



SHAMMY SHINE CAR WASHES

**GIFT CARDS
WASHES
ALL LOCATIONS
SHAMMYSHINE.COM**

**FREE WASH
WITH \$60
PURCHASE**

THE LEHIGH VALLEY'S FIRST SOURCE FOR NEWS

themorningcall.com

THE MORNING CALL

\$4.00 DECEMBER 14, 2023 THURSDAY Some sun 40° | 24° Weather, Sports 8

'NUTCRACKER'



Penelope Blomfield portrays Clara as Karen Knerr, artistic director for the Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, holds a final dress rehearsal with full orchestra and children's choir at Zoellner Arts Center on Tuesday in Bethlehem. The company will have performances Wednesday through Sunday, marking the 55th annual production of the Ballet Guild/Pennsylvania Youth Ballet "Nutcracker." **JANE THERESE/PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE MORNING CALL**

Ballet production returns for 55th year



Kristopher Yoder portrays Herr Drosselmeyer in "The Nutcracker" during a dress rehearsal with full orchestra and children's choir at Zoellner Arts Center on Tuesday in Bethlehem.



Mike Grigoruk portrays Dr. Stahlbaum in "The Nutcracker" during a dress rehearsal Tuesday. The show runs from Wednesday through Sunday.

Council again passes 2024 budget with no tax increase

'Disappointed' Allentown mayor says he won't veto proposal a second time

By Lindsay Weber
The Morning Call

Against the urgings of city leaders, including the mayor, finance director and controller, City Council on Tuesday again approved a 2024 budget with no tax increase.

Mayor Matt Tuerk said he would not veto council's budget for a second time, but that he was "disappointed" in the vote. He vetoed the budget council passed last month that also had no tax increase.

Tuerk proposed a budget with a 2% tax increase, an attempted compromise on his original budget proposal, which

would have increased property taxes by 6.9%.

The vote on an amendment removing the tax hike from the budget narrowly passed 4-3, with Council members Cynthia Mota, Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos and Ce-Ce Gerlach voting in favor, and Daryl Hendricks, Santo Napoli and Candida Affa voting against it.

Council's budget leaves the city with a deficit of \$762,045 next year. Tuerk said his staff is "resourceful" and would find ways to cut spending in order to balance the budget, and would avoid taking

Turn to Budget, Page 2

House passes impeachment inquiry into Biden

Democrats assail absence of evidence

By Farnoush Amiri
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House authorized the impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden, with every Republican rallying behind the politically charged process Wednesday despite lingering concerns among some in the party that the investigation has yet to produce evidence of misconduct by the president.

The 221-212 party-line vote put the entire House Republican conference on record in support of an impeachment process that can lead to the ultimate

penalty for a president: punishment for what the Constitution describes as "high crimes and misdemeanors," which can lead to removal from office if convicted in a Senate trial.

Authorizing the monthslong inquiry ensures that the impeachment investigation extends well into 2024, when Biden will be running for reelection and seems likely to be squaring off against former President Donald Trump — who was twice impeached during his time in the White House. Trump has pushed his GOP allies in Congress to move swiftly on impeaching Biden, part of his broader calls for vengeance and retribution against his political enemies.

Turn to Impeach, Page 2

PennDOT plans updates for I-78, Routes 22, 611

By Evan Jones
The Morning Call

On a windswept hilltop overlooking Interstate 78, PennDOT District 5 Executive Chris Kufro gave an update on the agency's activities in the past year.

The biggest one was right behind him, where work was recently completed to improve a 9-mile stretch of I-78 from Lenhartsville, Berks County, to the Lehigh County line, widening the highway to help accommodate the growing number of tractor-trailers and other vehicles using it to get between the Lehigh Valley and Harrisburg.

Kufro said the improvements, which cost about \$173 million, will give drivers more room to maneuver,



Traffic moves along the improved section of Interstate 78 in eastern Berks County. **EVAN JONES/THE MORNING CALL**

especially with traffic moving at different speeds. The speed limit on the stretch in Greenwich Township, Berks County, has been raised to 65 mph from 55 mph.

"The biggest upgrade is basically the reconstruction of the roadway and having

wide shoulders inside and outside," Kufro said at a news conference Tuesday. "Before the project, there was a very limited shoulder width. Adding those truck climbing lanes is a huge improvement because at times, trucks are going at different speeds and not

having a lot of options. It's a big improvement as far as having that flexibility to have traffic flow.

"If there is a truck that breaks down or an incident occurs, there's enough space to move from one side to the other to avoid any situation," he said. "So we're looking for this to be a major safety improvement."

Overall, District 5 — which includes the Lehigh Valley along with Berks, Carbon, Monroe and Schuylkill counties — spent 2023 replacing 362 bridges, paving 64 miles of roads and seal-coating another 345 miles.

There are 95 projects with a contract value of nearly \$1 billion active in the region.

Turn to Updates, Page 4

Trees of Historic Bethlehem

THE FINER THINGS

ELEGANT • LUXURIOUS • OPULENT



NOV. 17 - JAN. 7

Vote for your favorite tree!

Enjoy the dazzling array of 25+ Holiday Trees dripping with finery

Beautifully decorated by the Bethlehem Garden Club & local volunteers

HISTORICBETHLEHEM.ORG • 1.800.360.TOUR

