



Giuseppe LoPiccolo/Post-Gazette

Pedestrians walk past the Harris Theater on Monday in the Cultural District. Downtown is entering a new growth phase, analysts say, with return-to-work mandates and more people moving into residential units.

A PATH TO RECOVERY

Construction, return-to-work mandates on horizon Downtown

By Madaleine Rubin
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

As 2026 approaches, downtowns across the country are still on the mend after losing major office tenants, residents and businesses during the pandemic.

Pittsburgh is no exception: When companies shifted to remote work and restaurants closed their doors, the Golden Triangle saw its vacancy rate spike — and has spent the last five years in recovery-mode.

Last year, Gov. Josh Shapiro announced a \$600-million plan to revamp the corridor, and as

INSIDE

• Graphic: Downtown revitalization by the numbers, **A-2**

• Reaction to infamous clothing brand Brandy Melville's new Shadyside location varied, **A-12**

2026 approaches, Downtown landmarks from Market Square to the Gulf Tower are under construction while major employers weigh return-to-work mandates.

Meanwhile, some of the corridor's oldest buildings continue to lose office tenants to new sky-

scrapers with more amenities.

As the year ends and construction crews fan out across Downtown, the Post-Gazette took a look at data from the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and local real estate firms to weigh how Downtown is faring on its path to recovery — and what's to come in 2026.

Next year, the number of people living and working Downtown is set to increase: PNC Bank will reportedly require employees to return to the office five days a week in the new year, while hundreds of residential units across the corridor are in the pipeline.

But daily activity Downtown — or the average number of residents, employees and visitors in the corridor daily — dipped slightly in November 2025 from November 2024, according to data published by the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. Data for December 2025 is not yet available.

Activity in the Golden Triangle peaked in July this year — the month of the Picklesburgh festival — but still fell short of its high point in 2023 and did not come close to pre-pandemic levels.

SEE **RECOVERY**, PAGE A-2

TRUMP ISSUES WARNING TO IRAN

Comments made amid talks with Netanyahu

By Will Weissert, Sam Mednick and Samy Magdy
Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Donald Trump warned Iran on Monday that the U.S. could carry out further military strikes if the country attempts to reconstitute its nuclear program as he held wide-ranging talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his home in Florida.

Trump had previously insisted that Tehran's nuclear capabilities were "completely and fully obliterated" by U.S. strikes on key nuclear enrichment sites in June. But with Mr. Netanyahu by his side, Trump raised the possibility that suspected activity could be taking place outside those sites. Israeli officials, meanwhile, have been quoted in local media expressing concern about Iran rebuilding its supply of long-range missiles capable of striking Israel.

"Now I hear that Iran is trying to build up again," Trump told reporters gathered at his Mar-a-Lago estate. "And if they are, we're going to have to knock them down. We'll knock them down. We'll knock the hell out of them. But hopefully that's not happening."



Netanyahu

SEE **IRAN**, PAGE A-7

Shapiro set to reach top earnings spot

Will surpass Hochul as highest-paid governor

By Benjamin Kail
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Gov. Josh Shapiro will soon become the top-earning governor in the U.S. after an automatic cost-of-living pay bump goes into effect on Jan. 1.

Mr. Shapiro, a Democrat up for re-election next year who is often named as a 2028 presidential contender, was already the second-highest paid state leader after New York Gov. Kathy Hochul. At about \$245,000 this year, Mr. Shapiro earned about \$5,000 less than Ms. Hochul, whose salary according to state law for the past few years has been \$250,000.

But along with dozens of other Keystone State officials of both major parties, the new year will bring Mr. Shapiro a salary increase of 3.3% — in his case about \$8,000, to \$253,870.

Governors across the U.S. average an annual salary of roughly \$167,000, according to Business Insider.

SEE **PAY**, PAGE A-2

Bipartisan bill in Pa. targets youth vaping

Six new laws in all signed by Shapiro

By Ford Turner
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

HARRISBURG — Closing out a year where partisanship in the Capitol took a heavy toll on the state, lawmakers came together to attack a threat acknowledged by both parties — the danger to children of unregulated vaping and e-cigarette nicotine devices.

A bipartisan bill on that threat was one of six signed into law by Gov. Josh Shapiro last week. Another, sponsored by Allegheny County Rep. Dan Deasy, a Democrat,

updates the state Liquor Code to accommodate the desire to hold catered gatherings with alcohol in association with funerals.

Still other new laws have to do with the nation's upcoming 250th anniversary, unemployment compensation law changes, repeat DUI offenders, and township supervisor vacancies.

The nicotine devices bill got praise from both sides. It calls for an "electronic nicotine delivery system directory" that will be run out of the state attorney general's office. The law will allow that office and the Department of Revenue to inspect and review records at businesses pertaining to nicotine-containing

SEE **BILLS**, PAGE A-5



Alexandra Wimley/Post-Gazette

BRAVING THE COLD Natallia, who declined to give her last name and is from California visiting friends in Pittsburgh, holds up her scarf to brace against the cold Monday as she crosses Murray and Forbes avenues in Squirrel Hill. Bitter cold and snowy conditions will persist through the new year. Story, **A-4**



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Weather

Morning snow showers; windy. Daytime high, 27; tonight's low, 21.
Page B-12

Bridge..... **B-10**
Business..... **A-12**
Classified..... **B-11**
Comics..... **B-9**
Crosswords..... **B-10**

Editorials..... **A-6**
High Schools..... **B-5**
Horoscope..... **B-10**
Local News..... **A-4**
Lottery..... **A-5**

Magazine..... **B-8**
Obituaries..... **A-10**
Scoreboard..... **B-7**
Sports..... **B-1**
Television..... **B-8**



6 08136 26301 8

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