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CENTRE DAILY TIMES

Despite new law, state loses hundreds of pharmacies

BY ED MAHON OF SPOTLIGHT PA

HARRISBURG — As pharmacy closures have continued across the state, a bipartisan group of lawmakers has questioned how the Shapiro administration is following through on the promises of a 2024 law meant to support these stores. They've also questioned the state's oversight of corporate middlemen, known as pharma-

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cy benefit managers (PBMs), who manage drug plans for employers and insurance companies. Critics say they harm patients by driving up drug costs and community pharmacies by offering insufficient reimbursements. State Sen. Lindsey Williams (D., Allegheny) — one of six

lawmakers who signed a July letter raising concerns about the enforcement of the bipartisan and much-touted law known as Act 77 — told Spotlight PA she wants pharmacists to feel that PBMs truly are being held accountable. "That's what this legislation is trying to do," she told Spotlight PA. "And I'm hoping that we can push it along to make sure that it fulfills its intent."

When Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro signed Act 77, he said PBMs' "greed and conduct" were primarily to blame for independent pharmacy closures and that they "manipulate and profit off of the pharmaceutical system, screwing over consumers and our community pharmacies along the way." The law limits practices that critics

SEE PHARMACIES, 5A



Eli Ace laughs as he sleds with two of his kids, Elsa and Joshua, at Slab Cabin Park on Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025.

How did you spend your snow day in Centre County?

Centre County schools were closed Tuesday and roads were impacted as several inches of snow fell across the area. A winter weather advisory was in effect through early afternoon for what the National Weather Service in State College called the "first widespread snow accumulation of the season." According to the NWS, snowfall totals in Centre County ranged from 1.1 inches in South Philipsburg to 4.2 inches in Poe Valley State Park. The snow made the morning commute difficult, with U.S. Route 322 between Philipsburg and Port Matilda temporarily closed due to crashes, among other impacts to local roads. Below is a look at scenes from the snowy day.



TREBOR MAITIN tmaitin@centredaily.com



ABBY DREY adrey@centredaily.com

Above: The reservoir at Cold Stream Dam in Philipsburg begins to freeze over on Dec. 2, 2025.

Left: People walk along the Allen Street mall on the Penn State campus in the snow on Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025.

Early morning house fire displaces 5 in Sandy Ridge

BY JACOB MICHAEL
jmichael@centredaily.com

A house in rural Centre County sustained heavy damage early Monday morning in a fire that displaced five residents. First responders were dispatched at about 4:50 a.m. Monday to the 400 block of State Street in Rush Township, Mountain Top Fire Company Chief Tim Sharpless told the Centre Daily Times. Alongside Mountain Top, the Hope, Reliance, Columbia and Houtzdale-Ramey fire companies also responded to the blaze, which Sharpless said was under control within an hour despite some "wind issues." The fire broke out in the garage beside the home, leaving both the house and the garage heavily damaged. The car in the garage was also significantly damaged. A family of five that included a couple, two children and the children's grandfather were living in the home at the time of the fire, and all safely evacuated. The residents were displaced, and Sharpless said that they were going to find their own lodging. The cause of the fire has yet to be identified.

Husband and wife aim to open new coffee shop in Port Matilda

BY JACOB MICHAEL
jmichael@centredaily.com

Husband and wife Salina and Ethan Swancer grew up in Port Matilda. And, while they've seen a number of businesses leave the area over the years, the pair is hoping to bring some new flavor to their town — in the form of a new coffee shop. Nothing is concrete just yet and no lease has been signed, but Salina was confident enough to recently share her plans with the CDT. She and Ethan are aiming to call their new coffee shop "Swanky Beans," and they're hoping to open it at 100 S. High St., in the first floor of a former First National Bank that closed in 2012. There is no timetable yet on when it might open. But Salina said work would begin as soon as the lease is signed. "We've lived in Port for almost our entire lives, and there really haven't been many new businesses that have opened here in that time, if any at all," Salina Swancer said. "There's Lykens, the [Port Matilda Hotel] and Brother's Pizza, which all have amazing food, but those places have been the only options for like 30 years, and we

SEE COFFEE SHOP, 2A



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