



Summer 2013

Capitol Office:

30 East Wing • P.O. Box 202009 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009 • (717) 772-2436

District Office:

Z-Penn Building • 20 S. Mercer St. • New Castle, PA 16101 • (724) 656-1112 • Toll free: 1-800-866-2215

Website: www.pahouse.com/sainato • Email: csainato@pahouse.net

Update on the Lawrence County racetrack and casino

The proposed casino and harness racing facility in Mahoning Township, which I strongly support, is back on track.

The long-awaited project has had more than its share of setbacks.

Originally, Indianapolis-based Centaur planned to build the facility, but ran into financial problems and auctioned the project to American Harness Tracks as part of a federal bankruptcy case.

Last fall, the Pennsylvania Harness Racing Commission approved the transfer of American Harness Tracks stock to Endeka Entertainment.

The project received some good news when Penn National Gaming, which owns and operates more than 20 horse racing and casino gaming facilities throughout the United States and Canada, announced a partnership with Endeka.

Penn National paid the \$50 million application fee to the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board for the proposal, and is providing a \$15 million loan for the \$158.5 million project. Penn National also acquired the option to purchase a one-third ownership interest in the racetrack and casino.

The facility, which is proposed for a 250-acre site off Route 422, is expected to have about 1,250 slot machines at opening, 40 live table games, 10 poker tables, and parking for 2,000 vehicles. Most importantly, the project is expected to create about 1,200 full- and part-time jobs for our area.

Penn National and Endeka have applied for a license with the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board. The board will review the application, conduct background checks and accept input regarding the project. Public hearings will be held in Mahoning Township.

This partnership between Endeka and Penn National is encouraging. I will be sure to keep you informed as the project moves forward.

Plan ahead. Be prepared.

We can't predict when emergencies or disasters will occur, but having a family emergency plan will help to protect the health and safety of you and your loved ones. Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count. Creating an emergency contact list, making a plan for your family and having an emergency kit on hand are some of the most important things you can do to be prepared.

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) has a brochure to help you prepare if disaster strikes. To access the brochure, please visit www.ReadyPA.org or call the ReadyPa hotline at 1-888-973-2397.



It was my pleasure to participate in the opening ceremony of the Lawrence County Fair.

It is important to know who in your community will be able to help you during a disaster, particularly if you have special needs. Your county emergency management agency can help you prepare for emergencies before they happen.

LAWRENCE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY – 724-656-4927, EXT. 3701

COMING SOON: Veteran designation on Pa. driver's licenses

Pennsylvania recently enacted a law to provide veterans with a veterans designation on their Pennsylvania driver's license.

The governor signed legislation, which I co-sponsored, into law in October 2012. However, PennDOT has until June 2014 to make these licenses available to veterans.

The military generally only provides a veterans status identification card for those who have a "retired" designation, which requires 20 to 30 years of service. Many people today serve their country for several years, then go on to work in the private sector, leaving them only with their DD-214 or NGB-22 discharge papers to prove their status.

Once available, these licenses will provide an easy way for veterans to prove eligibility for benefits or discounts without having to carry their discharge papers.

To qualify, an applicant must have served in the United States Armed Forces, including a reserve unit or the

National Guard, and been discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable.

There will be no additional cost to veterans for the special designation on their licenses.

Numerous other states, including Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Utah have enacted similar legislation.



2013-14 state budget highlights

A few hours before midnight on June 30, Gov. Tom Corbett signed the General Appropriations bill (Act 1A/HB 1437), providing \$28.375 billion in state fund expenditures for 2013-14.

Below are several highlights as they relate to veterans, emergency preparedness and public safety:

- An additional \$1.05 million, a 64.3 percent increase, for **Veterans' Outreach Services**.

- \$100,000 for the **Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol**, which last received state funding in 2009-10.

The Civil Air Patrol is a federally supported, nonprofit organization serving as an official civil auxiliary arm of the United States Air Force. It consists of volunteers who support emergency service responders by conducting search-and-rescue operations, providing disaster relief and performing homeland security missions.

- Provides for three **State Police** cadet classes (approximately 290 cadets) and the hiring of 90 civilians to free up 90 troopers, for a total of 380 additional troopers. The State Police currently has 544 vacancies and about 1,000 troopers are eligible to retire.

- \$2.5 million to the **Attorney General's Office** to create a new Mobile Street Crimes Unit to fight gang activity.

Attorney General Kathleen Kane has said the unit will combine resources from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the federal Drug Enforcement Agency, the Attorney General's Bureau of Narcotics Investigation & Drug Control, and local police departments.

- Increases the **Safe Schools Initiative** by \$6.5 million, or 321.5 percent, for total funding of \$8.5 million. The funding provides targeted grants to schools and municipalities to address school violence and safety issues.



I joined with Lawrence County members of ABATE to help promote motorcycle safety.



We observe Loyalty Day every May 1. It is a day set aside for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States and for the recognition of our heritage of freedom. It was my honor to present VFW State Commander Ruth Fairchild with a citation designating May 1st as Loyalty Day in Pennsylvania. Joining us for the presentation were VFW Ladies Auxiliary Department President Sandra Brenner and Pennsylvania VFW State Adjutant John Getz.

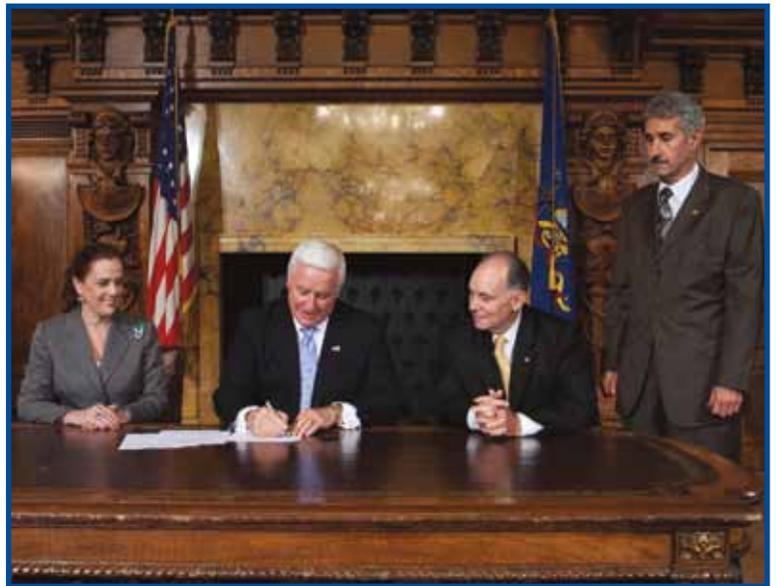
New law preserves 911 center funding

Legislation to restructure the E-911 Wireless Fund and ensure its viability into the future was signed on June 17 to become Act 9 of 2013. Without this law, the fund would have become bankrupt by 2014.

Funding for county 911 services is critical. Without the changes in this law, our 911 centers would have been in a perilous funding position. Act 9 authorizes the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to provide counties with helpful suggestions to cut costs, including joint purchasing, regionalization and consolidation. The law also eliminates a 911 center's ability to "carry forward" unpaid PEMA approved costs. Currently, any 911 center request that is eligible for funding, but is not able to be funded in the current year, can be funded "off the top" of the following year's appropriation. If this practice was allowed to continue, these carryover IOUs would have functionally bankrupted the E-911 Wireless Fund by 2014.

After a one-year transition period, Act 9 eliminates the carryover provision, allowing 911 centers to apply for and receive funding for the current year and keep the E-911 Wireless Fund solvent and able to meet the needs of call centers on a yearly basis.

Additionally, the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, of which I am the Democratic chairman, continues to work with PEMA and all other interested parties to update provisions of the law and further examine the funding formula and surcharge on devices used to call 911.



As Democratic chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I joined Sen. Lisa Baker and Rep. Stephen Barrar, Republican chairs of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee in their respective chambers, to watch Gov. Corbett sign into law legislation to preserve funding to operate 911 centers across the state.

Honoring our service members' final wishes

Legislation to ensure that Pennsylvania respects the final wishes of our service members was recently signed into law. Act 45 recognizes the DD Form 93 as the formal mechanism for service members to determine who has the right to make decisions regarding the disposal of their remains.

Previously, state courts had to honor a will, even if it varied from a DD Form 93 that was executed at a later date. Act 45 will make it legally clear that these decisions should be determined according to the wishes of the person in military service as authorized on their DD Form 93. This will help in instances where a will has not been updated and family members, including current and former spouses, are in conflict over the decision.

Pennsylvania had been one of a few states that did not recognize the document as an acceptable form for military personnel.

Join my email update list

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates from me about public meetings, traffic alerts, 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 sign up online at www.pahouse.com/Sainato and click "E-mail Alerts."



The VFW provides valuable service to the men and women who served our country. I had the pleasure of visiting with members of VFW Post 315 at their picnic.



STATE REP. CHRIS SAINATO

30 East Wing
P.O. Box 202009
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009

lpo.ad.0813

HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

Rep. Chris

sainato

Summer 2013



Capitol Office:

30 East Wing • P.O. Box 202009 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2009
(717) 772-2436

District Office:

Z-Penn Building • 20 S. Mercer St. • New Castle, PA 16101
(724) 656-1112 • Toll free: 1-800-866-2215

Local veterans assistance at my office

I have arranged to have a representative from the American Legion make regular visits to my local office at 20 S. Mercer St., Z-Penn Building, New Castle, to help veterans with concerns about a variety of issues.

The service is available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the last Thursday of every month. To arrange a meeting, please call my office at 724-656-1112.

Information available as part of this service includes veteran housing benefits, financial assistance, employment benefits, veteran and dependent education benefits and other state-sponsored veteran programs.



I joined local veterans at the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

My office can help you with:

- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups

