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Township Engineer

Newsletter of the Township Engineers Association

September 2021

Past Issues of This Newsletter Are Now Available on PSATS' Website

Looking for information in a past Township Engineer newsletter? Access previous editions at www.psats.org. Log in and look under the "Newsroom" tab.

Latest News

FHWA Safety Summit Series Available in September

The Federal Highway Administration's Every Day Counts Safety Summit Series will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Wednesday in September, beginning September 1. Participants can join for one or more Wednesdays.

The summit will highlight Every Day Counts safety innovations and how they save lives. Topics will include Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian; Data-Driven Safety Analysis; Reducing Rural Roadway Departures, Intersection/Interchange Geometrics, and Road Diets. To register, [click here](#).

New Software Analyzes Work Zones

Planning for efficient and effective work zones on Pennsylvania's roads helps to minimize congestion and delays. [Freeway Evaluation – Pennsylvania, or FREEVAL-PA](#), is a predictive work zone assessment tool for use by PennDOT employees and business partners. FREEVAL-PA is the Pennsylvania-specific version of the FREEVAL analysis software, created to analyze work zones' effect on traffic flow. It guides PennDOT's decision-making process for implementing lane closures, crossovers, or other traffic control methods and helps to minimize congestion and delays during construction or maintenance projects.

FREEVAL-PA supports the planning, prioritization, operations, and analysis of work zones on all roads, including those with limited access. PennDOT and its partners can use the software for work zone staging changes; analysis of work zone delay and user cost, lane reservation,

diversion sensitivity, and freeway alternatives; and scenario planning. FREEVAL-PA can also be used to evaluate incident management and response strategies.

A software users group has scheduled several meetings in the coming months to give new users an opportunity to ask questions, obtain technical knowledge, and provide evaluation tips for the software. Click on a date below to register for one of the Microsoft Teams meetings:

- [September 13, 2021, 1-2:30 p.m.](#)
- [December 13, 2021, 1-2:30p.m.](#)
- [March 14, 2022, 1-2:30 p.m.](#)
- [May 16, 2022, 1-2:30 p.m.](#)

Don't Miss These Grant Opportunities

Broadband Grants for Unserved and Underserved Communities

The Commonwealth Financing Authority has \$5 million available for projects that expand high-speed broadband service infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas through the [Unserved High-Speed Broadband Funding Program](#). This grant program is open only to non-governmental entities that have the technical, managerial, and financial expertise to design, build, and operate a high-speed broadband service infrastructure in unserved areas. Applications are due **September 24, 2021**.

DEP Accepting Applications for Recycling Grants

The state Department of Environmental Protection is accepting applications for Municipal Recycling Program Development and Implementation Grants (Section 902) until **September 24, 2021**. Eligible recycling program development and implementation costs are eligible for 90% funding. Municipalities who did not receive a section 902 grant award in 2020 will receive additional consideration during this solicitation period. All municipalities compliant with Act 101 may apply. Click [here](#) for more information.

Legislative Report

Court Rejects 'Drive-By' Investigation Claim, Upholds Township Enforcement Notice

In *Granny N Pops, LLC v. East Lampeter Twp. Zoning Hearing Bd.*, No. 287 C.D. 2020, 2021 WL 3012174 (Pa.Cmwith. July 16, 2021), the Commonwealth Court rejected an argument that a zoning officer's "drive-by" investigation was insufficient and upheld an enforcement notice issued to property owners for constructing two apartment units in an accessory building without zoning approval.

The property owners contended that the zoning hearing board failed to present substantial evidence to establish the zoning violation because the zoning officer conducted only a "drive-by" investigation of the property, where the accessory structure was more than 150 feet from the road and behind the primary structure. Thus, the board had no witness with personal knowledge of the interior of the structure.

The court found that the testimony of the assistant zoning officer — he spoke with the resident who confirmed the existence of the units, performed a drive-by inspection, and observed improvements and cars parked in front of the structure — was sufficient to support the enforcement notice. The court also noted that the property owners, when submitting a request for a special exception after receiving the enforcement notice, stated that the use had existed for several decades.

Training Opportunities

Calling All Subject Matter Experts

PSATS continues to host numerous in-person and virtual educational events targeted at both township engineers and municipal officials. If you are interested in sharing your expertise for an in-person or virtual presentation on any topic of interest to our audience, please contact Education Director Scott Coburn at scoburn@psats.org.

PSATS Stormwater Conference Goes Virtual (PDH eligible)

Register now for the 2021 PSATS Stormwater Conference, which has been converted to virtual sessions to accommodate presenter participation. The scheduled topics address a number of activities for which municipal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds could be used. Make sure to attend to be in a better position to help your municipal clients evaluate how to invest their ARP dollars in an eligible category. Each virtual session runs from 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Policy Track	Technical Track
BMP GIS Project Management Software	Growing Smart Stormwater Planning Techniques
Intergovernmental PRPs: How Are They Working?	Parks as Resilient Infrastructure
The Keys to Successful Multi-Municipal Stormwater Programs	Integrating Pay-for-Performance BMPs
DEP's New Post-Construction Stormwater Management Manual	Drones for Municipal Uses
Using PennDOT's New IFB BMP Credit Process	How One Municipality Developed Its Own BMP GIS Map

Following are the dates for the 2021 PSATS Virtual Stormwater Conference. To register for one or more sessions, click [here](#).

- **Sept. 14** – Technical Track
- **Sept. 21** – Policy Track
- **Sept. 22** – Technical Track
- **Sept. 29** – Policy Track

Fall 2021 Engineers Seminar (PDH eligible)

Save the date for the Fall 2021 Engineers Seminar, offered in three in-person sessions. To register, click on the session of your choice.

- [Sept. 28 \(East\) — Mohegan Sun Pocono, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne Co.](#)
- [Oct. 14 \(Central\) — PSATS Education Center, Enola, Cumberland Co.](#)
- [Oct. 21 \(Southeast\) — Valley Forge Casino Resort, King of Prussia, Montgomery Co.](#)

More Upcoming PSATS Educational Opportunities (PDH eligible)

[PSATS SEO Precertification Academy – November 1-5, 2021](#)

Are any of your employees looking to become sewage enforcement officers (SEOs)? The PSATS SEO Precertification Academy is designed to teach the basic skills prospective SEOs need to know to work for a local agency. Whether you work for a municipality in need of a good SEO or are considering the SEO field as a career, you will benefit from attending the academy. Not only is it a prerequisite to taking the commonwealth's SEO certification exam but it also prepares attendees to enter the multi-faceted world of local agency sewage enforcement.

[The PSATS Zoning Academy – December 7-9, 2021](#)

The new PSATS Zoning Academy, which will be held **December 7-9** at the PSATS Education Center in Enola, is designed to give attendees a foundational understanding of all important aspects of zoning in Pennsylvania. It will include small-group and individualized exercises and post-academy assessments and will leave attendees well-prepared for the Certified Zoning Officials exam.

Topics to be addressed include:

- Legal foundations and framework of zoning
- Overview of key elements of the Municipalities Planning Code
- Review of important zoning terminology and elements
- Permitting process
- Use regulations and zoning districts
- Enforcement
- Zoning hearing boards
- New and emerging zoning uses

This will also be a great refresher for seasoned zoning officials and a good start for those looking to get into the zoning field. Watch your email and this newsletter for more details in the coming weeks.

At the conclusion of the PSATS Zoning Academy, attendees who want to join the Pennsylvania Association of Zoning Officials (PAAZO) may take the Certified Zoning Official examination for an additional \$75 fee. This prestigious designation is currently held by fewer than 200 people statewide.

Registration fees:

- \$249 for members (*academy only*)
- \$299 for non-members (*academy only*)
- \$75 additional fee to take the CZO exam (*includes one-year PAAZO membership, a savings of \$50*)

To register for the PSATS Zoning Academy, click [here](#).

[Best Practices for 'Quality of Life' Enforcement – 9/8 Webinar \(1 CLE\)](#)

This session will cover a variety of common "quality of life" issues for townships, including

managing short-term rentals, fireworks, and numerous property maintenance challenges. This webinar will leave you with best practices to better position your township to be proactive on these issues.

[Overtime and Other Employee Pay Issues – 9/15 Webinar](#)

This webinar will cover a variety of employee pay-related issues, including which of your township employees are eligible for overtime pay, when employees must be paid for on-the-clock and off-the-clock work, how to calculate overtime pay, and the differences between state and federal laws governing overtime pay.

[Webinar: Know Before You Dig: Geophysics 101 For Municipalities – 9/22/21](#)

Municipalities often need to know what is underground or underwater before building a new road, repairing or mapping utility lines, constructing a new building, or determining the extent of a sinkhole, to name a few examples. Geophysics, the earth-science equivalent of medical radiology, can help save municipalities time and money — as well as maximize safety and minimize liability — by detecting what's beneath the surface before construction or repairs begin. This process uses safe, cost-effective methods and emerging technologies to identify subsurface features and infrastructure (*utilities, unknown targets, etc.*) to help municipalities use their resources most wisely. This presentation will provide you with a better understanding of beneficial applications for municipalities through real-life project examples and allow you to learn the benefits of using geophysics before a shovel ever hits the ground.

[2021 PSATS HR & Labor Management Institute – 9/23-9/24/21](#)

This 1½-day class is a must-attend for anyone who has responsibility for HR and personnel management in their township.

[Webinar: Hot Topics In Planning: Storefront Vacancies, Recovery, & Multifamily Impacts – 10/13/21](#)

In this webinar, representatives of the Montgomery County Planning Commission will cover several new and emerging areas in the planning world and their efforts to address them. They will review the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on commercial environments and how those impacts might continue. They will also share suggestions on what municipalities and developers are doing or could do in the future to address the pandemic impacts on their commercial areas. In addition, they will address the uptick in the number of multifamily residential developments that have been proposed or are in development and review new research on the impacts of multifamily housing and how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts this residential segment.

[Webinar: How Capital Improvement Plans Position You To Maximize ROE And Reduce Costs – 10/27/21](#)

With a capital improvement plan, municipalities can take the guesswork out of infrastructure investment, identify their highest priority needs, and ensure they have the funds in place for repair and replacement before failure or regulatory action puts them at risk. Capital improvement plans are also a valuable tool for obtaining grants and loans. As Washington considers a major infrastructure funding bill, now is the time to get your capital improvement plan in place. Find out how in this webinar.

[Webinar: Efficiencies In Park And Open Space Management – 11/10/21](#)

Designed to emphasize the importance of parks and public open space as essential elements in community infrastructure, this webinar will highlight opportunities for land managers to improve maintenance, operational efficiencies, and sustainability efforts. Participants will also network in small groups to share best practices in resource management and capital planning across various industries that can be applied to public works, facilities, grounds, and public property stewardship.



Comments and suggestions about this monthly newsletter for members of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Engineers can be emailed to James Wheeler at jwheeler@psats.org.



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

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