



IN THIS ISSUE

**Co-Sponsor Memos
PA Bulletin
In the News**

**Bill Actions
Upcoming Events**

**Committee Stories
Session Schedule**

Co-Sponsor Memos

- N** [HCO1492](#) [Galloway, John](#) Adds offenses for homicide and aggravated assault by vehicle while driving under the influence.
- N** [HCO1497](#) [Evankovich, Eli](#) Ensures that funds for the Medical Assistance Transportation program (MATP) are available for those who need the assistance the most.
- N** [HCO1498](#) [Marshall, Jim](#) Designates a bridge carrying State Route 588 over Interstate 376, Chippewa Township, Beaver County, as the TFC Blake T. Coble Memorial Bridge.
- N** [HCO1543](#) [Emrick, Joe](#) Rectifies inconsistencies between Pennsylvania and New Jersey law relating to the operation and oversight of the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission.
- N** [HCO1548](#) [Keller, Mark](#) Affords organized motorcycle processions many of the same rights that funeral processions currently receive.
- N** [SCO 711](#) [Rafferty, John](#) Creates a Distracted Driving Awareness Plate for passenger cars and trucks to help advance public education and outreach on the dangers posed by distracted driving.
- N** [SCO 714](#) [Aument, Ryan](#) Establishes the Pennsylvania Veterans' Monuments and Memorial Trust Fund (formerly the Pennsylvania Veterans' Memorial Trust Fund) to be administered by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA).
- N** [SCO 715](#) [Killion, Thomas](#) Builds upon the Commonwealth's successful use of Public Private Partnerships (P3s) for transportation infrastructure projects and authorizes the expanded use of P3's for other public infrastructure initiatives.
- N** [SCO 716](#) [Folmer, Mike](#) Amends the Prevailing Wage Act to update the term "maintenance" to include work associated with road repairs such as guide rails, curbs, pipes, line painting, etc.

Bill Actions

- N** [HB 691](#) [Cruz, Angel](#) (PN 742) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in rules of the road in general, providing for removal of vehicles in a city of the first class (Philadelphia) by requiring a towing and storage agent to take digital photographs clearly demonstrating the license plate, violation, and posted sign before removing the vehicle. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-02-17 H Filed
03-03-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House

Transportation

N [HB 720](#) [Farry, Frank](#)

(PN 776) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles) to add a section relating to railroad trains not to block crossings and adds a minimum fine of \$1,000 with imprisonment between 30 days and six months for a sixth subsequent conviction of such an offense. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-03-17 H Filed
03-06-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HB 723](#) [Hanna, Mike](#)

(PN 789) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in enforcement, granting authority to individuals appointed and commissioned by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to preserve order in state parks or state forests to enforce those provisions of this title which designate violations as summary offenses of operation of an all-terrain vehicle even if the violation occurs outside of State park and State forest lands. The authority to enforce those provisions includes the power to stop vehicles suspected of summary offenses, to issue citations for summary offenses and, if a vehicle is stopped for a suspected summary offense, to make arrests where evidence appears of additional offenses designated as misdemeanors or felonies. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HB 725](#) [Hanna, Mike](#)

(PN 791) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in fees, adding that the fee for issuance of a certificate of title to a dealer for purposes of resale shall be \$36.25 and the fee for recording or changing the amount of security interest on a certificate of title being issued to a dealer for purposes of resale shall be \$14. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HB 731](#) [Longietti, Mark](#)

(PN 797) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in registration of vehicles, adding language waiving the Department of Transportation fee to acquire a license plate designating a Purple Heart award recipient. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HB 732](#) [Longietti, Mark](#)

(PN 798) Amends the Rail Freight Preservation and Improvement Act further providing for the Rail Freight Advisory Committee by increasing its membership to 29 members. The areas from which the additional five members will be drawn are laid out in the bill. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HB 737](#) [Longietti, Mark](#)

(PN 803) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in size, weight and load, further providing for restrictions on use of highways and bridges by requiring the department to publish by January 1,

2018, a revised schedule of bonding amounts based on increased or decreased maintenance costs and at least every three years thereafter. Additionally, the legislation requires department regulations to be updated by January 1, 2018, to reflect a rebuttable presumption in favor of the municipality and against the over-posted-weight permittee for damage sustained to posted highways used by such permittee.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

 [HB 741](#) [Stephens, Todd](#)

(PN 807) Amends Titles 18 (Crimes and Offenses) and 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure), in other offenses, further providing for drug trafficking sentencing and penalties; in sentencing authority, further providing for sentencing and penalties for trafficking drugs to minors and for drug free zones, further providing for sentences for offenses committed on public transportation, for sentences for offenses against elderly persons, for sentences for offenses against infant persons and for sentences for offenses committed while impersonating a law enforcement officer. The bill provides for application of mandatory minimum sentences for certain offenses. Also restores mandatory minimum sentencing provisions relating to violent crimes committed with firearms. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Judiciary
03-14-17 H Meeting set for 10:00 a.m., Room 140 Main Capitol, House Judiciary -- House Judiciary

 [HB 744](#) [Cruz, Angel](#)

(PN 810) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles) adding language requiring every school bus to have a video monitoring system by July 1, 2019. The system shall include an internal camera positioned so that every seat is within the camera's field of vision and either an internal camera positioned outward so the road ahead is within the camera's field of vision or an external camera. Also requires the Department of Transportation to adopt regulations implementing this requirement. Effective immediately.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

 [HB 745](#) [Cruz, Angel](#)

(PN 811) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles) adding language providing for the suspension of an individual's vehicle registration for failing to respond to a citation; failing to pay any fine, costs or restitution or defaulting in the payment of any fine, costs or restitution imposed by an issuing authority or court within Pennsylvania or any jurisdiction with whom the Department of Transportation has an enforcement agreement. Effective in 180 days.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

 [HB 749](#) [Cruz, Angel](#)

(PN 815) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles) prohibiting the operation of a vehicle while holding or attending to an animal on the driver's lap, or allowing an animal to be in the driver's

immediate area, which interferes with the driver's control over the driving mechanism of the vehicle. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HB 783](#) [Nesbit, Tedd](#)

(PN 858) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in certificate of title and security interests, further providing for transfer of ownership of vehicles used for human habitation by exempting homes which have not been previously titled in Pennsylvania from the tax certification requirement. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-08-17 H Filed
03-09-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HB 811](#) [Cox, Jim](#)

Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in inspection of vehicles, further providing for requirement for periodic inspection of vehicles.

Bill History:

03-09-17 H Filed
03-10-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [HR 124](#) [Longietti, Mark](#)

(PN 780) Resolution memorializing the Congress of the United State to return orphan transportation earmarks to the states.

Bill History:

03-06-17 H Filed
03-07-17 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Transportation

N [SB 457](#) [Brewster, Jim](#)

(PN 483) Amends Titles 53 (Municipalities Generally) and 75 (Vehicles), in Title 53 in employees, establishing the Municipal Police Recruitment and Retention Program and establishing the Municipal Police Recruitment and Retention Program Fund; and, in Title 75 in penalties and disposition of fines, providing for law enforcement enhancement surcharge of \$10. Effective in 60 days.

Bill History:

03-03-17 S Filed
03-03-17 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Law and Justice

Committee Stories

House Appropriations Committee budget hearing with Budget Secretary (BH)

3/9/17, 10:00 a.m., 140 Main Capitol

By Aaron Rider and Matt Hess, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee held a budget hearing with [Randy Albright](#), Pennsylvania Secretary of the Budget, to discuss the proposed budget plan for fiscal year 2017-18.

Chairman Saylor began by "applauding" Sec. Albright and the executive branch for coming up with a budget proposal designed to reduce the state's debt burden by \$2 billion, including a reduction of \$325 million in the public improvement category and \$175 million in the transportation assistance category. He asked if this \$500 million estimate is still current. Yes, answered Sec. Albright. "What'd we like to do," he said, is combine debt borrowing authority for different fiscal years. Chairman Saylor inquired when that authority needs to be in place to avoid being late on making payments. By June 30th, answered Albright. Chairman Saylor said that the House plans to move a relevant bill soon.

Rep. Dunbar announced that he had a number "quick Q and A's" for Sec. Albright. He named a series of proposals, and asked if they were cuts, savings or efficiencies, or "something else."

- \$566 million in Department of Human Services (DHS) costs - "Cuts and efficiencies, if you will," said Sec. Albright
- \$144 million in consolidation of DHS, Department of Health, and "criminal justice" - Sec. Albright said these were cuts.
- \$47.5 million from local municipality charges for using state police services - "They are cuts that are made possible by assessing a fee on local municipalities," answered Sec. Albright.
- \$50 million for "people transportation" - "That is a cut," said Sec. Albright
- \$110 million for paying grants from bond proceeds - Sec. Albright described this as a cut for the next three fiscal years.
- \$200 million from the "lease lease-back" of the Farm Show - Sec. Albright termed this a "revenue initiative."
- \$145 million for prior-year lapses - "Those are cuts," answered Sec. Albright.
- \$106 million in tax credits and exemptions - "Those are cuts," said Sec. Albright.

"Are any of those going to be permanent," asked Rep. Dunbar. "That's a conversation we want to have with the General Assembly," replied Sec. Albright, who clarified that the cuts are now proposed only for the 2017-18 budget.

Following these Q and A's, Rep. Dunbar stated, "What it really comes down to" is that the legislature wants some "truth in advertising" from the governor. In his opinion, a large number of the governor's proposed \$2 billion in cuts would be instead new revenues, new fees, offloads to other funds, or one-time revenue sources, and so on. Constituents, he said, will be displeased with legislators who promise \$2 billion in savings only to provide far less. Rep. Dunbar called the governor's budget address a "good starting point," and commended him for using the word "we" so often in it, but said, "We have to be honest with each other about" what is in the budget, what is a cut, what is a saving, and so on.

Chairman Markosek inquired if the governor's proposal for early retirements for some state workers will help or hurt Pennsylvania's debt burden. Sec. Albright opined that early retirement incentives for those within the State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) in conjunction with lessened benefits for new employees due to Act 120 of 2010 will help provide "long-term savings" and ultimate relief. However, he said, "We're not trying to be overly prescriptive." Chairman Markosek replied, "This is all pretty much a fluid situation, and a work in progress in some ways, but we look forward to working with you."

Rep. O'Brien said he was pleased to see funds for education in the governor's budget proposal, especially \$75 million for pre-K education. "I love those little guys," he said. He asked what that \$75 million will be supporting. Sec. Albright said it will go towards providing 8,400 additional seats for children to use pre-K. He added that this will help put more families on a "trajectory of success."

"I'd like to talk a little bit about the Institutional Assistance Grants (IAG)," said Rep. Peifer. He expressed the concern of private schools who told him they believe that a cut of half or more of that program's funding may severely harm their ability to accept need-based students, and inquired how the budget will replace the dollars in question. "Many of the things we recommend in the budgets may be things we wish we didn't have to do," began Sec. Albright. "The IAG program is one we want to maintain," he went on, "And the simple answer is we want to take that program and the roughly \$25.8 million that we're currently providing and make it a matching grant program." Rep. Peifer responded, "But aren't they doing that now?" He added, "Really, they're probably matching that money now already because they're performing some kind of match through a scholarship program. I don't understand how that matching program would work." Sec. Albright said he "couldn't be more transparent than that." To receive the state funds, he explained, the institutions will simply have to provide a matching dollar of their own for each dollar they receive from the state. Rep. Peifer queried if any corporations are available to help provide those matching dollars, or if the schools will "just have to dig deeper." Rep. Albright replied, "We aren't prescriptive about how the private institution will go out and find that matching aid." He added, "All we're saying is that they need to be partners with us." Rep. Peifer opined that many "overachieving" children in his areas may be restricted in their access to "great schools" by this cut. He said he respects that but does not necessarily agree with the idea.

Rep. Daley asked Sec. Albright if he sees a value in installing performance metrics for the evaluation of tax credits. Sec. Albright described tax credits on behalf of private businesses and said that every dollar spent as a tax credit

should receive the same scrutiny as a General Fund expenditure. He said they have identified \$195 million in tax credits that could be scrutinized.

Regarding the Rainy Day Fund, Rep. Daley requested Sec. Albright to explain its importance and stressed that Pennsylvania is ranked 50th out of 50 states in the level of its Rainy Day Fund. Sec. Albright affirmed that Pennsylvania's current Rainy Day Fund level of \$245,000 is dangerously and exceptionally low, and said the current budget, if properly implemented, would replenish that fund to \$500,000 within five years, improving Pennsylvania's status with bond agencies. Rep. Daley asked if taxpayers understand the importance of the issue. Sec. Albright opined that anyone who is familiar with daily financial planning can understand it.

Referring to proposal by Gov. Wolf to use bonds for three years of certain funding, Rep. Greiner inquired if handling program needs through the large-scale use of bonds, instead of using revenue, is "prudent fiscal management. "To make ends meet," began Sec. Albright, the commonwealth must do some things it would not do in a stronger position, and bond issuance is one such item. He said that this issuance, if properly "calibrated," is a prudent short-term measure to fund obligations while preventing middle-class tax increases. Rep. Greiner replied with the opinion that these measures may hurt Pennsylvania's credit rating with bond-rating agencies, and inquired if those agencies have met with Sec. Albright and the administration. Sec. Albright said that he will be meeting with S&P representatives next week.

Rep. Greiner lastly said he struggled with the concept behind the lease-leaseback Farm Show arrangement, of "using a credit card on the one hand" and using debt to pay off obligations with the other hand. "Are we gonna do with this the Capitol Building next year," he asked rhetorically. Sec. Albright stated that the arrangement is a "strategic opportunity" that will work out if the governor and legislature work together to create a balanced long-term budget.

Rep. Dean uttered she was "struck" by the fact that the governor's budget did not fully include a request by the Office of Attorney General (OAG) for an additional \$17 million to be directed towards fighting the opioid epidemic, and asked if Sec. Albright is working to fund the 44 positions proposed by OAG to "go into this important work." Sec. Albright replied, "The simple answer is yes," and he described OAG as a revenue-generator for the commonwealth.

Rep. Dean declared that it makes sense to tax Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction for the purpose of paying off SERS debt. She asked if the governor agrees. Sec. Albright replied that the governor wants to work with the state legislature to find a sensible answer to the debt question.

Rep. Boback wondered if there are other tax credit programs with commitments for future years, like a neighborhood assistance credit and a film credit. "No," replied Sec. Albright, who also reiterated, "We don't want to be overly prescriptive," in regard to deciding which tax credits are more important than others.

Rep. Boback queried if the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) applies to businesses who contribute to a non-profit entity like a school. "Yes, that's correct," answered Sec. Albright. Rep. Boback then asked if a study has ever been done to establish how much money is "doing that." Sec. Albright opined in reply, "I think we could do a better job with that program to evaluate what return that has on the commonwealth's investment."

Rep. Boback asked if film tax credits can be sold. Sec. Albright said they are salable. "Why would we allow someone to take our tax credit, which is money that would have come to the commonwealth, but sell it to somewhere else," asked Rep. Boback. The beneficiary of the tax credit may not have the tax liability and so might have to sell the credit to get the full benefit, explained Sec. Albright, who reaffirmed his opinion that performance metrics are necessary to evaluate tax credit performance. Rep. Boback asked if a California resident who wants to film in Philadelphia would be allowed by state law to receive a tax credit. "Yes," answered Sec. Albright, who said that "huge economic multipliers" may occur as a result of that kind of tax credit. "Not to repeat myself further," he added, "But clear metrics could do a better job of evaluating those trade-offs." Rep. Boback said she would hate to see someone from outside Pennsylvania receive such a tax credit if there is a clear trade-off against the state.

Rep. Krueger-Braneky stated that Pennsylvania has a constitutional obligation to provide clean air and clean water. Along that line, she asked if a new fee package will be passed to help fund the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which, she said, was recently cited by the federal Environmental Protection Agency as not having enough resources to perform basic duties. "We're hopeful" that the fee package will pass, answered Sec. Albright,

adding, "The budget that we've put forward is a responsible one for our environment." Rep. Krueger-Braneky asked what will happen if the fee does not become law. Sec. Albright said that other conversations would then have to take place.

Rep. Krueger-Braneky then inquired about funding for ensuring environmental protection around pipelines that are being constructed. Sec. Albright replied that energy is an important part of Pennsylvania's budget future and that funding will indeed be necessary for balancing that with environmental protection for local communities. "We are now an energy state whether we like it or not," he said.

Rep. Santora asked if there are metrics in place to evaluate tax credits. "No," said Sec. Albright, "And, as a matter of fact, what we'd like to do is work with the General Assembly to do that." Rep. Santora asked if the money taken from these programs is an "increase in revenue" rather than a "cut." Sec. Albright said he "certainly" did not want to "get into any argument over semantics," but that taxpayers will be "off the hook" for \$195 million.

Regarding the EITC program, Rep. Santora asked how many millions are committed for two years. "I don't know off the top of my head, but I will provide that to you," answered Sec. Albright. Rep. Santora asked if Sec. Albright can look into how much of an economic impact there is upon public schools from the use of the EITC program. Sec. Albright agreed that this was important.

Rep. Santora opined that Pennsylvania does not capitalize enough on real estate sales of state property and asked if this subject was a part of the McKinsey Report. Sec. Albright said it was, and stated that the budget does propose to revise state property sales. Rep. Santora asked the people who want to buy the properties can be put "on the line" to maintain them if Pennsylvania changes the "way we do business." Sec. Albright responded, "We want to work with you." Rep. Santora replied, "I feel like the low-hanging fruit from what I'm hearing is EITC. I think it's a big mistake."

Rep. Kim asked what exactly the role was of McKinsey & Company in helping with the composition of the budget. Sec. Albright said that their role was largely one of "validation." They also, he said, compared certain Pennsylvania programs to ones in other states, and found "some outliers" as they did this.

Rep. Kim then stated that there will still be a "\$600 million hole" in next year's budget, and asked how Sec. Albright perceived this in relation to other budgets. Sec. Albright stated that "significant progress" has been made towards getting Pennsylvania's "fiscal house in order." He added that he has been working in the budget arena for over 30 years, and that balancing the budget has been an ignored priority for too long. Rep. Kim queried if the \$2 billion in debt will be "safely gone" as proposed by the budget. Sec. Albright said it will be if the budget is properly and fully implemented.

In relation to complement, Rep. Kampf said that the budget proposal has "significantly more" authorized positions. Sec. Albright said that there are currently about 74,000 filled positions but every agency will need to maintain their complement where it is now. To some extent, he said, the executive branch wants to use attrition to reduce complement numbers and use agency consolidation where appropriate for managing down the number of employees and deliver services more efficiently. Regarding the filling of positions in the Department of Corrections (DOC), Rep. Kampf asked if the money will be lapsed forward to reduce spending and if that is in the budget already. Sec. Albright answered affirmatively.

Switching to the subject of "what I'll call a \$340 million tax increase on customized computer services," Rep. Kampf asked Sec. Albright to "talk a little bit for the taxpayers about what that is." Sec. Albright termed this increase as working towards a "Better tax system for the 21st century" that will realize fairness in taxing.

Rep. Donatucci asked about a fee on municipalities that use State Police services, and wondered if the particular targeted fund for the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) will come from the motor licensing fees again if the municipal fee does not pass. Sec. Albright said that the municipal fee initiative will reduce costs from motor licensing, and that not enacting the fee will stop the state from realizing \$53 million in savings.

Rep. Donatucci also inquired about the proposed consolidation of the departments of Human Services, Health, Drug and Alcohol Programs, and Aging into one Department of Health and Human Services, and said it should save more than \$90 million. She asked Sec. Albright to elaborate. He described the proposal as being not just one of "horizontal consolidation" but as also involving "vertical consolidation" to enhance service delivery to Pennsylvanians.

Related to Act 146 waivers and unspent funds in the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Rep. Ortity asked why the funds cannot be lapsed into the next year or put in the Rainy Day Fund. "We can't put them in the Rainy Day Fund without the statutory authority to do that," said Sec. Albright. He said the Office of the Budget would like to "strengthen" the clawbacks so that businesses are accountable to the taxpayers who subsidize them, and that \$4 million worth of clawback funds are earmarked for apprenticeship programs and job re-training initiatives.

Rep. Ortity opined that a lot of these funds are being pushed towards businesses that have failed in their goals. Sec. Albright said "in fairness to Secretary Davin," he has to make very difficult determinations to make in relation to such businesses.

Rep. Briggs applauded the governor's budget proposal for addressing the budget crisis "by investing in education" and in the middle class, stated he supports film tax credits, and said he voted against certain budget proposals by former Gov. Rendell because they did not do enough to support education. He queried if Pennsylvania is changing statutory authorization for tax credits. Sec. Albright replied in the negative. "Taking a step back" to a "broader view," Sec. Albright stated that Gov. Wolf "challenged us" to balance the budget without burdening local school districts or the middle class.

Rep. Quinn stated that the following categories will be included in the newly proposed tax on health insurance premiums: HMOs, PPOs, non-profit hospital and health service plans, and risk-assuming non-licensed insurers. She said she was hearing a "great deal of uncertainty" from insurance-providers about these proposals regarding to who and what will be taxed and when the tax will be implemented. Sec. Albright said he would do his best to "remove uncertainty," and clarified that every category Rep. Quinn mentioned will indeed be taxed. "This is, again, in our view, a matter of tax fairness."

Rep. Quinn said that the insurance-providers are due to share with the state government their new rates by May or June, but that there will probably not be a completed budget by then. "When can they expect to have your language for this," she inquired. Sec. Albright said "we will work with the General Assembly" to have clarifying language on the issue as soon as possible. "But for us to work with you," Rep. Quinn declared, "We need to have in our hands what it is you're proposing." Sec. Albright said his office will share the language as soon as possible, noting it is still being developed and will be shared at the conclusion of the budget hearing process. Rep. Quinn responded, "So it is possible to have that next week?" Sec. Albright said, "I don't want to over-promise and say next week." Rep. Quinn explained that she will soon be holding town hall events and that it is unlikely that any of the affected insurance executives will be able to attend the "little town hall meetings." She said that the whole preceding budget hearing process had been "time for us to work together," and expressed, "I feel I'm going to be going home empty-handed on this subject." Sec. Albright reiterated that the categories defined by Rep. Quinn's original question will be taxable. "You can tell them that." Rep. Quinn asked for the similar language for a water fee proposal. Sec. Albright said the DEP secretary is working directly on that.

Rep. Bullock questioned what impact a minimum wage increase would have on the budget and Pennsylvania families. Sec. Albright said a minimum wage increase would be a "win-win" for the commonwealth and Pennsylvania citizens. "From a pure revenue standpoint we believe an increase effective by July 1, 2017, would generate a net \$95 million in additional revenue for the 17-18 Fiscal Year," he stated. Sec. Albright added that if the wage was increased around 145,000 individuals would no longer have to receive state assistance which would be a net gain of \$50 million for the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Rep. Knowles said the McKinsey report was a "regurgitation of information" that the administration was already aware of and asked why the \$1.8 million report was necessary. Sec. Albright called the McKinsey report a "valuable tool" and explained that report "validated much of the work already in motion and provided norm referencing." Rep. Knowles argued that administration could have done what the McKinsey report did. "It's money that could have been better spent," he stated.

Rep. Keller questioned if the McKinsey report simply "rubber stamped" what the administration was already going to do in terms of the budget. Sec. Albright responded "no" and explained that one recommendation was to eliminate funding for the Penn Veterinary School because it was way out of line with what the rest of the country was doing in terms of funding private institutions.

Rep. Roae said that at the end of the Rendell Administration the state provided \$8.8 billion for education and the last Corbett Administration budget had \$10.1 billion. He questioned if the governor is still going to claim that there were cuts to education spending under the previous administration. Sec. Albright said the way the administration evaluates education spending is on the basis of how much money actually goes into the classroom and argued that the increases under the Corbett Administration went to the pension liability and not in direct services for students. "What matters to parents, what matters to school districts, what makes the difference in performance of our children are the dollars that actually land in the classroom and it's that measure that is the important measure," he stated.

Rep. Grove questioned if benchmarking PACENET dispensing fees to Medicaid fees was a recommendation of the McKinsey report. Sec. Albright said McKinsey was part of the conversation but was mainly driven by the departments. Rep. Grove questioned if the report studied other states that have implemented a similar policy. Sec. Albright indicated that DHS completed a study on the issue and is developing recommendations. "We're planning to complete our recommendations based on that study and will share them publicly when we have a stakeholder meeting on March 23," he stated.

Rep. Grove inquired about conversations with the US Treasury Department regarding the Treasury offset program. Sec. Albright said the conversation is ongoing and there have not been any "stumbling blocks."

Rep. Knowles questioned whose idea was it to contract with McKinsey. Sec. Albright said it was a "shared decision" by the governor in consultation with senior administration staff.

Rep. Kruger-Braneky said the \$100 million increase for basic education, the \$75 million increase for early education and \$25 million increase for special education is a good thing. "As we move forward in this process I hope we can move forward together to ensure all these education investments get realized," she stated. Sec. Albright agreed and emphasized the importance of metrics in analyzing education spending. "We were the only state in the country over a period of almost eight years that had increased test results in every grade level tested every year tested through the end of the Rendell Administration. When we made those deep cuts at the first year of the next administration test scores declined. When we started making investments in the last two years test scores went up. Those metrics speak for themselves about the investments we make in public education," he stated.

Rep. Roae said the Congressional Budget Office conducted a study and found that there would be a loss of 500,000 jobs if the minimum wage was increased to \$10.10 and the Independent Fiscal Office found that it would result in a loss of 29,800 jobs. He questioned if the secretary believes an increase would negatively impact jobs in Pennsylvania. Sec. Albright responded "no" and noted that every contiguous state has increased minimum wage and has not experienced job losses.

Rep. Quinn noted the recent cyber-attack of the Senate Democratic Caucus and questioned what line items address cyber security for the commonwealth. Sec. Albright said it is impossible for him to guarantee that there will not be another cyber-attack. "We think that the technology plans we recommend going forward are responsible and we take that threat very seriously. It is a very important part of our cyber investment program," he stated. "If it is the belief of the General Assembly that more should be done in that we would be happy to work with you to increase that investment," he stated.

Rep. Flynn asked how long low income Pennsylvanians should wait for a minimum wage increase "until our Republican colleagues believe they've earned a raise." Sec. Albright said the governor is proposing a minimum wage increase that would take effect July 1.

Chairman Markosek noted that this was the last formal budget hearing with the administration and thanked all the department secretaries and Chairman Saylor.

Chairman Saylor closed by noting that there were no cuts to education under the last administration. "There was no K-12 education cuts under the last administration and the only cuts that were in education were the federal stimulus money that went away," he stated. "The fact is that neither Republican nor Democratic administrations have cut education."

Chairman Saylor said he hopes that there is a budget long before June 30 but "we'll see how that process works out; I try to be optimistic."

House Appropriations Committee budget hearing with members (BH)*3/9/17, 2:00 p.m., 140 Main Capitol*

By Kimberly Hess, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee held a budget hearing with House members to discuss their budget priorities.

[Rep. Murt](#) urged budgetary support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He called for funding for the Waiting List for Services, totaling 13,420 individuals, and to support individuals who want to stay in their community. Rep. Murt also requested funding for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, for the PA Tourette Syndrome Association in the amount of \$150,000, and for early intervention.

[Rep. Vitali](#) discussed the "chronic underfunding of the Department of Environmental Protection" (DEP), which he argued has compromised the department's ability to protect public health and the environment in Pennsylvania. He urged the committee to consider increased funding for the department as well as to support the department's proposed fee packages.

[Rep. Charlton](#) discussed his concerns surrounding human services and how Pennsylvania provides those services. He relayed the experiences of a constituent receiving services through an institutional setting and has to remain there because waiting lists in the Department of Human Services (DHS) are not adequately funded. He called for DHS to receive its full requested funding.

[Rep. Comitta](#) spoke of her concerns with pipelines and called for oversight of construction, inspection and maintenance of those pipelines. Further, she urged the committee to "properly fund" the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and DEP to that end.

[Rep. Dush](#) reviewed the budget process and called for a forensic audit of each of the commonwealth funds. He further commented that the various agency heads that appeared before the committee during the course of the budget hearings often "appeared to become very aware of the clock and began to blivate" or otherwise eat up time in order to avoid questions they did not want to answer. He urged the chairman to remind these secretaries that they are required to be present and required to answer questions; to do otherwise is cause for being held in contempt. Rep. Dush argued that the executive needs to be compelled to produce complete and accurate information in order to "restore much faith in this body by the electorate."

[Rep. Cephas](#) offered her budget priorities, which she said are driven by principle. She said she will fight for people with low incomes and working families, she will fight for sustainable solutions to move those people along the economic spectrum, she will fight for increased funding for Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) programs like Elm Street and Main Street, and she will fight for investments in education. Rep. Cephas advocated for an increased minimum wage, workforce training and development programs, and an investment in high quality pre-K programs.

In written testimony, [Rep. Watson](#) highlighted recent updates to the child abuse and child welfare laws and called for the focus to shift to the impact of the opioid abuse epidemic's impact on children. She called for passage of [HB 235](#) to establish a task force to examine the issue. Rep. Watson also supported proposed increases in state funding for county child welfare services.

In written testimony, [Rep. Zimmerman](#) spoke about DEP permitting process. He argued that small-business projects and agriculture should not be treated in a similar fashion to large scale development as is currently the case. Further, he said he has been told by DEP staff that they do not have knowledge of agriculture and farming and he argued that people should not work in critical jobs when they do not possess the necessary knowledge. Rep. Zimmerman concluded, "Many of my constituents are at the point where they believe (DEP) is more concerned with revenue and political empowerment than actually keeping our air and water clean. At this point, I am inclined to agree with that sentiment."

In written testimony, [Rep. Thomas](#) offered support for education funding, fighting opioid addiction, providing for economic development, and realigning state government. Regarding education, he urged the committee to restore

cuts to the job training line item and to require reporting by schools in certain areas. Speaking to addiction, Rep. Thomas proposed a plan that requires counties to submit a plan prior to the release of opioid funding, to establish task forces, and to provide quarterly reports. On economic development, he called for the elimination of the Pennsylvania First and Keystone Communities programs and the savings used to increase the infrastructure, manufacturing, and industry partnerships line items. Lastly, Rep. Thomas said the proposed merger of the Departments of Health, Human Services, Aging and Drug and Alcohol Programs "operationally...will be a nightmare." He argued the delivery of services will be fragmented under the new department. He suggested, instead, that the Department of Health should be returned to its pre-1990 level.

Chairman Saylor announced Rep. Pam DeLissio (D-Montgomery) is expected to submit testimony as well.

- 30 -

Senate Appropriations Budget Hearing with Governor's Office (BH)

3/9/17, 1:00 p.m., Hearing Room #1 North Office Building

By Jeff Cox and Andreas Diener, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee held a budget hearing with the Office of the Budget and the Office of Administration (OA).

Chairman Browne said Gov. Tom Wolf's revised budget to fiscal year 2016-17 reflects a \$606 million deficit and reviewed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2017-18. He wanted to know if the administration has any concerns with the revenue projections since the governor proposed his budget in early February. Randy Albright, secretary, Office of the Budget, responded, "No. We are still comfortable relying on the revenue estimates that were the basis of our proposed budget." He added, "As we outlined during the mid-year briefing, one of the disappointing outcomes for the first several months of the fiscal year is that revenues have lagged our original estimates." Sec. Albright said, "At this point our proposed budget is based on a revenue shortfall of about \$640 million compared to our original estimate and that obviously has a recurring impact."

Chairman Browne noted that the 2017-18 budget proposal for revenue capacity includes a proposal for lapsing prior funds. He asked if it is possible to consider in finalizing a balanced budget for 2016-17 by using lapses as recommended for 2017-18. Sec. Albright explained that it depends on how to account for some of those lapsed expenditures. Chairman Browne then discussed some of the revenue capacity increases included in the governor's budget including a severance tax and elimination of some sales and use tax exemptions. He wanted to know if the administration considered the impact of those proposals on current or future economic activity. Sec. Albright responded that they carefully calibrated and chose the recommendations they chose to create what they believe is a fair and structured long-term tax and revenue plan for the commonwealth. Chairman Browne discussed the proper use of long-term borrowing as a means to fulfill obligations and generate cash for short-term expenditures within departments. Sec. Albright commented that what they feel is most important from their vantage point is to calibrate the use of those opportunities to make sure if they are using short-term remedies to balance the 2017-18 budget they are not exceeding one time recurring expenditures. Chairman Browne then discussed the governor's proposal regarding the various business tax credit programs. He commented that the committee has not been able to determine at this point in time what tax credits come under the proposed cap. Sec. Albright commented it is his understanding the information has been provided to the appropriate committees which specifically itemizes about \$390 million of current tax credit obligations. He said that it is from that list that the administration would like to work with the General Assembly to develop program metrics and return on investment analysis. Sec. Albright described the tax credit expenditures as being the same as taxpayer expenditures that are made from the General Fund.

Chairman Hughes commented that the committee has heard from the various cabinet secretaries about changes in health care at the federal level and the impacts it will have on Pennsylvania and the potential those changes have for adding another \$2 billion to the commonwealth's deficit. He asked if anything else has occurred at the federal level that Pennsylvania needs to be concerned about. Sec. Albright responded that the administration is concerned with changes in the Affordable Care Act and its potential impact. He commented that "all is conjecture at this point." Sec. Albright explained that any changes "won't hit until 2020." Chairman Hughes wanted to know if there are any other decisions by the Trump Administration that have a direct impact on Pennsylvania. Sec. Albright responded, "Right now, no." He noted Gov. Wolf and senior staff has already been in Washington to meet with the members of Pennsylvania congressional delegation and Trump Administration officials.

Sen. Folmer, chairman of the State Government Committee, asked about the Office of Administration developing a shared services model for human resources/IT services. He wanted to know about the model and the plan to implement it. Sharon Minnich, secretary of the Office of Administration (OA), described OA as a "service organization" that serves all of the other agencies. She explained that the HR/IT consolidation shared services that OA has been working on is something they have been working on for more than 20 years in Pennsylvania. According to Sec. Minnich, on the IT side OA has been consolidating data centers, email networks, and IT organizations. She added they have also been able to create an HR shared services for all of the employees of the Commonwealth. Sec. Minnich indicated the goal is to drive down costs and improve services. Chairman Folmer asked about OA's goals relating to records retention and record maintenance. Sec. Minnich explained that OA concentrates on training agencies and what is required from a legal standpoint to make sure the agencies are retaining and maintaining the records properly. She added that they are looking at what technology is available for retaining and maintains records electronically. Chairman Folmer wanted to know what other efforts OA has made to improve bringing Pennsylvania further into the digital age. Sec. Minnich explained that it is something OA continues to work on. She provided an overview of OA's efforts in this regard.

Sen. Vogel wanted to know about the proposal to lease back the farm show complex. He wanted to know how the Office of the Budget determined that the proposal would generate \$200 million. Sec. Albright explained that it was based on the strategic investments that have made in the facility. He pointed out that about \$150 million has been invested over the past 15 years in improvements and \$200 million is "probably a good starting point" to generate the one-time transaction. Sec. Albright explained that the proposal would be competitively bid and the market would determine the value and rate of return for the commonwealth. Sen. Vogel asked if there have been any inquiries on the proposal. Sec. Albright responded that there have been no official inquiries but there has been "some word or mouth" interest. Sen. Vogel asked what the payment would be by the commonwealth under a lease. Sec. Albright responded that they anticipate a little less than \$12 million in an annual lease payment over a 29-year period. Sen. Vogel asked if the Wolf Administration believes the Farm Show Commission has the ability to enter into this agreement without legislative authority to do so. Sec. Albright responded, "Yes we do."

Sen. Vogel noted the proposed budget includes the dropping of \$30 million in state funding for the private University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine (PennVet). Sec. Albright explained that it was something "we wished we did not have to do." He further explained that they looked at other states and found Pennsylvania was "a significant outlier." According to Sec. Albright, no other state provides funding in the magnitude of \$30 million. He noted the commonwealth is helping with a \$65 million capital project at the school. Sen. Vogel asked if there have been any discussions with private companies to help contribute to the school. Sec. Albright responded that the proposal is starting point for conversation and he expressed willingness to discuss funding alternatives.

Sen. Langerholc discussed the heroin/opioid crisis in Pennsylvania. He noted the governor is proposing to spend \$13.4 million through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to combat the epidemic. Sen. Langerholc wanted to know if the money will be utilized for law enforcement or for prevention and treatment. Sec. Albright explained that \$10 million is for a competitive grant program for local providers throughout the commonwealth and the remainder is for initiatives to create specialty drug courts. Noting St. Francis University is in his district, Sen. Langerholc wanted to know the rationale behind the reduction in institution assistance grants. Sec. Albright responded that when looking at how Pennsylvania structures its scholarship aid program and looking at other states, they found that most other states have a matching grant program where if a grant is being provided to a private institution with state tax dollars the institution has to provide some matching assistance. He further explained the proposal would not reduce the current \$28.5 million appropriation but expects from this point forward that on a dollar for dollar basis the receiving institution will come up from their resources a match to the state tax dollar resource. Sen. Langerholc commented that many seniors in his district are concerned with the proposed merger of the four health agencies including the Department of Aging and its impact on the State Lottery. He asked if the funding from the State Lottery will continue to be used exclusively for senior programs. Sec. Albright replied, "Unequivocally, yes."

Sen. Baker asked about the McKinsey Report executed by the Office of the Budget. She commented that it her understanding the contract was for \$1.8 million to provide recommendations for this year's budget. According to Sen. Baker, the report dedicates seven pages to the consolidation of the four state agencies. She asked where the money came from for the report to pay for the contract, when the company was engaged, and how they were selected. Sec. Albright responded that the Office of the Budget engaged them in November and the funds came from the Office of the Budget's budget. He said the company was chosen based on the work it did in other states. Sen. Baker asked if McKinsey will be used to help with the transformation that would occur with the proposed merger of the four agencies

and the lack of specificity about the proposed merger. Sec. Albright explained the rationale behind the hiring of McKinsey and the report. Sen. Baker, who chairs the Health and Human Services Committee, reported that her committee will be conducting hearings on the proposed consolidation. She spoke of the need for additional information on the proposal. Sen. Baker asked if there are any plans to engage McKinsey in the future regarding the proposal. Sec. Albright responded that there are no plans in that regard.

Sen. Schwank wanted to know who is "leading the charge" in terms of looking at the consolidation. Sec. Albright responded that it is a senior staff engagement process, including the policy secretary, the governor and his office and his senior staff. He described it as a "shared initiative." Sec. Albright also spoke of working with the General Assembly and stakeholder groups on the proposal. Sen. Schwank asked that the General Assembly be kept informed. Sec. Albright responded, "Certainly, that is our commitment." Sen. Schwank wanted to know what some of the things that have been done in the past regarding budgets that have put Pennsylvania in its current fiscal situation. Sec. Albright pointed at not fully funding the commonwealth's pension funds.

Sen. Argall discussed Gov. Wolf's opposition to creating more Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ) or expanding the City Revitalization and Improvement Zones (CRIZ) program. He reported Gov. Wolf signed the legislation to expand the KOZ program last year. Sen. Argall wanted to know how the governor plans to help local communities. According to Sec. Albright, the governor views KOZs and CRIZs as a "patchwork solution" and he believes in a more comprehensive approach. He added that the governor believes a piecemeal approach is not appropriate. Sen. Argall pointed out the governor was able to find \$30 million for the port in Philadelphia. He wanted to know why smaller towns are not allowed to utilize KOZs and CRIZs. Sec. Albright reiterated Gov. Wolf's belief in a more comprehensive approach. He added the administration would be happy to discuss the investment in the Philadelphia port. Sec. Albright said that there is an array of opportunities to help communities such as the third class cities. Sen. Argall asked if \$30 million is the largest state investment ever made for one project. Sec. Albright responded that the investment in the cracker plant in western Pennsylvania will be the largest investment.

Sen. Killion asked about the governor's early retirement proposal and its impact. Sec. Albright explained that about 2,000 employees are eligible and about 1,000 will take advantage of it. He added that about 80 percent of them would need to be replaced if they chose the early retirement.

Sen. Eichelberger asked about the impact of the early retirement proposal on the State Police and the Department of Corrections (DOC). Sec. Albright explained that since it creates "a 30 and out" window it essentially excludes the State Police and DOC employees. Sen. Eichelberger then asked about the proposal to charge municipalities \$25 per person for State Police services. He expressed concern that it could have a reverse impact. Sec. Albright responded that the administration is willing to discuss other ways to fund the State Police for local services. He noted that the State Police reports the current cost to the agency is \$234 per person. Sec. Albright added that the current proposal generates \$63 million.

Sen. Eichelberger reported that DOC officers and the state troopers' union contracts expire this year. He wanted to know what the administration is going to ask from the unions as far as any reciprocal payments on health insurance. Sec. Minnich explained that health care is one of things they are going to ask about. Sen. Eichelberger wanted to know if the issue of DOC "walk-in times" is on the table. Sec. Minnich said that it has been part of the collective bargaining contracts in the past and it is standard in collective bargaining agreements. Sen. Eichelberger spoke about the continuing problem with overtime at DOC and Sec. Wetzel has said the department is making progress on the issue. Sec. Albright responded that the Wolf Administration believes the department is on course to reduce costs. Sen. Eichelberger then discussed the need for skilled labor yet the budget proposal flat funds vocational technical schools. Sec. Albright explained how Education Secretary Rivera is working with school districts and vocational technical schools on the issue of training a skilled workforce.

Sen. Scavello asked about the increase in costs to the system regarding union contracts, which he asserted would be in the \$50 million range. Sec. Albright said he would provide additional information, to which Sen. Scavello said it seems the governor has not accounted for the increase. Sec. Minnich answered OA is only responsible for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) contract in that regard. Sen. Scavello continued, questioning whether portions of the \$25 per capita State Police fee would go back to municipalities. Sec. Albright maintained the revenue does not. Moving to the unemployment compensation (UC) call centers, discussions determined that 500 employees were furloughed, some retired, and more than 80 have been placed. Next, Sen. Scavello voiced concern with using one-time fixes to fund operational costs, to which Sec. Albright agreed. Lastly, Sen. Scavello mentioned a possible gaming expansion and how OA feels the state should approach the issue. Sec.

Albright specifically mentioned internet gaming as a start and also recommended a continuing conversation on the tax rate. He said he looks forward to working with the General Assembly to generate revenue using the expansion.

Sen. Wagner referred to a previously mentioned "handshake agreement" during last year's budget proceedings. Sec. Albright explained it was not a concrete agreement but was determined that gaming expansion would be considered in the near future to help close the structural deficit. Sen. Wagner then moved to a report issued by the Pennsylvania Taxpayer Caucus which outlined \$3 billion in potential savings measures, and asked why OA has not acknowledged the analysis. He opined the report is highly valuable and questioned whether OA is doing enough to work with legislators to save taxpayer dollars. He specifically questioned the choice to spend \$1.8 million on the McKinsey report while the caucus report was done at no cost. Sec. Albright said the McKinsey report was an "invaluable tool" in putting forth a responsible plan for a balanced and savings based budget, but clarified the administration seeks to engage and consider productive proposals from legislators. Sen. Wagner requested that OA initiate more contact with legislators for effective costs savings, saying "we are very busy."

Sen. Street thanked OA for their efforts with the budget, and inquired as to efforts to close the "Delaware loophole" and change the Corporate Net Income Tax. Sec. Albright said a productive tax climate is a top priority, including the phase out of the Delaware loophole and combined reporting reform to address the budget shortfall. On GO-TIME initiatives, he said \$156 million has already been saved with a projected savings of \$500 million by 2020.

Sen. Yaw requested information on the new cabinet level lead position on drug treatment. Sec. Albright said the consolidation structure is "a work in progress," but suggested the focus on drug issues and treatment will remain a high priority. Sen. Yaw voiced issue with eliminating the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) if it is supposed to be a top priority. Sec. Albright responded the consolidation would integrate service delivery and improve treatment while maintaining a focus on the issue. He added that a large portion of treatment services, including Centers of Excellence (COE), are already under the Department of Human Services' (DHS) purview to utilize Medicaid funding. Sen. Yaw asserted that Sec. Albright misunderstands the problem as treatment issues effect more than the Medicaid population. Sec. Albright acknowledged the varying affected populations, but remarked that two-thirds of treatment is received through DHS already.

Moving to the proposed severance tax, Sen. Yaw discussed the 6.5 percent severance tax projected to raise \$293 million while maintaining the current impact fee for local municipalities. Sec. Albright mentioned that the impact fee will be a direct credit against their liability that they pay for the severance tax, estimated at \$165 million next year and "becoming a wash in two fiscal years." Sen. Yaw said about 60 percent of current impact fees are distributed to local municipalities with the remainder to the state, and asked if that 40 percent will come out of the \$293 million. Sec. Albright emphasized OA is not touching the current statutory allocation of impact fee revenues as fees paid are credited in full and deducted from tax liability. He clarified the \$293 million is the net figure assuming gas prices at \$2.75 decreasing to \$2.25 by next fiscal year offset by an increase in production.

Chairman Browne asked about the cabinet level drug treatment position, which Sec. Albright said will likely be an executive assistant to the governor but is open to dialogue on the topic.

Sen. Blake commended Chairman Browne for [Act 120 of 2010](#) and said the level of pension contribution cost increases will "drop precipitously" after four years from \$350 million to \$90 million. He said pension reform is a priority in the legislature, to which Sec. Albright said the governor agrees. On minimum wage, Sen. Blake asked for projection clarifications. Sec. Albright said the proposal presents a productive policy opportunity by offering a living wage to workers, saving the state \$95 million, and reducing federal reliance by \$500 million.

Chairman Browne requested that detailed modeling information for the projections be submitted in writing in the near future.

Sen. Vulakovich mentioned the large size of the consolidation and claimed it would be difficult to successfully implement by July 1. Sec. Albright acknowledged the "extraordinary challenge" of the merger and said ongoing work with all stakeholders will be needed to ensure effectiveness. He said \$90 million of savings will be recognized in the next fiscal year. Sen. Vulakovich said he agrees with the concept of an integrated delivery system, but added he doesn't think it can be done that quickly. On dollar figures, Sec. Albright mentioned various savings attributions including \$9 million in personnel, \$9 million in health programs, \$7 million for county assistance office (CAO) programs, and \$45 million for pharmacy consolidation. Sen. Vulakovich then moved to minimum wage language,

referencing business concerns with layoffs differing from OA projections. Sec. Albright highlighted projected impacts, including more than one million impacted workers and 141,000 workers being removed from state assistance, with \$95 million net profit due to a total \$800 million reduction in assistance costs paired with increased provider costs. Sen. Vulakovich reiterated Chairman Browne's request for a detailed line item breakdown of the savings.

Sen. Scavello continued questions on the minimum wage, saying that assumes workers keep the same amount of hours. He suggested the true way to increase wages is to invest in infrastructure and accommodate good business practices to make all stakeholders benefit and create jobs. Sec. Albright said he is happy to work with all recommendations to get to that goal.

Sen. Eichelberger claimed that an increase in minimum wage would result in layoffs and ultimately damage workers' wellbeing. Sec. Albright opined that "every other surrounding state" has already increased their minimum wage above federal requirements and have only seen positive results. Sen. Eichelberger disagreed, and moving to education, said a major reshaping of how business is done in the state needs to occur. Sec. Albright said that service reshaping is what the budget is truly about, and agreed with Sen. Eichelberger that big picture and long term viewpoints for all services and departments are critical to success. On community based services, Sec. Albright it is a major focus for seniors and the disabled population which represents a big picture approach.

Sen. Wagner discussed the revenue shortfall, and outlined how natural gas wells could generate revenue. Sec. Albright said work is ongoing to dedicate resources in pipeline permitting and oversight as well as funding the last mile initiative to help with pipeline backlogs. He added more can be done, but cited resource limits due to financial conditions. Sen. Wagner then referenced the Department of Transportation (PennDOT), saying blacktop projects are not allowed between October and April and suggested an extended period. He said he is presenting many ideas that are not getting done and asked what the loss of revenue from the drilling moratorium on state game lands was. Sec. Albright said \$80 million is received annually from gas royalties but he did not have a figure for the state game land drilling. Sen. Wagner also said he is alarmed by the percentage of benefits to payroll dollars in Harrisburg and voiced displeasure with a potential minimum wage increase. Sec. Albright said many private companies have already increased starting wages for employees. Lastly, on the \$12 minimum wage, Sen. Wagner said such an increase would cause higher earning workers to also want raises which could cause issues for the private sector, specifically with small businesses. He indicated he has offered an alternative proposal. Sec. Albright repeated his desire to work with the General Assembly to consider all viewpoints for an effective budget.

Sen. Street said investments into education are critical. Sec. Albright agreed, saying it is one of the governor's highest priorities even with strict fiscal restraints. Sen. Street emphasized equitable funding for rural and urban areas and applauded the governor's efforts.

Sen. Yaw, in context of the consolidation, voiced concern on who will educate the legislature and agencies on drug issues in the new cabinet position. He said a department solely focused on the issue may be needed for most effective response. Sec. Albright voiced understanding of a fundamental need for those services and said the consolidation would only improve service delivery through better plans and cooperation. On the State Police radio system, Sen. Yaw said the state should be looking to investigating how to get money back from investments that did not work. Sec. Minnich said active work with State Police is occurring and acknowledged issues with current system. However, she said nearly 70 percent of that original investment will be able to be used for the conversion to a new system. Sec. Albright added that an active audit is underway.

Sen. Blake brought up the tax credit proposal stating "it is a tight squeeze" from \$390 million to \$100 million. He also mentioned performance based budgeting and analysis of the cuts, adding "tax credits aren't always about return, they can be about quality of life issues." Sec. Albright said the tax credit programs can be divided into economic and job related incentives, education and access, and community development and needs to be balanced as such. Sen. Blake then asked about a projected \$110 million savings in programs currently funded by bond funding. Sec. Albright said the proposal allows maintained bond support for those programs for a three-year period instead of eliminating support. Sen. Blake referenced a "responsible use of debt" in several instances, which Sec. Albright agreed and referenced the School Constructions and Facilities program (PlanCon) as an example. Sen. Blake then moved to Industrial Resource Centers (IRC) and manufacturing initiatives to "link up with research institutions." Sec. Albright said it is a strong belief of the administration and would help the manufacturing community to connect to research institutions such as universities.

Sen. Vulakovich reiterated requests for a detailed line item report on savings from the minimum wage proposal, which Sec. Albright said would be provided. Sen. Vulakovich then brought up the Civil Service Modernization Act and rumors it is not being implemented even though it is law, saying it must be adopted as required. Sec. Minnich confirmed it has not yet been implemented but referenced ongoing conversations to develop regulations. On early retirement discussions, Sec. Albright said a narrowed approach conversation can be had with the General Assembly to determine the best path forward. Moving to IT, Sec. Minnich said a yearly report placed their letter grade at a B+ for their system. Sen. Vulakovich emphasized integrating the systems will be a critical component to the merger, to which Sec. Minnich responded HR and IT consolidation is being taken seriously and has a plan and base application in place.

After thanking the panel for their participation and recognizing staff for their work, Chairman Hughes offered several points of emphasis in closing, including:

- Pennsylvania has been "extremely accommodating" yet is the only major Marcellus Shale production state to not implement a severance tax on the product. Sec. Albright said Ohio has a proposal in place to increase their already present severance tax, in which the increased revenues themselves are greater than the proposed amount in Pennsylvania. Chairman Hughes voiced frustration with the absence of such a tax, saying it subsidizes nearby states and misses out on revenue.
- The \$7.25 per hour minimum wage is below the federal poverty limit. He said Pennsylvania is lagging behind all surrounding states in improving the wage, and cited lower unemployment rates in those states even with the presence of a severance tax and increased minimum wage. Sec. Albright agreed, saying results from other states should inform policy decisions.
- 2010 levels of education funding need to be restored to increase equality. Sec. Albright said the proposed budget works towards that 2010 threshold and restores equality and indicated education is a key focus for the governor. Chairman Hughes said "the current situation does not reflect the best in Pennsylvania."

Chairman Browne also recognized the panel for their work and offered key closing points and perspective, such as:

- The proposal for internet gaming and lottery must be discussed while preserving the Lottery Fund.
- An actuarial note for the early buyout must be examined. Sec. Albright agreed, saying all effects should be considered and discussed. Chairman Browne specifically cited "brain drain" issues and retaining valuable talent and experience while saving money.
- Remediation of existing properties can be valuable, but maintenance costs on empty buildings with an ultimate fate of destruction is not effective and a waste of money.
- A proposed education formula change must be revisited and discussed, particularly with early education and charters.
- Debates on Marcellus Shale must consider the storied history of Pennsylvania as a key energy state to inform policy decisions.
- The consolidation is the keynote piece to the budget with the real value in long term outcomes over short term savings. The large scope will take "many years" to finalize and needs high engagement. Sec. Albright said OA expects to be able to implement the unified agency on July 1 with continued work for full efficiency and improvement. On the importance of each affected agency, Sec. Albright said each perspective is valued and thanked each agency for their dialogue and commitment to working on the merger.
- The value of an external performance evaluation to reinforce decisions is "worth considering." Sec. Albright said it has been discussed and is an important underlying factor to inform budget decisions.

- 30 -

PA Bulletin

[IRRC: NOTICE OF FILING OF FINAL RULEMAKINGS](#)

The Independent Regulatory Review Commission received the following regulation, scheduled to be considered on April 20, 2017 at 333 Market Street, Harrisburg:

- Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission #57-312: Reduce Barriers to Entry for Passenger Motor Carriers

A copy of the regulation is available by contacting the promulgating agency or at www.irrc.state.pa.us.

Upcoming Events

House Judiciary

March 14, 2017 - 10:00 a.m., Room 140, Main Capitol

[HB 741](#) Stephens, Todd Amends Titles 18 & 42 re sentencing & penalty

PA Public Utility Commission

March 16, 2017 - 10:00 a.m. Commonwealth Keystone Building, Hearing Room 1, 400 North St., Harrisburg
Public Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-1740

House and Senate Transportation

March 21, 2017 - 9:30 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building

Joint public hearing on Highly Automated Vehicles (HAV) Testing legislation

PA Turnpike Commission

March 21, 2017 - 10:00 a.m. Turnpike Admin. Bldg, Large Board Room, 700 S. Eisenhower Blvd., 3rd Fl.,
Middletown

Commission Meeting. For additional information: (717) 831-7333

Joint Legislative Budget & Finance Committee

March 22, 2017 - 9:30 a.m., Room 8E-B, East Wing

To release reports on PA State Police cost to provide safety on public highways and grant expenditures by Commonwealth agencies

Session Schedule

Senate

March 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29

April 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26

May 8, 9, 10, 22, 23, 24

June 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

House

March 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22

April 3, 4, 5, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26

May 8, 9, 10, 22, 23, 24

June 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

In the News

03-09-2017

[Stateline Daily: More States Debate Requiring Seat Belts on School Buses](#)

(Press Release)

03-09-2017

[New Interactive Traffic Study for PA Shows Traffic Crashes Cost Every Man...](#)

(Press Release)

03-09-2017

[Volunteers Needed for Statewide Cleanup, Beautification Effort](#)

(Press Release)

03-09-2017

[Washington Boulevard floodgate system deemed operational after morning tests](#)

The once-troubled floodgate system on Washington Boulevard passed technical tests early Wednesday, capping weeks of work by a contractor, Pittsburgh city officials said. "Let's just say my confidence level has risen considerably," said public safety Director Wendell Hissrich. He deemed the \$450,000 system... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

03-09-2017

[Pre-construction hearing on Southern Beltway project set for Thursday](#)

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission will hold a pre-construction meeting Thursday evening

for the next section of the Southern Beltway on the Washington-Allegheny County border. Contractor Joseph B. Fay Co. expects to begin work on the 3.2-mile section of the highway between the Panhandle Trail and Cecil Reissing Road in... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

03-09-2017

[Floodgates on Washington Boulevard operational again](#)

Pittsburgh has completed a \$55,000 repair of floodgates on Washington Boulevard and an early morning test Wednesday proved the gates are operational, Public Safety Director Wendell Hissrich said. The gates, installed by PennDOT following a flash flood in 2011 that... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

03-09-2017

[PennDOT plans \\$3.25M Route 136 upgrades, \\$10M in other Westmoreland resurfacing](#)

A heavily traveled section of Route 136 in Hempfield will receive fresh pavement, upgraded traffic signals and other improvements as part of work PennDOT plans this year in Westmoreland County. According to PennDOT, the project will include a small portion of West... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

03-09-2017

[Stranded on PATCO nearly 13 stories above the Delaware: 'It was a little disconcerting to look down'](#)

So you're on PATCO during rush hour, crossing the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, and the train suddenly stops. You're stranded — nearly 13 stories above the Delaware River. Now what? That's what PATCO crews and passengers had to figure out Tuesday, when a crowded eastbound train stalled on the bridge and forced at least 480... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

03-09-2017

[Capital Area Transit executive pension frozen, but still drawing questions from Cumberland County](#)

Capital Area Transit says the executive pension plan that has drawn fire from Cumberland County officials is now frozen and no new workers will be allowed to join it. bus+1+0123+dcg.jpg.JPGfile photo But questions remain as to why additional workers were allowed to join it... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)

03-09-2017

[NASA aircraft fly over Centre County for PSU-led project](#)

The wind was whipping at the General Aviation Terminal on Wednesday afternoon as a King Air B-200 landed for a pit stop. "We've been bounced around all day," said Greg Slover, one of the aircraft's two pilots. Dressed in a beige NASA jumpsuit, he greeted a group of Penn State scientists as crews refueled the plane after a... - [State College Centre Daily Times](#)

03-09-2017

[Former CATA driver warned not to resurrect lawsuit](#)

WILLIAMSPORT A federal judge has warned a Port Matilda woman that she could face sanctions if she keeps trying to resurrect a nine-year-old lawsuit over her firing as a Centre Area Transportation Authority bus driver. U.S. Middle District Judge Matthew W. Brann on Tuesday issued the warning... - [State College Centre Daily Times](#)

03-09-2017

[Colts to offer free bus rides on all routes on parade day](#)

SCRANTON — County of Lackawanna Transit System will offer free rides on all routes on Saturday for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. "We are encouraging people to use public transit on Saturday as they participate in the day's festivities," COLTS Executive Director Bob... - [Scranton Times](#)

03-09-2017

[Crews continue cleanup of mudslide that closed road near Mt. Morris](#)

MT. MORRIS – Crews are close to reopening a section of Big Shannon Run Road in Perry Township more than a week after a mudslide closed the road near Mt. Morris after severe storms swept through the area. The March 1 mudslide that brought layers of sediment and trees across the... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)

03-09-2017

[Pa. 655 bridge to close for a month](#)

HUSTONTOWN – Pleasant Ridge Road (Pa. 655) will be closed about a mile south of the Pennsylvania Turnpike for a month starting as early as March 20. The bridge spanning Fortune Teller Creek in Dublin Township, Fulton County, is being replaced as part of the state's billion-dollar bridge program.... - [York Daily](#)

03-09-2017

[More people, more places, more possibilities \(column\)](#)

Transportation – it's important for getting to and from, so I can do what I need or want to do at any given time. Living in a suburb, I rely on my car most of the time, as I don't live close to the office, grocery store, physician, theater or shopping center. I know I'm... - [York Daily](#)

03-09-2017

[Wysox votes to support scenic byway designation for U.S. Route 6](#)

WYSOX TOWNSHIP — At their most recent meeting, the Wysox Township supervisors passed a resolution in support of the proposed designation of U.S. Route 6 as a Pennsylvania byway. The Pennsylvania Route 6 Alliance is seeking the support of Wysox and other municipalities for its campaign to... - [Towanda Daily Review](#)

03-09-2017

[Despite aggravating motorists, water line project on Shamokin Street continues to move forward](#)

SHAMOKIN — No progress comes without sacrifice. That old adage aptly applies to a major water line replacement project being conducted on Shamokin Street that started in late October and should be completed by the end of spring with the entire street being repaved.... - [Shamokin News-Item](#)

03-09-2017

[Uber Seeks to Prevent Use of Greyball to Thwart Regulators](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — The ride-hailing service Uber said on Wednesday that it would prohibit employees from using a program called Greyball to thwart regulators. Uber's new policy pertaining to the use of Greyball, a tool the company developed to show individual riders different versions of its app, comes in... - [New York Times](#)

03-09-2017

[More States Debate Requiring Seat Belts on School Buses](#)

Dawn Prescott doesn't recall all the details of when the school bus she was riding on more than 15 years ago careened off a bridge in Omaha, Nebraska, plunged nearly 50 feet into a creek bed, and landed on its side. She was a chaperone for the high school band, which was returning from a... - [Stateline.org](#)

03-09-2017

[Project at deadly Route 422 intersection in Jackson Twp begins](#)

Expect construction to slow down traffic on a one-mile stretch of Route 422 east of Lebanon City in Jackson Township from now until early Autumn. A construction project got underway Wednesday to improve the intersection between Route 422 and Ramona Road, which is a township road. Approximately... - [Lebanon Daily News](#)

03-09-2017

[PennDOT needs volunteers to help clean up trash along roads in Pennsylvania](#)

Here's your chance to help make a difference. PennDOT is looking for volunteers to help clean up roadsides as part of its Great American Cleanup of Pennsylvania campaign. The cleanup began March 1 and runs through May 31. To see all of the available volunteer opportunities, visit the PennDOT... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

03-09-2017

[PennDOT training employees to spot human trafficking](#)

PennDOT is taking steps to train its employees who work at driver license centers to spot potential victims of human trafficking. According to ABC27.com, PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards said "the training instructs employees how to call the appropriate authorities and... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

03-09-2017

[Borough, county plan road and bridge projects](#)

FRANKLIN COUNTY - A number of road and bridge projects are planned this summer around

the county, including the revamping and improvement of two major intersections -- one in Chambersburg and one in Greene Township. The intersection at Fifth Avenue and Norland in Chambersburg is slated for... - [Chambersburg Public Opinion](#)

- 03-09-2017 [CAT announces interim general manager](#)
Capital Area Transit Wednesday announced that Anthony Johnson will be its interim general manager. Johnson has 29 years of transit management experience and works with McDonald Transit Associates, a transit management firm located in Fort Worth, Texas. The CAT board has contracted with McDonald Transit to provide... - [Carlisle Sentinel](#)
- 03-09-2017 [SEPTA fare card rollout for Philly transit users nearly complete](#)
The final stage of a months-long rollout for SEPTA's new fare card on city transit begins Monday, with an option for riders to use the card to pay-per-ride being made widely available. From March 13 to March 24 SEPTA Key will sell the Travel Wallet function at... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 03-09-2017 [Pittsburgh 'bus rapid transit' route options revealed](#)
Pittsburgh and Port Authority of Allegheny County officials on Thursday revealed route options and cost estimates for a long-discussed "bus rapid transit" system that would link Downtown and Oakland. BRT, often called "light rail on wheels" uses buses that often... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 03-09-2017 [Plan for Bus Rapid Transit system takes next step forward](#)
What has been nothing more than an idea for more than 10 years finally is moving ahead: Bus Rapid Transit between Downtown and Oakland. Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and the Port Authority announced Thursday morning they will be filing an application with the Federal Transit... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Pennsylvanians Encouraged to Review Updated Transportation Performance...](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-08-2017 ["Bike and Ride" at SEPTA Stations](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-08-2017 [PennDOT lets \\$294 million in February](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-08-2017 [AAA survey finds public slow to accept self-driving vehicles](#)
It may be common to see Uber's self-driving cars in Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle or Strip District, but that doesn't mean other motorists are comfortable in sharing the road with them. In fact, 75 percent of drivers in a national AAA survey released Tuesday said they are afraid of the prospect of self-driving vehicles.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Pittsburgh will have a 24-hour shuttle service for St. Patrick's Parade Day](#)
A St. Patrick's Day Parade parking shuttle will offer longer hours and a new route Saturday, in a bid to keep more South Side revelers and workers from driving in the congested Carson Street area. "For the very first year, we are going to run the shuttle for 24 hours... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Pa. senators question Wolf's proposed school transportation cuts](#)
HARRISBURG — State senators Tuesday questioned Education Department officials on proposed changes to transportation funding as hearings on Gov. Tom Wolf's budget plan continued for a second day. "There's too many variables in the transportation issues," Sen.... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

- 03-08-2017 [Philadelphia has a blueprint on how to make city streets safer](#)
A three-year plan to make Philadelphia's streets safer includes proposal proposals that touch on virtually every aspect of road travel around Philadelphia. "It's really about integrating this into the way we do business," said Kelley Yemen, the city's director of complete... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Capital Area Transit responds to Cumberland County criticisms](#)
Capital Area Transit is responding to criticism by Cumberland County commissioners regarding two pensions for executive staff and other management concerns. "CAT board of directors has long been aware of the 40-year old executive pension situation raised by Cumberland County officials earlier today," ... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Dauphin County commissioners react to Cumberland County's call for audit of Capital Area Transit](#)
"In budget hearings with CAT, we have repeatedly questioned their operations, including their pension system, and made our frustration with management clear," the Dauphin County commissioners said in a statement. The Cumberland County commissioners said Tuesday they have asked Auditor... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Delta to restore, add Detroit flights from Erie](#)
Airline recently cut Erie service to two flights daily but will restore third flight and add fourth. Delta Air Lines will once again offer three flights to Detroit from Erie International Airport on weekdays, beginning Thursday. The airline will add a fourth weekday flight to Detroit beginning May 1.... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 03-08-2017 [GE Transportation presents \\$215,000 to Erie charities](#)
Representatives from three Erie charities collected checks Tuesday morning as GE Transportation divided the \$215,000 raised during its annual Bids for Kids auction and the Rock-for-Kids event. Checks were presented to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Boys & Girls Club... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Looking to improve Erie? Adopt a PennDOT roadway](#)
Choose one of these two programs to volunteer your time to make Erie prettier and cleaner. By Staff report If you're looking to make Erie a prettier or cleaner place, or simply looking to volunteer in the community, consider adopting one of Erie's roadways. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation offers two beautification... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 03-08-2017 [PennDOT plow truck hit Newburg Inn, police reveal](#)
The historic Newburg Inn is seen in July 2014. The building was struck by a PennDOT plow truck during the snowstorm of Feb. 9, 2017, state police said March 7, 2017. (Lehighvalleylive.com file photo) A plow truck driver crashed into the Newburg Inn in Lower Nazareth Township... - [Easton Express-Times](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Owner of Midland Terminal could cut emissions by more than half](#)
INDUSTRY -- The owner of the Midland Terminal could cut emissions there by more than half while reducing barge-loading operations, but the company isn't saying why. The terminal, located along Route 68 just outside of Midland, is owned and operated by MPLX Terminals LLC, a subsidiary of Marathon Petroleum,... - [Beaver County Times](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Long-term restrictions coming to Route 65 in Pittsburgh](#)
PITTSBURGH -- Lane restrictions will be put in place Wednesday on northbound Route 65 in Pittsburgh and will remain until September. PennDOT said the long-term restrictions will be implemented on Route 65 in several locations. From the Fort Duquesne Bridge to the West End Bridge, a single-lane... - [Beaver County Times](#)
- 03-08-2017 [Final chance to weigh in on bus routes](#)

Tonight is the last chance for public comment directed to the board of the Washington County Transportation Authority as members consider changes to routes, fares and stops. The authority board is scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. in the Washington Transit Center, 50 E. Chestnut St., to finalize proposals drawn up earlier... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)

03-08-2017

[Pa. 655 bridge to close for a month](#)

HUSTONTOWN – Pleasant Ridge Road (Pa. 655) will be closed about a mile south of the Pennsylvania Turnpike for a month starting as early as March 20. The bridge spanning Fortune Teller Creek in Dublin Township, Fulton County, is being replaced as part of the state's billion-dollar bridge program.... - [York Daily](#)

03-08-2017

[Local company sends superloads for bridge rebuild](#)

Two superloads, carrying over 180 tons of steel girders, departed Williamsport early Tuesday morning headed for New York and the largest infrastructure bridge project in the nation. "This is the largest job High Steel has ever done," said Ronnie Medlock, vice president of technical services for High Steel Structures LLC... - [Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)

03-08-2017

[Citizens raise concerns over road conditions and their maintenance](#)

LEROY — Residents of LeRoy Township came out to the township supervisors meeting Monday night to voice their concerns about conditions and maintenance. Citizens Alicia Harris, Robin VanValkenburg and Avery VanValkenburg addressed their concerns to the township supervisors and road... - [Towanda Daily Review](#)

03-08-2017

[Cashless tolling begins in April on I-376 in Lawrence County](#)

Cashless tolling will begin on the Beaver Valley Expressway next month, Lawrence County commissioners announced at their meeting Tuesday. They provided information from the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission stating the new method of collecting tolls will be tested in Beaver and Lawrence... - [New Castle News](#)

03-08-2017

[Don't Roll Back the Vehicle Fuel Standards](#)

Jody Freeman The standards also provide badly needed uniformity and predictability for the auto industry. When we adopted our strategy, car companies were facing the prospect of three different and conflicting sets of standards. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration had traditionally set... - [New York Times](#)

03-08-2017

[Work to start again on Route 202 at Route 30 interchanges](#)

Just when motorists thought it was safe to go back onto Route 202 again ... The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is ready to begin the rehabilitation of two bridges over Amtrak rail lines near the Route 30 interchanges on the heavily traveled road in East Whiteland and West... - [West Chester Daily Local News](#)

03-08-2017

[Transportation group releases study for improving mobility](#)

A 10-county group known as the Regional Transportation Alliance released a report Wednesday with seven guiding principles and 50 ideas to explore for improving mobility in southwestern Pennsylvania. The alliance spent 18 months meeting with more than 500 businesses, groups... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

03-08-2017

[Cumberland County commissioners take issue with CAT executive pensions](#)

The Cumberland County Commissioners are asking the state Auditor General's Office for an inquiry into Capital Area Transit, in response to information indicating that CAT's top executives are receiving benefits from two publicly funded pension plans simultaneously.... - [Carlisle Sentinel](#)

03-08-2017

[Pa. 655 bridge to close for a month](#)

HUSTONTOWN – Pleasant Ridge Road (Pa. 655) will be closed about a mile south of the

Pennsylvania Turnpike for a month starting as early as March 20. The bridge spanning Fortune Teller Creek in Dublin Township, Fulton County, is being replaced as part of the state's billion-dollar bridge program.... - [Chambersburg Public Opinion](#)

- 03-07-2017 [Pennsylvanians Encouraged to Review Updated Transportation Performance Report...](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-07-2017 [Gov. Wolf Announces PennDOT Effort to Help Combat Human Trafficking](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-07-2017 ["Bike and Ride" at SEPTA Stations](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-07-2017 [\\$235 Million in Infrastructure Projects Planned in West Penn Power Area...](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-07-2017 [Bike lanes are good, but affordable housing is more important](#)
In response to "Despite 'Bikelash,' Mayor Stands Behind Bike Lane Vision" (March 5), I want to make sure that my views on this issue are clear. I am not an opponent of bike lanes. As stated in the article, I think better communication from the Peduto administration was necessary, and this... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 03-07-2017 [County denies funds for Vandergrift paving](#)
Vandergrift's summer paving program appears to be over before it started. The borough got some bad news from Westmoreland County planning department officials recently. Vandergrift officials had requested \$400,000 to pave 14 streets but was turned down by the county, which administers the federal Community... - [Tarentum Valley News Dispatch](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Christie ally gets probation for coercing United to create flight](#)
NEWARK, N.J. — David Samson, the former chief of a powerful public agency, who admitted to forcing one of the country's biggest airlines to initiate a money-losing flight from Newark to an airport in South Carolina so he could travel more quickly to his vacation home, won't... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Final chance to weigh in on bus routes](#)
Tonight is the last chance for public comment directed to the board of the Washington County Transportation Authority as members consider changes to routes, fares and stops. The authority board is scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. in the Washington Transit Center, 50 E. Chestnut St., to finalize proposals drawn up earlier... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Final chance to weigh in on bus routes](#)
Tonight is the last chance for public comment directed to the board of the Washington County Transportation Authority as members consider changes to routes, fares and stops. The authority board is scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. in the Washington Transit Center, 50 E. Chestnut St., to finalize proposals drawn up earlier... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)
- 03-07-2017 [This week's road work, expected backups in Monroe](#)
Traffic backups are expected with the following road work taking place in Monroe County this week: * Today through Thursday in Pocono Township on Interstate 80 West, between Exit 302 (Bartonsville) and Exit 293 (Interstate 380), due to bridge repair work. * Today through Friday in Barrett Township on Route 191, between Route 940... - [Pocono Record](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Communications channels to be enhanced by state](#)
Williamsport area officials interested in transportation projects learned Monday about a new plan

by the state Department of Transportation to improve communication ahead of project design and construction. The plan is called “PennDOT Connects,” and it was revealed at the... - [Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)

- 03-07-2017 [PennDOT offers Free motorcycle training at state ‘riding ranges’](#)
 BWith warmer temperatures and motorcycle season on the way, PennDOT is offering free training to all motorcyclists in the state. PennDOT is urging riders of all ages to prepare by taking a free motorcycle training course. These courses are available to Pennsylvania residents... - [Warren Times Observer](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Outdoors with Jim Collins: A February bike ride](#)
 We just love riding our bikes as much as possible. It is always enjoyable. We see some wonderful sights and enjoy the smells and sounds that God has given us to enjoy in nature. In our memory, we have never had a bike ride in February. We bought our bikes in 2006, so our records are quite... - [Towanda Daily Review](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Volkswagen’s Emissions Fraud May Affect Mortality Rate in Europe](#)
 From 2008 to 2015, Volkswagen sold 11 million diesel cars worldwide rigged with software that cheated emissions tests by running the full emissions-control system only if the car sensed a test was underway. Otherwise, the cars operated without emissions control, releasing more than... - [New York Times](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Omaha’s Answer to Costly Potholes? Go Back to Gravel Roads](#)
 As in many big cities, the infrastructure here is crumbling, a problem exacerbated by decades of neglect and a network of residential roads, including Ms. Amoura’s, that have never met code. But Omaha’s solution is extreme: grinding paved streets into gravel as a way to cut... - [New York Times](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Skies brighten for Sikorsky GM as market stabilizes](#)
 SADBURY >> It was a turbulent start for Audrey Brady as head of Sikorsky’s Coatesville commercial helicopter operation. In June of 2015 Sikorsky, then a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp., announced widespread layoffs that affected more than 700 full-time workers... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Police: Uber Driver Assaulted By Passenger](#)
 ABINGTON, Pa. (CBS) — Police in Abington have arrested a man accused of assaulting an Uber driver. Police say it happened along Shady Lane in the Huntingdon Valley Section of Abington Township, just before midnight Friday. According to investigators, the Uber driver picked up 52-year-old Andrey... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)
- 03-07-2017 [TSA To Use More Rigorous, Universal Pat-Down Procedures At Airports](#)
 PHILADELPHIA (CBS)– At times, air travel can be a hassle, especially when there’s a long line at the security check point. Most passengers agree it’s all for the greater good, but, not everyone’s on board with a newly launched, more comprehensive TSA screening procedure.... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)
- 03-07-2017 [SEDA-COG, PennDOT plan traffic study](#)
 YEAGERTOWN — A traffic study is going to be completed at the U.S. Highway 322 Interchange in Derry Township. During a Monday night meeting of the Derry Township Supervisors, Kelly Shutes, township manager, told the board a grant was awarded to the township and the county to participate in the study.... - [Lewistown Sentinel](#)
- 03-07-2017 [Southern Airways Express starts year on successful note](#)
 FALLS CREEK – Southern Airways Express is off to a flying start in DuBois. At the last meeting of the Clearfield-Jefferson Counties Regional Airport Authority, airport manager Robert W.

Shaffer reported that the airline already has made progress with passenger boardings.... - [DuBois Courier-Express](#)

03-07-2017

[Guest Editorial: Trump infrastructure plan is sound](#)

One of the great advantages the United States has held over our economic competitors in the industrialized world is our multi-modal transportation infrastructure network. It has allowed us to ship goods tremendous distances, both within this country and around the world, more cheaply and... - [Carlisle Sentinel](#)

03-07-2017

[Pa. 655 bridge to close for a month](#)

HUSTONTOWN – Pleasant Ridge Road (Pa. 655) will be closed about a mile south of the Pennsylvania Turnpike for a month starting as early as March 20. The bridge spanning Fortune Teller Creek in Dublin Township, Fulton County, is being replaced as part of the state's billion-dollar bridge program.... - [Chambersburg Public Opinion](#)

03-07-2017

[Shuster pushes proposal to privatize air traffic control](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Legislation introduced by U.S. Rep Bill Shuster, R-Everett, to privatize the nation's air traffic control system has met bipartisan opposition in the Senate. Shuster's proposal is included in the six-year re-authorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. The Aviation Innovation, Reform and... - [Chambersburg Public Opinion](#)

03-07-2017

[Philadelphia has a blueprint on how to make city streets safer](#)

A three-year plan to make Philadelphia's streets safer includes proposals that touch on virtually every aspect of road travel around Philadelphia. "It's really about integrating this into the way we do business," said Kelly Yemen, the city's complete streets director.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

03-07-2017

[Cumberland County commissioners ask for state audit of Capital Area Transit; say execs get 2 pensions](#)

Cumberland County commissioners are asking the state auditor general to audit Capital Area Transit's management after they discovered executive staff members are receiving double pensions. The commissioners are also renewing their call for regionalization with... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)

03-07-2017

[TSA implements a new pat-down screening procedure at nation's airports](#)

The next time you catch a flight and get a pat-down at airport security, you may notice a more involved physical search by the Transportation Security Administration. The TSA on March 2 consolidated five previous pat-down methods into a single procedure that some passengers may find different or potentially... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

03-06-2017

[Orange barrels signal start to road construction season](#)

Spring won't officially begin for another two weeks, but that won't stop the beginning of the annual orange barrel parade as construction crews resume work Monday on some of the region's biggest road and bridge projects. And with the work will come a series of new traffic patterns sure to cause... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

03-06-2017

[Enforce traffic laws to help decrease risky driving](#)

The part missing from a recent article on bad driving is "enforcement" ("Studies Confirm Increases in Risky Driving," Feb. 16). Like the officer quoted in the article, I and most drivers see multiple violations every day. In my hometown of New Kensington, stop signs and speed limits are optional.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

03-06-2017

[New law could keep police, medics safer](#)

Medical technician Joseph Epp still has pieces of a bullet in his shoulder. He was wounded 10 years ago by a man police brought to the hospital for a drunken driving blood test who wrestled an officer's gun away. Newtown Officer Brian Gregg was killed and another officer was

wounded. The... - [Tarentum Valley News Dispatch](#)

- 03-06-2017 [Travelers can now access a faster lane at W-B/Scranton airport](#)
 PITTSTON TWP. — An expedited screening program has begun at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport, allowing approved travelers access to a quicker lane. People can apply for the Transportation Security Administration program that requires a background check, fingerprinting and an application fee of... - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)
- 03-06-2017 [Reading Area Transportation Study panel discusses over-budget projects](#)
 Berks County, PA Berks County's transportation-planning panel is working on a plan to determine who pays when municipal projects funded by federal grants come in over budget. The region receives a pool of money from the federal government to spend on projects related to pedestrians, bicyclists and other alternative modes of... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 03-06-2017 [Kevin Cuneo: Great Lakes shipping gets underway on open waters](#)
 A sure sign that spring is fast approaching is the start of the 2017 Great Lakes shipping season, which opened last week. Eric Haun, writing in Marine Link, said the tug-barge unit Dorothy Ann-Pathfinder left her winter berth in Erie and sailed to Cleveland where she will begin shuttling iron ore.... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 03-06-2017 [13 intersections eyed for improvements in York County](#)
 Five York County intersections that are part of a York County Planning Commission is study of 13 intersections for congestion management. The video is sped up 20 times faster than real-time. Paul Kuehnel This intersection at Bull and Canal roads in Dover and Conewago townships... - [York Daily](#)
- 03-06-2017 [Safety first](#)
 Area roads and bridges could be seeing makeovers in the near future. Governor Tom Wolf announced plans this week for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to invest more than \$2 billion in roadway maintenance and highway and bridge capital projects over the next 10 years... - [Warren Times Observer](#)
- 03-06-2017 [PennDOT offers Free motorcycle training at state 'riding ranges'](#)
 BWith warmer temperatures and motorcycle season on the way, PennDOT is offering free training to all motorcyclists in the state. PennDOT is urging riders of all ages to prepare by taking a free motorcycle training course. These courses are available to Pennsylvania residents... - [Warren Times Observer](#)
- 03-06-2017 [Naming bridge for Nate Akins should be done](#)
 Editor, The News: In regard to the article "Bridge may get a new name" — by Dan Irwin, front page story. New Castle News Weekend edition, February 25-26, 2017: Right on! East Grant Street always was in my heart since my Dad's and his Dad's home and doctor's office is one of my fondest memories. The... - [New Castle News](#)
- 03-06-2017 [Blotter: Driver strikes deer resulting in DUI arrest](#)
 DUI: Eric Heagy, 31, Myerstown, was westbound on Freeport Road just west of Morrissey Drive at 9:58 p.m. Feb. 28 when he came upon a deer in the roadway, state police at Lickdale said. Heagy was unable to avoid the deer, struck it and pulled off the road near the Zoar Lutheran Church parking lot... - [Lebanon Daily News](#)
- 03-06-2017 [EDITORIAL: Lighting along North Main Street offers improved visibility](#)
 The new lighting along the Allegheny College corridor of North Main Street makes a substantial difference in pedestrian safety. There are 24 light emitting diode, or LED, street lights now up and operating along the west side of North Main Street within its half-mile... - [Meadville Tribune](#)

- 03-06-2017 [**Meadville eyes agreement with PennDOT for Baldwin Street project**](#)
Meadville City Council will vote on an agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to replace a retaining wall, sidewalk, fencing and curb along the eastern side of Baldwin Street between Glenwood Avenue and Prospect Street. The vote will come at council's next meeting at 6... - [*Meadville Tribune*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**CATA Plans to Use Electric Bus March 13-17**](#)
An electric bus will be buzzing around State College next week. CATA will be hosting the Xcelsior Electric — a specially designed no-emissions vehicle. CATA public relations manager Jackie Sheader announced that the bus will be active as either a White or Blue Loop March... - [*State College News*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**Motorcyclists encouraged to take free courses, start riding season safely**](#)
With the approach of warmer temperatures and the motorcycle riding season in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) urged riders of all ages to prepare by taking a free motorcycle training course. These courses are available to Pennsylvania residents throughout the... - [*Somerset Daily*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**Chesco receives \\$16.9 million for local roads, bridges**](#)
Chester County municipalities will be receiving more than \$16.9 million in state funding for roads and bridges. The county will be receiving money under Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Transportation Funding Plan to maintain bridges and roads throughout the county's municipalities, according to state Sen. Andy Dinniman.... - [*Phoenixville News*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**In Silicon Valley, Caltrain Upgrade Is Imperiled as Trump Withholds Funds**](#)
In this impasse, some transportation experts see a foretaste of the political infighting and financial hurdles that could plague the nationwide infrastructure projects that President Trump is promising. Reviving America's rusted and sagging infrastructure is one of the few areas... - [*New York Times*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**Automakers Near a Victory on Rollback of Fuel Standards**](#)
But the aggressive targets of the Obama administration, which signed off on the current rules in January, would no longer loom as an escalating cost for automakers, which estimate that fewer than 4 percent of today's vehicles would meet the 2025 standards. "Even under E.P.A.'s optimistic estimates, the automotive industry... - [*New York Times*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**General Motors pulls back from European auto market**](#)
General Motors is selling its two major European brands to French automaker PSA Group and pulling back from the world's third-largest auto market, where the company has struggled to turn a profit for nearly two decades. GM's Opel and Vauxhall brands, as well as the European arm of its... - [*Washington Post*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**Chesco receives \\$16.9 million for local roads, bridges**](#)
Chester County municipalities will be receiving more than \$16.9 million in state funding for roads and bridges. The county will be receiving money under Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Transportation Funding Plan to maintain bridges and roads throughout the county's municipalities, according to state Sen. Andy Dinniman.... - [*Pottstown Mercury*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**Plan To Put PennDOT License Center Wait Times Online**](#)
HARRISBURG, Pa. (CBS) — The state transportation secretary says PennDOT plans to put the wait times for its 71 license centers online. Secretary Leslie Richards says by the end of 2017, and possibly as soon as this summer, wait times at license centers will be available on... - [*KYW News Radio 1060*](#)
- 03-06-2017 [**Pa. Turnpike Reopens Between Bensalem, Willow Grove Following Earlier Crash**](#)

PHILADELPHIA (CBS) — All lanes of the Pennsylvania Turnpike between Willow Grove and Bensalem have reopened following an earlier accident. Authorities said the crash happened around 9 a.m. Sunday when a tractor-trailer struck the median and went through the barrier on the... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)

03-06-2017

[Public enthusiasm bodes well for Lancaster's 'active transportation' planning](#)

The consultants helping Lancaster County develop a comprehensive walking, biking and transit plan said they're encouraged by the high level of public interest here. To date, about 900 people have filled out an online survey, giving opinions on existing road and trail conditions and making recommendations. And more... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

03-06-2017

[Rettew honored for Luzerne County bridge design](#)

A bridge design by Rettew has won a diamond award in the transportation category of the annual American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania competition. Rettew captured the second-place award for its design of the four-lane Route 11 bridge over a walking trail in Larksville, Luzerne County. The... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

03-06-2017

[PennDOT: \\$16 million for York County in 2017](#)

The state Department of Transportation will distribute more than \$16 million to York County municipalities in 2017 to help maintain roads and bridges, according to a PennDOT news release. The money is part of nearly \$466.2 million in liquid fuel payments PennDOT... - [York Dispatch](#)

03-05-2017

[Despite 'bikelash,' Pittsburgh mayor stands behind bike lane vision](#)

If Bill Peduto doesn't win re-election this year, the one-liner goes, blame the bike lanes. The Pittsburgh mayor himself delivers the satire, joking that "bikelash" paired with his support for refugees and self-driving cars will crater his political career. Still, as Mr. Peduto runs for a second term, he's sticking with his... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

03-05-2017

[Sewer system extension to affect Route 993 in North Huntingdon](#)

North Huntingdon will have its own version of the Big Dig starting next month. Crews will cut a 125-foot-long trench about 28 feet deep across Route 993 for a sewage system project, closing a section of the busy road from April 3 to June 15. The Western Westmoreland Municipal Authority needs to create an underground... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

03-05-2017

[PennDOT seeks volunteers for litter cleanup](#)

PennDOT is searching for more volunteers to pick up litter along state highways. "We'd like to see more participation," said Gretchen Wood, a spokeswoman for District 12 — which includes Fayette, Washington, Greene and Westmoreland counties. Out of 3,627 miles of state-owned roadways in the district, 786 miles —... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

03-05-2017

[West Mifflin residents could get assist in fight for bus service](#)

An effort by residents of a West Mifflin housing complex to reinstate bus service there could be getting a boost from elected officials. Allegheny County Council on Tuesday will consider a motion to formally urge Port Authority to reinstate bus service to Mifflin Estates. The service was... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

03-05-2017

[Capitol Roundup: Aging secretary discusses governor's investment in seniors](#)

Pennsylvania Department of Aging Secretary Teresa Osborne this week spoke about the department's current and future initiatives and Gov. Tom Wolf's budget investment in seniors at the University of Scranton's State of Scranton Seminar Series. Osborne provided an overview of Pennsylvania's aging landscape and how... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)

03-05-2017

[Cheers and Jeers](#)

Cheers to students, educators and parents in the Dallas and Wyoming Valley West school

districts who topped all Luzerne County districts in SAT scores released last week by the state Department of Education. Wyoming Valley West showed the largest increase over the 2015 scores among all local... - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)

- 03-05-2017 [State offers motorcycle safety classes](#)
Free motorcycle safety courses are available for beginning to experienced riders. The courses are offered by the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program at locations statewide. Offerings include Basic Rider Courses for beginners. Riders under 18 must complete the course to get a motorcycle license.... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 03-05-2017 [Editorial: Community should work to keep bike race alive](#)
The Reading 120 Classic of the Americas is good for our area. - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 03-05-2017 [I-80 open after 45 vehicles involved in two crashes](#)
Interstate 80 was opened around 7:45 a.m. Saturday after snow squalls led to two crashes involving 45 vehicles in Clinton County. The westbound lane was closed for around 17 hours as law enforcement, emergency crews, first responders and vehicle haulers worked to clear the... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 03-05-2017 [Bridge closed by fractured truss on track to reopen in April](#)
Engineers say work to repair a major bridge that links Pennsylvania and New Jersey remains on track for it to reopen in about a month... - [AP](#)
- 03-05-2017 [Politics as Usual: Northampton lawmaker called to service](#)
State Rep. Zach Mako, R-Northampton, has been on the elected job less than two months and he just found out he has to leave it temporarily. Mako, a Pennsylvania National Guard helicopter pilot, received orders last week to report for duty at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence at... - [MORING CALL](#)
- 03-05-2017 [Trucking company planning first U.S. hub in the Lehigh Valley](#)
A Canadian trucking company plans to establish its first U.S. hub in the Lehigh Valley and create about 25 jobs. Kenz Transportation LLC recently opened an office in the Stabler Corporate Center at 3477 Corporate Parkway, with plans to secure a trucking facility... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 03-05-2017 [How Uber Deceives the Authorities Worldwide](#)
Uber's use of Greyball was recorded on video in late 2014, when Erich England, a code enforcement inspector in Portland, Ore., tried to hail an Uber car downtown in a sting operation against the company. At the time, Uber had just started its ride-hailing service in Portland... - [New York Times](#)
- 03-05-2017 [Uber Said to Consider Changes to Employee Stock Compensation](#)
Uber has lurched from one blow to its reputation after another. Now it is trying to contain some of the damage to employees. Uber, the privately held ride-hailing company, is considering ways to make its stock compensation policies more friendly to its workers, according to... - [New York Times](#)
- 03-05-2017 [Trump to Undo Vehicle Rules That Curb Global Warming](#)
The Trump administration is expected to begin rolling back stringent federal regulations on vehicle pollution that contributes to global warming, according to people familiar with the matter, essentially marking a U-turn to efforts to force the American auto industry to produce more... - [New York Times](#)
- 03-03-2017 [Motorcyclists Encouraged to Take Free Courses, Start Riding Season Safely](#)
(Press Release)

- 03-03-2017 [**PA's failure to comply with federal ID law could cost residents nearly \\$1B, groups warn**](#)
Pennsylvanians hoping to board commercial flights in 2018 could shell out hundreds of millions of dollars on passports if the state continues to shirk federal identification requirements, according to an aviation trade group. Starting in January, Transportation Security Agency officials are scheduled... - [*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**Turnpike agency no longer defendant in lawsuit filed by abuse victim**](#)
The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission has been dismissed as a defendant in a federal civil damage lawsuit filed by a Fayette County woman who was sexually abused by a former turnpike maintenance supervisor who is now in prison. In an opinion filed Wednesday, U.S. District Judge Cathy Bissoon also ruled... - [*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**The first new marine terminal in 50 years on the Delaware River opens in Paulsboro**](#)
The sun shone brightly Thursday on Paulsboro, where the first ship, the Doric Warrior, was docked at the new Paulsboro Marine Terminal on the Delaware River and 55,000 tons of steel slabs were being unloaded, headed to mills in Western Pennsylvania and Indiana.... - [*Philadelphia Inquirer*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**Drivers rebel against Uber's price-cutting quest for growth**](#)
DETROIT (AP) - The face-off between Uber CEO Travis Kalanick and driver Fawzi Kamel illustrated a conflict between Uber, with its effort to grow by cutting prices to beat competitors, and drivers who have seen their pay reduced... - [*AP*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**TSA Pre-check open enrollment extended at LVIA, and other company news**](#)
TSA Pre-check extended at LVIA for additional week Due to a rapid response and request for additional time, the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority is extending the TSA Pre-check Temporary Open Enrollment Center for an additional week in March. Appointments are now available for the expedited screening program from... - [*Allentown Morning Call*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**Area transit unity needed**](#)
The establishment of a pass allowing residents of Lackawanna and Luzerne counties to ride all mass transport throughout the two jurisdictions represents a firm step toward more comprehensive regional transit service. Bus riders in the two counties now can purchase month-long passes that... - [*Scranton Times*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**Freight growing at LVIA, but not passenger flights | Letter**](#)
Lehigh Valley International Airport officials reported that cargo traffic flights more than doubled compared with last year and are up 165 percent since 2015. There seems to be no increase in passenger flights in the same time frame. So the people of the Lehigh Valley do not mean anything to... - [*Easton Express-Times*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**Despite mild season, potholes plague the city**](#)
If the mildness of the season continues, savings on ice-melting materials will translate into more money for municipalities to make warm-weather road repairs. "We've been knock-on-wood fortunate this winter," said Washington Councilman Ken Westcott, head of the road department. "If... - [*Washington Observer-Reporter*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**A look back at how Interstate 79 came to be and changed Greene County**](#)
Before Interstate 79 was constructed in the 1960s and 70s, the main road through Greene County, north to south, was Route 19, a winding, two-lane highway. Don Chappel remembers coming to Waynesburg from South Fayette Township in Allegheny County to attend Waynesburg College in late 1968, when I-79 was... - [*Washington Observer-Reporter*](#)
- 03-03-2017 [**Motorcyclists encouraged to take free courses, start riding season safely**](#)

HARRISBURG — With the approach of warmer temperatures and the motorcycle riding season in Pennsylvania, PennDOT today urged riders of all ages to prepare by taking a free motorcycle training course. These courses are available to Pennsylvania residents throughout the commonwealth through... - [Shamokin News-Item](#)

03-03-2017

[Trail link work to begin this month](#)

A marriage of state and local funding will provide a new and improved bike and pedestrian route from the North Street Bridge to a point where people can access the Neshannock Creek Trail. Construction of the Neshannock Creek Trail Connection, located at the end... - [New Castle News](#)

03-03-2017

[Federal noncompliance could lead to \\$1 billion in passport costs for Pa. residents: analysis](#)

Pennsylvanians who fly once a year could spend a combined \$1 billion to acquire passports by the end of 2018 as the state-issued ID will no longer be accepted for domestic air travel. Keeping Identities Safe, a not-for-profit prevention group, performed an analysis that found Pennsylvanians' pocketbooks will be hit if the state... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)

03-03-2017

[Opinion | Trump's infrastructure plan could run into a big problem: Democracy](#)

The American people support more federal spending on infrastructure such as roads, buildings and waterways — 75 percent are in favor, according to a year-old Gallup poll. And so President Trump's call for a 10-year, \$1 trillion “national rebuilding” plan was one of the few parts of his... - [Washington Post](#)

03-03-2017

[Why Teens Still Don't Want to Get a Driver's License](#)

At 16, Henry Stock doesn't see many reasons to get a driver's license. He can walk to stores near his home in Hollywood, Florida. Many of his friends are fellow gamers he can talk to online. And he can use a mobile ride-sharing app to get a ride when he needs one.... - [Stateline.org](#)

03-03-2017

[PennDOT encourages motorcyclists to enroll in courses](#)

HARRISBURG - With the approach of warmer temperatures and the motorcycle riding season in Pennsylvania, PennDOT recommends free motorcycle training through the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program as part of a rider's preparation for this year's riding season.... - [Oil City Derrick](#)

03-03-2017

[PennDOT: \\$2M bridge replacement projects to begin next week in Berks County](#)

Work is set to begin next week on a nearly \$2 million project to replace two bridges in Berks County, PennDOT announced Thursday. On Monday, March 6, crews will begin to replace the structurally deficient Weavertown Road Bridge over a tributary to Monocacy Creek in Amity... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)

03-03-2017

[Letter: Put gas pipelines along the Turnpike](#)

Dear Editor: I have read with interest the fight over pipelines across the nation. If the pipeline technology is so great why don't we build them next to roads, etc. The company could drive back and forth easily to observe possible problems. I found it interesting that new pipelines are to cross... - [Carlisle Sentinel](#)

03-03-2017

[PennDOT plans replacement of South Muddy Creek Road bridge to start March 13](#)

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) recently posted signs announcing that on March 13 its contractor will close the South Muddy Creek Road bridge over Little Muddy Creek and begin a seven-month project to demolish and replace the 66-year-old superstructure of the bridge... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)

03-03-2017

[What was the Hugg-Harrison-Glover House, the just-demolished Revolutionary landmark?](#)

The Revolutionary War-era Hugg-Harrison-Glover House in Bellmawr was torn down Friday, a surprise demolition for a highway construction project that shocked and outraged preservationists. Concern and conflict over the historical site's fate have been brewing for... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

03-03-2017

[Bridge closed by fractured truss on track to reopen in April](#)

Engineers say work to repair a major bridge that links Pennsylvania and New Jersey remains on track for it to reopen in about a month.... - [AP](#)

03-03-2017

[How Uber Used Secret Greyball Tool to Deceive Authorities Worldwide](#)

SAN FRANCISCO - Uber has for years engaged in a worldwide program to deceive the authorities in markets where its low-cost ride-hailing service was being resisted by law enforcement or, in some instances, had been outright banned. The program, involving a tool called Greyball, uses data collected from the... - [New York Times](#)