

A NEWSLETTER
CONTAINING
THE LATEST
INFORMATION
ON LEGISLATION
AND NEWS OF
INTEREST TO
TOWNSHIPS

PSATS Cancels 2021 Annual Conference, Announces “Plan B”

PSATS’ Annual Conference and Exhibit Show, scheduled for April 18-21 in Hershey, has been canceled due to Gov. Tom Wolf’s **pandemic-related gathering limits** that are still in place and are too restrictive for a successful conference.

Although millions of vaccine doses have been administered nationally, infection rates are falling, and hospitalizations are on the decline, Pennsylvania’s vaccine rollout has been one of the slowest in the country. The governor’s restrictions on crowd capacity at events are still oppressively low, yet they remain in place.

As a result, the PSATS Executive Board decided to **cancel the PSATS Conference again this year** for no other reason than the gathering size numbers. Based on the state’s restrictions, the numbers are just plain stacked against holding the conference.

Although we had more than 3,000 participants signed up for the conference, including delegates, guests, exhibitors, and sponsors, and there was great enthusiasm building for the conference, **the governor’s gathering size restrictions are too low**. Instead of 75 in a class, we could have less than 20.

The good news is, we’re moving on to Plan B. The goal is to give you some of the conference experience but in slightly different ways.

* **Education** is a big draw so, for starters, most of our 60 interactive workshops will be presented virtually in April and May. See the enclosure for details about our conference workshop pass.

* **Networking**, another great feature, will be the focus of multiple **virtual town hall-style sessions** for population groups, secretaries and managers, county associations, and others. And they will be free!

* Because we fully expect event restrictions to be gone by fall, PSATS will host a **one-day business meeting in Hershey in mid-October** to set policy, elect officers, and provide a legislative update. The night before, we will celebrate the Association’s milestone 100th birthday with a **Centennial Celebration Dinner**, sponsored by the PA Leadership Institute, but there will **not** be an exhibit show this year.

Registrations and refunds for attendees, exhibitors and sponsors: More information about refunds and new registrations will be released soon so watch your inbox for The Insider, our Tuesday e-newsletter for conference attendees. Also, look for updates in TVN and the Morning News and at conference.psats.org. All hotel reservations for April have automatically been canceled, and we will share more information about other opportunities for our Centennial Celebration Dinner and Commemorative Centennial Book soon.

Please see the conference announcement video at conference.psats.org for more about this decision, why we were forced to make it, and our plans going forward. We are sorry that we cannot gather for our premier annual event for the second year in a row, but the future looks promising, and we look forward to seeing many of you again when we can safely gather.

Your health and safety have been our top priorities.

Thank you for your patience and continued support.



PENNSYLVANIA STATE
ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP
SUPERVISORS

4855 WOODLAND DRIVE
ENOLA, PA 17025
(717) 763-0930
WWW.PSATS.ORG

Governor Proposes 2021-2022 State Budget

The proposed
“fair share fee”
would be
assessed on
all municipalities
to pay for
the costs of
State Police
services in their
community.

Gov. Tom Wolf gave his annual address on February 3 for the fiscal year 2021-22 budget, which contains several provisions affecting local governments. These include:
State Police tax — The governor is proposing a “fair service fee,” which, if enacted, would be assessed on all municipalities to pay for the costs of Pennsylvania State Police services in their community. The proposal is anticipated to raise \$168 million. The fee is based on a complex formula developed by the State Police considering station coverage costs, including incidents and coverage area. It gives “credits” for low population, low income, and whether a municipality already provides full- or part-time police services.

Note: Existing Association policy opposes any plan that would mandate that townships pay for State Police services. PSATS supports allowing townships to voluntarily contract with the State Police for patrol and ordinance enforcement services.

Recycling — Municipal recycling grants would be reduced from \$30 million to \$25 million, while municipal recycling performance grants would be reduced from \$21.5 million to \$11 million. This reduced funding is a result of a \$50 million transfer from the Recycling Fund to balance the 2020-2021 budget.

Severance tax on natural gas — The governor is proposing several billion dollars in funding for the workforce development system to provide rapid re-employment assistance to workers impacted by the pandemic. This would be funded through a severance tax on natural gas extraction that is estimated to bring in \$300 million a year.

Note: Once details are released, PSATS will review it to ensure that the impact fee is preserved.

Financially distressed communities — Due to costs of pandemic mitigation, the commonwealth is predicting a surge in financially distressed Act 47 municipalities. The budget proposal says this distress will require communities to make difficult decisions on consolidation and municipal reform and notes that additional state funding for these communities could provide much-needed relief. Recent federal funding to counties will likely increase the pressure for this.

Personal income tax increase — Gov. Wolf is calling for an increase in the state personal income tax from 3.07% to 4.49%. In addition, he is proposing to expand special forgiveness tax credits to \$15,000 for single filers, \$30,000 for married filers, and \$10,000 for each dependent and providing 100% state tax forgiveness for those at or near the threshold, with those just above these thresholds receiving a partial credit. A family of four making a combined \$84,000 will see tax increases.

Additional details on the governor’s proposed budget can be found at www.budget.pa.gov.

Capitol Roundup

Special Elections Scheduled — Senator John Blake (*D-Lackawanna*) has resigned to serve as the Regional Director of Economic Development for Congressman Matt Cartwright (*D-8*). A special election will be held to fill the vacancy, expected to be held May 18.

Due to the death of Sen. Dave Arnold (*R-Lebanon*) a special election will be held May 18, concurrent with the primary, for the 48th Senatorial District.

PennDOT Announces P3 Bridge Tolling Candidates — The state Department of Transportation has announced the nine bridges planned for tolling for its Pathways Major Bridge Public-Private Partnership (P3) Initiative. They are: I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge Replacement Project (Berks County); I-79 Widening, Bridges and Bridgeville Interchange Reconfiguration (Allegheny County); I-80 Canoe Creek Bridges (Clarion County);

LTAP has provided a detailed overview of the changes in PennDOT Pub 213 (Work Zones).

[I-80 Nescopeck Creek Bridges](#) (Luzerne County); [I-80 North Fork Bridges Project](#) (Jefferson County); [I-80 Over Lehigh River Bridge Project](#) (Luzerne and Carbon counties); [I-81 Susquehanna Project](#) (Susquehanna County); [I-83 South Bridge Project](#) (Dauphin County); and [I-95 Girard Point Bridge Improvement Project](#) (Philadelphia County).

Districts are conducting further study required for U.S. Federal Highway Administration approval. For example, PennDOT must identify expected diversions onto secondary and local roads by drivers avoiding the toll. Identified impacts must be mitigated through toll revenues. Impacts on lower income communities must also be identified and mitigated.

PennDOT believes that current federal and state laws give it the authority to pursue tolling; however, there are legislators who strongly disagree. The plan is expected to receive vigorous debate in the General Assembly.

LTAP Provides Overview, Offers Webinar on Updated PennDOT Pub 213 (Work Zones) — The state Department of Transportation has updated its Publication 213, Temporary Traffic Control Guidelines, which establishes the standards for temporary traffic control (*work zones*) on all public roads in Pennsylvania.

The Local Technical Assistance Program is providing two free webinars on March 18 and 19 on temporary work zones, during which the Pub 213 updates will be covered. To register for these webinars or to learn more, go to gis.penndot.gov/ltap/.

In addition, LTAP has provided a [detailed overview of the changes](#) in Pub. 213. To view the overview, go to psats.org and scroll down and choose “More News.”

Historical Agricultural Building Bill Reported from Committee — [SB 191](#) would exempt historical agricultural building from the Uniform Construction Code, provided that the owner of the building annually files an affidavit with the municipality stating that the certain conditions are satisfied. SB 191 was reported from the Senate Labor and Industry Committee.

PennDOT Seeks Feedback on Transportation Performance Report — Pennsylvanians can review ratings of the state’s efforts in transportation safety, mobility, system preservation, and accountability in the state Department of Transportation’s 2021 Transportation Performance Report, at talkpatransportation.com. A public forum on the report will be held **March 23 at 6:30 p.m.**

PennDOT is collecting public feedback until **April 14**. Township officials may take the survey at the link above or call 717-783-2262 to complete the survey by mail or phone.

COVID News

As state orders change at a rapid pace, go to psats.org and choose **COVID-19 Resources** for the most up-to-date information and subscribe to the **PSATS Morning News e-newsletter** by emailing memberservices@psats.org.

Wolf Renews COVID-19 Disaster Declaration — Gov. Tom Wolf signed a fourth renewal of his Proclamation of Disaster Emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic on February 19, 2021. The proclamation is in effect for an additional 90 days.

Commonwealth Rescinds Travel Quarantine, Revises Gathering Limits — The Commonwealth’s out-of-state **travel quarantine order** has been rescinded. Township policies requiring testing or quarantine based on the now-rescinded order should be repealed or revised. **Gathering limits** for indoor events are increased from 10% to 15% of maximum occupancy and outdoor events are now 20% (from 15%) of maximum occupancy, regardless of venue size.

Governor Signs National Guard Vaccine Roll-Out — Gov. Tom Wolf signed Act 4 of 2021 which enlists the state National Guard to speed the state’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

Don't Miss PSATS Training Opportunities

For more information, go to learn.psats.org!

Eight PowerPass-Eligible Webinars in March — From combating cyber threats to municipal gun regulations or using drone technology and high cube warehouses, PSATS has as strong lineup of webinars this month.

Duties of a ZHB Member — PSATS will be offering three in-person (*and one virtual*) classes in March and April that are focused on helping ZHB members navigate their way around the MPC, hearings, and more.

In-Person Flagger Training in March — PSATS will be hosting classes in Erie, Allegheny, and Franklin counties. Don't forget the virtual class option too!

This and That...

Be sure to check this section each month, where you will find important reminders and information.

- **Add PSATS to Your Safe Sender Lists** — Make sure you are receiving important emails from PSATS by adding psats.org to your safe sender or whitelist. If you are suddenly missing PSATS emails, check your spam folder to make sure they are not getting blocked or quarantined due to security efforts of your internet service provider. Missing PSATS emails and not sure what to do? Email memberservices@psats.org, or call 717-793-0930.
- **New Township Code Books** — The Local Government Commission has mailed updated copies of the Second Class Township Code to all townships. Once you receive these newly printed books, the previous versions, which are dated 2003, should be discarded, along with all supplements.
- **Good News! Deadline Extended for Awards Programs** — With the cancellation of PSATS' Annual Conference, we have extended the deadlines for two of our award programs. This will give townships more time to submit their intergovernmental cooperation projects and encourage youth organizations to submit their community service activities for recognition. Projects for the **Excellence in Intergovernmental Cooperation Awards** are now due **April 5**. **PSATS Youth Awards** deadlines are now **April 1** for youth organizations to submit entries to their county association and **April 15** for county associations to submit entries to PSATS. These awards will be presented in the fall.
- **ATV, Snowmobile Trail Grants Available** — The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is accepting grant applications for ATV or snowmobile trails and facilities until **March 31**. To learn more, go to brcgrants.dcnr.pa.gov or contact the grants customer service center at (800) 326-7734 or DCNR-Grants@pa.gov.
- **RCAP Accepting Applications** — The Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) is accepting applications for grant funding until **March 31**. The grant program is for economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historic improvement projects that have a regional or multi-jurisdictional impact, and generate or maintain employment, tax revenues. For more, go to budget.pa.gov and choose "Programs."
- **Gaming Grants Available for Police Departments** — Police departments have until **April 1** to apply for Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board grants to prevent and investigate unlawful gaming. For more information, go to gamingcontrolboard.pa.gov and scroll down.
- **Community Parks, Recreation Grants Available** — The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is accepting grant applications for recreation and conservation projects until **April 14**. Local governments may apply and use funds to plan, acquire, or develop public parks, recreation areas, motorized and non-motorized trails, river conservation and access, streamside forest buffers, and open space conservation. To learn more, go to brcgrants.dcnr.pa.gov.
- **DCED Accepting Applications for Act 13 Grants** — The state Department of Community and Economic Development is accepting applications for Act 13 programs until **May 31**. These grants include flood mitigation, sewage facilities planning, trails and recreation, watershed restoration and more. To learn more, go to dced.pa.gov and under "Programs and Funding," choose "Commonwealth Financing Authority" and then "Act 13."