

# Lehigh Valley Businessman Nominated to Lead NASA

By Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY - Lehigh Valley entrepreneur and space explorer Jared Isaacman has been nominated to lead NASA under incoming President Donald Trump.

Isaacman is CEO and founder of Shift4, a global fintech company based in Center Valley that supplies payment processing technology to the hospitality, retail, and sports industries, among others.

He is better known internationally for being the first private person to do a spacewalk, in September while aboard a chartered flight purchased from SpaceX, Elon Musk's company.

"Jared will drive NASA's mission of discovery and inspiration, paving the way for groundbreaking achievements in Space science, technology, and exploration," Trump said in a news release.

Isaacman, a native of Palmer Township, said in a post on X that he was honored to be nominated.

"I am honored to receive President Trump's nomination to serve as the next Administrator of NASA. Having been fortunate to see our amazing planet from space, I am passionate about America leading the most incredible adventure in human history.

On my last mission to space, my crew and I traveled farther from Earth than anyone in over half a century. I can confidently say this second space age has only just begun. Space holds unparalleled potential for breakthroughs in manufacturing, biotechnology, mining, and perhaps even pathways to new sources of energy. There will inevitably be a thriving space economy—one that will create opportunities for countless people to live and work in space. At NASA, we will passionately pursue these possibilities and usher in an era where humanity becomes a true spacefaring civilization.

I was born after the Moon landings; my children were born after the final space shuttle launch. With the support of President Trump, I can promise you this: We will never again lose our ability to journey to the stars and never settle for second place. We will inspire children, yours and mine, to look up and dream of what is possible. Americans will walk on the Moon and Mars and in doing so, we will make life better here on Earth.

It is the honor of a lifetime to serve in this role and to work alongside NASA's extraordinary team to realize our shared dreams of exploration and discovery."

In a 2021 interview with Lehigh Valley Economic Development (LVEDC), Isaacman credited Lehigh Valley International Airport with being a launchpad for his aviation career.

LVIA is among the many institutions Isaacman has said make the Lehigh Valley a great place to live and do business. Isaacman is behind the Isaacman Next Generation Institute at the Da Vinci Science Center, which opened this year in Allentown, and the Isaacman Family Children's ER at St. Luke's University Health Network, which opened last year in Fountain Hill.

In the 2021 LVEDC interview, Isaacman shared what made the Lehigh Valley such a desirable place to locate his innovative business.

"I have no doubt this region has contributed to our success," Isaacman said. "Being a short one-hour drive from Philadelphia and 90 minutes west of New York City, the Lehigh Valley provides greater access to diverse talent coupled with lower costs, solid transportation infrastructure, and a higher quality of living than similar regions."

Shift4 systems collect payments in some of America's most iconic places, ranging from Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming to the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. The company has been growing rapidly. In August, it acquired Givex Corp., a global provider of gift cards, loyalty programs, and point-of-sale solutions.

Isaacman plans to remain CEO of Shift4 until he is confirmed for the NASA role by the U.S. Senate.

"While I can envision a future where I return, I know the company is in great hands," Isaacman said in a message to shareholders and employees. "Shift4 has been my life's work since I was 16 years old, but it is my time to serve and give back to the nation that enabled me to live the American dream."

In October, Shift4 participated in Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation's Fall SignSignature Event, "Tech & Talent for Tomorrow's Lehigh Valley."

Allison Valentin, Shift4's Director of Talent Acquisition, was a member of a panel of executives who discussed how Lehigh Valley tech and life sciences companies are developing the talent they need for their workforce.



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Photo courtesy of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital)

## DCNR Announcements Stream Restoration Project at Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center

By Rob Neitz

Nazareth, Pa. – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) State Parks Director John Hallas today announced a streambank restoration project at the Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center in Northampton County.

Beginning Monday, December 16 the bridge and restroom facilities located at the main parking lot, along with a portion of the lower Henry's Woods Trail will be closed.

"Increased public interest and use, as well as climate change and more frequent high-water events, have significantly eroded the streambank at Jacobsburg," Hallas said. "This project will rebuild the creek back to the original width and bank heights it once had."

In addition to rebuilding the stream bank, the project will also restructure two existing stream access points along the lower Henry's Woods Trail. The use of stacked field stone will allow increased public access to the creek while also protecting the stream bank from compaction and erosion. A new, third access is also being implemented during this project to help distribute foot traffic to the creek.

Once the project begins, there will be impacts to the visitor experience at Jacobsburg this winter. Portions of the Henry's Woods Trail will be closed to visitors during this time, though an alternate hike is available. The bridge to access the trail and the restroom facility in this area will also be closed. Please check the Jacobsburg website or call the park office before visiting if you plan to hike in this area.

"We know this work will have an impact on visitors," Hallas said. "But this timeframe is best for the creek, other wildlife, and our spring trout stocking. We look forward to □

Visit DCNR's website for more information about Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center and check out DCNR's Calendar of Events for events on public lands.