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July 22, 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.

Latest News

[Recognize Your Local Hometown Heroes and Win Cash for Your Township!](#)

Townships of under 5,000 population have until August 15 to nominate an outstanding civic volunteer or organization for the Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award. The award recognizes hometown heroes such as an exceptional volunteer firefighter or fire company, EMS volunteers, your emergency management coordinator, municipal advisory committee volunteer, or the whole committee or commission. The purpose of the award is to recognize and reward the efforts of civic volunteers in smaller communities across America and shine a spotlight on the growing need for people to serve as grassroots volunteers to fill a variety of critical local public service roles. [Read full story.](#)

Supreme Court Defines Public Utility Status of DAS Network Providers

Yesterday, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled against the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and Pennsylvania's local government associations by deciding that distributed antenna system (DAS) network providers such as Crown Castle and ExteNet, which provide telecommunications transport services to wireless service providers are

considered public utilities under the Public Utility Code and are permitted to obtain certificates of public convenience from the PUC, access the right of way, be exempt from local zoning and exercise eminent domain. This decision does not apply to wireless service providers(AT&T Wireless, Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile, etc.) who remain “not utilities”.

[Department of Health Releases FAQs on Orders for Gatherings, Restaurants](#)

The state Department of Health has released frequently asked questions on the recent commonwealth orders restricting public gatherings and restaurants. The FAQs also provide guidance on recreational sports (indoor and outdoor), events such as firehall fundraisers, and application to wineries and breweries. [Click here](#) and scroll down to read the FAQs.

[Turnpike Tolls to Increase in January 2021](#)

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission confirmed its movement to 100% cashless operations with approving a 6% toll increase for EZPass rates systemwide and establishing rates for the new PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE program. Rates for toll facilities newly converted to TOLL BY PLATE will increase by an average of 45 percent to reflect the costs for the new method. The rate changes will take effect on January 3, 2021.

[Read full story.](#)

[Wildfire Grants Awarded to Volunteer Fire Companies Across Pennsylvania](#)

The Commonwealth has announced \$591,975 in new grant awards to help rural communities guard against the threat of wildfires in the state’s forests and undeveloped areas. These awards were made to volunteer fire companies in 49 counties. [Click here](#) to see if your company is on the list.

[Regional Forums Now Virtual, Last Call for Erie!](#)

Due to Gov. Wolf’s recent order capping indoor gatherings at 25 people, PSATS Regional Forums will now be offered as virtual sessions. The dates listed on the [PSATS Regional Forums page](#), but we expect to add more dates to break up one-day training into more manageable time segments over several days. For me details, keep up with the PSATS Regional Forums page.

Coming up next week is our first virtual [Regional Forum for Erie](#) and surrounding counties so be sure to register!



Township News, TVN Score Awards

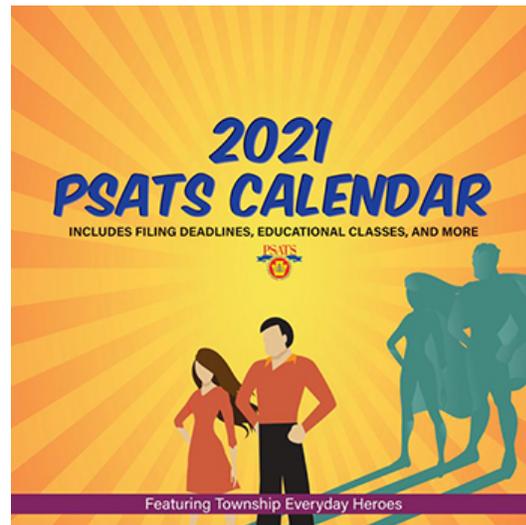
2020 has been a drag so how about some good news? [The Pennsylvania Township News](#) , PSATS' long-running monthly magazine, and the [Township Video News](#), its weekly digital programming, have been honored by their peers at Communications Concepts, Inc., in Springfield, Va. More than 1,200 entries from around the world were submitted to the APEX 32nd Annual Awards Program.



The News was one of 37 publications in its category to be honored with an Award of Excellence, and TVN was one of 15. Although the News is no stranger to receiving accolades, this is TVN's first-ever award. The program was revamped last year, and new segments are released Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Morning News.

[PSATS Looking for Photos of Township "Everyday Heroes"](#)

Attention, township officials! PSATS wants photos of your "Everyday Heroes" for its 2021 calendar! [Read more](#) for details.



Legislation & Policy



PSATS Testifies Before House Transportation Committee on Personal Delivery Devices

On July 21st, PSATS testified before the House Transportation Committee on SB 1199 which would provide for the operation of personal delivery devices (PDDs) in Pennsylvania. PDDs are autonomous robots designed to deliver packages to consumers. SB 1199 would authorize local governments to prohibit PDDs on local roadways and pedestrian areas if they would constitute a hazard. PSATS' testimony focused on the fact that it is critical that municipal officials be empowered to exercise local control over these devices for public safety purposes.

Throughout the hearing legislators were widely in agreement that local authority is essential for the deployment of these devices in Pennsylvania.

[Click here](#) to read a copy of PSATS' testimony.

Learn

[PA 811 - Compliance Execution And New PUC Requirements - Virtual - 7/23/20](#)

Attend this session to learn about changes to Pennsylvania's One Call Law and the impact this has on your township's compliance responsibilities. The presenters will explain the Alleged Violation Report (AVR) process and the renotification response requirement for facility owners. They'll also discuss tools to enhance communication and collaboration. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Public Safety Point. [Click here](#) to register.



[Get The Dirt: Zoning, Subdivision & Land Development Basics - Virtual - 7/23/20](#)

The effects of land use ordinances are evident everywhere you look. They shape the feel and look of our communities. This workshop will provide a great foundation for anyone new to land use matters and reinforce the basic principles for those with more experience. Beginning with the history of zoning in the U.S., the presenters will guide attendees in making informed decisions whether they're enacting a zoning amendment or approving a land development plan. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Planning/Zoning Point. Eligible for 1 CLE Credit. [Click here](#) to register.

[Webinar - Creating An Affordable Retirement Plan - 7/29/20 \(MEMBERS ONLY\)](#)

The Trustees Insurance Fund, through PSATS, is offering a webinar to provide an introduction to our 457 Plan and help your township officials determine if this is a valuable benefit to offer to the employees. [Click here](#) to register.

[PSATS' Regional Forum - Erie County - 7/29-30/20](#)

PSATS Regional Forums will now be offered as virtual sessions. Learn more about issues that matter to your community. Attend general session as well as workshop sessions. Earn PMGA and other professional credits for workshop attendance, and discuss common interests with other local leaders. [Click here](#) to register.



PSATS Trustees Insurance and Retirement Services



[Understanding Your Community's Stormwater Obligations - Virtual - 7/29/20](#)

This program, designed specifically for newly elected township officials, will cover the basics of municipal stormwater management. Topics covered will be helpful to communities with and without municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). And don't worry if you don't know what an MS4 is...you will by the time you leave! Qualifies for 1 PMGA Public Works Point. [Click here](#) to register.

[Webinar - Don't Wait: How To Prepare Now For The Next Crisis - 8/5/20](#)

The best way to handle a crisis is to prevent it. The second best way is to be prepared for it. Having a crisis plan in place before a crisis happens is key to getting your township on the road to recovery. Attend this session led by an accredited public relations counselor to learn: the stages of a crisis; how to go about creating a crisis plan; must-have content for your crisis plan; and best practices for effective communication during a crisis. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Public Safety Point. [Click here](#) to register.

[Webinar - Best Practices For Municipal Records Retention - 8/19/20](#)

Is your township struggling to get a good handle on its records? Do you have staff members who are working remotely and don't know what to do with their records? In this webinar, Tyler Stump, an archivist with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, will review what records the Commonwealth allows townships to store electronically and make suggestions as to what sorts of records should (and should not) be created and stored electronically. He will also review the Commonwealth's PDF/A policy, which governs the electronic storage of permanent records, and address the impact of employees working from home on municipal records retention. Qualifies for 1 PMGA Administration Point. [Click here](#) to register.



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



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