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**December
2022**



Altoona Proud

A Monthly Insight into all that is Altoona

Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon Ugly Sweater 5K Run

The staff of our Emergency Services in Altoona face many challenges and are often confronted with difficult situations and traumatic events. These are things they face every day as they rescue, protect and serve the people of Altoona and surrounding communities. The Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon (BESCP) is a group of volunteer chaplains who provide Peer 2 Peer support for the Emergency Services Community and their families. The Ugly Sweater 5K raises funds to help support this important work. Help show your support for our Police, Fire, EMS, 911 Dispatchers, Parole and Probation officers and their families.

Benefits the Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon
You'll never run better than in an ugly Christmas Sweater...but sweaters are optional!



ugly CHRISTMAS *sweater*

5K Run/2 Mile walk
Holiday Fun Included
December 10:10am 5K-10:10 walk
@ the Mishler
Stick around for food; live music and fun.

Facebook.com/BESCP Ugly Sweater 5K
runsignup.com "BESCP Ugly Sweater 5K"

The BESCP event is a timed 5K run, a 2 mile walk and a free Reindeer Run for kids, on Saturday, December 10th. The race will begin and end at Heritage Plaza in Downtown Altoona and is packed full of fun along the routes. The Race begins at 10:00 AM and ends at 2:00 PM. Registration fee is \$26 for walkers or runners.

Stick around after the race for live music from the Pennsylvanians, food and fun. Race day registration will be available for a slightly increased fee.

UGLY SWEATERS ARE OPTIONAL!

To register for the event, or to make a donation, visit the link below:

[Register on Run Signup](https://runsignup.com/R/run/5K/Altoona%20PA/Blair%20Emergency%20Services%20Chaplain%20Platoon%20Ugly%20Sweater%205K%20Run)

Energy Assistance in Altoona

As we approach the cold winter months of central Pennsylvania, utility bills rise and, for many people, this can be a hardship, especially as inflation continues to be an issue everywhere in the U.S. There are many agencies serving the City of Altoona that can provide energy assistance based on different eligibility guidelines. If you, or someone you know, needs help with utility bills this winter season, the following are just a few of the many resources:

Blair County Community Action - utility assistance for renters, 2301 Beale Avenue, Altoona
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 ashley.fulmer@use.salvationarmy.org

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

Pennsylvania Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – utility assistance for residents of Pennsylvania. Call the Blair County Assistance Office at 866-812-4431

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

2022 Holiday Lights on the Lake

For 26 years, Holiday Lights on the Lake has been a festive and family-friendly attraction for the residents of our City and surrounding communities. Each year, over 1 million lights illuminate more than 50 acres of land, where visitors experience one of the most beautiful light displays in the area.

This year, the Lights on the Lake will run from November 18th, 2022 through January 8th, 2023 from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM each evening. This is a special treat for friends and family visiting during this holiday season and something of which our citizens can be very proud. Many local businesses and organizations participate with wonderful displays you can enjoy from your own vehicle.

In addition to the lights, Santa's Gift Shop is there to warm up with hot chocolate and treats, along with unique gifts and ornaments. Right next to the shop, is an impressive Alto Model Train Display which is filled with many scenes and trains, and is especially fun for "kids" of all ages to try to spot familiar characters within the display (watch out for the Grinch!).

For more information, click [here](#). Take advantage of a local highlight this holiday season!



**ON BEHALF OF MAYOR MATTHEW
PACIFICO AND STAFF, WE WISH EACH AND
EVERY CITIZEN OF OUR WONDERFUL CITY
A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON,
AND ALL THE BEST IN 2023!**

Christmas at the Mansion

Our City is fortunate to have many festivities and events scheduled during this busy holiday season. They are a great chance to celebrate the spirit of the season and take a break from the busyness that can overtake us at this time of year. Our very own Baker Mansion has several events that our residents can take part in.

There will be special visits from Santa Claus on December 3rd & 4th and December 17th & 18th at the Mansion. These event days are included in the tour admission (adults - \$10; 12 & Under - \$5; children under age 3 and BCHS members – free. Attendees will enjoy music, cookies from the Altoona Women's Club and stunning holiday decorations by the Blair Garden Club. (Get your photo with Santa in the single parlor!)

On the evening of December 9th, trained pianist, Cynthia Moringiello, will have special performances at 5:00 PM, 6:00 PM and 7:00 PM on Anna Baker's piano, using Anna's original music book from the late 1800's. It is a chance to step back in time to the Mansion's history. Self-guided tours of the Mansion and photos with Santa are included with the admission cost. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. Children under age 3 are admitted free.

There are many other events, fundraisers and celebrations throughout the City. Take advantage of the opportunities to support these local businesses and organizations who add to the festivities of the holiday season!



(NOTE: *If your business or organization is having a special event, fundraiser or other occasion, please share it with us for inclusion in our newsletter. The more we share information, the more we grow!*)

Amtran's First Annual Stuff the Bus



Amtran is holding its first Annual Stuff the Bus initiative to benefit the Altoona Food Bank and the Mountain Lion Backpack Program, providing food to over 900 elementary school children in need. The bus will be accepting donations during the Spirit of Christmas Parade on December 1st, and on Saturday, Dec. 3rd from 1PM – 5PM at the Amtran Trolleyworks along 6th Avenue and 35th Street. Some of the most needed items include:

- Canned Pasta
- Cracker Packs
- Applesauce / Fruit Cups
- Ramen Noodles
- Cereal Cups
- Juice Boxes
- Mac and Cheese
- Canned meats and chili
- Pudding Cups
- Knorr Noodle and Rice Mixes

Please support this great cause by donating a food item or two to “Stuff the Bus”!

History Highlight

Altoona is rooted in railroad history, with important milestones in December, so this month we highlight:

The Pennsylvania Railroad Altoona Shops

Altoona was founded in 1848 by the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) with the purpose of building a hub for their expanding railroad. In 1854, when the Horseshoe Curve opened, the railroad carried about 150,000 passengers. By 1890, the figure was 20 million. Immigrants from all over Europe moved to Altoona, settling into neighborhoods, doubling Altoona's population between 1900 and 1930, from 39,000 to 82,000 people. At that time, the Altoona shops employed over 16,000 people and the PRR carried almost 67 million tons of freight.

By the early 1900's, PRR shops covered 242 acres with 122 buildings, and the East Altoona Roundhouse was one of the largest in the world. The railroad's importance in the early 20th Century cannot be understated. In WWI I, the US Government assumed control of all railroads, including the PRR, and in WWII, PRR facilities (including the Altoona Shops) were on target lists of German saboteurs.

December, 1850 - First train runs from Altoona to Pittsburgh.

December, 1852 - Headquarters of Transportation Department moved from Harrisburg to Altoona, along with 100 employees.

December, 1892 - 2,000th locomotive built (the first built in 1866 and a total of 6,783 built by 1946).

December, 1931 - A major fire destroys parts of the Altoona Machine Shops causing \$1.5 million in damages (the equivalent of over \$17 million today).

December, 1951 - PRR announced the building of 5,000 freight cars in the Altoona Shops.



You can learn more about the Railroad's rich history in Altoona by visiting the Railroaders' Memorial Museum, in the 140-year-old Master Mechanics Building. Located at 1200 9th Ave, Altoona, there are three floors of displays highlighting the people and events that shaped railroad history in Altoona and beyond. The Museum also operates a separate Museum, Visitor Center, and Observation Area at the Horseshoe Curve.

To learn more, visit <https://www.railroadcity.org/info.html>



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