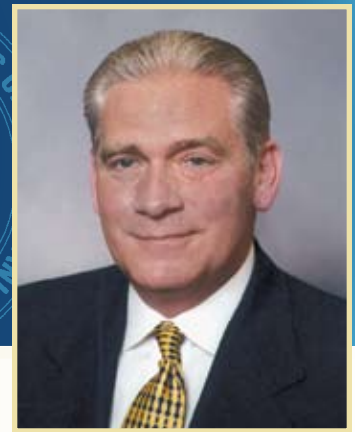
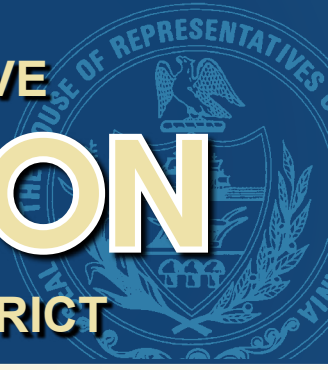


STATE REPRESENTATIVE

RON BUXTON

103RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Fall/Winter 2009

CAPITOL OFFICE:

512 Main Capitol • P.O. Box 202103 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2103 • (717) 783-9342

DISTRICT OFFICE:

151 S. Front St. • Steelton, PA 17113 • (717) 986-1673

Steelton post office remains open

Buxton credits community's effort



First and foremost, I would like to express my thanks to all of you who played a large part in the successful effort to keep the Steelton post office open.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Postal Service included the Steelton office on a list of hundreds of post office branches nationwide being considered for closure.

Steelton residents were asked to complete a survey about their use of the post office. Obviously, your participation and responses to that survey made a big difference in keeping the Steelton branch of the post office open.

This was a total community effort led by Mayor Tom Acri. It was his call to residents to save this facility that was heard loud and clear.

Had the post office closed, many senior citizens and people

who do not have cars would have lost access to postal services they have come to depend on. It is important that the Steelton post office remain open as an anchor in the heart of town and a convenient and important resource for Steelton residents.



Rep. Buxton talks with Mayor Acri and a postal service employee about the effort to keep the post office doors open.

Electric rate caps ending: What you need to know

Beginning in January, you could be faced with increases of about 30 percent in your electric bills because of the rate caps that are coming off PPL's electric generating rates on Dec. 31. I would like to make sure you are well-informed as to your options as a consumer, but also explain how we got to this point.

In 1996, Pennsylvania residents paid electricity prices about 15 percent above the national average. Legislators responded by restructuring the generation of electricity, which accounts for about 60 percent of users' bills, to encourage more competition and drive down prices. Those caps were set to expire years ago, but they were extended for many electric companies in litigated proceedings before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

I want you to know that there are options for ensuring that your electric bills won't produce a shock to the system. PPL has posted information on its Web site regarding alternatives to using the company as your electric supplier.

Shopping around for a new electric supplier could save you money. The Pennsylvania Office of Consumer Advocate provides a shopping guide to assist you with the process, and can answer any questions you might have along the way. The phone number is 1-800-684-6560. Here is direct contact information for main competitors in Pennsylvania:

Community Energy • 1-866-WIND-123 • www.communityenergyinc.com
Dominion • 1-888-216-3721 • www.dom.com/products
Direct Energy • 1-888-734-0741 • www.directenergy.com
Liberty Power • 1-866-POWER-99 • www.libertypowercorp.com
PPL Electric Utilities • 1-888-668-4775 • www.pplelectric.com

In the meantime, you can perform your own home energy audit. An energy audit evaluates a home's energy use. It calculates how much energy is used, how efficiently it is used and suggests ways to make a home more energy efficient. An audit can reveal potential savings totaling hundreds of dollars. More information on how to conserve energy and save money is available through the state's Turn Down, Seal Off, Save Up initiative: www.turnsealsave.org.

Investing in education

Local schools see increase

In a tough economy, education is an investment in the future and we must prepare children for the workforce needs of tomorrow to help grow the economy. Providing the necessary funds that make up the state's share of basic education costs also helps to reduce the reliance on local property taxes.

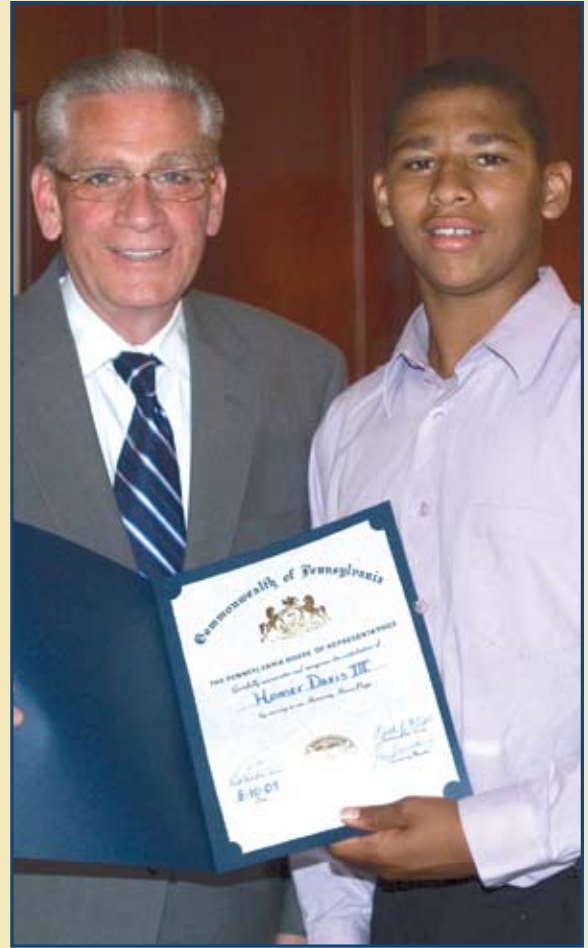
The 2009-10 state budget provides funding increases over last year for the school districts I represent.

	Basic Education Funding	Percent Increase from 2008-09
Central Dauphin	\$16 million	4%
Harrisburg	\$42 million	4%
Steelton-Highspire	\$8 million	6%

The funding amount for basic education is a combination of state and federal monies.

In addition, non-public schools across the state, like Bishop McDevitt High School, Holy Family School and Nativity School of Harrisburg within the 103rd Legislative District, received a total of \$78 million in state funding in the final budget. This is \$2 million more than the Republican-proposed budget, Senate Bill 850.

In addition, the budget preserves the programs that have been most effective in increasing student achievement, maintaining funding levels for Pre-K Counts at \$86.4 million and Accountability Block Grants, which are responsible for nearly doubling full-day kindergarten programs, at \$271.4 million.



Rep. Buxton congratulates Homer Davis III of Harrisburg for his valued contributions while he served as a guest page on the floor of the House of Representatives. Students 12 or older may serve as guest pages. Call Rep. Buxton's office for more information.



Rejecting proposed non-profits tax

Throughout the budget impasse, the prospect of taxing cultural institutions and charity raffles was very real. It was proposed in order to help balance the state budget. However, opposition to the proposal from House Democrats was enough to take it off the negotiating table.

I feel that taxing the arts and other cultural activities, or the

proceeds from small games of chance, would only hurt our local volunteer fire companies, veterans' organizations and small businesses and organizations looking to thrive in this difficult economy.

A final breakdown of revenue sources that are included in the state budget is available through www.pahouse.com.



What do you think?

Take my online survey about your state-related concerns.

www.pahouse.com/Buxton

Unemployment benefits extended

As a result of a new federal law, Pennsylvania residents who have been unable to find work during the economic downturn could be eligible for up to 99 weeks of unemployment benefits.

The federal legislation automatically makes workers in all 50 states eligible for an additional 14 weeks of federal emergency unemployment benefits. But workers in 26 states where the unemployment rate is at or above 8.5 percent are eligible for another six weeks on top of that. Pennsylvania is one of those states, meaning many workers here may

now be eligible for up to 99 weeks of state and federal unemployment benefits.

The federal legislation makes the additional benefits available automatically; no action is needed by Pennsylvania or any other state. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry will contact you directly by mail if you're eligible for the extended benefits.

Please pass this information on to anyone you know who might find it helpful.

Help for your heating bills

Pennsylvania's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps low-income and moderate-income families pay their heating bill, is currently accepting applications for the 2009-10 winter heating season.

The program has two components. The first provides cash grants to families to help pay regular monthly heating bills. The second component of LIHEAP provides crisis grants to families that are facing heating emergencies, such as broken heating equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced, a fuel shortage, termination of utility service, or the danger of being without fuel or of having utility service terminated. The crisis grant portion of LIHEAP opens Jan. 4. Both programs will run through March 15, or as long as funds remain available.

Eligibility is based on family size and income. This winter season, a family of four earning up to \$33,075 may qualify for LIHEAP.

Please contact my office for more information or assistance with the application.



Dauphin County home to Green Center

Earlier this year, it was announced that the first-ever institute for the development, teaching and application of green technologies will be established right here in Harrisburg.

The Green Center of Central Pennsylvania will be housed in the newly constructed Campus Square Building and is a partnership between the Harrisburg Area Community College, the City of Harrisburg and GreenWorks Development.

Green technology is constantly evolving and being integrated into our economy. By offering green technology courses, this will open the door for people looking to be educated and trained in the growing environmental sector.

Courses expected to be offered include solar and wind installation, maintenance and repair, green building management, home energy installation, water treatment and more.

Apply for your property tax or rent rebate

Pennsylvania has extended the deadline to Dec. 31 for senior citizens and other eligible residents to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.

Under the program, senior citizens and other eligible homeowners and renters can apply for a rebate of up to \$650 on their 2008 property taxes or rent. The program is open to senior citizens 65 or older, widows or widowers 50 or older and residents 18 or older with a permanent disability. The income limit for homeowners is \$35,000; the income limit for renters is \$15,000. Residents only have to include half of their Social Security or federal railroad retirement Tier I benefits when calculating income.

Information and applications are available by contacting either of my offices. Forms and assistance are also available by visiting www.PaPropertyTaxRelief.com online or calling toll free 1-888-222-9190.





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Local students receive state grants

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency recently announced state grant recipients for the 2009-10 school year. The grants help students who demonstrate qualifying financial need in pursuing a higher education. The average grant is nearly \$3,000 and about 172,000 full- and part-time students will be awarded grants for this school year. As of Oct. 30, 2009, that translates into \$1.5 million in state grant funding for Harrisburg-area students.

Sign up to stay informed!

You can sign up for free e-mail updates on issues important to you or send me an e-mail by visiting my Web site at www.pahouse.com/Buxton and clicking on the “Contact Me” button.



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