

# ERIE COUNTY *connection*



## Proposed Lake Erie Quadrangle Moves to Inventory

The County Executive received great news in February from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS). The ONMS sent a letter advising the County Executive that they have determined the nomination of the Lake Erie Quadrangle meets the criteria and considerations to be added to the inventory of potential new national marine sanctuary sites.

The letter from John Armor, Acting Director at ONMS stated that “ONMS concurs that the historical, cultural and heritage characteristics of this area clearly are of national significance and merit inclusion in the Sanctuary Nomination Process inventory.”



A diver explores the depths of Lake Erie.  
*Photo courtesy of Jeremy Bannister.*

County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper couldn’t be more thrilled. “It was a busy year that involved public outreach and the drafting and submission of the application,” she said. “We had great support from the community and were able to include over 100 letters

of support. The fact that NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries recognizes the area included in our proposal to be of national significance is very encouraging.”

Being placed in the inventory is a holding place for proposals that NOAA may consider for future designation as national marine sanctuaries. Being placed in the inventory, however, does not guarantee that the Lake Erie Quadrangle’s nomination will become a sanctuary. The designation process can take several years to complete and is a public and highly participatory process.

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The proposed Lake Erie Quadrangle includes approximately 750 miles of water that spans the 76 miles of Erie County coastline within the Pennsylvania border. This area includes some of Erie County’s most popular landmarks, including Presque Isle State Park and Erie Bluffs State Park, and is home to 130 known shipwrecks—one of the highest concentrations of shipwrecks in the United States, and contains a higher concentration than the Bermuda triangle. If the Lake Erie Quadrangle National Marine Sanctuary becomes designated, it would become the keystone in a network of Great Lake National Marine Sanctuaries.



A map of the proposed Lake Erie Quadrangle.

To find out more about national marine sanctuaries and the designation process, visit NOAA’s website at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>.

## Getting Geared-Up for National Bike to Work Day

Hundreds of communities around the country have committed to promoting bicycle safety and commuting by participating in the National Bike to Work Week and Bike to Work Day during the month of May. In 2016, National Bike to Work Day is scheduled for Friday, May 20. Interestingly, the number of bicycle commuters in the United State grew by more than 62% from 2000-2013. This



County Executive and employees of the Erie County Department of Health pose for a photo on Bike to Work Day 2015.

increase in bike commuters helps to create healthier communities and provides sustainable and economically friendly transportation options.

Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper has invited fellow County employees to join her when she bikes to work on May 20. She is also encouraging all Erie County residents to participate by riding their bikes to work that day if they can.

To find out more about National Bike to Work Day, visit <http://www.bikeleague.org/content/bike-month-dates-events->

Who knows, before you know it, you’ll be leaving your car in the driveway and biking to work every day!



## Safe and Secure Counties: celebrating the 25th Anniversary of National County Government Month

National County Government Month (NCGM) is celebrated each April by the Nation's counties to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of county government. Since 1991, the National Association of Counties (NACo) has encouraged counties across the country to actively promote county government programs and services. This year's theme, *Safe and Secure Counties*, emphasizes the role of county government in keeping our communities safe.

In order to remain healthy, vibrant, safe, and economically competitive, America's counties provide public health, justice, emergency management and economic services that play a key role in everything from residents' daily health to disaster response.

County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper is proud of the work each department has done to ensure the safety, health and well-being of people throughout the region and looks forward to what this year will bring to strengthen the Erie County community.



## Spotlight on Awareness: National Child Abuse Prevention Month

The month of April calls attention to an issue in communities, small and large, across the nation. National Child Abuse Prevention Month is crucial to bring awareness to light and provide the momentum to create safer communities for our youth to grow. Erie County is dedicated to promoting the safety of the children and youth in our community and strives to ensure everyday health and well-being through the Office of Children and Youth and the department's collaboration with regional agencies.



Children are the key to a successful future; to our economic and social growth, community prosperity and quality of life of Erie County. Every child and youth in Erie County and across the nation should have their chance to be a part of this success, yet many are burdened with abuse or neglect. During this month we call to strengthen our resolve to give our youth the opportunity to have the bright future they deserve.

All citizens play a role in preventing child abuse and neglect. Parents, guardians, community leaders and educators must actively contribute to this ongoing issue. We can do this together by recognizing the signs of abuse or neglect, fostering environments that promote confidence, helping young victims recover and being aware of services available to those affected by abuse or neglect. Raising a healthy generation that recognizes that we live in an integrated community – one in which we all have a stake in each other's success – contributes a thriving region for generations to come.

Come and pledge to do your part in securing our community's future and join County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper in lighting the Courthouse blue on Thursday, March 31 at 7:45pm in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Updates and information on the event will be posted on the Erie County website and on the County Executive's Facebook page.

# Employee SPOTLIGHT

## What is your job title?

Advanced Intake Caseworker at Erie County Office of Children and Youth

## Describe a few highlights of your job and why you enjoy them.

The greatest moments would be having children return home to their families after a placement. It lets you know that both the parents and the workers did what was necessary to get the family reunited. Seeing children smile makes me smile.

## What do you think is the most important quality needed for success?

Motivation followed by dedication to the cause of whatever you are working to achieve.

## What is your most proud moment from your career?

Getting my Masters degree and working full time.

## Who is your role model, and why?

My mother. She raised three children on her own and did an excellent job, if I do say so myself! She is a very hardworking woman and I know I get that trait from her!

## If there was a movie produced about your life, who would play you and why?

I would have to say Regina King. I like her style.

## If you could have dinner with one famous person, living or from history, who would it be and what would you ask them?

Michelle Obama. I want to know what she eats regularly! She is in excellent shape.

## Social cause that is near and dear to the heart?

I am a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., local chapter Rho Sigma Zeta, and we have a national program ZHOPE (Zetas Helping Other People Excel) and one of the populations is teens. Teens, the girls specifically, are very near and dear to my heart. Someone needs to advocate for them as well as educate them on self preservation and worth.

## What's one goal you strive to accomplish daily?

With my busy schedule, I strive to make my 5 obligatory prayers as prescribed in Islam.

## If you had a superpower, what would it be and why?

A "jumper". I like to travel and this would make traveling so much easier and it would shorten travel times!

## What is your favorite time era for music?

Early 90s-00s. R & B, neo soul!



**Meet Meko!**

## National Correctional Officers and Employees Week

Since 1984, the first week of May is celebrated as National Correctional Officers and Employees Week. It is through the ongoing commitment of the Erie County Prison staff that the goal of corrections work is achieved; providing secure management and rehabilitation to justice-involved individuals prepares offenders with the services they need to become law abiding citizens. In addition to the hard-working officers and employees, the Department of Corrections has continually strived to create the safest environment possible for both staff and inmates. As such, several safety precaution measures have been enacted to achieve this objective.

One established safety precaution that the Erie County Prison has in place is its Hostage Negotiation Team (H.N.T.). The Hostage Negotiation Team is used in a hostage/crisis situation involving inmates. The



Staff at the Erie County Prison participate in a Hostage Negotiation Team drill.

purpose of the team is to create contact with the hostages and diffuse an emergency situation using dialogue.

The Erie County Prison's H.N.T. started in 2010 with just a few volunteer members. The team was created to improve the overall safety and security of the prison. The H.N.T. has grown, and currently has eleven volunteer members. Erie County's team works closely with Albion's H.N.T. Also, Erie County's team has traveled to Warren County, Crawford County, Butler County, and to the State Community Corrections Center in Erie to perform drills for training and guidance with other local county institutions.

The Hostage Negotiation Team has had surprise drills performed on every shift at the Erie County Prison to better prepare staff for any situation that may arise. Last fall, Deputy Warden Holman worked to get the PA Department of Corrections Western Regional H.N.T. to teach H.N.T. basic training at the Erie County Prison. This training certified all of our team members as well as those from other counties who participated.

The Erie County Prison's Hostage Negotiation Team is a valuable asset to the prison, and helps to provide a greater sense of security, along with knowledge and power in a possible hostage situation.

County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper recognizes and thanks the correctional

officers and staff at the Erie County Prison for their continued commitment to the citizens of Erie County.



The 2016 management staff of the Erie County Prison poses for a photo.