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April 10, 2020

Welcome to the PSATS Morning News, our new email digest.

The Morning News eliminates a common complaint – too many emails – while still delivering up-to-date information on PSATS and local government issues. Members will receive ONE email from PSATS that includes latest news & COVID-19 updates, videos – look for TVN and the Question of the Week every Tuesday and Thursday – along with legislative and policy updates, grant and funding opportunities, and announcements about upcoming PSATS training.

Missed yesterday's PSATS Morning News? No problem! A [PSATS Morning News Library](#) is available online for your viewing pleasure!

We're excited about this new concept and want to hear what you think. Email comments and suggestions to [morningnews@psats.org](mailto:morningnews@psats.org).

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## Latest News

### [Commonwealth Extends School Closure for Remainder of Academic Year](#)

Gov. Tom Wolf has announced that all schools will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year. The governor made the decision in consultation with Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine and Secretary of Education Pedro A. Rivera. [Read full story.](#)

### [CDC Issues Guidance on Work Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers](#)

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued "Interim Guidance for Implementing

Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19.” The guidance states that this includes, but is not limited to, local law enforcement, hazardous material responders, janitorial and custodial staff, and workers in transportation and government facilities. [Read full story.](#)

#### **[State Treasurer Provides Relief for PA Hospitals Fighting COVID-19](#)**

State Treasurer Joe Torsella will purchase bonds to provide financial relief to nonprofit and public health care systems in Pennsylvania. The bonds will help create liquidity and reduce borrowing costs for such health care systems. [Read full story.](#)

#### **[USDA Rural Development Takes Action to Benefit Residents, Businesses, and Communities](#)**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development has taken a number of actions to help rural residents, businesses, and communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. [Read full story.](#)

#### **[Licensing Waivers Allow Professionals to Respond to COVID-19 Emergency](#)**

The Pennsylvania Department of State has issued 30 licensing waivers since March 17 to allow licensed professionals, facilities, and trainees to respond to the COVID-19 disaster declaration. [Read full story.](#)

#### **[DCNR Accepting Applications for Grants to Fight Wildfires](#)**

The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is now accepting applications to help Pennsylvania’s rural communities increase protection from wildfires. Funded through federal grants, this money helps fire companies in rural areas or communities with fewer than 10,000 residents with training and equipment purchases directly related to fighting forest and brush fires. [Read full story.](#)

#### **[Delivery of 2020 Census Paper Questionnaires Begins](#)**

Anyone who has not yet responded to the 2020 Census will begin receiving a paper questionnaire from the U.S. Census Bureau this week. Households receiving the paper questionnaire can still respond online at 2020Census.gov or by phone, or they can return it by mail in the enclosed envelope.

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## **Legislation and Policy**



## Federal Aid for Local Government in the Works

In Washington, Congress adjourned for Easter and will return next week. Before they left, The Senate Democrats blocked a vote on Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) \$250 billion supplemental to provide additional funds to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

The vote ran into objections from Democrats who have their own \$500 billion [plan](#). Among other provisions, the Democrats' proposal provides an additional \$150 billion in direct relief for states, tribes, and local governments, which can be used for lost revenues, and makes lost revenues an eligible cost under the Coronavirus Relief Fund created by the CARES Act. Contact Senators Toomey and Casey to support help for local governments in Covid - 4!

On the House side, A bipartisan group of House members are leading an effort to introduce legislation that would make states, local governments, and public agencies (regardless of employees) eligible for payroll tax credits for the emergency paid sick and family leave programs. Additionally, the *Coronavirus Community Relief Act* has been introduced to provide \$250 billion in stabilization funds for towns and cities with a population less than 500,000 that are struggling amidst the pandemic. Please contact your member of congress to sponsor and support help for local governments in Covid-4.

In Harrisburg, the State House is scheduled to return next week to hopefully vote on SB 841 and address the important issues for local government including remote meetings, permit extensions and local options for property tax payment schedule flexibility.

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## Learn

### [PennDOT Municipal Services 101/ Boot Camp Virtual Classroom - 4/13/20](#)

In this session, Randy Albert, the Municipal Services Supervisor for PennDOT District 2, will review the many services that PennDOT makes available to municipalities. This includes the liquid fuels program (and tips to remain in compliance), technical assistance programs, including maintenance troubleshooting, training and funding opportunities.



**Planning/Land Use 101/Boot Camp Virtual Classroom - 4/14/20**

Terri Cunkle, who is with the DCED's Governor's Center for Local Government Services and is a former township secretary, will cover the basics of municipal planning and zoning, including the respective roles of township boards, zoning officers, planning commissions and zoning hearing boards. She will also outline subdivision and land development ordinances, comprehensive plans, zoning officers and form-based codes (which are an alternative or companion tool to traditional zoning).



For full list of webinars and classes please visit <https://learn.psats.org>



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