

Altoona Mirror

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FRIDAY

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Rubber dams in good shape

Recent inspection finds cracking of inflatable dams actually superficial

By **WILLIAM KIBLER**
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A recent inspection of the inflatable rubber dams installed seven years ago atop the spillways for Lake Altoona and the Impounding Dam near Horseshoe Curve showed the rubber dams are in fundamentally good condition and could last another 25 or 30 years, according to authority General Manager Mark Perry.

That “good news” assuages authority fears that the rubber dams would need replaced far sooner than would normally be expected, due to recent cracking and leakage of air, as reported at a meeting in May.

The cracking of the rubber atop the Impounding Dam, however, is only superficial, and doesn’t affect the integrity of the bladder, which is good — although a patch will be needed, according to a preliminary report on the inspection by M2i of Montreal, Perry said.

“That was a relief that we were not faced with (potentially) millions” in expenses for premature replacement, Perry told the board Thursday.

The current rubber dams were manufactured in China and replaced a pair of rubber dams that had been manufactured in Japan — and that had lasted 30 to 35 years, officials said last month.

By the time the authority replaced those prior rubber dams seven years ago, the Japanese manufacturer no longer made rubber dams, officials have said.

By that time, the Chinese version was one of only two choices, according to a retired authority engineer who contacted the Mirror several weeks ago.

Nevertheless, more than 1,500 of those rubber dams from China had been installed around the world by then, according to that retired engineer.

The rubber dams from China met the International Organization for Standardization’s quality assurance measures and met the specifications the authority had listed, which mirrored those that applied to the Japanese version, according to the engineer.

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FINDING BALANCE



Mirror photo by Patrick Waksmunski

Alison McMullen (left) and Helen Betar, both of Claysburg, try reverse hyperextension at the newly opened Fitness Court at Claysburg Community Park on Thursday.

Court’s in session

Claysburg debuts fitness facility at Claysburg Community Park

By **COLETTE COSTLOW**
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CLAYSBURG — Those looking to get in shape or try something new need look no further than the Claysburg Community Park, where a bright blue outdoor gym has taken shape.

During an official ribbon cutting ceremony Thursday, local government officials, school district administration and community members gathered at the park to see the area’s first Fitness Court, designed for individuals ages 14 and up, and equipped with core, squat, push, lunge, pull, agility and bend workout stations.

Users can scan the QR code found on the

court wall to view photos or watch videos of exercise demonstrations using the installed equipment.

“We all agree it is crucial to get people the proper recreational options to be able to get outside and have the opportunity to live healthy lifestyles,” said Jordan Oldham, chairman of the Greenfield Township supervisors.

Oldham said it was lucky he found information about the grant opportunity about a year ago, as it ended up in his junk email folder. After filling out the application, Oldham received notice that the township received a \$30,000 grant through the National Fitness Campaign.

In early March, Grannas Bros. in Hollidaysburg laid the blacktop before the equipment was eventually set in late May.

Oldham worked alongside Claysburg-Kimmel’s Assistant Superintendent Brannan Raptosh to raise awareness about the court among the district’s students.

“We’re very excited to teach our youth about this resource,” Raptosh said.

Demonstrating the equipment were three members of the Claysburg-Kimmel High School football team, one of the many groups likely to use the equipment to increase their fitness, strength and stamina.

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Rural King seeks dismissal of suit

Mother of murder victim says store had duty to prevent gun’s ‘straw purchase’

By **PHIL RAY**
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The parent corporation of a Clearfield firearms store has asked a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit brought by the mother

of a murder victim, who claims the company and the store had a duty to prevent the alleged “straw purchase” of the gun used in the killing.

The lawsuit was filed earlier this year by Jodi Lynn Parks of Clearfield County.

Her son, Kodey Lee Parks, 33, was shot to death on Feb. 24, 2024, during a custody exchange with his estranged wife, Danielle Parks, and her boyfriend, Bryan Michaelis, in a home in

Morris Township.

Michaelis, it was charged, used a gun purchased the day before at a Rural King firearms store located at 260 Plaza Drive, Clearfield.

According to a lawsuit filed by the mother, Michaelis was an individual with a criminal record which barred him from purchasing and possessing a firearm.

Danielle purchased the gun, and, the lawsuit charged, handed it to Michaelis while the couple

was still in the store.

The Parks lawsuit contends that Rural King employees had a duty “to pick up on, and intervene on the suspicious activity of Parks and Michaelis while inside the store.”

But, Rural King, through Pittsburgh attorney Kevin C. Harkins, has asked U.S. District Judge Stephanie L. Haines to dismiss the lawsuit.

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Mangione reverses course on psychiatric defense

The Associated Press

In a stunning reversal, Luigi Mangione’s lawyers told a judge Thursday that he will no longer be asserting a psychiatric defense at his state murder trial in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson.

The retraction came just a day after Mangione’s lawyers told Judge Gregory Carro that

they planned to pursue a defense involving claims that the 28-year-old Ivy League graduate was suffering from extreme emotional disturbance at the time of the Dec. 4, 2024, killing.

A message seeking comment was left with a spokesperson for Mangione’s lawyers. The Manhattan district attorney’s office, which is prosecuting the state

case, declined to comment.

Mangione’s lawyers had faced a deadline Thursday to provide prosecutors with information to support the emotional disturbance claim. Also Thursday, a transcript of a secret hearing held on the matter on June 3 was made public after Carro ordered it unsealed.

If Mangione were to have

gone through with the extreme emotional disturbance defense, he would have effectively been admitting that he killed Thompson but did so because of mitigating circumstances. It wouldn’t have absolved him of responsibility, but could have led to less time in prison.

If a jury accepts the defense, it is obligated to convict a defen-

dant of manslaughter, which is punishable by up to 25 years in prison, instead of murder, which carries a potential life sentence.

In a letter to Carro on Thursday, Mangione lawyer Karen Friedman Agnifilo said the defense “respectfully withdraws” its notice under New York’s psychiatric defense statute.

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