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**December
2024**



Altoona Proud

A Monthly Insight into all that is Altoona

National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

Weekends and holidays can be dangerous times on our roadways. Two of the most celebrated days of the year, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, also are among the deadliest. That's why December has been recognized as National Impaired Driving Prevention Month. Taking personal responsibility for a safe ride saves lives. This initiative is in its 44th year and, in light of the tragic loss of two Altoona High School students in one weekend in October as the result of drunk driving, this initiative is close to our community.

National Impaired Driving Prevention Month seeks to educate teens and adults alike about the real dangers of impaired driving. Last year, more than one in eight drivers admitted to driving when they thought they were close to, or over, the legal alcohol limit. Drunk driving was the cause of one-third of all traffic fatalities in the United States in 2023, accounting for about 10,000 lives lost. This is why continued education and awareness are needed.

Alcohol, however, is only one cause of impaired driving. Drugs, including opioids, marijuana and some over-the-counter medications, can impair driving by causing drowsiness, visual malfunctions and delayed mental judgment and motor skills. You can learn more about the causes of impairment by visiting <https://www.nsc.org/impairment>

This holiday season, have a plan in place if you, or anyone you know, is planning to drink. A designated driver, taxi or ride share, or even an overnight stay can save a life.



**KEEP YOURSELF AND
OTHERS SAFE THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON**

2024 Holiday Events



Holiday Lights On The Lake, now in its 27th season, will open on Friday, November 15th, 2024 and run until Sunday, January 5th, 2025, daily from 6 PM – 10 PM. With over 150 displays, this is an event for the whole family to enjoy. Look out for Loco's favorite decorations for a chance to win \$1,000! For more information and tickets, visit <https://lakemontparkfun.com/hlol> or call 814-949-7275.

The second annual **Glow Up Downtown Altoona** will be held on Friday, **December 6th** from 5 PM – 7 PM. Last year's event was a great success, and this year promises to be even better. Enjoy music, craft and food vendors, a petting zoo, tree lighting and fireworks! Visit www.altoonapa.gov for details.



It's not too late to register for the Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon (BESCP) **Ugly Christmas Sweater 5K and 2 Mile Walk** on **December 7th**. Online registration ends November 30th, but you can register on Race Day as well. The event begins at 9:00 AM at Heritage Plaza. For information or to register, visit runsignup.com/Race/PA/Altoona/UglyChristmasSweaterFunRun5K

Then stick around in downtown Altoona for the **Annual Spirit of Christmas Parade**, hosted by Seven Mountains Media and the City of Altoona. The parade begins at 1:00 PM and route details are available at <https://spiritofchristmasparade.com>

Winter Utility Assistance

If you, or someone you know, needs help with utility bills this winter season, here are some resources:

Blair County Community Action - utility assistance for renters

Call 814-946-3651 or email at info@blaircap.org **[VISIT WEBSITE](#)**

Salvation Army Worship and Service Center - utility assistance for residents of Altoona, PA

Call 814-942-8104 or email at jennifer.blessing@use.salvationarmy.org **[VISIT WEBSITE](#)**

Pennsylvania Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – utility assistance for PA residents. Call the Blair County Assistance Office at 866-812-4431 **[VISIT WEBSITE](#)**

Dollar Energy Fund (First Energy / Penelec) – electric utility assistance for PA residents. Call Penelec at 814-545-7741 or 814-941-2379 **[VISIT WEBSITE](#)**

Baker Mansion Christmas

The Blair County Historical Society at Baker Mansion celebrates Christmas in the 19th century with tours of Baker Mansion on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays throughout December from 11 AM – 3 PM. Admission is \$5 and seasonal desserts and beverages will be available on Saturdays and Sundays, courtesy of the Altoona Women's Club.



December 6th and 13th will feature special holiday music performances at Baker Mansion by pianists, carolers, flutists and others, as guests tour the Mansion from 6 PM – 9 PM. Admission is \$5 and seasonal desserts will be served.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will visit Baker Mansion this year! Santa will greet visitors on December 7th and 15th from 11 AM - 3 PM, and Mrs. Claus will visit on December 8th and 14th from 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM. Starting at 2:00 PM, Mrs. Claus will read Christmas stories to guests here at the Mansion. For questions or information, contact info@blairhistory.org or on their Facebook at www.facebook.com/blairhistory

2024 Holiday Model Train Open House



The Altoona Association of Model Railroaders, located at 2930 S. 10th Avenue in Altoona, welcomes you to the 2024 Holiday Model Train Open House event! Explore two floors packed with N and HO scale model train layouts, railroad memorabilia and complimentary hot cocoa and cookies. Admission is free but donations are appreciated. Bring family and friends to experience the magic of the holiday season, see trains in action, make memories and celebrate the joy of model railroading. The dates and times are listed below.

Wednesdays, Dec. 4th and 11th; 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Friday, Dec. 6th and 13th; 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm

Saturday, Dec. 7th and 14th; 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Watch for more Open House dates in 2025! For more information, visit www.theaamr.org

LOSS Team Initiative

The Suicide Prevention Task Force of Blair County would like to bring a LOSS (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors) Teams Program to Blair County. These two-person teams, consisting of a survivor of suicide loss and a caring citizen, help families who have lost someone to suicide. Individuals need not have any professional experience or knowledge, just a desire to care and help others in their time of need. All volunteers will be interviewed and will receive training.

LOSS Team volunteers can be a calming reassuring presence. Those who have lost someone to suicide provide a sense of normalcy and hope simply by introducing themselves as someone who has been impacted by a suicide death. Once trained, a team would be on call for one week, every 4-8 weeks, depending on the number of teams. Currently, the Task Force is assessing local interest and, if there is enough interest, training will begin. Please consider this VERY important initiative for our community. If you are interested, use the link or QR code to complete the survey! www.surveymonkey.com/r/LOSSTeam



December Days

Of course, December brings us Christmas and Hanukkah each year, as well as Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, on December 7th. But you can have fun throughout the month by “celebrating” these unusual days:

December 1 – National Pie Day

December 4 – National Sock Day AND National Cookie Day

December 6 – National Gazpacho Day

December 11 – National Stretching Day

December 12 – National Poinsettia Day

December 13 – National Hot Cocoa Day

December 15 – National Cupcake Day AND National Wear Your Pearls Day

December 16 – National Chocolate Covered Anything Day

December 18 – National Answer The Phone Like Buddy the Elf Day (Hi! What’s your favorite color?)

December 20 – National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day

December 21 – National Crossword Puzzle Day AND National Humbug Day

December 24 – National Eggnog Day

December 30 – National Bacon Day

On behalf of the Mayor’s Office, we wish you a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and look forward with you to a great 2025!



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