



**DIANE KEATON DIES:**  
Oscar-winning star of ‘Annie Hall,’  
‘Godfather,’ dies at 79 | **A-5**

# The Herald

**TUESDAY**  
**October 14, 2025**  
Sharon, Pennsylvania **\$2.00**  
2 sections 14 pages  
Volume 162, Number 158 [sharonherald.com](http://sharonherald.com)

## All hostages freed in Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal brokered by Trump

Complex issues remain as both sides lick their wounds

By **WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and MELANIE LIDMAN**  
*Associated Press*

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israel and Hamas moved ahead on a key first step of the tenuous Gaza ceasefire agreement on Monday by freeing hostages and prisoners, raising hopes that the U.S.-brokered deal might lead to a permanent end to the two-year war that ravaged the

Palestinian territory.

But thornier issues such as whether Hamas will disarm and who will govern Gaza — and the question of Palestinian statehood — remain unresolved, highlighting the fragility of an agreement that for now only pauses the deadliest conflict in the history of Israel and the Palestinians.

For Israelis, the release of the 20 remaining living hostages brought elation and a sense of closure to a war many felt they were forced into by Hamas,

See **CEASEFIRE**, page A-3



AP file  
**People react as they gather to watch a live broadcast of Israeli hostages released from Gaza at a plaza known as hostages square in Tel Aviv, Israel on Monday.**



MICHAEL ROKNICK | Herald  
**Backhoes and other equipment is ripping out concrete at a former industrial plant site in Greenville-Reynolds Development to make way for a new 63,000-square-foot building. Construction could begin as early as spring.**

## Building bigger

Ground clearing underway for new Greenville-Reynolds building

By **MICHAEL ROKNICK**  
*Herald Business Editor*

**PYMATUNING TOWNSHIP** – A 63,000-square-foot industrial building is set for construction in Greenville-Reynolds Development. “We’ve been told there’s a shortage of buildings between 40,000 to 70,000 square feet in Mercer County,” Brad Gosser, vice president

and executive director of the industrial park, said. “So we’re trying to fill that demand.”

Ground clearing is well underway now at the former Damascus Tube Co.’s plant. Now operating under the name Marcegaglia USA, the company closed the 115,000-square-foot mill that employed around 100 mill in December 2002 and moved

its operations to Munhall, in Allegheny County near Pittsburgh.

Greenville-Reynolds bought the building for \$300,000 and had it demolished, because the organization found the ailing building wasn’t attracting any buyers.

“Our first phase was to demolish the old building and now we’re cleaning up the

site to get it ready for construction,” Gosser said.

Ryan Construction of Brookfield is the general contractor for the project.

Sereday’s in Masury is now removing and recycling concrete that was once the foundation for the former mill. Sereday’s is doing similar work at the former

See **BUILDING**, page A-2

## 4 Mercer residents dead after crash

By **MELISSA KLARIC**  
*Herald Staff Writer*

**LACKAWANNOCK TOWNSHIP** – Four people died in a two-vehicle crash Friday evening on Mercer-West-Middlesex Road in Lackawannock Township.

Two drivers and a passenger in each vehicle were killed in the crash that happened at 6:38 p.m. Friday on Mercer-West Middlesex Road (state Route 318) at its intersection with Orchard Road, state police said.

All four people were from Mercer.

Jacob J. Leathe, 21, was the driver of a Chevrolet Corvette, with Urie Byler, 19, the passenger.

Larry L. Miller, 76, Mercer, was the driver of a truck, a Toyota Tacoma, with Cynthia L. Miller, 76, the passenger.

According to a state police press release, the Corvette was speeding east on Mercer-West Middlesex Road approaching the Orchard Road and the truck was traveling west on Mercer-West Middlesex Road, making a left turn onto Orchard Road.

The Corvette hit the truck head on as it turned. The Corvette then went off the south side of the road where it hit an embankment, flipped in the air and came to rest off the south side of the road, right-side up.

The truck traveled backwards and came to final rest on the north side shoulder of the road.

Police said Leathe and Byler were dead upon arrival after the car caught on fire. Mercer County Chief Deputy Coroner Robert L. Snyder pronounced Leathe and Byler dead at the scene at

See **CRASH**, page A-2

## Hearing for PHN defendant continued for sixth time

By **MELISSA KLARIC**  
*Herald Staff Writer*

**PITTSBURGH** – The sentence hearing of one of the five defendants accused of conspiring to steal more than \$2 million from Primary Health Network has been rescheduled for a sixth time to March 9.

Christopher O’Brien, 60, Masury, Ohio, pleaded guilty in February 2024 to a felony count of conspiring to commit mail or wire fraud in the case.

His sentence hearing was originally set for May 29, 2024; continued to Aug. 22, 2024; continued to Dec. 19, 2024; continued to April 1; continued to July 1; continued to Oct. 29; and on Friday, it was continued to March 9. The hearing is in front of Judge J. Nicholas Ranjan in federal court for the Western District of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh.

O’Brien, as a contractor, said he directed workers to create fraudulent invoices amounting to \$136,200 paid to them by PHN for what was described as flooring projects at PHN branches that his company never performed.

O’Brien has been free on bond pending sentencing.

The potential maximum sentence is up to 20 years in prison and \$250,000 in fines plus restitution of \$493,868.72 split among the co-defendants.

Also accused in participating in the conspiracy to defraud PHN between 2011 and 2019 are Mark Marriott, 58, Sharpsville; John “Jack” Laeng, 72, and Drew Pierce, both West Middlesex; and John O’Brien, 60, Masury, Ohio.

Two of the other defendants have pleaded guilty in the case.

Marriott pleaded guilty Oct. 6 to three felony counts

of conspiracy to commit mail or wire fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering and willfully filing false tax returns in the case.

His sentence hearing has been set for March 17 in front of Ranjan in federal court for the Western District of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh.

Laeng pleaded guilty in September to two felony counts of conspiracy to commit mail or wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering in the case.

His sentence hearing has been set for March 16 in front of Ranjan in federal court for the Western District of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh.

A trial for the remaining defendants has been scheduled for Feb. 9.

Pierce was PHN’s chief financial officer from 2011 to 2014 and chief executive officer from 2014 until 2020. Laeng was PHN’s CEO from 2011 to 2014, an employee of

the organization through 2016 and a board member of the affiliated charitable organization PHN Charitable Foundation into 2020.

Marriott was PHN’s facilities administrator until 2020.

The five were charged May 9, 2023, with conspiracy to commit mail or wire fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering and mail or wire fraud.

Federal prosecutors accused the men of creating non-existent companies that received payments from PHN for services never performed.

On Jan. 29, 2020, federal agents bearing subpoenas and warrants, raided the headquarters of PHN and PHN Charitable Foundation, both in Sharon.

PHN’s board dismissed Pierce and Marriott April 6, 2020.

At the time of the raid,

See **DEFENDANT**, page A-2

## Mercer teen dies after bike crash

*Herald staff*

**MERCER** – A teenager died Monday after getting hit by a vehicle last week while he was riding his bike in Mercer borough.

Kyle Hites, 19, Mercer, was riding his bike at 9:45 p.m. Oct. 8 in the area of Greenville and Penn avenues when he was hit by a vehicle driven by James Brocklehurst, 41, Greenville, as he was trying to turn, according to Mercer Police Chief Robert Davis.

Hites was flown by helicopter to a Youngstown trauma center. He died Monday in the hospital from his injuries.

Brocklehurst was not at fault, Davis said.

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### DEATHS

**Joseph P. HOZA, 72, Farrell.**



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