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from
Adams County

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Veterans Affairs

On Tuesday April 23rd, the Adams County Veterans Affairs office will be distributing over 8,000 flags to 30 individual volunteers and groups to be placed on Veterans graves in the 89 cemeteries in Adams County. This solemn activity is one of the most important functions that is performed by our VA Department each year and pays tribute and respect to our deceased Adams County Veterans. It should also be noted that this solemn gesture could not be accomplished without the assistance and cooperation of a lot of patriotic Adams County residents.

In an effort to update veterans on policy changes, Veterans Affairs Director Stan Clark reports that after over 20 years of denial, the Veterans Administration has finally agreed to accept and adjudicate service connected disability claims for Blue Water Navy and Marine Veterans that served aboard ships in the territorial waters of Vietnam. Many of these Veterans were denied



benefits for Agent Orange related illnesses/ conditions in the past and many never bothered to file a claim for these benefits. If you know of any of these Veterans, please have them contact our Veterans Affairs office for details and assistance at 717-337-9835 ext. 1432

Clerk of Courts Office Enhances Collections

Adams County Clerk of Courts Kelly Lawver recently informed us that due to some change of procedures, the collection of fines, costs, and restitution has been significantly enhanced. Kelly related that prior to 2006, the average monthly revenue was between \$95-110,000 per month. In 2007, with the assistance of Judge George, the office implemented a contempt process to assist with the collection of fees, fines, costs, and restitution. The financial impact of the contempt procedures was significant. In the first year the office collected over \$1M more revenue than the previous year. At that time, the office routinely collected around \$220,000.00 per a month. Those financial impacts have continued to grow each year. In March of this year, the Clerk of Courts office collected \$419,206.13 for one month!

Kelly states that fines, costs and restitution is not just a bill but a penalty and legal obligation that will be enforced and must be paid. A quote by an anonymous person that hangs on Kelly's wall says "a fine is punishment for a crime only when it is collected". Kelly would like to recognize her staff for doing a superior job encouraging regular payments and thanks President Judge George and Judge Wagner for their continued support. The Board appreciates the effort of all involved in collection of these obligations!

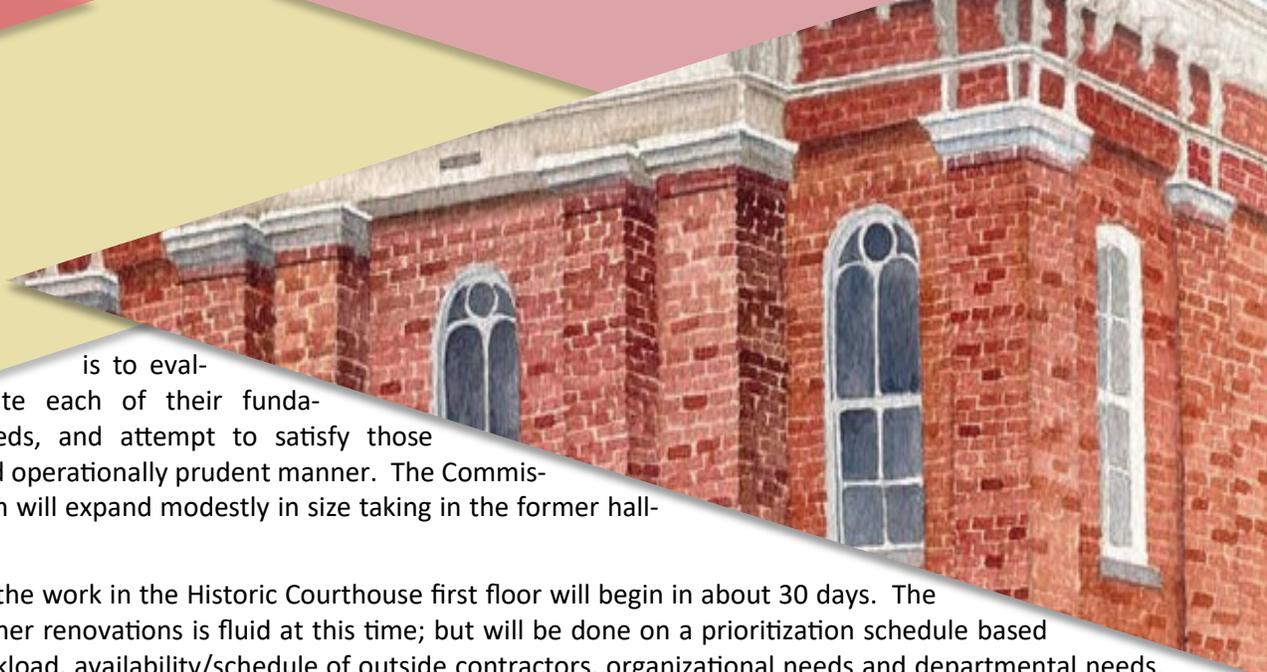
Historic Courthouse Office Upgrades/Movement

As many of you are aware the first floor office of the Historic Courthouse has been vacated by the District Attorney and Victim Witness when they recently relocated to the renovated 3rd floor offices. After discussing and evaluating the Courthouse physical needs and other operational considerations, the Board has committed to the following additional movement or renovations to improve operational efficiency, use of space and building improvement.

Downstairs the Sheriff's Office will expand out the back into what is now the Public Defenders space. This will provide the Sheriff with much needed Evidence Room expansion, an expanded Holding Area and more Office Space. The Public Defender will move to the former District Attorney's Reception area and further down the left side of the Historic Courthouse first floor hallway. Incidentally, the folks at the Public Defender's office are very excited about having windows. Both the Controller and Finance will be joining the Public Defender in that same hallway. The Controller definitely needs more office space, and it is desirable for the Controller and Finance to collaborate. The Solicitor's will eventually be taking over the Controller's former space on the 2nd floor and potentially some of the former Finance space. That will provide additional office space to keep solicitor staff together and also place them in closer proximity to the Commissioner's office. At this time, it is projected that renovations in the historic courthouse will include HVAC improvements, fresh paint and new ceiling tiles. There is no doubt there will be a fresher look; but with the historic fabric of the building and load bearing walls - structural change options are limited.

Moving to the First Floor we have been identifying the needs of our Row Offices. The plan





is to evaluate each of their fundamental needs, and attempt to satisfy those needs in a fiscally and operationally prudent manner. The Commissioners meeting room will expand modestly in size taking in the former hallway to CYS.

It is anticipated that the work in the Historic Courthouse first floor will begin in about 30 days. The time table for the other renovations is fluid at this time; but will be done on a prioritization schedule based on maintenance workload, availability/schedule of outside contractors, organizational needs and departmental needs. The Board is excited to be part of providing staff and Adams County residents with building improvements, enhanced work space and increased operational efficiencies!

Information Technology Update

The Information Technology Department recently migrated the Prison over to the VOIP telephone system. With this change now completed, all Adams County offices are officially on the new system. This multi-year project has provided all offices with a new, reliable, and feature rich telephone system. The IT Department will continue to promote the utilization of the new features to improve business processes and offer greater efficiencies. In the future, a follow up meeting will be scheduled to review the department experiences thus far, and offer an opportunity to receive feedback on how the new system is working.

In addition, the IT Department completed the first of many future sessions with the “Department Requested IT Projects Governance Workgroup.” The initial scoring matrix was introduced and reviewed by Finance, Building & Maintenance, Court Administration, and IT. Committee members are currently finalizing the matrix and the initial scoring of projects. The results will be posted on the County IT intranet page under project management following the next meeting. The IT Department will update the list on a monthly basis as new projects get added into the queue and scores assigned. A standardized form for all future department requested IT projects will be required for department directors to fill out prior to being reviewed by the workgroup. Brandon Brenize, IT Projects Coordinator, will be the official contact for all department requests related to IT projects. The goal of this list is to create transparency for all departments to understand which department requested projects the IT department is working on and the priority level assigned to each project.

Bring Your Child to Work Day

Thursday, April 25 is recognized by businesses as “*Bring Your Child to Work Day.*” We have been asked by several staff members if this was permissible? After some Board discussion, it was determined that although we generally support this initiative, not surprisingly, it may be acceptable in some departments - while unacceptable in others given the scope of work. We leave it to department director(s) to make that determination of appropriateness and suitability. If deemed appropriate by your supervisor, we welcome giving your child the opportunity to see how their parents or grandparents contribute to our Adams County community.



Helping Our Youth

The South Central PA Youth Advocacy Board collected suitcases in March for area youth. They not only collected suitcases, they also collected a total of 95 carrying items that included suitcases, backpacks, duffel bags and small totes. These items are for children and youth who do not have suitable bags to take their belongings with them when they are taken into custody or when they are changing foster homes. Hopefully this makes a normally traumatic situation a little less traumatic. The items are located in the Independent Living storage room at the Human Services Building. If you know of a youth who needs one of these items, please see an Independent Living staff member. Great job South Central YAB!

Coroner Recognized

Adams County Coroner Pat Felix is known for her compassion to bereaved families. Just one example is the memorial program she facilitates each year for families that have suffered loss. The Commissioners have had the privilege of delivering remarks for that program.

We recently received a letter in the Commissioner's Office from one of those family members. The letter speaks for itself and is symbolic of the impact that many county staff has on our community and residents. *"We would like you to know that Ms. Felix was more than professional in her dealings with us. She went out of her way to help us with our situation. She is not only professional; but a kind human being. In our opinion she has gone beyond fulfilling her office with great public service."* Thank you Pat for your compassion and service to Adams County!

Something Fishy



Tuesday evening Commissioner Jim Martin was invited to be the guest speaker for the April meeting of *Adams County Trout Unlimited*. Jim shared his personal experiences that related to the protection of water sheds and their streams. He also discussed related subjects of interest that are relevant to the function of the Adams County Conservation District where he serves on the Board. Following the presentation, there was a good interactive period of discussion. According to Jim, the discussion ranged from the Commissioners' position on Tom's Creek to the challenge farmers face to remain profitable while at the same time instituting best practice conservation measures.

The End

April showers have brought spring flowers - but how about enough for the wind? I know spring has arrived when I take the plow off my pickup truck which I did April 1. This past weekend, at 74 degrees, was like a smorgasbord of outdoor chores such as power washing the deck and porch, rolling some of the yard, mowing some of the yard, pulling last year's dead flowers out of the barrels, taking the plow off my Case Tractor and putting on the mower deck, prepping my zero turn mower and listening to Kathy tell me all the outdoor things she has in mind that I should not forget to do. My part and now almost full-time time job has been fighting a Robin on my porch - who is incessant on building a nest underneath my porch eve and making a mess of my porch and porch furniture daily. I can attest to the fact that an assortment of owls and fluttering silver reflective tape have not worked. Every day I take the makings of a partial or full nest down - and every day it is partially or fully built again at the same spot. Short of taking drastic action that may cause damage to my porch, I am looking for any sure fired bird deterrent suggestions?

There are a variety of Easter Services and Easter breakfasts and dinners all over Adams County this weekend. Some upcoming events are the Historic Gettysburg Adams County (HGAC) Architectural Warehouse Sale at the Daniel Lady Farm on Hanover Road this Saturday. From 10-2 browse and purchase an array of old doors, windows and other building materials. Also on April 20, Hollabaugh Brothers is having a Hop Along The Bunny Trail event. It includes an Easter egg hunt, hay rides and even real bunnies will be featured. Best wishes to you and your family for a blessed and joyous happy Easter Weekend!

No matter what you do get out there and experience all the historical, recreational, agricultural, natural and cultural opportunities that beautiful Adams County has to offer!