

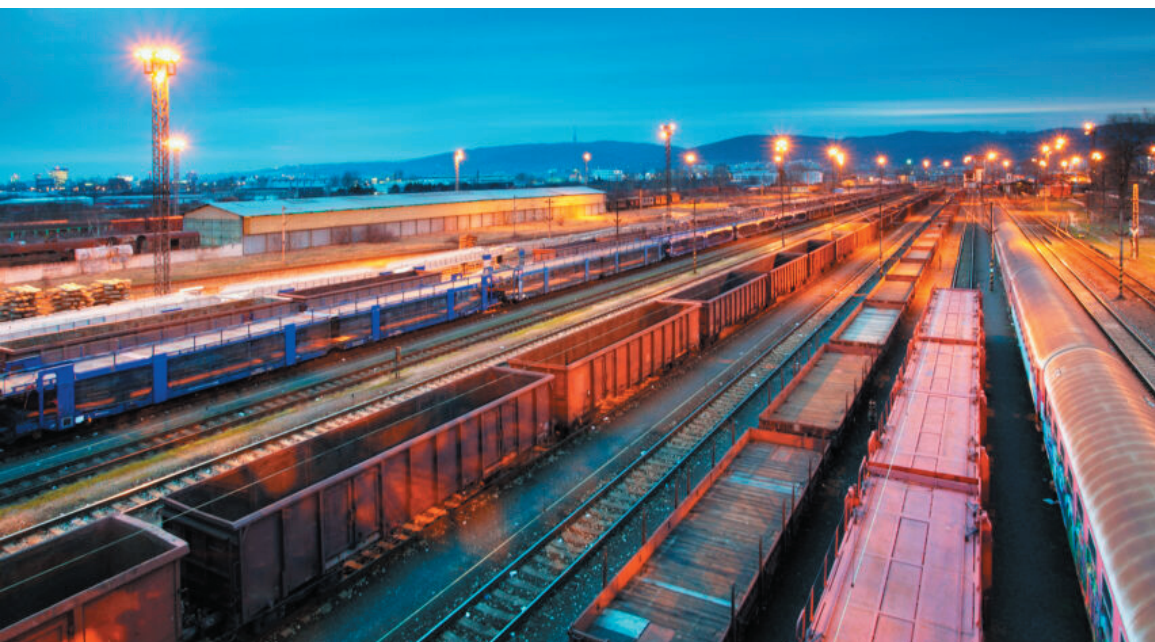
Protecting Senior Citizens' Access to Medications

By Stste rep. Joe Emrick

BETHLEHEM - Recognizing the challenges many senior citizens face when it comes to affording their medications, we recently passed a law that will preserve their access to the state's PACE and PACENET prescription drug benefit plans.

Act 62 of 2023 prevents Social Security cost-of-living increases from making seniors ineligible for PACE and PACENET.

Current income eligibility levels for PACE are set at less than \$14,500 for a single person and less than \$17,700 for a couple. PACENET, which covers those individuals with incomes exceeding PACE maximums, is open to individuals earning between \$14,500 and \$33,500 and couples with incomes between \$17,700 and \$41,500. The minimum age to participate in the programs is 65, and they are funded from proceeds of the Pennsylvania Lottery.



Shapiro Administration Invests More Than \$42m In Rail Freight Infrastructure

By Ed Gruver

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY - The Shapiro Administration is investing \$42.5 million in rail freight infrastructure, with more than 300 jobs across Pennsylvania being created or sustained by 25 new rail projects in 23 counties, including the Lehigh Valley.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) announced the approval of the rail freight improvement projects that are expected to enhance freight mobility.

Locally Northampton County:

Lehigh Valley Rail Management LLC: \$1.8 million to rehabilitate 860 feet of track and construct 3,500 feet of track in the Iron Hill Transload Yard.

PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll said in a statement that expanding the state's rail freight network will support family-sustaining jobs and connect communities to the global economy while strengthening local economic development.

"This is a historic moment to build out our infrastructure thanks to state and federal funding that will create opportunities for generations of Pennsylvanians to come – and the expansion of Pennsylvania's efficient rail freight network and service will provide key mobility throughout 23 counties across the Commonwealth," Carroll said.

Pennsylvania's 65 operating railroads are more than any other state. Pennsylvania has some 5,600 miles of freight lines.

The State Transportation Commission voted to approve the following Lehigh Valley and Central Pennsylvania projects through the Rail Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Rail Freight Assistance Program (RFAP).



Debbie Pettinari
Agent

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