



STATE OF THE COUNTY

FEBRUARY 28, 2023

LUZERNE COUNTY ACTING MANAGER, BRIAN SWETZ

Budget Review

State of the County-February 28, 2023

- ▶ Current General Fund Cash Balance as of February 27, 2023 – \$18,016,437.13
- ▶ Debt Service as of December 31, 2020 - \$223,884,394.00

Audit Update

- ▶ County soft close was February 17, 2023.
- ▶ Area Agency on Aging – Currently have a draft report.
- ▶ Drug & Alcohol – Currently have a draft report.
- ▶ MHDS – Draft will be provided to the County by March 31, 2023.
- ▶ Children & Youth/Office of Human Services – Fieldwork will begin in March 2023.

State of the County- February 28, 2023

DIVISION REPORTS

Division of Administrative Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Information Technology

- ▶ Restructured department to include two managers direction to the IT Director.
- ▶ 2 major infrastructure projects including network infrastructure upgrade and cisco converged infrastructure upgrade.

Office of Community Development

- ▶ Through the CDBG Program nearly \$4.4 million was expended this year for infrastructure projects for various municipalities, which includes roads, sewers, fire facilities, demolition, etc.
- ▶ Over \$1.6 million of community development funding went to repairing county owned roads and bridges in 2022.
- ▶ The Emergency Rental Assistance program utilized \$25.9 million of the funds allocated to the County to provide rental and utility assistance to 5,126 households in need in 2022.

Division of Administrative Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Human Resources

- ▶ 276 employees were hired in 2022 including merit hires.
- ▶ Negotiated 5 expired CBA's
- ▶ Participated in 12 job fairs

Licensing Department

- ▶ Sold 23,710 dog licenses; 15,096 hunting licenses; 59 fishing licenses; 20 sportsman gun permits and 332 small games of chance/bingo licenses.

Division of Administrative Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Bureau of Elections

- ▶ Was awarded the Election Integrity Grant in the amount of \$1,041,396.09.
- ▶ With the approval of County Council, the Bureau purchased a mail ballot sorting system to significantly improve our operations surrounding mail-in ballots. This system allows the Bureau to process 18,000 mail-in ballots per hour and promotes efficiency.

GIS/Mapping

- ▶ The Luzerne County GIS/Mapping Department has expanded GIS services to internal departments such as Bureau of Elections, Planning and Zoning, and Engineering/Road and Bridge, to name a few.
- ▶ Staff has developed mapping applications and tools that can be used to identify which precinct a voter resides in; assisted the Engineering/Road and Bridge Department on its MS4 data collection and mapping deliverables to the EPA; began dialogue and started further collaborations with Planning and Zoning to offer them much needed GIS services for current and upcoming planning projects.
- ▶ The department had finalized and successfully migrated to a new/modern department production server for enterprise GIS operations. We are currently working on a similar project to upgrade the web GIS offerings with a new server to modernize the departments' online presence.

Division of Administrative Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Purchasing Department

- ▶ During the calendar year 2022, Purchasing department processed over 3003 purchase orders, verified and posted 5510 invoices against related purchase orders in New World, advertised and posted 64 Bids and 168 RFP's. We also welcomed two new employees to the Purchasing staff.

Tourism Bureau

- ▶ Moved to the historic train station.
- ▶ Hosted the fourth annual Rockin' the River music series at River Common which drew thousands of attendees.

Division of Budget & Financial Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

- ▶ Completed unqualified audit for 2021.
- ▶ Continued work with Council and Booth Management Consulting to administer \$112 million in ARPA funding.
- ▶ Relocated the Treasurer's Office to Penn Place building.
- ▶ 2023 Tax bills mailed on February 14, 2023.

Division of Correctional Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

- ▶ Increased over-sight of Light Duty, and F.M.L.A. use.
- ▶ Developed and updated Riot response plans and response equipment.
- ▶ Developed Inmate Medical Appointment Protocol to reduce over-time hours.
- ▶ Established a preventative Vehicle Maintenance Inspection Program.

Division of Human Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Area Agency on Aging

- ▶ Protective Service Staff and Supervisors are being trained in the Weill Cornell-Penn Interview for Decisional Abilities (IDA) program. This program will train staff to implement an evidence-based screening tool, which assesses an Older Adult's ability to perceive risk and make safe decisions.
- ▶ Emergency Supply boxes were provided to Active Adult Center participants as well as homebound consumers. These kits included emergency supplies such as radios, batteries, flashlights, blankets, heating and cooling items, and several other supplies.
- ▶ Health and Wellness class offerings continue to expand in the Active Adult Centers as well as with community partners.
- ▶ Additional shelf stable meals are being provided monthly to homebound consumers as well as Active Adult Center participants.

Division of Human Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Children & Youth

- ▶ 4770 Assessments were completed
- ▶ 347 Children Achieved permanency
- ▶ 75 Adoptions completed

Drug & Alcohol

- ▶ Purchased and distributed more than 1300 Narcan (Naloxone) Overdose Reversal Kits to community partners, business, county departments, and general public. Purchased and begun implementing a new web-based software system called CPR-Web by Susquehanna Software Inc. The CPR Web will streamline client data collection and entry, report building, fiscal and budget management, and invoicing and service authorizations.
- ▶ Implemented a State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant-Funded Housing Program in partnership with the Commission on Economic Opportunity.

Division of Human Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Drug & Alcohol Continued

- ▶ Implemented Emergency Room-Based and Community-Based Warm Hand-Off Policies. These Warm Hand-Off procedures utilize Certified Recovery Specialists with lived experience in addiction and long-term recovery to intervene with those Luzerne County residents at high risk of overdose or prolonged illness due to a substance use disorder in the hospital setting and/or community setting. These policies have led to further education, linkage, and access to treatment services.

Division of Human Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Mental Health/Developmental Services

- ▶ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – This is a Pilot (State partnership). To date, we have trained 315 individuals to be more aware of FASD.
- ▶ For Kids By Kids Food Program was an idea born from the youth involved in community service through the Luzerne County Juvenile Wellness Court. The participating youth prepare food boxes Tuesday evenings. Each box includes all the ingredients (meat, fresh veggies, and other items) along with a recipe card printed in both English and Spanish to prepare a family meal.
- ▶ Our Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant application was approved. . Our application was for increased Mobile Crisis Response Teams. Mobile Crisis is a critical aspect of the comprehensive crisis continuum. Mobile teams engage with individuals in the community to triage and de-escalate immediate, non-violent, behavioral health needs and link individuals to appropriate services.

Division of Human Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Veteran Affairs

- ▶ Distributed 88,000 flags to decorate veteran graves throughout Luzerne County.
- ▶ Office staff successfully completed their annual accreditation training with the US Department of Veteran Affairs.
- ▶ Participated in various community events to serve veterans:
 - ▶ Polish American Veterans Annual Golf Tournament to raise funds for the VA Hospital Community Living Center, Hospice, and Volunteer Services Departments.
 - ▶ Several events at Patriots Cove assisting disabled veterans in various outdoor recreational activities while providing advocacy services.
 - ▶ Coffee hour events at the VA hospital community living center
 - ▶ Veteran Expos at the Mohegan Sun convention center and Laurel Mall Hazleton.

Division of Judicial Services & Records

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Sheriff/Security

- ▶ The continued use of surplus programs saved the County \$38,450 in the acquisition of ballistic helmets for each member of the Department.
- ▶ Fully implemented our new 320 Hour Orientation Training Program.
- ▶ Completed a training room, allowing us to host trainings. By doing so the Department receives free seats. This saves training and travel costs.
- ▶ Renewed partnership with Wilkes-Barre Twp. Police to assist in law enforcement services at Mohegan Sun Arena.
- ▶ Began to reinstate our Community Service Division by: providing Gun Safety presentations at the Irem Circus, participated in the West Side Memorial Day Parade, and participated in Shop with a Cop.

Division of Judicial Services & Records

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Sheriff/Security Continued

- ▶ Provided Security and Law Enforcement services at numerous events including, but not limited to, Rockin' the River, as well as Judicial Security for 17 Supreme Court Judges during a tribute to President Judge Charles E. Rice.
- ▶ Civil/PFA/Warrants Division
 - Received for service:
 - ▶ 4,068 civil documents
 - ▶ 1,699 protection Orders
 - ▶ 3,972 warrants
 - Closed:
 - ▶ 3,770 civil cases
 - ▶ 1,661 protection Orders
 - ▶ 3,805 warrants

Division of Judicial Services & Records

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Sheriff/Security Continued

- ▶ Security Division:
 - ▶ 310,393 security screenings were conducted.
- ▶ Licensing Division and Other Services:
 - ▶ 6,902 licenses were issued.
 - ▶ 100 individuals were fingerprinted.
- ▶ Prisoner Transportation Division:
 - ▶ 3,716 prisoners were transported.

Division of Judicial Services & Records

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts

- ▶ Prothonotary administratively purged 1,273 civil cases and purged by Court Order another 540 as part of the annual purge of cases with no activity for 24 months.
- ▶ 11,942 new Civil cases opened, a decrease of 823 from 2021.

Division of Judicial Services & Records

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Recorder of Deeds-Register of Wills

- ▶ Recorder of Deeds replaced the need for microfilm archival copies of recorded documents with a PDF process approved by the Pennsylvania Historical Museum.
- ▶ The Register of Wills/Clerk of Orphans' Court continues to offer Skype appointments for marriage licenses and estate probates along with in person options to provide services to customers who are homebound or out of the County.
- ▶ Register of Wills processed 1,950 marriage licenses in 2022. This is an increase of 100 over 2021.

Division of Judicial Services & Records

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Coroner's Office

- ▶ 1,993 Death Incidents
- ▶ 1,672 Death Incidents without Covid-19
- ▶ 321 Covid-19 deaths
- ▶ 1,574 Natural deaths
- ▶ 169 Accidental deaths, includes elderly fall deaths
- ▶ 9 Homicides
- ▶ 57 Suicides
- ▶ 38 Motor vehicle fatalities
- ▶ 168 Drug overdoses with 2 pending
- ▶ 120 Autopsies
- ▶ 506 Bodies to the morgue
- ▶ 2,579 Cremations

Division of Judicial Services & Records

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Records Storage

- ▶ Provided retrieval services for 3,724 department requests, 612 phone requests, 1,703 email requests, 167 fax requests and 41 walk ins.
- ▶ The Records Center currently stores 11,651 boxes and 22,186 linear feet of open files.
- ▶ 740 boxes were submitted for storage.
- ▶ 1,500 boxes staged for shredding, due to reaching the end of the required retention period.
- ▶ Current available storage space is 101,250 cubic feet, which is approximately 60% of capacity.

Division of Office of Law

State of the County-February 28, 2023

- ▶ Confirmed the hiring of Chief County Solicitor Harry W. Skene in July 2022.
- ▶ Settled 3 cases in litigation.
- ▶ Successfully Executed 877 Contracts with local and State entities that work with various divisions of Luzerne County.
- ▶ Processed 262 Right to Know Requests and appeals.
- ▶ Began Office of Law Education Series with an informational Podcast on the Right to Know and Sunshine Act – This is a Public Series on Pennsylvania State Statutes and Judicial Standards.

Division of Office of Law

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Conflict Counsel

- ▶ Adult Criminal: Approx 1100
- ▶ Juvenile Criminal: Approx 61
- ▶ PCRA: Approx 32
- ▶ Appeals: Approx. 25
- ▶ Homicides: Approx 6
- ▶ Dependency/Parents Counsel, we did in excess of 4,000 hearings for 2022.

Division of Operational Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

911

- ▶ Successful cutover and implementation of a Countywide, P25 digital radio system, including programming and distribution of nearly 4,000 mobile and portable radios to all Luzerne County agencies/stakeholders successfully integrated 9-1-1 texting into the current Motorola VESTA phone system.
- ▶ Luzerne County 9-1-1 achieved nationally recognized training program re-certification and accreditation through the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials.
- ▶ 9-1-1 Processed 211,904 calls and 523 9-1-1 text messages. 99% of all incoming 9-1-1 calls were answered in 10 seconds or less.

Division of Operational Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Building & Grounds

- ▶ Moved the Treasurer's Office from the Courthouse to Penn Place.
- ▶ Moved Treatment Court from Penn Place to the Courthouse.
- ▶ Installed one water bottle filling station into each building.
- ▶ Assisted Elections with manpower assistance for two elections.

Division of Operational Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Emergency Management

- ▶ Completed our outreach training program by bringing our Incident Command System (ICS) class to five different locations throughout Luzerne County. This “ICS on the Road” training is a Luzerne County oriented G402 – Emergency Management for Municipal Elected Officials and Officers and discusses their roles and responsibilities during an emergent incident or non-emergent planned event.
- ▶ Took the initiative to teach, plan, and conduct numerous trainings throughout the county focused on the needs of the schools and their administrations. Topics taught were basic Incident Command System structures and the preparation, planning, response, mitigation, and recovery process for the betterment of their districts and their students.
- ▶ 2022 was our year for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to evaluate our Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) program. All drills were successfully completed with FEMA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) complementing our efforts.

Division of Operational Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Planning & Zoning

- ▶ Successfully Advocated No New Bridge Tolls Be Placed on Interstate-80 By Co-Hosting Town Hall Media Event with Borough of White Haven.
- ▶ Reviewed 184 Subdivision and Land Development Plans for Municipalities.
- ▶ Reviewed 58 More Plans for Approval Under County Jurisdiction.
- ▶ Issued 276 Zoning Permits.
- ▶ Issued 104 Certificates of Zoning Compliance.
- ▶ Processed 2 Re-Zonings.
- ▶ Administered 39 Applications with the Zoning Hearing Board.
- ▶ Won All Cases Submitted to the Magistrate Requesting Financial Penalties Against Code Violators.

Division of Operational Services

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Solid Waste Management

- ▶ Renovate Air Force Building to a “Green Building” using sustainable/recyclable materials for future recycling department office.
- ▶ Exceed the number of municipalities running special collection programs from the 2022 calendar year.
- ▶ Develop additional programs to assist municipalities with residential recycling programs for their residents.
- ▶ Work with municipal recycling programs and expand their recycling education efforts in addition to exploring possibilities for enhancing/expanding their programs for continued success.

Division of Operational Services

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Road and Bridge

- ▶ County Road 24 Kirby Avenue – Re-Surface/Drainage Improvements - Road Evaluation
- ▶ County Road 31 St John's Road – Base Repair.
- ▶ County Road 30 Hobbie Road – Base Repair.
- ▶ Union Township Bridge Project – Rehabilitation/Replacement.
- ▶ Butler Township Bridge Project – Rehabilitation/Replacement.

Division of Operational Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Road and Bridge Continued

- ▶ County Bridge 42505 Pine Creek Road Bridge Replacement Road Evaluation.
- ▶ County Bridge 57301 Hollow Road Bridge Rehabilitation.
- ▶ Bridge Demolition Project.
- ▶ County Bridge 47108 Market Street Bridge Replacement.
- ▶ County Bridge 45809 East County Road Bridge Replacement.

Division of Operational Services

State of the County-February 28, 2023

Engineering

- ▶ Wyoming Valley Airport Fuel Facility Replacement.
- ▶ Wyoming Valley Airport Taxiway A Rehabilitation.
- ▶ Highway Lighting Upgrades.
- ▶ Vietnam Veterans Memorial Statue Repair.
- ▶ Penn Place Building Window Flashing.
- ▶ Courthouse Window Replacement.

Public Defender's Office

State of the County-February 28, 2023

- ▶ Negotiated contract for ADA/APD with worker retention as our main goal.
- ▶ Promotions have begun to start filling vacant positions.
- ▶ Our staff continued to provide effective representation within the limitations we practice under, but both the professional staff and the support staff performed heroically under the circumstances. This was our greatest accomplishment in 2022.