Everyone, from parents and athletes to fishermen and senior citizens, is invited to put their imprint on the latest gift to Dauphin County and future generations: 411 acres of pristine parkland in Middle Paxton Township.

The green space, blessed with dense forestland, open fields and fishing opportunities, was partially donated, and partially purchased, by the county, through the enormous generosity of the Detweiler Family.

Now it’s the public’s turn to recommend how Detweiler Park should look, as the largest of the county’s eight parks.

“We do we need more ball fields, playgrounds, or nature trails? We want to hear from the people who will be spending quality time here for decades to come,” said Jeff Haste, Chairman of the Dauphin County Commissioners, and an avid outdoorsman and soccer coach.

“We want this park to be ‘the People’s Park,’” Commissioner Mike Pries said. “We have always found fresh, innovative ideas when we talk with citizens.”

Public meetings will soon be held to gather input on the park’s master plan, to explore expanded parking, converting the farmhouse to a nature center, and other possibilities.

“We’ve embraced growth and progress, it’s wonderful to be able to stop the march of the bulldozer in parts of the county and preserve the natural beauty of this area,” Commissioner George Hartwick, III said. “I am excited to hear what the public has in mind for it.”

Parking is available at the entrance of the park at the Dauphin County Conservation District headquarters, 1415 Peter Mountain Road. For more information, go to www.DauphinCounty.org.
Transforming Distressed Sites into Desirable Ones

From Millersburg to Steelton, at least 100 former industrial sites that once created jobs and opportunities for communities are sitting idle. Not for much longer.

The commissioners’ Transformation Initiative launched this year aims to increase development county-wide and to breathe new life into these vacant sites and turn them into prized assets.

“The Transformation Initiative is about revitalizing these blighted and unused commercial properties and allowing them to shine again,” said Commissioner Mike Pries, who oversees the county’s Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED). “Working with residents and officials, we believe it will make a lasting and positive impact.” An advisory board made up of local officials, real estate professionals, developers and other stakeholders was appointed by the commissioners to help guide redevelopment efforts. Pennsylvania-based TRC Environmental Corporation is helping the county in assessing the sites.

Bolstering the Transformation Initiative is a $400,000 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant that will allow the county to conduct environmental assessments of promising sites. The county was one of only four Pennsylvania communities to receive the grant, and EPA officials cited the commissioners previous redevelopment successes.

“We recently joined with Steelton in helping the borough turn 6 acres of former steel mill land across from borough hall into what will be a mix of shopping and apartments called Renaissance Row,” said Chairman Jeff Haste. “Our Transformation Initiative is about doing these kinds of projects throughout the county.”

Commissioner George P. Hartwick, III said the Transformation Initiative underscores the board’s emphasis on finding creative ways to improve the lives of residents without turning to tax dollars.

“What we’re doing is transforming vacant and underutilized properties into real economic opportunities,” said Hartwick.

“The Transformation Initiative is about revitalizing these blighted and unused commercial properties and allowing them to shine again.” —Mike Pries

Combatting the Heroin Crisis

As heroin and prescription opioids continue to claim the lives of 10 Pennsylvanians a day, Dauphin County’s efforts to fight back have made small but steady inroads.

“Everyone needs to be part of the solution,” said Commissioner George P. Hartwick, III. “Government can’t fix this epidemic on our own. It’s too vast, costly and complex. Getting past the denial, the finger-pointing, the stigma and the shame, we can work together to get people the help they need.”

The commissioners’ counterattack includes raising awareness, supporting despairing families in the community, sending mobile case managers to get overdose victims into treatment and ensuring community and first responder access to overdose-reversing medications.

For more information about the county’s efforts to combat addiction, to get help, or to get involved in local support groups, visit www.DauphinCounty.org or call Dauphin County Drug and Alcohol Services at 717-635-2255.

Three new community groups have formed. To learn more, contact:

Northern Dauphin County Drug and Alcohol Task Force
Wendy Shoop, 717-329-2357, shoop.wendy@gmail.com or Dawn Reese, 717-692-2431, dawnreese@comcast.net

I Care Foundation
Wendy Loranzo, 717-315-6664, wloranzo@comcast.net www.facebook.com/iCarePA

Fighting Addiction Middletown Style (FAMS)
Rhonda C. Spencer, 717-343-6362, ladylion1959@gmail.com
Commissioners Host Free Forums for Veterans, Launch Discount Card Program

To connect veterans with services, the commissioners and the county’s Veterans Affairs Office are hosting their second free breakfast forum for veterans from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on September 28 at the Halifax Area Ambulance Association, 31 Bunker Rd., Halifax. Available services include: health care benefits; pensions; addiction or mental health treatment; and employment assistance. Registration by September 14 is required. Please RSVP to Colleen Washinger at cwashinger@dauphinco.org or 717-780-6356.

New this year for veterans is the Dauphin County Veterans Discount Card Program, which enables veterans to receive discounts at various participating county businesses. To register for the program and to receive a card at the forum, veterans must bring their DD-214. This program is a collaboration between the Dauphin County Commissioners, Veterans Affairs and the county Recorder of Deeds. A list of participating businesses can be found at www.DauphinCounty.org/deeds/vets. Can’t make it to the forum? Call Dauphin County Veterans Affairs to learn how to get your discount card.
Volunteer Spotlight: Halifax’s Jean Patton says Volunteering Keeps Her 86 Years Young

Jean Patton of Halifax is approaching her 86th birthday, but she says volunteering has kept her young. For 40 years Jean has helped deliver hot food to seniors and the homebound for Dauphin County Area Agency on Aging’s Meals on Wheels program.

“The meals are not as important as the visit, as the checking on someone,” Jean said. “We can see if someone is sick. The Meals on Wheels person may be the only person some people see all week.”

As a widow with no children, Jean is like so many of the clients she serves through the popular program. Many clients are younger than she is. But she has a devoted dog and a nephew who checks on her daily, and she has always been one to “never take no for an answer.”

That “Just do it” attitude dates back to the days when she was Board President of the Upper Dauphin Human Services Center, which predates the 2009 opening of the Northern Dauphin Human Services Center in Elizabethville.

Before her retirement, Jean worked as a systems analyst for the federal government in the Bureau of Employment Security. Her husband, who passed away ten years ago, was a farmer.

Volunteering makes her feel “great.” “It’s what keeps me going,” she said. “It’s good for you. It’s good for everyone.”

County’s First Skateboard Park Rolls into Steelton

The county’s first skateboard park replaces unused tennis courts at 3rd Alley and Franklin Streets, by the Steelton Borough Municipal Park. Designed by professional skateboarders, the concrete park will include a bowl, plaza-like steps, and ramps designed to mirror some of the finest skate parks in the nation. It is part of an overall effort to redevelop and revitalize Steelton Borough.

The park received a $31,000 tourism grant and $90,000 from the local share grant program generated by the Hollywood Casino at Penn National. The borough also received a five-year, $80,000 loan from the county’s Industrial Development Authority.

The park is expected to be completed and open to the public later this year.
Tell the Commissioners What You Would Like To See At Detweiler Park

The Dauphin County Commissioners want to hear your ideas about how to develop Detweiler Park in Middle Paxton Township! Please detach this comment card and mail it to: Dauphin County, Office of the County Commissioners, P.O. Box 1295, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Or you may complete the survey online at www.DetweilerPark.org

Name: _______________________________ E-mail: _______________________________

Address: ______________________________

☐ Please send me more information and updates on Detweiler Park
☐ Please send me information about county parks and events

Here are my ideas for Detweiler Park: ____________________________________________

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK!


Study Examines Value of Dauphin County’s Natural Ecosystem

In 2016, 20 conservation organizations, state and local agencies and commissions, participated in meetings to assess Dauphin County’s Return on Environment, or the economic value that nature provides to the public for recreation, health, home real estate value, and quality of life. The meetings were hosted by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Audubon Pennsylvania, and Keystone Conservation Trust.

The findings were surprising. Forested areas along rivers and streams in Dauphin County reduce water pollution and flood damage by $248.6 million annually. The total annual value of the “services” nature provides to Dauphin County is estimated at $958 million. If these natural buffers would disappear, taxpayers would have to pick up the tab.

Jazz & Wine Festival
Sept. 8 from 6 p.m. – 10 p.m. and Sept. 9 – 10 from 4 p.m. – 10 p.m. at Fort Hunter Park
Weekend passes are $55 in advance, $60 at the door.

Fort Hunter Day
Sept. 17 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. at Fort Hunter Park
This free annual celebration features children’s crafts, games, live music, pony and carriage rides, and a craft show.

Fitness Fest
Oct. 14 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Lykens Glen Park
Get fit and feel great at the annual Fitness Fest. Local fitness center court.

Celebrate Wildwood
Sept. 24 from 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. at Wildwood Park
Celebrate the amazing things happening in the natural world as autumn arrives. For a small fee, you can paint a pumpkin, sniff a autumn aroma, for a small fee, you can rent a pumpkin, stroll through the park, and enjoy local food and craft vendors. A $10 donation is accepted at www.WildwoodParkPA.org.

Lykens Glen Fall Festival
Oct. 14 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Lykens Glen Park
Enjoy fall foliage, arts, activities, and food at the annual fall festival.

Dauphin County Upcoming EVENTS
Call 717-599-5188 or visit www.DauphinCounty.org and click on “Parks & Recreation” for a complete listing of more information.