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TOMATO TIME

Parade, spaghetti-eating contest headline Pittston Tomato Festival's third day



Dana Germano, of Wilkes-Barre, and Nick Webb, of Glendale, pose with Stu as co-winners of the spaghetti-eating competition at the Pittston Tomato Festival on Saturday. PHOTOS BY JASON ARDAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The 43rd annual Pittston Tomato Festival continued Saturday with the 5K race and 1-mile walk, the festival parade, the spaghetti-eating contest, tomato contest judging and much more. The event concludes Sunday with music, food and the Little Miss & Mr. Tomato contest at 11 a.m. Festival hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Webb chews a bite of spaghetti during the spaghetti-eating competition.



Attendees look on and take video during the spaghetti eating-competition.

Lawsuit: Salem Twp. planners illegally advanced data center

Filing claims officials illegally locked people out of July 23 meeting

By Michael P. Buffer
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The Salem Twp. Planning Commission illegally voted to advance plans for a third data center campus in the township by locking people out of the July 23 meeting, a lawsuit alleges.

"By locking both the front and back doors, preventing public entry, turning attendees away through police involvement, and proceeding in a location with inadequate seating and capacity for public attendance, Defendants failed to conduct a meeting open to the public," the lawsuit states.

Eight pro-se plaintiffs filed the suit Monday against the planning commission and township board of supervisors in the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas. They allege the planning board violated the Sunshine Act requirement to take official action at an open meeting.

More than 200 people wanted to attend the July 23 meeting at the municipal building in Salem Twp., and roughly 140 were allowed inside, said Nate Eachus, a plaintiff from Butler Twp. Three of the eight plaintiffs were locked out of the meeting, Eachus said.

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KINDERGARTEN VACCINATIONS IN NEPA

Dozens of schools missed key mark for measles

By Jeff Horvath
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With parents and students preparing for school to start again as measles cases continue to climb in parts of Pennsylvania, kindergarten-level immunization data from last school year shows dozens of elementary schools in the state's northeast region reported measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination rates under 95%.

That key immunization threshold is important as measles can "easily cross borders and cause

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Tec Centro coming to former Barnes & Noble in Downtown W-B



Tec Centro Wilkes-Barre project manager Maryann Velez, now executive director, hosts a community forum to introduce the organization's vision at the Innovation Center in Wilkes-Barre in December 2025. THE CITIZENS' VOICE FILE

Bilingual development center will offer free training for key jobs

By Stephen Mocarsky
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A nonprofit that will offer free courses in certificate programs to help people secure higher paying jobs is set to open in a long-vacant Downtown Wilkes-Barre storefront in the coming months.

Tec Centro, a bilingual workforce development network, will open a new training center in the former Barnes & Noble storefront

at 7 S. Main St., with construction set to begin this fall.

"Tec Centro is a tuition-free workforce initiative, meaning, we're investing in the client that's coming to us looking for additional opportunities, whether it's a career pathway or a vocational pathway," Maryann Velez, executive director for Tec Centro Wilkes-Barre, said on Friday.

The development center will offer courses in programs that result in certifications for in-demand jobs that start new employees at rates as high as \$20 per hour or even more.

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