



October 30, 2020

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## Latest News

### **Wolf Signs 26 Bills**

Yesterday Governor Wolf cleared much of the legislation on his desk, signing 26 bills into law including help for fire and Emergency services. A safety bill to require covid information to be provided to first responders dispatched to Covid positive addresses by 9-1-1 centers remains unaddressed. See the legislative section for more detail.

### **White House Releases Rural Resource Guide**

The White House has released a rural prosperity resource guide for state and local officials in rural communities. *Promoting Rural Prosperity in America* highlights resources available for businesses, farmers, and communities. [Click here](#) to view the guide.

### **Positive reports from Independent State and Federal Fiscal Offices**

The State Independent Fiscal Office released a positive update to its June 2020 official revenue estimate for the commonwealth. Compared to its June forecast, the IFO has now revised upward its GDP contraction and wage growth, the same job losses, and slightly higher inflation. The future projections were modified for all economic variables because while the labor market had a rapid improvement in May, June, and July, more modest gains were seen in August and September. [Click here](#) for more.

In related news, the U.S. Commerce Department released the U.S. GDP for the third quarter, which showed the economy grew at a record-setting 33.1% annual rate. [Click here](#) for more.

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## Legislation & Policy



The House is in recess until November 10. The Senate remains at the call of the President Pro Tempore.

### **Governor Signs Bills into Law**

On October 29, Governor Wolf signed the following bills into law pertinent to townships:

#### **Comprehensive Fire & EMS Reform:**

##### **Act 91 of 2020 (formerly HB 1673)**

Renames the Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Company and Rescue Squad Assistance to Fire and Emergency Medical Services Loan Program and expands the program to include municipal fire companies and emergency medical services companies. Act 91 authorizes a referendum to implement the expanded use of the funds to volunteer fire departments or companies that provide services through paid personnel and gives the office of the state fire commissioner the authority to establish rules, in consultation with the fire advisory committee, for the eligible uses of the funds and require an annual report. Act 91 also renames the Fire Safety Advisory Committee as the State Fire Advisory Board and directs them to review and make recommendations for the fire relief funding formula and fire relief services. The law also makes the state fire commissioner position confirmable by the state Senate.

This Act also clarifies that fire relief associations include both volunteer and combo companies and that funds may be used for:

- necessary training;
- activities and materials to help with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters;
- establishment of length of service awards;
- facilities to store vehicles and equipment and for training and meetings;
- vehicles and equipment for emergency response,
- defrayment of the cost of obtaining or renewing a CDL for volunteer firefighters that operate fire or emergency vehicles registered to fire companies or municipalities and

- stipends to volunteer firefighters not to exceed \$1,500 per year.

Counties and school districts are authorized to provide property tax credits to volunteer first responders.

Finally, it eliminates the 20 % cap on real estate tax credits and authorizes intermunicipal cooperation of tax credit programs.

**EMS Operating Fund:**

**Act 93 of 2020 (formerly HB 1838)**

Act 93 requires 30 percent of the money from the Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund be allocated to provide training to underserved rural areas. It also requires that not less than 10 percent of funds be provided to emergency medical services agencies to assist with medical equipment purchases for ambulances.

**Broadband Services; Rural Electric Cooperatives:**

**Act 98 of 2020 (formerly HB 2438)**

Act 98 allows rural electric cooperatives to use their existing infrastructure to deploy fiber lines for broadband services. This applies only to existing infrastructure that can meet applicable safety standards and maintain structural integrity, not to new poles or structures within an existing easement.

**Move Over Law:**

**Act 105 of 2020 (formerly SB 1281)**

Act 105 renames Pennsylvania's "Steer Clear Law" the "Move Over Law" to clarify how motorists should react when approaching or passing an emergency response area. Act 105 also increase fines and penalties for drivers who fail to move over or slow down when approaching an emergency response area.

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Learn

## [Flagger Training](#)

This instructor-led Flagger Training will be conducted for individuals who have flagging responsibilities on ANY ROAD OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Others who would benefit from this course include: utility companies working on low volume roads, law enforcement personnel, municipal managers and elected officials (to understand the importance, and for budgeting purposes). This class is eligible for 2 PMGA Public Works points. Click here on a location below to register.



[11/2/20 - Lycoming County](#)

[11/6/20 - Montgomery County](#)

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

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