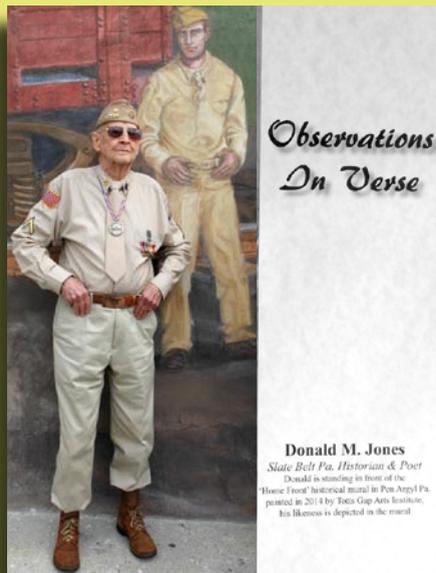


A Poem from the Archives of Donald Jones

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times



A POOR MAN

He had a chance to show kindness to a lonely man,
And to lead an old one by the hand.
He had a chance to feed a starving child,
And a chance to show God to those in the wild.
He was wealthy with chance that kept coming his way,
He ignored them; then one day he passed away.
He lost his chances to do so much good,
It seems as though he never understood.
He lost all these joys while he was still living,
They could have been his with just a little giving.
It is better to help others while you can,
Than to hear someone say, "He was a very poor man".

Great News for Pennsylvania Taxpayers

By Rep. Joe Emrick

NAZARETH - There is great economic news to report related to the state budget!
State revenue collections are more than \$828 million ahead of estimates with two months to go in the current fiscal year. But that does not mean we should be spending it all.

House and Senate Republicans came together earlier this week to stress our intention to devote much of the additional funding to building up the state's reserves for the next "rainy day" to help ensure we can weather the next economic slowdown.

The Commonwealth's revenue growth is the result of pro-growth policies and our commitment to standing up for taxpayers – and standing against excessive taxes and spending proposed by the governor over the last several years.

We will continue that commitment through this year's budget negotiations. A final 2019-20 state budget is due by June 30.

Please go here for more details <http://links.pahousenews.com>.

Government Done Right – Pennsylvania Needs an Upgrade

By Rep. Joe Emrick

BANGOR - House Republicans are devoting the month of May to giving our state government a long-overdue upgrade.

Having "government done right" means upgrading to a more effective and efficient government while providing core services. It means repealing out-of-date laws, reexamining the effectiveness of some state boards and commissions, and putting a stop to the red tape and overregulation that has tied the hands of job creators and hampered economic progress.

We kicked off the effort this week by passing House Bill 762 to require state agencies to designate a regulatory compliance officer to facilitate better understanding of new and existing regulations and boost compliance rates among affected businesses.

We also passed House Bill 509, which would boost transparency in the permitting process by requiring agencies to post information online and create an accessible tracking system for applicants to check the status of their applications.

Finally, we started a spring cleaning of sorts to get rid of some our most outdated, irrelevant laws. These include measures that regulate when things can or cannot happen on Sundays, such as movie times, baseball and football games and even playing music. Other laws we are working to repeal include antiquated sections of our Public School Code and the Scotland School for Veterans' Children, which closed in 2009.

You can read more about what we are doing to improve Pennsylvania's government by going to <http://links.pahousenews.com>

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Auditor General DePasquale Recommends Rehabilitation of Route 611 in the Delaware Water Gap, "Missing Link" Connector for the 911 Liberty Trail

By Gary Miller

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale said his new audit of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) shows the agency could be further along in repairing rough highways and fixing 2,829 structurally deficient bridges with the billions of dollars it has been forced to pay to State Police.

Locally in the Allentown-based region DePasquale recommends with additional funding, PennDOT could speed up rehabilitation of 2.6 miles of Route 611 in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Monroe County that has been identified as the "missing link" connector for the Liberty Trail. The \$30 million project is not set to begin preliminary engineering work until 2024.

DePasquale noted that transfers from the Motor License Fund to State Police have totaled more than \$4.25 billion since the 2012-13 fiscal year, money that PennDOT could otherwise have used to address a growing list of needed repairs across the state.

"More than 2,800 state-maintained bridges across Pennsylvania are structurally deficient and our bridges average over 50 years in age – beyond," DePasquale said. "That \$4.25 billion could have cut that list in half and if PennDOT could use all of the gas tax money for roads and bridges we could get that number to zero in about 5 years."

Under the state Constitution, proceeds from the Motor License Fund are to be used solely for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of and safety on public highways and bridges.

The General Assembly did act to phase in a cap on the amount of money going to State Police from the Motor License Fund. In the 2017-18 fiscal year, State Police received \$789,580,000 from the fund.

"The nearly \$800 million that came out of the fund in one year could have helped PennDOT make a significant dent in the list of urgent needs across Pennsylvania," he added.

The audit also examined how funds are awarded through the Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund (TIIF), which PennDOT administers with the help of the Department of Community and Economic Development.

During the audit period, between Jan. 1, 2014, and June 30, 2017, PennDOT indicated the governor approved TIIF monies for 27 projects totaling almost \$65.2 million as follows:

"While these may have been very worthwhile projects, my audit team was unable to find detailed documentation explaining how and why they were selected to receive funding," DePasquale said. "I recommend that this program be revised to work like a competitive grant program and steps should be taken to ensure all regions of the state have an equal chance to receive funds."

The audit also recommends that PennDOT speed up the grant cycle for funds awarded through the Multimodal Transportation Fund, which was created to help communities pay for projects that promote pedestrian safety and transit revitalization.

"I want to commend PennDOT for tightening up its internal controls, which are significantly better than they were in decades past," DePasquale added.

Visit www.paauditor.gov to review the performance audit for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation or learn more about the Department of the Auditor General.

Editor's Note: With the nearly \$800 million transferred from the Motor License Fund to State Police in 2017-18, PennDOT could accelerate or commit funding to many other important projects in various regions of the state.



Copies of the Study can be viewed at:

www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/wherewework/northeast/news/nereg_news_2011_11_FeasibilityStdy.html



Liberty-Water Gap Trail, PA Extension
Borough of Delaware Water Gap
49 Main Street
Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327
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