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May 27, 2020

Welcome to the PSATS Morning News.

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We're excited about this new concept and want to hear what you think. Email comments and suggestions to morningnews@psats.org.

Latest News

[Never Attended Conference? Now's Your Chance!](#)

This year, Conference workshops have gone virtual and it is now the perfect opportunity to experience what you may miss annually in Hershey. A wide variety of topics are covered by incredible speakers. [Click here](#) to register for workshops, which begin next week.



Wolf Thanks Pennsylvanians, Approves Centre to Move to Green

Yesterday, Gov. Tom Wolf thanked Pennsylvanians, including the Pennsylvania National Guard, for the many contributions to the pandemic response. He also announced that Centre County will move to the green phase on Friday.

While Centre County had originally been approved to move to green, the decision was delayed due to concerns from the county commissioners. The commissioners' concerns were addressed, and Wolf agreed to allow Centre to move to green this Friday.

Wolf noted that additional guidance for the green phase is being finalized and alluded that a specific attendee limit will be made for large gatherings. In addition, he noted that social distancing and wearing of masks will continue in the green phase.

Shapiro Urges Congress to Expand High-Speed Internet Access

Attorney General Josh Shapiro has joined a bipartisan group of 39 attorneys general who are urging Congress to help ensure that all Americans, especially those in rural communities, have the home internet connectivity necessary to participate in telemedicine, teleschooling, and telework as part of any additional legislation that provides relief and recovery resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During this emergency, where nearly 1 in 3 Pennsylvanians are out of work and millions are at home, it's crucial that everyone has access to fast, reliable internet," Shapiro said. "Too many towns, particularly in rural Pennsylvania, have been left behind while broadband is needed for school, for telework, and to access resources, including unemployment compensation and health care. I'm calling on Congress to step in and deliver what Pennsylvanians need during this crisis – high-speed internet access – no matter what county they live in."

While this bipartisan group of attorneys general lauded independent efforts of various companies to increase access by waiving late fees or even providing free or discounted access to students and medical providers, such efforts are not sustainable. Ultimately, the attorneys general argue, a national solution is needed.

In a letter sent to congressional leaders, the attorneys general urge them to:

- Provide state, territorial, and local governments with adequate funding expressly dedicated to ensuring that all students and patients, especially senior citizens who are at risk, have adequate internet-enabled technology to participate equally in online learning and telemedicine.
- Increase funding to the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's Universal Service Fund, which provides vital funding to rural and low-income populations, health care

providers, and educators with the goal of bridging the digital divide.

[Independent Fiscal Office Reports Revenue Estimates for State's 2020-2021 Budget](#)

The Independent Fiscal Office has submitted its initial revenue estimates to the General Assembly for the current and upcoming budget years. This report focuses on an economic forecast and estimates General Fund and Motor License Fund revenues. While the 2020 numbers are depressed, the report envisions a relatively rapid recovery by 2021. To read the report, [click here](#).

[Labor and Industry Releases April Unemployment Numbers](#)

The state Department of Labor and Industry released its employment report for April 2020. Pennsylvania's unemployment rate was up 9.3 percentage points to 15.1 percent in April, above the April national rate of 14.7 percent. The number of residents working or looking for work declined by 91,000, and unemployment rose by 597,000. [Click here](#) for more information.

Legislative & Policy



The House and Senate are scheduled for session today, May 27th.

House Passes Short-Term Budget

On May 26th, the House passed HB 2387, a five-month budget plan. The general appropriation for the temporary budget is \$25.8 billion, with level funding throughout the budget based off current year numbers and does not include any tax increases. HB 2387 does include some 12-month appropriations, including statewide K-12 education, state-supported universities, debt service, and school pension obligations. The budget proposal passed the state House by a vote of 103-99 on Tuesday and is expected to pass the Senate this week as well.

Learn

[The Pros and Cons of Selling Water/Sewer Assets - June 3, 2020](#)

This webinar is designed to provide attendees with information regarding the current market for selling and acquiring municipal water/sewer assets, including a summary of recent public and private transactions, updates on the environmental and PUC developments related to sales/acquisitions and the potential benefits and challenges associated with sales and acquisitions. Join Steve Hann and Tom Wyatt as they cover all sides of this important issue. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Public Works Point. Qualifies for 1 CLE Credit. [Click here](#) to register.

[Creating a Traffic Impact Fee - In Plain Speak! - June 10, 2020](#)

Sure, that developer will pay for and build the new road in his subdivision. But the increased traffic will impact roads throughout your township. Who will pay to improve this “off-site” infrastructure? Developers will... but only if your community has an Act 209 Traffic Impact Fee! Learn the basics about this important state law, without the technical-speak! Qualifies for 1 PMGA Planning/Zoning Point. [Click here](#) to register.



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Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
4855 Woodland Drive
Enola, PA 17025

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