

# NETWORKS

## DIGITAL NEWS

### A plan for the great outdoors - 2025

Last month, Pennsylvania released its latest and likely most bold comprehensive plan for outdoor recreation throughout the Commonwealth. This sector is a priority focus for the state, not just for fun and health, but for economic development. Here in Blair County, government leaders and economic development stakeholders are continuing to take steps to expand



awareness and access to outdoor recreation assets throughout the County. Our mountain trails, waterways and shared roadways are a key part of our community that can help to attract next generation of investors and residents. We applaud the Commonwealth and our local state delegation for their support of this effort. To read more see the article below:

**As appeared in the Altoona Mirror on July 22, 2025**

**by Christina Lengyel, writer for The Center Square:**

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and National Resources has issued its Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The plan is revisited every five years in order to guide the department's work throughout the commonwealth.

The plan entitled, **Outdoor Places, Shared Spaces** was unveiled at the second annual Outdoors for All Day at Culliton Park in Lancaster.

"This plan is about making a place for everyone in the outdoors in Pennsylvania," said Deputy Secretary Claire Jantz. "Input from thousands of Pennsylvanians — including recreation providers, outdoor enthusiasts, and the general public — was critical in shaping the exciting next phase of outdoor recreation in our state."

The Conservation Department says the plans aims are "promoting community and economic development, advancing health and wellness, supporting access and inclusion, addressing infrastructure and maintenance, and advancing sustainability and climate resilience."

The plan enables the department to receive funding from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Permanent funding came through the Great American Outdoors Act, which President Donald Trump signed into law in 2020. Cuts made by Congress at Trump's direction via the One Big Beautiful Bill Act divert \$387 million from several public land projects.

Click [HERE](#) to read the rest of the story.

### Cowboy Country trip information meeting tonight

Rambling western towns and historic landmarks are on the itinerary when you pack your bags for America's Cowboy Country trip, September 8-15, 2026 with travel partner [Epic Journeys](#). An informational meeting will be held this evening at 6 p.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. There is no cost or obligation to attend. Travel experts will be on-hand with detailed itineraries. Let us know you are coming. Call the Chamber at 814-943-8151.

### Heading to Happy Valley

At last week's Breakfast Club the Chamber hosted a White Out featuring a panel of gridiron experts offering entertaining insight into the coming Penn State football season. A highlight of the event was awarding one attendee four tickets with parking pass to the Nittany Lions season opener. Pictured below is the winner, Jim Gonsman of [Home-town Bank](#), left, with Cody Jones, right, of [PNC Bank](#), event and ticket sponsor.



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# Your gift can bring a smile

By Sherri Stayer, LBC Alumni

Each year Leadership Blair County (LBC) Alumni searches for a cause in which they can truly make a difference in the lives of others. In response to these efforts, the Alumni created Gifts of Hope.

The organization selected by LBC Alumni for the 2025 Gifts of Hope project is Easter for Eli.

Elias "Eli" Garrett was a loving 3-year-old boy who lost his courageous and lengthy battle with Non-Hodgkin's T-Cell Lymphoma on May 7, 2009, just shy of his fourth birthday. In his memory, Easter for Eli collects Easter baskets to be delivered to children who are hospitalized over the Easter Holiday. Last year, they delivered 5,000 baskets and \$4,800 worth of gifts cards to children at 16 hospitals in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia, Delaware, and DC.

"Life after Leadership as Alumni includes practicing the Servant Leadership principles we learned during the program and continuing to help those in our community. With that in mind, we



are excited to collect contents for the "Easter for Eli" baskets, as well as gift cards, to be delivered to children hospitalized next Easter," said Jodi Cessna, Chair of the LBC Alumni Committee.

Items, such as stuffed animals, blankets, sensory toys, craft kits, coloring books, crayons, art sets, books, Legos, journals, and gift cards, just to name a few, can be delivered to the Blair County Chamber office from September 2nd through the 9th to be included in the Gifts of Hope donation to be presented at the annual LBC Alumni Breakfast later in September.



...to Master Chelsi Tedeschi, owner of [Blair School of Martial Arts](#), upon receiving a Loyalty Award, Spirit Award, first-place finish in both masters forms and weapons divisions, and completion of her 6th degree blackbelt test at the International Tang Soo Do Federation World Championship in Washington, DC.

...to [The Meadows](#) for celebrating 75 years in business. Founded by James V. Meadows, they are still delighting customers with the same frozen custard recipe since the stand opened on July 4, 1950.



## Unlocking the power of planned giving

Register today for an expert-led panel discussion featuring seasoned professionals who will dive into the ins and outs of major gifts and estate planning. The Chamber's Committee of Non-Profit Businesses is hosting a Best Practices workshop on Friday, Sept. 5, from 8:15 - 10:00 a.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. At this workshop you will learn how to position your organization to be part of someone's legacy. Through real-life examples, you will hear how to navigate donor conversation with confidence, and understand the legal and financial nuances of accepting and managing large or restricted gifts. Cost to attend is \$10 for Chamber Members and \$20 for non-members. Corporate sponsor is [Central Pennsylvania Community Foundation](#). Register today at [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com) or call the Chamber at 814-943-8151.

## Welcome New Chamber Members



The Blair County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to welcome its newest members. Pictured, from left: Kristy Replogle and Sandra Chernicky, [AMERICAN RED CROSS GREATER PENNSYLVANIA REGION](#); Shannon Mielnik, [CROWNED BOUTIQUE](#); Jacob Bickley, [BICKLEY FINANCIAL GROUP](#); Dr. Bridget Flickinger and Heidi Murphy, PA-C, [BLOOM MedAesthetics](#); and Megan Rossman, Program Manager, Blair County Chamber of Commerce.



# Gifts of Hope

Making a difference.



Meet Eli...



Elias "Eli" Garrett was a loving 3-year-old little boy who lost his courageous and long battle with Non-Hodgkins T-Cell Lymphoma on May 7th, 2009, just ten days before his 4th birthday. In his memory, "Easter for Eli" started collecting Easter baskets to be delivered to children who are hospitalized over the Easter Holiday. Last year "EFE" delivered 5,000 baskets and \$4,800 worth of gift cards to sick children at 16 hospitals!

## Donations accepted:

**September 2 - 19**

**8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

## Donation location:

Blair County Chamber of Commerce  
3900 Industrial Park Drive, Altoona

## Monetary donations:

*100% will be used to purchase items for baskets*

**Checks payable to:**

Blair County Chamber Foundation

## For more information:

Email Sherri Stayer

[sherris@lungdiseasefoundation.org](mailto:sherris@lungdiseasefoundation.org)



**BLAIR COUNTY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
FIRST FRONTIER - BLAIR COUNTY, PA

**LEADERSHIP BLAIR COUNTY ALUMNI**

Each year the Blair County Chamber's Leadership Blair County Alumni searches for a cause in which they can truly make a difference in the lives of others. In response to these efforts, the Alumni created Gifts of Hope.

## Items needed...

- ☼ Teethers
- ☼ Stuffed animals
- ☼ Blankets
- ☼ Books (all ages)
- ☼ Sensory toys
- ☼ Playdough
- ☼ Hair bows
- ☼ Coloring Books (all ages)
- ☼ Crayons
- ☼ Blocks
- ☼ Toy figures
- ☼ Slime
- ☼ Dolls
- ☼ Craft Kits
- ☼ Art sets
- ☼ Legos
- ☼ Hats
- ☼ Stress balls
- ☼ Fun pens
- ☼ Cool room light
- ☼ Bluetooth speakers
- ☼ Journals

## Gift cards...

Sheetz	iTunes
Google Play	Amazon
Wawa	Visa

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**NO food or candy**

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