

# LOCAL & STATE

## PSU Faces Budget Challenges

**By Genaro C. Armas**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER  
STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) – Penn State University plans to steer clear of higher-than-expected tuition increases to balance the books despite facing difficult budget decisions amid a worsening economy, school president Graham Spanier said Friday.

Penn State has an enrollment of 92,000, counting its 24 campuses statewide and online students. The Board of Trustees proposed increases for the 2009-10 school year of between 4.9 and 5.6 percent, depending on the campus, in its appropriations request to the state in Sept.

That same month, though, the state told the university that it would likely hold back \$15 million of previously appropriated money for the current school year due to economic woes.

The university hasn't had to increase tuition at midyear in large part to "defensive measures" and long-range planning, Spanier said Friday in addressing the trustees.

With prospects of a short-term recovery dim, the university is thinking ahead. Rising costs for fuel and other utilities are among the items that the university must account for amid lower appropriations, a reduced endowment and the credit crunch, Spanier said.

Trustees on Friday did approve an increase to room and board rates of about 5.8 percent, or about \$225 per semester for the next academic year at all nine of the university's residential campuses.

But current and prospective students also face tightening family pocketbooks, especially at a university where the tuition for lower-division, in-state students is about \$13,000 a year – and almost double that for out-of-state students.

"We're going to do everything we can to leave tuition in the same zone as it has been proposed (in September), and not used to balance the budget," Spanier said during a break Friday.

"We would have to have an extraordinary tuition increase to get next year's budget in balance if we wanted to follow through on that earlier plan," he said. "We don't think that would be possible or appropriate given the economic circumstances our students and families are facing."

Instead, there may be significant cuts in other areas, including little or no salary increases. The schedules and financing on some new building projects may be delayed.

The school also announced that Spanier and his wife, English professor Sandra Spanier, have made a new \$700,000 philanthropic commitment, increasing their total commitment to \$1 million.

## Ex-Pa. Trooper Gets 8 Years For Tipping Off Pimps

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) – A former Pennsylvania state trooper is going to prison for about eight years after being sentenced for his role in tipping off a prostitution ring that operated at truck stops.

Kevin Judas Coleman Sr. of Harrisburg was sentenced Friday in federal court for obstructing and impeding the due administration of justice.

The 42-year-old had been assigned to patrol the Gables Truck Stop in Harrisburg.

Prosecutors say he warned those involved in prostitution about undercover work, wiretaps, sweeps and arrests in exchange for sexual favors.

His sentence is 97 months, a fine and two years probation.

Coleman's lawyer Royce Morris didn't immediately return a phone message late Friday.

## Bear Season Opens Here Monday

Three-day season ends November 26

**By Chanin Rotz-Mountz**  
STAFF WRITER

When McConnellsburg area resident Randall Clippinger set out for the opening day of bear season Monday, he joked with daughters Samantha and Stephanie he wasn't going to shave his beard until he harvested a black bear. On the schedule for Monday evening – shaving.

His first time ever in the field in search of black bear, the 44-year-old man's hunt came to a quick finale only 1 1/2 hours into the three-day season that will wrap up Wednesday, November 26. Clippinger was one of several hunters to share his success with the "News" as well as local residents awaiting a top Sideling Hill Mountain at lunch time Monday, at the bear check station.

Clippinger's male bear harvested in State Game Lands 81 in Dublin Township adjacent to the home of his brother, Russell, weighed in at the check station inside the Bureau of Forestry building at 130 pounds. Clippinger's bear was the sixth bear processed at the station on Monday with the largest tipping the scales at 206 pounds.

Avid outdoorsmen Ken Walter of East Freedom told the "News" he has been hunting bear on and off since the age of 12. In prior years, he has spent hours preparing and scouting in hopes of harvesting a large bruin or sow. Heading out only at daybreak Monday morning, Walter broke tradition and surprisingly enough managed to harvest his bear by 8:45 a.m. behind the home of hunting companion and friend Dave Duncan of Bedford.

As of 1 p.m. Monday, Walter held the record for the largest bear brought to the check station – a 206-pound male. The station was scheduled to stay open until 8 p.m. Monday and will resume operations from noon to 8 p.m. Tuesday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday.

Fulton County Wildlife Conservation Officer Kevin Mountz reported bear complaints are down in county but sightings are definitely up.

"We had a rather wet spring and early summer that produced a marginal food supply, which in turn kept nuisance complaints down. It seems that most people you talk to are seeing more bear," said Mountz, who added sightings are widespread throughout the county in all townships.

The number of roadkill bears was



**Randall Clippinger of McConnellsburg** (left) was accompanied to the Sideling Hill Bureau of Forestry building by his father, Bob Clippinger of Clear Ridge, Monday afternoon. In his first-ever hunt for black bear, Randall harvested a 130-pound male bear in State Game Lands 81 in Dublin Township.



**Ken Walter of East Freedom, Pa.**, harvested this 206-pound male bear while hunting behind the home of friend and hunting companion Dave Duncan of Bedford. By 1 p.m. Monday, Walter's bear was the heaviest bear checked in with Pennsylvania Game Commission officials.

also significant in 2008, with the most recent bear killed by an automobile Monday morning on the Fulton County portion of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. A total of seven bears were killed on the turnpike, while an additional two bears were struck by automobiles along Route 655 north of Hustontown in Taylor Township.

"Rain or sleet on the opening day tends to keep hunters in their vehicles," said Mountz, looking skyward Monday at the bear check station where skies threatened inclement

weather. The forecast for the remaining two days includes a possibility of snow, which could offer hunters ultimate tracking conditions.

"Most bears are more active at nighttime and lounge during the day. To have a chance at being successful, hunters have to be willing to get out and beat the bush," he said. Mountz concluded success can also depend on early scouting and locating good habitat that offers a good, natural food supply and will keep bears in the area.

## McCbg.'s Own Mr. & Mrs. Claus Stepping Down This Christmas

Nelson and Rachel DeShong hope to continue bringing cheer to area children next year

**By Chanin Rotz-Mountz**  
STAFF WRITER

With their bellies full of turkey and trimmings as dusk descends on Fulton County Thursday evening, passing motorists and residents seeking an early dose of Christmas spirit will only be greeted by darkness at 1748 Lincoln Way West, McConnellsburg.

Normally adorned with sparkling lawn ornaments and thousands upon thousands of festive lights, the home of James "Nelson" and Rachel DeShong, more commonly known this time of year as Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus, will remain unlit. The decision not to decorate their Todd Township residence, according to the DeShongs, was a difficult one for the married couple of 23 years but fueled solely by health issues.

In addition to halting their annual family tradition of lighting up the night sky, the DeShongs also sadly announced to the "News" last Friday they will not be able to greet the carloads of visitors that frequent their home on a yearly basis in hopes of getting an early gift request to Santa and Mrs. Claus to ensure their Christmas wish lists are filled.

The couple got their meager start, Nelson noted, through his wife's decorating skills. Standing behind a plastic Santa mask on their front porch, the couple fondly recalls, Nelson began waving at passersby slowing their automobiles to get a good look at their holiday display. They were surely startled when an arm protruded from behind the decoration and began waving at them, Nelson, now 64, said.

Eighteen years later, with the aid of a Santa suit borrowed from a neighbor and a new dress for Mrs. Claus, the couple has greeted thousands of adults and children, some hailing from as far away as England. Not only has their display of lights increased to well over 25,000, but their notoriety in the area has grown as well.

"We have parents stop in who

used to come visit us as children. Now they're bringing their children to see us," said the DeShongs, who greet their young visitors with popcorn balls, candy canes and coloring books. Obtaining these sugary treats and books has turned Christmas into almost a year-round event as months in advance they begin placing orders to beat out larger orders submitted by grocery chains and stores such as Wal-Mart. Those routinely lending financial assistance with the DeShongs' venture are Peckie's Auto Body; Penn Rod and Gun Club; Dr. Gordon Kaiser; TruValue and various groups from JLG Industries.

In exchange for a photo opportunity with Santa and Mrs. Claus, a treat and the chance to share one's most hidden desires, the DeShongs routinely receive well wishes; the occasional treat – a coffee mug filled with candy or a steaming cup of hot coffee; and a warm, fuzzy feeling for bringing a little Christmas cheer to this small, rural community.

Five to six years ago, the DeShongs moved their holiday operation from the end of their driveway, where they encountered a variety of inclement weather ranging from snow and hard rain to heavy winds, to a much cozier spot inside their garage that would hardly be complete without a box to hold handwritten letters for Jolly Saint Nick. One of the most popular gift requests over the years has been a pony, but the most heart-wrenching request was a young teen who said she had all she needed but would like for her grandmother's cancer to go away.

"That really caught me off guard. When you get one like that, it's really hard to respond to. It still chokes me up to think about it," Nelson said.

"I've seen the kids run from the vehicle and jump onto Nelson's lap," said Rachel, 71. "It's just getting to be too much with Nelson's health and being out in the weather and the cold."

"We had planned on this Christmas being our last outing, but if everything goes well we'll resume our schedule for at least next year," stated Nelson, who added during their best years they greeted around 500 kids and strung approximately 25,000 lights. Their lone disappointment – not having a car counter for the bottom of their driveway to get an accurate visitor count.

With the DeShong family's Christmas being less festive than normal, the "News" is asking local residents and individuals who may have been touched at some point by the DeShongs' holiday spirit and giving nature to send the couple a letter or card over the holiday season. Whether it be a short note sharing why their family looks forward to a quick visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus and a glimpse of their holiday display or how their generosity has affected them, all correspondence and well wishes should be sent to Nelson and Rachel DeShong, 1748 Lincoln Way West, McConnellsburg, PA 17233.

## Fulton County Deer Harvest Looks "Promising"

Hunters reminded of changes in Wildlife Management Unit 4B

**By Chanin Rotz-Mountz**  
STAFF WRITER

Sportsmen are in the process of making final preparations for the much-anticipated season opener of the statewide firearms for antlered and antlerless whitetail that will get under way Monday at daybreak.

While the majority of regulations encompassing the firearms season remain unchanged, the biggest change for some local hunters will be the alteration of hunting requirements in Wildlife Management Unit 4B, which in Fulton County lies to the east of Route 522 and north of the Route 30 bypass. Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 4B, according to Fulton County Wildlife Conservation Officer (WCO) Kevin Mountz, was one of four WMUs to be selected by Pennsylvania Game Commission officials and approved by the Board of Commissioners earlier this spring to offer an antlered-only season beginning Monday, December 1, and ending Friday, December 5.

The remainder of the season set

for December 6 through December 13 will include the harvesting of both antlered and antlerless deer, Mountz added. No changes were made to the season guidelines in WMU 4A, which encompasses the remainder of Fulton County.

In addition to the alteration of season guidelines, another regulation seeing a minor adjustment is the area of mistake kills. Mountz indicated in following past practices, field officers will continue to issue a new tag to hunters who harvested a buck that did not meet the antler restrictions. Hunters will still be required to provide officers with a written statement regarding the killing of the deer, but unlike prior years, will not be permitted to keep the antlered deer.

In addition, a portion of the \$25 restitution fee paid by the hunter in connection with the mistake kill will in turn be donated toward offsetting processing costs with Hunters Sharing the Harvest. In Fulton County, Strait's Butcher Shop located at 304 Possum Hollow Road, Harrisonville, is the lone deer processor to participate in the "venison donation program that has been channeling donated venison to local food banks and soup kitchens since 1991."

Furthermore, Mountz reminds

hunters all mistake kills must be properly tagged and reported within 12 hours to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Southcentral Region by calling 814-643-1831.

In regard to the outlook for the 2008 firearms season, Mountz stated it looks "promising" for hunters looking to harvest a deer in Fulton County. "Deer numbers seem to be on the rise this year," said Mountz. "People are seeing more deer with larger groups of bucks, and the crop damage complaints are definitely up this year in comparison to years past."

Even for those veteran hunters

in the field, safety continues to be an issue for both hunters and field officers. Requirements state all hunters must wear at least 250 square inches of fluorescent orange on the head, chest and back combined. Having a loaded firearm in a vehicle and not wearing enough fluorescent orange continue to be two of the most common safety issues encountered by officers and deputies in Fulton County as well as a variety of infractions ranging from unlawful taking, possession or transportation of an illegal deer and failure to properly tag big game to hunting overbait.

Merry Christmas & HAPPY NEW YEAR

Have a Great Holiday Season!  
From The Bishop's  
Kevin, Karen,  
Taylor, & Megan  
2008

## Enrollment Open For Medicare Part D

**By Robert Goldberg**

From now until Dec. 31, Medicare Part D is offering an "open-enrollment" period, meaning that seniors can change their prescription drug coverage to pick a new plan that better meets their needs.

Seniors should jump at this once-a-year opportunity. Instead of being forced into a one-size-fits-all plan run by the government, Part D participants can choose among a variety of private insurance plans, custom tailoring their coverage to their particular drug needs.

Since companies have to compete for the premium dollars of millions of Part D participants, they're delivering increasingly attractive offerings.

Beneficiaries are seeing a broader selection of drugs, lower prices and more generous benefits.

Indeed, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) estimates that the average monthly premium for

standard Part D coverage in 2009 will be \$28, only \$3 higher than last year, and a whopping 37 percent lower than the \$44.12 monthly premium projected for 2009 when Part D was launched.

The prospect of substantial cost savings is another big reason why savvy seniors should sign up for Part D. "Until I enrolled in Medicare Part D I paid more than \$4,000 a year just in premiums," says Joan Wells of East Aurora, N.Y. "Now I only pay about \$300 a year for coverage."

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to pick the right plan. Simply make a list of all your current prescriptions and dosages. Then visit Plan Finder, an easy-to-use, interactive comparison tool at Medicare.gov. Once you enter your information, Plan Finder kicks out a list of all the appropriate plans and their costs in your area.

This year, the CMS Plan Finder has a valuable new feature that can

help you save even more on drugs by comparing the cost of filling your prescriptions by mail versus buying directly from a local retail pharmacy.

According to a recent poll, nearly nine in 10 seniors covered by the Medicare drug benefit are satisfied with the program. In the coming weeks, seniors should take advantage of the open enrollment period and sign up or switch to a new plan that better meets their needs.

Seniors should also pay attention to any effort Congress makes to take those choices away. Many lawmakers are pushing for a redesign of Part D, as they'd like to turn it into a more traditional government program with just a single, price-controlled plan. By taking the opposite approach, Medicare Part D leverages market forces to create competition, leading to lower prices, better service and more choices. And choice is what better health is all about.

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