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# THE NEWS-ITEM

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Shamokin, Pa.

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

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## Zerbe supervisors welcome new officer

BY C. J. GREGO  
 THE NEWS-ITEM  
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TREVORTON — Zerbe Township supervisors officially welcomed the newest member of the Zerbe Township Police

Department at their Monday meeting. Patrolman Russ Dawson was officially hired as a part-time police officer at an hourly rate of \$15.50, following a motion that was unanimously approved by all three supervisors. “Congratulations, and we want to offi-

cially welcome you here,” board president Mike Schwartz said to Dawson. In the absence of Zerbe Township Police Chief Mike Kreischer, Dawson updated the board on the monthly police report, which included a total of 80 calls responded to and 386 patrol miles.

**AOAA Fight the Blight Benefit Ride**  
 The supervisors unanimously approved a motion to allow riders from the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area (AOAA) to use portions of East Coal Street, Green-

Zerbe, Page A6

## The ‘next revolution’



LARRY DEKLINSKI/STAFF PHOTO

Dave Porzi, director of operations for the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area (AOAA), left, Shamokin Councilman Dan McGaw, Mayor John Brown, and Councilman Scott Roughton view a map of a proposed trail connecting the AOAA to the city. The trail was discussed during council's regular meeting on Monday.

## Officials: Trail connecting AOAA to Shamokin will sustain tourism funds

BY LARRY DEKLINSKI  
 THE NEWS-ITEM  
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SHAMOKIN — The Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area (AOAA) is proposing using an existing dirt trail on a hillside west of Shamokin Creek to serve as a portal into the city. Dave Porzi, director of operations for AOAA, presented to city council at their regular meeting Monday a map of the proposed route, which would start east of the Raspberry Hill Complex and terminate on an improved lot next to the former Holy Trinity Episcopal Church.

**“IF WE GET LEASES ON THESE PROPERTIES AND GET THIS PORTAL OPEN, THEN YOU’RE LOOKING AT SOMEBODY THAT’S GOING TO CLEAN IT UP, MAKE IT PRESENTABLE AND MAKE PEOPLE PROUD THAT WE HAVE THIS COMING INTO THE CITY.”**

Dave Porzi, AOAA director of operations

He said the AOAA's main concern went “very well,” he added that the AOAA wants to establish a more

Trail, Page A6

### ERIE COUNTY

## Firefighter was dad to 3 of 5 kids killed in day care blaze

ERIE (AP) — Three of five kids killed in a fire at a home child care center in Pennsylvania were the children of a volunteer firefighter who was responding to another call, an official said Monday. Luther Jones' two daughters and a son were trapped in a blaze in the lakeside city of Erie while he was responding to a call for what turned out to be a malfunctioning alarm, said Lawrence Park Township Volunteer Fire Chief Joe Crotty. The children haven't been formally identified, but the Erie Fire Department says the dead range in age from 8 months to 7 years. The owner was hos-

pitalized after the fire Sunday Erie fire officials say the children were staying overnight at a house that had been turned into a day care center. The mother of Jones' three children, Shevona Overton, who said she is also the mother of another child killed, told WICU that she had “lost a piece of me that can never be replaced.” “I’m just so hurt my babies are gone,” she said. “I love them dearly. I just hurt inside knowing that my kids were fighting and hurting in that fire. Every minute, I feel the same pain.” The fire, reported at

Kids, Page A6



GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS VIA AP

Paul Laughlin, 57, places stuffed animals on Sunday outside a home in Erie, where multiple people died in an early-morning fire.

### IN THE COURTS

## 4 goats die; Danville reckless driver gets state prison term

BY MARK GILGER  
 THE NEWS-ITEM  
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SUNBURY — A 38-year-old Danville man charged in a high-speed chase, involving a truck loaded with livestock, was sentenced by video Monday on multiple charges by Northumberland County President Judge Charles H. Saylor. Jarrett Castelsonia reaffirmed his previous guilty plea to a felony of fleeing police, a misdemeanor of criminal conspiracy to commit cruelty to animals and summaries of driving under suspension and reckless driving. The defendant was initially charged with 81 offenses and planned to take his case to trial.

Livestock, Page A6

## Police: Baby suffers brain damage after left in hot car

Watson town mother pleads no contest to aggravated assault

BY MARK GILGER  
 THE NEWS-ITEM  
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SUNBURY — A 25-year-old Watson town-area woman, who is accused of leaving her 21-month-old daughter in a locked car with the windows up for more than five hours last summer, pleaded no contest Monday to a felony charge of aggravated assault. Tonia Lee Sones is scheduled to be sentenced within 90 days after entering the plea before Northumberland County President Judge Charles H. Saylor, who ordered a pre-sentence investigation. By pleading no contest, Sones is

neither admitting nor denying guilt but concedes that the prosecution has enough evidence against her to gain a conviction at trial. The defendant entered the plea just prior to jury selection in her case. Sones, who was represented by defense attorney Kyle Rude, was charged by state police at Milton with aggravated assault (three counts), simple assault, endangering welfare of children and recklessly endangering another person as the result

of an alleged incident that occurred between 7 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. June 1, 2018, outside her residence. All other charges will not be prosecuted at sentencing. Trooper Joshua Kendrick said in court papers that he and Trooper Joel Follmer arrived at Evangelical Community Hospital, Lewisburg, at 2:20 p.m. June 1, 2018, after receiving a report of an infant who was being treated for heat stroke.

Baby, Page A6

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**WEATHER**  
 Heavy rain and a thunderstorm  
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