

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MARCH 2010

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Register & Vote – 2010 primary elections

The 2010 primary election will be held Tuesday, May 18. The last day to register to vote is April 19.

Pennsylvania is a closed primary state, which allows voters to cast ballots only in the primary of their party.

There are expected to be contested primary races for U.S. senator, governor, lieutenant governor and U.S. Congress. Also on the ballot are state senator in the 26th District, which includes Marple Township, and state representative.

Voters will choose Democratic and Republican State Committee members, as well as members of the Democratic County Committee.

Visit <https://www.pavoterservices.state.pa.us> and click on the “Find Your Polling Place” link to find out where to vote.

If you have moved since the last election, you must register in your new precinct. If you are a first-time voter, or voting in a new precinct for the first time, state law requires you to show a valid form of photo or non-photo identification at the polls. Non-photo identification includes a current utility bill or bank statement.

If you are unable to go to the polls because of illness or disability, or will be out of your township because of professional obligations, you may apply for an absentee ballot until May 11.

Voter registration and absentee ballot applications are available in my Havertown office.

Vitali bill would protect state forests

In January, I introduced House Bill 2235 which would place a five-year moratorium on leasing additional state forest land for natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale region.

With the leasing of 32,000 acres in January, about a third (692,000 acres) of state forest land is now available for drilling. There is a proposal to lease more.

In January, an agreement between Gov. Rendell and Senate Republican budget negotiators to raise another \$180 million for the 2010-11 budget by leasing additional state forest land for gas drilling was revealed.

In addition to placing a five-year moratorium on state forest leasing, my legislation would require the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to study the impact of gas drilling on state forests and provide an an-

nual report to the governor and General Assembly. It also would give DCNR sole discretion after the moratorium to determine if state forests can withstand additional natural gas drilling.

Marcellus gas drilling has a significant impact on the quality of state forests and may put local water supplies at risk. Six or seven thousand wells are expected to be drilled on already leased land in the next 10 to 15 years. My legislation would allow us to take a step back and analyze the impact of this drilling before we lease any additional acreage.

Instead of leasing more state forest land, I believe Pennsylvania should impose a severance tax on gas drillers to raise money. Almost every other state that extracts natural gas imposes such a tax.

Havertown PCP Superfund site update

Here is what's happening at the Havertown PCP Superfund site:

Excavation of contaminated soil began in January at the open space behind Rittenhouse Circle near the end of Washington Avenue and is expected to be completed soon.

An abandoned sewer line is being removed along with the contaminated soil as it is encountered during the excavation. The areas are being filled with new soil after the excavation and sampling.

Once the excavation is complete, new monitoring wells and three new extraction wells will be installed to draw water from the ground that will be piped to the treatment plant. EPA plans to add topsoil and replant when weath-

er permits, and hopes to complete this part of the project by June.

A monitoring well will be converted to a deep extraction well at the former National Wood Preservers portion of the site across Eagle Road from the Philadelphia Chewing Gum factory. Contaminated water drawn from wells throughout the site will be pumped and treated for many years.

Visit www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/npl/PAD002338010.htm for more project details. Comments and questions about the Superfund project should be referred to Jill Lowe, Remedial Project Manager, at 215-814-3123 or by e-mail at lowe.jill@epa.gov.

State library offers prompt answers to your questions

The state library system offers an online question-and-answer service, providing information about topics such as Pennsylvania, history, the arts, popular culture and genealogy.

Through Ask Here PA, librarians in most cases will answer your questions online within 15 minutes any time of the week. If the answer requires extensive research, they'll help get you started and point you in the right direction.

To access the online service, visit www.AskHerePA.org and follow the directions. Please note that the service does not apply to information related to your individual library records, overdue fees, book renewals, etc.

Join my e-mail update list

I maintain an e-mail list of constituents who wish to receive periodic e-mail updates from me about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. If you would like to be added to that list, please visit my Web site at www.pahouse.com/vitali and hit the "Contact Me" tab on the left. Fill in the information and you will automatically be added to the list. You can unsubscribe at any time, if you so choose.

Update on Haverford Reserve

Here's what's new with the Haverford State Hospital development project:

On March 8, the Haverford Township Board of Commissioners voted to advance the indoor recreational facility proposal to the next level of design by directing the architectural firm of Kimmel Bogrette to add more details to the schematic design.

The schematic design, which was presented to the commissioners in February, calls for a 35,000-square-foot, \$6 million indoor facility. The design includes a double gym, an elevated walking track, a wellness center and a meeting room. A swimming pool was left out of the design.

No final decision has been made on whether to construct the facility. Residents are urged to contact their commissioner to let them know how they feel about an indoor facility at Haverford Reserve.

I believe that an indoor recreational facility would improve the quality of life in our community and increase property values. To help pay for the indoor recreation facility, state Sen. Daylin Leach and I jointly secured a commitment of \$1 million from the state. Haverford Township has filed an application to secure the money.

This spring, two more grass fields – one for softball and



another multipurpose field – will be added to the site. A synthetic surface field with lights and a multipurpose grass field are already in use.

Two more hiking trails opened on Jan. 30. A 1.5-acre dog park is planned near the Marple Road entrance as well as a pavilion, restroom facilities and a playground.

Plans for a private residential component of the project include six condominium buildings containing 200 units and 50 carriage house duplexes. Construction is underway on the second condominium building. One carriage home duplex is complete and three more are under construction.

2010 Delaware County Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Drop-off Events

Delaware County will again have several household hazardous waste drop-off events through the year. Household hazardous waste includes household products that are labeled poisonous, toxic, flammable, caustic, corrosive, reactive or explosive. Electronics that can be dropped off include computers, printers, scanners, fax machines and televisions with screens less than 27 inches.

All events will be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. rain or shine.

- Saturday, March 27 – **Marple Transfer Station**, Marpit Drive and Sussex Boulevard, Broomall (electronics will not be accepted at this event).
- Saturday, April 24 – **Emergency Services Training Center**, 1600 Calcon Hook Road, Sharon Hill.
- Thursday, Sept. 16 – **Rose Tree Park**, 1521 North Providence Road, Media.
- Saturday, Oct. 9 – **Upper Chichester Township Municipal Building**, 8500 Furey Road, Boothwyn.

For more information, call the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority at 610-892-9627. For driving directions, visit www.co.delaware.pa.us/recycle/hhw.html.

Montgomery County also will hold hazardous waste and electronics collection program events that are open to Delaware County residents. They will all be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. rain or shine. Some convenient locations are:

- Saturday, June 19 – **Temple University Ambler Campus' student parking lot**, Butler Pike entrance only, Upper Dublin.
- Saturday, July 17 – **Montgomery County Community College**, 473 Cathcart Road, Blue Bell.
- Saturday, Oct. 23 – **Lower Merion Township Public Works Building**, 1300 North Woodbine Road, Penn Valley.

Tax amnesty program to start in April

If you are behind on your taxes, you may benefit from Pennsylvania's tax amnesty program that will run from April 26 to June 18.

All taxes administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, such as personal income tax and corporate net income tax, are eligible for this 54-day program. The program is open to individuals and businesses.

To obtain tax amnesty, you must file an amnesty form **online** with the state Department of Revenue, file all delinquent tax returns and pay all delinquent taxes plus 50 percent of the interest due. The state will waive 100 percent of penalties and half of the interest for anyone who

pays his/her delinquent state taxes.

The department will have an online application beginning April 26 at www.revenue.state.pa.us. Information about commonly asked questions is already posted on the department's web site.

Pennsylvania is owed \$3.2 billion in taxes, about half of which the state Department of Revenue considers collectible. This program is expected to generate \$190 million.

Pennsylvania's last amnesty program was held in 1995-96.

State can help answer your finance questions and complaints

The Pennsylvania Department of Banking Consumer Services Division is available to handle a wide range of questions related to finance and banking.

Some commonly asked questions cover what a person should do if they believe they are the victim of an identity theft, what recourse they have after being assessed an overdraft charge and who owns their mortgage if it was sold.

Consumers in Pennsylvania can contact the Department of Banking toll free at 1-800-722-2657 or by submitting a

request online www.banking.state.pa.us.

The office also has a growing list of resources available online, including information on potential scams, enforcement actions taken by the Department of Banking and informational materials.

If a person has a question about a financial company that is regulated by the federal government, such as Bank of America, the department will refer the question to the proper regulatory agency.

Deadline to apply for Property Tax/Rent Rebate is June 30

Applications for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program are available in my office. The deadline to apply for the rebate is June 30. The program provides rebates of up to \$650 to qualifying homeowners and renters.

To qualify, homeowners must have a household income of \$35,000 per year or less and renters \$15,000 per year or

less, be 65 or older, a widow or widower 50 or older, or 18 or older and permanently disabled. As always, only half of an applicant's Social Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I income is counted against the income limits. In previous years, the deadline has been extended until Dec. 31 but that decision is not made until mid June.

Free notary services at district office

If you are a resident of the 166th Legislative District, you can have most official documents notarized free in my district office. Please call ahead to make sure the notary is in the office and can accommodate your type of document. Notary work is done most weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person, in the presence of the notary, and provide proof of identity such as a valid

driver's license, photo ID card or passport. Please let my staff know if witnesses are needed, in addition to the notary, for your documents. We also ask that residents observe a five-signature limit.

My office is on the second floor. If you are unable to climb stairs, please let us know when you call and we can arrange to have the notary meet you on the ground floor.