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Convention center annual losses up another \$1 million

After only nine months of operations, the 2010 annual operating loss may be close to a million dollars in addition to the \$400,000 budgeted to fund the convention center authority, assuming the revenue figures remain as projected. (That may prove to be a big assumption.)

According to the 2009 year end “*Statement of Income – Final*” recently received by *NewsLanc*, the convention center “*net revenue*” for 2009 came to a loss of \$677,742, one and a half times the amount of its “*total revenue*” of \$451,195.

Of even greater significance, energy costs are projected to exceed the earlier budgets by over \$300,000 a year, and it appears that there will be a shortfall from the convention center’s share of the hotel room sales tax approaching \$700,000. Therefore, there may be a shortage of close to a million dollars per year prospectively over what was originally projected.

As previously reported, the revenue from the hotel room sales tax in 2009 trailed the previous year by \$441,411, an 8% drop.

McCaskey “squeaks by” tough Conestoga Valley

Last year the McCaskey mock trial team lost in the county finals to Lancaster Catholic by points in a tie breaker.

But this year it was McCaskey that won the title in a similar ‘squeaker’ in which even members of McCaskey’s team feared they may have lost.

Each year a new fictional court case is submitted to high school teams throughout the state, and students work for months to create and master arguments for both the prosecutor and defense, since they alternate sides from competition to competition.

The McCaskey team is representative of the ethnically and racially diverse inner city high

school, including youngsters from Bosnia, Columbia, Peru, Puerto Rico and Viet Nam and consisting of African-Americans, Asians, and Caucasians.

The team is coached for the third straight year (and to the second county championship) by Kevin Webster, a faculty member at J. P. McCaskey. Ms. Nguyen Nguyen and Benjamin Field are co-captains.

The next step for the team is the regional competition to be held in Harrisburg in March. It would require three more wins on the regional level to earn McCaskey a coveted birth in the state wide finals.

STATE BUDGET AFTERMATH: Nonprofits feel pain

From the *Patriot News*: ...Last year, human-service agencies throughout Pennsylvania went almost four months without state aid during the standoff. From July 1 through Oct. 9, state money

for day cares, drug and alcohol treatment services, emergency shelters, food banks and more was held up while Gov. Ed Rendell and state lawmakers fought over taxes and spending. [Continued...]

A statewide survey of nearly 350 agencies conducted by the United Way of Pennsylvania indicates that the impasse hurt social-service

agencies at precisely the time when more residents were turning to them for help. Some are still recovering...

Crossings center likely won't see County funds

Since the County has not been awarded a \$91.5 million federal transportation grant, High Real Estate Group is looking for other ways to fund about \$48.2 million in Route 30 / Harrisburg Pike improvements to accommodate their planned "Crossings at Conestoga Creek" shopping center. At the Monday, February 22 meeting of the Lancaster County transportation coordinating committee, the prospect of County help appeared unlikely.

The planning commission's transportation improvement program (TIP) determines the

allocation of more than \$197 million in local, state, and federal funds for area transportation improvements over the next four years. Lancaster City Mayor Rick Gray, vice chair of the committee, told *NewsLanc* that improvements accommodating the shopping center are nowhere on the immediate horizon.

"It's a big jump at this point," Gray said, *"They've got a lot of bridges to cross before they get to that one."*

NEW ERA: An editorial starts, *"Like an obnoxious tavern patron who already has had one too many, a renewed attempt is under way to loosen Pennsylvania's beer-sales law. A group of supermarket chains, convenience stores and independent grocers rallied in the ornate state Capitol rotunda on Tuesday for proposed*

legislation that would broaden the places where people can buy six-packs, 12-packs and beer cases in Pennsylvania."

WATCHDOG: The editors need to pour a cold one and loosen up!

LETTER: A tribute to PAM's co-founders

"...You have built an extraordinary temple to music that will outlive all of us. More importantly, you have devoted the past twenty years to preaching the importance of early music education..."

"Your selfless and untiring devotion to providing quality musical education to children of all ages and abilities has inspired many thousands, if not tens or even hundreds of thousands, of people. And of course there are four decades worth of

pupils you taught, all eager to ensure their own children and grandchildren receive the same quality music instruction they did.

"...42 N. Prince Street will always be the house that Veri & Jamanis built—a physical testament to the extraordinarily high standards of excellence to which you devoted yourselves first as students at Julliard, then as recording and performing artists, and finally as teachers..."

The above have been excerpted from NewsLanc.com.
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