April 21, 2021

Latest News

National Administrative Professionals' Day
It's a big day in township government! National Administrative Professionals' Day recognizes the professionals who keep an office running smoothly every day. Celebrate these professionals on the Wednesday of the last full week in April of each year. The day recognizes the work of secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, and other administrative support professionals.

The day in the life of an administrative professional is varied from moment to moment. While organization is key to their success, their flexibility and ability to handle the unexpected make them valuable to any business. Some of their

responsibilities include managing appointments, drafting letters and memos, booking business trips, coordinating appointments and planning meetings. Administrative professionals compile data and research information, too. They are central to an office or organization running efficiently.

43% of Adult Pennsylvanians Have Received at Least One Vaccine Dose
It is now just over one week since Pennsylvania made everyone 16 and older eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. More than 2.8 million Pennsylvanians are now fully vaccinated, and an additional 1.8 million Pennsylvanians have received the first dose of a two-dose vaccine series. Nationally, more than 85 million people have been fully vaccinated. According to the Centers for Disease Control, Pennsylvania remains at 19th for total doses administered per capita and 43% of adult Pennsylvanians have received a first dose of vaccine. Click here for state numbers and here for national numbers.

Pennsylvania road fatalities jumped in 2020 despite people driving less during pandemic
Despite stay-at-home orders and a dramatic drop in traffic due to the pandemic, Pennsylvania road fatalities surged 6% in 2020, PennDOT announced Tuesday.

Last year, 1,129 people died in crashes across Pennsylvania, a jump from the 1,059 people who died in 2019, PennDOT reported.

The news proved little surprise as observers from across the country had warned of disturbing safety trends over the past year. Traffic experts had previously linked road deaths to exposure — when people drove more, more people died in accidents. But 2020 flipped those expectations on their head.

When the pandemic struck, traffic disappeared almost overnight. Businesses had employees work remotely when possible, schools shifted to virtual learning plans and major tourist destinations closed their doors or limited the number of people they'd serve. By the time 2020 ended, motorists traveled 1.5 billion miles less in Pennsylvania than they had in 2019, an 18.4% decrease, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

"We cannot definitively say why fatalities increased during the COVID-19 pandemic even though it certainly had an impact on traffic volumes statewide," PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian said in a news release. "Over the long term, traffic fatalities are still trending down, but we must continue to work together to make our roads safer for all drivers. The surge was fed by a jump in the number of people who died in fatal crashes involving motorcycles, people who drove off the road and speeding, PennDOT data shows. At the same time, the number of people killed in head-on collisions and in pedestrian-involved crashes decreased, according to PennDOT.

Safety experts may hope the 2020 surge will mark as an anomaly tied to the strangeness of the pandemic. With minor exceptions, road deaths have been trending downwards for years in Pennsylvania since 2005, when 1,616 people died in crashes. The 1,059 people killed in 2019 is still the record low.

While many types of fatality crashes decreased, including those involving drivers 65 or older, some categories were up. Crashes involving local roads, single vehicle run-off-the-road, motorcycles, and crashes involving speeding were up in 2020. To learn more, click here.

Biden Orders U.S. Flag to Half-Staff for Walter Mondale
President Joe Biden ordered the U.S. Flag to be flown at half-staff at the White House and on all public buildings and grounds as a mark of respect for Walter Mondale, former U.S. vice president, until sunset on the day of internment. Click here for more.

Reminder: DCED Accepting Applications for Act 13 Grants
The state Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is accepting applications for Act 13 programs until May 31, 2021. There are several grant programs listed below that funded from impact fees from natural gas wells under Act 13 of 2012:

Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) Abatement & Treatment Program: Townships may apply for grants to reclaim abandoned mine wells, remediate and repair existing AMD project sites, and monitor water quality to track nonpoint source load reductions from AMD remediation projects.

Baseline Water Quality Data Program: Townships may apply for grants to establish baseline water quality data on private water supplies using the Baseline Water Quality Data program.

Flood Mitigation Program: Townships may apply for grants to perform flood mitigation projects.

Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program: Townships may apply for funding to plan, acquire, develop, rehabilitate, and repair greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks, and beautification projects.

Orphan or Abandoned Well Plugging Program: Townships may apply for grants to clean out and plug abandoned and orphan oil and gas wells, stray gas mitigation systems, and well venting projects.

Sewage Facilities Program: Townships may apply for grants for costs associated with the planning work required under Act 537, the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act.

Watershed Restoration and Protection Program: Townships may apply for grants to construct, expand, repair, maintain, or rehabilitate new or existing watershed protection best management practices.

Legislation and Policy

The House and Senate will convene for session today, April 21. Watch session live here.

House Local Government Committee News
Yesterday, the House Local Government Committee reported the following bills from committee:

HB 221 which would amend the Local Tax Enabling Act (*Act 511 of 1965*) to authorize local governments to use up to 25 % of revenue from the open space tax for maintenance and development regardless of the method of acquisition or purchase.

HB 403 which would clarify that land on boundary lines would be assessed to the municipality or county of the owner's choice when the boundary goes through the house. Would be binding on all future owners unless subdivided.

HB 1213 which would authorize the council of a distressed municipality to vote to organize a government study commission if the recovery plan adopted by the distressed municipality recommends adoption of a home rule charter or amendment of an existing home rule charter.

HB 1217 which proposes an amendment to the Constitution to provide for the removal of elected officers of a municipality. Would establish removal "for cause" as defined by the General Assembly which shall include absenteeism from meetings and dereliction of duty.

Note: Constitutional amendments require approval during two consecutive legislative sessions and approval by the voters during a statewide referendum.

HB 221, HB 403, HB 1213, and HB 1217 are now before the House.

Learn

2021 PAAZO Spring Virtual Educational Forum - 4/23 & 30/ 2021
This two-day virtual program explores issues that zoning officers, planning and zoning officials face on a regular basis, and discusses effective strategies to address them. Click here for agenda and to register.

Duties of a Zoning Hearing Board - 4/27/21 - Cumberland County (Live and Virtual)
This class is being held as a live classroom course, or you can attend virtually.From making decisions on contentious public issues to learning the ins and outs of the Municipalities Planning Code, being a member of a zoning hearing board can be a challenge. Click here for more information and to register.

Land Use and Zoning Law Update - Virtual - 4/28/21
Attend this session to learn about significant land use and zoning cases in Pennsylvania and changes and developments in related laws. Click here for more information and to register.

Development Disasters and How to Defend Against Them - Virtual - 4/30/21

This session will explore how an approved, compliant land development can fail and what townships can do to protect themselves. Click here for more information and to register.

New Uses & Zoning Regulations: What We Learned From 2020 - Virtual - 5/5/21

This workshop will encourage participants to consider new uses that have evolved and their impact on townships. Click here for more information and to register.