February 9, 2021

Township Video News

TVN's Coffee & the Capitol | Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Dr. Kyle Kopko was named the new director of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania in the middle of a pandemic. Learn how that's shaping his approach and how the center is educating lawmakers and the public about rural issues, ranging from the opioid epidemic to the digital divide. (5:51)

Latest News

Safer Internet Day U.S.
Every year, Safer Internet Day, February 9, brings tools, education, and awareness to
create a safer internet for both kids and adults. From cyberbullying and identity theft to fraud and human trafficking, the internet can be a frightening place. Safer Internet Day and ConnectSafely.org aim to make the internet a better place.

The day brings organizations and individuals together with the common goal of reaching as many internet users as possible and provide them with the tools and resources to keep them safe. Schools use the internet to connect students to tools and resources. Users bank, visit their physician, order medication, and shop all from the comfort of their mobile devices. Every day, we all face the potential of becoming a victim of internet crimes. However, there are ways to protect ourselves and to teach our children how to correctly use the internet, too.

Reminder: February 14 Is Deadline for Recognizing Local Government Excellence
The deadline for the 2021 Governor’s Awards for Local Government Excellence is February 14, 2021. Do you have a township official in your community who demonstrates exceptional dedication to improving public services? If so, be sure to nominate them for this award in one of the 10 eligible categories. Click here to learn more and give a worthy township official the recognition they have earned!

PennDOT Changes Funding Method for New Turnback Roads
The state Department of Transportation has changed how the rehabilitation costs for new turnback roads will be processed. The department will use a new reimbursement-style contract for these rehabilitation costs, which are undertaken before a state road is turned back to a municipality. This replaces the prior lump-sum payment for rehabilitation costs. Please note that this change does not affect turnback road maintenance payments.

Federal SAFER Fire Grant Applications Now Being Accepted
The Federal Emergency Management Agency is now accepting applications for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants until March 12. About 300 grants are available for a total funding of $355 million. Both career, volunteer, and hybrid departments are eligible to apply.

Volunteer and hybrid companies may use funds to assist fire departments with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response. Funds may also be used for career and hybrid companies to hire new, additional firefighters, to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call volunteer firefighters to full-time firefighters, rehire laid off firefighters, or to retain firefighters facing layoff. Click here for more information.
Legislation & Policy

House Passes National Guard Vaccine Roll-Out

On Friday, the House unanimously approved HB 326 which would enlist the state National Guard to speed the state’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout. HB 326 would also require the Governor to establish and submit to the General Assembly a report on the integration of the state National Guard into the Commonwealth's plan for the distribution and administration of any vaccine for COVID-19, including the administration of the vaccine to individuals by members of the Guard. HB 326 is now before the Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Learn

Webinar - Home-Based Businesses - Is Your Township Ready for More? - 2/10/21

Whether it is to comply with mandates, help care for family members, convenience or because they just prefer working in their pajamas, more people are now working from homes than pre-COVID-19. Fortunately, modern technology enables business operators and employees to safely and efficiently continue working from their homes. Home business activities and functions are considered a form of home-based businesses or occupations (HBBs) as defined, permitted and regulated by most municipal zoning ordinances. In this webinar, representatives of McNees Wallace and Nurick, LLC will explore opportunities and options for municipalities to proactively plan and zone for HBBs. This course is eligible for 1 PMGA Planning/Zoning point. Click here to register.
Performing MS4 Outfall Inspections - Virtual Class - 2/16/21
In this virtual class, attendees will learn a workable, effective framework for establishing a hierarchy for outfall inspections, a protocol for performing inspections in the field, and method for inspecting documenting and addressing potential illicit discharges. This class, which will be led by Mark Harman of ARRO Consulting, will benefit everyone involved in your township’s stormwater management program, including supervisors, managers/secretaries, and public works management and staff. Click here for more information and to register.

HR and Labor Relations in 2021 - Four New Things to Watch For - Virtual Class - 2/23/21
In this seminar, Mike Miller and the team from Eckert Seamans (sponsor of the PSATS HR & Labor Management Institute) will detail what to expect in human resources and labor relations for 2021. Click here for more information and to register.

Flagger Training - 3/2/21 - Erie County (p.m.)
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), Click here for more information and to register.
**Right-to-Know Law, Sunshine and Ethics, Oh My! - Virtual Class - 3/2/21**

Has your township received bad publicity because of a misstep involving the Right-to-Know Law, Sunshine Act or Ethics Act? Not sure whether you or your township officials/employees are complying with your obligations under any of these laws? Or are you an experienced township official/employee just looking for a refresher? If you answered yes to any of these, you should take this class, which will provide best practices on how to more efficiently handle tricky (and common) RTKL requests, ensure smooth, and legal, public meetings (including remote meetings), avoid tripping yourself up with conflicts of interest and other Ethics Act problems, and much more. This course is eligible for 3 PMGA Administration points and 3 CLE credits (separate fee required for CLEs). [Click here](#) to register.

**Flagger Training - 3/9/21 - Allegheny County**

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). [Click here](#) for more information and 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.