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March 11, 2021

Township Video News



TVN's Question of the Week | How Old Is Your Township Code?

If the Township Code on your shelf is dated 2003, get rid of it and learn how and where to get the most recent version. Also, [click here](#) to catch up on previous Questions of the Week. (1:35)

Latest News

Money and Strings

Yesterday, the U.S. House approved a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package which will now be sent to President Biden who has indicated he will sign the measure into law as soon as it reaches his desk.

The package will provide \$350 billion for state and local governments, with a total of \$13.722 billion coming to Pennsylvania. The state will receive \$7.5 billion (including \$279 million set aside for capital projects), counties will receive \$2.8 billion, and municipalities with populations of more than 50,000 will receive \$2.3 billion. Municipalities in Pennsylvania with a population of less than 50,000, which includes almost all townships, boroughs, and small cities, will have to share \$936 million (*while Philadelphia alone will get in excess of \$1.3 billion*).

[Click here](#) to see the amount your township will receive.

Note: This local funding will be distributed to the state and then released to townships.

State and local governments are able to use these restricted funds to cover costs incurred by Dec. 31, 2024, to:

- Respond to the COVID-19 emergency and address its negative economic impacts, including through aid to households, small businesses, nonprofits, and industries such as tourism and hospitality;
- Provide premium pay to essential employees or grants to their employers. Premium pay could not exceed \$13 per hour or \$25,000 per worker;
- Provide government services affected by a revenue reduction during the pandemic (relative to revenues collected by the local government in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency); and
- Make investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

Funds cannot be used to deposit into pension funds or to offset revenue resulting from a tax cut.

State and local recipients are able to transfer funds to private nonprofit groups, public benefit corporations involved in passenger or cargo transportation, and special-purpose units of state or local governments.

Additionally, the legislation includes \$125 billion to help K-12 schools reopen for in-person classes; \$48 billion for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing; \$7.5 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's vaccine distribution efforts; \$21.5 billion for rental assistance; \$30 billion for local subway and bus systems and \$8 billion for airports.

Direct payments of \$1400 will be sent to eligible households; individuals who make under \$75,000 with eligibility phasing out at \$80,000 and couples who earn less than \$150,000 will get \$2,800 with eligibility phasing out at \$160,000. Weekly unemployment benefits of \$300 per week are extended through Labor Day 2021.

Eight Counties Added to Pennsylvania's Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine Zone

The state Department of Agriculture has added eight counties to Pennsylvania's spotted lanternfly quarantine zone ahead of the 2021 spring hatch. With this addition, the quarantine zone for this invasive pest is now at 34 counties

Native to Asia, the spotted lanternfly is capable of decimating entire grape vineyards and damaging fruit orchards, hops, walnuts, hardwoods, and decorative trees. In addition, they're known to swarm in the air, cover trees, and coat decks and play equipment with their excrement.

"The spotted lanternfly is more than a pest in the literal sense," says Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding. "It's wreaking havoc for home and business owners, kids who just want to play outside, Pennsylvania agriculture, and the economy of the state we all call home. Whether you think it's your job or not, we need every Pennsylvanian to keep their eyes peeled for signs of this bad bug – to scrape every egg mass, squash every bug, and report every sighting."

Cambria, Cameron, Franklin, Lackawanna, Montour, Pike, Wayne, and Westmoreland are the newly added counties. The eight new counties are not completely infested but rather have a few infested municipalities, which can be [viewed here](#). [Click here](#) for the map of all counties in the quarantine area. [Click here](#) to learn more about the spotted lanternfly and why it is a major problem for Pennsylvania. [Click here](#) to learn more about the quarantine.

Highmark Accepting Grant Applications from EMS Agencies

Highmark is funding a \$10 million grant program for Pennsylvania licensed emergency medical service agencies. The Pennsylvania EMS Provider Foundations is administering the grant funds, which must be used for the following: 1) equipment, including hardware and software, used to provide EMS services or the repair of equipment used to provide EMS services, and 2) supplies, including medications and personal protective equipment, used to provide EMS services. Grants are limited to \$250,000 each.

The grant program is accepting applications until May 15 and will distribute funds after July 1. Consideration will be given to retroactive grants for purchases made during calendar year 2020. Grants may be full or partial reimbursement. To learn more or apply, [click here](#).

Commonwealth COVID-19 Enforcement: More Restaurants Ordered Closed

The following state agency reports are for the week of March 1:

[Pa. Department of Agriculture](#): Two more restaurants were ordered closed for violating Covid-19 restriction orders. The Bureau of Food Safety performed 762 total inspections, 31 of which were the result of COVID-19-related complaints, and received 422 food facility COVID-19-related complaints, 33 of which were referred to local and county health jurisdictions.

[Pennsylvania State Police](#): Officers issued 76 warnings and 43 violations for failing to follow COVID-19 requirements after visiting 1,330 licensed liquor establishments.

[Pa. Department of State](#): The Bureau of Enforcement and Investigation performed 549 inspections of licensed professions' compliance with COVID-19 mitigation requirements, opened 17 COVID-19-specific investigations, and distributed 10 warning letters and two compliance letters.

National Johnny Appleseed Day

March 11th – On National Johnny Appleseed Day, we remember a man who made apple (and pear) trees bloom across the nation. The day celebrates a kindly legend who lived by sage teachings and labored to bring the shade of fruit trees across much of the United States.

He was born John Chapman on September 26, 1787. Not much is known about his early life until 1797, Chapman when he shows up in northwestern Pennsylvania, propagating his apple seeds. Warren County, Pennsylvania, lays claim to Johnny Appleseed's first tree nursery.

Two dates celebrate Johnny Appleseed Day, either March 11th or September 26th. The September date is Appleseed's acknowledged birth date. However, many people across the country prefer the March date due to the planting season.

Learn

[Webinar - Zoning Implications for Agritourism in Pennsylvania - 3/18/21](#)

There are several important legal considerations regarding agritourism operations in Pennsylvania, such as zoning, regulations, insurance and other matters. Zoning laws regulate land uses, including agritourism. These may address the ability of property owners to use their property in such a manner to parking, hours of operation, traffic, noise, and lighting. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.



[Duties of a Zoning Hearing Board - 3/25/21 - Allegheny County](#)

Topics to be covered include procedures for deciding variances and special exceptions, handling hearing-related questions, Ethics Act requirements and much more. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.



**Duties of a Zoning Hearing Board - 4/8/21 -
Luzerne County**

Topics to be covered include procedures for deciding variances and special exceptions, handling hearing-related questions, Ethics Act requirements and much more. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.



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