



Technicians April Hall, right, and Tracy Deneen demonstrate the Ferrogaurd Screener.

FCCM Foundation Buys New Radiology Equipment

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
OBSERVER-REPORTER

Fulton County Medical Center Foundation has purchased a Ferrogaurd Screener for radiology. It is vital that no ferrous magnetic objects are taken into the MRI room. They can be highly dangerous projectile objects that can harm the patient or staff and cause damage to the expensive MRI equipment. Additionally, ferrous metal on a patient causes image distortion on their MRI scan result-

ing in wasted time and costly re-scans. The Ferrogaurd Screener is an asset in aiding the technician with finding smaller objects that the patient may have forgotten about like hearing aids, bobby pins, etc.

"This piece of equipment was made possible through our Annual Fund gifts - those who are members of the Green Hill Donors Club," said Mike Straley, executive director of the FCCM Foundation.

Man Ready To Ply Monongahela Waters With Renovated Riverboat

BY DAVE ZUCHOWSKI,
(WASHINGTON)
OBSERVER-REPORTER

MILLSBORO, Pa. (AP) - While piloting a tow boat on the Mississippi, Michael Hughes spotted a boat he recognized about 4 or 5 miles downriver near Tunica, Miss. It was a 125-foot-long, 35-foot-wide riverboat with three decks, whose stern was rebuilt at a shipyard he once managed.

"I recognized the boat from that far away," he said.

Hughes, a former tow boat captain, decided to buy the boat in 2016 with "a bunch of my retirement and discretionary funds." Following his purchase, he and two friends navigated the boat 1,274 miles up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers to a dock near his home in Millsboro.

In view from his back yard, the ship is currently undergoing as much restoration as the Coast Guard will allow before it's dry docked at Campbell Transportation in Dunlevy. There, the boat will get its final restoration work, as well as any necessary repairs prior to its inspection by the Coast Guard.

"From day one, we started with the idea of being a green (eco-friendly) boat," Hughes said. "With a (federal) grant, we're putting in new engines and propeller system to make the boat more efficient and reduce emissions. We're also complying with all Coast Guard regulations and standards. In effect, we're taking an old boat and making it new again."

Operating under the business name of Access H2O, Hughes plans to make Morgantown, W.Va., the boat's home port. He hopes that by spring of next year, the Mountaineer Star will begin offering excursions and dinner, dance and sightseeing cruises along the Monongahela and serve as a platform for more private events such as

proms, weddings, children's theme events and graduation parties.

"Our business footprint will be from Morgantown south to Fairmont and from Morgantown north to Charleroi," Hughes said. "To save client drive time, we'll bring the boat to them instead of having them come to the boat."

The vessel can hold 325 passengers for casual cruising and 240 for formal sit-down events such as proms and weddings. The plan is to operate the boat throughout the year, weather permitting. If the river freezes in winter, the boat will remain static at the dock at the north end of Hazel Ruby McQuain Park in Morgantown, but be available for events, parties and other functions.

While the boat will have on-board confections and small food items available for purchase, Hughes plans to have local restaurants cater the excursions and private events.

"Rather than be a competitor with local restaurants, the Mountaineer Star will be more of a partner," said Hughes, who was born and raised in Brownsville. "I see the boat as an economic driver to start to daisy chain some of these small river communities together. Fortunately, we can put the boat in along the river at any point that's safe for the vessel and passengers."

Hughes recognizes the excursions won't be able to duplicate the awe factor people who ride the Gateway Clipper Fleet in Pittsburgh experience. Instead, he said the underdeveloped beauty of the riverfront makes up for what it might lack in urban glitter. There's also the spectacle of autumn leaves that can be experienced by boat. From time to time, he also plans to bring a historian onboard to talk about the area's past, where

it's at now and where it's going in the future.

To connect with both the broader area as well as the smaller communities along the Mon, he's met with senators, congressmen, county commissioners and mayors. He's also a member of the Morgantown Riverfront Revitalization Task Force, which includes Morgantown's mayor, city manager, city councilmen and a local kayak group, the Morgantown Area Paddlers.

You might say that piloting a riverboat is in Hughes' genes. His father, Isaac Hughes, was also a riverboat captain for 48 years. Even though Hughes plans to hire a captain to pilot the Mountaineer Star as part of his 12-employee start-up crew, he'll also pilot the boat himself on occasion.

"If I have my way, I'll be pushing people out of the way to captain the boat," Hughes joked.

A manufacturer in Dubuque, Iowa, constructed the riverboat in 1965. Dubbed the Biscayne Belle, the boat took passengers on Miami-based excursions until the late John Connelly, former owner of the Gateway Clipper fleet in Pittsburgh, purchased the vessel in the mid-1970s. In 2006, the Gateway Belle, as it was then called, relocated to Tunica, Miss., after a new owner took possession. There it remained until Hughes bought the boat two years ago with the intention of refurbishing it to make it river-excursion worthy.

"I am excited about this venture not only for myself, my family and Access H2O, but also for the small communities on the Upper Monongahela," Hughes said.

U.S. House Races Loom Largest In Pennsylvania Campaign Sprint

By Marc Levy
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - Ron DiNicola, the Democrat running in northwestern Pennsylvania's 16th Congressional District, isn't trying to rewrite the message of President Donald Trump's 2016 victory. Instead, he's trying to harness it in his uphill battle to unseat four-term Republican Rep. Mike Kelly.

Voters in the longtime Democratic bastion of Erie County, DiNicola's home, backed a Republican presidential candidate there for the first time in 32 years, and DiNicola sees why.

"I probably was a bit surprised at the time," DiNicola said, "but as you reflect on it, you realize that people are really frustrated with a government that doesn't work."

Now, the fights for U.S. House seats being waged by DiNicola and his fellow Democrats are shaping up as the most closely watched contests in Pennsylvania, as the state's races for governor and U.S. Senate are relegated to relative backburner status.

Campaigns are ramping up on Labor Day, when labor-endorsed candidates like DiNicola march in union-organized parades in cities across Pennsylvania. It's also viewed by campaign strategists as a fulcrum of sorts, when persuadable voters return from summer vacations, and start paying attention and making up their minds over a nine-week sprint to the Nov. 6 election.

There is no sign that super PACs will flush millions of dollars into Pennsylvania to try to unseat Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and Democratic U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, and no independent poll shows their Republican challengers with striking distance.

But with Democrats aiming to recapture the U.S. House, Pennsylvania could be a springboard to wipe out the GOP's 23-seat majority.

A pickup of seats by Democrats would be unsurprising since the party of the president historically does poorly in midterm elections. But Democrats in Pennsylvania have extra reasons giving them hope of flipping as many as six seats.

Pollsters have repeatedly found that registered Democrats in Pennsylvania are more enthusiastic than Republicans about voting in November. The latest poll to find that was issued Thursday by Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster.

Also propelling Democrats is a state Supreme Court decision in January to throw out seven-year-old congressional district boundaries as unconstitutionally gerrymandered to elect Republicans. Under that map, Republicans won 13 of Pennsylvania's 18 U.S. House seats in three straight elections, even as Democrats dominated statewide elections during that period.

The replacement districts approved by the court's Democratic majority are fueling more competitive contests around the state.

Freshman Republican Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick is defending his suburban Philadelphia seat in a perpetual swing district against a challenge from first-time candidate Scott Wallace. Democrats are expected to capture two other suburban Philadelphia seats being left vacant by Republicans. Just to the north, an Allentown-area seat is viewed as a tossup after seven-term Republican Rep. Charlie Dent resigned in May.

Elsewhere, three Republican incumbents - Kelly and three-term Reps. Scott Perry and Keith Rothfus - are facing what GOP strategists view as the most difficult re-election campaigns of their careers.

All three were handed more difficult district boundaries in the redrawn map.

In the heat of August, Kelly aired a TV ad designed to cement his standing with seniors.

"It was promised to you that when you were done working, you'd be taken care of, that's why I fought to protect and preserve Medicare and Social Security," Kelly tells a roomful of retirement-age listeners.

DiNicola called that "trying to rewrite history." Kelly, a strong Trump supporter, also has touted Trump's tax-cutting law as an economic good, while DiNicola criticizes it as primarily benefiting the wealthy.

Unseating Kelly won't be easy: Had the district existed in 2016, Trump would have won it by 20 percentage points.

But DiNicola, a Marine Corps veteran and a lawyer with an Ivy League pedigree, is following a trail blazed in a nationally watched March special election when Democrat Conor Lamb flipped a Republican-held seat in a southwestern Pennsylvania district that Trump won by nearly 20 percentage points in 2016.

Like Lamb, DiNicola avoids liberal positions that could alienate moderates. He doesn't support California Rep. Nancy Pelosi as House Democratic leader, banning assault-style weapons or abolishing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

And like Lamb, he doesn't criticize Trump. Rather, he criticizes dysfunction in Washington, its callousness to working families and what he views as Kelly's blind allegiance to Trump.

"Anyone who is in lockstep with the president, regardless of the issue, is not serving the interests of the district," DiNicola said. "I don't care if he's a Democrat or a Republican."

Thieves Stole Over \$40,000 In Rare Insects, Reptiles

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Philadelphia police say current or former employees at an insectarium stole over \$40,000 worth of rare insects and reptiles.

Authorities say the suspects stole about 90 percent of the animals at the Philadelphia Insectarium and Butterfly Pavilion on Aug. 22 and possibly other days. Police say staff uniforms were found stabbed into a wall with knives.

Police are searching the three suspects' homes for the animals but no arrests have been made.

They say some of the insects, including a Mexican fireleg tarantula, have been returned.

Insectarium chief executive Dr. John Cambridge believes the animals were stolen to be resold.

The organization has started a fundraising campaign to help replace the missing insects. Insectarium officials say they hope to restock their collection in time for the Philadelphia Oddities Expo in November.

PA To Start Pre-Qualifying Residents For A Real ID

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - Pennsylvanians who want a drivers' license that allows them to board commercial airliners and enter certain secure federal buildings can soon get one.

Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation next week, on Sept. 4, will begin pre-qualifying residents to receive one of the so-called Real IDs when they become available next March. The IDs cost \$30 and meet federal anti-terrorism standards, but are optional and aren't necessary to legally drive.

Residents who want a Real ID must provide proof of current address, a Social Security card and proof of identification, such as a passport or birth certificate, if they received their first Pennsylvania drivers' license before September 2003.

Federal Real ID standards take effect in Pennsylvania on Oct. 10, although the Wolf administration is asking the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for an extension.