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from *Adams County*

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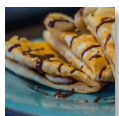
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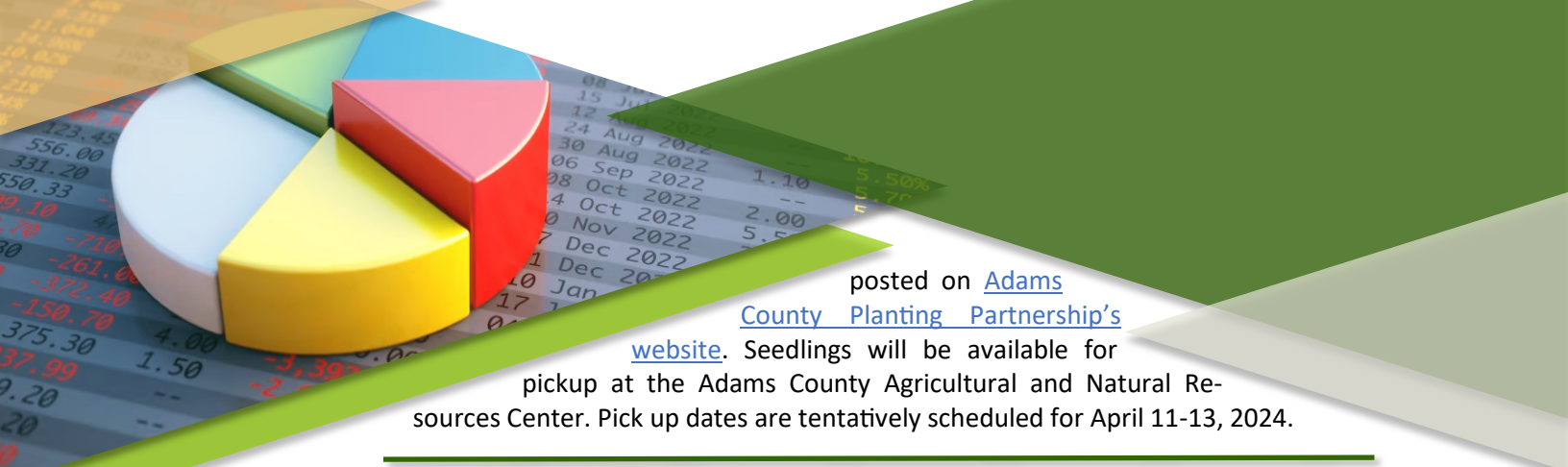
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Free Seedling Distribution

The *Adams County Planting Partnership* is a joint initiative of the Adams County Conservation District, the Watershed Alliance of Adams County, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The Adams County Planting Partnership's mission is to get as many native trees and shrubs as possible into the hands of Adams County residents to plant along streams, ponds, and waterways to stabilize the soils, take up excess nutrients, shade and cool the water, and provide food and shelter to fish and wildlife. Trees can also lessen the impacts of stormwater runoff and provide community and environmental benefits in urban areas as well.

The Adams County Planting Partnership's Spring 2024 native tree and shrub seedling distribution is coming up in April! More than 8,000 trees and shrubs have been requested. The seedling request form will open at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 2, 2024, and close at 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 17, 2024. A link to the form will be



posted on [Adams County Planting Partnership's website](#). Seedlings will be available for pickup at the Adams County Agricultural and Natural Resources Center. Pick up dates are tentatively scheduled for April 11-13, 2024.

Governor's 2024-25 Budget Proposal Impacts Counties

On Tuesday, February 6, Gov. Shapiro delivered his second budget address, announcing his \$48.3 billion fiscal proposal for FY 2024-2025 in a joint session of the House and Senate. The proposal represents an increase of approximately \$3.7 billion, or 8.4%, over the FY 2023-2024 enacted plan of \$44.6 billion, after adjusting for proposed supplemental appropriation changes that reduce current year state appropriations. With \$14 billion currently sitting in state reserves, including more than \$6 billion in the Rainy-Day Fund, Gov. Shapiro's budget proposal does not include any broad-based tax increases to coincide with increased spending in this budget and draws down the reserves by \$3.2 billion to cover the revenue shortfall. However, over a five-year outlook, expenditures would outpace revenues, necessitating a further draw down on reserves in future years. The budget proposal does assume new taxes on adult-use cannabis and skills game, which, if enacted, are expected to produce \$15 million and \$150 million in revenue in FY 2024-2025, respectively.

The Governor's budget also focuses heavily on economic development investment, following up on the Governor's recently released Statewide Economic Development strategy. Additionally, the budget includes Shapiro Administration priorities such as permitting reform, increased mental health investment, funding for indigent defense services, adult-use cannabis legalization, increased investment in public safety, workforce development, agriculture, and veteran's services, and a request to increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 per hour effective January 1, 2025.

Another key theme in the budget proposal is one of the top 2024 county government priorities, increased funding for county-based mental health services. Notably, Gov. Shapiro's proposal includes another \$20 million increase in county mental health base funding for FY 2024-2025, with additional funds in successive years, reaching a \$60 million increase in FY 2025-2026. Counties are deeply disappointed in this proposed increase, as it fails to address the significant system-wide need counties have long dealt with. Because of this increasing need, counties requested an increase of \$250 million over the current county mental health base line to be directed entirely toward the base funds, regardless of investments being made in other mental health services such as school-based services. The minimal increase for county mental health services fails to provide a long-term commitment to appropriately rebuild the crumbling mental health system and shore up the social services safety net, providing a comprehensive system that is accessible for all Pennsylvanians.

Gov. Shapiro is prioritizing mental health services in schools, proposing a sustained annual investment of \$100 million to continue provision of mental health grants to schools. Counties continue to call for increased coordination between counties and schools to ensure the system of care is built and supports children and families inside and outside of the classroom with available community-based services.

Overall, for counties, this budget proposal reflects a failure to deliver support for a number of 2024 county priorities. However, as this is the first of several steps in the Commonwealth's annual budget proceedings, counties look forward to continuing discussions with the administration and General Assembly on the FY 2024-2025 budget.

State Budget

Adams County Agrees to Collect Municipal & County Taxes

As a result of having no tax collector, agreements for collection of the 2024/2025 municipal and county taxes for Abbottstown, Arendtsville, and Bendersville Borough, by the Adams County Treasurer, were approved at Wednesday's public meeting. It is anticipated that Germany Township taxes will also be collected by the County Treasurer.

A shout out to Adams County Treasurer Crissy Redding and her staff for providing this additional service when a municipality loses its tax collector, or no one seeks the position. This is a benefit to the municipality, and a fiscal benefit to the county, as the tax collection fee goes into the general fund. Thank you, Adams County Treasurer's office!

Adams County Board Appointments

The Adams County Board of Commissioners would like to recognize our many civic minded citizens who volunteer to serve on various county boards that benefit and serve our community.

At Wednesday's public meeting the board took the following action for the Adams County Act 137 Housing Committee. They accepted the resignation of Alan Fleckner, effective February 21, 2024, and appointed Stacey Rice, @Home in Adams County Coordinator, to fill the remainder of Fleckner's term that will expire on December 31, 2025.

The Board also approved the following Adams County Agricultural & Land Preservation Board Members and Reorganization. Approved Ben Mearns, George Taughinbaugh and George Weikert, all Citizen Board Members for another 3-year term. Re-appointed Craig Yingling as Chairman, appointed Dave Wenk as Vice-Chairman, and appointed staff in the following capacities: Ellen Dayhoff, Treasurer, LeighAnn Abraham, Secretary, Mark Clowney, Assistant Secretary

Two LERTAs Coming to Eastern Adams County

LERTA is an acronym for *Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance*. It is a tax abatement program created by the Commonwealth in 1977, authorizing local taxing authorities to provide tax exemptions/reductions to incentivize development of aging, deteriorating, or problematic properties. For properties meeting the guidelines, and approved by each taxing authority, the tax abatement typically is for 10-years. Normally, the reduction goes from 100% the first year down to 10% the last year.

In Pennsylvania there are 3 taxing authorities. They are the Municipality, School District and County. Each of those authorities must agree separately to the submitted application to approve the LERTA. A LERTA provides a development catalyst for a property that normally would be difficult or impractical to develop, to become a viable economic contributor to the fiscal health and quality of life in that community.

At Wednesday's public meeting, the Adams County Board of Commissioners approved a LERTA for 221 acres of vacant land along Oxford Avenue in Conewago Township, and 30 acres of vacant land along Carlisle Pike in

Berwick Township. The parcels had been previously approved for a LERTA by Conewago Twp., Berwick Twp., and Conewago Valley School District.

Oak Lawn Cemetery - New Building

As most residents know, after exhausting all other viable options, Adams County assumed caretaker status of Oak Lawn Cemetery after years of angst, turmoil, and uncertainty. As the final resting place for thousands of Adams County veterans and residents, leaving the cemetery stagnate was not an option. Upon sale of unused real estate in the western portion to fund the non-profit Oak Lawn Cemetery Foundation, Adams County will turn the cemetery over to the foundation.

Pending the transfer of the property to the Oak Lawn Foundation, a dilapidated shed needed to be torn down and a structure for administration, records and storage erected. Two weeks ago, Adams County Maintenance and Cumberland Township collaborated with personnel and equipment to demolish the structure. Adams County staff will build a new basic structure appropriate for an office, records retention, and storage area. The Oak Lawn Foundation will then reimburse the County for the structure. This will take us one step closer toward ending the Oak Lawn Memorial Gardens saga!

Thank you, Cumberland Township, for not only your assistance on this building project, but for your significant investment, for almost a decade, of investigative time, records retention, and man hours to assist families caught up in this travesty!



The **End**

- **Gettysburg Rocks.** Bi-annual music festival. 3 Days, 16 Venues. 150 Bands. This Friday, Saturday & Sunday. The festival is a benefit for Four Diamonds - Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital supporting children battling pediatric cancer. Go to gburgrocks.com for location, bands, and schedule. That's a ton of music this weekend for a great cause!
- **Lincoln Social Saturday Market.** Check out their Saturday Market from 9-1 and \$4 Breakfast + other great food and beverage at Lincoln Social on Baltimore Pike. Lincoln will be "rocking" all 3 days with Gettysburg Rocks bands and will be the only venue with Gettysburg Rocks bands on Sunday! You can also shake a leg Country Line Dancing and Trivia every other Thursday.
- **The March of the 5TH Corps.** Join Adams County Historical Society Historian Tim Smith as he examines the route of the 5th Corps from Frederick to Gettysburg and the events that occurred during that arduous march. It was no walk in the park for the 5TH Corps! Saturday, 11a.m.-12p.m. at ACHS, 625 Biglerville Road.
- **Healthy Adams County Physical Fitness Hike.** Saturday evening at Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve, 1537 Mt. Hope Road, Fairfield. *Hunger Moon Night Hike* with a Naturalist at 7:30 p.m. Must register at education@strawberryhill.org The hike is 1 hour and 1-mile. Please bring a flashlight.
- **Gettysburg College Jazz Ensemble Celebrates Wayne Shorter.** Calling all jazz lovers! Saturday, 8p.m. at the Majestic Theater. Tickets \$5
- **Crepe & Wine Pairing.** Adams County Winery. Saturday. Cottage Creperie will be providing a variety of delicious, sweet crepes with your choice of select wines. Pre-register for slots 10a.m.-11p.m., 11a.m.-12p.m., 12p.m.-1p.m., 1p.m.-2p.m. Adams County Winery. 717-334-4631. Cost \$20.
- **St Francis Lenten Fish Fry.** March 1, 8, 15, 22. 7p.m. An Adams County tradition! Dine-in or Take Out.
- **U.S. Army Air Force Day.** At the World War II American Experience. 845 Crooked Creek Road. Sunday 12p.m. The members of the Capital Wing of the Airmen's Preservation Society will have on display a wide variety of uniforms, equipment, and other artifacts related to the US Air Force during WWII. A variety of speakers will present WWII aviation experiences and history.
- **Sunday Matinee Tribute to George Harrison.** Sunday 2p.m.-5p.m at Ploughman Tap Room on Lincoln Square. A great group of local musicians play Harrison tunes. Free show with no outside food or beverages allowed.

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