

GREG VITALI

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Senior meeting set for Oct. 7 in Marple

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2011

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Senior meeting set for Oct. 7

I will host a program starting at 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 7 in the meeting room of the Marple Public Library. The purpose of the meeting is to inform senior citizens about services available from the Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA), health care choices, and Social Security issues.

Marie Bonita will outline the services and programs available from COSA, Kim Andrews will talk about Medicare counseling available from APPRISE, and Ed Lafferty will discuss Social Security issues.

Light refreshments will be served.

Please use entrance on the side of the building. For more information, call my district office.

New rules to obtain passports

Effective April 1, the U.S. Department of State began requiring a long-form birth certificate to receive a passport. The long-form certificate contains the full names of both parents. If you intend to apply for a long-form version of your birth certificate, please make sure that you note on the application that its intended use is **travel**. Pennsylvania Vital Records will then include your parents' names on the birth certificate. Applications are available in my district office. My district office can also help you obtain a birth certificate.

Update on Marcellus Shale legislation

Earlier this year, I attempted to bring my Marcellus Shale drilling tax legislation to a vote by the full House of Representatives. House Bill 33 would impose a 5.9 percent tax on natural gas drillers to help ease cuts in this year's budget, fund environmental programs and help communities impacted by drilling.

However, the legislation was met with resistance and sent back to the House Finance Committee where it has been stalled most of this year. I will attempt to bring my legislation for a vote this fall.

The bill would generate an estimated \$492 million in 2012, and estimated yearly revenue would rise to \$671 million in 2015. The money would be shared equally by the General Fund, the Environmental Stewardship Fund and communities impacted by gas drilling.

My two other Marcellus Shale-related bills remain in the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

House Bill 150 would put a three-year moratorium on

additional state forestland being leased for Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling. The state already has leased about half of the 1.5 million acres of state forest that lay above the Marcellus Shale formation to gas drillers. My bill would not stop drilling on land the state has already leased, or on privately owned land.

House Bill 1211 would require at least a two-mile space between natural gas drill sites in the Marcellus Shale formation. This would reduce the number of drilling pads, minimizing the impact of natural gas drilling on Pennsylvania's landscape.

Additional drilling legislation I co-sponsored would provide setback of well pads from drinking water supplies, disclosure of chemicals used in drilling and bonding requirements for drillers.

I will aggressively continue to work for the enactment of the above legislation when the House returns to session in the fall.

County Line Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue intersection improved

Traffic is flowing more smoothly through the Five Points Intersection in Bryn Mawr now that a project jointly undertaken by Radnor and Lower Merion townships, Bryn Mawr Hospital and the state Department of Transportation was completed in May.

The project streamlined the intersection of County Line Road and Bryn Mawr, Railroad, and Glenbrook avenues by closing off traffic to Glenbrook except at a traffic light on County Line Road. It also added dedicated left-turn

lanes on Bryn Mawr and County Line and a right-turn lane from Bryn Mawr onto County Line.

Radnor and Lower Merion townships contributed \$330,000 apiece to the project, the hospital added \$610,000 and PennDOT provided in-kind work.

The Road and Bridge Safety Improvement Award program recognized the project with an honorable mention certificate.

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.

Register & Vote – 2011 election is Nov. 8

The 2011 general election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 8. Voters will elect candidates for Superior Court, Commonwealth Court, Delaware County Court of Common Pleas, District Justice, Delaware County Council, Delaware County District Attorney, School Board, and Township Commissioners from odd-numbered wards.

If you have moved since the last election, you must register in your new voting precinct to be eligible to vote. Also, if you are a first-time voter, or voting for the first time in a new precinct, state law requires you to show a valid form of photo or non-photo identification at the polls. The last day to register to vote is Oct. 11. The last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot is Nov. 1. All absentee ballots must be received by the Bureau of Elections by Nov. 4.

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

EPA: No TCE danger in homes near Havertown Superfund site

Testing of 10 homes around the Havertown Superfund site earlier this year for trichloroethylene (TCE), a volatile organic compound used to degrease metal parts, showed there are no levels of concern in any of the homes, according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA did the testing because TCE was found in groundwater at the site. When TCE is present in groundwater, its vapors have the potential to seep through soil and into homes. Long-term exposure to TCE vapors could cause nerve, kidney or liver damage, and some studies show TCE could cause cancer in those organs.

EPA released its findings in a mid-July statement that says TCE does “not pose an unacceptable risk to residents via a vapor intrusion pathway.” EPA reported that no TCE contaminants were detected in indoor living spaces, so removal action is not required.

However, Dr. Michael Levin, an environmental scientist from Havertown, said “current results must be further evaluated both for human health and safety risks.”

“The proposed YMCA building site may be contaminated

with at least nine different wood preserver compounds, technical grade petroleum products as well as trichloroethylene (TCE) from one or more sources and additional testing should be done,” Levin said.

EPA has installed two new monitoring well clusters to determine the western boundary of TCE contamination in groundwater. Each cluster has a well drilled to a shallow and intermediate depth. The new well clusters are at the Eagle Business Park property.

The wells were drilled on Aug. 2 and samples have been taken. They are currently being processed.

TCE is not a contaminant associated with the Superfund site, but it was detected as part of EPA’s continuing monitoring of the area.

For more information on the TCE study, contact On-Scene Coordinator Ruth Scharr at (215) 814-3191 or email her at Scharr.ruth@epa.gov. For more information on the Havertown PCP Superfund Site, contact Project Manager Jill Lowe at (215) 814-3123 or email her at Lowe.jill@epa.gov.

Household hazardous waste and electronic drop-off events

There are more household hazardous waste drop-off events scheduled this year:

- Thursday, Sept. 15 – **Rose Tree Park**, 1671 N. Providence Road, Media.
- Saturday, Oct. 15 – **Upper Chichester Township Municipal Building**, 8500 Furey Road, Upper Chichester.
- Saturday, Oct. 22 – **Lower Merion Township Public Works Building**, 1300 N. Woodbine Road, Penn Valley.

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

Household hazardous waste includes household products that are labeled poisonous, toxic, flammable, caustic, corrosive or reactive.

Electronics that can be dropped off include computers, printers, scanners, fax machines and televisions with screens less than 27 inches. A maximum of three computers and/or televisions is permitted per vehicle.

For more information about the Media and Upper Chichester events, call the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority at (610) 892-9627. For more information on the Penn Valley event, call the Montgomery County Recycling Hotline at (610) 278-3618.

Marple/Haverford electronic waste recycling collection set for Sept. 17

Marple and Haverford townships will hold the first of three electronic waste recycling events from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine, Saturday, Sept. 17 at the grounds of the former Marple Grade School, West Chester Pike and Malin Road, Broomall.

Items that will be accepted include stereos, vacuums, cell phones, microwaves and air conditioners 24,000 BTUs and under. There’s no cost to discard items except for glass-screen televisions and glass computer screens, which carry a \$10 per-item fee, cash only.

Items that will not be accepted include large appliances, items containing mercury, gas-powered machinery such as lawn mowers, appliances with Freon and air conditioners larger than 24,000 BTUs.

The two additional dates will be announced later. For more information, please contact Joe Romano, Director of Code Enforcement for Marple Township at (610) 356-4040.

Recent changes in Pennsylvania law

Several bills that will impact the day-to-day lives of Pennsylvanians have been signed into law this year. Here's a summary of that legislation:

Castle Doctrine expansion (H.B. 40) – Eliminates a person's duty, when outside of the home or workplace, to retreat even when he or she can safely do so before resorting to deadly force. Before the new law went into effect, people only had the right to use deadly force in their home without retreating.

Homicide by watercraft penalties (H.B. 78) – This law increases the penalty for homicide by watercraft while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances to a mandatory minimum three-year prison term for each resulting death. This change brings penalties for homicide by watercraft in line with penalties for homicide by vehicle, DUI related.

Cancer in firefighters (H.B. 797) – A new law allows firefighters to receive workers' compensation if they develop cancer and can establish direct exposure to certain carcinogens while responding to an incident. Firefighters also must successfully pass a physical exam showing no evidence of cancer before beginning work as a firefighter or submitting a claim.

Sunshine Law changes (S.B. 101) – Increases fines when elected officials meet with the intent of violating the state's open meetings law, called the Sunshine Law, from a flat rate of \$100 to as much as \$1,000 for a first offense and \$500 to \$2,000 for a second offense. The new law applies to officials such as school board members, township commissioners and county council members.

HIV testing (S.B. 260) – This law eliminates Pennsylvania's requirement for separate written consent and pre-

test counseling to obtain a HIV test as part of a blood test. Those who do not wish to be tested for HIV can still sign a written opt-out form. The change brings the state in line with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth (S.B. 326) – A new law provides parents with documentation when a child is stillborn, helping families through the grieving and healing process. At the option of the parent, the name of the child, names of the parents and birth place can be included on the certificate. This certificate was not previously available in Pennsylvania.

Sunday motorcycle sales (S.B. 419) – Pennsylvania motorcycle dealerships can now sell motorcycles on Sundays. Previously, they were permitted to open on Sundays, but could only sell merchandise or parts.

Good Samaritan (S.B. 448) – A new law provides immunity to underage drinkers who call 911 because someone else needs medical attention. The caller must provide his or her name to the 911 operator and must remain with the person until paramedics arrive. The law eliminates a disincentive for underage drinkers to call for help.

Unemployment compensation (S.B. 1030) – The law continues a federally funded, 13-week period of unemployment compensation benefits for those receiving extended benefits. Had the bill not been signed, the benefits would have stopped on June 11. Eligible Pennsylvanians can now receive their 13 weeks of extended benefits through Dec. 31.

To read the text of legislation, the history of the bill and its sponsor and co-sponsors, please visit www.house.state.pa.us.

Deadline to apply for Property Tax/Rent Rebate extended until Dec. 31

The deadline to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate has been extended until the end of this year. The program provides rebates of up to \$650 to qualifying homeowners and renters. Rebates issued this year are based on property taxes or rent paid in 2010.

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. Only half of an applicant's Social Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I income is counted against the income limit.

You can obtain an application form in my office or download the form online at www.revenue.state.pa.us, click-

ing on "Forms and Publications" on the left side of the page, and then clicking on "Forms for Individuals," then "Property Tax/Rent Rebate."

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