

Tionesta Builders Supply has a wealth of experience unique in this day and age



Submitted photo. Brothers: Kyle, Kristian and Keane Schmader talk about kitchen and bath design options.



Submitted photo. Cory Schmader speaks with his children Sophia and Harrison about veneer stone options. Sophia and Harrison are working at the store as summer help.

Submitted article
TIONESTA – Tionesta Builders Supply is worth the trip to Tionesta or shop in your back yard in Shippenville.

History

From small beginnings in 1958 to big aspirations in 2025. A lot has changed in the Home Improvement landscape over the last 67

years. In case you didn't know, TIONESTA BUILDERS SUPPLY is a family owned and operated home improvement center in business since 1958. They have two stores to serve the community better, including four generations of the Schmader family contributing since the beginning.

The main "Home Improvement Center" in

Tionesta first opened in 1958 by Dennis Schmader. In 1981 the Shippenville location opened. Garry and Larry Schmader (Dennis' sons) welcomed their sons into the business more than 30 years ago. And don't forget Garry and Larry have been doing this for over 60 years too! Today two grandchildren have been working part-time while in school, making

them the fourth generation to work for the company.

Keeping up with the latest trends is a full time job that we are more than happy to take on. We're full of great ideas! New product lines, updated displays and a large inventory are cornerstones to having what the customer needs when they walk through our

doors. We are constantly updating our displays to keep up with popular trends in the building and remodeling industry.

"Having two Home Improvement Centers is convenient for our customers. If we don't have something at one store we'll have it the next day from our other store. Our Tionesta store has 12 warehouses. That's the

advantage to having a large diverse inventory," Kristian Schmader said.

Open six days a week: Monday thru Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to noon and we are open 24/7 online!

The phone number for the Tionesta store is 814-755-3561 and the Shippenville store's number is 814-226-5040.

See TIONESTA BUILDERS, Page 6

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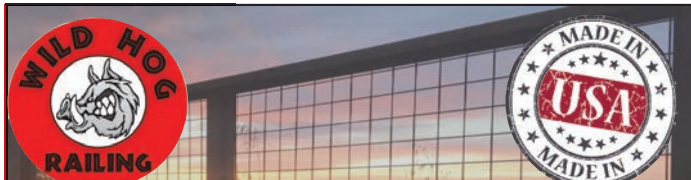
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EMAIL: tbs@penn.com

Shippenville
814-226-5040



Leading the Future of Community Health: A Q&A with UPMC Northwest’s New President

Submitted article
SENECA — UPMC Northwest welcomed Jonathan Bailey as its new president in June. Bailey served as vice president of Operations at UPMC Northwest since June of 2022. He graduated from Slippery Rock University with a bachelor’s degree in exercise science and received a master’s degree in business administration from Point Park University in Pittsburgh.

Former president Brian Durniok serves as the president of UPMC Hamot and market president, Northwest Pa. and Western New York.

Meet Jonathan Bailey, President, UPMC Northwest

Q: How long have you been at UPMC Northwest? Where were you prior?

A: I’ve been at UPMC Northwest for three years, starting as the vice president of Operations. Prior to this, I worked at UPMC Horizon in Farrell and Greenville and UPMC Jameson in New Castle in various leadership roles. I started my career at UPMC in 1999.

Q: Can you share a pivotal moment in your career that prepared you for this position?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic was a pivotal moment for all the hospitals in the country. I had the opportunity to lead a variety of departments as we responded to the pandemic at UPMC. It transformed the way healthcare was delivered and how we managed day-to-day activities.

During the pandemic, telemedicine became very important. Throughout UPMC, the use of telemedicine increased significantly, as much as 300 percent since the start of the pandemic. Today, UPMC Northwest continues to offer the largest tele-health program in the UPMC system with 40 out-patient specialty programs and 10 in-patient programs.

Personally, I learned the importance of resiliency and collaboration during that time. I hope to contin-

ue to guide my actions as a leader with the best practices we developed as part of our pandemic response.

Q: What does the job of the president entail at UPMC Northwest?

A: My role as president is to ensure that the hospital delivers high quality health care to our community, while also navigating the challenges and complexity of the industry.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: I have two high school age children who are very active in sports and theater, so my time is often spent supporting their activities. Besides that, I like to travel with my family and jog. I participate in a couple foot races a year, whether it’s 10 miles or a half marathon.

Q: What are some of your goals as president?

A: My goals are three pronged: access, safety, and experience. We want to ensure our patients can rely on us for high-quality close to home care with exceptional experience for our employees and patients.

Q: What makes UPMC Northwest unique?

A: UPMC Northwest is unique for many reasons. Most importantly, we are a community hospital dedicated to serving our county. We have the resources we need to provide care to our patients locally, with the support of a large integrated health system.

Being part of a 40-hospital academic medical center continues to help in our overall management of operations. We share resources, transfer patients, have access to a variety of experts, and secure the appropriate equipment and technologies to keep our staff and patients safe.

Q: What opportunities do people have at UPMC that they may not have in other places?

A: Our staff have the opportunity to work in a community setting with all the advanced technologies that UPMC provides. Our

staff can grow with the resources UPMC provides, whether it’s through career ladder advancement at their local hospitals or opportunities at other hospitals.

Q: What role does UPMC Northwest’s commitment to investing in the community play in enhancing the region’s well-being?

A: We understand and appreciate our role in providing community health in the region, and we will continue to be actively involved in community benefit activities. That includes community health fairs, screenings, educational events, and investing in healthcare employment opportunities whenever we can offer them.

UPMC Northwest’s annual economic impact to the region is more than \$245 million. In Fiscal Year 2023, UPMC Northwest provided \$11 million in benefits to the community, including more than \$7 million in free and reduced-cost care to the area’s most vulnerable citizens.

Q: What are a few of UPMC Northwest’s biggest achievements in 2024 and 2025 thus far?

A: I am proud of our recruitment, especially with our nurses. In the first three months of 2025, we have retained all our nurses with less than one year of experience.

In 2024, UPMC Northwest was awarded an Energy Star Certification, which is a program run by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that grants certification based on strict energy performance standards like electric, natural gas, and water usage along with hospital metrics.

To achieve certification, a building must maintain a minimum score of 75 over a year-long period. UPMC Northwest scored 83 for 2022. Over the past few years, UPMC Northwest has made major energy management changes, following an ambitious sustainability plan first developed in 2017. The plan

called for low cost retro commissioning and deep retrofit energy management efforts that were initiated in 2018 with Envinity, a sustainability-focused commissioning and engineering firm.

We were recently recognized by CMS with a five-star rating for cleanliness and for having zero cases of MRSA.

In October, 2024, we celebrated our 20th anniversary as the first UPMC hospital built from the ground up. UPMC Northwest officially opened its doors on Oct. 8, 2004. The 126-bed facility and 28-bed behavioral health center brought together the hospital’s two former locations in Franklin and Oil City.

The last 20 years at UPMC Northwest have been full of growth, and the hospital continues to provide excellent care and service to Venango, Clarion, Forrest, Mercer, and Crawford counties and beyond.

Q: Which new providers and staff were you excited to bring to UPMC Northwest?

A: We hired a handful of doctors. Most notably, we hired Francis Ogbolu, D.O., urology, and David Thomas, D.O., general surgery.

We were also excited to bring Kristen Maguire, chief nursing officer, UPMC Northwest, back to UPMC as both our chief nursing officer and vice president of Patient Care Services. She is an advocate for all our nurses, promoting a workplace where staff are engaged, where patients are getting the exceptional care they deserve, and where we are strengthening the trust the community has in UPMC Northwest.

Q: How many babies did UPMC Northwest deliver in 2024 and 2025 thus far?

A: In 2024, we delivered 505 babies, and in 2025 thus far, we delivered 270. Our delivery volumes have increased by 50 through the end of May, and we are so proud of the work they do to ensure the families in our community receive the



Jonathan Bailey

best care possible.

This year, they conducted an amniotic fluid embolism (AFE) simulation designed to mimic a real-life event and to train medical professionals to test and develop their skills and responses in a controlled environment. The multidisciplinary exercise took place over a two-day period and involved 60 staff members including obstetricians, obstetric nurses, and staff from anesthesia, emergency department, respiratory therapy, pharmacy, lab and blood bank.

Q: What initiatives will you be prioritizing in the upcoming months to enhance patient care and services?

A: Now, we are focused on the conversion of our electronic medical record to Epic, providing a single EMR for both the hospital and physician practices. We are hopeful that this

project, named UPMC Bridges, will enhance the patient experience, improve collaboration with the offices and the hospital, and provide better service to our patients.

Q: What are you looking forward to for the rest of the year?

A: For the remainder of the year, I’m looking forward to continuing to work with the incredible team and getting to know the staff and our community leaders better.

Q: How do you envision the future of UPMC Northwest in the next five years?

A: At UPMC Northwest, we will continue to focus on workforce development and staff recruitment. We will innovate and strive for clinical excellence. We will continue to invest in technology and infrastructure to ensure we are providing our community with top-notch care.■

Route 66 Sporting Goods has been serving area for over three decades

Submitted article
PAINT TWP. — Route 66 Sporting Goods is looking to celebrate their 21st year in business under the ownership of Linda and Lee Dechant. Route 66 Sporting Goods is located on State Route Route 66, 1.5 miles north of U.S. Route 322 in Shippensburg.

Route 66 Sporting Goods employs a knowledgeable staff including, Lori Gadley, Mike Beveridge, Mindy Maurer, Joe Winger, Pam Bauer, and Wayne Gadley. They pride themselves on being able to answer any question about their vast selection of merchandise for the great outdoors. They will work one on one with the customer to give them the ultimate personal experience.

Route 66 Sporting Goods has something to meet the needs of all hunters, fishermen, reloaders, campers, archers, and trappers. They carry many high quality brands and are the largest retail trapping supplier in Western PA.

New for 2025 are fur buying events. Keith Winkler from Sterling Fur will come in a few times and year and pay cash for furs. Check out the Facebook page for updates.

Route 66 will also continue to host buck scoring events throughout the year.

If there is something they don’t have in stock, Route 66 will order it in for the customer. They also offer layaway and gift certificates.

They are always expanding and adding to

their large inventory to better suit the customer.

Their large archery section is run by Lori Gadley, daughter of Lee and Linda Dechant, and Mike Beveridge. Route 66 is the areas Mathews Archery Dealer. Besides Mathews, Route 66 also carries Hoyt, Bowtech, Tenpoint, Excalibur, and Bear with all the accessories to complement the bows.

Route 66 carries recurve accessories as well as carrying a wide selection of recurve and long bows.

The archery section continues to include many accessories including 3D targets, arrows, sights, range-finding sights and much more.

New for 2025 Route 66 is now stocking Mathews Branded Ultra View sights!

Route 66 Sporting Goods carries a vast selection of pistols, rifles, and shotguns from the following manufacturers: Browning, Weatherby, Ruger, Bergara, Christensen, Remington, Winchester, Walther, Taurus, Savage, Heritage, Sig Sauer, Kimber and Beretta. They also carry black powder equipment. They have a fine selection of Inline and Flintlock rifles as well as black powder pistols.

Flintlock rifles by Pedersoli can be found in stock year round.

Route 66 Sporting Goods is now stocking Bergara Carbon Fiber Rifles as well as Christensen.

There are over/under shotguns in stock year-

round by companies such as: Franchi, CZ, Stoeger, Browning, and Mossberg. There are also Side by side shotguns in stock too!

Route 66 Sporting Goods stocks a vast selection of scopes by Leupold, Bushnell, Hawke, and Vortex. They also have an extensive selection of bases and rings by Weaver, Leupold, Talley and Browning.

New for 2025 are infrared and thermal scopes and thermal hand-holds.

Route 66 Sporting Goods carries an extensive selection of equipment for any type of fishing including fly fishing, fly tying, and ice fishing.

Route 66 has expanded the Bass fishing selection! Be sure to stop and check out baits from Gary Yamamoto, Z-Man, Strike King, Bass Assassin, Rapala, Fish Bio, and many more!

The camping section is always well stocked with tents, Palmer (MADE IN USA) cast iron pie irons, flashlights, Coleman fuel & propane, and so much more.

The clothing section at the store is stocked with clothing by Under Armour, Gamehide, Badlands, DSG and Rocky. Route 66 also has boots and shoes from LaCrosse, Rocky, DSG, and Muck boots.

New for the summer Route 66 has the all new Muckster Clog and ankle boots! They are great for slipping on and heading out into the yard!

Route 66 also now

stocks snake gaitors and snake boots.

You are also able to find Badlands packs, and accessories at Route 66.

Route 66 is also a Kenetrek Boot dealer for Those that Take the Trail Less Traveled.

All Hunting and Fishing License can be purchased at Route 66 Sporting Goods. Allegheny National Forest ATV/OHM Trail permits can also be purchased at the store (only season passes).

Did you know Route 66 has a canning section!? Be sure to stop in and get your lids, bands, and canners made by Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry! Route 66 also has a large selection of LEM grinders and accessories, including the juicer attachment and screens! Along with the grinders Route 66 has the MaxVac sealers and New for 2025 the vacuum chambers as well as the bags for all models!

The year 2024 proved to be another interesting year and we are thankful for all of our customers continued support. We at Route 66 are always placing orders and trying to get product in during these crazy times.

Mark those calendars! The Open house is Christmas in July this year! July 25, 26, and 27 stop in for storewide sales!

The store is open seven days a week. Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. They can also be found on Facebook and Instagram.

Clarion’s best kept secret—The Liberty House Restaurant

By David A. Hollis
CLARION NEWS Staff Writer

CLARION
Sometimes the best things about a town are hidden in plain sight. The Liberty House Restaurant is just such a place.

“I think that’s our biggest challenge is that people don’t realize we’re open to the public,” said manager Roberta Simpson, “You don’t need to be a member to come in here.”

Located at 603 Liberty St in Clarion inside the VFW building, The Liberty House Restaurant if a full-service establishment offering customers a wide range of appetizer and meal options, with alcohol available to card-carrying members. Simpson added,

“The only time you would have to show a card is if you wanted an alcoholic drink during your dinner. You or somebody in your party has to be a member.”

The restaurant offers a classic menu from breakfast to burgers, broasted chicken, wings, fish, fries, salads and baskets, an assortment of

beverage options and much more. Simpson remarked,

“We have daily specials, we have a soup, salad and dessert bar on Fridays. And all of our soups are homemade.”

Daily specials include the “Poor Man’s Breakfast,” which is one egg, two strips of bacon or sausage and toast for only \$3.95, or the Liberty House Burger with fries for \$12.95.

“We also do catering and events like birthday parties, weddings, anything like that.”

Another noteworthy event, Simpson added, is their Veterans picnic on August 16 at Clarion County Park.

“That’s a busy time for us and it’s always a great turnout.”

Hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Fridays at 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Sundays 8 a.m. to noon. Closed Mondays.

Gift certificates are also available. Follow The Liberty House Restaurant on Facebook for more information and specials.■

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Independence Health system offers expert care, here

Submitted article
MONROE TWP. — As the third largest health system in the region, Independence Health System remains committed to serving its communities as it enhances access to high-quality healthcare across Western Pennsylvania. With clinical expertise in cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, cancer care, orthopedics, women's care, stroke care and more, the system continues to advance the boundaries of medicine in the region.

Over the past year, Independence Health System expanded access to specialty services in the Clarion area, including bariatric weight loss consultations, plastic and reconstructive surgery, pulmonary rehabilitation, Mohs micrographic surgery, and enhanced access to vascular, electrophysiology and general surgery specialists.

Technological advancements

Earlier this year, Clarion Hospital introduced new MRI technology, improving patient comfort and diagnostic accuracy. Independence Health System also expanded access to its lung cancer screening program in Butler and Clarion through the Advanced Lung Center, and Butler Memorial installed the Johnson & Johnson MedTech's MONARCH platform - a robotic bronchoscopy system that enhances precision in obtaining tissue samples for the biopsy of lung nodules.

Cardiovascular excellence

Clarion Hospital recently celebrated 20 years of continuous echocardiography accreditation from the International Accreditation Commission (IAC); a milestone achieved by only 77 facilities nationwide. The system performs more than 32,000 echocardiograms annually across its five hospitals - Butler Memorial, Clarion, Frick, Latrobe and Westmoreland - all of which are IAC-accredited.

Expanded services at Trinity Point

The Health and Wellness

Center at Trinity Point continues to grow, offering patients access to high-quality care in one convenient location. Services include:

- ✓ Cardiology
- ✓ Cardiothoracic surgical consultations
- ✓ Electrophysiology
- ✓ Vascular surgical consultations
- ✓ Cardiac & Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- ✓ Primary care
- ✓ Pulmonology
- ✓ Food Institute and Lifestyle Coaching
- ✓ Walk-in laboratory, X-ray and EKG Services
- ✓ Women's care and women's imaging.

The Family Medicine Residency Clinic at Trinity Point welcomes four new residents in July and offers walk-in services Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., including wellness checks, flu shots, care for minor injuries, and more.

The Women's Imaging Center provides walk-in 3D Mammography services every Wednesday from noon to 4 p.m. Walk-in laboratory services, X-ray, and EKG services are available weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lifestyle Coaching seminars are available in person, virtually and on demand - free to the community. Healthcare professionals lead these evidence-based courses. For more information, visit www.independence.health/services/lifestyle-coaching/.

Cancer care in Clarion In September, the Clarion Hospital Cancer Center hosted its 21st annual Light Up Night at the Clarion Eagle's Pavilion, honoring patients, caregivers and community supporters. Since 2003, the center has provided outpatient medical oncology services, including chemotherapy and state-of-the-art radiation therapy. It is accredited by the American College for Radiation Oncology through its APEX program.

In June 2025, the Cancer Center introduced a new treatment option to help patients experiencing dis-

comfort from osteoarthritis: low-dose radiation therapy. This non-invasive treatment option is administered twice a week over a three-week period and is designed to reduce inflammation and improve joint function.

Patients may be eligible if they:

- Are over the age of 50
- Have experienced osteoarthritis symptoms for more than three months
- Have not undergone joint replacement for the affected joint
- Continue to experience symptoms despite conservative management with NSAIDs and/or physical therapy

To learn more or determine eligibility, contact the Clarion Hospital Cancer Center at 814-226-1970 or speak with a healthcare provider.

Breakthrough Alzheimer's care

In August of 2024, Independence Health System became the first in the region to offer advanced diagnostic and treatment options for Alzheimer's disease. These services are available at the Butler and Westmoreland area campuses, providing critical support to patients and families facing this growing health concern.

Leadership transitions

In 2025, the system announced several leadership transitions. Karen Allen, president of Butler Memorial and Clarion Hospitals, retired in June. Matthew Schnur, a Butler native with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Duquesne University has been named her successor.

Michael Sekhon was promoted to Vice President of Ancillary Services, overseeing pharmacy, laboratory, and radiology service lines for the system. Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Carol Fox retired in June. Dr. Michael Fiorina, who had been serving as Associate CMO for Butler Memorial and Clarion Hospitals, has been named her successor.



Submitted photo.

Earlier this year the Independence Health System Clarion Hospital unveiled its state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology and newly renovated suite during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. In the above photo, from left, are: Markelle Matthews, MRI technologist (Clarion Hospital); Jeff Mechling, director of imaging services (Clarion and Butler Memorial Hospital); Karen Allen, president (Clarion and Butler Memorial Hospital); Teri Sherry, Radiology and Imaging Services Manager (Clarion Hospital) Dr. Michael Fiorina, CMO (Clarion and Butler Memorial Hospital); Cindy Yarger, MRI technologist (Clarion Hospital); Leslie Walters, CNO (Clarion and Butler Memorial Hospital); Scott Koscho, vice president, support services (IHS); Matt Schnur, vice president of ancillary services (Clarion and Butler Memorial Hospital)

Anthony Cancro was named Chief Development Officer, overseeing the four hospital foundations, and Kelley Skoloda was appointed Chief Marketing and Communications Officer for the system.

Clarion Hospital Foundation

The Clarion Hospital Foundation is dedicated to supporting and enhancing quality health care, education, and overall community wellness through various projects and services. The generosity of donors and supporters has enabled the Foundation to assist Clarion Hospital in its mission over many years. Contributions, sponsorships, and donations have funded numerous initiatives. Highlights of 2025 include:

- ◆ Handbags for

Health designer purse bingo event raised more than \$20,000 to support the Clarion Hospital Ambulance Fund. Clarion Hospital EMS responds to approximately 7,300 requests annually, covering 750 square miles. Due to the aging fleet, replacing a 2005 ambulance was identified as a high priority. In April, the Foundation transferred over \$90,000 to the hospital to aid in the purchase of a new ambulance and EMS equipment. The funding was made possible through the success of the Handbags for Health events and the generous support of community members and organizations.

◆ In partnership with the Clarion Rotary, the Foundation held their biannual Multiphasic Blood Screening in early May, rais-

ing more than \$23,000. Over 250 community members and staff participated in the screening which offered 60 + blood panel tests.

◆ The 2024 Clarion Hospital Foundation Golf Tournament raised over \$27,000 to support hospital initiatives that serve the community. The 2025 tournament, titled "Driving For Community Health," is scheduled for July 25 at Clarion Oaks Golf Club. Team registrations and sponsorships are currently being accepted.

◆ Healthcare and nursing scholarships provided through the Foundation assisted eleven area high school students and one college student pursuing a career in the medical field.

See IHS, Page 7

At Independence Health System, we're neighbors caring for neighbors—

bringing expert care to your community so your family can access specialized health services, right here at home.

Comprehensive services include:

- Walk-in 3D mammograms every Wednesday
- Heart, lung and vascular services, with cardiac rehab
- Primary care and walk-in visits
- Walk-in lab, X-ray, and EKG at Trinity Point
- Advanced imaging and MRI
- Dermatology and Mohs skin cancer surgery
- Concussion care
- Comprehensive cancer treatment
- Multi-million-dollar renovation of Clarion Hospital's Emergency Department
- Orthopedics, OB/GYN, urology and pulmonary medicine
- Robotic bronchoscopy for lung cancer diagnosis, available in Butler

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Top Tier Federal Credit Union celebrates 85 years

Submitted article

MONROE TWP. — Earlier this year, Top Tier Federal Credit Union celebrated its 85th anniversary. The Credit Union's story began on February 6, 1940, when nine employees of the Owens-Illinois Glass Plant in Clarion signed the organization certificate of Clarion Onized Federal Credit Union. From this small group, a credit union to serve the needs of the Owens-Illinois employees was formed. Today, the Credit Union has over 16,500 members across 13 Northwestern Pennsylvania Counties.

Over the years, the Credit Union has witnessed remarkable growth in terms of asset size, membership eligibility and service offerings. The original office of the Credit Union was located in the lower level of the Owens-Illinois Glass Plant. A branch was eventually built on Wood Street, just down the street from the Owens-Illinois plant. In the Summer of 2009, the Board of Directors decided that it was time to expand the Credit Union's physical presence once again as it had outgrown the Wood Street office. This led to the construction and opening of the modern-day Clarion location at 144 Holiday Inn Road. The Credit Union opened the Brookville Branch in May of 2015 followed by the Cranberry Branch in October of 2020.

In early 2021, the Credit Union expanded its charter from four counties to 13 counties in Northwestern PA and acquired land for future branch locations in Butler and Hermitage.

On August 1, 2022, Clarion Federal Credit Union officially changed its name to Top Tier Federal Credit Union. The name change reflects the Credit

Union's strategic goal to modernize, expand and offer top tier service to its credit union members.

In November of 2023, the Butler Branch of Top Tier Federal Credit Union opened.

In August of 2024, the former Klingensmith's Healthcare Building in Clarion was purchased for future expansion. According to CEO, Mark A. Lauer, "The expansion is not just about needing more space. It's a testament to Top Tier's commitment to exceeding member expectations and cementing its status as a leading financial institution in the region."

Late Summer 2025 will mark the opening of a fifth branch in Hermitage, PA.

Throughout its eighty-five years, one thing that has never changed is the Credit Union's mission to take care of its members. "Because credit unions work for their members, not stockholders, the objective is to take care of and do what is best for the membership which translates into lower fees, lower loan rates and higher returns on saving products," Lauer stated. He continued, "The focus of credit unions is on their members' financial well-being. That member-centric approach is what credit union members appreciate and benefit from."

The organization is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors: Deborah Boyles, Board President, Nancy Kadunce, Vice-President, Sherry Kahle, Board Secretary, Gary Wolbert, Treasurer, Todd MacBeth, Michael Meals, Betsy Stewart, Linda Pappas and David Fleming. The executive officers of the organization are Mark A. Lauer, CEO, Chris Duncan, Executive Vice President and

Chief Lending Officer and Lynne Griffith-Gagnon, Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer.

Top Tier is committed to understanding and addressing the unique financial needs of members and strives to create a personalized and welcoming environment. Top Tier Federal Credit Union is a full-service credit union providing financial services to both consumers and commercial entities with a variety of products. The Credit Union offers savings and checking accounts, term certificates, IRAs, Christmas Clubs, Vacation Clubs and youth accounts. The lending department specializes in auto, home equity, recreational, equipment, personal and mortgage loans. The mortgage team has over 30 years of combined experience. When financing a mortgage at the Credit Union, the mortgage loan originators will help you navigate the entire process. Top Tier also offers business accounts and loans.

"We look at the whole picture when working with members for loans. We have products to help members build and repair their credit," Lauer stated.

Members of the Credit Union enjoy a wide variety of complimentary services including modern digital amenities for keeping up with today's fast-paced world like mobile and online banking. While members can utilize digital services, the member service representatives will always take the time to assist them with their financial needs.

In addition to being a resource for its members, the Credit Union is also an active partner in the local communities that they



Pictured above is the Top Tier Credit Union Branch located on Holiday Inn Road in Monroe Township.

serve. "We have worked with a number of local organizations and schools to develop a financial literacy program for young adults called Credit 101," stated Roz Gregg, Marketing Manager. "Our staff will present Credit 101 and speak to students, educating them about finances. It was a need that we recognized for area youth, and we have enjoyed working with hundreds of local young adults." The Board of Directors also awards five \$1,000 scholarships to selected high school, college and technical school students. The 'Project Backpack' campaign which helps local underprivileged youth is a consistent source of pride for the

Credit Union. The Project Backpack program will celebrate its 18th year this month.

Top Tier has been recognized by Callahan and Associates as #1 in PA for Return to the Member in its asset class. It has also been named a 10x Credit Union, a designation that is awarded to credit unions in the top 1-percent in the nation who deliver the most balanced and consistent results and are positioned for continued growth and service to members.

A unique benefit that Top Tier is proud to offer to its members is the Special Bonus Dividend program.

Over the past nine years, the Credit Union

has paid \$2.95 million dollars to members through this program.

The Special Bonus Dividend given to members either increases the member's return on their savings or reduces their cost of borrowing.

From an original nucleus of nine members; from \$100 in assets; from the corner of someone's desk or lathe, over the course of eighty-five years, what began as an organization for a singular employee group has evolved into a community mainstay. Top Tier is grateful for their members, the communities they call home and the dedication and hard work of their employees and Board of Directors.■

Racing returns to Knox Raceway

By Kenn Staub

For the CLARION NEWS

ELK TWP.

Racing returned to the Knox Raceway on Sunday, May 25 with a program featuring the FAST Winged 410 Sprint Car Series and RUSH Sprint Car Series (non-wing), as well as mini stocks and ATV/UTV races.

That event was followed by a demolition derby and 100-lap enduro a month later (June 21).

Prior to the show on Memorial Day weekend, the three-quarter-mile clay oval last hosted a full program of racing during June 2023, abruptly closing that July.

Said Brian Steinman, who bought the former Sportsman's Speedway in fall 2021 with wife Brianana, "We had some races up to the concerts [the venue hosted two country concerts on July 14-15, 2023] and we weren't getting people in. You can only lose

[money] for so long on that type of deal. I just got frustrated after the concerts and said, 'Enough is enough.'"

When the Steinmans bought the track, it had sat unused since 2015. Because of this, they made significant improvements so racing could resume in 2022, including installing new fencing and lighting, replacing the guardrails along the front stretch with Jersey barriers, and updating access to the pit area.

In spring 2023 the racing surface was improved, banking added to the turns and certain areas of the oval widened.

"After sitting a couple years [the raceway], I wanted to see something done with it," reported Steinman. "I have a friend that helped me down there, Kevin Thomas [the track's assistant manager], he was kind of on me the last couple of years to at least give it a go again on a small

scale and keep it simple.

"Since I wanted to see it used again, we came to the consensus of doing three nights of racing and a demolition derby."

Because the grounds and facilities were maintained following the track's most recent closure, it did not fall into disrepair, making the decision to start racing again perhaps easier.

Two other sprint car shows are scheduled this season – Sunday, July 13 and Sunday, Sept. 14.

Hot laps are scheduled for 5 p.m., with opening ceremonies following at 6 p.m. Steinman believes the entire racing program, which will also include mini-stocks competing in SCRA-sanctioned events, should be completed within three hours.

Sprint cars weigh approximately 1,400 pounds and have powerplants capable of generating anywhere from 350 horsepower (the RUSH

series) to 900 horsepower (the FAST series). With cars that light and engines that large, speeds of over 100 miles-per-hour can be easily reached depending upon track conditions and configuration.

"We picked sprint cars for all three of our race nights [May, July, and September] because that's big. I feel like it draws the most people," observed Steinman. "I'm kind of partial toward the 410s, that's what I ran [before suffering an injury at Lernerville Speedway in 2012]. When you hear those babies come to life, you can usually see eyes open up pretty wide."

"I know most of the guys [sprint car drivers], they helped me out when I got hurt. It's a big family, there's a lot of local guys and we'll get a lot of good cars from outside the area."

Mini stocks, similar in appearance to small family sedans, are 2,200-pound cars outfitted with four-cylinder engines matching the vehicle brand.

Relayed Steinman, "They're kind of really growing nationally [mini stocks]. They have a big following locally, within a couple hour radius."

General admission is \$15 for each of the upcoming events, with pit passes available for \$30. Admission for children 13-and-under is \$10. Those 3-and-under are free.

Concessions are available on-site.

"We have the best bang for the buck when you come to the track. You'll see competitive action," said Steinman. "We're going to have a three-hour show – if you have to be at work on Monday morning, you can make work on time

and not be up till the middle of the night. We'll have good local participation [drivers]."

"We try to involve the whole family. It's family-oriented all the way through. We try to make it a nice experience all the way around."

Though the track will be hosting events this summer, it's still for sale, the turn-key operation listed at \$450,000.

Noted Steinman, "If somebody is interested in the raceway they can contact me. If somebody wants to rent the track or do something themselves, they want to explore other options, like a concert or a race, they're more than welcome."

For additional information about the raceway and upcoming events, see its Facebook page (Knox Raceway).■

Clarion Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star

By David A. Hollis

CLARION NEWS Staff Writer

CLARION Founded in 1850 by Robert Morris, the Order of the Eastern Star (OES) is an appendant body of Freemasonry open to both men and women.

Morris, a poet and devout Freemason himself, wanted to open up the teachings of Freemasonry to everyone without giving away its cherished rites and practices. So, along with his wife, Morris developed a system that utilizes the stories of five female figures found in the Old and New Testament, to serve as moral compasses in life, with each heroine representing a specific virtue.

The stated mission of the OES is "to make a positive difference in the world with charitable works, lasting friendships, and loving kindness to all mankind." The organization accomplishes this through various charitable events and fundraising activities, with the Clarion Chapter raising nearly \$900,000.

The Clarion Chapter No. 267 of the Pennsylvania OES, which has celebrated 106 years since its charter on May 14 1919, operates from Clarion Lodge No.277 located at 515 Main Street. Current appointed officers are Heather Seigworth, Worthy Matron; Chuck Young, Worthy Patron; Janet Stewart, Associate Matron; Joan Kriebel, Secretary; Betty Sigworth, Treasurer.

Membership in the OES is open to any man or woman of good moral character,

who profess belief in a Supreme Being, and holds some type of Masonic affiliation. Men must be Master Masons in good standing, while women need be related to a Freemason by either birth, marriage, or adoption.

For more information about the Pennsylvania Order of the Eastern Star visit its website at paoes.org, or for contact information regarding the Clarion Chapter of the OES, email the Pennsylvania Grand Secretary at gs@paoes.org.■



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CRBC is the OG of Clarion microbreweries

By Kenn Staub
For the **CLARION NEWS**

Clarion's original microbrewery, Clarion River Brewing Company (CRBC), is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2025. Not only was CRBC the first microbrewery in the immediate Clarion-area, but it remains the only one to feature a full-service restaurant.

Bryan Smith, co-owner of CRBC with Jeremy Borkowski, is excited about both the food and beer at the establishment on 600 Main Street, giving credit to chef Brian Gonzalez and brewmaster Devin Smith, respectively.

Talking about Gonzalez, who has been CRBC's chef for approximately three years, Smith said, "He's got a very diverse history. He helped us revitalize our new menu, which came out in the spring of 2025. He's been working with local providers, we're trying to incorporate a lot more local options as far as what we have on the menu and in the features."

"He's creative, he puts out the types of food we know have sold well for years, but he puts his own spin on everything. He's keeping things fresh, trying new things that could potentially become staples. He's received great feedback, 'Wow, your food has never been this good, this consistent.' He produces quality food time-in and time-out."

Smith continued, providing a thumbnail sketch of the current menu, "We still definitely have a fairly extensive menu. We've scaled back on our features, [we have] anywhere from

three-to-four features on a weekly basis. We're still doing either a burger or sandwich of the week. There's always a local beef option and one or two things that we have seasonally."

CRBC offers a variety of beers, including flagships such as Golden Eagle Pilsner – a light, easy drinking lager – and 1841 Amber Lager – a roasty, multi-brown – as well as more seasonal beers.

Making sure the brewery's 12 taps are supplied with high quality beer is brewmaster Devin Smith, who earned a certificate in brewing and fermentation science from Penn College of Technology (PCT) during May 2024.

As to what she learned at PCT, Devin relayed, "Everything and anything that is pertinent to brewing – raw materials, the microbiology of yeast, the biomechanics of the brewing process, the mechanics of the brewing equipment – pretty much everything that is brewing or brewery adjacent."

"People would be surprised at the depth of brewing, the math and science. It's a very precise art, there's a lot of math and science that goes into brewing a beer."

Though there were established recipes for the brewery's flagships, Devin has incorporated her own ideas into their brewing process, as well as created new offerings.

"I'll be thinking about wanting to incorporate an ingredient or I think about what I would want to drink, how I would want a flavor profile to be" relayed Devin on the creative aspects of brewing. "From there, I back-track and build my

recipes off of, 'What do I want?'"

"I truly feel that every time I release a new beer, I'm releasing a new piece of art."

As brewmaster, Devin believes making a high quality product is paramount.

"It's a tough time in our industry right now, consumers are getting to a point where they're not necessarily tolerating a lesser quality product," she observed. "The higher the quality the product and the more consistently good it is, the more likely your customers are going to continue coming back."

Two of Devin's beers recently garnered recognition, winning medals at the Denver International Beer Competition – a silver in the British Brown Ale category for her Leatherwood beer and a bronze in the Belgian Tripel category for a brew she calls Liquid Long Johns.

On the significance of winning those awards, she said, "It means I am on the right path, I'm doing what I should be doing, especially so early on in my tenure as head brewer. You don't normally hear of brewers within their first year or two winning international awards and having that recognition in the industry. To me, it's definitely a sign that I'm doing okay."

In early June Devin was voted president for the Pittsburgh district of the Master Brewers Association of the Americas, an organization focused on making knowledge and education pertaining to continued quality improvement more accessible to brewers.

In addition to its loca-



Pictured above is CRBC Brewmaster Devin Smith.

CLARION NEWS photo by Kenn Staub.

tion on Main Street, CRBC has, for a third consecutive year, opened a seasonal spot in Cook Forest at the edge of MacBeth's Cabins's parking lot.

"Things are rolling up there," reported Bryan. "I've made small improvements every year. Last year I put on a deck, this year I put a roof over the deck."

"This year the weather's been terrible, so it's been a little bit of a rough start. We're eventually going to have summer, I hope."

The fact that CRBC has been around for 10 years is not something the Smiths take lightly.

"Being on Main Street in downtown Clarion and having been here so long, we've become ingrained in the community," contributed Devin. "It's important that we're interactive and collaborative with the community, just making sure that we're keeping our roots."

Added Bryan, "I think we've become a cornerstone of the community. We think we're a great option for both high qual-

ity food, high quality beverages, and a great atmosphere you can just relax and enjoy yourself in."

CRBC is open Monday through Thursday 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.; and Sunday 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

For more information on CRBC, including a menu and beer list, see its Facebook page (Clarion River Brewing Company), Instagram (@clarionriverbrew), or website (<https://www.clarionriverbrew.com/>). ■



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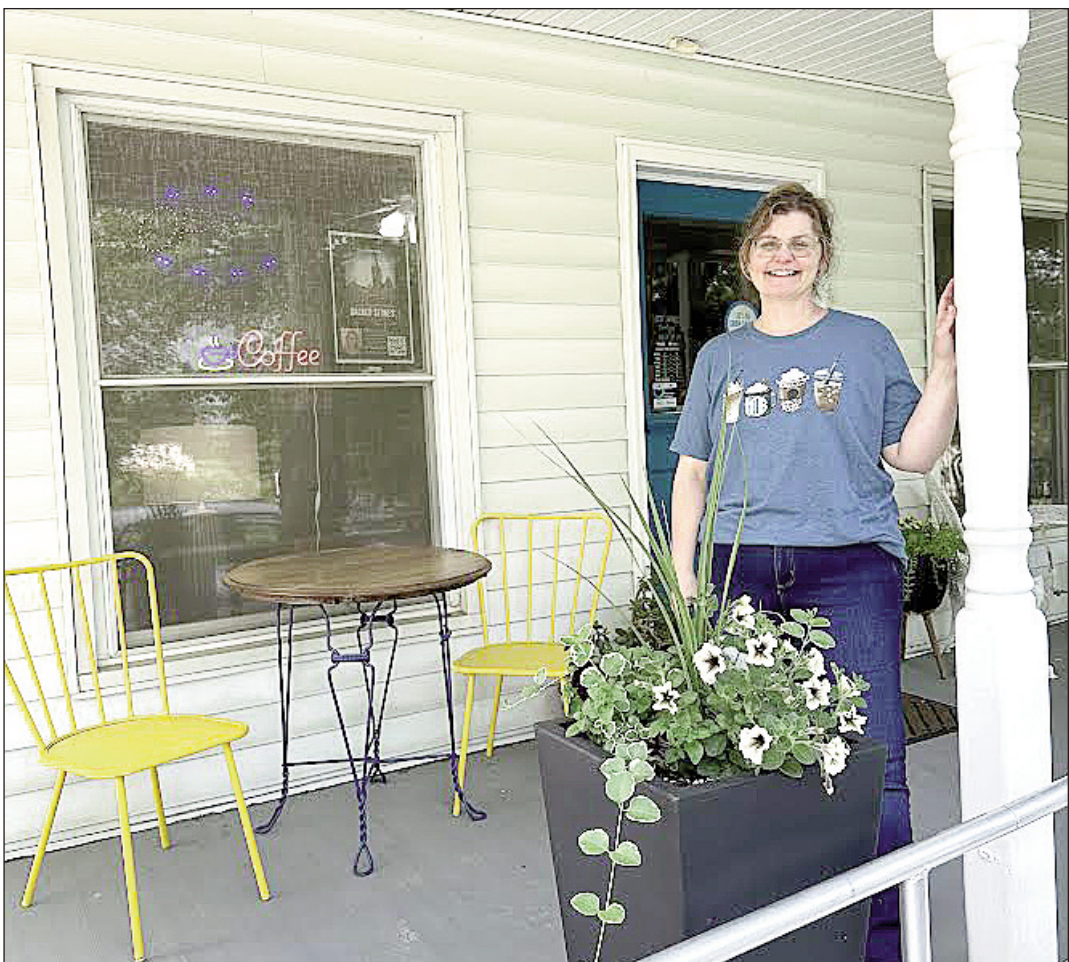
The Drawing Room—bringing community together one cup at a time

By David A. Hollis
CLARION NEWS Staff Writer

KNOX
When Angela Apel found herself dreaming about opening a coffee shop, it was her husband who gave her the nudge she needed to turn the vision into reality.
“He said, ‘You keep talking about it and don’t do anything,’ so that was my kick in the butt to do something about it.” She joked.
Located at 654 Popetown Road in Knox, walking into The Drawing Room evokes a feeling more akin to entering a welcoming home rather than a café, but, as Apel explained, that was exactly her intention for the “Community Coffeehouse.”
“I always said to my husband, ‘We need a place where people can come and sit and have a cup of coffee and a conversation, a place where homeschoolers can sell their books, where people can meet outside of their church to hold Bible studies or teach classes. The coffee and sandwiches are just the starting point—the real vision is to bring people together, to spend time and learn from one another.’”
Opened in August of 2024, the spacious shop was once a historic home previously owned by a local teacher.
“We’ve always loved old homes,” Apel said, “There

was a historic home in Emlenton we looked at first, and my husband has restored several houses in Fredericksburg, Virginia, but when we found this place, I knew what I was looking for, it was perfect—the kitchen was still from the 1940s or ‘50s and hadn’t even been redone.”
Aside from the large lounge area and cozy ambiance, the home has two rooms available to rent on the upstairs floor for meetings or small gatherings, which again, fits perfectly with Apel’s vision.
“The name ‘The Drawing Room’ has a few meanings,” Apel explained. “It’s about drawing people together. It’s also the traditional name for the living room—a place where people gathered to play games, talk, and spend time with each other, and it means drawing people towards Christ so it can mean a lot of different things.”
The Drawing Room offers a full menu of espresso drinks, Americanos, lattes, drip and pour-over coffee, hot teas, smoothies, and a variety of breakfast and lunch options like a chicken salad croissant, grilled Reuben, or the “trainwreck” grilled cheese,” with maple whisky bacon, caramelized onions and gouda cheese.
Additionally, all pastries are made fresh in-house,

including fan favorites like cinnamon rolls, banana muffins, and scones. Even the sourdough is made from scratch. Apel added,
“Our drink specials each month center on a different family read-aloud which we encourage families to read and discuss together. June was the book “Strawberry Girl” by Lois Lenski and featured drinks that showcased strawberry and tropical flavors like coconut and guava.”
Despite her success in launching a coffeehouse, Apel admits she didn’t come from a food service background. “I’m a teacher,” she said. “Last year I got my Master’s degree in Classical Education, which is very different from modern education, so I wanted to share that with the community. It has nothing to do with coffee.” she joked.
So to help bridge that gap, Apel partnered with Commonplace Coffee to train both herself and her staff.
Looking ahead, Apel hopes the café continues to grow as a creative and collaborative space.
“I’m always looking for people who want to host classes, book clubs, poetry nights, or open mic nights,” she said. “We already have a writers’ group that meets on Saturdays. I’d love to see musicians playing on the porch someday,” Apel said, adding,



CLARION NEWS photo by David A. Hollis.
Angela Apel, owner of The Drawing Room Community Coffeehouse, says her recently opened café is much more than a cup of coffee or a sandwich, but a place where people can truly come together to learn, inspire or simply connect with each other.

“Almost ten years ago my son was in an accident and lost his arm, and the community did so much for our family, so this is just a small way

of giving back.”
Summer hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Tuesday and

Thursday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sundays. Follow The Drawing Room Community Coffeehouse on Facebook.■

Tionesta Builders

Staff
Today, eight members of the Schmader family (Garry, Larry, Kyle, Keane, Cory, Kristian, Sophia and Harrison) work at the two stores and are joined by two additional full-time employees.
“Even though we are all related, long standing (good) employees are the cornerstone of knowledge and experience which makes a big difference when it comes to being well versed in different products. Having all the boys grow up in this business makes a huge difference when it comes to selling. We strive to do our very best with customer service,” Kristian said. “The friendly and knowledgeable atmosphere we provide is one of our strong suits. Our employees are not only well versed in the products we sell but, more often than not, have installed them. The boys have an easier time than most visualizing and relaying ideas for remodeling projects. That’s from lots of experience and probably why our company is somewhat unique in this day and age.”

What’s Going On Today – Shop Local and Save!
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TIONESTA BUILDERS SUPPLY has found many ways around product shortages and long lead times. We have a great deal of options when it comes to finding alternative goods to fill our customers’ needs. We encourage customers to plan early for future projects. That’s meant customers were ready to get a jump on good weather projects this spring. And now we’re telling customers to plan for their fall projects now, even though it’s hard to think of fall coming any time soon.
Market Area
“We service a large area, typically within a 60 mile radius of our locations in Tionesta and Shippenville. But, we always like to say all our trucks have wheels and we’ll go basically anywhere, because we do!” Said Kristian who is the son of Garry
Online Presence
We manage a website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.
The website: www.tionestabuilders.us is an interactive site featuring over 100,000 of the products we carry. The best part is you can order something online and have it shipped directly to your home. Or, if you’d like, you can call us to order

and pick it up at one of our stores with no shipping cost.
“Our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages our very useful for those looking for remodeling ideas and tips. We also showcase some of our customers’ finished projects and promote our latest specials there. If you’re looking for a deal we just might have something on sale you’re looking for,” Kristian said.
Goods and Services
What do we sell? What do we do? Tionesta Builders Supply is a true HOME IMPROVEMENT CENTER, and really the only stores in the area with everything home improvement in one place. Actually two places – Tionesta and Shippenville. It really is worth a trip to Tionesta or shop in your back yard in Shippenville just to see what we have!
We always wanted to say: “If we don’t have it, you don’t need it!” Outside you’ll find a lumber yard with all your building needs to start and finish your next project. Inside you’ll find isles of hardware, plumbing, paint, moulding and more including beautiful showrooms, with the latest trends displayed. If you want ideas for your next project, you really need to stop and see us!
Many of our customers don’t realize what we stock. We currently have more than 30 tub and shower units on stock, over 100 windows in stock covering 30 common sizes and usually more than 30 exterior doors on hand. Some products are currently on extended lead times, other products are still readily available.
Showrooms, Showrooms, Showrooms
Kitchen and bath displays, more than 50 vanities and more than 30 tub and shower units, even curved showers. Featuring displays from: “Clarion Bathware”, “Samuel Mueller”, “Maxx” “Sterling” and “Swanstone” to name a few. Also: Quartz, granite, solid surface and laminate counter tops too...pretty impressive. We’re now stocking ready-made shower pans by “Fin Pan” and “Palisade” water proof wall tiles. We stock nine colors...Building your own customer shower just got a whole lot easier.
Our KRAFTMAID CABINETRY line is a custom cabinet line where you can get a custom kitchen or bath without paying the custom price. Kraftmaid offers the “Aged Finish”. It’s almost the look of aged concrete. Reminiscent of worn, vintage furniture passed down through a few generations. Kraftmaid says: “the entire kitchen can feel completely old but it’s new.”
The finishing techniques Krafmaid uses are unmatched. It’s called the “Dura Kraft Plus” finishing system, with a 14 step process. It starts by selecting the finest grade of American

Hardwoods and hand staining and detailing the cabinets. Plus, they offer custom color match. That’s the Kraftmaid difference.
Kraftmaid has features like: standard all plywood construction and slow close heavy duty drawers and doors. More than 65 classically elegant finish options competitors envy. Over 100 door styles, plus 200 luxurious storage solutions, and it’s made in the USA. We like to say KRAFTMAID is the “Standard in custom cabinetry”! And of course, we offer design and drawing services.
Yes, we stock flooring!
All types of flooring imaginable: Carpet, ceramic tile, hardwood goods, laminate products and Luxury VINYL PLANK FLOORING.
The luxury vinyl plank and or tile flooring is the latest and greatest fad in the flooring industry. There are over 100 styles and shades to choose, and even look and feel like wood or tile. The best feature to the luxury vinyl flooring is water can’t hurt it.
TIONESTA BUILDERS SUPPLY doesn’t advertise 24 hour water protection, what kind of a guarantee is that. This product is vinyl and water does not affect it, it’s 100% waterproof. No worries period, and it wears like iron. And the best part is we stock more than 10 colors at various price points. If we don’t stock the color you like we have 100’s more colors and styles to choose.

Siding Products – Factory direct pricing!
✓ We carry an extensive selection of siding products and distribute a line of vinyl siding direct from the manufacturer, which saves our customers money...we have a massive amount of samples displayed so you can make decisions easier!
✓ Traditional vinyl siding with more than 15 lines and 25 colors to choose from including those Cedar and Deep Dark Colors...We have vinyl siding options you won’t see on display anywhere else, such as vinyl log siding. We have a dozen different brands to choose from. We buy siding “Factory Direct” resulting in a better price for our customers and much better lead times.
✓ Wood siding...like cedar lap goods
✓ Cement board siding by “Hardi” and “Certainteed”
✓ PVC Siding including “Celec” by Royal” and

“Everlast” composite
✓ Vinyl “River Rock”, “Brick”, “Stacked Stone”, “Scallops” and more...you know the “Gingerbread” stuff
✓ Various vertical siding options to compliment any style, including 20” wide Double 10 Board-N-Batten
✓ The popular man-made stone veneer products like the traditional mortar types from: “Pro-Via”, “Ply-Gem” and “Apple Ridge” and the ever increasingly popular mortarless stone veneer by: “Affinity”, “Versetta Stone”, “Clip Stone” and “Adorn”. These beautiful products can be used outside or even inside like around your fireplace, an accent wall or your entire home. And they look real!
✓ If you stop in either showroom you’ll see some of these stone veneer products on display. They are very nice and easy to work with.
Tionesta Showroom
● Five years ago the Tionesta store opened its second floor sales area. Products of interest include: AMMUNITION, REAL-TREE clothing, hunting supplies, PORTWEST working wear including FR shirts, heated clothes (jackets, vests, socks, gloves, chairs, etc), Ammo in assorted calibers, LODGE cast iron cookware, WESTON food processing equipment, fishing gear (poles, lures, etc), NEBO flashlights, camping goods, and more...it’s worth seeing for yourself. Make the trip to Tionesta, it won’t disappoint! Plus, it’s beautiful country there.
Window and Doors
◆ Doors or windows with a million options, or so it seems
◆ Steel or fiberglass exterior doors...finished or unfinished, fancy glass or no glass at all.
◆ “Larson” storm doors with custom sizes available in a wide color selection
◆ Patio doors by “Pella”...that’s sliding doors, swinging doors or even bifold...in vinyl clad, aluminum clad or fiberglass and about 100 colors to choose with options ranging up to 24 feet wide
◆ Interiors doors in more styles than you can imagine and pretty much any wood species available. We also handle a wide selection of the popular interior barn style doors.
◆ New construction or replacement windows available in wood or vinyl by:

“Sprouse”, “Wincore”, “Vinkwinko” and “Pella”
◆ Stop in our showrooms for ideas
Decking products
◆ Tried and true treated lumber in a “Premium Grade”
◆ Over the years we’ve found it more beneficial to stock premium grade decking...it saves the customer time and headache to just get to best lumber the first time around.
◆ Cedar lumber
◆ Maintenance free composite decking from: Timbertech, Azek, Trex, Fiberon, Zuri by Royal and Armadillo...just to name a few
◆ Our displays show you larger pieces...helping you determine the wood-grain pattern you desire that much easier
◆ Lots of deck railing options too...Traditional treated or Vinyl choices from “Color Guard” & “Certain-teed”, the very creative “Wild Hog” railing system and composite options from “Timbertech” and even very appealing aluminum options in several different colors.
Power Tools/Outdoor Goods
◆ We stock a wide variety of corded and cordless power tools from: Makita, DeWalt, Bostich, Black & Decker, Porter-Cable...to name a few. “Hot Items” like the cordless weed eaters, chainsaws, push mowers and hedge trimmers are very useful and practical tools. These manufacturers have really come a long ways in battery output.
◆ We stock Tarter Farm & Ranch Products at the Tionesta yard including: Rock rakes, back blades, box blades, rotary tillers, horse & cattle feeders, gates and more.
Roofing Products
● We Stock “Tamko’s Titan” Architectural shingles
● Better than life-time warranty
● Steel Roofing & Siding – Factory direct pricing, 2-day lead times, cut to the exact inch.
● Metal Sales
● Fabral
● ABC

Hardware, plumbing, electrical, paint goods
✓ We are constantly adding more and more hardware to the stores
✓ Of course we stock: PVC pipe, pex pipe, drain pipe, culvert pipe, poly septic and cistern tanks...basically anything to do with plumbing. “Delta”, “Moen”, “Kohler”, “American Standard” are just a few of our major brands.
✓ Like we said before we stock lots of vanities and everything that goes along with the bathroom. Several different commode options, hot water tanks, shower doors and more.
✓ “Zar” and “Flood” exterior stains...now offering more than 160 colors
✓ And don’t forget about interior painting...we stock “Rustoleum” acrylic latex in pre-mixed colors to suit your style!
Heating – Burning Displays in Shippenville: Stop in, warm up!
✓ Vented and Vent-free gas or propane fireplaces and inserts. We display a dozen burning units along the lines of log-sets, fire boxes and woodstove type. They’re beautiful, economical and the best part about them is they work without electricity...so you can still have heat if the power is out in the winter.
✓ Interior woodstoves and pellet stoves: Free standing and inserts. We stock several different brands at our Tionesta location. Stop and see one of our heating showrooms today!
We get delivery of products virtually every day of the week from one of our manufacturers.
Stop and see us at one of our showrooms. You’ll be pleasantly surprised at how much you can save when you shop local. TIONESTA BUILDERS SUPPLY, we have it all: Lumber/plywood/OSB/trusses, treated or composite decking, shingles & steel roofing, flooring, siding/windows/doors, custom kitchen/bath, plumbing/electrical/paint and hardware...just a few of the things you find in our stores!■

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Leeper Red & White helps make customers feel at home

By Aoife Salusky
CLARION NEWS Staff Writer

LEEPER
In the heart of Leeper, Pennsylvania, there's a small-town staple that's been serving up quality meats, hearty hoagies, and unbeatable hospitality for nearly half a century. Leeper Red & White, a family owned business, has been around for about 50 years, and if you ask the locals, it's more than just a grocery store. It's a place where employees feel like family and customers are treated like old friends.

Walking into Leeper Red & White feels like stepping into a place where everyone knows your name. That's thanks to the tight-knit crew of long-time employees who help keep things running smoothly. Some have been there for decades, and that kind of loyalty shows in the way they treat everyone who walks through the door. It's this hardworking, close-knit team that makes the business feel more like a home.

While it may be best known for its impressive meat section, Leeper Red & White offers so much more. For starters, there's an in-store hoagie shop that keeps hungry customers happy with made-to-order sandwiches. Whether you're craving a classic Italian hoagie or something a little more adventurous, they've got options for every taste.

The real star of the show is the full-service meat department. From thick-cut bacon and juicy chicken wings to house-made sausages that would impress any grill master, this place is a carnivore's dream come true. The team is constantly adding new flavors and fresh ideas to their offerings, so there's always something new to try.

If you're in a rush or just want an easy dinner solution, Leeper's Red & White is a perfect pit stop. The store offers quick, high-protein meats that you can cook up at home in no time. Or, if you've just left a late-night



CLARION NEWS photo by Aoife Salusky.
The deli counter is one of the trademarks of the Leeper Red & White located at the intersection of State Route 66 and State Route 36.

ballgame and don't feel like cooking, swing by the hoagie shop for a delicious and satisfying meal.

What makes Leeper Red & White truly stand out, though, is what happens just outside its back doors. On weekends, especially during the warmer months, the shop hosts a lively flea market. Vendors from around the area come to sell antiques, crafts collectibles, and homemade goods. It's the kind of event where neighbors gather and kids explore tables of treasures.

Owner Brian Schmader says his favorite part of the job is talking with people every day. Getting to know customers and seeing familiar faces is the best part in his opinion. It's clear that for Brian and his team, this business is about more than just food. It's about connection.

Leeper Red & White is

also known for giving back to the community. Whether it's supporting local fire departments and churches or sponsoring Little League baseball teams, they make it a priority to invest in the community that supports them. Their commitment to helping others is just another reason why this small business has stayed strong through the years.

As the business grows and stays busier than ever, Brian and his team are always on the lookout for more helping hands, especially from the local community. They love hiring local teens and giving young people the chance to learn valuable skills, earn a paycheck, and become part of the Red & White family. It's a great opportunity for high school students to gain work experience while contributing to a business that truly values them.

For anyone dreaming about starting their own business someday, Brian has some simple but powerful advice: "Start by doing what you do best. Grow as you go and don't try to do everything all at once." It's advice that clearly worked for him and it's a reminder that great things often start small, with a lot of heart and a strong work ethic.

Whether you're planning your next BBQ, craving a fresh hoagie, hoping to score a flea market bargain, or just want to support a local business that cares, Leeper Red & White is the place to go. It's more than just a market; it's a local legend.

The Leeper Red & White hours are Monday through Friday 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The store's phone number is 814-744-8811.■

The personal approach—Haws Ricker Insurance



CLARION NEWS photo by David A. Hollis.
Greg and Brenda Haws of Haws Ricker Insurance say what matters most is the relationships they build with their clients who, over the years, truly become like family.

By David A. Hollis
CLARION NEWS Staff Writer

CLARION
In today's world of overwhelming information, spam calls, junk emails and pushy salespeople only looking to rack up their enrollment numbers, Haws Ricker Insurance stands as a testament to a simple approach that's lasted for over thirty years.

"We started out just believing in taking care of people and getting to know them," said owner Brenda Haws, and it's that proven philosophy that sets them far apart from the "bigger guys."

Founded by Haw's mother, Phyllis, Haws Ricker Insurance is owned and operated by Brenda and her husband Greg, who said it's because of their one-on-one approach to customer service that the company has only continued to grow, more specifically, allowing the duo to specialize in health insurance. Haws said,

"We're licensed to do everything, but we specialize in health insurance. And we've taken care of parents whose children are now getting Medicare or whose grandchildren may need health insurance now, and because (these customers) have trusted us with their health insurance needs they're comfortable asking us about life insurance or annuities or whatever."

From Medicare supplements to prescription drug plans, long term care to life insurance, annuities and

IRA's and so much more, the Haws' make it a point to focus on the customer's individual needs and commented on how the ongoing rise of impersonal communications can often lead people astray.

"I think the other thing is that we feel strongly about, in this day and age is technology," Haws said, "Technology is good, and we use it, and you can do a lot of things with it, but we've also seen the dark side where people innocently get into things that isn't the best thing for them, so by sitting down with someone or going into their home and talking with them at the table, we're able to recommend something better that's really the best fit for them, and do for them what we'd do for our parents, or for ourselves—which maybe isn't always the most lucrative choice, but that's okay, too."

Aside from their careers, the Haws's have also been very involved in the community, including the Freemasons, the Eastern Star, Lions Club and others, with Brenda adding she's also a lay minister and enjoys meeting new people in the various churches she sermons.

"We very much believe in giving back because it's the community that's allowed us and enabled us to be here, so it's only right we give back. Without them, we're nothing."

For more information or to schedule an appointment with Haws Ricker Insurance, call 814-226-8422.■

IHS

From page 3

◆ Launched in 2024, the "Caring Angel" basket raffle program raised more than \$8,000 in November to support the Clarion Hospital Charity Care program. This program assists patients in the community struggling with ongoing medical expenses.

Keeping care close to home

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Clarion region offers independent living options for active seniors

Submitted article
CLARION — There comes a time in life when maintaining a home, shoveling snow, mowing the lawn and paying utility bills all become too much to handle. When that happens, relocating to an independent living community can alleviate that stress while still allowing the independence most people covet. Residential living communities have become popular among "snowbirds," who go south for the winter. These individuals can travel without the worry or stress of leaving their homes unattended.

Penn Highlands WRC Senior Services offers residential living communities that cater to seniors.

The Villas at Water Run and The Laurels at Laurel-brooke Landing are continuing care retirement communities where residents purchase homes with the peace of mind that they will have access to many amenities and priority access to other levels of care should their healthcare or housing needs change. They also will receive a percentage of the purchase price upon the sale of the property.

The Villas at Water Run is privately located within the Water Run Landing senior living community at 300 Water Run Road in Clarion. The Villas provide lawn care, snow removal, house-keeping, home maintenance, and personal emergency response services. Property taxes and property and liability insurance are paid by the Villas, while residents are required to carry personal property and liability insurance. Amenities offered include: fully equipped kitchen and laundry; fitness center and spa; beauty and barber services; 24/7 maintenance; and access to Penn Highlands Healthcare services.

"Many people find our senior living options very



Submitted photo.
Pictured above is one of Penn Highlands WRC Senior Services homes at The Villas at Water Run

appealing — particularly because residents are offered priority access to Highland Oaks at Water Run, the short stay rehab at WRC's McKinley Health Center at Laurelbrooke Landing in Brookville. They also receive home care, home health, and hospice services offered by our health system," explained Anthony Nefstead, Nursing Home Administrator for Penn Highlands WRC Senior Services.

In addition, for those who would rather spend the day reading or going out with friends than cleaning the gutters or staining the deck, The Laurels is another small, private residential neighborhood for active retirees. Just like the Villas at Water Run, at The Laurels, residents purchase homes, enjoy the many amenities and receive a percentage of the purchase price upon the sale of the property.

Located in Brookville, The Laurels is part of Laurel-brooke Landing, which is situated on rolling farmland with beautiful country views, yet just minutes from shops and restaurants.

"We promote healthy aging at The Laurels by offering educational programs and free wellness screenings. Residents enjoy

their retirement living in these communities because they can do the things they want to do rather than the home maintenance project they would have to do living elsewhere," added Nefstead.

To learn more about senior living options in the Clarion region, visit www.phhealthcare.org/wrc or call 814-849-3615.■

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Trinity Point at Monroe has been steadily growing

By Kenn Staub
For the **CLARION NEWS**

MONROE TWP. Trinity Point at Monroe is a mixed-use business park located off Exit 62 on Interstate 80 (I-80).

“Originally, we were looking for a place to build a new church [for the Liberty Street Church of God, which became the Trinity Point Church of God]. We started here simply because I had a familiarity with the property, I knew this property,” said Tim Reddinger, president and sole owner of Pinnacle Resource Management, Inc. (PRM), on the business park’s genesis.

“We bought this property to facilitate [construction] of the church, but in the course of that, it was a lot more property than we anticipated buying. It was originally 155 acres, so we went down the avenue of development and tried to tie in the community.”

PRM is the general partner of the Trinity Development Company.

Discussing the business park’s evolution, Reddinger continued, “We started back in 2000 originally to find a location and build a new church. That was our initial thing. During the course of the years we partnered with the Clarion University Foundation on the Barnes Center, which is now Independence Health.

“Fifteen years ago we partnered to bring in things for the community, such as Primary Health Network, Life-NWPA, Tractor Supply, the hotel [Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham], and the Clarion Travel Plaza.”

Of the 21 lots comprising the Trinity Point development, seven are currently occupied.

According to Renninger, the development features 9,000 linear feet of roads; access to a wastewater plant; Pennsylvania American water service; redundant fiber optic (communi-

cation) systems via Comcast, Verizon, and AT&T; gas service lines provided by National Fuel; and redundant electric power through West Penn Power.

Tractor Supply, located at 26 Commerce Road, was the first business at Trinity Point, established in 2016. The retail chain offers products for home improvement, agriculture, and lawn and garden, as well as supplies needed for livestock, equine, and pet care.

“They’ve done very well,” remarked Renninger. “They’ve been a good fit for the community.”

The Barnes Center was next, owned by the Clarion University Foundation and designed for use by the biotech sector.

Renninger attributed the biotech industry’s inability to reach its full potential in Clarion to several factors, “I worked diligently for about eight years to see that come to fruition. The approval process and pathway to commercialization can be a killer for a start-up biotech company. There were all kinds of things that a small business, a small start-up would find difficult to handle.

“One of the biggest things that held us up back then was the potential tolling of I-80, we lost multiple businesses that were in negotiation at that time, they left, they walked away. And then in 2008 the recession hit. About the time we were recovering from that, in 2019 things were really going well, and then COVID hit. We’re finally coming out of COVID and inflation over the past three or four years has given us another mighty blow.”

In January 2020, Butler Health System, now Independence Health System (IHS), bought the Barnes Center to have a presence on I-80.

IHS Clarion at Trinity Point on 330 North Point



Pictured above is the newest addition to Trinity Point at Monroe: the Clarion Travel Plaza which opened its doors last summer.

Drive offers a range of medical services under one roof, with an emphasis on community health and wellness – family care, women’s care, cardiovascular care, pulmonary care, and endocrinology.

The other medical facility at Trinity Point, Primary Health Network (PHN), was established in 2012 at 30 Pinnacle Drive.

PHN’s 33,000 square-foot facility houses medical, dental, and behavioral health offices, as well as a pharmacy and urgent care. It is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

“Its [PHN’s] main function is to serve people that are in need – they serve anybody, whether they can afford it or not,” explained Renninger on the significance of the FQHC facility. “It was brought in to help Clarion Hospital at that time because they’ll [PHN] take the clients that would normally go to the emergency room at the hospital, they’ll service them.”

The church was opened in 2016 at 180 West Trinity Drive, providing a spiritual home to a large, active

congregation. Trinity Point Church of God also houses an event center which can seat up to 600.

Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham on 121 North Point Drive was opened the year after the church.

Owned by PRM, the Microtel has 68 rooms, all smoke-free. Each room has a mini-refrigerator, microwave, and 40-inch television. Amenities include free hot breakfast, guest laundry, business center, fitness center, WIFI and wired internet access, and free overnight parking with hook-ups for electric vehicles. Some rooms are pet-friendly.

Additionally, the Microtel has a covered pavilion that’s capable of accommodating 24 outside. Two gas grills are available.

Life-NWPA Clarion on 108 East Pinnacle Drive came along in 2018. Based on the LIFE model (Living Independence For the Elderly), the facility’s team of medical professionals assist individuals with leading active, independent lives in their own homes and communities

by providing all-inclusive care.

During 2024 the newest business at Trinity Point came to fruition, the Clarion Travel Plaza at 79 North Point Drive. Open 24/7, the facility offers gas and diesel fuel, has a convenience store, and several dining options at its food court – Dunkin’, Jimmy John’s, Sbarro, Fatburger, and Tikka Shack.

“The travel plaza was actually planned a long, long time ago. I’ve worked with them over the last five years to see it through, to help them get where they are now,” noted Reddinger. “That’s something I wanted with the hotel, because when you do lodging you need food and fuel, that’s what goes hand-in-hand”

“The Sandho’s, who own it, are from the Williamsport-area and it’s a family-run business. They have about eight or nine of these and Clarion’s their largest.”

As to the future of the Trinity Point development, Reddinger talked about growth – possibly building

affordable housing for the local workforce and attracting business to the area.

“South View Village [the proposed housing complex] would include new apartments, new single-family homes, townhomes designed at a cost to meet the needs of the Clarion County workforce,” he said. “We have to get specific funding, we’re working on certain funds to help offset new construction. We’ve got to find a way of offset costs through either grants or tax credits to make things affordable. Over the last three-to-five years the inflation rate on new housing has exceeded the market.”

Added Renninger, “We’re [PRM] here and willing to work and hopefully we’ll be able to attract new businesses to the area. Monroe Township has been our best ally in helping us to facilitate growth here. I really want to build up services in the community. I have a long list of targeted businesses and entities I would love to bring to the community.”■

Strattanville American Legion and Auxiliary honor veterans and much more

By Kenn Staub
For the **CLARION NEWS**

STRATTANVILLE Strattanville’s American Legion Post 249 and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 249 are dedicated to recognizing and supporting veterans of the United States armed forces.

Each May, the Legion hangs banners, depicting former and current members of the military with Strattanville roots, throughout the town. The banners are taken down in the fall, cleaned, and then displayed inside the Legion building. There are currently 238 troop banners.

Not only does the Legion raise troop banners each May, it also holds a Memorial Day service.

This year, George Pry, president of Pittsburgh Honor Flight, spoke, providing information about the free program which transports veterans to Washington D.C. where they are given a tour of Arlington National Cemetery and various monuments in the nation’s capital.

The Strattanville American Legion regularly contributes to the Honor Flight Network and presented Pry with a donation.

In addition to Pry, Cheryl Bazzoui spoke about her father’s service during World War II. According to Bazzoui, Robert Himes, a Purple Heart recipient, never watched war movies or went to fireworks as, having lived through it, he did not find them entertaining.

Following the Memorial Day service a dinner was held, at which the veterans in attendance were recognized.

The week prior to Memorial Day, Legion members, along with Cub Scout Pack 51, checked local cemeteries to ensure each veteran had a flag at

his or her gravesite.

Other veterans’ initiatives championed by the Strattanville Legion include the Fisher House in Pittsburgh, a place for veterans and their families to stay when receiving medical treatment in the city; Wreaths Across America, wherein a wreath is donated to mark the grave of every veteran in the Strattanville cemetery during December; sending money to the Veterans Administration hospital in Butler; donating to the Clarion County’s annual veterans picnic; and placing and decorating a Christmas tree in Veterans Memorial Park.

Not only does the Legion work on behalf of veterans, but it’s also active in the community.

In the Strattanville-area, the Legion helps with the community watch program and homecoming committee.

The auxiliary donates to the Pisgah Presbyterian Church’s annual clothing giveaway in Corsica and the First Presbyterian Church’s monthly food distribution in Clarion. It collects hats, mittens, and scarves for Clarion County Child and Youth Services.

Every year the auxiliary sponsors a poster contest for Clarion-Limestone Elementary students to raise awareness of veterans.

Further, the auxiliary annually recognizes an outstanding eighth grade female student at C-L for her honor, Americanism, service, leadership, scholarship, and courage. This year Lydie Aaron, daughter of Mel and Abbie Aaron, was the recipient of the auxiliary’s certificate of recognition and medal.

The group regularly donates books to the C-L school library and recently contributed to the purchase of a large tent for the Central Clarion cross country team.

Funds for the Legion’s various service activities are raised through weekly bingo games held every Tuesday at the post’s building on 400 Washington Street.

Monies raised also go toward routine building maintenance and any needed improvements. A 35-foot flagpole was installed in front of the building in time for Memorial Day.

The Legion has 34 members and meets the second Monday of each month, excepting June and July.

Officers are Fred Lewis, commander; Fred Larson, first vice-president; Bob Larson, second vice-president; Tom Lewis, finance officer; Mark Campbell, post services officer; Bob Wilson, chaplain; Gene Cummings, Sargent-at-arms; and Tommy Lewis, membership chair.

The auxiliary has 25 members and meets the first Monday of each month, with the exception of January and July.

Auxiliary officers are Pat Lewis, president; Sharon Klingensmith, first vice-president; Sandy Reed, second vice-president; Bert Larson, secretary and treasurer; Christine Fitzsimmons, chaplain; Deanna Shipakoff, Sargent-at-arms; and Jane Wenner, historian.

The Legion and auxiliary have a joint meeting in September.

“We’re a small group, but all of us have had multiple generations serving in the military,” said Pat Lewis. “There’s a lot of families in our area that their father or grandfather have served and now have sons that may be serving.”

The grandfather of Pat



Legion Auxiliary outstanding eighth grade female student at Clarion-Limestone and Civil Air Patrol Cadet Lydie Aaron (left), daughter of Mel and Abbie Aaron is pictured above with Auxiliary President Pat Lexis (right).

WEEKLY
**Health
Tip**



by John Slagle
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ACE is the place for your hardware needs and more

By Kenn Staub
For the **CLARION NEWS**

CLARION
ACE Hardware is one of the newer businesses in Clarion, opening at 527 Main Street on Groundhog Day 2024.

While some might find a hardware business in a two-story building unique, it's really nothing out of the ordinary for owners Kevin and Mark Salandra, who have another store in Brockway.

"Our store in Brockway is also two floors, it's a first-floor basement. Our store in Brockway also has a walk-in safe, just like this store does," noted Kevin Salandra during a tour. "There were a lot of similarities when we found the [Clarion] building, so it wasn't like, 'Oh, this is going to be a novel experience.'"

"We thought we would actually have more room than what we did. We filled up the building, it's kind of crazy. We have a lot of people coming in wanting us to sell convenience lumber, drywall, building materials, we don't have room."

As to what some of the more popular products are at the Clarion location, Salandra said, "That's tough, because it's very seasonal. This time of year [early summer] we're crazy selling mowers and

weed trimmers, chainsaws, hedge trimmers. We've sold a lot more chainsaws this spring than normal because we had a little bit of a windy, tough winter and people had a lot of cleaning-up to do."

"We do [sell] a ton of plumbing, electrical, hardware, Stihl products [mowers, weed trimmers], paint, lawn and garden."

ACE also makes keys, something Salandra indicated the big box stores don't do as much of anymore. Services such as screen repair and glass cutting are also available.

If customer can't find the item they are looking for among the almost 18,000 unique products in stock, ACE probably has it among the 70,000 different things available online at <https://www.acehardware.com/>. Customers can have online orders shipped to them directly or to the store.

Added Salandra, "Basically, if there's something that you need that you don't see, ask us, because we do have a lot that we can order, even direct from the manufacturer."

"We're also constantly making changes. If people come in and request items that we don't have in stock, once we get a few requests for that item, then we add it to our inventory."

Like all businesses, the effects of a dynamic economy have impacted prices.

"For the customers, prices are going up, it's pretty much across the board" relayed Salandra. "The vendors that haven't raised prices [yet] have sent notices saying they're going to raise prices, it just depends on how much the increase is going to be."

"Some vendors do a little bit more overseas or have more components coming in from overseas, they've had higher price increases. Others have maintained lower prices."

Clarion has proved welcoming to Salandra's business, "The community has been very supportive. We have good repeat customers. We've special ordered some things that other people weren't able to get elsewhere. It's interesting to meet a lot of people."

Salandra attributed the successful launch of ACE Hardware to its employees.

"We've got a lot of great employees, we have a really good team in place," he offered. "We have a lot of very knowledgeable employees that can help solve your problems - what type of paint to use, what plumbing or electrical parts you need. We have people that have had 30 years and more in the building



CLARION NEWS photo by Kenn Staub.

Pictured is ACE Hardware co-owner Kevin Salandra in front of the Milwaukee Tool display at the ACE Hardware store on Main Street in Clarion Borough.

trades. We pride ourselves in giving customer service."

ACE Hardware is open seven days a week - Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday 9 a.m. to 4

p.m.

As to the store's long hours of operation, Salandra said, "If we didn't have those hours, we wouldn't be serving our customers properly. A lot of people need to stop before

work, after work, maybe on their way to a job."

Information on ACE Hardware can be found on Instagram (@acehardware) or its webpage (<https://www.acehardware.com/>).

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Big projects highlight Palo's summer

By Ryan S. Pugh
CLARION NEWS Editor

CLARION
If you have ventured between Exit 62 of Interstate 80 and Main Street in Clarion over the past few months, you have seen a portion of what the Francis J. Palo, Inc. Heavy Highway division has been up to.

Palo is the prime contractor on the \$13,368,068 safety improvement project on State Route 68 that stretches from Dolby Street in Monroe Township to Trout Run in Clarion Township.

The project includes the widening of State Route 68 and the installation of a turning lane. There is also a sidewalk being installed that will allow pedestrians to walk from Trout Run to Dolby Street without walking on the roadway.

"That's a three-year job," Palo President Paul Roman said about the project on State Route 68. "Scheduled for this year is basically the utility relocations. Palo is relocating the water and sewer lines and the gas company and the electric company working for their relocations. That's pretty much the work for this year."

According to Roman, the following two years Palo will take care of making the road wider.

Roman said the plan is to connect the three lanes that stretch from Main Street to Trout Run and the three lanes that run from Interstate 80 to Dolby Street.

"We are going to widen a little bit on each side of [State Route 68]," Roman said. "They didn't take a lot of property on one side to bother any individual land owners. The one year, we are going to widen to the right with traffic on the left and the next year we are going to widen to the left with traffic on the right."

Roman said the process of widening the roadway is not as simple as it seems.

"When you do widening, it's not only just the widening, it's the storm drainage, the under drainage," Roman said. "There is a lot more work [to it] than just digging a hole and widening it."

The addition of the sidewalk along the length of



Submitted photo.

Pictured is the work the Palo Heavy Highway division did on Jordan Road on Interstate 90 in Erie County. The work had to be performed at night due to the high volume of traffic on Interstate 90.

the roadway is also something Roman is glad to see getting done.

"That was one of the goals of the job for people to be able to walk to Walmart safely," Roman said. "The outcome of the job is that it is going to be safer for the driving public and the walking public."

The second biggest job Palo is working on, according to Roman is a bridge replacement on Interstate 90 in Erie County.

"Right now, the demolition is done and we are in the process of putting back," Roman said. "We had to remove the bridge over Interstate 90 and it all had to happen at night."

Currently, Palo is reconstructing bridges on Cherry Run in Clarion County, near Hazen in Jefferson County and in Indiana in Indiana County.

The bridge on Cherry Run Road is the Cherry Run Church Bridge project and it is estimated to be completed Nov. 21 of this year. At a total cost of \$1,342,007.

All the bridge reconstructions are scheduled to be completed this year.

Roman said that Palo

was being subcontracted by Glenn O. Hawbaker Construction for a reconstruction project on Interstate 80 near the Ohio-Pennsylvania line.

"They are basically rebuilding Interstate 80 from the Ohio line to mile marker five in Mercer County and we are going to build the structures on it," Roman said. "That is also a three year job."

There are some other small projects Palo is going to be undertaking soon including rehabilitating a suspension bridge in Cook Forest, a installing a water treatment plant at the Mercer rest are on Interstate 79 and a rehabilitation of the Clintonville sewage treatment plant.

"We're working for a variety of owners; PennDOT, DCNR, local municipalities like always," Roman said. "We don't just work for PennDOT, we work for a lot of locals."

Another job Roman was surprised Palo got was constructing a new hangar at the Indiana County airport.

"There has been some airport money coming here lately," Roman said. "That

had been missing the last few years. There really wasn't much work going on at airports."

Palo is also working on slope stabilization on the Clarion River at Piney Dam

Palo has two construction divisions; heavy highway and industrial construction.

The industrial construction division has a number of projects it is involved in.

Along with the construction divisions, Palo has the Clarion Environmental Services Division which has been providing services to clients across Pennsylvania since 2003. According to the Palo website, the environmental services division specializes in asbestos abatement, asbestos building inspection, asbestos air testing, mold and mildew remediation, mold testing, shot blasting of floor mastics, and interior/exterior demolition.

In addition to the two construction divisions and the environmental services division, Palo also operates the CNG fuel station at Exit 64 on Interstate 80.



Submitted photo.

The above photo is a picture of one of the beams being removed during the bridge replacement project on Moore Road near Hazen in Jefferson County.

The CNG station was one of the first stations in the area to offer alternative fuels including natural gas, liquid propane, on- and off- road diesel and regular unleaded fuel.

Those who become a customer of the CNG station will receive five cents off per gallon and there are volume discounts available. The CNG station accepts all major credit cards.

"We're always trying to make improvements out there," Roman said about the CNG station. "We did some work out there this spring already."

According to Chief Financial Officer Stephanie Marshall, Palo is planning to add another gas pump at the CNG station this fall.

"Business is good, we need more pumps," Roman said.

Marshall said that the gas prices at the CNG station were competitive with other stations around the area.

"If people decide they want to become a [CNG] customer, they will save an additional five cents off per gallon and that includes

our diesel and our gasoline," Marshall said.

Roman said Palo has a full staff of employees for the summer with 50 full-time workers and 100 part-time workers. The part-time workers are on staff from March through November.

Francis J. Palo, Inc. originated as Francis J. Palo Excavating in 1954. Francis J. Palo, Inc. was incorporated in 1973.

The company's officers and office staff include Chief Executive Officer Michael Palo, who has been with Palo more than 30 years; President Roman; Executive Vice President Mark Schaffer; Chief Financial Officer Marshall and Industrial Division Vice-President Jason Kiely.

Safety continues to be a top priority for Palo.

To keep up to date with Palo's current projects and job openings or to learn more about the company, visit www.paloinc.com/. Palo also has a LinkedIn page. Palo has a 3A1 credit rating with Dunn & Bradstreet and several local and regional banking affiliations, according to its website.■

Red River Roadhouse is more than a steakhouse

By Kenn Staub
For the CLARION NEWS

MONROE TWP.
At first glance, the Red River Roadhouse, located in the Clarion Mall, seems like your typical steakhouse. Bo Lockwood, the restaurant's owner since 2017, begs to differ.

"A lot of people would consider us primarily a steakhouse, with maybe a 'cookie cutter' steakhouse menu. I see it a little differently," relayed Lockwood. "It's a broad menu. We not only have steaks, but also chicken and fish. We have salmon, seafood, lots of shrimp, crab cakes. There's a variety of salads, sandwiches. I mean, really, the list goes on and on."

"We have a kids' menu that's \$5.50, your kids will be happy, your kids will be full. You can bring your children out for a good meal and not have to pay an arm-and-a-leg."

Regardless of what you order, Lockwood's emphasis is on providing "True, Real Food."

"We try to stay with whole foods, real foods, we don't throw in a lot of processed anything. We try to make sure everything we serve is healthy," he said.

"That's what I love, our food is true. I have been to places where the food you eat sometimes doesn't agree with you because of all the additive stuff. That's not here, that's definitely not here."

Lockwood continued,

"When you come here, you order your proteins, they're real, they're harvested the way they're supposed to be. Your steaks, your chickens, your meats, everything is real and well taken care of from the time it was in the field till the time it reaches your plate."

"I always feel good when a plate goes out, I know we're not aiding issues in this country like bad food and stuff like that."

Though the RRR Roadhouse cooks with 100-percent soy oil, the kitchen recently trialed beef tallow for about a week and haven't ruled out using it more in the future.

"The big movement now [in the restaurant industry] has been beef tallow," reported Lockwood. "We tried it, had it in our fryers, and it worked well. The food, the flavor, everything is just unbelievable. It's all next level."

"The feedback we got, nine out of 10 people loved it. There's that one that is a little either not curious or just not completely sold on it yet. I understand. We'll probably in the future be able to keep one of each, have fryers with beef tallow and oil fryers."

In addition to the dining room, the RRR Roadhouse features a separate 19-seat bar in an area that also includes four booths. Those sitting in bar can order from the full restaurant menu.

Noted Lockwood, "The nice thing is the bar is somewhat hidden compared to the dining room, so it has its own atmosphere. You can be somewhat private compared to the dining room. Typically, it's a little more laid back compared to up front."

The RRR Roadhouse's catering operation can handle both small and large events.

"When I purchased the restaurant, the previous owner did catering to a smaller extent. Our chef and I, it's just something we branched off and started doing more and more. Before we knew it, it was a full-fledged situation,"

remarked Lockwood.

"We can do everything. If you want a very small situation, we can handle that. If you want a full-scale wedding, we can handle that."

Like restaurants all over, Lockwood has had to meet the challenges of increasing prices, not only for food, but also for supplies such as straws, gloves, and glassware.

"There's two ways you could go – you could drop the quality of your food or you could keep prices the same and just run with it," offered Lockwood. "I don't think that's a way that we would ever go [lowered food quality], though I've

seen plenty of restaurants do it. We decided to stay with the high quality food and just raises our prices a little, assuming some of the cost instead of gouging customers out."

"We just take it one day at a time and adjust as needed. We just pray everything stays in the right direction and balances, that it doesn't get out of whack."

Lockwood, from the Brookville-area, believes, like so many local restaurant owners, in giving back, "We try to do everything we can. There's a lot of side things that happen, behind the scenes with all the restaurants

and all the businesses around here that help the community. Any kind of function, we try to make sure we're there, at least 'kick in' here or there, do what we can to offer support."

The RRR Roadhouse is open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday.

For more information on RRR Roadhouse, including a menu, see its Facebook page (Red River Roadhouse), Instagram (@redriverroadhouse), or website (<https://www.redriver-roadhouse.com/>).

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Francis J. Palo, Inc.

Clarion Environmental Services, Inc.

Rizer Fireworks gears up for summer fun

Submitted article
MARIENVILLE — Rizer Fireworks is a family-owned and run retail business that was established in 1984 by Clifton and Mary Rizer in Marienville, Pennsylvania. The couple opened their second location in Shinglehouse, Pennsylvania in 1997. As the small company continued to grow a third location was opened in Russell, Pennsylvania in 2004. The family has since opened another location in DuBois, Pennsylvania in May of 2022. Rizer Fireworks has been providing safe entertainment to our patrons for 41 years.

The company started from very humble beginnings, with the first year's operations being held in a small rented building in Vowinckle, Pennsylvania. This temporary location was used while the ground for the permanent store in Marienville was being cleared for building. In the early years of Rizer Fireworks, the company's founders also were supplying 180 Sheetz stores with sparklers and novelty items from 1989 – 1995. From the company's start in 1984 until the law changed in 2017, only out-of-state residents could purchase full line fireworks items; while Pennsylvania residents were restricted to novelties,

fountains, and sparklers.

Throughout the company's 41 years the fireworks industry has experienced major growth and change. Product quality and safety have continually evolved and improved with each passing year. The company has been affected by the change in Pennsylvania's fireworks law. The original fireworks law in 1939, banned the use of aerial fireworks within Pennsylvania, and was overturned on October 30, 2017. This means that Pennsylvania residents are now legally permitted to purchase and use fireworks within the state according to the law.

Rizer Fireworks, in 2017, along with their storefronts also operated five tent locations throughout the area. The company only did this for the one year because of another Pennsylvania law change that made tents only able to sell novelties, fountains, and sparklers from these temporary structures.

Rizer Fireworks has worked to establish and maintain relationships with the community over the past 41 years. Mary Rizer participated in the entrepreneurial business leaders' program at St. Joseph Elementary school. The program was designed to help 5th graders gain a deeper understanding of business and its opera-

tions. Rizer Fireworks in Marienville hosted the students for an educational field trip to the store as part of the experience. In 2020, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Rizer Fireworks donated fireworks to North Clarion Junior/Senior High School for a special graduation ceremony to help the seniors create a special memory; after missing so many of the other activities that should be going on during senior year were cancelled or altered to accommodate COVID safety protocol.

This year the company looks to continue upgrading its technology with improvements to both the website and app, helping customers better access product information and videos. In addition to the technology boost, the company is working to become more active on their social media platforms; with a presence on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, fireworks enthusiasts can connect with the company easier and enjoy great fireworks content! Rizer Fireworks also has started a gift certificate program, the best possible gift for fireworks enthusiasts in your life!

Additionally, the company has made improvements at the Marienville location by redoing the floor in our retail space and pouring new sidewalks outside the store. The Shinglehouse location had improvements to the stores roof, including new metal in the fall. The company's Russell location received an LED sign for promotional advertising in the spring of 2024. At the DuBois location improvements have been made to the retail space by putting in a new floor.

Rizer Fireworks has been a member of the National Fireworks Association for 25 years and the Pennsylvania Pyrotechnics Association for 26 years. These organizations work to improve the overall fireworks industry's safety standards, education access, and fair regulation at the national and state levels.

The company is now owned by Clifton and Mary Rizer, along with their



Submitted photo.
The Rizer Fireworks team, pictured from left, are: Clifton Rizer, Mary Rizer, Madison Tepke, Christina Tepke, and Jacob Tepke

daughter Christina (Rizer) Tepke and her husband, Jacob. Rizer Fireworks operates as a summer seasonal business and is open May – September, with the option to make appointments the rest of the year at any of the four locations.

Rizer Fireworks provides the public with access to fireworks products such as: rockets, firecrackers, fountains, parachutes, roman candles, mortar sets, and repeater cakes. High quality products are imported from China for the best value and lowest prices. Since the new tariffs on China, the overall fireworks industry has been adapting to the changing and ongoing supply chain issues that have resulted. Fortunately, the company had already received over 90% of their inventory for the 2025 summer season and does not anticipate the tariffs to impact consumers this year. Rizer Fireworks works to place orders earlier with suppliers to alleviate some of the economic pressures created by the new and ever-changing tariffs to ensure that the shelves are filled with high quality fireworks for all our customers to enjoy! The 2025 season will debut over 30 new items in our stores!

All of us at Rizer Fireworks are highly anticipating the summer of 2026, as the United States will celebrate its Semiquincentennial, marking the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. "This will be the biggest Fourth of July Celebration!" explained Christina, "everyone will be going all out with their celebrations and everyone at Rizer Fireworks looks forward to helping families create lifelong memories for this very special celebration!"

Rizer Fireworks offers a large selection of both ground and aerial display items, with sizes and prices to accommodate every celebration and budget. The company's friendly and knowledgeable staff works to help families create their own perfect backyard experience! "Our staff treats our customers like family because that is really important to us," stated Christina, "we want to help make summer memories that include fireworks fun!"

Rizer Fireworks is also available for professional display shows for town festivals, weddings, birthdays, retirements, graduations, and other events. Over the past 41 years the company has provided

these services for events such as: the Marienville Fourth of July Celebration, Smethport Summer Festival, Horsethief's Days in Knox, Potter County Fair, St. Mary Church Picnic in Crown, Girl Scout Camp, Community Days in Rural Valley, Mayfest in Fryburg, and Light Up Night in Leeper.

Rizer Fireworks is excited to offer the most Buy 1, Get 2 Free deals in-store anywhere! In-store bonuses also add value to your shopping experience. Additional early-bird specials run through Father's Day. For an unforgettable experience visit Rizer Fireworks. They are located at 40147 Route 66 in Marienville and are open from May to September. Call 814-316-1183 or visit www.rizerfireworks.com. Rizer Fireworks can be found in the app store; you can also find them on Facebook and Instagram.

All of us at Rizer Fireworks would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the family, friends, customers, businesses, and colleagues that have supported us along that way! Rizer Fireworks is a success because of all of you and we look forward to continuing to provide safe, quality backyard entertainment to all of you! ■

Shippenville area churches

SHIPPENVILLE — Churches serving the Shippenville area include:

Manor UMC
Nine Airport Road,
Paint Township, Shippenville
Pastor: Steve Ketner
Sunday worship: 8:45 a.m.

Bible study: 7 p.m. Wednesdays
Phone: 814-745-2480
Fully handicapped accessible church
Shippenville UMC
123 Main Street, Shippenville
814-745-2480
814-316-1419

Shippenville United Methodist church is part of the Shippenville four-point Charge with Curllsville, Manor, and Monroe.

Pastor: Steve Ketner
Sunday worship: 11 a.m.

The Shippenville Charge hosts three combined services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Christmas Eve.

Shippenville UM provides community support through various outreach programs. Some of those include a toy and clothing drive in Dec. to help families in need, contributions to the local food bank.

The church has a clothes drop-off bin in its parking lot.

Another event taking place at the church includes Thanksgiving dinner in November.

If you have any questions, please call the church at 814-782-3202.

Holy Trinity Lutheran

501 Main St., Shippenville
814-782-3753

The church has about 38 baptized members.

Pastor: Jeffrey Piccirilli
Sunday worship: 10:30 a.m.

Craft circle: 9:30 a.m., Saturdays. The group makes stuffed animals for Independence Health System—Clarion Hospital. It also makes quilts and puts together health kits to send to Lutheran World Relief for those in need.

Free sewing classes are offered twice each year.

In the fall, the congregation collects donations and puts together school kits that will be shipped to Lutheran World Relief.

Additionally, to help the community the church contributes money to Charitable Deeds.

Cornerstone Church of Clarion
3655 East End Road Shippenville
814-226-4949

Cornerstone Church of Clarion's mission is to "Live for MORE: Making Disciples Obeying God's

Word; Reaching the Lost; Exalting Christ." We are a non-denominational, vibrant, fun, loving, relaxed and casual church whose primary purpose is to love God and our communities with all our hearts.

We are a church that is growing each and every week as we continue to share the love of Jesus with people and meet them where they are in their walk. There are no perfect people at Cornerstone. We are a family who seek to love more, learn more, and lean more on Jesus as he leads us, as he loves us, and as he continues to grow us.

At Cornerstone, you'll hear the Word of God preached and taught, and enjoy a relaxed blended worship.

Cornerstone Church was born just about 12 years ago and started with around 20 people. We are now a family with a weekly gathering of nearly 300 and we continue to grow.

This is an exciting time at Cornerstone, and God's blessings and Spirit are evident.

Cornerstone's programs span the generations of our family. From youth group to Wednesday night prayer, Celebrate Recovery, women's and men's ministries, summer Kids and Youth Camp, vacation Bible school, and others Cornerstone's programs promote strong fellowship and a deep reliance on God's presence in our lives—both corporately and individually.

We love welcoming new people into our family, so if you're new to the area or just want to see how God is moving and growing us; come grow with us.

Senior Pastor: Josh Easlon

Associate Pastor: to be determined

Worship service: 10:30 a.m.

Sunday school: 9 a.m.

Youth group: 6 to 8 p.m. first and third Sunday of each month

Celebrate Recovery: 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays

Prayer Fellowship: 6 p.m. Wednesdays

Kids Camp: July 6 to 10

New! Glow Run: 9 p.m. Vacation Bible School July 20 to 23: 5 to 8 p.m.

and can be found at: clarioncornerstone.com/missions

Web address: clarioncornerstone.com

Email address: info@clarioncornerstone.com

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