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# THE NEWS-ITEM

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Shamokin, Pa.

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## Ashland buildings sustain extensive fire damage, civilian treated for head injury

BY LARRY DEKLINSKI  
THE NEWS-ITEM  
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ASHLAND — Two apartment buildings sustained heavy fire damage and a civilian suffered a head injury during a three-alarm fire Monday afternoon in the downtown section of the borough.

Fire crews from Schuylkill, Northumberland and Columbia counties responded to 426 W. Centre St., a three-story apartment building that reduces to one-story at the rear, at about 2 p.m. Monday.

Flames spread to 420 Centre St. even though the buildings were separated by about 3 feet. Firefighters ventilated the roof of 416 Centre St., which had smoke and water throughout.

"The one on the far west (426 Centre St.) is going to be the source of the fire. We don't know exactly what happen," Chief Phil Groody said Monday afternoon, adding that a state police fire marshal will investigate. "All the major fire was to the rear of the building."

An unknown number of tenants are homeless because of the damage. According to the Schuylkill County Assessment Bureau's geographic information system, 426 and 416 Centre St. are owned by Acorn Estates LLC. The building at 420 Centre St. is owned by Luna Sergio.

Groody said a male across from the fire scene suffered a head injury and was transported by EMS to Geisinger Medical Center in Danville. The chief was unsure of the exact circumstances surrounding the incident, but indicated that a coupling for a hose may have struck the



LARRY DEKLINSKI/STAFF PHOTO

Firefighters work to contain flames to 426 and 420 W. Centre St., in Ashland, Monday afternoon. The buildings sustained significant damage.

Fire, Page A6

## Catawese Coach Lines revenue drops more than 80% during pandemic

### Loyal customer comes into office, gives \$300K to help company

BY TIM ZYLA  
THE NEWS-ITEM  
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COAL TOWNSHIP — A loyal customer of Catawese Coach Lines walked into owner William Milbrand's office in June and made a donation of \$300,000 to the company that had been devastated by the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Milbrand said the donation, along with the company's contract to operate buses for the Lower Anthracite Transit System, has kept his business alive during a time when he hasn't had one bus dispatched from the middle of March until last week.

"I couldn't believe that someone would donate that much to us," Milbrand said. "That money has allowed us to stay afloat. It has kept us in business, but things are not good right now and



TIM ZYLA/STAFF PHOTO

Catawese Coach Lines owner William Milbrand works at his desk Monday in Trevorton.

there's no telling when it will get better."

Government regulations, closure of museums and sightseeing locations in big cities and a wariness of people to travel led to his business seeing a decrease in revenue from \$1.9 million to about \$300,000 in 2020. Of the \$300,000 in revenue, nearly \$140,000 has been refunded due to trip cancella-

tions. The nation's motorcoach industry typically brings in more than \$15 billion annually. This year, it's on pace for \$4 billion, a similar percentage decrease experienced by Catawese.

"I don't know what's next," Milbrand said. "We're going to take a loss

Catawese, Page A6

## City council creates new Food Truck Committee

BY BECKY LOCK  
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SHAMOKIN — Five people were appointed Monday night to the city's new Food Truck Committee, which has been established to "make the ordinance a little

more suitable starting for the new year," Mayor John Brown said during council's regular meeting.

They are Robert Slaby, city administrator; police Chief Darwin Tobias III; Kevin Richardson, streets foreman; Eric Kuijpers, owner of Covered Bridge

Brewhaus; Sarah Shepard, of Verilife; and an owner of the When Pigs Fly food truck, who was identified only by his first name, Brandon.

All five were unanimously approved and charged

Council, Page A6

## Judge: Wolf's pandemic restrictions unconstitutional

BY MICHAEL RUBINKAM  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gov. Tom Wolf's pandemic restrictions that required people to stay at home, placed size limits on gatherings and ordered "non-life-sustaining" businesses to shut down are unconstitutional, a federal judge ruled Monday.

The Wolf administration said it will appeal.

U.S. District Judge William Stickman IV, who was appointed by President Don-

ald Trump, sided with plaintiffs that included hair salons, drive-in movie theaters, a farmer's market vendor, a horse trainer and several Republican officeholders in their lawsuit against Wolf, a Democrat, and his health secretary.



WOLF

Wolf, Page A6

## Kulpmont files tax-exempt appeal on building owned by Twilight Beginnings

BY MARK GILGER  
THE NEWS-ITEM  
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KULPMONT — Attorney Edward Greco, solicitor for Kulpmont Borough

Council, has filed an appeal with the Northumberland County Assessor's Office challenging the tax-exempt status of an unoccupied building at 1444 Poplar St. owned by Twilight Begin-

nings. Greco said the appeal was filed Aug. 28 to get the property back on the tax rolls in an effort to generate tax

Kulpmont, Page A6

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