



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

**Merchant Payments Group
focuses on customer service**

**Sam's Club celebrates nearly
3 decades of meeting
customers' needs**

**Mountain View Christian School
proud of curriculum, ratio**



**Celebrations Cakes
and Cafe offers wide
variety of foods**



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

Already feeling like the year is slipping by, I heard someone mention that we're about six weeks away from when we start to see the daylight getting shorter. That really hit me for some reason. As there's nothing that I'm going to be able to change about it, it's better to get out there and enjoy the extended daylight while we have it here in beautiful Lycoming County.

I wanted to touch on two items here of importance to our area's economy, and those are energy and the plastics sector. Senator Yaw has been speaking for the past few years about the importance of energy to any society as a foundational basis for its sustenance. If you think about it, he's 100% correct because when you look at all of the things we need power for, it's akin to water for the body.

You may have picked up through various news sources that there's a real crisis ahead with the availability of energy sources here in this country. We are seeing greater demand and are getting to the point where the demand is going to outpace the supply. The rapid expansion of technology has also driven the rapid consumption of more energy. As a state and as a country, we've done a poor job in preparing for this demand. It's at a point where we're starting to see the private sector, primarily large technology companies, addressing this on their own.

The closest example is the re-opening of Three Mile Island plant through an agreement with the owner to provide power for Microsoft.

Crazy to think that a power plant that used to provide power to roughly 1.6 million homes is now going to be re-opened to just serve the needs of one business and their data centers. We're not looking at putting this back into the grid to be used by other businesses and residents. It's strictly to serve just one company.

Our electric bills over the past several years have been a telling sign for this increased demand. Prices continue to go up, and no new plants are coming online to meet the need. I was talking to someone the other day that is with a large institution in the area, and they shared that their energy costs just eight years ago were approximately \$900,000 but have now jumped to just over \$1,900,000.

We are getting to the point where there will be a major energy crisis here in Pennsylvania and in the whole of the United States. Here, in Pennsylvania, it takes several years to get a new power plant built. We have the natural gas sitting in our ground that can fuel this demand; however, the cumbersome regulatory environment by the government prohibits any projects from being advanced.

Having been heavily involved with the Panda Patriot plant construction, I can speak to the challenges companies face when undertaking a project such as a new power plant. Most of the time it's not locals but those bussed in to speak as if it was going directly next to where they live, which usually is in either Philly or Pittsburgh.

If we want to see something done about the lack of power, we need to get our regulatory process in-line to perform their proper review and oversight of a project and have it be one that takes years to even get approved to break ground.

My other item for the month, as I mentioned, was our plastics industry here in Lycoming County. We are fortunate to have many dynamic companies in this sector. The ingenuity of plastics manufacturers is shaping our everyday lives in significant ways. From creating more affordable products for families to supplying crucial materials that empower our local businesses to grow and succeed, it's all interconnected and vital to our economy here in Lycoming County and across the state.

It is a powerful force, driving innovation and creating opportunities. The development of lighter and more recyclable plastics is not just about better products; it's about creating jobs and fostering economic growth in communities like ours in Muncy, Jersey Shore, Montoursville and Williamsport.

Think about it when you go to your favorite amusement park. That roller coaster ride with the padding; it was almost certainly made here in Lycoming County at Ralph S. Alberts. Your shot you get at the doctor's office; the device delivering that was also most likely made here at West Pharmaceuticals. We make so many things here in Lycoming County that people don't know about and these are just a couple of examples.

Be proud of what we do here and what we contribute to the national and global economy. I sure am.

Welcome New Chamber Members!

New Growth Learning Company

Conrad Shank
2100 W. 3rd St.
Williamsport, PA 17701
570-560-6783
<http://newgrowthlc.org>
Child Care

Eagle Ridge Home Care

Lindsey Penland
2997 Renovo Rd.
Mill Hall, PA 17751
570-367-1899
<http://eagleridgehomecarepa.com>
Healthcare - Home Health Care

Redmond's Complete Comfort

Tera & Brian Redmond
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Lock Haven, PA 17745
570-962-0084
www.rcchvac.com
HVAC and HVAC Plumbing Service

Best Auto Sales & Service

John Best
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Lock Haven, PA 17745
570-748-8000
www.bestautosaleslh.com
Automotive

Otto Bookstore

John Shableski
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Williamsport, PA 17701
570-326-5764
www.ottobookstore.com
Retail Shopping - Specialty Shops

Ascend Chiropractic and Wellness Center

Logan Yerger
1124 Market St.
Williamsport, PA 17701
570-777-3506
<http://www.ascendwellnesspa.com>
Chiropractors

EmmUcare Home Health - Muncy PA Branch

Brittany Braunsberg
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Muncy, PA 17756
570-367-1899
<https://emmucarehomehealth.com/emmucare-muncy-1>
Healthcare - Home Health Care



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**Are you interested in
joining the Chamber?**

Call Taryn Hartle at
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or apply online at
www.williamsport.org

Upcoming Ribbon Cuttings



EmmUcare Home Health – Muncy Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting

Friday, May 23, 2025
24 S. Main St., Muncy
Ribbon Cutting @ 6pm
Open House 6-9pm

Hush Medical Spa Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting

Friday, June 6, 2025
400 Market St., Williamsport
Ribbon Cutting @ 5pm
Open House 4-7pm

Phased Alloy Research and Testing Services LLC (P.A.R.T.S.) Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting

Saturday, June 7, 2025
129 Turkey Bottom Rd., Muncy
Ribbon Cutting @ 11am
Open House 10am-2pm

Lash by Keisha 2 Year Anniversary & Ribbon Cutting

Saturday, June 14, 2025
315 Pine St., Williamsport
Ribbon Cutting @ noon
Open House 10am-2pm



Bill's Appliance Center celebrated its grand re-opening with a ribbon cutting and open house event, featuring appliance giveaways and discounts. Located at 2098 Lycoming Creek Road, Ashley and Kevin Chase and their staff can help you find the home appliance you're looking for.



Bright Beginnings Childcare Center, located at 145 Ashler Manor Drive in Muncy, is currently enrolling students in their Preschool Program and is inviting potential families to schedule a tour! Call Madison Dewald, Director of Bright Beginnings, at (570) 471-4521. Bright Beginnings is a program of the River Valley Regional YMCA, Eastern Lycoming Branch. Thank you to the Executive Director, Abigail Schrom, CEO, Chad Eberhart, and their team for providing an essential service to our community.

Member Renewals

First Year Renewals

Matthew Schauer
SERVPRO of Williamsport/Montoursville
The Crooked Goose
The Mulberry Moose
The Purpose Center
The UPS Store #1927

Members 2-5 Years

Bayada Home Health Care
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Serving Lycoming County
Brick Mill Craft Furniture
Celebrations Bakery and Cafe
Don Waltman's Market House
Eder's Ice Cream
Freedom Towing LLC
Genesis House Williamsport
Harrison Construction, Inc.
Hiawatha, Inc.
Intentional AdVennTures, LLC
Keller Williams Advantage Realty
Lightning Limousine Service LLC
Musselman's Golf
PA Energy Vision, LLC
Producers Supply Company
Revive & Align Pilates, LLC
Sidock Group, Inc.
Tag's Take Out & Italian Specialty Store
Veterans Multi-Service Center

Members 6-10 Years

A1 Stop/Beer Here
Bimbo Bakeries USA Inc.
Consolidated Call Center Services
Edward Jones - David Tanney
First Commonwealth Bank
Liberty Lodge
New Trail Brewing Company
The Peter Herdic House
UPMC Health Plan
Weigle Trucking Company
Wyrope Williamsport Federal Credit Union

Members 11-15 Years

Carrs Trailers and Supplies
Coterra
Family Promise of Lycoming County, Inc.
FASTSIGNS, Inc.
Postage Pros Plus
RDF Tax Services, LLC
River Valley Health
Sordoni Construction Services, Inc.
Stallion Infrastructure Services, Ltd.
TownePlace Suites by Marriott (*Chartwell Hotels*)

Members 16-20 Years

C.H. Waltz Outdoor & RV
City Hall Ventures DBA City Hall Grand Hotel
Comfort Keepers
Kliney's Home Furnishings
Lang's Chocolates
Padgett Business Services
Squarewood Acres Campground

Members 25-30 Years

Franco's Lounge, Restaurant & Music Club
Lycoming County SPCA
Sam's Club
The Williamsport Home
Williamsport Regional Airport

Members 31-40 Years

Allison Crane & Rigging
Bearing & Drive Solutions
Dixon A. C. & R. Corporation
Greater Lycoming Habitat for Humanity, Inc.
Janet's Floral
Loyalsock Township Board of Supervisors
Montoursville Area School District

Members 41-50 Years

Brass Alignment, Inc.
Giant Food Store
Norcen Industries, Inc.
Pudgie's Pizza
Radiant Steel Products Company

Member 69 Years

Centre Concrete Company

Community Update

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Hodrick Realty Announces 2024 Award Winners

Williamsport, Pa. – Kevin Hodrick, Broker of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Hodrick Realty, announced the agents of the Williamsport office who earned a place in the prestigious Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices President's Circle, Leading Edge Society, and Honor Society for 2024.

The President's Circle recognizes the network's top five percent of sales professionals who exemplified great sales measures in production or transactions this past year. This was achieved by Amanda Evans. Recognized in the Leading Edge Society, which honors the network's top nine percent of residential sales professionals, were Amy Fessler and Amie Penfield. The Honor Society award, representing the network's top fourteen percent of sales professionals, included Betsy Bjorkman, Gail Bair, Kelly Annicelli, Jim Shaible, and Denise Reis.

"We applaud each of these agents. Earning these awards is a remarkable achievement and a testament to their dedication to their industry. These agents are knowledgeable, have a strong work ethic, and are natural leaders. They continue to strive to provide the best possible real estate experience for all their clients," said Hodrick.



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STAY UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST CHAMBER NEWS



LEGACY MEMBER

Sam's Club celebrates nearly 3 decades of meeting customers' needs

By **MARK MARONEY**
mmaroney@sungazette.com

This year, Sam's Club Muncy celebrates its 29th year in business.

Sam's Club opened Feb. 22, 1996, at its location at 611 Lycoming Mall Circle.

Sam's Club Muncy Manager David Oxford and Sales Manager Kimberley Ruch provided input after being asked some questions about what's the latest at the store.

There are over 150 associates, consisting of a mix of full-and-part-time.

What is special about shopping at Sam's Club?

"We are like a one stop shop not only buying in bulk but, where you are able to visit our Tire & Battery department with several selections of name brand tires that you know and trust and Pharmacy where we have 10 generic prescriptions for free along with having pet prescriptions as well Optical department where we now have a doctor that will take scheduled appointments on Thursday's and several selections of glasses for the whole family and we will take your doctor's prescription as well to order your lenses," Oxford relayed.

"We have a Hearing Center to have your hearing tested and to order hearing aids," he noted.

"We have a fresh Sushi bar and cafe where our Members and associates enjoy delicious hot dogs and pizza. And in our cafe, you can order a whole pizza of your choice, cheese, pepperoni, or meat lovers for the same price," he said.

"If you want the convenience of shopping online, you have your choice to have curbside pickup or delivery to your home. We also have our fuel station where we have a gas attendant to help you."

What is unique about the variety of products?

"We have good quality for less



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Staff members of the Sam's Club in Muncy Township.

pins for them to choose from. Our community and Sam's Clubs take great pride in all veterans!"

What do the customers say in feedback that they like most about Sam's Club? "Members are happy with the associates helping them find products, greeting members with a smile, the cleanliness of our Club, friendliness of employees at the sampling stations, members that use Scan N Go are very pleased with it, over 95% satisfaction. They like our Members Mark products, easy to shop online, and if they choose to do Curbside/Deliver, it makes their shopping convenient," Oxford remarked.

What about the checkout area?

"This is our fastest area with the changes in technology," he said.

"There are self-check and employee-stationed check outs as well as our Scan N Go app. With almost 80% of members checking out through self checkout and Scan N Go."

How is this process working for Sam's Club and will there be any changes in this system?

"Our members may choose

how they would like to check out from the register, self-check-out where we have associates to help members checkout at, and Scan N Go where all you have to do is download the free Sam's Club app." Oxford added.

"Our Scan N Go makes it so easy especially when you want to get in and get out with no standing in line to get checked out. All you have to do is scan the items as you shop and it keeps track of your spending so, if you have a budget, you're able to keep track because it adds your total as you go. What better way to keep track of your receipts as well, especially those high-ticket items in case you would have to return anything?"

"At the end it will ask if the total in the cart is correct you just swipe and pay and you are able to use credit, debit, or EBT card and once completed a QR code will come up on your screen as you go through our Just Go exit and the exit associates will let you know to keep on going and say thank you.

You may also use Scan N Go to order from our cafe if you want to pick up a quick meal, place your order as you're shopping with our Scan N Go and when ready you just go to the pickup window to get your order without waiting in a line.

The only time you may be stopped at our Just Go exit is if merchandise is in a box, bag or if something got missed with scanning.

"This is why our Scan N Go is so convenient, especially with everyone's busy schedule just Scan N Go!

"If you need to fill up your vehicle you may use your Scan N Go at our fuel tanks, no digging for a card, just take your phone and scan the QR code. As far as changes in the system, Walmart and Sam's Club are constantly changing to make it better and more convenient for our customers and members."



price from our clothing choosing from several name brands you know and trust," Oxford observed.

"We have our brand Members Mark from food, clothing, and other merchandise at a great price and quality.

"We have our bakery department to order cakes or cupcakes for those special occasions from birthdays, graduations, weddings, we have you covered. We try to have a treasure hunt appeal as well where we have unique one time buys for great values. A great example would be an AI Run Bird feeder that identifies birds and takes pictures."

"We have our 3 pound rotisserie chickens that are cooked

fresh daily. For the size and price and always being delicious our members really enjoy them," he said.

What kind of community involvement do Sam's Club employees take part in?

"We are very proud of our community and surrounding communities by helping out with our local food bank, raising money for Children's Miracle Network, and some associates are volunteers for EMT services," Oxford said.

"We would like to add that we appreciate our veterans and we have associates that are former veterans. On Veterans Day, we set up a table and hand out Thank You bags with snacks in them and a variety of Veteran

Celebrations Cakes and Cafe offers wide variety of foods

By **MATTHEW COURTER**
mcourter@sungazette.com

Mother's Day arrives this weekend, and for anyone seeking that perfect treat, Celebrations Cakes and Cafe, located within the Aspen Plaza at 500 Pine St., Williamsport, has it covered.

"I grew up with two grandmothers who baked and one of them who did specialty cakes as a small business, so I was always around that and interested in it," said owner and baker Jennifer Eisner.

After having children, Eisner would bake all of their cakes, branching out into making cakes for her friends and their children.

In 2013, Eisner set up shop at the Pajama Factory before stepping away from the business for a while. Still, her following continued, and on April 31, 2022, Eisner held her grand opening at her current location.

"I had no idea what to expect when we first opened, but we were regularly selling out," she said.

Among Eisner's biggest sellers is her eclairs, cream puffs, and especially, her cupcakes, which she attributes to the wide variety she keeps on hand, often boasting six to eight different flavors.

"And anything chocolate-peanut butter," she said.

"We just kept trying new things and learning things, and changing flavors, to bring something new," Eisner said, adding that her daughter and business partner will sometimes lend a helping hand in the kitchen.

And, while Celebrations Cakes and Cafe is known for their confections, the menu has several non-sweet offerings as well.

"We make our own croissants in-house, and they're very popular. We make a variety of them, and we



MATT COURTER/Sun-Gazette

Jennifer Eisner operates Celebrations Cakes and Cafe in the Aspen Plaza at the corner of Pine Street and Little League Boulevard.

also offer sandwiches on them," Eisner said.

"We have a sandwich menu. We have a variety of different kinds of both coffee drinks and non-coffee drinks," she said, adding that their coffee drinks come from Gnosis in Lewisburg.

Additionally, Eisner has added providing desserts, such as cheesecakes and cream puffs, for The South Side Restaurant, Pizzeria, and Tavern to her list of partnerships.

Eisner's willingness to work with the community stretches to local organizations, as well, including the YWCA.

"Some of the women who work there are frequent customers, and

they asked if we were interested in spreading awareness of the services they offer," she explained.

In conjunction with sexual assault awareness month throughout April, Celebrations Cakes and Cafe has had special teal-colored cupcakes and cookies, with a portion of each one sold going back to the YWCA.

"We're going to continue with that. There's a bunch of other things coming up, so that'll be a regular thing for us, and hopefully people will see it and be willing to jump on and help out a little bit," Eisner said.

"I have people personally in my life who have benefited from their services, so it's important," she said.

For Eisner, working with these organizations gives her the opportunity to make a difference.

"For a lot of people, world events have been heavy for a while, and when you think, 'I'm gonna bake cupcakes today,' it just doesn't feel super helpful or important, so it's a way that I can feel like I'm contributing something more than fixing somebody's sweet tooth for the day," she said.

Personal connections have always been at the forefront for Eisner.

"I have a new girl starting this weekend that was a customer, and the girl that helps me during the week started out as a customer that we absolutely loved," she said.

"They're very knowledgeable about our products, they have their favorites and they can make recommendations," she said.

Seeing customers willing to become employees has encouraged Eisner as she seeks to remind people of the importance of shopping local.

"It's been hard, but we've been fortunate that we're still here, and I am super thankful, she said.

"I know a lot of places that don't make it past their first year or second year, so if you're able and can afford it, shop local, shop small," Eisner stressed.

"It means a lot if people can just do that," she said.

The combination of their many products, along with an authentic customer experience is what has kept her business thriving, Eisner said.

"It's not just a broad assortment of offerings, like the breakfast sandwiches and the lunch sandwiches and our extensive drinks menu. We have people who come here just for drinks on their way to work in the mornings, instead of going through a drive thru, and I think they come here because of the environment. We spend time with them and talk to them," she said.

"My girl that runs my counter, Erin, she's amazing, and she loves the customers, and they love to come and visit and chat with her," Eisner said.

"They're not just buying cupcakes, they're coming for a good experience, where they feel welcomed and accepted and just maybe they brighten their day a little bit, with something as silly as a cupcake or a cream puff, but they'll walk out the door and say, 'you just made my day,' she said.

"If we can do that, our job is done," Eisner said.

NEW MEMBER

Merchant Payments Group focuses on customer service

By **MATTHEW COURTER**

mcourter@sungazette.com

Many times innovation is born out of a lack of quality options, which is exactly how Merchant Payments Group came to be.

"My wife and I own a preschool daycare in Muncy called Lil' Bean Sprouts, and I, as a merchant that had to accept cards, could see a lot of issues with this industry. It's a very unregulated industry, which, unfortunately, there's a lot of bad players," said owner Rashad Frelin.

Looking at this as an opportunity, Frelin linked up with others with connections within the industry and began his own business in 2021.

Merchant Payments Group offers several products and services from POS systems and equipment to website integration.

"The most common one is just basic credit card terminals," Frelin said, noting that the company often utilizes Dejavoo and Clover for basic credit card terminals.

"A lot of them are touchscreen, but still a pretty simple setup. Just plug it into the internet, and swipe or tap the credit card," he said.

"We can also do entry level POS systems, not super expensive, but something that's still beyond just a basic terminal. Then we have full ledge POS systems, where you can do inventory, and manage thousands of items," Frelin explained.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Rashad Frelin founded Merchant Payments Group in 2021.

Another company used by Frelin is called Swipe Simple, which is similar to a Square reader, but allows the user to have an actual merchant account, rather than going through an aggregate.

"A lot of people don't realize that, but there's a lot of reasons you want an actual agent helping you, instead of just buying a Square reader, especially when you're starting to move money that's more than \$1,000, \$2,000 a month," Frelin said.

There are a number of options for website integration,

as well, he said.

"We can essentially integrate into Shopify, we can integrate into a lot of different websites. Even if they want to send out invoices and be able to get paid by the customer just by clicking on the invoice and paying through their phone, we can also do that," Frelin explained.

Although they service several different sectors, one that they have a particularly good relationship with is the healthcare industry.

"In the healthcare industry, a lot of doctors, dentists,

chiropractors, they get taken advantage of quite a bit just because they're bringing in a lot of revenue, and the companies they work with know that, so they kind of price gouged them, Frelin said, stating that he helped one dentist save around \$1,800 a month.

Reflecting on the emerging "shop local" mentality, Frelin feels services, rather than products, is one area that has been overlooked.

"I would just urge them to at least give a shot to local services, because a lot of times that's the better quality experience," he said.

"I know some local insurance agents, and it's a totally different experience working with them than it is to have to call in somewhere," Frelin said.

Well established in the state, Merchant Payments Group has a presence in other states, including North Dakota, Minnesota and recently expanded to Myrtle Beach, Frelin said.

Frelin's business also works as an agent through experienced processors who have a support team of their own.

"Those people have helped me a lot. Some of the people I work with have literally set up starwars.com to accept payments back in the 90's. They're big players, people who have access to a lot of these, 'you know their names,' that they do the processing for, and they're willing to kind of help me as well," he said.

"It's all about networking, really, which is why I joined the chamber. And it's been really good for us," Frelin said.

A major difference between most similar companies and Merchant Payments Group is that they don't lock their customers into long-term contracts.

"I don't do any sort of contracts whatsoever. If they're not in love with us, they can always leave," Frelin said.

"That keeps us honest, that keeps us doing the right thing and it keeps us earning their business every single month," he said.

"I have very good retention rates, and I have some merchants that have sent me multiple other merchants, because they see the value," he said.

"I want to do it the right way, because my name's on it, and I want to pass this on to my kids one day. It's truly a family business," Frelin said.

Merchant Payments Group also comes with exceptional customer service, much of it handled by Frelin, himself, he said.

"I take that very seriously. I want to make sure they're

comfortable and not panicking with the first credit card machine they've ever had," Frelin said.

"I also have 24-hour tech support, they're amazing, and the average hold time is under a minute," he said.

Frelin said this dedication to his customers is a key ingredient to Merchant Payments Group's success.

"Personally, I like to build relationships, so I have a network now that I've established, and I have a lot of merchants that have become friends," he said, specifically marveling at the growth of local food trucks, Beans BBQ and Grab n' Growl.

"That's how you build that credibility," Frelin said.

"It's super important to the literal lifeblood of their business around because people don't realize when someone uses a credit card at your business, that money doesn't just move. It's essentially a short term loan that lasts 24 hours," he explained.

"That's why we'll always do the right thing and we'll always do it with integrity," Frelin said.

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Mountain View Christian School proud of curriculum, ratio

By **MARK MARONEY**
mmaroney@sungazette.com

For the students ages 4 through eighth grade who attend Mountain View Christian School at 470 E. Southern Ave., South Williamsport, all standard elementary school subjects, such as math and social studies are taught, but a key component of the curriculum is a Bible class.

That's what Principal Dale Walker emphasized when asked what curriculum was taught at the school which focuses on education and faith-based learning.

"This instruction is based on the Bible and explores stories and the concepts that enhance living the victorious, abundant Christian life," Walker said. "Science is taught from a Christian/Creationist viewpoint."

So what is the criteria for teaching at the school?

"Criteria for teaching in the Seventh-day Adventist system in North America includes membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"Certification must be obtained from the Seventh-day Adventist organization.

"State and other forms or levels of certification are encouraged but not required," Walker said.

Describe the average day at the school?

"Monday through Thursday begins with worship which provides an opportunity to start the day with Jesus and the wonderful stories, promises, and truths of the Bible. The spiritual atmosphere created by having worship continues through the day.

The school day continues with classwork, activities, and time for physical education and lunch. "The day closes with Bible class to provide a wonderful bookend effect when combined with the early morning worship," Walker said.

Friday begins with chapel for worship period. Friday also includes music and art classes. These special features bring the week to a close in a different and fun way."

What are the extra-curricular activities?



PHOTO PROVIDED

Students at MountainView Christian School hold up artwork and other projects.

"We plan three to four field trips during the year. A highlight of the year is our annual spring trip to Sight and Sound in Lancaster," Walker said.

"We have seen the productions for Jesus, Esther, David, Daniel, and Noah," he said.

Art and music classes are taught on Friday. "We have done service activities such as preparing care bags for the homeless and other individuals," he said.

What can you tell prospective parents about the benefits of enrolling their child?

A.) strong spiritual core to all aspects of the program

B.) emphasis on knowing God, loving Jesus, and having a forever relationship with our Forever Friend

C.) excellence in academics

D.) development of a family environment in which students care for each other—respect and kindness are given high priority

E.) low student-teacher ratio—with growth this pattern will be maintained.

How many students, teachers and administrators are in the school?

"We have three full-time staff, one part-time staff and currently, about 15 students including some that are homeschooled part of the time.

"We have the capability to eventually educate about 100 students in this facility as we also add staff," Spencer said.

Walker observed the low student to teacher ratio: 5 to 1, which provides opportunity to focus on each individual students' needs and concentrates the core curriculum.

What are the grades taught and ages of the students? PreK-4 through 8th grade.

Sandy Spencer, a school spokeswoman, added the school at one time was in the basement of the church and then for many years was at 309 Fleming St., in South Williamsport.

"In the beginning of the last school year, we moved to our new modern facility which houses our church and school," Spencer said.

What is the purpose of the school?

The mission at Mountain View Christian School is to enable each student to develop a life of faith in God, and to use their knowledge, skills, and understanding to serve God and humanity. We desire for every student to excel in faith, learning, and service, blending biblical truth and academic achievement to honor God and bless others."

The school's hours are 8:15 a.m. to 3 p.m.

How are students there transported to the school?

Some are transported each day by family members, (parents/grandparents, etc.).

"We also do have several who are transported by local school districts on school buses," Spencer noted.

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Welcome to the Chamber team!



Julia Mertes *Director of Marketing and Communications*

The Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce welcomes Julia Mertes as the new Director of Marketing and Communications.

With a background in journalism, nonprofit communications, and collegiate marketing, Julia brings a passion for innovative storytelling to the team. She will oversee the organization's social media accounts, website, email newsletter, and the Chamber Connection — among other responsibilities.

"I look forward to collaborating with local businesses and organizational partners in Lycoming County, working to promote this area and the opportunities it offers," Julia said. "This region has so many hidden gems, and I am excited to use my communications background to highlight the amazing work done and resources provided in our community."

Julia attended the Pennsylvania State University's Schreyer Honors College, earning dual degrees in English and journalism and a minor in technical writing. She is currently finishing her master's degree in Strategic Communications from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania.

Most recently, she worked at Lycoming College, assisting athletic communication efforts for the school's 19 NCAA Division III athletic teams. Julia previously served as the communications director for the Lion's Pantry, a food resource in State College that helps combat food insecurity. Her journalistic work has been published in outlets like the *Centre Daily Times*, *Northcentral PA News* and *Penn Live*.

In her free time, Julia enjoys creative writing, reading, volunteering, and spending time with her family.

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Upcoming PM Exchanges



Camp Susque

Thursday, May 15, 2025
5:00-7:00 p.m.
47 Susque Camp Road
Trout Run, PA 17771

Enjoy live music, munch on appetizers and refreshments and embark on golf cart tours of Susque's campus. Enter for a chance to win door prizes and receive early access to Susque's annual Silent Auction. Have a first look of Susque's brand new pool with an official ribbon cutting, hear remarks from state and federal leaders and witness presentations from local businesses fulfilling the Neighborhood Assistance Program.



Herman and Luther's

Thursday, May 22, 2025
5:00-7:00 p.m.
787 State Route 87
Montoursville, PA 17754

Herman and Luther's invites you to their PM Exchange as they celebrate 10 amazing years in business! Come see what makes Herman and Luther's more than just a wedding venue. They are also a go-to spot for events, lunch meetings and so much more. Enjoy a relaxed evening with delicious food, and a variety of beverages as they showcase everything they have to offer. Let's toast to a decade of memories – and many more to come.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June & July PM Exchanges
Thursdays from 5-7pm

- June 12: Hull's Landing
- June 26: The Williamsport Home
- July 10: John Ryan Brewery
- July 24: Lycoming Arts

Mark your calendars for the...



on **August 12**

The application deadline for the 19th Grand Slam Parade is rapidly approaching. Businesses, non-profits and community groups wanting to participate, now's the time to apply. Applications are due May 30 and can be electronically submitted by going to:

www.grandslamparade.com

Businesses looking to be affiliated with the parade can download sponsorship and advertising information at the website. This year's parade will be broadcast live on **WNEP-16**. Get your name out to the local and regional community across the television airwaves.



Thank you to our PM Exchange Hosts!

Thank you to Genesis House, Inc., for hosting an incredible PM Exchange in April with fantastic food, valuable networking and chances to learn more about the life-changing services provided at Genesis House.

State Representative Jamie Flick also had the opportunity to present a citation in honor of Genesis House's 40 years of service, which was a well-deserved recognition for the impact they've made in the lives of so many.

L to R: Jennifer Rempe, Jamie Flick, Amy Fleming and Shakeena Lee



Are you interested in being featured in an upcoming Chamber Connection?

Reach out to Julia Mertes at jmertes@williamsport.org to learn more!



Thank you to PDC Spas for hosting a memorable PM Exchange with an amazing turnout and energy that was just as warm as the spas on display!

From the beautiful new showroom to the great company, tasty treats, and fun giveaways—it was the perfect way to celebrate local craftsmanship and wellness, all under one roof. If you haven't stopped by yet, their new showroom at 200 E. Church Street is a must-see!

L to R: Ricky Ortiz, Travis Reed, Cynthia Ward, Marshall Welch III, Erin Welch and Jaime Smith

Service 1st 2024 Annual Meeting Celebrates Credit Union's 50th Anniversary with a Special Citation Presented by Senator Lynda Schlegel Culver



Danville, Pa. – Service 1st Federal Credit Union held its 2024 Annual Meeting Wednesday, April 23, at the Silver Moon Banquet Hall, Lewisburg, celebrating their 50th Anniversary with a special presentation by Senator Lynda Schlegel Culver.

"Wow—50 years! What an incredible journey it's been for Service 1st Federal Credit Union!" said Mike Thomas, President/CEO, Service 1st, as he welcomed members to the event. "Back in 1975, a small but mighty group of Geisinger employees had a vision—to create a financial institution that put people first.... Their contributions will always be remembered. Their dedication laid the foundation for what has grown into the thriving credit union we are today."

During the meeting, highlights from the past year were shared, as well as awards bestowed on the credit union. Senator Culver then presented Tracy Shirk, Chairperson, Service 1st Board of Directors and Mike Thomas with a special citation for their continued community support and focus on financial education over the past 50 years.



What do people gain from Leadership Lycoming?

"I hope to connect to the best people, places, and things in Lycoming County to learn the needs of our community and to make new friends and connections."

*Tonya Welshans
WellSpan Health*

"To better understand the community, its resources, leaders and to learn which path I can take to affect positive change for everyone."

*Samantha Ecker
Larson Design Group*

"I'd like to gain a network of support for myself in my class and a network of support in the community to support my students."

*Kaysey Beury
Penn College*

Leadership Lycoming

Local resources highlighted on Health and Human Services Day

It was April showers for Health and Human Services Day, but that couldn't dampen our enthusiasm!

We started the day by visiting Geisinger Life Flight, The New Love Center Mobile Food Pantry, and the River Valley Health Mobile Unit. We learned that whether it's medical care or a stocked pantry, these crucial programs go where the need is.

Next, we went to Hope Enterprises and heard the moving story of the organization's mission and history. We learned about the wide range of services Hope offers to individuals with disabilities and even heard from some of those whose lives have been empowered by the organization's services – from community living to prepping for a job interview!

Our next stop was the American Rescue Workers-Williamsport, a faith-based organization offering homelessness and hunger prevention services in Lycoming County since 1934. We were served lunch in the dining hall (the pickle pizza was delicious) and toured ARW's facility, including the men's shelter and warehouse, learning about ARW's network of thrift stores and how they drive their mission forward.

North Central Sight Services, Inc. was next, where we learned about their mission to create programs, services and employment opportunities for blind and visually impaired individuals.

In addition to touring the expansive facility where NCSS offers document shredding and storage, packaging and distribution services, and other business services, we also got a VR experience! These headsets allowed us to experience everything from a visit to the eye doctor to the inside of the eye itself.

The class made their way to the YWCA Northcentral PA. We were provided with a tour and given the history of the YWCA and how it provides a multitude of services to women and children in our community. We learned different ways that our organizations can help in their mission.

Our last stop on Health and Human Services day was to the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center. The class was given a tour by Michelle Gaida, Director of Cancer Services. We learned the importance of screening ourselves and reminding others to routinely screen. We also learned how critical technology can be in detecting and treating cancers. It is nice to know that we have such state of the art facilities here in Lycoming County.

The Class of 2025 would like to thank our program day sponsors: Geisinger, River Valley Health and Valley View Rehab & Nursing Center.

We continue to thank our amazing Annual Sponsors (many whom we visited today!) UPMC North Central Pa., North Central Sight Services, Inc., Hope Enterprises and West Pharmaceuticals!



Leadership Lycoming serves as a specialized training program designed to understand the needs of the community it serves and develop and motivate effective leaders committed to utilizing their skills and talents for the betterment of their community.

The Leadership Lycoming Class of 2025 most recently learned about the health and human services resources offered in Lycoming County and the surrounding areas, including new virtual reality (VR) experiences.

Front Row (L to R):

Stephanie Steinbacher, Kristen Lorson, Lesha Trostle, Susan Yost, Nicole English, Sam Ecker and Janai Arbogast.

Second Row (L to R):

Becky Winters, Jessica Reich, Jen Miller, Brian Clemmons, Nicole Klees, Shelbie Eshleman, Kaysey Beury, Will Baney and Chelsea Reichard (Host, Class of '24)

Last Row (L to R):

Danielle Forker (Host, Class of '24), Matt McGuriman, Dalton Gough, Jen Cullin-Hetrick, Chris VanDergrift, Christine Woods and Tim Colburn.



Community Update



Service 1st Announces Johnson as Chief Lending Officer

Danville, Pa. – Service 1st Federal Credit Union recently announced the promotion of Brett Johnson to Chief Lending Officer.

“We are thrilled to officially welcome Brett Johnson as our new Chief Lending Officer,” said Mike Thomas, the President and CEO of Service 1st. “His leadership and experience will be instrumental in strengthening our lending strategy, supporting our members and driving smart, sustainable growth. We look forward to his contributions as we continue to innovate and expand our lending services.”



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Only one passport per person is permitted.*