



February 1, 2021

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## Latest News

### **National Get Up Day**

National Get Up Day on February 1st offers an opportunity to share inspiring stories of perseverance. The day reminds us to pick ourselves up when we've fallen and given it (whatever it may be) another go! We never know when our efforts to seek a goal or overcome an obstacle will encourage another to do the same.

### **Pa Department of Corrections Covid Data Flawed**

The state Department of Corrections' COVID-19 dashboard is being taken down for 30 days to replace it with a better site that uses fewer staff resources. The current site is being updated manually. [Click here](#) for more.

### **Pa. COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalizations Cases Continue to Drop**

Daily new COVID cases and hospitalizations continue to decrease. The statewide COVID-19 case total now stands at 839,239, and while 38,282 new cases were reported this week, this is 13.8% less than in the prior week and continues a downward trend.

The [number of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Pennsylvania](#) continued to decrease for the sixth week in a row, from 3,910 to 3,370. 695 of these patients are in an ICU, down from 790 the prior week. The number of COVID-19 patients on a ventilator statewide decreased for the fourth week in a row, from 492 to 428.

The total deaths attributed to COVID-19 in Pennsylvania have reached 21,602, including 1,076 reported this week, down 31% from the previous week. Nationally, deaths from COVID-19 have reached 438,035, with 25,443 occurring in the last week.

Pennsylvania's statewide percent-positivity rate dropped for the third week in a row, from 10.5% to 9.3%. Eleven additional counties dropped under 10% this week, while two other counties went over 10% and one county dropped under 20%. Forest, the only remaining county over 20%, has a COVID-19 outbreak at a state prison.

[Click here](#) for more county-specific information.

### **Johnson & Johnson Releases Vaccine Results**

Johnson & Johnson has released Phase 3 global results for its single-shot Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, showing that it was 66% effective at preventing moderate to severe COVID-19 28 days after vaccination, with protection observed as early as day 14. Traditional flu vaccines have historically been in the 50-60% effective range. In addition, the vaccine was demonstrated to be 85% effective in preventing severe disease 28 days after vaccination, with efficacy against severe disease increasing over time with no cases reported in vaccinated participants after day 49.

Johnson & Johnson intends to submit its vaccine to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a candidate for emergency use authorization this week. The FDA requires a minimum efficacy for vaccines of 50-60%. If approved, the one dose vaccine will be easier to administer and distribute because it only needs to be refrigerated, unlike the currently approved vaccines, which must be kept frozen. To learn more, [click here](#).

### **Reminder: LTAP Holding Virtual Drop-In Session on Updated PennDOT Pub 213 (Work Zones)**

Township officials are reminded that the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) will hold a virtual drop-in session this **Thursday, February 4, at 11 a.m.** to discuss the state Department of Transportation's newly updated Publication 213, Temporary Traffic Control Guidelines. Publication 213 establishes the standards for temporary traffic control (work zones) on all public roads in Pennsylvania. The new updates take effect March 1, 2021.

This virtual drop-in session will provide an overview of Publication 213 and the changes that affect municipalities. Please join the discussion with your work zone experiences and your most worrisome safety concerns. [Click here](#) to register. [Click here](#) to view the updated Pub 213.

### **Pa Turnpike Transfers \$337.5 Million to PennDOT**

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission has transferred \$337.5 million to the state Department of Transportation to fulfill its legal obligation to provide supplemental transit funding under Act 44 of 2007. This included two payments that were deferred due to COVID-19-related toll revenue losses. [Click here](#) for more.

The Act 44 funding plan was dependent on the tolling of I-80, which was never approved

by the U.S. Department of Transportation. As such, the commission was forced to shoulder these payments, which has required regular, significant toll increases since 2009. Act 89 of 2013 partially addressed the turnpike's burden by allowing the payment to decrease from \$450 million to \$50 million annually beginning on July 1, 2022.

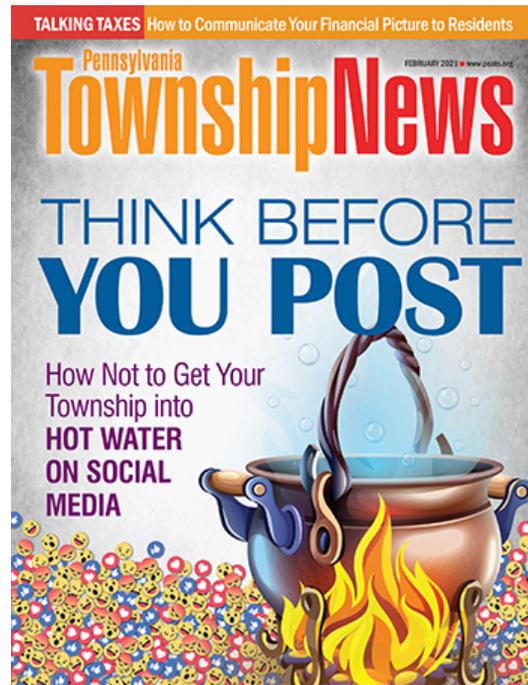
Expect transportation funding to be a major legislative issue in the coming months.

### ***Digital Version of Township News is Now Available!***

#### **Staying Out of Trouble on Social Media**

In this month's edition, the Township News explores the pitfalls of social media and how township officials should proceed with caution when using it. Other features include an article on how to talk taxes with residents, an interview with Pa. Senate Majority Leader Kim Ward, an article on structural engineers, and remembrances of PSATS Past President Ken Grimes and former Gov. Dick Thornburgh, who both passed away late last year.

Subscribers to the News can access a digital copy by signing in to [www.psats.org](http://www.psats.org) and clicking on "Digital Publications" under "My PSATS Profile." Not yet a subscriber? You can check out the free cover article [here](#) and learn how to subscribe to the News [here](#).



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## Legislation & Policy



Due to the winter weather, the House and Senate will not be in session today and will convene for voting session on Tuesday February 2.

#### **Governor's Budget Address: Live Coverage on PCN**

Tomorrow, February 2, on cable & streaming online, starting at 11 a.m. Pennsylvania's Cable Network (PCN) will provide complete, live

coverage of the Governor's 2021 Budget Address. [Click here](#) to watch.

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## Learn

### [Webinar - COVID-19 Vaccines: What Municipal Employers Need to Know - 2/2/21](#)

In this webinar, Ryan J. Cassidy, Michael McAuliffe Miller and Scott E. Blissman of Eckert Seamans' Labor and Employment Group will present a focused discussion of the relevant factors municipal employers should consider when implementing vaccination policies, maintaining employee morale, handling enforcement issues and managing accommodations requests. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.



### [Basic "Virtual" Training for Secretaries and Administrators - Feb. 22 & March 1, 2021](#)

This virtual training class will be offered in two half-day sessions. This is your opportunity to learn from acknowledged experts about all the most important issues township secretaries and managers need to know, right from the comfort of your desk. Topics covered will range from budgeting, purchasing, advertising and meeting management all the way to human resource issues and public engagement. Attendance for both sessions qualifies for 6 PMGA Administration points. [Click here](#) to register.



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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](mailto:morningnews@psats.org).

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