

FOP, Dignitaries Honor Fallen Officers At 30th Annual State FOP Memorial Service

By Jill Helsel Gingrich / Photo by Nicholas Williams

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Today, the Pennsylvania State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police honored the lives of the commonwealth's brave officers who have died in the line of duty, during its 30th annual Memorial Service in the State Capitol Rotunda. Throughout the nation in 2024, 147 federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement officers died in the line of duty.

Pennsylvania lost Officer Jaime Roman of the Philadelphia Police Department in the line of duty last year.

The ceremony included remarks from Gov. Josh Shapiro, Attorney General Dave Sunday and FOP President Joe Regan. The service included the presentation of the memorial wreath and resolutions from the General Assembly. The families of Officer Roman and all of Pennsylvania's fallen officers were invited to place flowers at the wreath to honor their memory and were presented with medals of ultimate sacrifice as a tribute to their loved ones, recognizing the bravery they displayed while protecting and serving the commonwealth.

"Each year, we honor the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the line of duty," said Joe Regan, PA FOP president. "We gather here to pay tribute, standing with the families and friends of those who displayed both bravery and courage to protect our communities."

The name of the fallen officer will be added to the wall at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., during National Police Week.



Commissioners Cut Ribbon for Rebuilt Library Branch

By Art Charlton

BLAIRSTOWN, NJ – The newly rebuilt Catherine Dickson Hofman Branch of the Warren County Library opens this Saturday, May 10, 2025, after the Warren County Board of County Commissioners held a symbolic ribbon-cutting last week to mark the end of the reconstruction project.



Warren County Commissioners Lori Ciesla, Director Jason J. Sarnoski and James R. Kern III hold oversized scissors as they prepare to cut a ribbon marking the completion of major renovations to the Catherine Dickson Hofman Branch of the Warren County Library system. With them are state and local officials, library commission members and library staff.

with Kern quipping, "She has lived up to her last name – she is always getting jobs done for this county."

"I believe you're going to be really impressed when you go inside," county Library Director Jill Butcher said the state, county and local officials gathered for the ribbon-cutting.

Located at 4 Lambert Road, Blairstown, the Catherine Dickson Hoffman Branch will offer 13,000 square feet of space including the renovated areas and the newly constructed addition. Featuring state-of-the-art technology and security, the branch has a renovated Adults area featuring new shelving, reading areas and public access computers; a Teens area outfitted with furnishings encouraging both quiet study and collaboration; a Children's area featuring a nautical-themed reading nook; an outside access book drop; and expanded parking.

It also features a "Makerspace" for library patrons to use for hands-on, creative projects, complete with 3D design capable computers and a 3D printer, as well as an Audio/Visual Studio complete with green screen and recording capability. The newly renovated Community Room includes a kitchenette, and the Meeting Room suite features two small group rooms and a 12-seat conference room. An outdoor community space includes a gazebo.

"It's always been a cornerstone of the community, and I know it will continue to be," Butcher said.

For Butcher, the project was particularly meaningful, as the Catherine Dickson Hofman branch was the library she grew up in and where she gained her love of books and reading. Her mother for more than 50 years has been a trustee of the library – which was a private library run by volunteers for years before it became part of the county system – and Butcher recalled going to the original location, in a former grist mill in the center of Blairstown's village area.

The open house to celebrate the opening takes place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 10. More information about the event is available at www.warrenlib.org.

Construction to rebuild and enhance the county's northernmost library branch began in December 2023, with library service provided in the interim at a temporary location in Hope.

"The northern section of Warren County deserves a library like this," Commissioner Director Jason J. Sarnoski said, adding it's been a great branch with great people, but the building needed a lot of work.

The project marks the end of a complete renovation of all four branches in the county library system during his time in office, Sarnoski noted, pointing out it was done without incurring debt. The county's long-standing "pay as you go" philosophy will result in Warren County being completely debt-free once the last payment on previous borrowing from years ago is made this July.

Sarnoski said the project would not have happened without the help of a lot of people, crediting his fellow commissioners, past commissioners and freeholders, the library staff and library commission, and the project team.

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The work was completed without delays and through a team effort, Commissioner Lori Ciesla remarked.

Sarnoski, Ciesla and Commissioner James R. Kern III singled out county Public Works Director Emily A Hammer for leading the project,

Lehigh Valley Career and Technical Education Students Ready to Get to Work

By Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY- A new generation of students who will help to fuel Lehigh Valley's growing economy with skills they developed through career and technical education were honored recently at the SkillsUSA Council's annual Signing Day.

More than 80 students from Lehigh Career & Technical Institute, Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School, Upper Bucks County Technical School, Monroe Career and Technical Institute, and Career Institute of Technology participated in the event on May 2 at Lehigh Carbon Community College.

Modeled after the popular events where high school athletes sign with colleges, the students signed with their future employers, military academies, and institutions of higher learning as their parents and other supporters watched.

"Local employers keep telling us what they need. They require a steady flow of talent that is trained and ready to maintain operations with the flexibility to change and grow. Today is a celebration of you, the students who have chosen to maximize your skilled

trade training with an eye on becoming successful and financially secure. Today, we are proud to recognize all of you who have made a solid investment in your future," said Andy Hammer, Executive Director of SkillsUSA Council District 11.

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers, and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. A nonprofit national education association, SkillsUSA serves middle sch

The Lehigh Valley boasts the only SkillsUSA Council that not only offers all the benefits of SkillsUSA national, but also professional development conferences and interest clubs year-round here in the Lehigh Valley.

The graduating students recognized at Signing Day will be entering fields including manufacturing, engineering, construction, business and technology, health and human services, culinary arts, an

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (LVEDC) was the Title Sponsor of Signing Day. Promoting and coordinating a skilled and prepared workforce is one of the



She credited her instructors and SkillsUSA with not only teaching the skills she needs for a career, but with helping her to overcome her social anxiety and become more comfortable interacting with others.

"SkillsUSA will forever be a part of my life," Yondura said. "I'm so grateful for the opportunities I've had and the opportunities I've allowed myself to go out there and do. SkillsUSA was the thing that pushed me out of my bubble and allowed me to be here right now giving this speech. This SkillsUSA Signing Day demonstrates how far we have all come and where we're all heading."

priorities of LVEDC, which works with partners to uncover regional occupation and skills demand and build strategies to ensure that our workforce is prepared for the career opportunities at local employers.

Karianne Gelinas, LVEDC's Vice President of Regional Partnerships & Talent Strategies, told the students there is a demand for their skills.

"Our economy and our population are growing, and we need people like you here who have learned the best from our career and technical schools and are now ready to make your next move," she said.

Lutron is among the Lehigh Valley companies that has hired SkillsUSA students.

"The current technical schools represented here today have been a great source for new hires at Lutron," said Ken Berger, Lutron's Human Resource Manager. "Well-qualified graduates from these schools have the capability to meet our customers' needs today and grow and expand in the ever-changing world to meet the needs of our customers down the road."

The graduates include Natalia Yondura of Upper Bucks County Technical School, where she studied baking and won awards at the state and national SkillsUSA competitions.