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June 15, 2020

Welcome to the PSATS Morning News.

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.

Behind the Headlines

COVID-19 and the short- and long-term challenges ahead for Pennsylvania's townships are among the issues PSATS Executive Director Dave Sanko addresses on this month's Behind the Headlines. Sanko is a regular guest on the program, produced by the Susquehanna Valley Center on Public Policy.

Latest News

Public Works Fact Sheets, Part of PSATS Fact Sheet Series Now Available

PSATS has developed new fact sheets to help you answer questions, learn best practices, and navigate Pennsylvania's phased reopening. The fact sheets are a new PSATS member service that also link you directly to the supporting state and federal guidance. The "Public Works and the COVID-19 Challenges" Fact Sheet, provided by PennDOT's Local Training Assistance Program (LTAP) is now available. Click here to see the full list of fact sheets.

Wolf Announces 8 More Counties to Go Green This Friday

On Friday, Gov. Tom Wolf announced that eight more counties would move to the green phase this Friday, June 19. These counties include Dauphin, Franklin, Huntingdon, Luzerne, Monroe, Perry, Pike, and Schuylkill. Read full story.

Reminder: Contact your County Commissioners Today for COVID Funding
If your township has COVID-related expenses, PSATS is urging townships to contact your county commissioners immediately to request a share of the $1.625 billion in federal CARES Act funding that counties will have in hand by July 15. Counties only have until tomorrow to apply for this funding.

Township expenses must be for response and planning efforts related to COVID-19 that are not reimbursable through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Eligible expense could be teleconference or virtual meeting expenses, website and communication expenses, high-speed internet, equipment or software for telework, building alterations, and signage (such as installing clear plastic dividers at reception areas or between work areas, temperature screening equipment, and additional staffing). Townships must document that these expenses are a direct response or planning effort to COVID-19. Expenses must be incurred between March 1, 2020, and December 30, 2020.

Townships in ALL counties with eligible expenses should request funding from their county commissioners. Both federal direct-funded counties (7) and state DCED block grant counties (60) are permitted to allocate COVID dollars to municipalities.

Commonwealth Court Expedites Emergency Declaration Case; Wolf Asks Supreme Court to Intervene
The Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court has decided to expedite its review of the Senate lawsuit urging the court to require Gov. Tom Wolf to terminate the emergency declaration as stated in the concurrent resolution passed by the House and Senate last week.

Wolf has made a "King's Bench" application and requested that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court intervene in the debate over the emergency declaration. Wolf argues that the legislature does not have the ability to unilaterally require him to end the emergency declaration without submitting for his signature or veto, which the legislature may override. He contends that the state's highest court should end the controversy as soon as possible due to confusion to the public and its impact on the public health.

Legislation & Policy

The House will conven for non-voting session, today June 15th. The Senate remains on a 12-hour call of the President pro tempore.

Learn

Webinar-COVID-19 Preparedness: Planning, Design & Engineering For Health, Safety & Success - 6/16/20

One of the biggest concerns of municipalities right now is how to reopen safely when allowed to do so. In this webinar, which is designed for anyone involved in the reopening process, join Martin Kimmel, President at Kimmel Bogrette Architecture + Site, Hoyt Emmons, Senior Health & Safety Consultant at Med-Tex Services, and township representatives for this 90-minute panel discussion as they review some of their thoughts on building use, design and modification to help townships reopen their buildings safely and efficiently. The panel will

also cover concerns for staff, public spaces and special use facilities such as libraries, rec centers and swimming pools. Qualifies for 1.5 PMGA Administration Point. Click here to register.

Webinar - Collective Bargaining In The Age Of COVID-19 - 6/17/20

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, municipal employers in Pennsylvania still maintain bargaining obligations with their unionized employees. For contracts expiring in 2020, the time to start negotiations is approaching. Some employers may have already been contacted by employees and unions seeking to simply roll over the existing contract for another year. Given all of the challenges that COVID-19 has presented, the temptation is high to put off contract discussions for a year. This webinar will explore some of the factors that you should consider before making this important decision for your municipality, as well as the longer-range implications of each side of the decision. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Public Safety Point. Click here to register.

Traffic And Parking: A Discussion With Traffic Engineers - Virtual - 6/22/20

Townships are continually changing. They grow, and rural areas become congested with traffic from a new development or uses. They contract, and a once-filled, massive parking lot now is nearly empty. In either case, how we plan for traffic and parking is important. During this moderated discussion between traffic engineers representing two sides of the table, municipalities and developers, attendees will gain insight into how traffic planning occurs and what it all means. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Public Works Point. Click here to register.

20 Ways To Improve Your Public Meetings - Virtual - 6/22/20

In this workshop, learn best practices to make your public meetings more productive. From publishing agendas on your websites to establishing ground rules for the conduct of the meeting to creating checklists for ordinance hearings held within previously-advertised public meetings to controlling the length and number of comments while still maintaining good participation and focus, you will get all sorts of practical tips for better meeting management. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Administration Point. Click here to register.

Stormwater Compliance: What Your Municipality Needs To Know - Virtual - 6/29/20

The workshop will cover a range of stormwater management topics, including MS4 permit requirements, case law that could impact your township's stormwater obligations, and the creation of stormwater authorities. The presenter will also thoroughly explore unique issues, including compliance with total maximum daily load (TMDL) and other Chesapeake Bay-related requirements. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Public Works Point. Click here to register.

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