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November 23, 2020

Latest News

What You Should Know about the Commonwealth Travel Quarantine Order

Townships should consider requiring employees to comply with the commonwealth's new travel quarantine order. The order requires any Pennsylvanian who travels to another state and anyone who visits from another state to have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours before entering Pennsylvania. If someone cannot get a test or chooses not to, they must quarantine for 14 days. [Read full story.](#)

COVID-19 Cases Continue to Set Records; Hospitalizations Equal Spring Peak

The statewide COVID case total stands at 302,564, while the total deaths attributed to COVID-19 have reached 9,801, with more than 500 deaths reported this week. Pennsylvania set a new daily record of 7,126 positive cases on Thursday. The average daily number of positive cases for the week was 5,914. [Read full story.](#)

Feds to Distribute New Monoclonal Antibody Therapy, Approve Second Therapy

The state Department of Health has announced that the federal government will be distributing monoclonal antibodies to healthcare systems throughout the commonwealth based on county case counts. Monoclonal antibodies are proteins created in a laboratory that mimic the immune system's ability to fight off harmful antigens, like the COVID-19 virus. [Read full story.](#)

PA Unemployment Rate Drops to 7.3 percent

The state Department of Labor and Industry has announced that Pennsylvania's unemployment rate for October dropped from 8.1% to 7.3%, just four-tenths of a percent

above the national unemployment rate of 6.9%. [Read full story.](#)

DEP Awards Grants for Recycling, Water Quality Improvement in Chesapeake Bay

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has announced grant awards to municipalities for recycling programs under Section 902 of the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act. More than \$26.8 million in grants was awarded to 127 municipalities, including many townships. [Read full story.](#)

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Legislation & Policy



General Assembly Approves Final 2020-21 State Budget

On Friday November 20, the General Assembly approved a final \$35.5 billion 2020-2021 state budget package, which includes appropriations for the commonwealth's remaining \$1.3 billion in federal CARES funding and is a 2 percent reduction in spending from the previous fiscal year. The final budget does not include any State Police fees.

Instead, the budget was balanced using a series of transfers from restricted funds, including \$100 million from the Rainy Day Fund, \$50 million from the Recycling Fund, \$45.5 million from several PennVEST funds, and \$2 million from the Local Government Capital Project Loan Fund.

In addition, any CARES funding that is unspent as of December 1 must be returned to the commonwealth by December 15, including any funds allocated to the counties last summer. These funds will be transferred to the state Department of Corrections.

Also, included in the budget package is an amendment to the Local Government Unit Debt Act (LGUDA) to authorize local governments to use alternative tax anticipation notes that mature at the end of the next fiscal year to help manage cash flow during the COVID-19 emergency.

The Pennsylvania State Police received an increase of \$37 million. However, the PSP budget received less from the General Fund and the Motor License Fund than in previous years, with the balance coming from federal CARES dollars and a transfer from the Firearms Record Checks Account.

The Fiscal Code bill would create a state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Regional ATV Pilot Program for state forest lands in the northcentral portion of the state. DCNR would be required to consult local community leaders, create the pilot area, and sell tags for access to these trails.

Finally, the Keystone Communities program contains \$9 million for community development and municipal assistance throughout this commonwealth.

Governor Wolf has expressed his support of the final budget package and is expected to sign it soon.

Broadband Funding Legislation Passes

On Friday, the Senate concurred on House amendments and unanimously passed SB 835 which would create a \$5 million broadband funding program to provide grants for high-speed broadband service infrastructure deployment in unserved areas of Pennsylvania. SB 835 would require that the grants be issued to entities that have demonstrated the ability to construct and administer high-speed broadband services and stipulates that the grants can only be used in unserved areas. SB 835 is on the Governor's desk.

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.



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