

WHY ARE WILDFIRES BURNING OVERTIME? SCIENCE | PAGE A8



WOMEN ARE TAKING THE LEAD IN WHISKEY BUSINESS | PAGE B5

FIND THE LATEST NEWS www.standardspeaker.com Breaking News Features Sports

Standard-Speaker

\$3.00 | TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 | STANDARDSPEAKER.COM

FATAL BLAZE

Mother and 6 children killed in explosion and fire at central Pa. home



This photo made from video from WNEP shows first responders at the scene of an explosion and fire in Lamar Township near Mill Hall on Sunday. PHOTOS BY WNEP VIA AP

LANSFORD

Body found near No. 9 Coal Mine

Police are investigating

By Olivia Schlinkman OSCHLINKMAN@REPUBLICANHERALD.COM

A person was found dead near Panther Creek and No. 9 Coal Mine in Lansford Borough on Saturday.

According to a press release, the Carbon County Coroner's Office received a report of a deceased individual found by the museum and adjacent Panther Creek around 2:44 p.m.

Upon arriving on the scene, the individual was located and pronounced dead at 5:22 p.m.

The identity of the decedent is being withheld at this time.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with this family during their time of loss," the Coroner's Office posted to Facebook Sunday evening. "We respectfully ask that you keep their loved ones in your thoughts as they navigate this difficult period."

The Coroner's Office says the decedent has been positively identified through fingerprint analysis performed by the FBI's Disaster Victim Identification Squad.

Further information, including the cause and manner of death, will be available upon the completion of an autopsy, which is planned for April 21. Forensic Pathology Associates at the Lehigh County Coroner's Office and Forensics Center in Allentown will conduct the examination.

The situation is currently under investigation by the Coroner's Office, Pennsylvania State Police, Lansford Borough Police Department and the Carbon County District Attorney's Office.

The museum, which opened for the season on April 1, is the site of a coal mine that operated from 1855-1972.

IRAN WAR

Trump offers mixed messages about path ahead

By Aamer Madhani, Munir Ahmed and Russ Bynum ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump offered mixed messages Monday about the path ahead for the U.S. war against Iran, declaring that he was in no rush to end the conflict while also expressing confidence that further negotiations with Tehran will soon take place in Pakistan.

With the 14-day ceasefire set to expire Wednesday, Trump whipsawed in telephone interviews and social media posts between measured optimism that a deal could soon be reached and warning that "lots of bombs" will "start going off" if there's no agreement before the ceasefire deadline.

Trump indicated that he still expects to dispatch his negotiating team, led by Vice

See IRAN on Page A5

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILL HALL — An Amish woman and her six children ranging in age from 3 to 11 were killed in a swift-moving house fire after an explosion that shook nearby houses in rural north-central Pennsylvania, authorities said.

Firefighters responding to a report of an explosion and fire at a home in Lamar Township in Clinton County near Mill Hall on Sunday morning said seven people were trapped, but they couldn't search the house engulfed in flames, Pennsylvania State Police said in a statement.

All seven died. Police identified them as Sarah Stoltzfus, 34, four sons, ages 11, 10, 5 and 3, and two daughters, ages 8 and 6.

An obituary posted online by a local funeral home identified Stoltzfus as a member of the Old Order Amish Church community. She is survived by her husband, David Stoltzfus, it said.

A police report issued earlier gave the spelling of her last name as Stolzfs.

The cause is under investigation. A propane leak inside the home may have caused the explosion and fire, police said, noting that exterior propane tanks did not explode and were not contributing factors for the explosion and fire.

Neighbor Christina Duck told WNEP-TV she was eating breakfast when it began.

"And I heard a boom and I could feel it



This photo made from video from WNEP shows first responders at the scene of an explosion and fire in Lamar Township near Mill Hall on Sunday.

and I got up and looked out the window and I could see the flames through the windows and I come running outside and within a minute the whole house was completely engulfed," Duck said. The family moved in a couple of months ago, Duck said, noting that she often saw the children outside playing.

By the time firefighters got there, "there was no saving that house, it went up so fast," she said.

WNEP-TV showed video of what it said was members of the Amish community arriving at the scene to clean up and pay respects.

The Amish prioritize their deep Christian faith and family life, eschewing many modern conveniences. They wear traditional clothing and use horses and buggies for much of their transportation. They often speak a German dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch.

Luzerne County homicide prosecutor releases book on his 20-year career

By Bob Kalinowski BKALINOWSKI@CITIZENVOICE.COM

For 20 years, Jarrett Ferentino prosecuted the worst of the worst criminals in Luzerne County to seek justice for the mothers left behind.

His mother, Rose, was his inspiration. His wife and mother of his children, Nicole, was his guide. The mothers of the slain were his mission.

Ferentino, who prosecuted most of the county's highest-profile homicide cases for two decades, retired from the Luzerne County District Attorney's Office in April 2024 to continue and grow his private practice in Kingston.

Since then, he's been writing the book documenting his career, "Mothers, Murders, and Motivation."

The book, which features a foreword by nationally known

crime analyst Nancy Grace, launches Tuesday on Amazon.com and other marketplaces online.

"This book is dedicated to the women who shaped my heart and the children who gave it purpose," Ferentino writes.

Ferentino, 6, was a child when his mother abruptly became a single mom of four young boys after his father died from a health ailment. He and

his twin were the youngest.

As Ferentino writes, his mother did everything possible to chart the way for their success. She became a pioneer in the insurance industry. That meant when Ferentino was playing sports or taking part in extracurricular activities after school, mom was working and couldn't be there.

Ferentino appreciated

See FERENTINO on Page A5



Former Luzerne County prosecutor Jarrett Ferentino has released a new book "Mothers, Murders and Motivation." CITIZEN VOICE ARCHIVES

SUBSCRIPTION

Call 570-501-3535 for a subscription. To place a classified ad, call 570-348-9161. Copyright © 2026, Standard-Speaker standardspeaker.com

WEATHER

TODAY H:51 L:38 WED. H:61 L:40 THU. H:70 L:44 Full weather report B5

INDEX

Business B5 Classified B6 Comics A7

Horoscopes A6 Lottery A2 Obituaries A5

Opinion A9 Sports B1 Television B8

