

CHAMBER CONNECTION

TO PRESERVE, PROTECT AND DEFEND THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM OF LYCOMING COUNTY

Montoursville Mini Park Bricks

Welcome New Members

About Our Members....



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Comfort Keepers

strives for good home care



The Chamber View

Jason Fink, President/CEO

Our newsletter got bumped a week to accommodate the need for election coverage. It was quite the election with it being longer than we've ever waited to get results for president and other key offices here in Pennsylvania. Hopefully, after everything settles, there will be a focus put in place to ensure that this doesn't happen again. We should want this, no matter what your political affiliation is, and should be demanding it be addressed prior to the next election.

Hopefully, you caught last month, that the County Commissioners put into the hands of small businesses here in Lycoming County, \$1.5m of CARES Act funds to assist them in getting through the challenges they're facing from COVID-19. That was from the \$10.2m of CARES Act dollars they received to not only assist small businesses but also municipalities, schools, emergency services and non-profit organizations. It sounds like a large amount of money but when you look at it closely, the need is far greater than what is available to assist in making everyone whole. For the small business program, there was over \$7m in eligible expenditures submitted.

One key thing that people need to understand is that funds need to go to COVID-19 related expenditures. Expenses such as payroll, rent, utilities, cleaning and protection items were a few of the items they could use these funds towards. It is great to

see that these funds are going to assist the owners of these small businesses to cover these expenses. However, the one thing they can't help them out with, is the lost revenue that the owners of these small businesses use to pay themselves in providing for their family. We as consumers need to be thinking more about this when we're making a decision to purchase online. These small business owners need us now more than ever to buy local to help sustain them through this period of time in helping to sustain their own families.

The Chamber was a willing partner to assist the County in being able to promote and review all applications that came in requesting funding. We appreciate not only their commitment in helping out these businesses, almost 170 received funding, but also providing us the opportunity to assist them in undertaking this work. Because these are federal funds, they also have SEDA-COG involved in administering these monies given their expertise in working with federally funded programs. I want to thank Joe Reighard, Shannon Rossman, John Houser, Nancy Eischeid, Matt McDermott and Kristen Moyer for taking their time to thoughtfully review each application in helping to award and distribute these funds. Thank you also to Commissioners Scott Metzger, Tony Mussare and Rick Mirabito for recognizing this need and quickly moving to assist those small business owners here in

our community.

Back in mid-September, we received the unfortunate news that Shop-Vac was closing. Ownership couldn't close a deal to sell and walked away from the local people that helped put them in a position that they could turn over their ownership stake to the bank and move away from our community. It's an unfortunate situation. We and others here in the community are doing what can be done to assist those employees affected by this decision. One thing that we did in response was quickly pull together a job fair in early October. The job fair had strong interest by local companies that had hiring needs. There was a morning session that was focused on Shop-Vac employees and the afternoon was open to the general public. Knowing that we have over a 10% unemployment rate, it was decided that there needed to be time for those currently unemployed to see what opportunities were here in the market. We were pleased there were 67 companies in attendance that were hiring for over 1,900 positions with their businesses. Of those positions, only 5 companies were hiring for employment that paid less than \$10/hr with the vast majority also offering standard benefits. The only disappointing thing about this day was our attendance. We had roughly 175 people that came out with only about 100 of those being during the open session in the afternoon. It's a struggle for me to see

how with so many jobs and an unemployment rate of over 10%, that we didn't see more people. While this is very frustrating, the good thing to know is that if you don't have a job, and you somehow missed this job fair, there are companies in our community hiring. Give us a call and we would be happy to share the names of those businesses that were in attendance.

As I'm writing this, I'm also listening to a US Chamber program called "No Crystal Ball Needed: Keeping America Safe & Open" that is focusing on helping mitigate a resurgence of COVID-19 and is including recommendations for keeping Americans safe and healthy and measures to keep the economy open for business. There's one thing that I'd like to share that is coming across very clear in that if you haven't gotten a flu shot yet, do it. If you have no medical reasons not to get one, this year will be more important than ever to get one. Having read the statis-

tics, there's a large number of people out there that don't get them. Hopefully seeing what's going on with the pandemic will move those who haven't do so in previous years to get one now. And yes, I just got mine this past Monday.

I'd be remiss if I didn't take the time to congratulate the biggest Dodgers fan that I know here in Lycoming County, John Troisi. John, for those of you that are younger, owned Troisi, Finer Things for Men that his father Domenic started here in Williamsport. He's well known for his photography and storytelling, along with being a huge Dodgers fan. Congratulations John, and any other Dodgers fan. I hope you enjoyed their victory. While I'm not a Dodgers fan, it was great to have baseball this year and a treat to enjoy the playoffs and World Series. Hopefully next year, we'll have a chance to get fans into the stadiums and see locally the Crosscutters take the field. Ten months down and two to go until 2021.

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PM Exchange and Ribbon Cuttings

Preservation Williamsport at the Rowley House



It was one of the last summer-like evenings for October and the last PM Exchange for the year. Which meant that Preservation Williamsport had the opportunity for an event on the lawn with tours of the Rowley House. Attendees were treated to food on the front porch by Farrington Place. Will Daniels, Chamber Membership Development & Retention Committee, presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Board Members (l to r), Chuck Anderson, Nan Young, Eiderson Dean, Bob Kane, (back row) Lisa Fink and Larry Fryda. Thank you for a wonderful evening and for showcasing an awesome historical house.

Bald Birds Brewing Company Ribbon Cutting

Bald Birds Brewing Co. held their ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of their newest location in Jersey Shore. (From l to r) Representative Garth Everett; Joe Hamm, Jersey Shore Borough; Jeffery Feerrar & Joe Feerrar, Owner, Bald Birds Brewing Co.; Erik Houser, Senator Gene Yaw's Office, and Jason Fink, Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.



Elysian Fields Equestrian Center Ribbon Cutting

Elysian Fields Equestrian Center celebrated their three-year anniversary with a ribbon cutting during their week-long Halloween event; Haunted Barn of Tallman Hollow. (From l to r) Jolinda Chamberlain, Jolinda Chamberlain State Farm Agency; volunteer Tim Starr; Robert Schnars, CEO of Elysian Fields Equestrian Center; Jason Fink, Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce; and Chester "DJ Chet the Jet" Rogers.

Welcome New Chamber Members!

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Interested in
joining the Chamber?

Call Taryn Mueller at
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apply online at:
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Happy Thanksgiving from the staff at your local Chamber of Commerce!

Check out our website for all your events, relocation needs,
economic development news, leadership opportunities,
and membership information.

www.williamsport.org
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Montoursville Chamber of Commerce



Broad Street Mini Park Project

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Chamber Members...

New Business? Have you moved to a new location? Coming up on a
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Participate in a FREE ribbon cutting ceremony!

Contact Taryn Mueller for more information at 570-320-4209 or
tmueller@williamsport.org



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For a complete list of upcoming Chamber events, visit www.williamsport.org

Leadership Lycoming Learns about Leadership & Community Service

The Leadership Lycoming Class of 2021 began their program days with Leadership & Community Service at the Genetti Hotel & Suites. Miranda Kujawa, General Manager, welcomed the class and shared information on the history of the hotel. Julie Steinbacher, Steinbacher, Goodall & Yurchak, spoke to the class about how to better chunk one's time, energy and presence professionally and in everyday life. Tyler Wagner, UPMC Williamsport, moderated a panel about the responsibilities of being a board member featur-

ing Ron Frick, Lycoming County United Way; Alysha Sides Greevy, Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers and Wendy Weaver, Weaver Wireless Consultants, LLC. Keith Kuzio, Larson Design Group, shared company and personal leadership experiences with the class. Chad Greevy, Williamsport Area School District, also provided a skills training on Change Theory, which focused on steps to leading change within an organization.

During lunch, the class had the opportunity to hear from the Kiwanis

Club of Williamsport about the club's mission and how their fundraisers and events benefit numerous programs in our community. After lunch, the class divided into three groups to tour the three local River Valley Regional YMCA branches: Eastern Lycoming, Jersey Shore and Williamsport. During the tours, class members learned about the numerous programs the YMCA offers to the community and how the organization engages volunteers.

Thank you to our Tier 2 sponsor, Leadership Lycoming Class of 2017 and our Tier 1 sponsor, Lycoming County United Way.



Thank you to Heather Allison, Pennsylvania College of Technology; Jessica Probst, River Valley Regional YMCA and Tyler Wagner, UPMC Williamsport, for hosting the day.



www.leadershiplycoming.org

Thank you to Jessica Betz, Wilkinson Dunn Company; Maggie Kisick, Lycoming Engines and Erin Scholl, YWCA of Northcentral PA, for being class reporters.



Some of the Class of 2021 "flexin" at the Jersey Shore Branch YMCA.



Class members are seen touring the River Valley Regional YMCA Williamsport Branch. During these tours, class members learned about the many programs offered through the YMCA.



Leadership Lycoming participant Adam Dincher delivering his elevator speech to his classmates. Constructing an elevator speech was a skillset taught at Opening Retreat.

Class of 2021 learning about the history of Lycoming County's first hotel, the Genetti Hotel in downtown Williamsport, by General Manager and Class of 2020, Miranda Kujawa.



FEATURE MEMBER

Comfort Keepers strives for good home care

By **MIKE REUTHER**
mreuther@sungazette.com

This year marks a big one for Comfort Keepers, a Williamsport-based home care agency for the elderly.

Not only does the business celebrate its twentieth year in operation, it also has found a new headquarters location at 1323 E. Third St.

Business owner Andria Larson said it's been a great run for Comfort Keepers.

"I love what we have done so far," she said. "But I'm always thinking how we can make it better."

In the last few years, Comfort Keepers has expanded its network, reaching people in Tioga county and many outlying areas of the region where there otherwise don't exist many home care options.

Some 100 caregivers make the individual home visits, providing help to people ranging from house-keeping and bathing needs to companionship.

"Some people get 15 hours a week. Some get 24-hour-care," Larson said.

She credited her personnel for making the business successful. The agency is busy and the phones are constantly ringing, she added.

When asked what makes Comfort Keepers unique from other home care agencies, she said, "One is probably our experience. We have done it for 20 years. I have good staff. I think our caregivers are good. They love what they do."

She strives to hire people who are kind and reliable with an excellent work ethic.

Larson, who grew up in Cogan Station, got into the business after working in retail.

"I started the business out of my home with two caregivers," she said. "If you had told me 20 years ago I'd have this business, I wouldn't have believed you."

She seems to have few regrets.

The business, she said, has been growing and she loves being involved in work that helps people.

"I just want to continue to be the leader in home care in the area. I want to continue to provide good care in the community," she said.

Larson said she simply feels blessed to come to work every day and have the opportunity to do



MIKE REUTHER/Sun-Gazette
Stacie Witts, left, and Andria Larson head up the team at Comfort Keepers. The business employs some 100 full and part-time caregivers. Comfort Keepers celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

The Williamsport Sun-Gazette
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FEATURE MEMBER

Comfort Keepers strives for good home care

(From Page 6)
what she does.

Stacie Witts, operations manager, shares her boss's enthusiasm.

"I love working here," she said. "I've had the opportunity to do a little bit of everything here."

In fact, Witts started out with the agency as a caregiver more than a dozen years ago.

"I have an amazing staff," Larson said, noting that various personnel are longtime employees.

Larson said perhaps the most challenging aspect of the business is having enough caregivers.

She noted some of the changes in the industry over the years.

"There are more regulations. Twenty years ago, home care wasn't in the mainstream," she said. "But that's a good thing. That helps protect the patients."

With more than 700 offices worldwide, Comfort Keepers has been named one of the fastest growing franchise systems by INC. Magazine.



MIKE REUTHER/Sun-Gazette

Comfort Keepers this year relocated to new headquarters here at 1323 E. Third St., Williamsport. The site is conveniently located to serve people throughout the region. At right, Andria Larson, front, owner, and operations manager Stacie Witts have long been part of the Williamsport-based business. The agency provides a range of home care to people.



The Williamsport Sun-Gazette is printed on newsprint which contains recycled material



LEGACY MEMBER

Housing authority provides affordable, quality living for residents

By MARK MARONEY
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It was after World War II, and as Lycoming County's soldiers returned to the home-front, many families were rebuilding, reconnecting and looking for affordable housing.

In these post-war years, the Lycoming County commissioners envisioned a return to normalcy and formed what was to be known as the Lycoming Housing Authority, said Marilyn Severson, the authority executive director.

To this day, the authority remains a vital link to connecting people with finding affordable and quality housing, and so much more, she said.

Severson, who joined the authority in 1999 as a social worker, said she gets joy from helping those in need find housing opportunities in nine different locations throughout the county.

"In 1948, the authority became a municipality by resolution of the commissioners," she said.

The Housing Authority purchased what was known as Penn Vale in 1948. During this time, Penn Vale was used by the War Department, a predecessor to the U.S. Department of Defense, as a location for soldiers' homes.

And over the years, that mission has expanded to not only low-income housing needs but also housing for the working class, including fair-market-rate housing.

In 1952, the authority oversaw construction of the Michael Ross and P.D. Mitchell developments. P.D. Mitchell site has become the centerpiece, Severson said.

Michael Ross remains close to Divine Providence Hospital, she said.

In 1969, the authority began William Hepburn Apartments on Lycoming Street and in 1973, the Robert Montgomery House in Montgomery borough, where there are currently 38 units enabling income-eligible individuals to find a place to live among the quiet borough in southeastern Lycoming County.

Between 1973 and 2000, the authority

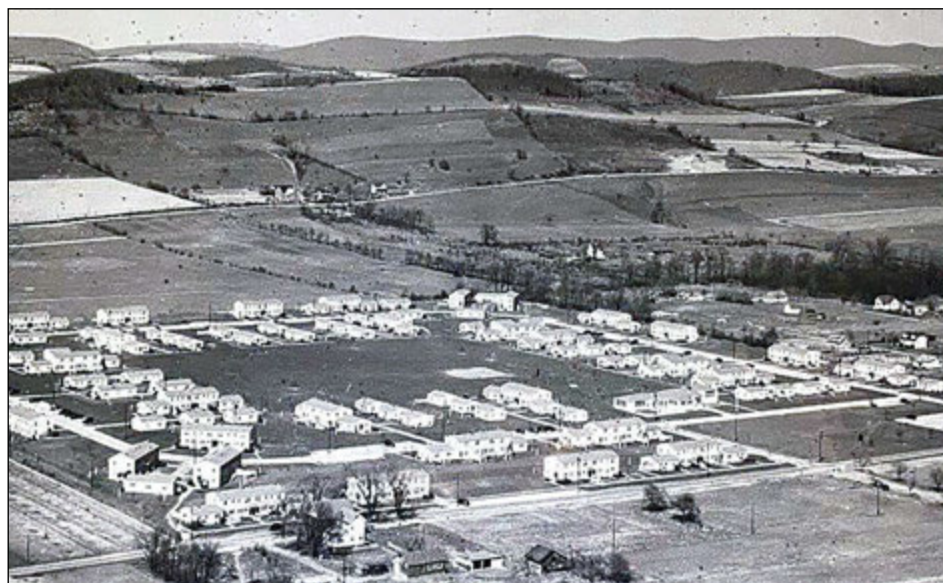


PHOTO PROVIDED

An aerial view shows Penn Vale when it was a U.S. Army living quarters in the post-World War II era. The Lycoming County Housing Authority took over ownership of the location in Loyalsock Township and it became a part of authority-operated affordable housing units, said Marilyn Severson, authority executive director.

managed housing properties and continued to meet its need over nearly three decades of service, providing affordable residences to low-income/ hard-working class individuals.

Lycoming Housing has become federally funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In 2000, the authority disposed of 138 public housing units in Pennvale and the Lycoming County Housing Finance Inc. was created. The following year, the Broad Street School Apartments were made by re-vamping the former Broad Street School in Jersey Shore. Those apartments include 30 units that are for senior citizens.

Severson noted how these apartments are so unique with some of the original school markings on the doors, such as teacher's names, original wood beams from the school preserved and a principal's office converted into an apartment.

In 2004, the Lycoming County Housing Finance Inc. bought Chatham Park Apartments in Old Lycoming Township.

In 2011, it began to manage the Mary Slaughter Apartments on Brandon Street,

which has 27 units available for the elderly near bucolic Brandon Park and its tennis courts, the band shell and walking paths.

Today, the authority manages 468 public housing units, Severson said.

These include four units that have occupants who are planning to purchase and have their own home ownership, she said. "The four apartments that will become owner-occupied structures are at Lose School Parkway, Cherry Street and Walnut Street," she said.

These occupants have five years using various bank loans and credit to save enough money to eventually call the house their own, she said.

The authority has staff that are willing and help out clients with their home repairs and provide educational resources to help them locate jobs, search for more productive jobs and do job training, Severson said.

"The whole purpose is to empower these folks so they can reach the finish line and sign on the dotted line, taking over the mortgage and becoming their own home owner," she said.

The authority manages Housing Choice

Vouchers, also known as Section 8 housing for 500 families, Severson said.

Housing and Urban Development issues 675 vouchers and the authority has a set budget to provide that many housing opportunities for low-income families and individuals, she said.

Additionally, we partner with many local landlords to provide support and management of 675 Section 8 vouchers. Lycoming Housing also provides homeownership opportunities to qualified applicants through our Section 32 Homeownership Plan.

The authority also has 202 market-rate units that do not come with any federal government assistance.

"We, as a public agency, with support of our Board of Directors and a commitment from our dedicated staff, have a shared responsibility to provide results-oriented, quality work and services for all our clients," Severson said on behalf of the board.

Lycoming Housing, together with residents, local government, community agencies, and the citizens of Lycoming County are committed to developing partnerships to maintain and improve neighborhood standards, she said.

"We are focused on ensuring we remain engaged within our community and doing our very best to help enrich the overall quality of life for our entire county."

"Our mission was and remains today to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing to low-income residents and offer supportive services that will enable residents to ultimately reach self-sufficiency," Severson said.



Under Pressure Connections provides all hose needs

By MALLORIE MCILWAIN
mmcilwain@sungazette.com

"When you walk in most people find out that everyone that works here, cares...and you can see that," Randy Pfirmman, President and Owner of Under Pressure Connections said. "I truly believe that everybody that works here will do anything to try to help you."

Under Pressure Connections, a business in South Williamsport alongside Route 15, has been working hard, providing quality hydraulic hoses, cylinders and business truck inspections since 2000 and after the reopening of the business in 2016.

Pfirmman started the business in 2000 and it shortly became a massive endeavor, in which he sold the building to a company and took a management position until the new owner left the business.

Pfirmman started the business back up in 2016 and it has been booming ever since.

"We make hydraulic hoses for everyone," he said. "From the oil field to the big factories, to the farmer who just walks in. We believe in inventory while other businesses don't."

He added that the business maintains a lot of parts needed to make hoses for any business, recreational, residential or agricultural need.

"We pull a lot of people from all over the state," he continued. "We probably have more fittings in hose than any other shop in Pennsylvania."

The business doesn't stop there. They also have specialty equipment used to break apart cylinders and repair them, as well as a father and son duo who do all of the federally regulated gas and oil truck inspections, repairs and even making of some trucks.

The 12, Williamsport local, employees stock for any hosing needs, and can even make up to an eight inch diameter hose.

"We are providing a service that is hard to get," Pfirmman said.

The business is also closely connected with CareerLink and local schools to help students find what career field they may be interested in doing.



MALLORIE MCILWAIN/
Sun-Gazette

Milton Fuoss, registered inspector, works on a truck at Under Pressure Connections. Branch Manager, Caleb Catherine, works on a hose at Under Pressure Connections.

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NEW MEMBER

Local Fraternal Order of Eagles is helping people

By MALLORIE McILWAIN
mmcilwain@sungazette.com

"We just want people to know that we are people helping people," Eric Hoover, president of the Williamsport Fraternal Order of Eagles #970 on Basin Street, said.

The order, which was founded in 1905, has been helping local families, students, organizations and more with their finances, getting into colleges during some of the hardest times of their lives including cancer treatments and house fires.

"Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international non-profit organization, which was founded in 1898 uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope," Hoover said.

This particular order has helped numerous cancer patients and their families, victims of fires, city residents who need help with bills and many local students who are interested in going to college.

The order has generously donated money and gift cards to local residents and residents across the state with necessities like clothing after a house fire, money for college textbooks and sports, money for house and medical bills and more.

In addition, the order has also provided help to the city's police department.

"We went to the Williamsport Police Department and asked them what we could do as an organization to help them," Hoover said. "Our officers and members voted to purchase new laptop computers for them. A little while later we went back to the Williamsport Police Dept and asked what else we could do. Again our great members approved to purchase rifles as well as laser scopes for them."

Hoover also said that the organization normally does this through "word of mouth" and allows people to send them letters of intent on what their current situation is and what kind of help the person might need.

"We are people helping people," he said.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Eric Hoover, above, is current president of the Fraternal Order of Eagles #970. At left is the Fraternal Order of Eagles building in Williamsport on a corner of East Third and Basin streets.



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Received between September 30 and October 28

Thank you to our renewing members!

We do appreciate your membership and involvement in the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce!

First Year Renewals

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Earth Works Energy Services LLC
First Citizens Community Bank
One Focus Property Management
Perfect-2-Perfect
Smith Burch Insurance Agency
South Creek Acres
The Break Room of Williamsport
Triad Strategies LLC
Woodrich - "Trees for Life"
Yoder Insurance Inc.

Members 2 - 5 Years

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Boom City Brewing Company
Collin T. Linn, DMD
Dave's Pro Auto Service Inc.
Enginuity, LLC
Hachiko Asian Cuisine
Highland Photography Studio
Liberty Arena/Kaos Fun Zone/Scorz Bar & Grill
Nippenose Valley Village
Northeast Knee & Joint Institute
Rowe Sprinkler Systems - A Division of
Reed Industrial Resources
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Schoonover Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
Valley View Rehab & Nursing Center
Zeigler Law Firm, LLC

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The Lycoming Foundation
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www.williamsport.org

or call Nancy Eischeid

at 570-326-1971.

About Our Members....

Providence Engineering Relocates

Providence Engineering Corp. is pleased to announce they have relocated their North-Central Pennsylvania office to Lewisburg, PA. Now located at 419 Market Street, in Lewisburg's historic district, Providence offers a more convenient location for our clients in the Lewisburg region and beyond. The Providence team is excited to continue providing constructible, affordable, and timely engineering services while also contributing to the economic vitality of downtown Lewisburg.

Providence has also hired Jeremy Whitmoyer, P.E. as Project Manager. Jeremy will be based in the new Lewisburg location, working alongside Zac Kurtz, P.E. and Jim Horting, P.E. With more than 10 years of professional experience, Jeremy brings a wealth of structural design expertise to the Providence team. In his new role, Jeremy will manage projects from concept to closeout including surveys, estimates, structural design, and construction administration services.

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(Winners are paid two weeks following the drawing)

Leadership Lycoming

Rules: All numbers played straight. Winning number based on the PA Lottery Pick 3 Evening Number only. Winners paid within two weeks following the drawing. EACH TICKET COST \$5.00 - ONLY 1000 TICKETS SOLD

Leadership Lycoming is a program of the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce

Proceeds support the Leadership Lycoming Program Lic. No. 771

Su	M	T	W	T	F	S
January 2021 #000					1 \$50	2 \$25
3 \$45	4 \$30	5 \$40	6 \$35	7 \$50	8 \$25	9 \$35
10 \$40	11 \$25	12 \$25	13 \$45	14 \$35	15 \$30	16 \$45
17 \$50	18 \$40	19 \$30	20 \$25	21 \$30	22 \$250	23 \$35
24 \$50	25 \$25	26 \$40	27 \$45	28 \$25	29 \$40	30 \$30
31 \$35	Thank You!					

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

#000

Get your tickets now before they are gone! They make great stocking stuffers or a gift for that hard-to-buy-for person or a small thank you gift. Contact Leadership Lycoming to purchase your tickets:
570-326-1971
or visit the Chamber at 102 W. Fourth Street in Williamsport.



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