

# Altoona Mirror

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## Shapiro pushes \$53.2 billion budget

Governor finds creative ways to fund new initiatives

By ROBERT SWIFT  
CapitolWire

With finances tight, Gov. Josh Shapiro proposed creative ways Tuesday to pay for several new state initiatives during his annual budget address to lawmakers. The Democratic governor proposed \$1 billion in state bond borrowing to help pay for energy

grid projects, housing and upgrading local government buildings through a new Pennsylvania Program For Critical Infrastructure Investment. He proposed a revived \$100 million PA Innovation Program to underwrite emerging technology ventures. The state would sell Insurance Premium Tax Credit to insurance companies to pay for the innovation program. Insurers would buy a credit thus generating revenue for the program, Shapiro administration officials said. An insurer would claim the credit on

future tax filings. Shapiro proposed creating a Federal Response Fund by transferring \$100 million from the Rainy Day Fund. The response fund is designed to give the administration broad authority and flexibility to respond to federal aid and reimbursement cuts under the Trump administration in such areas as disaster aid and low-income food assistance. Shapiro said Pennsylvania needs to do more than just filing lawsuits to counter the funding uncertainty at the federal level.

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## Lawmakers' reactions mixed

Proposal 'represents a starting point'

By CONNER GOETZ  
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During his annual budget address Tuesday before members of the state House and Senate, Gov. Josh Shapiro called on lawmakers to build on the progress Pennsylvania has made over the past three years with further investment in key

areas, including education, housing and economic development. Shapiro's budget "represents a starting point," state Sen. Judy Ward, R-Blair, said in a statement. "The governor's budget proposal depends on accounting tricks and bad policy, such as transferring billions from our Rainy Day Fund and the legalization of recreational marijuana, while increasing government spending at an unsustainable pace," Ward said. See **Lawmakers**/Page **A3**

## Trump signs bill to end shutdown

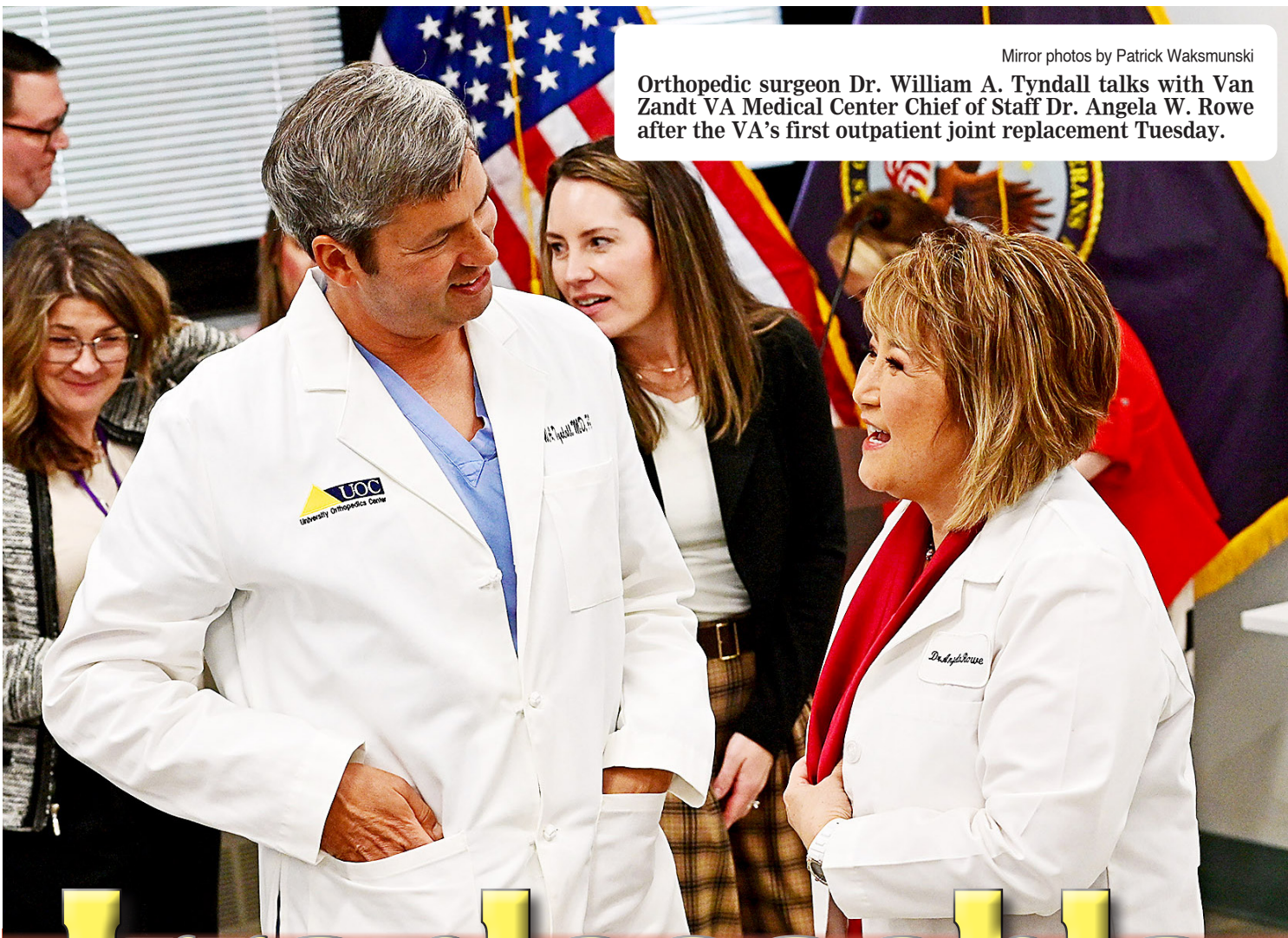
President inks \$1.2T government funding measure, setting stage for next fight

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed a roughly \$1.2 trillion government funding bill Tuesday that ends the partial federal shutdown that began over the weekend and sets the stage for an intense debate in Congress over Homeland Security funding. The president moved quickly to sign the bill after the House approved it with a 217-214 vote. "This bill is a great victory for the American people," Trump said. The vote Tuesday wrapped up congressional work on 11 annual appropriations bills that fund government agencies and programs through Sept. 30. Passage of the legislation marked the end point for one funding fight, but the start of another. That's because the package only funds the Department of Homeland Security for two weeks, through Feb. 13, at the behest of Democrats who are demanding more restrictions on immigration enforcement after the shooting deaths of Alex Pretti and Renee Good by federal officers in Minneapolis.

Leaders are digging in for a fight

Difficult negotiations are ahead, particularly for the agency that enforces the nation's immigration laws — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries quickly warned Democrats would not support any further temporary funding for Homeland Security without substantial changes to its immigration operations., raising the potential of another shutdown for the department and its agencies. "We need dramatic change in order to make sure that ICE and other agencies within the department of Homeland Security are conducting themselves like every other law enforcement organization in the country," Jeffries said.

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Mirror photos by Patrick Waksmunski

Orthopedic surgeon Dr. William A. Tyndall talks with Van Zandt VA Medical Center Chief of Staff Dr. Angela W. Rowe after the VA's first outpatient joint replacement Tuesday.

## Irreplaceable

Van Zandt performs first VA total joint replacement for an outpatient

By WILLIAM KIBLER  
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The Van Zandt VA Medical Center is not among the bigger hospitals in the VA system nationwide, but on Tuesday, it became the first ever in that system to perform total joint replacement surgery on an outpatient. Hospital officials seemed ecstatic about achieving the distinction during a news conference shortly after shoulder replacement surgery on Scott Miller, 66.

Yet it probably shouldn't be surprising that one of the system's smaller hospitals ended up being the one to do it first, because as an outpatient-only facility that doesn't deal with high-acuity patients like a major hospital does, there is less competition for resources like X-rays, should something go wrong, according to

orthopedic surgeon Dr. William "Andy" Tyndall, who performed the surgery on Miller. There are several reasons why it makes sense for the VA system — and specifically Van Zandt — to begin doing joint replacement surgeries, according to Dr. Angela Rowe, chief of hospital staff. VA patients generally prefer to get as much of their health care within the system as possible, Rowe said. Van Zandt patients in particular prefer to get their care at the local hospital, rather than the VA in Pittsburgh, for example, to avoid the travel and inconvenience, Rowe said.

**"It's the most grateful patient population I've ever treated. They do not take (the help) for granted."**

Dr. William "Andy" Tyndall, Van Zandt VA Medical Center orthopedic surgeon



Van Zandt VA Medical Center staff listen to orthopedic surgeon Dr. William A. Tyndall after the Veteran's Administration's first outpatient joint replacement on Tuesday.

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