ATTENTION

Due to a planned outage by First Energy, directly effecting our printing press overnight, Friday sports stories and other news can be found at **www.huntingdondailynews.com.**
Printed content will run in Tuesday's edition.

Thanks for your patience!

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Residents urge leaders to protect valley

By JORDAN RHODES
Staff Writer

Trough Creek Valley residents urged Union Township Supervisors to protect their valley Thursday night during a two-hour town hall meeting to discuss a proposed data center along Trough Creek Valley Pike.

Jay Ziegler and his wife, Tracy, were among the residents who spoke against the proposal, raising concerns about noise, water use, wildlife, light pollution and the township's ability to regulate the project.

Ziegler also questioned the language being used to describe the proposed development, pointing to the use of the words "property" and "properties" in earlier discussions and the repeated use of "campus" during a presentation from Rich Wray, a representative of Rod Roberts, who owns the property associated with the proposed development.

"The word campus implies large-scale development with the potential to expand," Ziegler said. "If one facility is approved, if more infrastructure investments are made, more are likely to follow."

Ziegler urged the supervisors to be transparent throughout the process and raised concerns about whether tree buffers would be enough to block noise from the facility, including natural gas generators.

"I personally can hear owls over one-half mile away down," Ziegler said. "I love it."

He said construction could continue around the clock for two to three years, bringing noise and light pollution to the valley and affecting wildlife.

Ziegler also pointed to industrial development in Beaver County, where he and his wife are originally from, as an example of what he fears could happen in Union Township.

Tracy Ziegler, who lived in Beaver County for 33 years, described her experience with the area surrounding the Shippingport nuclear power plant and the tax revenue it generated.

"The power plant gave us a large amount of tax revenue, we were sitting pretty, and overnight, they figured that the cooling tower was seen as equipment," said T. Ziegler. "We became a distress district overnight."

She also referenced other industrial developments in Beaver County as examples of what she described as broken promises.

"You are not gonna get tax revenue," T. Ziegler said.

She also expressed concern about the effect the proposed data center could have on wildlife and the valley's natural surroundings.

"I hear owls, I see animals I've never seen before," T. Ziegler said. "It's going to get ruined. Trust me."

She further warned that she believed the proposed development could contribute to cancer in the area, pointing to Beaver County and what she described as its history of industrial pollution.

"You should see Beaver County,"

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Diesel program added at SCI

Shop will bring new training opportunities for inmates

By JORDAN RHODES
Staff Writer

Six incarcerated men at SCI Huntingdon will have the opportunity to learn diesel mechanics through a new shop designed to give them hands-on experience and prepare them for certifications they can use after their release.

The state Department of Corrections (DOC) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony last week for the new three-bay diesel mechanic shop at SCI Huntingdon, established through Pennsylvania Correctional Industries (PCI).

PCI director Anne Saint, Ph.D., said the program will give incarcerated individuals the opportunity to gain marketable certifications while serving their sentences.

"It's a great trade to have when you get out," Saint said.

Participants will begin with classroom training, which Saint estimated could take six to eight months before they move on to hands-on work.

During that portion of the program, participants will learn how to take apart and rebuild a diesel engine using a state vehicle.

"They will take it completely apart and rebuild it to understand all the parts that go into a diesel motor," Saint said.

By the time they leave the institution, participants will have the skills and knowledge needed to pursue several industry certifications, including Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification, a Pennsylvania state inspection license and Section 609 certification through the Mobile Air Climate Systems Association.

PCI has two employees who have completed the program and will train participants in the skills needed to pursue the additional certifications, Saint said.



Submitted photo

The new three-bay diesel mechanic shop at SCI Huntingdon will provide hands-on training for incarcerated individuals preparing to pursue industry certifications.

"One of the things we like to do in PCI is find certifications that are marketable," she said.

The diesel mechanic shop is one of several programs PCI offers at SCI Huntingdon to help prepare incarcerated individuals for employment after release. The institution also offers commercial driver's license classes.

"We get them trained for their certifications for the CDL as well," Saint said. "It's a good fit for that area."

Saint said PCI aims to help individuals transition back into their communities by teaching them job skills and the soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

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Photo by BECKY WEIKERT

Pennsylvania School Press Association (PSPA) executive board member Nate Thompson led State College High School students, from the left, Marshall Laskowski, Braylon Morris and Rafael Ronquillo, in writing prompt Friday during the regional student journalism competition at Juniata College.

Young journalists attend competition

By BECKY WEIKERT
Managing Editor

Approximately 75 future journalists gathered on the campus of Juniata College Friday for the Pennsylvania School Press Association (PSPA) regional student journalism competition.

Students from Altoona, State College and Tyrone area school districts competed in various contests related to journalism careers, while also hearing from professionals in the field.

"These students get to compete under deadline and that's an experience you don't get often," said PSPA executive board member Nate Thompson of Hesston, who served as one of the coordinators for Friday's competition. "Plus they get to meet people in the industry and learn from professionals in the industry."

Thompson said the day is also an excellent netorking opportunity.

"You have reporters, editors and advisers in the same place dealing with the same things," he said.

Students started the day hearing from Daily News managing editor Becky Weikert who addressed the young journalists on the similarities between small-town reporters and high school journalists.

They then competed in the categories of newspaper and literary magazine and yearbook and editorial.

"Contests cover everything from writing and photography, yearbook design and even podcasts," said Thompson. "We've tried to diversify it to include all forms of media."

As part of the newspaper news writing contest, students were given an envelope containing a prompt. They had one hour to write a 250-300-word news story based on the information provided.

Following the morning competitions, PSPA members had an opportunity to attend breakout sessions. Juniata College's associate director of communication, April Feagley, and director of web design, Isaac Baker, led a session on magazine design decisions, while Daily News sports writer Ty States offered tips for sportswriting. Thompson, a master journalism educator (MJE) and owner of 707 Photos, also shared photography gear suggestions and tips for any budget/skill level.

Friday's contest was one of several regional qualifying events. Friday's regional event rotates each year between Penn State Altoona, St. Francis and Juniata College campuses. Campus tours were also a part of the day.

"It's a great opportunity for students to see three different campuses," said Thompson.

Winners from Friday's event will go on to compete in the state contest at Penn State's University Park campus next spring.

Thompson said the state contest typically requires students to report on a mock press conference, applying it to the category in which they're competing.

The Pennsylvania School Press Association originated in 1924 and stands among the oldest scholastic journalistic organizations in the country. Headquartered in Manchester, Pennsylvania, PSPA welcomes all journalism advisers and teachers to apply for membership.

Membership is free for the 2026-2027 school year. Schools must be members to participate in regional and state contests, critiques, and awards programs. For more information on the association or becoming a member, visit www.paschoolpress.org.

Becky can be reached at bweikert@huntingdondailynews.com.

Mount Union EMS crew assists with birth

By JORDAN RHODES
Staff Writer

Helping deliver a baby before reaching the hospital is an uncommon call for Mount Union EMS, making a Sept. 30 birth a memorable experience for three crew members who were awarded stork pins for their assistance.

Stork pins are traditional awards given to emergency responders who assist with an out-of-hospital birth. For Mount Union EMS, the recognition marks an experience crews rarely encounter.

Natasha Everhart, Kim Leonard and Holly Thompson assisted with the birth of a baby boy, with help from Orbisonia-Rockhill EMS. The call marked the second time this year Mount Union EMS had assisted with a prehospital birth.

Everhart, who has worked in the EMS field for 11 years, said the regional council recognizes stork pins alongside awards for cardiac saves. She said cardiac saves tend to receive more recognition, but prehospital births are also significant because they are uncommon.

"It's something that we don't see all the time," Everhart said.

The Sept. 30 call was the first time Everhart had helped deliver a baby before reaching the hospital. She said she had come close to assisting with a birth before but had never been involved to that extent.

For Thompson, who has worked in EMS for two years, it was also her first time assisting with a birth. Leonard, an EMT since 2010, assisted with another prehospital birth in June.

That June call was the first known instance of Mount Union EMS assisting with a birth outside a hospital, according to Everhart, who said she confirmed the information with her supervisor.

The Sept. 30 call required additional help because the crew was caring for two patients, the mother and newborn, who each needed a provider. Orbisonia-Rockhill EMS sent crew members Dean Morgan and Dina Hartman to assist. Hartman joined the Mount Union crew during transport, helping care for the baby while Everhart focused on the mother.

"We had mom and baby to technically have a provider for each one," Everhart said.

Everhart explained that the experience stood out because it offered a welcome contrast to the difficult situations crews often encounter.

"After seeing all the bad that we see, to actually see something good like that, it's definitely something that I am gonna remember," she said. "We see so much negativity to actually see something good for once, it's an adrenaline high."

Although a stork pin might not seem like a major event to everyone, Everhart said the recognition means a great deal to the crew members who experience these calls.

"For some people, it's like, 'OK, you delivered a baby,'" she said. "But whenever we get those chances, to us, it's a huge deal."

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