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January 28, 2021

Township Video News



TVN's Question of the Week | Is the COSTARS Program Free?

PSATS explains what townships need to do to participate in the COSTARS Program and start saving money on products and services. The answer may surprise you. Also, [click here](#) to catch up on previous Questions of the Week. (1:19)

Latest News

Back to Work PA

Watch for an announcement from Governor Wolf to rename "Restore PA" to "Back to Work PA". The 3.5 billion dollar borrowing and spending proposal will be part of his 2021-22

legislative agenda and budget proposal. Instead of focusing on the original infrastructure buildout, the new proposal will be state spending for Covid recovery. No details were available on how to pay for the effort or if a severance tax remained as the funding source.

The new plan will be refocused to assist workers and business owners most impacted by COVID-related closures. Look for targeted funding for job training and new childcare subsidies, as well as programs for low-wage workers, people of color, people with disabilities, and certain industry sectors to include apprenticeship efforts and coaching in non-traditional industries and occupations. There will be expanded funding for Act 47 distressed municipalities (anticipating more communities to enter the program?) as well as broadband internet expansion (the only survivor from the original program menu). Stay tuned for more details later this morning.

Nominations Due Tomorrow for Outstanding Supervisors, Secretaries, and Managers

You have until tomorrow, January 29, to nominate a township supervisor, secretary, or manager who has exhibited outstanding leadership to improve their community in the PSATS President's Leadership Awards. Nominations can be for one or more projects or for "lifetime achievement." [Click here](#) to download the complete guidelines and entry form.

Today Is Data Privacy Day

Data Privacy Day reminds us each year to review how our data is used. It's an excellent opportunity to take stock and evaluate our personal cybersecurity.

Our personal data is collected and used through a variety of media and for numerous reasons. Part of the problem is most of the time, the people who have access to our data, don't need it. Additionally, it gets redistributed legally and illegally. Thanks to the internet, massive amounts of personal data can be easily distributed. While the information may be out there due to our own carelessness or privacy violations, there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

To observe the day, take steps to secure your digital devices. Make a commitment to learning ways to protect yourself and maintain those tech-savvy practices. When you do, you and your family will be more secure.

Township Code Books

The Local Government Commission announced that they will be mailing updated copies of the second class township code to all townships in mid-February. The commission is a legislative agency of the General Assembly and one of its duties is to print and distribute copies of the second class township code. This will be the final state paid production on this code as they switch to all electronic access in the future. Watch for PSATS to meet this need in the future.

DCNR Poll Shows Importance of Parks and Recreation

The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources released results of a recent poll indicating that four out of five Pennsylvanians who visited parks and trails believe that time spent outdoors is essential to their physical and mental health during the pandemic. [Read full story.](#)

Commonwealth Agencies COVID-19 Enforcement Actions

Pa. Department of Agriculture: Last week, inspectors closed three restaurants that were operating in violation of COVID-19 orders. Between January 18 and 24, the Bureau of Food Safety performed 600 total inspections, 33 of which were COVID-19-specific complaints. The bureau received 236 food facility COVID-19-related complaints, five of which were referred to local and county health jurisdictions. [Click here](#) for more.

Pennsylvania State Police: Officers issued 60 warnings and 28 violations for failing to follow COVID-19 requirements after visiting 1,580 licensed liquor establishments between Monday, January 18, and Sunday, January 24. That brings the total violation count to 646 over the last 7 months (*3 per day statewide*). To view a summary of the number of checks and warnings issued by enforcement officers since July 1, [click here](#) and scroll down.

The PA Department of State as well as Department of Labor and Industry are also conducting Covid-19 non-compliance investigations but had no license revocations, warnings or letters issued in the past week.

Legislation & Policy



The House will convene for non-voting session today January 28. Watch session live [here](#).

Both chambers are scheduled for voting session February 1, 2, & 3.

Governor Plans to Deliver Virtual Budget Address

Governor Tom Wolf sent a letter to legislative leaders indicating his plans to deliver his annual budget address to the General Assembly, scheduled for February 2, virtually via a pre-recorded video.

Senate Passes COVID-19 Relief Package

The Senate unanimously approved a \$912 million Covid-19 relief package utilizing Federal funds passed by Congress in December. Additionally, \$145 million from state workers' compensation reserve funds would be used to establish a Hospitality Industry Recovery Program consisting of grants of up to \$50,000 for small businesses hurt by the pandemic and mitigation efforts.

The package also includes \$569.8 million for rental and utility assistance and \$197 million for education programs both of which are covered by federal funds. The legislation is now awaiting committee assignment in the House.

House Approves Emergency Declaration Legislation

Yesterday, the House approved HB 55 which proposes amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution relating to emergency disaster declarations, limiting declarations to 21 days (currently 30) and requiring renewals be approved by the General Assembly; and nondiscrimination protections

Note: All amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution must be approved by the General Assembly during two consecutive legislative sessions and then approved by the voters statewide. Versions of the proposed constitutional amendments above were approved during the 2019-2020 legislative session.

House State Government Committee News

Yesterday, the House State Government approved the following pieces of legislation:

SB 2 which proposes amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution relating to emergency disaster declarations, limiting declarations to 21 days (currently 30) and requiring renewals be approved by the General Assembly; and nondiscrimination protections.

HB 40 which would amend Title 71 to establish information technology governance, oversight and cybersecurity standards.

HB 47 which would amend Title 71 to establish the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs, would transfer specific powers from the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Department of State to the new Department.

HB 284 which would amend Title 37 to modernize artifact disposition, acquisition, and retention for the commonwealth and municipalities and permit the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to retrieve an archival record from a private entity on behalf of a local government.

Senate State Government Committee News

The Senate State Government Committee approved SB 116 which would amend Title 37 to modernize artifact disposition, acquisition, and retention for the commonwealth and municipalities and permit the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to retrieve an archival record from a private entity on behalf of a local government.

Learn

QuickBooks for the Beginner - Virtual Class - February

This four-session virtual class is designed to provide each student with a fundamental understanding and working knowledge of QuickBooks Accounting Software, and is intended to demonstrate the application of QuickBooks and QuickBooks Pro to assist in municipal accounting. The sessions will review how to set up your company files and create your DCED Compliant Chart of Accounts. From start to finish, how to write a check, make a deposit and reconcile your checking account. You will learn how to set up vendors and customers for all of your information that you could possibly need to replace that old rolodex. (note: no payroll will be addressed in this class). Eligible for 6 PMGA Administration Points. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

Webinar - Take Advantage of Market Conditions While You Can for Updated/New Facilities- 2/11/21

This webinar will cover the benefits of planning, financing, building and renovating township facilities during an economic downturn by taking advantage of lower interest rates, lower construction bids, stimulus funds, grants and other initiatives. Presenters will include planners/architects, a finance professional who specializes in securing funds for municipal



projects, an expert in the real estate market and a grant writer who will together be a complete planning resource for you and your township. Eligible for 1 PMGA Public Works point. [Click here](#) to register.

Webinar - Positive Impacts of Trail Planning on the Community - 2/18/21

Trails and greenways create healthy recreation and transportation opportunities by providing people of all ages with attractive, safe, accessible, and low-or no-cost places to cycle, walk, hike, jog or skate Trails help people of all ages incorporate exercise into their daily routines by connecting them with places they want or need to go. Communities that encourage physical activity by making use of the linear corridors can see a significant effect on public health and wellness. In this webinar, you will learn ways in which your township can become more trail-friendly. Eligible for 1 PMGA Planning/Zoning point. [Click here](#) to register.



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.



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