



November 20, 2020

Latest News

Vaccine Distribution Before End of Year

Emergency applications soon to be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will result in COVID-19 vaccines being distributed across the nation in record setting development time. In PA, the state Department of Health stated that this could be as early as December, with a second vaccine arriving in January. Initial supplies will be limited and reserved for first responders, health care workers, the elderly, and people living in group health care settings. To view a summary of Pennsylvania's plan, [click here](#).

DCNR Finalizes ATV Trail Policy

The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has outlined final changes to its internal policy on ATV trails on state forest lands to respond to increasing demands for riding opportunities, local and county government interest in expanding recreational tourism, and legislative action. The revisions authorize DCNR to explore the potential for new ATV trails and connectors on state forest lands.

The major change will allow DCNR to carefully consider strategic new riding opportunities on state forest lands to connect regional trail systems. DCNR will be exploring the potential for new ATV trails and connectors on state forest lands, focusing on the northcentral part of the state due to the prevalence of state forest lands, a relatively high number of township roads open to ATV use, and proximity to other DCNR ATV trail systems. [Click here](#) to read the policy, which is now in effect. [Click here](#) for more about ATV riding in state forests.

Northeast Governors Urge Colleges to Test Students for COVID Before Break

The northeast governors, including Gov. Tom Wolf, are urging colleges and universities within their state to provide COVID-19 testing for all students traveling home for Thanksgiving break before they leave campus and to provide for quarantine for infected students. It is hoped that this step will help protect those at home and prevent community spread. [Click here](#) for more.

911 Modernization Steps Announced

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency has selected Comtech Telecommunications to partner with PEMA and the commonwealth's 911 centers to upgrade Pennsylvania's 911 system to a Next Generation 911 platform. This effort will take place across Pennsylvania and allow for more data communication to 911 and improve access for the deaf and hard of hearing. This seven-year, \$137 million upgrade is funded by the \$1.65 911 surcharge on Pennsylvania communications. [Click here](#) for more.

LCB Waives 2021 Liquor License Fees for Breweries, Wineries, and Distilleries

The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board approved, by a vote of 2-1, the waiver of an estimated \$1.8 million in license fees in 2021 for manufacturing licensees, such as wineries, breweries, and distilleries. LCB Board member Mike Negra, who made the dissenting vote, argued that the LCB did not have the authority to waive the fees. [Click here](#) for more.

CDC Urges Americans to Stay Home for Thanksgiving

The Centers for Disease Control is urging Americans to avoid travel this Thanksgiving and to stay home and celebrate with people only from your immediate household. If you choose to spend Thanksgiving with people outside your household, [here are steps](#) to help make your celebration safer.

Legislation & Policy



The House and Senate are scheduled to be in session today, November 20. Watch session live [here](#).

State Budget To Be Finalized Today

Today, The State House and State Senate are both expected to approve the remainder of

the \$35.5 billion dollar state budget including the allocation of \$1.3 Billion in additional CARES dollars. This budget will tap the Rainy Day Fund for \$100 million, but the final 2020-21 Budget does not include any State Police fees consistent with PSATS policy.

Leadership Election Results: Senate Democrats

On November 19, the Senate Democratic Caucus met to elect their leadership team for the 2021-2022 legislative session. Senator Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) was reelected as Minority Leader, Senator Anthony Williams (D-Philadelphia) was reelected as Caucus Whip, Senator Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia) was reelected as Appropriations Chair, and Senator Wayne Fontana (D-Allegheny) will continue as Caucus Chair.

Senator Maria Collett (D-Montgomery) was elected as Caucus Secretary and Senator Katie Muth (D-Montgomery) was elected as the Policy Chair

Congratulations to all returning and new Senate Democratic leaders!

Note: The leadership election results for the three other caucuses can be found in the November 13 edition of the PSATS Morning News.

Senate Passes Pipeline Emergency Response Legislation

On Thursday, the Senate unanimously passed House Bill 2293. This legislation would require pipeline companies carrying natural gas liquids through highly populated areas to provide emergency response plans to the secretary of the Public Utility Commission, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and the county Emergency Management Coordinator. HB 2293 has passed the House and Senate and will be presented to the Governor.

House Passes Alternative Fuels Tax Legislation

On Thursday the House passed SB 845 which would allow electric vehicles to exceed the 80,000 lbs. weight limit by up to 2,000 lbs. attributable to the weight of the battery or battery pack. SB 845 would also assess an alternative fuels tax on electricity for noncommercial vehicles with annual electric vehicle road usage fees of \$15 for electric motorcycles and neighborhood electric vehicles; \$75 for hybrid electric vehicles under 26,000 lbs., \$175 for electric vehicles under 26,000 lbs., and \$250 for electric and hybrid vehicles over 26,000 lbs. SB 845 has passed the Senate and the House and is before the Senate on concurrence of House amendments.

Senate Passes Small Games of Chance Legislation

On Thursday, the Senate unanimously passed HB 777 which would allow organizations with club licenses to use proceeds required under current law to be used for charitable purposes for operating expenses during the COVID-19 emergency declaration and up to one year after the end of the emergency. HB 777 has passed the House and the Senate

and if before the House on concurrence of Senate amendments.

House Adopts Resolution Requiring Election Audit

On Thursday, the House adopted HR 1100 which requires the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to coordinate a comprehensive risk limiting audit of the 2020 election.

Learn

[Webinar - New PENNVEST Financing Opportunities - 11/24/20](#)

Is your township looking for funding for water/sewer projects? In this webinar, you will learn about how PENNVEST has improved its funding methods to better accommodate all water quality projects and practices. Eligible for 1 PMGA Public Works Point. [Click here](#) to register.



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

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