle.

Looking ahead, Pacifico said a critical aspect of any potential rail fests would be the completion of K4 1361, also known as The Spirit of Altoona. It is currently undergoing restoration by the Railroader's Memorial Museum and the Horseshoe Curve National Historic Landmark.

"The K4 is one thing we need to finish," Pacifico said. "It is going to be a really big piece to the puzzle."

Twenty-five Big Boys were commissioned exclusively for Union Pacific Railroad, the first of which was delivered in 1941. These massive locomotives were built to haul heavy equipment in support of the war effort, normally operating between Ogden, Utah, and Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Big Boys are 133 feet long and weigh 1.2 million pounds.

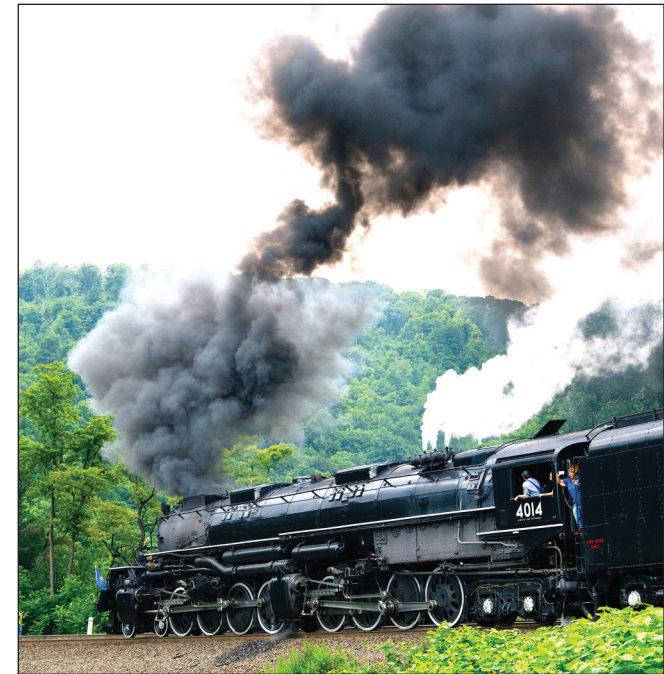
Due to their great length, the frames of the Big Boys are "hinged," or articulated, to allow them to negotiate curves. They have a 4-8-8-4 wheel arrangement, which means they have four wheels on the leading set of "pilot" wheels to guide the engine; eight drivers on the first engine; another set of eight drivers on the second engine; and four wheels trailing that support the rear of the locomotive.

No. 4014 was retired in December 1961 after traveling 1,031,205 miles. Union Pacific reacquired it from the RailGiants Train Museum in Pomona, California, in 2013 and relocated it back to Cheyenne, Wyoming, for a multi-year restoration. It returned to service in May 2019 to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad's Completion.

The seven other remaining Big Boys are on public display in St. Louis, Missouri; Dallas, Texas; Omaha, Nebraska; Denver, Colorado; Scranton, Pennsylvania; Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Cheyenne, Wyoming.

— Union Pacific

JUNIATA SHOPS WELCOME BIG BOY NO. 4014



Photos courtesy of Norfolk Southern

Norfolk Southern hosted a private event at the Juniata Locomotive Shops on July 8. Clockwise from top, left, Boilermakers show off their pride in front of Big Boy 4014; Norfolk Southern President and CEO Mark George talks with guests; Big Boy steams up the tracks; and children check out a virtual train experience.

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Big Boy stop in Cresson 'better than any concert'

BY COLETTE COSTLOW

ccostlow@altoonamirror.com

It's no secret that Union Pacific's No. 4014 Big Boy steam locomotive brought in a large crowd to central Pennsylvania, and Cresson was one of the lucky towns to reap the benefits.

"I've been up here for 40 years, and I've never seen anything like this," Cresson Borough President Ed Lebo said as Front Street was packed with people from near and far.

Roughly 9,000 to 10,000 people turned out to watch the steam engine stop from 10:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Saturday, July 11, before it continued its journey to Leatsdale and beyond, Cresson Borough secretary Roberta Soisson said.

About 8,000 attendees were from out of town, she said, dwarfing Cresson's population of 1,500.

Local and visiting railfans could visit about 20 local businesses that lined the street in food trucks, tents or in nearby buildings.

Business was steady at Frosty's Caboose ice cream shop located near the end of Front Street, owner Becky Strunk said.



Mirror photos by Colette Costlow

Yard Lounge employee Emily Mason puts out sweet treats for a continental breakfast July 11 before Big Boy's arrival in Cresson. Above, the crowd watches as Big Boy comes to a stop in Cresson.

With warm weather, she said many visitors stopped by the shop and ordered their All American Sundae with fresh strawberries and blueberries or their M&M train car for children.

Strunk was inspired by Saturday's turn out, and hopes the community can get together in the future to host another festival.

"I'd like to see the community businesses create one nice activity

for the town," she said.

Belly Buster's Restaurant & Catering was one of nine food trucks stationed along Front Street.

According to co-owner Walt Weaver, they served about 150 burgers that day.

Throughout the four events they catered last week for Big Boy's arrival, they sold about 1,300 burgers. They sold 985 burgers in four hours while catering for Norfolk Southern in Altoona, an all-time record for the business.

He said about 70% of their customers were from out of town, serving people from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York and Maryland.

More people heard about their small business as well, Weaver said, because they met new people and gained more followers on their social media platforms.

"To have that event in a small town was a big event, and it was pretty amazing that we got to be there," he said.

Cresson Borough Police Chief, Mike Novak, said he also spoke with people from Massachusetts

and New York, describing them as pleasant and happy to see the Big Boy locomotive roll through the town.

With their annual summer carnival slated for 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. from July 28-Aug. 1, Libo said they're looking at bringing another festival into the community.

Talking about the success of the Big Boy event, Lebo said the borough hosted a great crowd.

"To see the joy on all the people's faces, it was worth it," he said. "It was better than any concert I've been to."

Railfans Lou Capwell of Topeka, Kansas, and Bill Schnierle of Canton, Ohio, volunteered at the Station Inn to help with the crowds.

Capwell has been coming to the Station Inn for about 30 years, driving 1,000 miles to hang out with his train-loving friends a few times a year. He drove to Cresson on July 8, which was his birthday.

Understanding the town's usual crowd, he said it was exciting to see all types of people come together to watch a train roll to a stop in the area for 30 minutes.

Continued on Page 11



Young Pittsburgh railfans — June Tarr, 4, (left) and Francis Tarr, 6 — pose for a photo during the Big Boy's stop in Cresson.

Continued from Page 10

"It's only half an hour this thing is here, and that's a big thing to think about," he said. "You're going to see it. You blink, and it's gone. Everybody is here just for that one fleeting instant."

Likewise, Schnierle said it was great to see railfans and those interested in trains come out and see the Big Boy.

He was a part of a group that chased the locomotive starting in Annville through Mexico and Barree. Schnierle had plans to keep chasing the train until Struthers, Ohio, which is near his hometown.

Two new railfans, Francis Tarr, 6, and June Tarr, 4, were excited to see the Big Boy locomotive as they traveled with their parents from Pittsburgh that morning. Francis wore a conductor hat with pins from different places they've visited.



Francis Tarr, 6, shows off his conductor hat decorated with pins.

Their father, Travis, suggested viewing the Big Boy in Cresson instead of visiting a bigger town in Pennsylvania.

"This was a nice place to go because it was a beautiful, little small town to see it go by in," he said.

Danny Anderson, assistant English professor at Mount Aloysius College and Ebensburg resident, said it was

unusual to see so many people taking an interest in his small town.

"We are very isolated from the rest of the world, it seems like," he said. "Now this major event is coming to visit us, and it feels special, especially with the train history of the region."

He decided to visit Cresson that morning because his 87-year-old mother-in-law wanted to see the Big Boy. She had been watching the adventure on the news, so Anderson said they made a whole day out of the train sighting.

Greensburg resident Jessie Glover took it one step further and dressed as a conductor, complete with bright blue overalls, a red bandanna and a conductor's hat. He wasn't channeling a specific look, but something along the lines of a steam engineer, he said.

As a railroad enthusiast, he wanted to see the train because "it's the biggest and the best."

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