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CENTRE DAILY TIMES

Record spending, trillion-dollar deficit in new Trump budget



President Donald Trump's 2020 budget proposal is delivered to the House Budget Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington on Monday.

BY LISA MASCARO
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump proposed a record \$4.7 trillion budget on Monday, pushing the federal deficit past \$1 trillion but counting on optimistic growth, accounting shuffles and steep domestic cuts to bring future spending into balance in 15 years.

Reviving his border wall fight with Congress, Trump wants more than \$8 billion for the barrier with Mexico, and he's also

asking for a big boost in military spending. That's alongside steep cuts in health care and economic support programs for the poor that Democrats — and even some Republicans — will oppose.

Trump called his plan a bold next step for a nation experiencing "an economic miracle." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called his cuts "cruel and short-sighted ... a roadmap to a sicker, weaker America."

Presidential budgets tend to be seen as aspirational blueprints, rarely becoming enacted policy, and Trump's proposal for the new fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, sets up a showdown with Congress over priorities, especially as he reignites his push for money to build the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

The deficit is projected to hit \$1.1 trillion in the 2020 fiscal year, the highest in a decade. The administration is counting on robust growth, including from the Republican tax cuts — which

SEE BUDGET, 3A

Sheetz in College Township is closed — for now

BY SARAH PAEZ
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COLLEGE TOWNSHIP

The Sheetz gas station and convenience store at the corner of Benner Pike and Shiloh Road is getting a facelift — and customers will have to go elsewhere for some time.

Construction began Monday for a rebuilt Sheetz planned for 765 Benner Pike. Signs on the old fence now surrounding the property warn the area is closed until further notice.

In January, College Township approved plans for Sheetz to demolish the existing, 4,700-square-foot store and develop a 6,077-square-foot replacement. The new store will have 14 gas pumps and 60 parking spots, including three handicapped-accessible spots, according to plans shared with the township.

Designs submitted over the summer — which include a drive-thru, a restaurant atmosphere inside and, if Sheetz can land a liquor license, a walk-in beer cooler — remain on track, township zoning officer Mark Gabrovsek said.

PennTerra Engineering in State College oversaw the land development plan and is helping Sheetz secure necessary permits. Mark Torretti, a project manager with PennTerra, said the firm hopes to get a permit this week to demolish

SEE SHEETZ, 3A



On June 1, Exelon Corp. plans to begin the monthslong process of shutting down the financially struggling Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Middletown, which was the site of a partial meltdown in 1979.

Fight over nuclear plants arrives at Pennsylvania's Capitol

BY MARC LEVY
 Associated Press

HARRISBURG

Legislation designed to pump hundreds of millions of ratepayer dollars into Three Mile Island and Pennsylvania's other nuclear power plants was introduced Monday and could usher in heated debate over whether the plants deserve what critics call a bailout.

The debate in Pennsylvania's Capitol will run up against a June 1 deadline in the nation's No. 2 nuclear power state.

That's when Three Mile Island's owner, Chicago-based Exelon Corp., has said it will begin the monthslong process of shutting down the financially struggling plant that was the site of a terrifying partial meltdown in 1979.



At a news conference Monday, state Rep. Thomas Mehaffie, R-Dauphin, discusses legislation he is introducing to pump hundreds of millions of ratepayer dollars into the state's five nuclear power plants.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Thomas Mehaffie, R-Dauphin, said

the plan is projected to cost ratepayers around \$500 million a

year by requiring that all five nuclear power plants get preferential treatment like what solar power, wind power and a few other niche energy sources received under a 2004 state law.

In total, roughly 6 million Pennsylvania electric customers paid more than \$14 billion for electricity in 2018, including distribution charges and taxes, according to federal data.

By all accounts, three of five nuclear power plants in Pennsylvania are profitable for the foreseeable future, and there is no plan to prematurely shut down all five.

But the plants' owners warn that the same market dynamics that make Three Mile Island unprofitable will eventually affect Pennsylvania's entire nuclear fleet.

"They contend that the legislation ensures the plants' survival against hostile market conditions, sustains "carbon-free" energy sources in the fight against global warming and, should all five shut down at once,

SEE NUCLEAR, 4A

Three men face charges after prostitution investigation

BY BRET PALLOTTO
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Three men accused of having sex with prostitutes at the Super 8 in State College were charged Monday after a joint investigation by State College police and the state attorney general's office.

The two agencies received a tip in January from Brookville police about a possible prostitution or human trafficking operation based at the 1663 S. Atherton St. hotel, according to a criminal complaint filed by the AG's office. Officers later contacted two Super 8 managers and were put in a room directly across the hall from Tsai-Hsia Wu, 56, and Yu-Ying Yeh, 51, to establish surveillance, authorities said.

Victor Shvenke, a 65-year-old from Bellefonte, was the first man to walk into Wu and Yeh's room, according to the complaint.

Travis Horner, a 38-year-old from Lewisstown, followed about two hours later, and Harold Geise, a 64-year-old from State College, went into the room about 30 minutes after Horner, authorities said. All three were stopped by

SEE INVESTIGATION, 3A

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Official, husband dispute Detroit police account

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH
An elected official from western Pennsylvania and her husband are disputing the account of Detroit police about a confrontation in that city last week.

Detroit police allege that Allegheny County Controller Chelsea Wagner interfered with officers as they were preparing to remove her husband, Khari Mosley, from the premises of the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel early Wednesday. Wagner, a Democrat, was arrested and spent about 12 hours in jail.

The former state representative, who is serving her second term as chief fiscal officer of Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh, on Saturday called the experience “appalling” and said their actions had been grossly mischaracterized.

No charges were immediately filed, although Wayne County prosecutors said they were reviewing a warrant request by Detroit police.

The couple said they went to a concert in the city and then to a restaurant, where they said they had a steak dinner and each had several glasses of wine. They then returned to the hotel, where he went up to their hotel room and fell asleep.

Later, he wanted to return to the room but real-



ALEXANDRA WIMLEY/AP

Pennsylvania's Allegheny County Controller Chelsea Wagner and her husband Khari Mosley speak about their encounter with police while on a trip to Detroit, in their home, Saturday, in the Point Breeze neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Wagner and Mosley were in Detroit for a concert.

ized he did not have the keycard needed to go up to the elevator. He asked for another one at the desk, but since the room was in Wagner's name, the request was refused, he said. Her cellphone was on “do not disturb” mode, and hotel employees said they tried the room phone but got no answer. Wagner said she never heard the phone ring. Mosley said he asked someone to go up and knock on the door, but staff declined to do so, and he asked to wait in the lobby but was eventually told he would have to go to another hotel.

“This is when the situation escalates because I respond I think the way any rational thinking hotel guest would respond,” he said. “The penalty for los-

ing my hotel key is now I have to go to a completely (different) hotel and book a completely different room?”

Police chief James Craig said Friday that officers were called to the hotel for a report of a “disorderly person, someone under the influence of alcohol, creating a disturbance.” He said Mosley had fallen asleep at some point and was also banging on a door. Mosley said he didn't remember doing anything like that, and the alcohol he drank had been spread out over a period of several hours that also included a big meal.

When officers arrived, Mosley said he agreed to be handcuffed so officers could take him up to the room to tell his wife he was

going to another hotel. Wagner said she was awakened and saw her husband in handcuffs surrounded by officers and security guards, and couldn't get a straight answer to her questions, so she began recording video on her cellphone. She said she followed them to the elevator and continued to question officers, concerned for her husband's safety, and at one point was pushed to the ground and bruised.

Craig said officer body-worn camera video shows Wagner several times “placing her hands on the officers, not in a very aggressive way but she was at least pushing and touching six or seven times.” She said she may have brushed officers when she tried to get by them to see her husband. After Wagner was arrested, Mosley said, he was allowed to go back into the room and pack their belongings as hotel security watched before he went to another hotel.

Craig said officers behaved appropriately and used “tremendous restraint” during their interaction with Wagner and Mosley. He said both “appeared to be under some level of intoxication,” based on his training and his viewing of the body camera video. Both denied being intoxicated during the encounter.

Wagner said the situation has traumatized her entire family, including her 7- and 9-year-old sons, who were not on the trip. “I'm still in shock and have not even yet had the time to digest everything that happened because (I'm) trying to make sure our kids are OK,” she said. “Knowing that your dad was in handcuffs, that your mom was in jail, it's traumatic for them as well.”

FROM PAGE 1A

BUDGET

Trump wants to make permanent — to push down the red ink. Some economists, though, say the bump from the tax cuts is waning, and they project slower economic expansion in coming years. The national debt is \$22 trillion.

Even with his own projections, Trump's budget would not come into balance for a decade and a half, rather than the traditional hope of balancing in 10.

Titled “A Budget for a Better America: Promises Kept. Taxpayers First,” Trump's proposal “embodies fiscal responsibility,” said Russ Vought, the acting director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Despite the large projected deficits, Vought said the administration has “prioritized reining in reckless Washington spending” and shows “we can return to fiscal sanity.”

The budget calls the approach “Macroeconomics,” after the president's “Make America Great Again” campaign slogan.

Some fiscal watchdogs, though, panned the effort as more piling on of debt by Trump with no course correction in sight.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, said Trump “relies on too many accounting gimmicks and fantasy assumptions and puts forward far too few actual solutions.” She warned the debt load will lead to slower income growth and stalled opportunities for Americans.

Perhaps most notably among spending proposals, Trump is returning to his budget war fight. Fresh off the longest government shutdown in history, his 2020 plan shows he is eager to confront Congress again over the wall.

The budget proposes increasing defense spending to \$750 billion — and building the new Space Force as a military branch while reducing non-defense accounts by 5 percent, with cuts recommended to economic safety-net programs used by many Americans. The \$2.7 trillion in proposed reductions over the decade is higher than any administration in history, they say.

On Capitol Hill, the budget landed without much fanfare from Trump's GOP allies, while Democrats found plenty not to like. “Dangerous,” not serious, a “sham,” they said. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer called it an “Alice in Wonderland document.”

The plan sticks to budget caps that both parties have routinely broken in recent years. To stay within the caps, it shifts a portion of the military spending, some \$165 billion, to an overseas contingency fund, which some fiscal hawks will view as an accounting gimmick.

The budget slashes \$2 trillion from health care spending, while trying to collect \$100 million in new fees from the electronic cigarette industry to help combat a surge in underage vaping. It provides money to fight opioid addiction and \$291 million to “defeat the HIV/AIDS epidemic.”

It cuts the Department of Housing and Urban Development by 16 percent and Education by 10 percent, but includes \$1 billion for a child care fund championed by the president's daughter, Ivanka Trump, a White House adviser. Trump is returning to old

TRUMP CALLED HIS PLAN A BOLD NEXT STEP FOR A NATION EXPERIENCING 'AN ECONOMIC MIRACLE.' HOUSE SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI CALLED HIS CUTS 'CRUEL AND SHORTSIGHTED ... A ROADMAP TO A SICKER, WEAKER AMERICA.'

battles while refraining from unveiling many new initiatives. He re-opens plans for repealing “Obamacare,” imposing work requirements for those receiving government aid and slashing the Environmental Protection Agency by about a third — all ideas Congress has rejected in the past.

The budget proposes \$200 billion toward infrastructure, much lower than the \$1 trillion plan Trump once envisioned, but does not lay out a sweeping new plan.

By refusing to raise the budget caps, Trump is signaling a fight ahead. The president has resisted big, bipartisan budget deals that break the caps — increasing the veto one last year — but Congress will need to find agreement on spending levels to avoid another federal shutdown in the fall.

Conservatives railed for years against deficits that rose during the first years of Barack Obama's administration as tax revenue plummeted and spending increased during the Great Recession. But even with Republican control of Congress during the first two years of the Trump administration, deficits were on a steady march upward.

The Democratic chairman of the House Budget Committee, Rep. John Yarmuth of Kentucky, said Trump added nearly \$2 trillion to deficits with the GOP's tax cuts for the wealthy and large corporations, and now it appears his budget asks the American people to pay the price.”

The border wall remains a signature issue for the president, even though Congress refuses to give him more money for it.

To circumvent Congress, Trump declared a national emergency at the border last month as a way to access funding. Lawmakers are uneasy with that and set to vote in the Senate to terminate his national emergency declaration. Congress appears to have enough votes to reject Trump's declaration but not enough to overturn a veto. The standoff over the wall led to a 35-day partial government shutdown, the longest in U.S. history.

There's also money to hire more than 2,800 additional law enforcement officers, including Border Patrol agents, at a time when many Democrats are calling for cuts — or even the elimination — of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The wall with Mexico played a big part in Trump's campaign for the White House, and it's expected to again be featured in his 2020 re-election effort. He used to say Mexico would pay for it, but Mexico has refused to do so.



A metal fence surrounds the closed Sheetz at Shiloh Road and Benner Pike on Monday.

FROM PAGE 1A

SHEETZ

the existing building and another permit by month's end to construct the new one.

The rebuild is expected to take about five months, with Sheetz projecting an opening date of Aug. 22, Torretti said.

In September, the project hit some hang-ups due to the possibility of a traffic study that might have reduced size and scope of the rebuild.

Sheetz ended up not needing a study, said Gabrowske, because the com-

pany did not change the road entrances and exits at the property.

Perkins Restaurant and Bakery, located nearby at 525 Benner Pike, expects more business while the convenience store is closed. General Manager Darby Cummings said the restaurant was “a little bit busier today than normal” Monday and had served several contractors working

on the Sheetz project.

Others aren't so excited for the closure.

“We'll be anxious to have (the Sheetz) up and running again,” Gabrowske said.

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FROM PAGE 1A

INVESTIGATION

officers as they attempted to leave the hotel, authorities said. Shvenke and Geise said they've known Yeh for “years,” while Hornen said he “meets(s) girls like this infrequently,” according to the complaint.

Each admitted to paying at least \$140 for sex with one of the two women, authorities said. None of

the men could be reached for comment.

Edward Tubbs — chief operating officer for Hospitality Asset Management Company, which operates Super 8 — said the company abides by the law and reports all incidents to the authorities.

Hornen, Geise and Shvenke were each

charged with one misdemeanor count of criminal solicitation and one misdemeanor count of patronizing prostitutes.

Each has a preliminary hearing scheduled for April 17.

Yeh was charged in February with one felony count of criminal use of a communication facility and one misdemeanor count of prostitution. Wu was charged with one misdemeanor count of prostitution.

Both women are scheduled to plead guilty March 20, according to court documents.

Yeh's attorney, Assistant Public Defender Lora Rupert, declined to comment. Wu's attorney, Justin Miller, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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