

# Lehigh County

P E N N S Y L V A N I A

## Welcome to Your Lehigh County Newsletter

### From County Executive Phillips “Phil” Armstrong

Hello Residents,

It is that time again for our Second Annual Lehigh County Newsletter. Thank you for picking up a copy as this publication rolls into its second year, and hopefully, many more years to come.

We have partnered with local businesses to fund this year’s newsletter to ensure not a dime comes out of our taxpayers’ pockets. I would like to thank Hometown Press and my administration for coming together and providing an inside look within our county government. With its many branches and departments, a lot is going on this year in Lehigh County and I am excited to bring all that is happening in 2020 right to your fingertips.

As always, our overall goal for this newsletter is to provide a greater understanding on current events and keep residents informed on the many services provided to them. After all, there are many facets of government working together to bring you the county we know and love today.

2020 brings on not only a new year, but a new decade for Lehigh County. It’s an election year and the way we vote is changing as we get closer to casting our ballots. The new “mail-in” voting system will allow you to skip the lines on Election Day with the opportunity to cast your

ballot and mail in your vote from the comfort of your home.

The Census also remains a highlight for this year as our funding for the next decade relies on this count. It’s not too late to “count yourself in” and cast your number in for the Census. All of our residents deserve proper funding to maintain and improve Lehigh County, and an accurate Census count will ensure that.

You will learn more about the new “mail-in” ballots and 2020 Census within this newsletter. Additionally, other topics will be addressed regarding our commissioners, elected officials, and other areas that make up our local government. For further information and updates, please visit our social media pages or visit us at [lehighcounty.org](http://lehighcounty.org).

Again, thank you once more for picking up this newsletter. Sit back, relax, and read its contents thoroughly at your leisure. We look forward to a brand new year, a brand new decade, of serving Lehigh County and its residents. Until our next publication, I wish you all the very best and a safe, happy summer.



**As we face this unprecedented time in history, Lehigh County extends its heartfelt gratitude to all its residents especially first responders, healthcare professionals, and all essential personnel as we together take on the COVID-19 virus.**



**Government Center:**

17 South 7th St. • Allentown, PA 18101

**Courthouse:**

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610-782-3000 • [www.lehighcounty.org](http://www.lehighcounty.org)

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# Lehigh County Board of Commissioners

Our local legislative branch, the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners come together to vote on legislation for the betterment of the county. Overall, there are nine elected “county commissioners”.

Five district commissioners are elected by the voters of designated districts within the county, and four at-large commissioners are elected by voters countywide. While district commissioners can focus on constituents or issues within their respective districts, all commissioners effectively represent all of Lehigh County. Meetings are open to the public and are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month at 7:30PM at the Government Center.

Their responsibilities include adopting a budget for Lehigh County and approving the appointment of certain officials. Additionally, they come together to sponsor and pass ordinances and resolutions for the benefit of the county. All of these responsibilities are dictated to the Home Rule Charter of Lehigh County, a document similar to that of the U.S. Constitution.

In addition to the Board of Commissioner’s regular duties, they also come together to serve on a variety of committees that deal with specific county issues and development. These committees are:

## Current Board Members



Board Chair Amy Zanelli  
(District 3)



Vice-Chair Marc Grammes  
(District 1)



Nathan Brown (District 5)



Bob Elbich (??)



Percy Dougherty (District 2)



Dan Harrington (At Large)



Geoff Brace (District 4)



Dan Hartzell (At Large)



Zakiya Smalls (At Large)

### **Administrative & Human Resources Committee:**

Zakiya Smalls (c), Dave Harrington (v),  
Nathan Brown, Dan Hartzell

### **Cedarbrook Committee:**

Dan Hartzell (c), Percy Dougherty (v),  
Bob Elbich, Marc Grammes

### **Courts & Corrections Committee:**

Dave Harrington (c), Dan Hartzell (v),  
Nathan Brown, Zakiya Smalls

### **Development & Planning Committee:**

Geoff Brace (c), Dan Hartzell (v)  
Nathan Brown, Marc Grammes

### **Finance Committee:**

Marc Grammes (c), Bob Elbich (v),  
Geoff Brace, Percy Dougherty

### **General Services Committee:**

Percy Dougherty (c), Marc Grammes (v),  
Geoff Brace, Zakiya Smalls

### **Governance Committee:**

Nathan Brown (c), Geoff Brace (v),  
Dan Hartzell, Dave Harrington

### **Human Services Committee:**

Bob Elbich (c), Nathan Brown (v),  
Percy Dougherty, Marc Grammes

Hometown Press, the publisher of your Hometown Newsletter, would like to send out a heartfelt, *Stay Safe and Healthy* message to all the residents, businesses, and municipal staff during this pivotal time in history.

*“And the World Came Together as the People Stayed Apart”*



# Letter from Madam Chair

Dear Lehigh County,

So many have asked, what is it that Commissioners do? Well, we here at the Board have a rather interesting job. We are mainly a legislative branch of government, but also share some administrative duties. That means our responsibilities vary from balancing and prioritizing our \$512 million dollar budget, to changing the administrative code to ensure all of our employees are treated fairly and equally. We approve contracts and honor Eagle Scouts. We are a fiduciary for your tax dollars. We are an extraordinary diverse group of people, and I can personally say I hold a great respect for each and every one of my colleagues that I share the dais with.



However, with such variety in our day to day, what we become are excellent problem solvers. So please, don't be a stranger. Come to our meetings and tell us what you need help with. Even if it is outside our particular purview, you will find at least one of us that will be able to help you navigate what can feel like the miles of red tape to the government system. For what we are most of all is at your service. Your job is to not let us forget it.

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy, and prosperous year.

In Solidarity,

Amy Zanelli, Madam Chair.

## Lehigh County Row Offices

Alongside the County Executive and Board of Commissioners, Lehigh County proudly is served by various elected officials who come into office at large every four years. These offices are collectively known as the county row offices, the name traditionally stemming from their appearance in a row on the general election ballot.

### Office and Responsibilities

#### **Coroner:**

The Coroner's office is responsible for investigating and determining the cause of death of those who pass within the boundaries of Lehigh County. The current coroner is Eric Minnich, who was elected in the 2019 election.

#### **Clerk of Judicial Records:**

This office is responsible for the maintaining of records for the 31st Judicial District Court of Common Pleas including civil, criminal, and register of wills records. Deeds for land ownership for Lehigh County are also maintained here. Unless stipulated by law, these records are made accessible to the public and can now be viewed easily in an electronic database. The current Clerk of Judicial Records is Andrea Naugle.

#### **Controller:**

The Controller is an independent office that serves as a fiscal watchdog responsible for conducting fiscal oversight of county operations. The office performs quality audits of County revenue and expenditures on a rotational basis to measure financial integrity, ensures county compliance with county, state, and federal regulations, and maintains the county's ethics hotline.

The Controller also ensures the integrity of the public bidding process and serves as Secretary of the Retirement Board. The current controller is Mark Pinsley.

#### **District Attorney:**

The District Attorney is charged with prosecuting all misdemeanor and felony cases arising in Lehigh County, seeking justice by fairly and efficiently prosecuting those individuals charged with committing crimes. The District Attorney is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of Lehigh County and works closely with all police departments on the county, state, and federal level. The DA works with these officials on investigations, crime-fighting, and public safety initiatives.

The District Attorney is Jim Martin, who has led the office since 1998.

#### **Sheriff:**

The Sheriff serves all original criminal, civil and protection from abuse orders which come from the Court of Common Pleas. The main role the Sheriff holds is to ultimately provide security to court proceedings and county buildings. Additionally, other roles include transporting prisoners, holds sales to collect on debts, and investigating/apprehending fugitives and bail jumpers. Our current Sheriff is Joe Hanna.



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# Lehigh County Departments

## **Corrections:**

The Lehigh County Department of Corrections is responsible for the detention of adult and juvenile offenders. Their mission is to uphold public safety through the lawful confinement of offenders and by providing rehabilitative programs for inmates. The Office of the Director of Corrections is responsible for the overall administration of Lehigh County Jail in Allentown and the Community Corrections Center in Salisbury Township. Additionally, the department works in collaboration with other counties via contracts in providing Juvenile Detention services.

## **Administration**

The Administration department is responsible for the everyday operations of Lehigh County's government. There are six administrative divisions and they are Fiscal/Assessment, Human Resources, Information Technology, Procurement, Veterans Affairs and Voter Services.

## **Assessment Office:**

This office is responsible for the maintenance of property assessment rolls and updating property assessments based on new constructions or fires. The effects of these circumstances can either increase or reduce the value of a given property.

## **Fiscal:**

The Fiscal Office is responsible for Lehigh County's finances and ensuring the county is financially solid. The office promotes the fiscal integrity and stability of many aspects of Lehigh County, while also providing financial insight to county operating practices.

## **Human Resource Department:**

Under the direction of our new Director Marc Redding, The Office of Human Resources is responsible for personnel and risk management along with employee training. They're tasked with handling job applications and seeking out valuable employees that promote innovation and diversity within Lehigh County. Additionally, The Office of Human Resources mitigates risk through employee benefits such as health care and worker's compensation.

## **Voter Registration**

The Lehigh County Election Board is responsible to select, purchase, preserve, store, maintain and equip polling places with all that is needed to run an Election. The Board also is authorized to investigate election frauds, irregularities and violations, and to report all suspicious circumstances to the District Attorney. The Board receives election results and reports them to the public and to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, as well as performing many other responsibilities.

Residents of Lehigh County have 15 days prior to a Primary or General Election to register to vote or make changes to their existing registration. This can be done online at [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com) or with a paper application by mail or in our office.

Absentee and Mail-In ballots are now available for all registered Pennsylvania voters. Absentee ballots are used when the voter is away from their municipality on Election Day, because you are ill

## **Information Technology:**

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) provides technological and electronic support to county departments. It is thanks to these resources that Lehigh County government stays connected through computing services, network software applications, and other technology-based resources.

## **Procurement:**

The Office of Procurement is responsible for administering the purchase of construction services equipment, furniture, materials, nonprofessional services and supplies at the lowest possible cost. The department provides County departments with quality resources needed for proper and effective operations.

## **Human Services Department:**

The Lehigh County Department of Human Services (LCDHS) is a tax-payer supported organization whose mission is to assist individuals and families in becoming self-sufficient and overall improve the quality of life within our communities. Their goal is not only to strive for the safety of residents, but also the betterment of those in need.

The department consists of the Officers of Information and Referral Services, Aging and Adult Services, Children and Youth Services, Drug and Alcohol Services, Early Intervention Services, HealthChoices, Integrated Services, Intellectual Disabilities Services, and Mental Health Services. Together, these departments work tirelessly to ensure that those living in our county have a safe place to live.

## **Community and Economic Development:**

The Department of Community of Economic Development focuses on enhancing the quality of life of our communities by concentrating on the revitalization of our cities and boroughs, spurring economic growth, and supporting regional partnerships among our municipalities.

The department's grant programs have supported high priority projects of the County's twenty-five municipalities, aimed at enriching their economic viability by upgrading aging infrastructure, supporting improvements within the downtowns, and assisting agencies focused on providing safe, affordable and sustainable housing.

and cannot go to your polling place or for religious reasons. Mail-In ballots can be used for any other reason the voter does not wish to go to their precinct on Election day.

To receive a ballot prior to Election Day is a two-step process. First an application, also found at [www.VotesPA.com](http://www.VotesPA.com), must be filled out and filed prior to 5PM the Tuesday before a Primary or Election. And the voted ballot must be returned, in the office prior to 8PM Primary or Election night.

In February 2018, Governor Wolf directed and later solidified by a litigation agreement between Jill Stein & the Department of State, that all of Pennsylvania will be required in the 2020 Presidential Primary to use voter verified paper ballots. Lehigh County began using hand marked, voter verified paper balloting in the 2019 November Municipal Election.



# Emergency Management Services

Emergency Management handles how communities cope with disasters along with providing preventative measures to reduce hazards and other vulnerabilities. Their vision is to plan, analyze, conduct, and maintain programs to minimize damage to property and loss of life or injury. Our 9-1-1 Center operates within this branch and dutifully serves Lehigh County residents 24/7, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



A new season brings in new changes and upgrades to our Special Operations team, such as the Boat and the Bearcat. Used for supporting hazmat and rescue operations, “The Boat” is a brand new asset for our team to efficiently perform in water-based operations.

The Bearcat is an armored vehicle used for high risk police response for both preplanned and active incidents. Among the features the vehicle boasts, one of the key factors is that the Bearcat is bulletproof and bombproof—making it ready for any crisis situation. The vehicle is also used regularly to support law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

Emergency Management oversees the use of the equipment through the Special Operations and law enforcement agencies. When a situation becomes dire, be assured procedures and tools are in place to get Lehigh County the help it needs.

## Meet Brad

The newest addition to our Emergency Management team, Brad is the Operations and Training Coordinator for Lehigh County. Previously, Brad worked at St. Luke’s University Health Network as a Project Manager in Laboratory Administration for eight years before starting full time with Lehigh County in January 2020.



However, Brad is no stranger to serving Lehigh County’s Emergency Management Agency. He has been involved with the Special operations Team and Emergency Operations Center, and has been the Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for North Whitehall Township since 2010. He also serves as the Deputy Chief and Training Officer for Community Fire #1 of North Whitehall Township, where he has been a member since 1998.

Today his duties include running the Emergency Operations Center, educating the Local Emergency Management Coordinators, facilitating PEMA delivered courses, and serving as the lead for the Limerick Generating Station.

He resides in North Whitehall Township with his wife Ashley and son Wesley.

*Welcome to the team, Brad!*

Emergency Management’s goal is not only to ensure safety but peace of mind in times of a crisis or emergency. Anyone can sign up to be alerted on a serious incident or disaster in Lehigh County. Please visit the Lehigh County website and under the Emergency Management tab, you will find the CodeRed program where you can register.

Overall, we would like to extend a huge thank you to our Emergency Management team for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to Lehigh County!

## Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training 2020



**Calling All Community Members:** The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is an all-hazards training. This valuable course is designed to help you protect yourself, your family, your neighbors and your neighborhood in an emergency situation. One of the key concepts of the program is when a disaster or large-scale emergency occurs; CERT is about “neighbors helping neighbors within their own neighborhood.”

CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens may initially be on their own and their actions can make a difference. While people will respond to others in need without the training, one goal of the CERT program is to help them do so effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger.

Lehigh County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) offers **free** CERT trainings to develop our community’s ability

to respond to emergency situations. The 16-hour CERT training course is being held as follows:

- October 8 – 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm**
- October 15 – 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm**
- October 22 – 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm**
- October 29 – 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm**

All courses will be held at  
Cetronia Ambulance • 4300 Broadway • Allentown PA 18104

**Registration is required two weeks prior to the start of class.**

**Dates are subject to change.**

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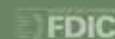
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# Cedarbrook Senior Care & Rehabilitation

Lehigh County is committed to serving all of its residents, especially our elderly who need special care. It is with great pride that we recognize Cedarbrook Senior Care & Rehabilitation for ringing in its 175th birthday, a milestone for its residents, employees, and all of Lehigh County.

That's 175 years of commitment, dedication, and loyalty!

A lot is happening at Cedarbrook this year. With the expansion of the new D wing, more room will be made for the residents so that they can live comfortably and spaciously. The design phase is officially in full swing and soon preparations will be made to transition residents over into the new area.

The wing is aimed to be complete by the year 2022.

However, it should be recognized that it is not simply bricks and mortar that make up Cedarbrook. It's the people, the residents, the employees, and all the volunteers that put in their time and dedication in making the facility a community.

Cedarbrook makes this possible with their Second Wing Dream program. Giving residents the chance to achieve one lifelong wish, such as flying in an airplane or riding an elephant, the Second Wing program makes it possible for Cedarbrook residents to truly live their golden years. Michelle Ayello, an employee at Cedarbrook, recounts her adventure with resident Karen as they visit the annual 2019 Philadelphia Flower Show.

*Last year in March, Karen told me her dream was to go to the Philadelphia Flower Show next year. She watches a Philadelphia news station that showed them setting up for the flower show, and she expressed how much she would love to see the flowers in person. Thanks to the Second Wind Dreams program, we were able to set up her dream and take her to see the flowers.*

## General Services

The Department of General Services holds a large umbrella for a variety of county events and services that affect our day to day living. Areas such as bridge maintenance, real estate management, facility planning, construction & maintenance, vehicle acquisition & maintenance, property distribution, and park maintenance all fall under duties carried out by our General Services Department. As we dive deeper into 2020, the county's presence in our infrastructure and preservation initiatives are expanding as Lehigh County's continues to blossom.

### Infrastructure

Our bridges connect us to many areas and destinations within Lehigh County and beyond. This year, we are proud to announce the completion of the Coplay-Northampton bridge—ahead of schedule and on budget. Be on the lookout for other construction updates on our county website and social media pages.

### Lehigh County owned D&L Trail Development in Catasauqua

In 2018, Lehigh County was awarded \$585,000.00 from the PennDot Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program towards the construction and improvements of the .75-mile section of the D&L Trail. This trail originates from the Deily Coal Yard trailhead South to Hanover Townships Canal Park and includes the replacement of the pedestrian bridge at the Deily Coal Yard.

The project is currently in its final permit stages of engineering

*We started our day at 9am on Tuesday morning. As we came into Philadelphia, we turned down the street of Chinatown and saw a beautiful arch full of flowers. We parked and headed into the convention center, where more beautiful arrangements came into view. We started looking at the beautiful plants next to the market place as we worked our way over to the main entrance. It is incredible the amount of work that goes into planning and setting up to make this a great event. Karen's favorite display was the Princess Grace display upon seeing all the beautiful plants and flowers.*



*After lunch, we headed over to the butterflies. We spent over an hour enjoying the butterflies flying around and landing on us. We would take them off ourselves and put them on flowers.*

*Following the butterfly exhibit, we headed back to the showroom floor and enjoyed more of the displays. Karen was even able to shop at the marketplace and purchase two air plants for her room. We then stopped at Cracker Barrel for supper on our way home. It was a great day had by all!*

-Michele Ayello, Cedarbrook Therapy Assistant in Life Enrichment.

It is with compassion and hope that Cedarbrook strives each day to make its residents feel at home. Karen's story is just one of hundreds waiting to be heard. Stay up to date with Cedarbrook residents and staff by following their website at <https://www.cedarbrookseniorcare.com/> along with their Facebook page Cedarbrook Senior Care & Rehabilitation.

and will be bid out for construction through the PennDot ECMS procurement process in 2020.


The project also includes additional PennDot cooperation by accommodating the trail passage under the Race Street bridge in the PennDot Race Street bridge/ Lehigh Street improvements project.

When completed this .75 mile section will give the County of Lehigh a total of 12.5 miles of improved D&L Trail for recreation--connecting our communities, businesses, and alternative transportation options for our residents.

Additional grant funding of \$250,000.00 was awarded to Lehigh County by PA DCNR for the project and is predominately be used for engineering and permitting.

The total project cost estimate is approx. \$829,000.00.






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### St. Luke's Sacred Heart Campus

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Phone: 610-440-4430  
Mon. - Fri.: 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

### Fowler Community Wellness Center

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Phone: 610-868-7800, ext. 224  
Mon. - Fri.: 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

### Easton Center

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## 2020 Census

The 2020 Census is here and in full swing! As we come together as a thriving community, we must take account for every individual that is present here in Lehigh County come April 1st. Even if you are not a resident, even if you are just visiting a loved one or friend, if you are in Lehigh County we want you to be counted!

So why the fuss? The purpose of the Census is to collect an accurate number of people living in an area so that the county may receive the proper funding to accommodate that number. For example, road work, school programs, food security, and overall county maintenance is funded by the Census. This year will determine how \$675 billion dollars in federal money will be divided among these services, or if we even get that amount at all.

There are many misconceptions floating around about the Census. Please bear in mind this is not a citizenship test or a collection of your personal information. Your count record is kept private, confidential, and is 100% protected.

Here are some fast facts about the 9 questions that make up this year's Census Questionnaire. Did you know?

- Did you know that our constitution mandates that we conduct a census every ten years to count the population of each state? The first census was conducted in 1790.
- It takes less than 5 minutes to fill out the Census form. That's quicker than ordering a cup of coffee!
- Your response to these questions is not only confidential, but protected by law. Anyone who is caught sharing this information will be hit with a \$250,000 federal fine and 5 year imprisonment.



- For the first time ever, the census is available online on your home computer or on your mobile device.
- A Census enumerator will only come to your house if you do not take advantage of taking the census online, by phone, or by mail.
- The Hispanic community, children under 5, college students, and seniors over the age of 60 are the groups most likely to be missed in the Census count.

- Pennsylvania is slated to lose one member of Congress if we have another undercount of our residents this year.
- Education and healthcare providers benefit the most from Census data. It affects our day to day lives more than you think!

Check out [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov) or call 1-844-330-2020 to get yourself started!

Ready to count yourself in? There is still time to submit your Census Questionnaire! Even though we are past April 1st, the Census will still be receiving your response for the next couple months. An undercount means less funding which results in a decrease in services for our community. The Census is ready for your response.

As we enter into a new decade, we want to bring positive growth and change to all Lehigh County residents. It's important now more than ever that we all get out and make sure the next decade counts.

*We are counting on you Lehigh County!*

## YOUR 2020 CENSUS COUNT AFFECTS THESE SERVICES



## YOUR COUNT MATTERS



# Veteran Affairs

The Veteran's Affairs Office is committed to serving Lehigh County veterans and their family members. They do so by providing federal, state, and local benefits along with information assistance.

## An Update from Tom Applebach, Director of Veterans' Affairs

Over the past several years, federal funding cuts to homeless Veteran services in the Lehigh Valley resulted in a significant reduction of dedicated resources aimed at addressing the problem. That will soon change as the Lehigh Valley Homeless Veteran Fund gets up and running.

Thanks to the efforts of Thomas Applebach, Director of the Lehigh County Office of Veterans Affairs to create the fund, coupled with funding from community and private donors, the county commissioners, and a \$200,000 state grant secured by Senate Appropriations Chairman Pat Browne, the Lehigh Valley will soon be back on track.

The number of homeless Veterans in the Lehigh Valley has held fairly steady over the past seven years when veterans became a subcategory of the yearly Point-In-Time count – a one-day effort held each January to identify the homeless throughout a community. But while the numbers haven't changed much, the loss of funding meant that local agencies have had to cut back on the amount of outreach and services they provide.

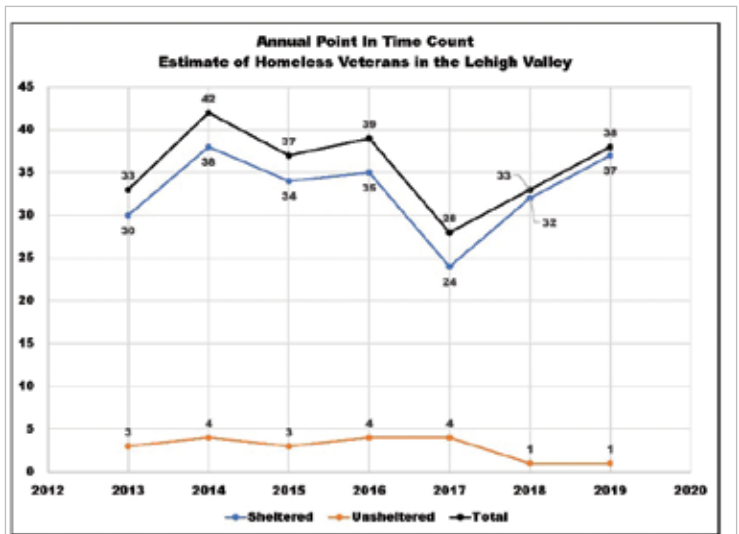
The Lehigh Valley Homeless Veteran Fund is designed to provide direct assistance to existing agencies on a competitive award basis and is administered by the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation. The fund is designed to support existing programs or support new initiatives that ensure that "No Veteran is Left Behind."

"It's been a struggle over the past several years to find additional funding to overcome the federal cuts," said Applebach. "The money secured by Senator Browne and donations from the community will help our local partner agencies sustain and grow their programs to house and serve our homeless Veterans and maybe even help to fund new and innovative programs."

The fund is overseen by a five-member committee who will evaluate applications and recommend grant awards. The fund is managed by the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation, which will disburse the grants as well as support fundraising efforts.

"I want to be clear that, although I work for Lehigh County and the Commissioners helped to create the fund and provided the initial seed money, this is not a government program. In partnering with the non-profit Community Foundation, we want everyone to understand that this is a Lehigh Valley-wide community effort that will require the financial support of everyone to sustain and grow."

You can donate to the fund at <https://www.lehighvalleyfoundation.org/create-fund/existing-funds/lehigh-valley-homeless-veteran-fund>. All donations to the fund are fully tax deductible.

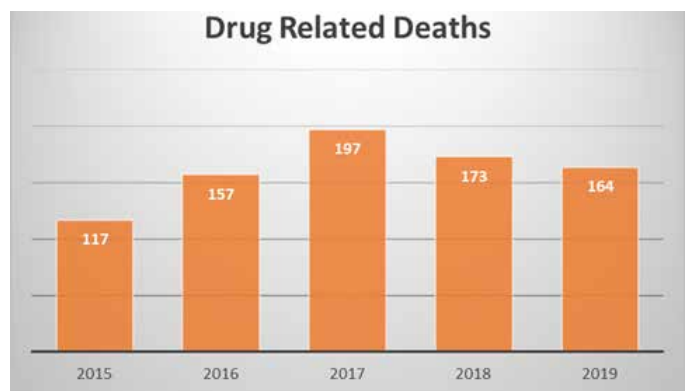


## Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center

The mission of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center is to serve not only the families and loved ones of those that have passed; but to the deceased themselves. The Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center conducts independent and thorough investigations, often working in conjunction with physicians, nurses, law enforcement and emergency service responders to assure the facts and circumstances surrounding a death are true and accurate. The staff of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center recognizes the responsibility to treat all deceased persons with dignity and respect.

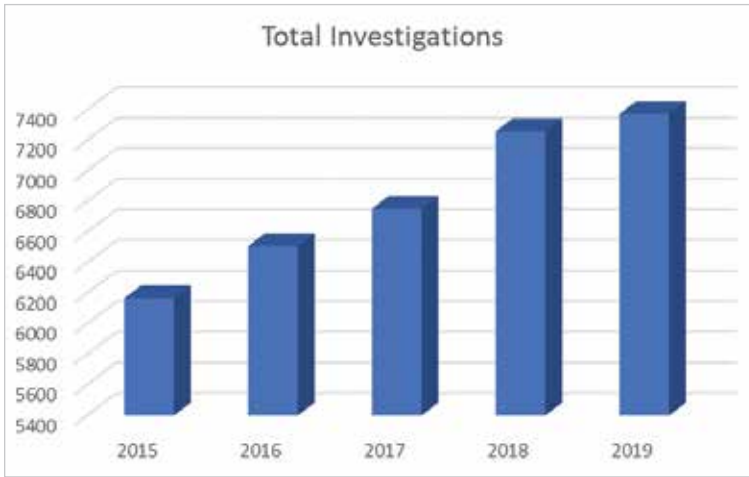
The Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center is responsible to investigate deaths that occur within the geographical boundaries of the County of Lehigh. Deaths that occur under violent and suspicious circumstances are those that attract the most attention.

However, most deaths occur away from the public eye. The staff of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center recognizes their responsibility to all citizens; regardless of the circumstances surrounding the death. Investigations performed by our staff often assist surviving loved ones with valuable medical information, specifically related to inherited diseases and conditions. This type of information provides families with comfort and peace of mind; serving as an early detection tool and treatment of potentially life-threatening illnesses. The investigations and rulings of our office concerning criminal acts or criminal neglect or those that affect public health and safety are the foundation for follow-up actions for other investigative agencies.



continued on next page

# Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center *continued*



The office is led by Coroner Eric D. Minnich. The Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center is accredited by the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners. Coroner Minnich and his investigative staff are all certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General Coroner's Education Board and approximately 75% of the staff is nationally certified by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

In addition to death investigations, the staff of the Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center is committed to the prevention of unnecessary deaths and serve on several committees that target at-risk groups (suicide prevention, opioid deaths, child death and elder abuse).

## Farmland Preservation Update

By Diana Matthews-Gehringer

Lehigh County consists of a diverse landscape of both urban and rural character which over the years has attracted ever increasing levels of residential and commercial growth.

At the same time, the County will reach a milestone for farmland preservation in 2020. The Agricultural Land Preservation Program will reach 25,000 acres of farmland preserved. Since 1989 when the program started, 347 farms have been protected and will forever be available for agriculture. Under the program, landowners voluntarily apply to sell their development rights and permanently protect their land for agricultural uses. Farms are ranked and the top farms are selected based on high soil quality and likelihood of development. An independent appraisal determines the value per acre.

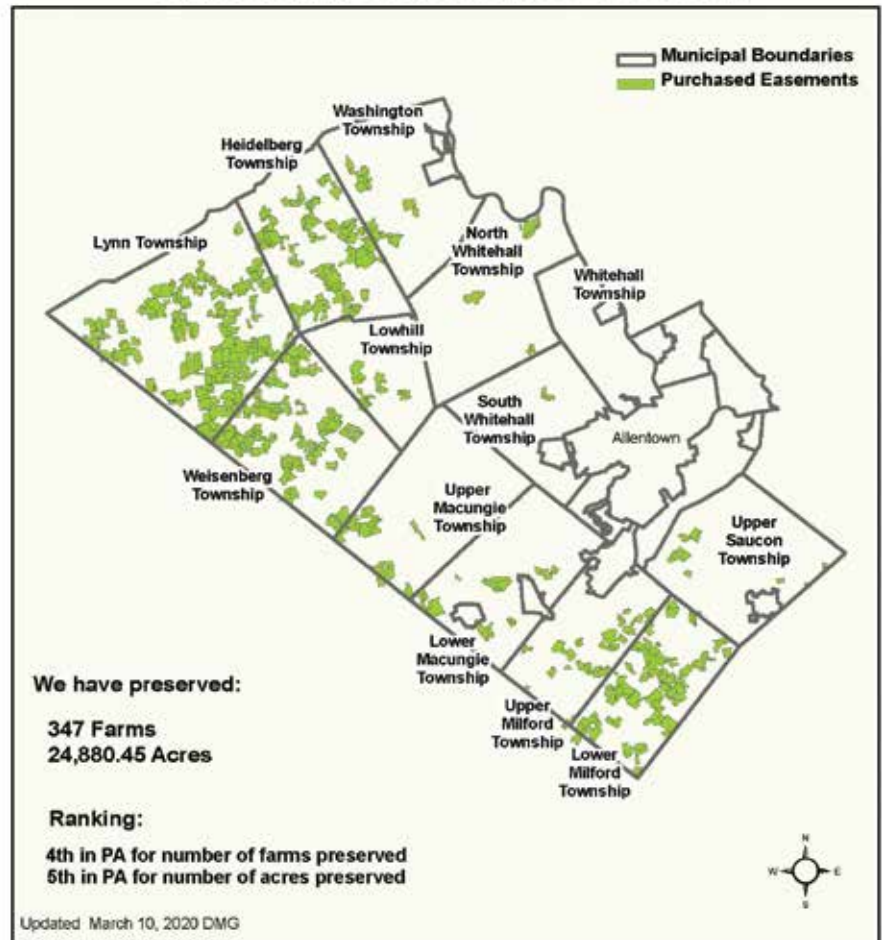


Statewide, 58 counties have farmland preservation programs. Pennsylvania leads the nation in farmland preservation and as of December 2019, 5,636 farms totaling 577,092 acres have been protected. Lehigh County ranks 4th in number of farms protected and 5th in number of acres. Funding for the program comes from Lehigh County and matching state funds. Local municipalities have also contributed in some cases.

Lehigh County Commissioners have supported the program at various levels over the years. In the years 2017, 2018 and 2019, County funds were at an all time high of \$2 million per year. This increased funding resulted in 77 farms protected. There are 65 farms currently on the Lehigh County waiting list.

Congrats to Lehigh County for this great accomplishment that will last for many future generations.

## Lehigh County Agricultural Conservation Easements







## Recycling in Lehigh County

With all that is going in Lehigh County, it is important that we take a step back and reflect upon the waste we are putting out to our environment.

Be on the lookout for our upcoming Hazardous Waste Management event—a community event that only comes once in a couple years here in the County. At the event residents will drop off materials such as motor oil, cleaners, acids, pesticides, and other items that cannot be disposed of at home.

With that being said, we are urging everyone to understand the difference between recyclable and nonrecyclable waste. Over time, these objects can accrue in our basements, sheds, and a variety of storage units so it is important we take advantage of these collection events in the upcoming future. Collection events normally occur on a 2-3 year basis.

### Did you know?

- Lehigh County has **2 e-waste recycling companies** operating within its borders? This is where you can take any electronic waste such as old computers, televisions, radios, laptops, stereos, etc.
- **Latex Paint** is one of the most frequently asked items in regards to disposal. A simple solution is drying out the paint by opening the lid and letting its contents air out. From there, add in cat litter before putting the paint can in a plastic bag

for disposal. Habitat for Re-Store has a complete guide for disposing latex paint on their website at <https://habitatlv.org/latex-paint-recycling>.

- To eliminate the need for **plastic shopping bags**, consider the use of recyclable cloth shopping bags for your next trip to the grocery store. If you do have to use a plastic bag, don't forget you can recycle them at Boscov's, Giant, Home Depot, Target, Wal-Mart, Wegman's, and Weis lobby containers. Be sure the plastic bags are clean before recycling.
- Many retailers such as Home Depot, Lowe's, ACE hardware, Staples, and Madles Hardware in Coopersburg will take your **old batteries**. These batteries include rechargeable batteries, single use batteries, old cellphones, and CFL bulbs. Be on the lookout for their participation bins on site.
- Many municipalities hold their own **document shredding** events. Please check your local municipality newsletter and website for details and dates.

Lehigh County shares one unified, collective goal of maintain a healthy environment for our residents. By managing our waste products efficiently, together we can ensure that the best steps possible are being taken to keep our county clean.

For more information on how to keep our county and Pennsylvania beautiful as a whole, please visit

<https://www.keeppabeautiful.org/>

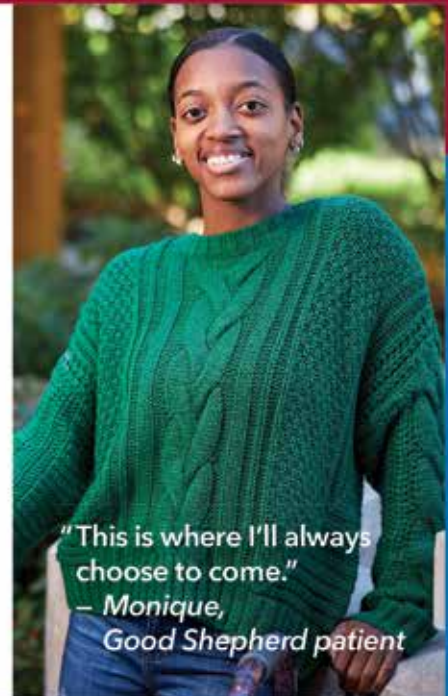
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# Lehigh County Contact Directory

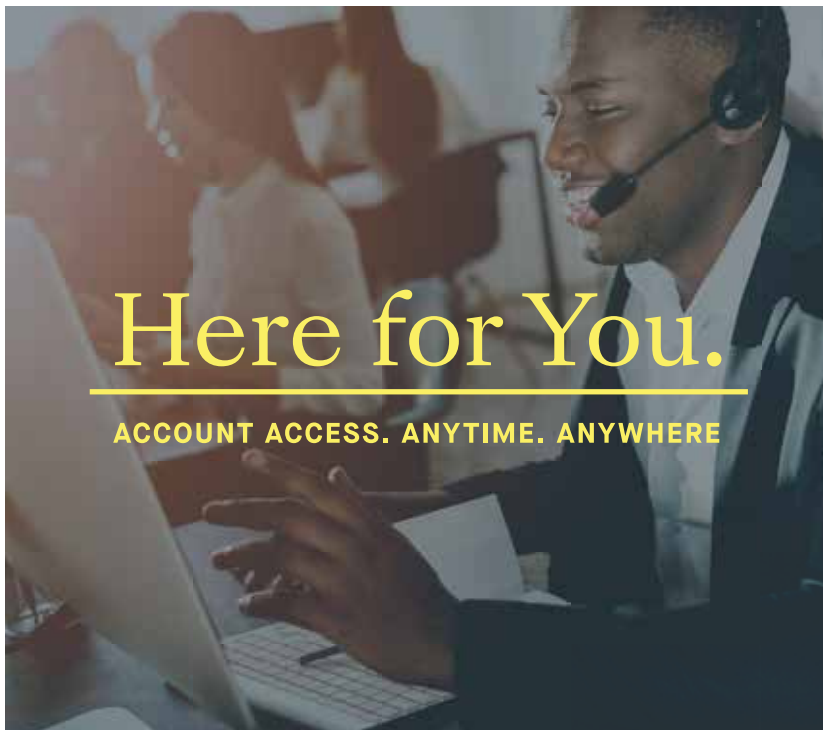
Lehigh County Government Center  
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Assessment	610-782-3038	Information & Referral	610-782-3200
Cedarbrook Nursing Homes	610-395-3727	Emergency Telephone Numbers	
Clerk of Judicial Records		Aging and Adult Services	610-782-3034
Civil Division	610-782-3148	Children and Youth	610-782-3064
Criminal Division	610-782-3077	Crisis Intervention	610-782-3127
Register of Wills	610-782-3170	Drug & Alcohol	610-782-3555
Recorder of Deeds	610-782-3162	Early Intervention	610-782-3125
Commissioners	610-782-3050	Mental Health	610-782-3135
Community and Economic Development	610-782-3565	Intellectual Disabilities	610-782-3126
Controller	610-782-3082	Veteran's Affairs	610-782-3295
Coroner	610-782-3426	Parks and Recs	610-871-0281
District Attorney	610-782-3100	Public Defender	610-782-3157
Executive Office	610-782-3001	Procurement	610-782-3030
Fiscal/Tax Claims	610-782-3115	Sheriff's Office	610-782-3175
General Services	610-782-3033	Solid Waste Management	610-782-3073
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Human Services – Administrative Office	610-782-3952	Voter Registration/ Board of Elections	610-782-3194



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