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DirSolutions of Williamsport takes pride in solutions



From Jason Fink's Desk - President/CEO of the Chamber

Closing out February and heading into March, the weather is all over the place with spring-like weather one day and cold and winter-like weather the next. Much like the weather, so too is Washington DC right now with the work to avoid a government shutdown. The third continuing resolution for Fiscal Year 2024 expires on two separate dates with the first of which that funds 4 of the 12 appropriations bills being set to run out on March 1. The following Friday, March 8, the remaining 8 are slated to expire.

It seems that the general population has become immune to the discussion and amped up coverage leading up to these government shutdown deadlines. The issue with that is there are real costs associated with a shutdown. While estimates vary widely, there's data which suggests that shutdowns tend to cost and not save money for several reasons. For one, many user fees and other charges are not collected during a shutdown. Those that are federal contractors will include premiums in their bids to account for uncertainty in being paid. Another factor is that while many federal employees are furloughed during a shutdown, they are guaranteed back pay, negating much of those potential savings. To illustrate this point, the Office of Management and Budget official estimates of the 2013 government shutdown found that \$2.5 billion in pay and benefits were paid to furloughed employees for hours not worked during the shutdown, as well as roughly \$10 million in penalty interest payments and lost fee collections.

These shutdowns also carry a cost to the economy. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the 2018-2019 shutdown reduced GDP by a total of \$11 billion, including \$3 billion that will never be recovered. On top of that effect, the CBO notes that longer shutdowns negatively affect private-sector investment and hiring decisions as businesses cannot obtain federal permits and certifications or access federal loans. A 2019 Senate report found that the three government shutdowns in 2013, 2018, and 2019 wasted nearly \$4 billion of taxpayer dollars. No matter what your political affiliation is, I believe we all can agree that this type of waste is not good for us as taxpayers and we should be strongly sending a message to our elected leaders to do whatever they can to avoid these shutdowns given how costly they are to us.

Looking here at the state, Governor Shapiro presented his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25. It definitely has generated a lot of talk given that the proposed spending is \$48.3 billion, which represents a 7.1 percent (or \$3.2 billion) increase over what was enacted last year. According to the Independent Fiscal Office's 5-year outlook, the Commonwealth will deplete cash reserves in the General Fund in 2026 and the rainy-day fund will be depleted in 2028, based on the current trajectory. Moving forward with budgets increasing year-over-year, it is anticipated that taxes will need to be raised to cover this increase in spending.

My take on this proposed budget is like most budgets presented by a Governor, there are things that you can point to and agree with and others that one can question the need in spending. It was good to see a \$2.4 million increase for career and technical education along with an additional \$2.2 million for industry partnerships, a \$2 million increase for a new one-stop-shop career pathways site to ease the complications of job seeking, \$2 million to aide businesses in implementing skills-based hiring, and a \$2 million increase for foundations in industries to support internships at Pennsylvania companies. The proposal also asks for funds to create a new portal to help military veterans more easily reenter the workforce. Workforce development is a major issue for business and industry here in Pennsylvania and across the US. To keep up with investments being made in this area by other states, PA needs to keep up in supporting this if we are to remain competitive with our labor market.

The Governor's proposal includes several new funding initiatives related to his recently announced economic development plan. The largest proposal is \$500 million for a newly created PA SITES Fund, to fund site development and infrastructure to create shovel ready sites. PA SITES would be funded by a \$500 million bond issuance, which would be paid through a \$15.4 million general fund appropriation, which annualizes to \$45.2 million. The governor's proposal also creates a new \$20 million PA Innovation line item to support entrepreneurs scaling their products, innovation and research; creates a new \$3.5 million Regional Economic Competitiveness Challenge to provide planning grants for regional growth strategies; increases funding for marketing to attract tourists by \$15 million, and proposes eliminating the Keystone Communities program and replacing it with a new \$25 million program called Main Street Matters.

As an economic development organization, it's good to see that Governor Shapiro is focused on improving Pennsylvania's business climate. I've noted before that the last comprehensive economic development strategy by a governor was during the Rendell administration. We must become more competitive or we will continue to lose out to other states who are investing in attracting new industries, retaining those that we currently have and supporting new start-ups. A number of recent studies show Pennsylvania among the bottom 10 states for attracting, retaining, or starting a new business. We have the ability to change that, but we need the right policies, investments, and structure in place so companies are encouraged to invest in Pennsylvania. It is good to see that the Governor is looking at ways to reverse this trend and put financial resources in play that will make us more competitive. This investment will pay revenues back to the state as they create more jobs and tax revenue.

One area that I differ with the Governor is the call for an increase of over \$1.5 billion in K-12 education spending. The most recent survey conducted by the US Census Bureau ranked Pennsylvania 11th highest per pupil spending in the country when you consider all sources of spending on public education, including federal, state and local funding. You can look at the data compiled by the US Census Bureau by going to www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/public-school-spending.html#:~:text=Seven%20of%20the%20nine%20states,and%20Maine%20was%20ranked%2013th. This spending is being done in response to the Commonwealth Court ruling last year that Pennsylvania's school funding system is unconstitutional and must be reformed.

I don't disagree that there is a need for public school funding reform. In my work with the school superintendents here in Lycoming County, I've heard from them regularly about how the current mechanism in place doesn't adequately provide the funding to the schools that need it. They've shared numerous examples of school districts in areas where the level of state funding is more than what is needed given the financial strong standing of that community. A key point to this is that the school funding decision notes that the reform needed is one that is not entirely financial. Given that we rank 11th in per pupil spending in the country, one can see that this is not a case of needing to spend more. This points more to an education funding system that is failing to distribute money in a more equitable and need focused manner.

There obviously is much more to this budget than these few items. I appreciate the dialogue that the Governor's budget has already started. For his part, he's done his job to date in presenting the financial roadmap for 2024-25. And I must say he's doing a great job in advocating for everything he's presented. It's now to the legislature to review and determine their response to it. While it's still a number of months out, it always comes down to the last weeks and day of June to finalize the final budget. This will entail a fair amount of compromise on both sides. We'll have to wait and see if they can do this.

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Welcome New Chamber Members!

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Timothy Bair
Cogan Station, PA 17728
(570) 772-5989

Check us out on Facebook
Excavation

Referred by Chamber Member
Mike Davis, UPMC

Basile's Botanicals

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Muncy, PA 17756
(570) 666-8532

<https://botanicalsbasiles.odoo.com>
Herbal Remedies & Skincare
Referred by Chamber Member Clarissa
Paige,
Clarissa Paige OBM Services

CPRS Physical Therapy

Muncy & Williamsport

Matthew McLaughlin
151 John Brady Drive
Muncy, PA 17756
(570) 308-1337

Julie Weslosky
2350 East Third Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
(570) 360-5915

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(570) 325-1971 - www.williamsport.org

February Ribbon Cuttings/PM Exchange



Live Well Adjusted celebrated the opening of their Williamsport location at 329 Pine Street, Suite 305.



The Laundry Room of Williamsport opened to the public on Valentine's Day. Check out their brand new machines at 1844 Lycoming Creek Road.

Upcoming Member Events

Ribbon Cutting - The Purpose Center

Ribbon Cutting & Open House
 Wednesday, March 6, 2024 | 4:00 PM
 Open House 4:15 - 5:15 PM
 400 Market Street, Suite 4, Williamsport

PM Exchange - Six West Settlements

Thursday, March 7, 2024 | 5-7pm
 201 Basin Street, Unit 11, Williamsport
 Six West Settlements, Inc eagerly awaits meeting Chamber Members, featuring Innerstoic Wine & Cider tastings and serving delightful locally catered foods and hors d'oeuvres.

PM Exchange - Your Building Centers

Thursday, March 21, 2024 | 5-7pm
 280 Arch Street, Williamsport
 Please join Your Building Centers for an evening of networking. Food and drinks will be provided.

Ribbon Cutting - Girl Scouts in the Heart of PA

Ribbon Cutting & Open House
 Wednesday, March 27, 2024 | 5:00 PM
 Open House 4:30 - 6:30 PM
 1770 E. 3rd Street, Williamsport

Ribbon Cutting - The Plant-Based and Juice Bar (PB&J Bar)

Ribbon Cutting & Open House
 Wednesday, March 27, 2024 | 6:00 PM
 Open House 6:30 - 8:30 PM
 1786 E. 3rd Street, Williamsport
 Featuring a Girl Scout Thin Mint smoothie at the PB&J Bar.



The Chamber, along with PA Wilds and Ben Franklin Technology and other partners, hosted an information session for their Big Idea Contest at Bald Birds Brewing Company. Following the Q&A, guests enjoyed a PM Exchange to share their ideas.

Leadership Lycoming Holds Local and State Government Program Day

The Leadership Lycoming Class of 2024 had their fifth Program Day; Local and State Government, beginning at River Valley Trade and Transit Centre, downtown Williamsport. Hosts Jesse Osborne, Class of 2023 and Joe Weber, Class of 2009, welcomed the class and gave a little background of themselves before introducing the first presentation; City Council Overview with Councilmen Adam Yoder and Eric Beiter.

The class then had the opportunity to experience a question and answer session with the County Commissioners, Scott Metzger, Marc C. Sortman, and Mark Mussina at the Executive Plaza in the Commissioners Board Room; followed by sitting in for a portion of the County Commissioners Public Meeting.

The morning continued back at RVTT with a discussion with State Senator Gene Yaw and State Representatives Jamie Flick; accompanied by Alivia Tagliaferri, District Office Manager for State Rep. Jamie Flick and Matt Wise, District Director for Senator Yaw.

The class enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by Kitchen Repose.

After lunch, the class participated in an Understanding Political Campaigns activity with Charley Hall, Mid Atlantic Regional Manager, AKC Government Relations, and LL Class of 1996. The class ended the day by traveling to the Lycoming County 911 Center for a tour and presentation of the 911 and Emergency Management Centers by Jeffrey Hutchins, Director.

Thank you to our Leadership Lycoming Annual Sponsors, North Central Sight Services and UPMC. Thank you to our Tier 3 and 2 sponsors, McCormick Law Firm, Malee Law Firm, and Senator Gene Yaw! Thank you Carnie Datres at Kitchen Repose for lunch and the River Valley Trade and Transit Centre for hosting Leadership Lycoming in the Ross Room. Thank you to hosts Jesse Osborne and Joe Weber. Finally, thank you to Samantha Tomkins, Steinbacher, Goodall, & Yurchak, Lindsay Crist, Lycoming College, and Melissa Shaffer, Little League International.



County Commissioners Mark Mussina, Scott Metzger and Marc Sortman



**Eric Beiter and Adam Yoder
Williamsport City Council**

Leadership Lycoming Holds Annual Summit

Last week, the Leadership Lycoming class was treated to a presentation by Jeffrey Brown, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. Jeff spoke about Artificial Intelligence and its application in the business world. Thank you to event sponsors C&N Bank, Intrada Technologies, Mc Nerney, Page, Vanderlin & Hall, Ralph S. Alberts and the Williamsport Country Club.



FEATURE MEMBER



PHOTOS PROVIDED

The staff of DirSolutions LLC, above, work on installing a security system, left, in these photos from the business' website and social media.

DirSolutions of Williamsport takes pride in solutions the business offers customers, experienced team

By **SETH NOLAN**
Sun-Gazette Correspondent

Starting in 2020, DirSolutions LLC has been a culmination of years of experience to offer the Williamsport area the most up-to-date security systems and cameras.

From professional surveillance systems for home or businesses, network set-ups, or smart home automation installation, DirSolutions has a wide area of specialization.

DirSolutions also offers network management, access control systems, cellular boosters, and Starlink installations,

Shang Beighey, of DirSolutions, carries with him 15 successful years as a communications specialist in the gas and oil industry.

Beighey works with a handful of dedicated employees serving Williamsport and Central Pennsylvania.

“We take pride in working alongside an experienced team that is committed to values, individual development, performance, and pursuing creative ideas and solutions to offer to our customers,” Beighey said.

In recent years, DirSolutions has seen an increased demand for what they offer.

“In today’s world, having that increased sense of security is important to more and more people,” Beighey said. “Whether for your home or your business, security cameras are a reliable tool to prevent and detect crime in our community.”

DirSolutions works hard to offer its customers high-quality and reliable products, and a big part of that is staying informed on what is new and modern.

“We are committed to providing those products,” Beighey said. “We will continue to do so with the introduction of new products and services this year. We take pride in delivering ex-

ceptional security and network solutions to our customers. We would like to thank our customers for the trust they have placed in us and their continued support and referrals”



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NEW MEMBER



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Merchandise on the shelves of Honeyella, 416 William St., can be seen in these photos from the store's social media.

Sustainable shopping at home/closet store Honeyella on William Street

By **ISABELLA BRIDY**
ibridy@sungazette.com

In 2020, soon-to-be college graduate Lyndsay Miller began her sustainable home and closet store “Honeypt Home,” now Honeyella. It began as a way for her to have an income during the COVID-19 shutdown while preventing perfectly usable goods from further polluting landfills.

“100% of the items with a Honeyella tag are thrifted or sourced second-hand,” Miller stated. “I’ve always been determined to keep everything ethically and sustainably sourced rather than just buying from a retailer at a discount price and selling it for more.”

While some individuals turn their noses at the idea of rooting through thrift store bins, Miller believed repurposing and representing second-hand items would provide an avenue for consumers trying to shop sustainably.

“I started with just home decor and about a year ago started doing clothing as well, which has now become my main source of income from Honeyella,” Miller said. “With a lot of work and money spent, my Instagram grew large enough for me to be confident in opening a brick and mortar downtown after being in business for 3 years online.”

Miller opened the brick-and-mortar version of Honeyella on Oct. 6th of 2023 at 416 William St., Williamsport. Inside, she has a wide array of home goods, clothes, and florals to choose from. There are even other small businesses sharing the retail space with Honeyella; “I have brought in a few vendors that are set up around the store that are also ethically sourced or handmade items,” Miller said. “Nothing is from a big-name store or retailer... just small businesses like me!”

For Honeyella, it is not just the home goods that are obtained with sustainabil-

ity in mind. Lyndsay pointed out that “in terms of inventory, there is zero waste happening. When someone orders online, I often try to reuse cardboard boxes before resorting to plastic mailers, and I purchase local for supplies whenever I can,” Miller said. On top of materials, an array of Honeyella’s dried florals are collected locally, “some kinds like straw flower and Celosia are even from my Mom’s flower farm, Deeply Rooted Flowers in Jersey Shore, Pa!”

“I’m so excited to enter my fourth year of business,” Miller said when asked about her goals in 2024. “I want to continue to grow my social media accounts to help people find their own unique style.”

If outside of downtown Williamsport, you can find Honeyella online at myhoneyella.com or find Lyndsay Miller at pop-up events and markets in the Lewisburg, Bellefonte and Lancaster areas.



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SMALL BUSINESS



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Rosko's Brew House, 601 Pine St., which offers a variety of artistically made beers in a historic building, "is a reflection of ourselves," says co-owner Adam Roskowski.

Rosko's Brew House perfect for lovers of beer, history buffs

By ISABELLA BRIDY
ibridy@sungazette.com

Drinking artistically made pints at Rosko's Brew House is becoming a weekend staple for craft beer lovers in and around Williamsport.

Opened by Adam and Samantha Roskowski in Aug. 2022, "Rosko's Brew House is a reflection of ourselves," Adam said. "We are family-oriented but are also social people...and our customers and staff have become like family to us." Samantha bartends occasionally and maintains her career with UPMC, though Adam says she is still very much involved by "tweaking ideas behind the scenes."

Serving up specialty brews and original beers with a twist, Adam and his full-time brewer, Taylor Strein, make it their mission to excite patrons'

taste buds. Having initially been self-taught, Adam "learned to brew beer in the driveway as a homebrewer" before doing further research and getting his Certificate in Brewing Technologies from the Siebel Institute in Chicago.

His right-hand man, Taylor, brings science to the brewery, having a background in physics and graduating from the Penn College Brewing and Fermentation program. "With his scientific approach and my gutsy approach, we collaborate and strive to make the best beers possible for our customers," Adam said.

Typically having seven to eight beers on tap, Adam explained the breadth of brewing he and Taylor take on; "We have several 'brands' that we like to recreate or even reinvent with small differences, such as our Leggy Blonde (fruited blonde ale), BRRR

(cold IPA), and Party Possum (coffee porter) series. Most importantly, we make a lot of beers that are not as easily achievable on a large distribution scale. For instance, brown ales, porters, red ales, and Kolsch...beers that have deep historical significance but aren't as easy to find on retail shelves...and we always have at least one IPA or hoppy beer on tap, too!"

Sorry to basic beer fans, but this bar doesn't carry any domestic or imported drinks.

"We only serve our housemade beer," Adam explained. "However, we also offer wines from Fero Vineyards in Lewisburg, and canned cocktails from Four Birds (Bald Birds) in Jersey Shore and Mason Dixon Distillery in Gettysburg"

Rosko's Brew House does not
(See ROSKO'S, Page 10)

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Rosko's Brew House perfect for lovers of beer, history buffs

(From Page 8)

have a kitchen. However, they sell locally baked soft pretzels, encourage patrons to bring their own food, and partner with local food trucks regularly. The soft pretzels are delivered weekly by a company and served with your choice of dip. When asked where the pretzels come from, Adam simply replied "They are based out of Mifflinburg and are a local trade secret!"

Having renovated the 1870s house for four years before opening, the Roskowskis wanted to keep the home's innate charm. "We were instantly attracted to the aesthetics of the house," Adam said, "but we had to squint a little to reimagine it. The home was vacant and blighted, and the property was in poor shape. It took over four years to renovate and restore the space. It has allowed us to create a homey, cozy, and welcoming vibe perfect for our taproom."

For the explorers and history buffs of downtown, Rosko's Brew House would make an excellent impression. With Pennsylvania's natural marshy terrain, the Victorian home was built on a stone culvert over a stream by the original owner and architect, William Fink.

The Roskowskis open the stone culvert for patron visitation only four times a year. Adam says it is because "by opening it occasionally, it keeps it a fun and special attraction."

After purchasing the run-down home and beginning the renovations, the Roskowskis discovered that Fink himself was a famous small-time brewer, known for ciders and wines he crafted inside of the home. That means the house has been the site of locally renowned drinks for over 150 years!

Open Wednesdays to Saturdays each week, Rosko's is establishing a rotation of specials and events. "We recently

opened on Wednesdays offering Kolsch Service," Adam explained. "We are known as a recurring Quizzo spot... [we host] Jon Mackey's Quizzo every Thursday at 7 p.m. and have developed quite the following. We welcome new customers to join our regulars and encourage them to grab a beer and a pretzel while hanging out with friends and testing their trivia knowledge. Fridays and Saturdays we leave open for live music, events, and food trucks. We offer private events, as well as community events and fundraisers. It's important to us that we give back to our community and connect with the folks around us."

Next time you're feeling parched, stop by Rosko's Brew House at 601 Pine St., Williamsport. To view on-tap beers and upcoming events, visit them online at roskosbrewhouse.com and follow them on Facebook & Instagram @roskosbrewhouse.

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Chamber Holds 138th Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet

The Chamber held its 138th Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet on Monday, February 26 at the Holiday Inn Downtown. Thank you to all for attending and to the below sponsors of our awards. We would also like to congratulate our winners. Stay tuned for stories on each next month!



Vince Matteo Excellence in Leadership Award:
Stephen D. Keener, Little League International



Emerging Business Award:
John Ryan Brewery



Staiman Family Large Business of the Year Award:
West Pharmaceutical Services



Phillips/Plankenhorn Small Business of the Year Award:
New Trail Brewing Company

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