

# LOCAL & STATE



Shawn Meyers

## Shawn Meyers To Announce Judicial Candidacy

Attorney Shawn D. Meyers of Chambersburg and a partner in the law firm of Steiger, Steiger & Meyers located in Mercersburg, Pa., plans to announce his candidacy for judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the 39th Judicial District comprising both Franklin and Fulton counties.

Meyers will make his formal announcement at a breakfast at the Orchards Restaurant, Chambersburg, on Thursday, November 13, 2008, at 8:00 a.m., followed by an announcement at the McConnellsburg Firehall in McConnellsburg at 11:30 a.m. the same morning.

Please contact Hannah Richards, campaign assistant, at 717-816-1612 for further information or questions about Meyers and his candidacy.

## County To Host Co-op Livestock Protection Program

By Greg Strait

PENN STATE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Fulton County will co-host a Cooperative Livestock Protection Program on Tuesday, November 20, at the Ag Heritage Center in Franklin County. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. and cover programs to protect your livestock, including dairy farms. Harris Glass from USDA -APHIS Wildlife Services will be the primary speaker for the evening.

Wildlife Services (WS), a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, provides federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife conflicts that threaten livestock. The Cooperative Livestock Protection Program, which is funded by federal, state, and local partners is focused in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Butler, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Huntington, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. This cooperative program provides producers with technical and operational assistance concerning black vultures, European starlings, Canada geese, and Eastern coyotes. WS technicians are available to provide on-the-ground direct control services (i.e., DRC 1339, effigies, pyrotechnics, traps, snares, compound 1080 collars, etc.) to producers in the 16-county area at a cost of \$250 per year.

For more information or to register to attend, contact the Penn State Cooperative Extension Office in Fulton County at 717-485-4111.

## Man Charged In Pa. Fast-Food Restaurant Shooting

EVERETT, Pa. (AP) - Police in southcentral Pennsylvania say they have charged a man in the shooting death of a woman in a fast-food restaurant parking lot.

State police say 38-year-old John Lewis Gerholt, of Mount Union, was arrested shortly after the shooting death of 24-year-old Karen Marie Gerholt, of Hopewell.

Police say the victim was shot at 3 p.m. Sunday in the parking lot of the McDonald's restaurant at the Bedford Square Plaza in Snake Spring Valley Township in Bedford County.

Police say John Gerholt was charged with criminal homicide and related counts. They have not indicated the relationship between victim and defendant. Gerholt was arraigned before a Bedford County district judge, and it is unclear whether he has an attorney.

## 88-Year-Old Goes The Extra Mile To Vote

Carolyn Hixon casts her vote from hospital bed

By Lindsay R. Mellott  
STAFF WRITER

Like many Americans, Buck Valley resident Carolyn Hixon was eager to vote in last week's presidential election. The politically minded 88-year-old has never missed an election and, recognizing its historic importance, she certainly didn't want to miss the November 4 election.

For Carolyn, however, casting her vote wasn't going to be as simple as it has been in the past. While enjoying the Fulton Fall Folk Festival parade in McConnellsburg October 18, Carolyn had the misfortune to fall. She was taken by ambulance to Fulton County Medical Center, where she was treated and sent home. Her recovery was going well, but on Nov. 1 complications from the fall sent her back to the hospital, this time to Washington County Hospital in Hagerstown.

According to granddaughter Megan Hixon, as she was being ad-

mitted, Carolyn's first question to the doctor was "Will I be out of her in time to vote?" Her doctor, Megan said, confessed that no patient had ever posed that question to him before.

Determined to vote, Carolyn began the process of getting an emergency absentee ballot. Her doctor prepared a notarized document attesting to her hospitalization and daughter Kay, on Election Day, brought it to the Fulton County Courthouse. Since county election officials had never before issued an emergency absentee ballot, some research of election law was needed before proceeding.

Approval by the court was required and Carolyn's daughter was assigned a case number. She waited in line for the judge to OK the doctor's notarized letter and issue an emergency absentee ballot that she then took back to Hagerstown so her mother could vote.

The completed ballot was returned to McConnellsburg, where it was notarized and given to the county election board, which had it hand-delivered to Carolyn's polling place in



Carolyn Hixon votes in last Tuesday's election from her hospital bed in Washington County Hospital, Hagerstown, after obtaining an emergency absentee ballot.

Buck Valley. And so, Carolyn's vote was cast.

The Hixon family says that it means a lot to Carolyn that Americans are free to pick their leaders and that nothing would have stood

in the way of her exercising her right to vote.

"She was aware of the fact that this was an historic election and she was aware of its importance," said Megan.

## Commissioners

# County Conducts Routine Business

STAFF REPORT

The Fulton County commissioners signed a contract agreement last Tuesday with an area construction company and gave their final authorization for the company to begin its efforts as part of the ongoing renovations at the Fulton County Library.

Chairperson Bonnie Mellott Keefer was given authorization to sign the contractual agreement with Eagle Construction Co., which was also given the nod to proceed with the purchase and installation of a sprinkler system. The agreement with Eagle Construction Co. totals \$111,900.

Other projects discussed on November 4 with county projects coordinator Karen Hann include the JLG turning-lane project, the addition of a sunroom at the Warfordsburg Senior Center and the relocation of the Needmore-based magisterial district judge office into the adjacent firehall.

On a motion by Dan Swain, the commissioners agreed to proceed with the submission of a "notice to proceed" to Keller Engineers Inc. in connection with the JLG turning-lane project on Route 16.

As requested by Fulton County Human Services Director Jean Snyder, the commissioners signed purchase-of-service agreements with an array of companies that will provide services to the county on an as-needed basis. Companies now having agreements with the county include 1 Step Detect Associates, Adelphoi Village Inc., Appalachian Youth Service, Beech Street Program, Catocin Counseling Center, Center for Arson Research Inc., Children's Home of York, Children's Resource Center, Christian Social Services, Cornell Abraxas Group Inc., Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, Family Care Services Inc., Fulton County Center for Families, Hope Moore (sign language interpreter), Manito Inc., NHS Human Services, Professional Family Care Services Inc., Pyramid Healthcare Inc., The Children's Aid Society of Franklin County, T.W. Ponnessa & Associates, Vision Quest National LTD and William Allenbaugh II MA.

Dublin Township's application for Liquid Fuel Funds was approved in the amount of \$2,700.

On October 28, the commissioners met with F&M Trust representative Ron Froeschle regarding the quarterly findings of the county's retirement fund. Others on hand for Froeschle's presentation were business manager Tim Stanton, Treasurer Monica Seville and solicitor Stanley Kerlin.

Froeschle revealed the total account return for the period beginning July 1 and ending September 30 ended in a loss of 10.12 percent, which equates to a drop in the amount of \$659,682.80. For the year to date, Froeschle added the county's retirement plan had a loss of 13.86 percent.

Michael McDavid of the Penn State Cooperative Extension office informed the commissioners he is in the process of working with County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) on public education and a natural gas project.

## PSU Expert Offers Tips For Economizing

If balancing your household budget is getting harder, you should consider ways to economize, reduce your costs and cut wasteful consumption, says a financial literacy expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Economizing means managing your family resources - including money - to get what you need and want," says Marilyn Furry, associate professor of agricultural and extension education. "Learning to substitute, to conserve, to cooperate and to find free goods and services will help your family balance income and outgo. There's a Depression-era saying that can be a concise and to-the-point definition of economizing: 'Use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without.'"

Furry offers several strategies for making the most efficient use of your income:

Substitute. Use lower-priced goods and services when possible.

"Have the family develop the

habit of asking, 'What can be substituted that would do the job for less money?'" she says. "Eat at home rather than in restaurants. Cook from basics rather than buying prepared meals.

Become a thrift-store shopper. Do more at-home entertaining rather than going out to be entertained.

Reduce waste. "Find ways to make products last longer and keep food from spoiling before it's used," Furry advises. "Keep your family's health, skills and possessions in good condition. Get the most out of each car trip, each load of laundry and each dollar spent on clothing and furnishing. You can make conservation a day-to-day practice by all family members."

Cooperate. Use food co-ops, baby-sitting co-ops, car pools and similar groups to share resources and reduce cost to each family. "There are many forms of co-ops, both formal and nonformal, avail-

able to you to share your family's time and talent with others as a means to stretch resources," she says.

Furry urges consumers to take advantage of the many goods and services offered free or at low cost by community, county and state agencies. "Libraries, parks, musical events, health clinics, walking and biking trails and low-cost classes to increase skills are examples of the many public and community resources to extend your family income," she says. "Ask yourself how you can use public services for your family welfare, education, health and recreation."

Furry has worked with Natalie Ferry, retired coordinator of special program initiatives for Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Cathy Bowen, associate professor of agricultural and extension education, to create a series of 11 fact sheets titled, "Bouncing Back When Your Incomes Drops." "The

series was created to help families that have to make adjustments in meeting basic needs when there is a job loss or some other event that causes an unexpected loss of income," Furry says.

"Also, people who are entering the workforce for the first time - welfare-to-work program participants, for instance - could use some of the publications in the series."

The "Bouncing Back When Your Income Drops" fact sheets are available at <http://consumerissues.cas.psu.edu/pubs.html>. Single copies also can be obtained free of charge by Pennsylvania residents through county Penn State Cooperative Extension offices, or by contacting the College of Agricultural Sciences Publications Distribution Center at 814-865-6713 or by e-mail at [AgPubs-Dist@psu.edu](mailto:AgPubs-Dist@psu.edu). For cost information on out-of-state or bulk orders, contact the Publications Distribution Center.

## Pa. Education Board Tries To Attack College Costs

By Martha Raffaele  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - Ashley Lovejoy has learned that her dream of becoming a special-education teacher comes with a hefty price tag.

The road to a bachelor's degree from Edinboro University, a state school, has left Lovejoy nearly \$43,000 in debt, and she still has another year until graduation.

Lovejoy, 22, was among numerous students and college officials who aired concerns in recent public forums across Pennsylvania. They say that a college education - increasingly deemed a necessity by business leaders and education policymakers - has become a luxury increasingly beyond the reach of young people.

"With the starting salary of a teacher averaging around \$30,000 a year I fear for how I will be able to repay my student loans and pay for my everyday necessities to live," Lovejoy said in testimony before the State Board of Education's higher education council.

In Pennsylvania, the average student-loan debt for members of the class of 2007 was \$23,613 - the sixth-highest in the nation, according to a recent report by the nonprofit Project on Student Debt.

The nation's current economic crisis has also brought into sharp focus the widening gap between college costs and the ability of students and parents to pay. Wall Street's woes are battering college-savings plans and private college endowments, and the credit crunch has made borrowing for college more difficult.

Pennsylvania's student-loan agency cut spending on its college grant program for 2008-09, and the state's growing budget shortfall has forced public four-year schools to prepare for a possible spending freeze - sparking worries about the fate of state aid to universities next year.

Against this backdrop, the higher education council is asking the Education Department to present information on college affordability at its meeting later this month.

But don't expect solutions to such a complex problem to emerge right away. Board chairman Joseph Torsella said it is too early to say what the council's inquiry may yield.

College access and affordability are concerns already mentioned in the state's master plan for higher education, but "the problem really has mushroomed," Torsella said.

"To the extent there was a gap before between what (financial) aid covers and what the costs are ... that gap is growing quickly and seems to be growing in ways that should make all of us worry," he said.

Among the more stunning revelations, Torsella said, was that some students were skipping on basic necessities like food in order to pay tuition.

In testimony presented Oct. 23, Luzerne County Community College President Thomas P. Leary said his school had recently raised more than \$1,000 for a new emergency fund to help students buy meal tickets for breakfast and lunch on campus.

"Faculty and staff have encountered students who have been on campus all day ... who have not had a thing to eat because they did not have the money," Leary said.

The school has another emergency fund for textbooks, which cash-strapped students sometimes delay buying, Leary added.

When the council meets Nov. 19, it hopes to gain a better understanding from the department about the availability of financial aid, the debt students carry, and the extent to which families are relying on private loans to finance college costs, said James Buckheit, the board's executive director.

Torsella said he hopes the exercise will at least spur conversations about the cost of higher education among people at the schools and in government. He said a report on its findings could come as early as January.

"This wasn't intended to be, 'Whose fault is this?' because there are a lot of different moving pieces," he said.

## Melissa Horton Selected As Outstanding Teacher



Central Fulton School District Child Care and Guidance instructor Melissa Horton was selected as one of the recipients of the 2008-2009 Outstanding Teacher Award sponsored by the Shippensburg University School Study Council. Horton was also named a Shippensburg University guest lecturer, a recognition which affords the opportunity of teaching at least one class to university students during the year. She was recognized at an October 16 luncheon at the university. Pictured left is District Superintendent Dr. Julia Cigola, Melissa Horton, middle/high school Principal Todd Beatty and Shippensburg University Dean Dr. James Johnson.

## Pa. Court Says Utilities Cannot Break Rate Caps

By Marc Levy

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - Two Pennsylvania utilities cannot raise electric rates they charge to customers, a move that would break deregulation-era electric-rate caps they agreed to a decade ago, a state judge ruled Friday.

Commonwealth Court Judge Rochelle S. Friedman upheld a January 2007 decision by state utility regulators to deny the request by Metropolitan Edison Co. and Pennsylvania Electric Co.

The utilities had argued that they should be able to raise customers' retail electric rates to reflect the increasing price of wholesale electricity. But Friedman wrote that the utilities chose not to sign long-term contracts that would have locked in all of their wholesale electricity costs over the life of the rate caps.

In 2006, the companies, both subsidiaries of Akron, Ohio-based FirstEnergy Corp., asked regulators to let them begin increasing electric rates, instead of waiting until 2011, when the utilities' rate caps expire.

The state's utility consumer advocate, Sonny Popowsky, said the companies would have been able to bill their customers another \$2 billion-plus over four years.

"This is an extremely important decision for MetEd and PennElec customers because they would have lost four years of benefits from the rate caps we all agreed upon," Popowsky said.

The companies serve a combined 1.1 million electric customers scattered across more than 40 counties in Pennsylvania.

A FirstEnergy spokesman, Scott Surgeoner, said he did not know whether the company will appeal. The utility's rate caps expire Jan. 1, 2011, allowing the company to begin passing on the full price of electricity supplied by the wholesale market.

Popowsky has estimated that bills for MetEd customers will balloon by 54 percent when the cap expires, while PennElec customers will have to absorb a 50 percent increase. Surgeoner said the utilities have not released their own estimates because they have not yet purchased the electricity that they will deliver in 2011.

As part of Pennsylvania's deregulation of the power industry, utilities had to cap electric rates at 1990s levels while they billed customers \$14 billion to cover power plant costs. About 85 percent of Pennsylvania's 5 million-plus electric customers are living under rate caps.

## Budget Cuts Mean Philly Officers Won't Patrol Interstate-95

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - State troopers will soon be patrolling Interstate 95 in Philadelphia.

City officials say the three Philadelphia police vehicles assigned to patrol the interstate are getting new assignments. That's because of budget cuts announced by Mayor Michael Nutter.

Last week, Nutter announced that the city was anticipating a \$1 billion budget shortfall. He says the city will close libraries and swimming pools, cut more than 800 jobs and trim some salaries.

Officials say budget cuts forced the removal of the three cars from Interstate 95. Those officers will now be assigned to cover other streets in the city.

They will take over patrols on Kelly Drive, Lincoln Drive and Roosevelt Boulevard. The unit that had patrolled Kelly and Lincoln drives is being dissolved.

