

**SPORTS / B1**

Hollidaysburg wins big over Tyrone on senior night

**NATION / A8**

Winter storm bearing down on swath of U.S.

# Altoona Mirror

**\$1.50** **WEDNESDAY**

January 21, 2026

## ABCD Corp. to buy Gable's building

Group to use \$1.3M from general fund for purchase of downtown landmark

By WILLIAM KIBLER  
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The Altoona Blair County Development Corporation has reached an agreement to buy the largest

building in the downtown, the one most characteristic of downtown's heyday and one that the organization regards as a key to continuing the development momentum that the downtown has experienced in recent years.

ABCD will use \$1.3 million from its general fund to purchase the former Gable's Department Store from DSD Investors, which bought it from a Johnstown group in 2021, which in turn bought it

earlier that year from a Devorris-Lawruk family partnership that had owned it for 30 years.

With the building once again under local control, ABCD will work with the city and local developers on a plan for transforming the 150,000-square-foot structure from "economically dormant" to "once again economically impactful to both the surrounding businesses, the tax base and the county" — within market and financial

constraints, said ABCD President/CEO Stephen McKnight.

ABCD is hoping to hear "feasible scenarios that will accommodate the city's continued growth trajectory," ABCD board Chairwoman Ann Benzel said in a news release.

ABCD has worked for more than a decade with the ownership groups to get the building renovated, without success, McKnight said.

Experts in 2017 estimated that it would cost more than \$25 million

to expose the original department store windows by removing the 1970s brick casing, while also gutting the interior to create a "vanilla" box with wide open interior spaces, according to McKnight.

There was a \$3 million state grant available then that required an equal match to help pay for the "daylighting" project, but the successive ownership groups didn't take advantage of it.

See **Gable's**/Page A5

### SAFELY IN HAND



Mirror photo by Patrick Waksmuski

**A**ltoona City crossing guards Jermaine Taylor (right) and Kim Kane stop traffic at 17th Street and Fourth Avenue for dismissed students on Tuesday afternoon.

### State deer season may move up a week

Game Commission mulls starting before Thanksgiving to attract more hunters

By JOHN FINNERTY  
CapitolWire

Fewer hunters headed into the fields and woods around the state for deer season in 2025 than they did before the state rolled back its longstanding ban on Sunday hunting, Game Commission data shows.

The decline mirrors national trends, and Game Commission spokesman Travis Lau said officials believe the drop might have been worse without the Sunday hunting change.

"Pennsylvania generally is said to be losing hunters at a slower rate, possibly due to new opportunities and removing barriers to participation," Lau said in an email to CapitolWire/State Affairs on Friday.

Pennsylvania had long barred hunting on Sunday, but began relaxing one of the last remaining blue laws on the books a few years ago. House Bill 1431 completely eliminated the Sunday hunting ban after Gov. Josh Shapiro signed it into law as Act 36 last June.

The number of junior hunters and out-of-state hunters was up slightly in 2025, compared to the previous year.

Now, the Game Commission is eyeing another major change, with the board set to consider this weekend whether to move the start of the deer season up a week.

See **Deer**/Page A2

## Penn Cambria won't exceed Act 1 Index

District passes resolution to limit level in case of property tax increase

By MATT CHURELLA  
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CRESSON — The Penn Cambria School Board indicated they will not exceed the state's Act 1 Index of 5% should the board

decide to raise tax rates in May.

During Tuesday's regular session meeting, the board passed a resolution in accordance with the Taxpayer Relief Act of 2006, which limits tax increases to the level set by an inflation index.

Should the board raise property taxes by 5% for the 2026-27 preliminary budget, the district's tax millage rates will increase from 68.6 mills to 72.04 mills in Cambria County and from 9.55 mills to

9.73 mills in Blair County.

The school district serves multiple municipalities in Cambria County, including Tunnelhill Borough — a portion of which is in Blair County, making Penn Cambria a multi-county district with distinct tax millage rates.

With a 5% increase, the average taxpayer would see an increase of about \$39.37 in Cambria County and \$13.15 in Blair County, according to business administrator Jill Francisco.

Because district officials don't know how much they'll receive from the Homestead/Farmstead property tax exclusion, those figures are preliminary, Francisco said.

The board will decide whether to raise tax millage rates in May when the preliminary budget is passed, Francisco said.

State law requires school districts to pass a final budget by June 30 each year.

See **Penn Cambria**/Page A6

## Aircraft accident closes runway

Plane runs off tarmac while landing at Blair County airport

By MATT CHURELLA  
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A small, single-engine aircraft

ran off a general aviation runway

while landing Tuesday morning

at the Altoona-Blair County Airport, prompting officials to close

the runway for a couple of hours

until they received permission to move the aircraft, airport manager Tracy Plessinger said.

The pilot was not hurt and was able to walk away from the incident "with no scratches," Plessinger said, adding the plane has a damaged propeller and is not flyable.

When an aircraft is in an accident, Plessinger said it requires a "complete rebuild" on the engine. In this incident, except for the propeller, people wouldn't realize the aircraft was damaged just by

looking at it, he said.

According to Plessinger, airport officials reported the accident to the Federal Aviation Administration, who in turn contacted the National Transportation Safety Board and granted permission to move the aircraft off the runway.

An investigation into what caused the accident will continue through the next few days, Plessinger said, noting the airport's operations are "back to normal now."

See **Runway**/Page A6



Mirror photo by Patrick Waksmuski

An Altoona-Blair County Airport runway was closed after an incoming plane landed and went off the tarmac. The small plane was trying to land at the airport Tuesday morning.

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