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Altoona Proud

A Monthly Insight into all that is Altoona

August is International Overdose Awareness Month

Since 2001, August has been recognized as International Overdose Awareness Month. Specifically, August 31st is designated as International Overdose Awareness Day. The day acknowledges people in our communities who are affected by overdose, but who often go unseen. The people affected may be family members, loved ones or friends. August 31st is a day to remember those we've lost to overdose, change the widely-held misperceptions, and reduce the stigma surrounding addiction and overdose.

While many substances can be the source of addiction, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States and has been classified as an epidemic. Nearly 45 million Americans age 12 and older have a substance abuse disorder, roughly 18% of that population, as reported for 2023. The good news is that this is a reduction from the 2021 statistics, meaning campaigns and initiatives designed to raise awareness and provide help (such as the free distribution of Narcan for use in cases of drug overdose) are beginning to have an impact.

Locally, Blair County is preparing for the 6th Annual Overdose Awareness Day Event, at Transformation Church on Saturday, August 31st from 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Author and former NFL player, Randy Grimes, will speak about his experience with opioid addiction that started while treating career-related injuries. For event information, email bcoverdoseawareness@gmail.com or message Blair County International Overdose Awareness Day on Facebook.

Resources to Learn More:

www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention

www.dea.gov/ioad

www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/opioids

www.overdoseday.com



Pickled Palooza at the Altoona Curve



Alliance of Bikers Aimed Towards Education (A.B.A.T.E.) OF Blair County, in partnership with People's Natural Gas Field, will host "Pickled Palooza" on Saturday, August 24th from 10 AM – 9 PM, at the People's Natural Gas Field, at 1000 Park Avenue in Altoona.

The day will include a Battle of the Bands, food and vendors, along with Pickle Eating and Brine Drinking Contests for both adults and children.

Admission is free and all are invited. For more information, visit the A.B.A.T.E. Facebook page at:

facebook.com/events/blair-county-ballpark/pickled-palooza

National Farmers' Market Week at Altoona Farmers Market



This year marks the 25th anniversary of National Farmers Market Week. This annual celebration reminds us all about the major role farmers play in our nation's food system, and the importance of farmers markets in making fresh food available to the public. This year, National Farmers Market Week is August 4th-10th. This is a perfect time to visit Altoona's Farmers Market, which is held in Heritage Plaza every Thursday in August from 11 AM – 2 PM. The Market will continue every Thursday through October.

The Altoona Farmers Market features fresh fruits and vegetables from local farms, as well as a variety of locally produced handmade crafts, baked goods, honey, home-made maple syrup, soaps,

sausages, jams and jellies. There are even treats for the special canine in your life. Visit the Market this month to support our local farmers and crafts people!

August Events at Prospect Pool

On Sunday, August 4th, there will be a FREE SWIM at Prospect Pool from 12 PM – 7 PM. Come and enjoy a live DJ with games, music and a day of fun as we "Party In The USA"!

Join the Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships on Friday, August 9th for Prospect Pool Family Movie Night! The gates open at 8 PM, and the movie begins at 8:45 PM! Bring family, friends, lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy the animated feature "Under The Boardwalk". Admission to the event is free and the concession stand will be open. Come enjoy a fun night with family and friends and watch a movie under the stars! For more event information, check out the calendar at prospectpoolaltoona.com



Rails and Ales Brewfest



This year's Rails and Ales Brewfest, hosted by Altoona Community Theatre, will be held at Heritage Plaza in downtown Altoona, rain or shine, on Saturday, August 17th from 3 PM – 6 PM. This event, for adults ages 21 and over, is a fun day to sample beers from your favorite local breweries, dance to live music, enjoy great food and support Altoona Community Theatre. General admission tickets are \$35 in advance, or \$40 at the door. VIP tickets are \$60, in advance only, and include an extra hour of festivities from 2 PM – 3 PM, with appetizers from the U.S. Hotel, and a Rails and Ales t-shirt. VIP ticket availability is limited, so get yours early. Designated Driver tickets are available for \$15, for just the music and fun. Designated drivers must also be 21 or older and show proof of age upon entry.

Home brewers are invited to enter the Home Brew Contest. The contest entry is open until August 13th, with a fee of \$60 per brewer. A panel of local judges will select a winner from each of 5 categories – IPA, Ale, Lager, Dark and Stout. In addition, there will be a People's Choice winner, based on votes by VIP attendees. All brewer entries will receive a VIP ticket for the day of the event, where the winners will be announced.

For tickets, event details, or to enter the Home Brew contest, visit www.railsandalosaltoona.com

Deb Stitt Golf Outing

The Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon (BESCP) will hold its second annual Deb Stitt Golf Outing on Friday, August 9th at the King Valley Gold Course in Imler, PA. Same-day registration is available at \$125 per golfer, starting at 7 AM, with the round beginning at 8 AM. Advance registration is \$400 per team or \$100 per golfer. Registration includes 18 holes of golf, a golf cart, and lunch after the round. Businesses and organizations are encouraged to sponsor a hole or golf cart if they are not able to field a team.



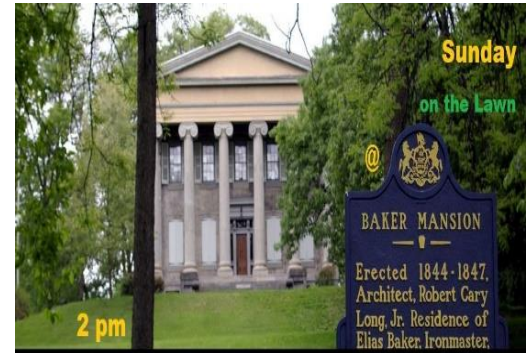
The event benefits suicide awareness for first responders and is named for Officer Deb Stitt, who served as a police officer for 28 years. The nature of the job of first responders results in a higher risk for mental health struggles, which often go unreported. This, in turn, leads to a higher rate of suicides in this profession, making mental health support critical for these workers. Funds raised at this event help to support counseling programs and services for these brave first responders.

The Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon (BESCP) is a group of volunteer chaplains who provide local support to firefighters, EMS workers and other first responders, who witness disaster and trauma every day. The BESCP maintains a website with resources, as well as a hotline, staffed by professionals who understand the struggles of first responders, including PTSD, depression, anxiety and suicide.

For information or to register, visit the Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon Facebook page at www.facebook.com/p/Blair-Emergency-Services-Chaplain-Platoon-100083145620470/

Baker Mansion Sunday on the Lawn

Again this year, The Blair County Historical Society is hosting “Sunday On The Lawn”, a concert series on the lawn of Baker Mansion on Sundays throughout the summer. Last year’s series was a huge success, despite losing three performances in July of 2023 due to weather. This season will again offer a wide variety of music and vocal performances.



Below is the August concert schedule. All concerts start at 2 PM.

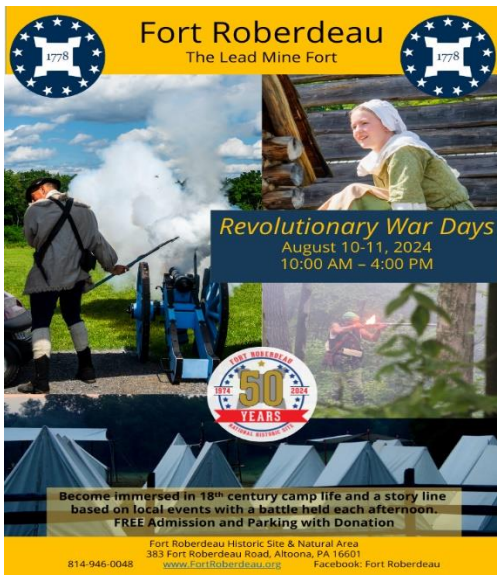
August 4th Silver Linings
A variety of acoustic hits, with guitar and vocals

August 11th 46th PA Regiment Band
Civil War uniforms and vintage Instruments make history come alive - acoustically

August 18th 341 Trio
Vocal harmonies by three amazing female singers, including gospel favorites

Bring your lawn chair or blanket and come to enjoy a relaxing afternoon of great music!

Fort Roberdeau Revolutionary War Days



Historic Fort Roberdeau will host Revolutionary War Days encampment and reenactment on Saturday and Sunday, August 10th and 11th, with the grounds opening at 10 AM on both days.

Revolutionary War Days at Fort Roberdeau recreates the situation that existed on the Pennsylvania frontier in the spring of 1778. Frontier settlers, militia and rangers garrison the fort and patrol the surrounding woods, watchful for loyalists and Native raiders.

Visitors to the event will be able to experience life on the frontier, with demonstrations that include musket and artillery firing, a raid on a settler’s cabin, a woods battle and two assaults on the fort. Other displays and demonstrations will illustrate the lives of women and children who took refuge at the fort. Children of all ages will have the opportunity to enlist in the rangers and learn how to fight “Native American style.”

Become immersed in 18th century field camp life as you visit the Patriot and Loyalist encampments. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early and stay through the afternoon. Bring a lawn chair to view the action. Admission and parking are free, and donations are welcome at the gate. For more information on this and other events at Fort Roberdeau, visit their website at <https://fortroberdeau.org/events/>

Altoona's Heritage

As we close out the series on Altoona's Heritage, this month we compare our population's heritage with that of the State and the Nation:

Altoona's People

As reported in 2023, 99.6% of Altoona's population are American-born United States citizens, which is higher than both the state and the national average, at 96% and 93% respectively. A little less than 1% of Altoona residents are foreign-born, far lower than both the state and national numbers.

The residents of our City come from many backgrounds, but the three most common homelands of ancestry are German (35%), Irish (19%) and Italian (13%). All three of these are higher than Pennsylvania's population in the same three ancestries. Polish and British ancestries make up another 10% of our population, and other ancestries, such as French, Swedish, Welsh, Russian and Slovakian, are represented in much smaller numbers.

Our Hispanic community has origins in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Central America and Costa Rica, among others. Our Asian population is equally diverse, representing India, China, Vietnam and the Philippines, among others. African Americans have been a part of Altoona's population since its founding and, today, represent almost 4% of Altoona's population, and that number is growing.

Altoona is proud of our military veterans and their service to our country. 8% of our population are veterans of the U.S. military, higher than the 6% state average. A staggering 1,000 of these veterans served in Vietnam alone.



The top four ethnicities in our City are White, African American, Asian and Hispanic. As our City grows and changes, the rise in diversity is evidenced by the increase in the population of these ethnic and racial groups. Altoona's history, from Native Americans through colonists to today's population, illustrates the rich heritage that has built our City, a heritage of which each citizen can be proud, as we work together to move our City forward!



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