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February 7, 2022

Latest News

Final Wolf Budget Address Live Tomorrow

Unlike last year when Governor Tom Wolf chose to deliver a video budget address due to COVID-19 concerns, the governor is scheduled to return to the House chamber to speak in person beginning at 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, February 8.

The address marks the start of the 2022-23 budget season. It will be followed by legislative hearings that take deeper, agency-level dives into areas of his budget proposal followed by negotiations that many expect – since it is an election year for lawmakers – will culminate in a final product well before the June 30 deadline.

Among other things, Wolf is expected to increase funding for roads and bridges by restoring more of the Motor License Fund by reducing the reimbursement of state police for highway safety. With a surplus approaching \$2 Billion, it should be a natural fit for the general fund to be the source of revenue for this important public safety funding.

Legislative Redistricting Commission Approves State House, Senate Maps

On Friday, the 2021 Pennsylvania Legislative Reapportionment approved the Final Reapportionment Plan for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Pennsylvania Senate. [Click here](#) to view the final maps. Appeals must be filed with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court by March 6.

DCNR Grant Funding Available for ATV, Snowmobile Trails

The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Bureau of Recreation and Conservation is now accepting grant applications for projects

proposing land acquisition, planning, development, rehabilitation, maintenance, equipment purchase, or educational programs for ATV or snowmobile trails and facilities. Applications are due **March 31**.

To learn more, [click here](#) or contact the department's grants customer service center at (800) 326-7734, DCNR-Grants@pa.gov. Bureau staff are available to assist applicants, and their contact information is [available here](#).

Reminder: Minimum Training Requirements for New CDL Drivers

Beginning today, all persons who apply to obtain their first CDL Class A or Class B license (*or who applies for an upgrade to a higher class of CDL, or an S, P, or H endorsement for the first time*) must take and successfully complete entry-level driver training course from a registered training provider before PennDOT can issue them a CDL license. More details on this new requirement can be found [HERE](#).

The entry-level driver training regulations are not retroactive and do not apply to individuals holding a current CDL license. However, if they possess a commercial drivers learners permit (CLP) and it expires before they obtain their CDL license, they will need to also complete this entry-level driver training before being issued their CDL.

While this does not impact CDL employers directly, it may temporarily reduce the availability of entry-level drivers. Townships that have in the past used their existing CDL employees to "train" their new hire can no longer rely on this practice unless the township becomes a registered training provider. The current list of registered training providers is available at tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov by scrolling down past the FAQ list.

COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations Slow for Third Week in a Row

New case rates of COVID-19 dropped for the third week in a row to 50,789, or a 34% drop compared to the prior week. The commonwealth dropped to 45th in cases per 100,000 nationally, with Alaska, Tennessee, and Mississippi now in the top three. As of February 2, cases nationally were down 53.1% from the peak on January 15.

For the third week in a row, the [number of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Pennsylvania](#) decreased from 5,084 to 3,794, a 25% decrease. 618 patients are in the ICU, a decrease from the previous week's 824. Total deaths in Pennsylvania have reached 41,538 with 990 new deaths reported, a decrease compared to the previous week.

Pennsylvania's statewide percent-positivity rate dropped for the third week in a row from 25.4% to 18.4%. 18 counties have a rate of 10% to less than 20% (*compared to four last week*); 45 counties have a rate of at least 20% but less than 30% (*compared to 27 last week*), and four counties have a rate of more than 30% this week (*compared to 36 last week*.) [Click here](#) for more county-specific information.

Today in History....

On February 7, 1804, John Deere was born. In 1837, the blacksmith and manufacturer launched the Deere & Company in Moline, Illinois after developing a steel plow precisely designed to cut through the prairie clay soils. The green tractors came later.....

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