



Jim Wansacz

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Senior Update 2010

Dear Neighbor,

This newsletter contains valuable and vital information for older Pennsylvanians living in Northeast Pennsylvania. Please take a minute of your time and read about the many state and federal programs that are available to you, including:

- PennDOT licensing, registration and other paperwork;
- Obtaining copies of birth or death certificates;
- Applying for PACE benefits or Property Tax/Rent Rebates;
- Disability placard applications;

and many other programs and services!

My office also has a variety of informational booklets, brochures and other publications on subjects such as emergency planning, tips for older consumers, identity theft protection, living wills, how to obtain your free credit report, and much more. You can pick up these materials at my office or write or call to request they be sent to you.

As always, please feel free to contact one of my offices: 570-451-3110 for Old Forge; 570-254-9672 for Scott Township; or toll-free at 1-877-295-4937 with any state-related question, concern or issue you may have.

2009 Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications available

Please be aware that applications for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program will be available through my office.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program provides rebates on the previous year's property taxes or rent to income-eligible residents who are 65 or older, 50 or older and widowed, and 18 or older with a permanent disability. The household income limit for homeowners is \$35,000; for renters, the income limit is \$15,000. Applicants only have to count half of any Social Security or federal railroad Tier 1 retirement benefits when calculating income. The maximum rebate is \$650. Some senior homeowners may be eligible for an even larger rebate, depending on income, which they will automatically receive based on the Department of Revenue's calculations.

If you qualified for, or received, a state property tax or rent rebate for the 2008 tax year, you should receive an application for the 2009 tax year in the mail automatically. Otherwise, you can download the form online at www.revenue.state.pa.us/ptrr or contact my office. Starting in mid-February, we'll have plenty of copies, and we can help you apply. Please contact my office for assistance with filling out an application for this program.



Benefits available to older Pennsylvanians

Older Pennsylvanians have long relied on the services provided by their local area Agency on Aging. The area Agency on Aging offers a wealth of information ranging from health care to home-delivered meals.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY INCLUDE:

- In-home help with cleaning and cooking
- Help with assessing individual care needs
- Care management with a case worker
- Housing placement in nursing homes or personal care facilities
- Support for caregivers
- Help with personal care
- Emergency response and medical supplies

For more information on services and programs available through the agency, contact:

Bradford/Sullivan/Susquehanna/ Tioga Area Agency on Aging

35 Spruce St., Suite 1
Montrose, PA 18801
Toll-free: (800) 634-3746
(570) 278-3751

www.aaaseniors.org

Lackawanna Area Agency on Aging

Lackawanna County
Administration Building
200 Adams Ave.
3rd floor
Scranton, PA 18503
(570) 963-6740

www.lackawannacounty.org

Luzerne/Wyoming Area Agency on Aging

111 N. Pennsylvania Blvd.
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701
Toll-free: (800) 252-1512
(570) 822-1158

www.aginglw.org



Low-cost prescriptions available through PACE/PACENET

PACE, PACENET and PACE Plus Medicare are Pennsylvania's prescription assistance programs for older adults, offering low-cost prescription medication to qualified residents 65 and older.

To be eligible for PACE, you must be 65 or older, a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days prior to the date of application, and you cannot be enrolled in the Department of Public Welfare's Medicaid prescription benefit. For a single person, your total income must be \$14,500 or less. For a married couple, your combined total income must be \$17,700 or less.

To be eligible for PACENET, you must be 65 or older, a Pennsylvania resident for at least 90 days prior to the date of application, and you cannot be enrolled in the Department of Public Welfare's Medicaid prescription benefit. A single person's total income can be between \$14,500 and \$23,500. A married couple's combined total income can be between \$17,700 and \$31,500.

My staff and I can answer any questions you have about these programs, and we can also help you apply.

Free legal advice offered for older adults

The SeniorLAW Helpline is a statewide confidential telephone service that provides free legal information, advice and referrals to Pennsylvania residents who are 60 and older. This AARP-sponsored service is staffed by experienced attorneys who can provide information on civil legal matters and almost any personal legal issues, including:

- Consumer problems – credit, debt and bankruptcy
- Health care, including Medicare Part D
- Estate planning, wills and powers of attorney
- Government and private pensions
- Family law – divorce, custody and domestic violence
- Housing, including landlord-tenant issues, deeds and utilities

Interpretation services in 150 languages are also available!

Call toll free 1-877-727-7529 Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For additional information about the program, visit www.seniorlawcenter.org.

Pension benefits available for veterans

The Veterans Administration offers a program that is largely unknown to most veterans. It's called "Aid and Attendance" and is part of an improved pension benefit that provides monetary assistance to veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular attendance of another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing, undressing, medication dosing, or other needs of nature. The program is also available to veterans who are blind or reside in a nursing home because of mental or physical disability. Assisted care in an assisted living facility also qualifies.

This is a "Pension Benefit" and IS NOT dependent upon service-related injuries for compensation. "Aid and Attendance" can help pay for care in a home residence, a nursing home or assisted living facility. A veteran is

eligible for up to \$1,632 per month, while a surviving spouse is eligible for up to \$1,055 per month. A couple is eligible for up to \$1,949 per month.

For more information on the Veterans Administration's Aid and Attendance Pension Benefit program, please contact one of the following Veteran Affairs Offices:

Lackawanna County Veteran Affairs
(570) 963-6778

Luzerne County Veteran Affairs
570-706-3960 or 570-706-3976

Susquehanna County Veteran Affairs
(570) 278-4600 ext. 260 or 261

Wyoming County Veteran Affairs
(570) 996-2258

Report suspected elder abuse

Elder abuse and crimes targeting older people are real problems that come in many forms, including neglect, physical, financial and sexual abuse.

Although these signs do not always mean abuse, it is important to be aware that elder abuse can occur at any time to anyone.

If you believe that you or an older adult is being abused, neglected, exploited or abandoned, please call the statewide elder abuse hotline: 1-800-490-8505. This hotline is open 24 hours a day.

If you have concerns about the quality of care an older person is receiving from a facility or a caregiver, please call your local area Agency on Aging. You may also visit www.aging.state.pa.us and click "Abuse and Crime" for more information.

Bradford/Sullivan/Susquehanna/ Tioga Area Agency on Aging

**Toll-free: (800) 634-3746
(570) 278-3751**

www.aaaseniors.org

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Retirees can pay less to register their vehicles

If you are retired and receiving Social Security or other type of pension, and your total annual income is \$19,200 or less, you qualify to register your passenger vehicle or light truck (9,000 pounds or less) for a \$10 processing fee per year instead of the annual registration fee of \$36 per year.

To apply, all you need to do is obtain Form MV-371, "Application for Retired Status," through PennDOT's Bureau of Motor Vehicles or one of my district offices.

Complete the form and include it with your regular registration renewal, along with a check or money order for \$10 made payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. To obtain Form MV-371 or more information, call PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services at 1-800-932-4600, or my office at 570-451-3110 for Old Forge and 570-254-9672 for Scott Township.

Plan now for your long-term care

We don't like to think about it, but the simple truth is that most people will need some form of long-term care in the future. This can be very costly and can cause serious financial issues for families if the proper steps aren't taken early to come up with a plan.

The "Own Your Future Planning Kit" is a free guide that will walk you step-by-step through the process of getting your finances, insurance, home and legal work in order, and help you determine what programs are available in your community to assist you with this process.

The free kit is available by calling 1-866-752-6582. You can find out more information by visiting www.longtermcare.gov.



State Representative
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 P.O. Box 202114
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lpo.jc.0210

Wansacz sees huge turnout at 10th Annual Senior Fair

I held my 10th Annual Senior Fair on Aug. 14, 2009 at the St. Mary's Center in Scranton.

The senior fair featured more than 40 exhibitors with information on health insurance, senior programs, health screenings and door prizes.

I would like to thank all of our vendors for their donations of time and prizes. I would also like to thank all of the seniors who came to this event and made it such a success.

Keep an eye out for information on this year's Senior Fair, which I plan to host during the summer of 2010!

