



Municipal Reporter



Sustainability and Economic Vitality

“Ensuring that our actions today lead to healthy, sustainable communities.”





Values

Local Governance

We believe that local authority and autonomy are central to effective municipal government and we are fully committed to their protection, preservation and advancement.

Non-Partisan

We welcome and respect the perspectives of all elected and appointed officials without regard to their political affiliation.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We value the diversity of our members and the people they serve, and are dedicated to ensuring equal respect, recognition, fairness, and access to opportunity for everyone.

Leadership

We understand that highly-competent current and future local leaders are vital and we proactively support their ongoing development.

Service

We listen to our members and ensure that their priorities, needs and satisfaction drive what we do.

Collaboration

We work to enhance all municipalities through alliances with public entities, organizations, businesses and educational institutions.

Innovation

We embrace the need to find and develop new ideas and solutions to help local governments increase their adaptability, effectiveness and impact.

Fiscal Integrity

We believe that accountability, transparency and the responsible management of resources are essential for both our association and local government.





Municipal Reporter



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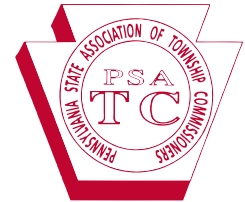
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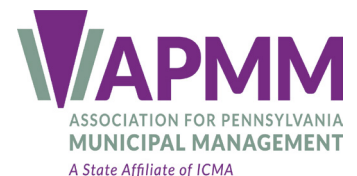
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The Pennsylvania Municipal League
414 North Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101



PML.org

Our Mission

To strengthen, empower and advocate for effective local government.

The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1900 as an advocate for Pennsylvania's 3rd class cities. Today, The League represents participating Pennsylvania cities, boroughs, townships and home rule communities that all share The League's municipal policy interests. Our Board of Directors oversees the administration of a wide array of municipal services including legislative advocacy (on both the state and federal levels), publications designed to educate and inform, education and training certification programs, membership research and inquiries, programs, and group insurance trusts.

We are continually monitoring the needs of our members and are committed to providing the Commonwealth's municipalities with cost-effective programs and services required to meet the distinct needs of their communities.

The *Municipal Reporter* is a publication of the Pennsylvania Municipal League, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners and the Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management. It is published six times a year on a bimonthly basis. Opinions expressed by authors and ad-

vertisers are not necessarily those of the officers, members and staff of The League.

Original articles on subjects of interest to municipal officials are welcome, but subject to review by editorial staff. The publisher has the right to reject unsuitable advertising.

All inquiries should be addressed to Debbie Bitting, Director of Communications, at:

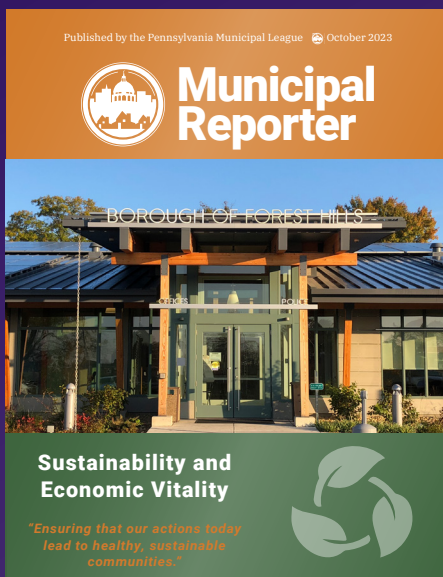
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Mark Your Calendar



2023 - 2024

Sustainable PA Annual Conference

November 1-3

Wyndham Gettysburg

U•COMP Board of Trustees Virtual Meeting

November 3

NLC City Summit

November 16-18

Atlanta, GA

PennPRIME Subcommittee Meetings and Dinner

November 30

Hilton Harrisburg

PennPRIME Board of Trustees Meeting

December 1

Hilton Harrisburg

Newly Elected Officials Virtual Training Sessions

January 5, 12 and 26 (9 a.m. - noon)

APMM Executive Development Conference

February 8-9

Omni Bedford Springs Resort

NLC Congressional City Conference

March 9-13

Marriott Marquis, Washington, D.C.

42nd Annual PELRAS Conference

March 13-15

Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College



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Municipal Reporter

The League President's Message



DOUGLAS BAKER
MAYOR
CITY OF FRANKLIN



If you were able to attend our annual business meeting on October 7, you won't be surprised to learn that I'm about to tell you a couple of stories. The first one relates to me as a young police officer walking foot patrol in downtown Franklin during the evening hours of pretty much all my afternoon shifts. Becoming a police officer was a childhood dream of mine and I often thought about how much easier my job was because of the people who had walked that same path before me. In keeping with that I would like to thank former League President Mayor Lombardo, The League Board, League staff, and the rest of my predecessors for walking this path before me and leaving us with the strong, relevant organization we have today. I appreciate their contributions and the opportunity to work with and for you during this upcoming year.

Story two: Nearly 35 years ago, I attended a law enforcement training on Performance Evaluations. I remember the concept that was presented that day well, but a specific question the instructor asked stands out and has helped shape some of my thinking to this very day. The question was "what is the product of law enforcement?" After several attempts to describe the things we do as the product, the instructor explained that the reason our communities keep us around is because they want us to make them feel safe. He then asked, "what did you do today to make your citizens feel safe?" I think that helps explain why some communities are more (or less) enthused about supporting their local police. However, that is a conversation for another day.

I've asked myself what the product of various organizations are and recommend caution when dealing with organizations that promote fear, outrage, anger and resentment. Timothy Shriver's Call to Unite presentation at the Summit was in my view "spot on." "Here at Unite, E Pluribus Unum is not a nostalgic memory to reclaim. It's the tallest aspiration imaginable – a vision of mutual respect, solutions that transcend tired debates and old divides, and promotes universal belonging – and is the greatest challenge of our times to finally achieve."

I also specifically asked myself what the product of my community is. That led me to the conclusion that we are primarily in the business of people living here and that quality of life is the primary concern of our citizens. Our job as a municipal government is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of our citizens. That basically includes, either directly or indirectly, everything we do and every service we provide. For us to maintain the ability to provide those services, we must consider the sustainability and economic vitality of our communities. That is the subject of this edition of the Municipal Reporter and I'm confident you will find it relevant, informative and useful.

Again, I would like to recognize and thank The League staff, Board of Directors and The League membership for this opportunity to work with and for such an awesome group of people.

Douglas A. Baker
Douglas Baker

The League Executive Director's Message

Anyone with kids in college knows how the conversation goes. What are you going to study? What career path do you want to pursue? Where would you like to work and how close to home do you want to work once you get that degree?

We all want our kids to find their path in life that is fulfilling and promising for their future. We all want them to have more opportunities than we did. We especially want them to be happy and hopefully live close to home. Pennsylvania continues to reinvent itself, and restore and renew our communities as we all work toward improving our quality of life. Invariably our kids find opportunities elsewhere. In other states, other parts of the country or across the globe. If we are going to make our commonwealth more economically competitive, we must give our kids the best education and skillsets we can and we have to build more sustainable communities.

The future of our communities and of our commonwealth depends on the good work and long-term decisions we make today.

The Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification, a project of the Pennsylvania Municipal League and Sustainable Pittsburgh, is a voluntary performance recognition program designed to help municipalities achieve sustainability goals, which in turn will allow your community to save money, conserve resources, and encourage innovation. The program is intended to bring recognition to municipalities that are applying the policy and practice of sustainability; municipalities that incorporate sustainable practices into their operations also foster community prosperity. The program provides communities with an online structure and performance platform for recognition as they adopt sustainable policies and practices.

This issue of the Municipal Reporter offers sustainability and economic vitality tools, resources, and innovative solutions. Fostering sustainable communities and a sustainable Pennsylvania is so important that your League, in partnership with Sustainable Pittsburgh, provides a FREE voluntary certification platform for your community to be recognized for making progress toward a more sustainable municipal government and a more sustainable community. The program is open to all municipalities in Pennsylvania.

Please check out the new Sustainable Pennsylvania software system and start recognizing your municipal staff and community partners today for making quality local decisions that have a big impact in your region of our commonwealth and beyond. Together, we can make a difference and keep more of our kids right here in our own communities.

Yours in Service,



John S. Brenner



[JOHN BRENNER](#)



Executive Director's Video Report



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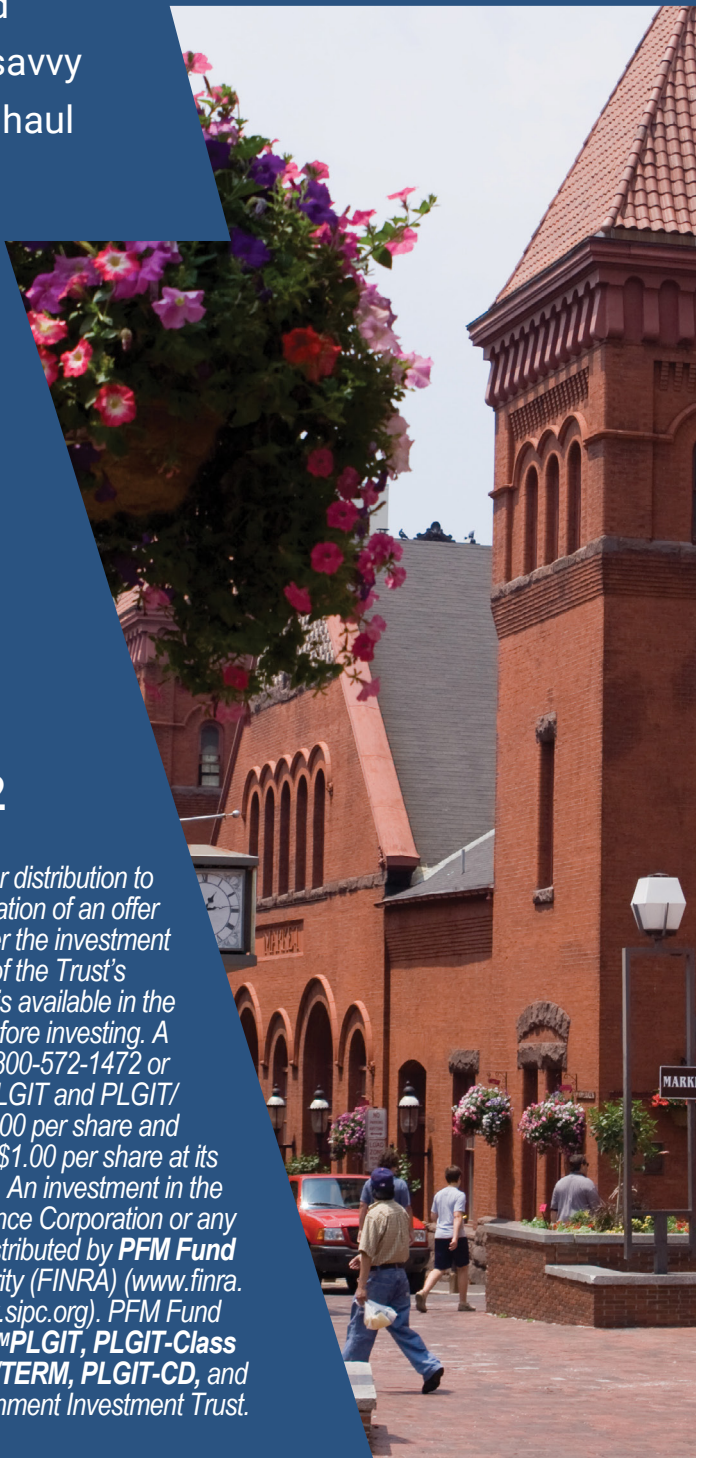
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Inside The League



ABE AMORÓS
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -
OPERATIONS

Now that summer has wrapped up and fall is here, we look forward to engaging with you for the rest of the year as we work to strengthen local governments and your communities.

Operations has been quite busy on several fronts. Not only does The League continue making significant progress in improving our information and technology capabilities but we're also pleased to welcome Amanda Lane as our new Deputy Executive Director of Membership along with our newest Director of Trusts, Mariella Queipo-Colón, who will replace our Director of Trusts Emeritus, Paul Cornell, at the end of the year. Since coming on board on July 31, Mariella has not only hit the ground running and learning about PennPRIME, U•COMP and our PennPRIME Workers' Compensation programs but she also was able to meet the fabulous board members of each of the Trusts for the first time.

Communications continues churning out quality publications along with pertinent information for our members, including notices about webinars and Lunch and Learn sessions that benefit members of The League. As a reminder, should your municipality wish to brag about a program or initiative that is currently working in your neck of the woods and you wish to share it, please contact Debbie Biting, our Director of Communications at dbitting@pml.org. She will be more than happy to assist you with a submission. With so many positive stories within our member communities, we will continue urging you to share those with us.

Earlier this year, The League also applied for a grant that would have been used for an initiative for comprehensive Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) training. Despite making it past the first round, The League was notified that we did not advance in September. However, by participating in analyzing other submitted applications, The League earned \$500 to be put toward the Schuettler Center for Municipal Development. While we were disappointed to receive the news, we are still committed to creating a DEIB program that will benefit you as members. Stay tuned for more!

John Brenner and I are also continuing our meetings with other Leagues that have leadership development programs that benefit their members in the way of a certificate program that assists them in their current roles. We will be meeting with the director of Penn State's School of Public Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg to continue our fruitful discussions. We'll have more to share with you later.

Please feel free to reach out at anytime should you have any questions at: aamoros@pml.org.

From Inside The League,

Abe Amorós

Abe Amorós

Q&A with League Leader

Salvatore Panto
Mayor
City of Easton
Past President



This Q&A feature section of the Municipal Reporter highlights an individual local leader who has been involved and engaged with their community and The League.



Q: Mayor, thank you for your service as mayor of Easton. How did you get involved in local government?

As a young man, I was involved in many community activities and was President of the Easton Area Jaycees which got me involved in all types of activities including the first Chairman of the Joint Easton Pennsylvania and Phillipsburg New Jersey Halloween Parade. I also served on the City Fire Civil Service Board and was an active member of Historic Easton.

Q: What leadership advice do you have for other local leaders?

I try encouraging other municipal leaders to be active in their state and national organizations. At the conferences for the Pennsylvania Municipal League or the National League of Cities, I encourage them to network with other leaders and attend as many learning sessions as possible so they are up to date on new issues and ideas, etc. that all municipalities face. It also gives them ample time to network with state and federal leaders as well and to stay up to date on legislation and programs that will help their municipalities.

Q: What has been your most rewarding experience as a municipal official?

I have been fortunate to have a long tenure in office, so I have had many positive experiences but the most rewarding has been working with our partners at the state and federal levels to cause a renaissance in Easton. We are approaching \$1 billion in economic development.

Q: What has been the greatest challenge in your position?

The most difficult challenge continues to be addressing homelessness and affordable housing.

Q: Thank you for serving on The League Board as a Past President. How has your involvement with The League helped you and your community?

I am very proud of my time as League President and a member of the Board of The League and the Board of the National League of Cities. I learned so much from my colleagues and the relationships that I made with state and local leaders that have helped my city in many ways. There is no doubt in my mind that without my involvement in The League and the NLC, Easton would be in the same situation as many of the other cities in our nation.

Q: What advice do you have for people considering municipal government as a career?

My advice is simple, if you want to serve you must enjoy people. A community is not the buildings, it's the people that make your community.

Q: As a proud mayor, what would you say are some of Easton's greatest attributes?

Easton's diversity is its strength. Our residents come from all backgrounds and income levels. Yes, location, our waterfront, our canals, our tourism, Lafayette College, Crayola, and others are all important to our city, but our greatest attributes will always be our people.

Q: What programs or practices has Easton implemented to address this edition's topic of "Sustainability and Economic Vitality?"

City council approved our Climate Action Plan two years ago, so our administration is now implementing the plan. In addition to purchasing renewable energy sourced electricity through The League program and planting thousands of trees to replace the urban forest, we have installed electric car charging facilities in our parking garages, purchased electric parking enforcement vehicles, and ordered four hybrid police vehicles. We also implemented our MS4 program to reduce the sediment going into our rivers. □



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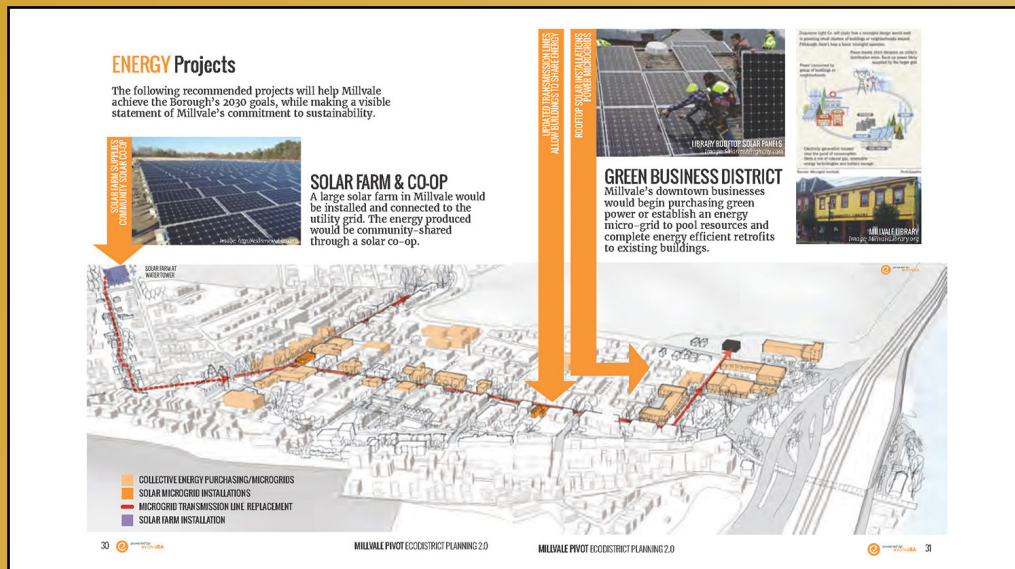
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Sustainability and Economic Vitality



This year the *Municipal Reporter* is covering the issues of highest concern that municipal leaders identified during The League's [ENVISION 2032 initiative](#), which included a broad survey and statewide forums. We are sharing articles and information relating to these very important topics of concern – Infrastructure, Municipal Finance, Equity and Civic Engagement, Community Development, Sustainability, Public Health & Safety, and Economic Vitality.

This October edition, our fifth issue this year, covers the topics of Sustainability and Economic Vitality.

As noted in our [ENVISION 2032 publication](#):

“Ensuring that our actions today lead to healthy, sustainable communities.”

For municipalities, sustainability means setting and pursuing long-term goals that create environmental, community, and financial stability. Increasingly, municipalities of all sizes are engaging in sustainable planning to navigate and balance their communities' growth, ensure all residents have access to opportunities, and maintain environmentally responsible and equitable practices.

Please see an excerpt on Sustainability from ENVISION 2032 on the following two pages. For more information and municipal actions, check out our [ENVISION 2032 publication](#).



*Charting the Future for
Pennsylvania's Municipalities*



SUSTAINABILITY

“Ensuring that our actions today lead to healthy, sustainable communities.”

The definition of sustainability has evolved significantly since the term became widely used by the environmental movement when human threats to the planet came into focus in the 1970s. Today, sustainability is more broadly defined as creating economically viable, socially equitable, and ecologically integrated conditions that ensure present and future generations can survive and thrive.

For municipalities, sustainability means setting and pursuing long-term goals that create environmental, community, and financial stability. Increasingly, municipalities of all sizes are engaging in sustainable planning to navigate and balance their communities’ growth, ensure all residents have access to opportunities, and maintain environmentally responsible and equitable practices.

Municipal leaders participating in The League’s ENVISION Forums echoed the importance of demonstrating strong leadership by advancing sustainable principles in every facet of their communities. They recognize that using sustainability as a strategic framework enables municipalities to holistically address economic development, environmental protection, and social equity.

Sustainability is a foundational value system that is multifaceted, crosscutting and interwoven throughout every aspect of municipal life.



TODAY'S REALITIES

Maintaining economic stability and growth while creating sustainable, livable communities for all is challenging for municipalities as they work to understand and address ever-shifting conditions.

The Commonwealth, which set the standard for government-led action in 1999 with its Growing Greener initiative, continues to lead.

In its first two phases, Growing Greener I and II saw investments of close to \$2 billion in environmental projects, though funding slowed over time. The current phase, Growing Greener III, is injecting \$500 million of American Rescue Plan Act funds into the 2022 state budget to conserve land and water resources and restore damaged waterways and land. Growing Greener III funding also provides one-time funding for programs to green community downtowns and neighborhoods, enhance urban waterways and riverfronts, preserve historic structures and landscapes, and create parks, recreation areas, greenways, and trails.

Sustainable PA helps municipalities make systemic changes to protect quality of life for future generations.

In 2013, The League joined with Sustainable Pittsburgh to create a signature project, Sustainable PA. Modeled on the approach that helped transform the former steel town and the Southern Pennsylvania region into a globally recognized face of the sustainability revolution, Sustainable PA offers a certification program that aligns with national and international standards. It lays out a detailed roadmap for addressing community engagement and resilience, energy production and consumption, land use and housing, water resource protection and conservation, waste and materials management, municipal operations, and transportation.

Hundreds of municipalities have engaged with the program, and 120 municipalities are currently certified, representing 3.4 million residents. The program has proven effective in helping communities reach their long-term goals and, in the process, save money, conserve resources, and encourage innovation. Sustainable PA was officially recognized in 2016 by Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development, which now asks municipal governments seeking funding to indicate their certification levels.

MOVING FORWARD

Municipal leaders are stepping up.

Local governments' commitment was evident in The League's recent survey, where 92% of respondents reported that their community is actively addressing or making plans to enhance water, air quality, recycling, and other environmental concerns.

ENVISION Forum participants are prioritizing projects that span municipal activities and services, including:

- ◆ Adopting 10-year energy goals, with milestones and accountability.
- ◆ Evolving recycling approaches and increasing public understanding of how to recycle.
- ◆ Increasing energy efficiency through partnerships with utilities.
- ◆ Building infrastructure for refueling stations.
- ◆ Converting police vehicles to electric.
- ◆ Prioritizing the development of "green economy" components.
- ◆ Establishing EcoDistricts.

Defining EcoDistricts

EcoDistricts are broadly defined as areas within a municipality that are engaged in holistic, sustainable planning at the neighborhood scale.

Sustainable PA is expanding to meet municipal needs.

In response to the growing focus on municipal sustainability, the program is continually adding new tools and services. Participating municipalities now have enhanced capabilities for setting goals and tracking progress against certification requirements. The program has also increased its focus on equity and added more technical assistance and mentorship services. "Sprints," an innovative competitions program in specific sustainability categories, was recently introduced to encourage timely action. Plans are in motion to establish regional sustainability hubs where community leaders can convene to discuss the issues they are facing, and offer internships to engage the next generation of environmental leaders.



Ferguson Township Takes the LEED®

A Home Rule Municipality with a Commitment to Sustainability

BY CENTRICE MARTIN, FERGUSON TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Ferguson Township, a home rule municipality in Centre County, held a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Ceremony on Thursday, May 25, 2023. Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors Chair Strickland was presented with the LEED Gold plaque for the LEED certified Public Works Building. Chair Strickland, as a member of the Pennsylvania Municipal League Sustainable Pennsylvania’s annual conference committee, said at the event she is pleased that programs like LEED and Sustainable Pennsylvania not only prioritize strategy, resources, and recognize with LEED certification, but also expand opportunity, such as educating on the benefits of

sustainability. It is our goal that this building be accessible and deliver opportunities for local and regional residents of all ages to tour it, so that it will serve as a promising site for learning and, at the same time, inspire innovative practices and investments from businesses and organizations.

As a municipality that is committed to sustainability, it is recognized that a shared vision and collaborative efforts through regional, state, public-private partnership, and other public partnerships allow for success in achieving goals focused on sustainability. Ferguson Township is proud to be recognized as also being

David Modricker, Director of Public Works with Solar Array



a Certified Gold Community by Sustainable Pennsylvania and as a Bicycle Friendly Business Program by the League of American Bicyclists. Through effective partnerships with



the Pennsylvania Municipal League, Sustainable Pittsburgh, and Centre Region Council of Government (CRCOG) Centre Region and Planning Agency, Ferguson Township is pleased to lead with aspiration from Article I, Section 1.05 Ferguson Township Community Bill of Rights.

Since my appointment to serve as the Township Manager, we've carried forward the good work initiated by former Manager Pribulka. In addition to becoming LEED certified, the Township recently applied, and was awarded, Bicycle Friendly Business Community, implemented the e-bike rental program with Spin and Transportation Services at Penn State University, established the Green Infrastructure policy, and is actively working to enact the single-use plastic bag ordinance and convert paper-based workflow processes to digitized processes as part of Goal 5: Best Management Practices as identified in the Township's Strategic Plan. In 2021, the Township established a Stormwater Utility Fee to be used solely to cover the Township's cost to cover the Township's stormwater management program and maintain the stormwater management system in the Township. Moreover, individual property owners are presented with options, adopted by resolution, that would apply for up to a 40 percent credit on their stormwater fee. This option for a property owner to receive credit ultimately provides an avenue for the

Ferguson Township LEED Gold Certified Public Works Building



Township to educate on individual action a property owner can take in support of sustainable efforts that also result in a reduction on their stormwater fee. The adopted resolution that allows for property owners to install green features for credit on their fee encourages property owners to self-educate on, and create, sustainable features at their own property.

Ferguson Township is fortunate to have past and present elected officials that have passion for governance and visionary and responsible leadership. It is with such leadership and collaborative efforts Ferguson Township was afforded the opportunity to mobilize resources for the public works building to be designed and constructed with LEED standards. LEED, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council ([USGBC](#)), is a green building rating system that essentially establishes a set of standards Ferguson Township had to meet for LEED certification. Through design, construction and operation practices that improve

environmental and human health, LEED-certified buildings are helping to make the world more sustainable. At Ferguson Township, we are happy to open our LEED-certified Public Works Building to citizens interested as a promising site for learning to inspire innovative practices and investments for local government.

The Ferguson Township Public Works Building's Green Features:

Quality Views

The building orientation and windows allow for views of the Rothrock State Forest, Musser Gap, and green features around the Township buildings.

Bicycle Facilities

Accommodations for bicycles are provided on site and in close proximity to neighborhood bike paths accommodating a form of transportation other than the automobile for commuting and for exercise and recreation.





Daylight

The building is oriented to the south to take advantage of natural daylight. Windows allow natural light to spill into the garage bay work areas as well as office spaces and break room. Blinds can control the amount of light. Skylights on the second floor allow natural light in work spaces.

Tobacco Free

Smoking is not permitted in any buildings or on the property except at two designated outdoor smoking locations.

Fuel Efficient and Low Emission Vehicles

Parking for electric cars, green vehicles, and carpools is provided on site as well as an electric charging station.

Stormwater Management

Most all best management practices for stormwater management are accommodated on site including bio-swales, infiltration and

detention basins, spill prevention, reforestation, pervious pavement, rain gardens, sink hole protection, disconnected downspouts, buffer plantings, and a hydrodynamic storm separator.

Native Landscaping

Grow zones and reforestation surround the site with native trees, shrubs, and grasses.

Reflective Roofing

The building's white roof reflects much of the sun's heat as it reaches the building, helping to lessen the "heat island" effect and maintain a comfortable temperature.

Optimizing Energy Performance

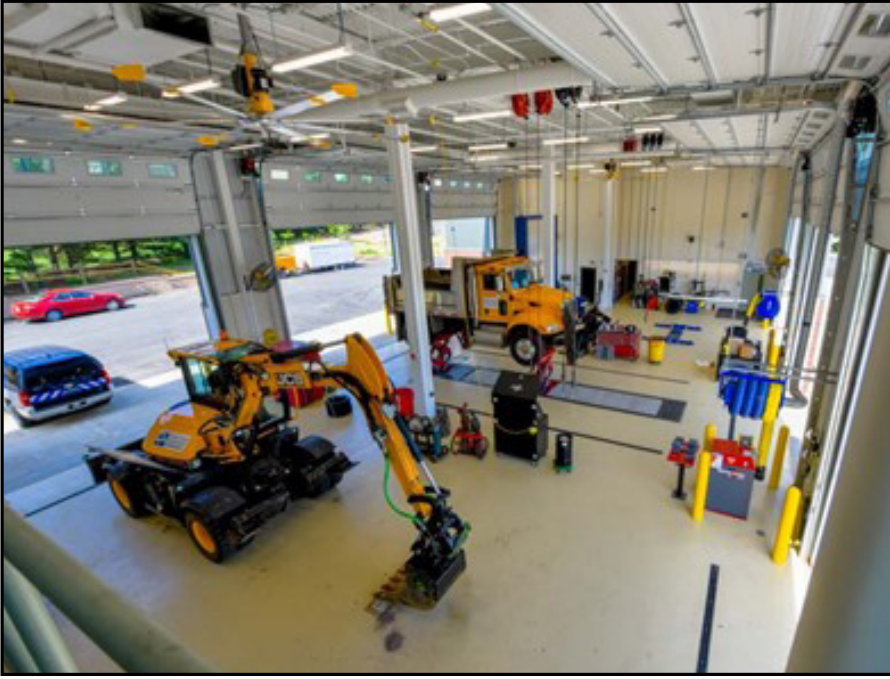
Energy models were prepared during the design phase and evolved into a highly insulated building envelope (7" thick insulated rubber roof and 4" thick insulated metal wall panels) and a variable refrigerant flow air conditioning system in office spaces and a first floor using hot water tubes in the concrete slab providing heat by convection. Appliances are energy star rated.

Building Systems Commissioning

Boilers, heating and air conditioning units and other building systems went through a rigorous commissioning after installation to verify systems work efficiently as designed.



Use of Reclaimed Wood



Construction and Demolition Waste Management

Clean fill and recyclable materials were separated during construction for proper disposal to limit the amount of material going to the landfill.

Water Use Reduction

All water usage is metered, and fixtures are in place to reduce the consumption of water. Water from the building's car wash can be recycled and reused.

Light Pollution Reduction

All light fixtures have cutoffs to eliminate upward distribution of light.

Reclaimed Wood

Trees required to be removed in Ferguson Township were felled by the Ferguson Township Public Works, dried, then taken to a local wood shop to be planed prior to installation in locations throughout the Public Works Building.

Green Cleaning Policy

The Township purchases non-toxic cleaning products that meet certain green criteria for use in all Township buildings.

Green Purchasing Policy

A sustainable purchasing and solid waste management program is in place to purchase consumables and durable goods in a manner protective of the environment and public health and to dispose of materials in the same manner.

Recycling Program

A program is in place to minimize the material that goes to the landfill. Recycling bins are located throughout the building to collect office paper, glass, metal, and cardboard.

Low Emitting Materials and Indoor Air Quality

Environmental product declarations were provided for all building materials and indoor air quality testing was conducted after

construction and prior to building occupancy to ensure a high level of indoor air quality.

Net Zero Energy Consumption and Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System

The roof was designed to accommodate a rooftop solar system capable of generating enough energy to offset the consumption of energy by gas and electric. In January of 2022, Ferguson Township installed a 108 kW solar array on the roof of the Public Works Building. The PV system harvests energy from the sun and converts it to electricity. With 240 solar modules filling up the roof, each one being 450 watts, the solar array contributes to the building's energy usage and excess energy produced is fed back into the grid.

Both the solar array's energy production and the building's energy consumption are continuously monitored and displayed in the building lobby on an interactive display for visitors to explore. Visit Ferguson Township's [LEED Dashboard](#) to learn more about the Public Works Building's green features.

With its state-of-the-art public works facility helping the Township approach net zero, Ferguson Township now looks to the future, seeking more ways to achieve its green goals. The Township is incorporating electric vehicles into its fleet and has made a regional commitment to purchase additional solar energy for the remainder of the Township's energy needs. □



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Four Ways Connectivity Helps Local Municipalities Build a Brighter Future

BY AARON MIMRAN, VICE PRESIDENT, COMCAST BUSINESS, COMCAST'S KEYSTONE REGION

Connections build community. At Comcast, we know those connections have the potential to create economic vitality, powering individuals, businesses, and communities with reliable technology services and connectivity. Whether businesses or local municipalities are looking to foster safer communities, facilitate local events, or create an easier way to connect with local government, connectivity is a vital part of meeting the needs of localities from Harrisburg to York to Pittsburgh and more surrounding communities.

While there are plenty of benefits local governments and municipalities can take advantage of when connectivity solutions are implemented, they all share a common theme: an ability to fortify relationships and experiences that bring people together to build a brighter future.

Protecting Against Cyber Risks

Beyond safety measures, a stronger network with cyber capabilities can help to protect the confidential information of local governments and residents. This has become increasingly critical as organizations with less than 100 employees are three times

more likely to be the target of a cyberattack, [according to the 2023 Comcast Business Small Business Cybersecurity Report](#). Furthermore, small organizations are at significantly higher risk than large enterprises to have unpatched systems, the leading cause to vulnerability exploits, according to the latest [2023 Comcast Business Cybersecurity Threat Report](#).

The data is proof that keeping up with technology is critical for local municipalities and businesses to stay protected and connected, now more than ever. Supporting in-place systems with security solutions backed by strong connectivity can help to offset potential risks.

Improving Community Safety

Security cameras in business districts, traffic-light cameras at busy intersections, and monitoring traffic speeds near schools are all draws for businesses. Red light safety cameras are one example of improving community safety by discouraging traffic violations. In fact, an [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study](#) found cameras reduced the rate of all types of fatal crashes at signalized intersections by 14 percent.

But for these security measures to be successful, they require a strong, reliable technological foundation and connection. Red light safety cameras can automatically photograph vehicles that go through red lights with cameras connected to traffic signals and sensors that monitor traffic flow. The better the bandwidth, the higher the quality of the footage captured by these systems, in turn offering more reliable security coverage and safety across town.

Revamping Local Experiences

Movies in the park, street fairs, and community gatherings are all perks potential residents – and small business owners – keep an eye out for when searching for a place in which to put down roots. It's a great way to build a sense of connection and foster relationships with community stakeholders. But all these events rely on a strong broadband/Internet connection to deliver a great experience.

For example, while movies in the park have become the new drive-in theater, streaming movies in a community space isn't as simple as it sounds. Not only does there need to be enough bandwidth to stream



the movie without any hiccups, but sufficient bandwidth is required to support viewers who may be looking to use their own devices throughout the movies, too.

Similarly, while street fairs can be a great way for local businesses to connect with the residents they serve, technology is important to make events successful. For instance, each kiosk will likely need access to WiFi for their point-of-sale systems (POS) and emergency personnel need a reliable line for communication, all while attendees are looking for WiFi bandwidth when navigating the events.

Investing in community experiences creates an energized municipality. And while hosting these experiences can be exciting, the excitement may not last if the technology isn't up to par. So having the right solutions in place to offer a reliable Internet connection enables events to be successful.

Building Local Connections

Using connectivity to power unique and dynamic experiences can foster interpersonal

relationships – whether that's in your community, in your career or with local government. For instance, connectivity offers businesses and residents flexibility and the choice to meet virtually or in person, whether it's at a coffee shop or a virtual book club supported by connectivity.

Plus, with the option to work remotely, local municipalities need to be equipped to provide support. [According to the Department of Labor](#), 28 percent of private-sector employees are regularly working remotely. This supports the growth of coworking spaces for remote workers, presenting business opportunities and jobs in local communities.

With technology, connecting with constituents has never been easier. Providing local access to a strong Internet provider enables government officials to hold town halls, informational meetings, and community events online. While residents can still attend in person, having a convenient alternative to accessing local government can give more residents a voice.

Building a Brighter Future

Connectivity is more than offering strong WiFi that your laptop and phone rely on – it's a powerful solution that can support a myriad of tools local municipalities can use to attract and retain residents and business owners. By partnering with customer-focused technology leaders, like [Comcast Business](#), municipalities can position themselves for success while serving their customers and community peers. To learn more about these different technological offerings and how they can improve your community's connectivity, please visit [business.comcast.com](#). □



COMCAST



Health Insurance: How to Lower Costs and Provide Excellent Benefits

BY FREDRICK M. BEAN, VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM MANAGEMENT,
BENECON (GENERAL ADMINISTRATOR OF PMHIC)

One of the hallmarks of local government is to provide an excellent benefit package to local government employees. True, some of this is driven by union contracts but many municipalities feel that their employees deserve excellent benefits since pay in the local government sector (for some employee classes) is less than employees can derive in the private sector.

With those thoughts in mind, most local governments provide a comprehensive health insurance program that offers limited cost sharing for full-time employees and their dependents as well. Some local governments have made strides over the years to achieve more buy-in or cost sharing from the employees along with benefit programs with higher deductibles and co-pays. However, the cost sharing from employees is substantially less than the private sector. This has resulted in increased costs for local governments.

Unfortunately, the cost escalation in health insurance does not seem to be subsiding. Much of this is a direct result of increases in pharmaceutical costs, medical advances and technology,

plus higher costs for medical providers (doctors/hospital). We are fortunate to have very good health care in our country, but it is expensive and projections show as the population ages, it will increase dramatically over the next 20 years.

The key question for you and others in local government is how to continue providing excellent benefits without expecting such large increases that could force tax increases or a drastic cut in your benefit packages.

In 2006, a group of township and borough managers decided to try another option to fund health insurance by creating the [Pennsylvania Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative \(PMHIC\)](#). The development of PMHIC created efficiencies in the marketplace through the power of group purchasing. Economies of scale also created an environment where health insurance companies would be more competitive with their pricing.

Another key goal the managers developed was to fund this cooperative through a system of “self-funding” which most large private sector (and large public

sector) employers use to fund their health insurance. This method produces more cost savings in the administration of the program, better transparency of claim data, and more cost-effective stop loss or reinsurance which pays for high claims and caps liability for groups. Through transparency, groups are able to receive surplus checks for any unspent claim dollars.

PMHIC started this program with the assistance and guidance of Benecon, a powerhouse in the self-funding arena based in Lancaster, PA. Since 2006, the PMHIC program has grown from 90 employer groups to now close to 300 local governments. The geographic span covers the entire Commonwealth of PA.

When this program started, there were several requirements set by the board which continues to be the standard for the operation of the cooperative. They include the following:

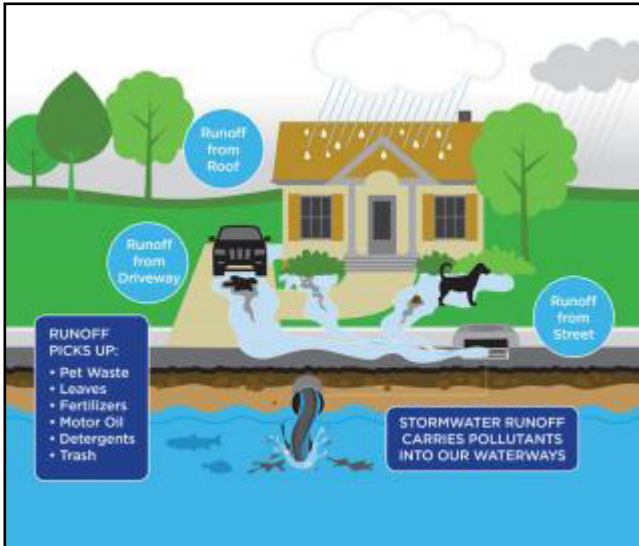
- Full transparency of costs and claims
- Very low administrative costs – approximately 1 percent

Continued on page 33 →



There are a Barrel of Benefits to Using Rain Barrels

BY DEBRA ENGLISH, GETTYSBURG BOROUGH DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION



Gettysburg Borough Stormwater Authority's (GBSWA) federally mandated MS4 Stormwater Program requires public outreach MCM #1. How can we engage our residents to understand and appreciate our Borough's stormwater program? We found the answer, distributing FREE rain barrels and using them to bring residents together to support our local stormwater program. Utilizing rain barrels has many community benefits such as enhancing our environment by conserving water and reducing their costs. We have initiated a program to distribute low-cost or FREE rain barrels to Gettysburg Borough and Adams County residents if they attend one of

our educational workshops for MS4.

Most residents do not know what MS4 stands for or even how their stormwater fees are used. MS4 stands for 'Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System' in case you did not know. This system separates and conveys stormwater independently from our sewage discharge to treatment plants.

This federally mandated program requires that municipalities bill fees to and collect them from all residents.

These stormwater fees are used to support the Borough's infrastructure including storm drains, reduce flooding, restore wetlands, and promote education. The average family uses over 300 gallons of water per day for residential use; for a family of four (4), consumption rates would range from 9,000-12,000 gallons of water per month allocated for indoor

use, but large outdoor gardens would add higher consumption rates. A leaky faucet, toilets, and appliances can amount to 18 gallons of water loss per day. That is a lot of water! Droughts create stress and really put pressure on our limited local water supplies. Everyone can play a part by adding a rain barrel or two to conserve water and lessen our carbon footprint by conserving our precious water resources.

You ask, where do I start? We publicized our rain barrel classes through social media such as Facebook and associated links, in our local newspaper, and promote it during our Borough council meetings. We received





an overwhelming response to our FREE barrel workshop. How do we fund this? We did have a few dollars in our budget; however, there is GRANT MONEY out there. I have found grant funding available through sustainability grants. It is a win-win for all! Each barrel will hold 58 gallons of water or one 8-year-old child!

Rain barrels will allow water to be collected from your roof

downspouts during a rain event; and then the water is collected and stored for later use. This stormwater allows residents to water their gardens and lawns during dryer days as needed, save on their water bills, and infiltrate this water back into our groundwater table. A single rain barrel can conserve up to 1,300 gallons of water each year. The Borough of Gettysburg has sponsored three rain barrel workshops with over 133 attendees conserving over 172,900 gallons of water and counting each year. This will reduce the water on our roadways, reduce flooding, and reduce water bills. Additionally, allowing the water to filter through your garden and vegetated lawn area will allow that vegetation and soil to filter the water that will eventually discharge into our local bay by reducing the amount of water charging over roadways (impervious surfaces), picking up

oils and contaminants and then carrying them into our storm drains to our precious waterways.

Our Borough Rain Barrel Class was such a well-received event within our community that we plan to make this an annual event. There was a mix of attendees with ages ranging from 6 to 78 years old, and “barrels of fun” for the whole family! All attendees enjoyed the class, appreciated, and supported the Borough’s attempt to conserve water, and help the community one rain barrel at a time. Some folks even purchased extra barrels because one barrel was just not enough. GBSWA will sponsor another rain barrel class in the Spring of 2024, so keep an eye out for our Borough Spring newsletter for more details. [Please visit our website](#) for more information on MS4. THANK YOU for being a part of the solution! ☐



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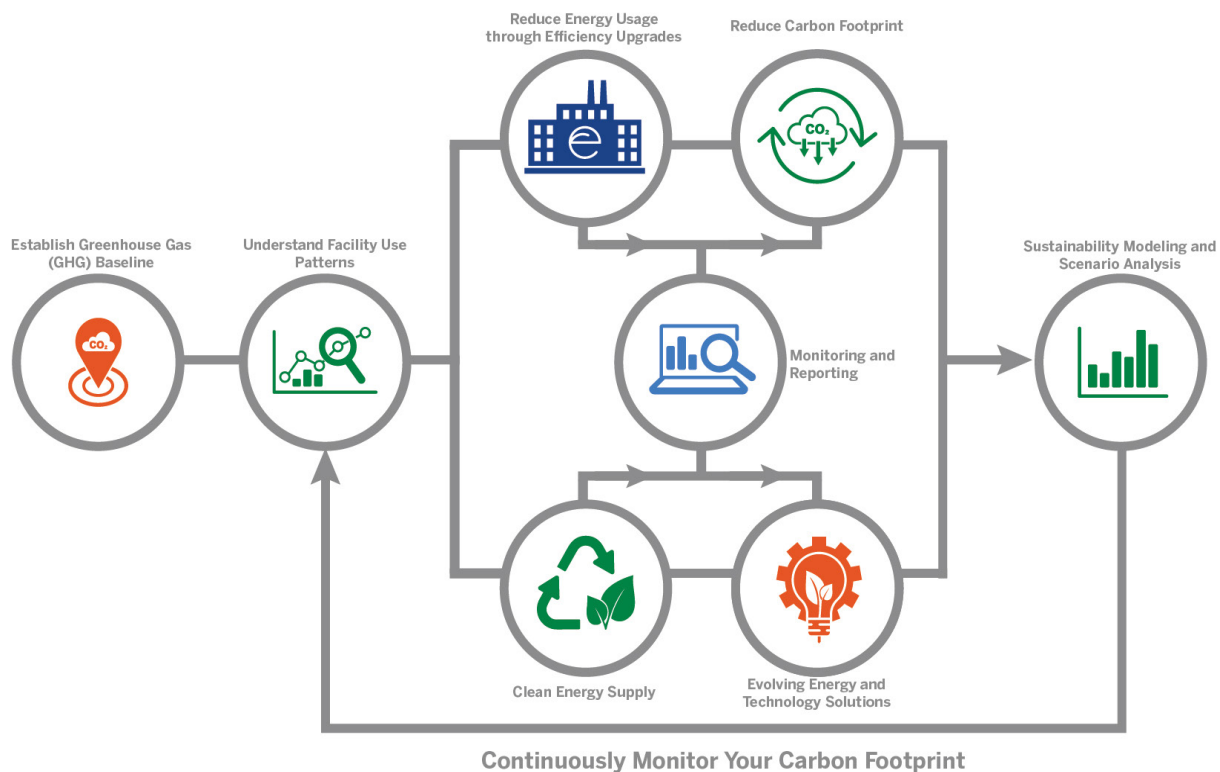
Roadmap to Corporate Sustainability Goals

BY MATT SHORTALL, SENIOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER WITH CONSTELLATION

Energy sustainability is no longer a lofty buzzword, but is in fact, an increasingly important factor in achieving long-term success. Even if your municipality has set goals, designing, and executing a robust sustainability plan can be complicated. Building an effective

clear: reducing emissions requires more than the right mindset. It requires a sustainability roadmap that clearly and transparently lays out how to properly execute and meet your objectives. Constellation will help guide you through the various steps to

crucial starting point. Greenhouse gases are emitted by many sources and are classified as either [Scope 1, 2, or 3 emissions](#). Scope 1 emissions are the direct emissions from an entity's operations while Scope 2 emissions are the indirect emissions from an entity's



plan requires consideration for evolving technology and clean energy supply options. It requires balancing investment in the future while keeping tight to the budget now. These challenges make it

developing effective sustainability strategies.

As municipalities strive to embrace a more sustainable future, establishing a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions baseline is a

purchased utilities. Multiple solutions exist to help reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions. Scope 3 emissions occur in the value chain of an entity, such as upstream emissions from suppliers,

downstream emissions from customers using their products, or emissions associated with the business travel or commuting of an entity's employees. Scope 3 is quickly gaining more attention as many companies look for even more leadership opportunities in the climate space by setting targets on their value chain emissions. A GHG emissions baseline serves as a foundation for understanding a municipality's current emissions profile that can lead to enabling informed decision-making, target setting, and effective implementation of emissions reduction strategies.

According to a 2022 ESG Global Study, municipalities that demonstrate progress toward environmental sustainability, like clearly reporting their GHG emissions, have found more success than they might have seen if they had not seen progress: Some 87% of consumers want to spend more with them and 83% of potential investors want to back them financially. Transparent reporting attracts and retains workforce talent, too. 83% of employees surveyed

shared that they want to work for employers and brands that take environmental and social issues seriously.

To begin, a municipality can depend on several areas of guidance and methodologies to help them define appropriate GHG reduction targets.

Self-Defined GHG Emissions Targets


Many municipalities have set self-defined GHG emissions targets. These goals typically focus on reducing emissions by a certain percentage from their baseline emissions by a specific deadline. For example, a municipality might set an Absolute target to reduce 50% of their 2020 emissions by 2050. Without first gathering the data and calculating the 2020 emissions baseline, it is impossible to quantify progress or measure success.

Self-defined GHG targets may be established for various reasons, such as social responsibility, environmental sustainability goals, or to demonstrate leadership in addressing climate change. These

targets are completely voluntary and allow municipalities to demonstrate their commitment to a sustainable future.

Take Action Today

Working with a trusted energy expert like Constellation can help your organization establish actionable and attainable GHG benchmarks for meaningful sustainability initiatives and positions you as a responsible and forward-thinking leader in addressing the pressing challenges of the climate.

Contact:
Matt Shortall
Phone: 443-602-5755
email: matthew.shortall@constellation.com 



Constellation®



The Sustainable PA Program: Fulfilling Your Constitutional Duty

BY LESLIE RHOADS, SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR FOR THE LEAGUE

In the ever-evolving landscape of municipal governance, there's one crucial aspect that often gets overlooked – environmental sustainability. Pennsylvania, with its rich natural heritage, is bound by a constitutional duty to protect the environment, as stated in Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, the 1971 Environmental Rights Amendment. In light of this obligation, municipal officials across the state should consider investing their time and energy into the Sustainable PA Program.

The Environmental Rights Amendment, ratified over five decades ago, recognizes the inherent right of every Pennsylvanian to clean air, pure water and the preservation of our natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values. It places the responsibility of protecting these rights squarely on the shoulders of the commonwealth and its political subdivisions. This includes our municipalities.

So, how do you ensure you fulfill this constitutional duty as municipal officials? One powerful answer lies in the

Sustainable PA Program. This comprehensive initiative offers a clear path for communities to gauge their environmental sustainability, economic vitality, and commitment to equity, taking meaningful steps toward improvement.

- **Snapshot of Your Community:**

The Sustainable PA Program provides municipalities with a comprehensive snapshot of their current environmental, economic and equitable practices, policies and performance. This snapshot is invaluable in understanding where a community stands concerning overall sustainability, encompassing not only the environment but also the economy and equity.

- **A Path to a Better Future:**

Sustainable PA does more than just assess the present. It offers a well-defined path toward a more sustainable future. Through data-driven insights, it assists municipalities in identifying areas where they can enhance their sustainability efforts,

fostering economic growth and advancing social equity alongside environmental protection.

- **Aligning with Constitutional Mandates:**

Investing time and energy in Sustainable PA isn't just a matter of environmental stewardship; it's also about upholding our constitutional duty. By proactively working to improve sustainability, municipal officials align their communities with the principles enshrined in the Environmental Rights Amendment while championing a holistic approach that ensures a flourishing environment, economy and society.

Benefits for Municipalities:

The benefits of participating in the Sustainable PA Program extend far beyond constitutional obligations. Here are some compelling reasons why every municipal official should consider this investment:

1. **Enhanced Quality of Life:** Sustainable practices improve residents' quality of life through cleaner air, safer water and healthier environments,

fostering well-being across all aspects of community life.

2. Financial Savings:

Sustainable initiatives often lead to long-term cost savings, benefiting municipal budgets and ensuring economic vitality.

3. Attracting Investment:

Sustainable communities tend to attract businesses and residents, bolstering local economies while creating opportunities for all.

4. Resilience:

Sustainable practices make communities more resilient to environmental challenges,

such as extreme weather events, while building a robust, diversified local economy and promoting equitable access to resources.

5. Positive Legacy:

Demonstrating a commitment to sustainability leaves a lasting positive legacy for future generations, honoring our constitutional duty and fostering a Pennsylvania that thrives in perpetuity.

As municipal officials, you have a moral and constitutional duty to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's environment,

ensure economic vitality, and advance social equity. The Sustainable PA Program not only helps you meet this obligation but also equips you with the tools and knowledge to create a better, more sustainable future for our communities. By investing our time and energy into this program, you uphold our constitutional duty and build a legacy of environmental stewardship, economic prosperity and social equity that will benefit generations to come. □

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Volunteerism in Municipal Entities and VIP Insurance

BY PAUL CORNELL, DIRECTOR OF TRUSTS EMERITUS

When you think of volunteerism in local government, the fire service and other emergency operations immediately come to mind, but volunteers provide much more service to our municipalities and their residents. Non-emergency volunteers are an integral part of local government and can easily be overlooked.

Consider the number of volunteers that serve on various boards and commissions who give of their time and talent to support municipal operations through monthly meetings and hearings, on the Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, Tax Committee, Library Board, Park and Recreation Board, or the Historic Architectural Review Board. Volunteers are also present in many capacities from the participation in formal meetings to ad hoc

service at special events or even litter pick-up or adopt-a-highway details.

Volunteers play an important role in municipal operations and many functions, programs and events would not be possible without the dedication of volunteers. Loss of this support would put a strain on paid staff or limit many of your functions.

Since volunteers are an engine that helps drive much of your municipal operation, what do you do to protect your volunteers? Coverage for fire and emergency service volunteers are mandated by code to be provided by municipalities. What about those volunteers serving your community in other capacities? Most often there is no coverage for these individuals who serve their community.

A Volunteer Insurance Program (VIP) provides support for those often overlooked volunteers that are integral to your community. Many types of coverage are available at very reasonable rates compared to the worker compensation coverage you provide to your employees and this coverage can be customized for your specific volunteer needs.

A typical volunteer insurance policy can pay for medical costs if someone is injured in service to your community. Coverages can be purchased that provide an accidental medical benefit for an injury, accidental death, and dismemberment benefit, and even a coma benefit. This coverage can also shield your municipality while providing peace of mind to your volunteers. If you don't have coverage for those volunteers, consider adding coverage

to protect them. Contact your insurance provider and ask what coverage is available for volunteers.

Finally, remember volunteerism is an important part of the history of this country. Please remember that National Volunteer Month is April and recognize all the volunteers that serve your community during that month.

Information such as above is available to all PennPRIME Members. Please contact Paul Cornell, Director of Trusts Emeritus, pcornell@pml.org / 717-236-9469, ext. *258, for additional information. □

Health Insurance *continued from pg 25*

- Stable and low premium increases
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In order to join PMHIC, a municipality must have at least 15 employees on the health plan and supply current plan data for Benecon's independent actuarial team to generate a quote. Generally, the process is very streamlined and as a result Benecon can supply you with a quote normally within 30 days. Thereafter, membership agreements must be executed to complete the enrollment process.

PMHIC is governed by a board of directors comprised of nine individuals voted on by the members. These individuals are township, borough, city, and authority managers representing all of the geographic areas of the cooperative. They provide excellent policy guidance and oversee the finances through independent audits completed annually.

Benecon, the general administrator, pioneered the self-funding concept for the government sector in 1991 and now has expanded in the private sector as well. Currently, Benecon has clients in 37 states and is growing with an excellent mix of private as well as public sector clients. Benecon currently represents 2,000+ employees which produces efficiencies in many components of the program.

PMHIC is pleased to be a business sponsoring organization with The League. In addition, Benecon is pleased to be a sponsoring organization with APMM (Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management), CCAP, (County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania) and many other local government associations and organizations. Through this partnership, we believe local government is able to work together to solve important problems confronting each of you.

We encourage you, if you are not a member of PMHIC, to contact Benecon at info@benecon.com or contact our office at (717) 723-4600. We can assist you in finding ways to lower your health insurance costs. If you want to learn more about PMHIC please see our website at www.pmhic.com.

Finally, to our many clients who are current members of The League, we **thank you** for your loyal service and look forward to serving you in the future.

Fred was former Manager in Mercersburg and Carlisle, PA., former President of APMM, and lifelong member of ICMA. □





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Legislative Status Report STATE



PREPARED BY AMY STURGES, LEAGUE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – ADVOCACY – asturges@pml.org
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All legislation can be found on the General Assembly's website:

legis.state.pa.us

Legislative Update

2023 Adopted Resolutions

The League is a member-driven organization relying on member municipalities to help develop policies that meet the present needs of local government. Our annual [resolutions process](#) provides every League member with the opportunity to participate in, and shape, The League's legislative agenda.

During The Municipal Leadership Summit, the voting delegates for The League's Resolutions Committee and Annual Business Meeting met for a final discussion and vote on the proposed 2023 Resolutions. All nine resolutions were adopted and will be integrated into the 2024 Policy Statement.

The subjects of the adopted resolutions are listed below.

1. 2019 Policy Review
2. Adoption of NLC's 2023 Municipal Policy and 2023 Federal Action Agenda

3. Support for a Community Solar Program in Pennsylvania
4. Speed Timing Technology
5. Senior Citizen Homestead Exclusion
6. Notice of Condemnation Prior to County Sales Tax
7. Increasing the Penalty for Driving over a Fire Hose
8. Post-Traumatic Stress Injury for First Responders Policy Update
9. Stormwater Management Policy Update

Please view and read the adopted 2023 Resolutions [here](#).

Cosponsor Memos Affecting Local Governments

Zero Emissions Lawn Care Task Force

Representative Melissa Shusterman has announced her intention to introduce legislation establishing a Zero Emissions Lawn Care Task Force to develop a plan to phase out gas powered lawn and garden equipment in the commonwealth.

Code Enforcement Grant Program

Senator Nick Miller has announced his intention to introduce legislation creating a code enforcement grant program to establish new code programs and to help maintain existing programs.

Legislation Affecting Local Government

Borough Manager, Surcharge by Auditors, and Borough Budget

Location: Passed the House; Senate Local Government Committee, October 13, 2023

[House Bill 1232](#) (PN 1323), introduced by Representative Lee James, would amend Title 8 (Boroughs and Incorporated Towns) proposing the following amendments to the Borough Code: authorizing the appointment of a partnership, limited partnership, association or professional corporation as borough manager; prohibiting surcharging an elected or appointed official who acted in good faith on the written opinion of the borough solicitor; permitting the civil service commission to reorganize within 30 days of the first Monday in January of even-numbered years; and removing the requirement that a preliminary budget be prepared at least 30 days prior to the adoption of the budget.

Senate Bill 765 introduced by Senator Carolyn Comitta is companion legislation.

ATVs and Dirt Bikes in Urban Municipalities

Location: Passed the House; Senate Transportation Committee, October 13, 2023

[House Bill 1338](#) (PN 1614), introduced by Representative Ed Neilson, would provide clarification for Act 92 of 2022, which prohibits use of ATVs and dirt bikes and allows for their forfeiture in First Class, Second Class, Second Class A or Third Class Cities. This bill would make it clear that Act 92 does not preempt a local ordinance regarding the operation of ATVs and dirt bikes within a municipal border.

Law Enforcement Background Investigations and Employment Information

Location: First Consideration in the House, October 3, 2023

[House Bill 1531](#) (PN 1765), introduced by Representative Christopher Rabb, would amend Act 57 of 2020, which created a database and established reporting requirements to track police officer separation records to aid with background investigations during the hiring process.

The bill would add a new requirement to provide a 14 day public notice before taking formal action on a police officers' employment application if the officer has any recorded separation discretions as listed in the bill. The failure to provide public notice or failure to report all separation records to the database established by Act 57 in a timely manner would make noncompliant police departments, as well as the department's respective municipality, ineligible to apply for or receive state funding.

The Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) would be required to produce an annual report regarding the efficacy of the database on police accountability and community safety on an annual basis.

Lastly, in addition to filing a report with MPOETC rationalizing hiring an officer with separation record discretions, a police department must materially respond to and address each disciplinary action explaining why the applicant should be hired.

Public Meeting Before Sale of Water or Sewer Utility

Location: Senate Local Government Committee, June 15, 2023

[Senate Bill 820](#) (PN 1112), introduced by Senator Doug Mastriano, would require at least one advertised public meeting no more than 60 days, but no fewer than 7 days, prior to entering into an agreement to sell a publicly owned water or sewer utility. The advertised meeting notice would need to appear in all municipalities served by the public water or sewer authority, and the potential purchaser or lessee must attend the public meeting.

Breach of Personal Information Notification Act

Location: Passed the Senate; House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utility Committee, October 4, 2023



Senate Bill 824 (PN 1151), introduced by Senator Tracy Pennycuick, would amend the Breach of Personal Information Notification Act, which requires the state, political subdivisions and businesses to provide notification when personal information is breached.

If the information of 500 or more individuals is breached, the Attorney General must be notified along with the impacted individuals. The data subject to reporting would include an individual’s name along with either the individual’s social security number, bank account number or driver’s license. The notice to the Attorney General would include the breached entity’s name and location, date and summary of the extent of the security breach and an estimated total number of individuals affected.

The bill would also decrease the reporting requirement of a breach to credit reporting agencies from 1,000 affected individuals to 500, and the breached entity would be responsible for assuming the costs and fees for all affected individuals, including:

- access to an independent credit report if the individual is not eligible to obtain a free credit report; and
- access to 12 months of credit monitoring services

The breached entity would need to include information regarding the availability of these no cost services within the initial notification of the security breach.

Providing Municipalities Burial Grounds Exemptions

Location: Senate Appropriations Committee, October 16, 2023

Senate Bill 887 (PN 1053), introduced by Senator Scott Hutchinson, would amend Title 9 (Burial Grounds) clarifying that municipalities are not classified as a cemetery company, thereby exempting municipalities from the requirement to establish a permanent lot care fund and registering with the State Real Estate Commission. □

House and Senate Session Days 2023	
<u>House</u>	<u>Senate</u>
November 1, 13-15	November 13-15
December 11-13	December 11-13

**reminder
session dates are subject to change*

Legislative Locator

Be sure to read the electronic Legislative Locator, produced bimonthly on the opposite months of the *Municipal Reporter*, for updates on legislation.



Transforming Brownfields Sites in Elizabeth, New Jersey and Communities Across the Country

BY J. CHRISTIAN BOLLWAGE, MAYOR OF ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY, A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY STATE LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES AND CHAIR OF THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS BROWNFIELDS TASKFORCE

As so many issues are divided along party lines in Congress, a recent hearing on the reauthorization of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Program was a refreshing show of bipartisanship.

I had the opportunity to [testify](#) before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing and Critical Materials in support of the program. On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the National League of Cities (NLC), I shared how my city Elizabeth, New Jersey, has undertaken several brownfields redevelopment projects that have transformed the community.

For city leaders, brownfields sites represent unrealized potential – an opportunity to create jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, increase the tax base as well as reuse and enhance already existing infrastructure in a more sustainable manner.

Brownfields Redevelopment in Elizabeth, New Jersey

Historically, Elizabeth's commerce depended heavily on its position as a port city. Most businesses that were

located close to and along the waterfront focused on and complimented the shipping industry, supplying additional services such as the transportation and storage of goods. Reimagining Elizabeth's waterfront has included the creation of market-rate and affordable housing.

Additionally, in 1999 the city transformed a former landfill into a thriving shopping experience, including new nearby restaurants and hotels. Today, The Mills at Jersey Gardens features a 4.8-megawatt rooftop solar system, which generates enough power for 564 homes.

The area surrounding our Midtown train station, which includes additional brownfields properties, has also begun the revitalization process. New housing, retail and offices will complement a modern train station and provide new services for residents, commuters and visitors.



Mayor J. Christian Bollwage & Commissioner
Tammy Shifflett Tincher

Bipartisan Support for the Brownfields Program

“EPA’s Brownfields Program is critical to the cleanup and redevelopment of Brownfield sites across the country. By utilizing existing space and infrastructure, this program has taken development pressure off undeveloped land, helped increase local tax bases, and, most importantly, created jobs in communities across the country,” said Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Subcommittee Chair Bill Johnson (R-OH).

Representing the National Association of Counties, Tammy Tincher, President of the County Commission in Greenbrier County, West Virginia shared a similar story of brownfields redevelopment and revitalization. The Brownfields Program supported the redevelopment and renovation process of a former elementary school in the county, which now includes an early learning childcare center, a new medical clinic and senior and low-income housing.

Members of the subcommittee highlighted the brownfields successes in their own communities, such as the University District in Spokane, Washington, which supports the billion-dollar Intermountain Northwest health sciences sector, and the Georgia Sea Turtle Center at Jekyll Island, Georgia, which used to be a coal-fired power plant and now is a center for rehabilitating sea turtles, research and education.

These examples demonstrate how brownfields redevelopment can bring new life to a community and create new opportunities for all residents. The Brownfields Program is one of the most useful and

effective federal programs for helping to revitalize America’s communities by putting abandoned or blighted property back to productive use.

Recent Improvements to the Brownfields Program

Many of these successes were made possible by the changes to the Brownfields Program that were enacted in the [2018 reauthorization](#), which local leaders and our associations strongly advocated.

Among these improvements, two are particularly key to helping local governments redevelop larger, more complex brownfields sites:

- Creation of a multi-purpose grant, and
- Increasing the cap on the cleanup grant amount.

Additionally, the last brownfields reauthorization provided more certainty for governmental entities by addressing the liability concerns for the voluntary or involuntary acquisition of property.

While the 2018 reauthorization maintained the original authorization level of \$250 million annually, the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021 provided a significant boost in funding with \$1.5 billion over five years, which will be extremely beneficial in funding a larger number of worthwhile projects.

The IIJA also authorized higher grant amounts for all of the categories of brownfields grants: cleanup grants (up to \$5 million); multipurpose, assessment and revolving loan fund grants (up to \$10 million each); and job training grants (up to \$1 million). We are hopeful that EPA will seize this opportunity to explore how higher dollar amounts can be utilized and assist in redeveloping some of the more difficult brownfield sites back into productive pieces of property.

Next Steps for Local Leaders

As Congress looks toward the next reauthorization, I was honored to represent USCM and NLC to share some local government priorities for consideration. Chief among them is higher overall authorization and appropriation levels, as well as higher per-grant amounts that were included in IIJA, especially for the cleanup and multi-purpose grants.

We look forward to working with [House](#) and [Senate](#) leaders on the next brownfields reauthorization bill.

The Brownfields Program is one that every member of Congress should be proud to support. It has a proven track record of creating jobs, cleaning up contamination and protecting public health. It is a win-win-win for our local governments, our environment and our economy.

In the House, two committees share jurisdiction over the Brownfields Program – the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure

Committee. In the Senate, the Environment and Public Works Committee has sole jurisdiction. Local leaders are encouraged to share their brownfields redevelopment and revitalization success stories with their members of Congress.

EPA is soliciting applications through November 13 for Brownfields multipurpose grants, assessment grants and cleanup grants. Local leaders can learn more [here](#). □



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NLC
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

**CITY
SUMMIT**
ATLANTA

**NOVEMBER
16-18
2023**
NOVEMBER 15, 2023

**DR. HAKEEM
OLUSEYI**
Astrophysicist &
Former Space
Science Education
Lead for NASA

**JOSÉ
ANDRÉS**
Chef,
Restaurateur,
Humanitarian

**BETH
MACY**
Journalist,
Best-Selling
Author of
Dopesick

Municipal Leadership Summit Wrap-Up

BY: KATIE REIBSANE, DIRECTOR OF TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT; MARY COSTIK, MEETING MANAGER; AND BAILEY ROCCO, TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEV. REP., THE LEAGUE

With over 300 municipal officials, vendors and countless speakers, the Municipal Leadership Summit was the definitive training event of the year!

The playground build kicked off this year's conference at Fairview Park in Bethlehem. Volunteers from the community and Summit attendees stepped up to provide another open space equity project in conjunction with KABOOM! Thank you to the continued support of the [playground build sponsors](#) for providing funds to keep this program growing.

From the opening ceremonies where guests were welcomed by the leadership of The League, the PA State Association of Township Commissioners, and the PA Career Fire Chiefs Association, to the color guard and National Anthem provided by Liberty High School Grenadier Band and Freedom High School Anthem Singers, all was keeping with the upbeat vibe that carried through the entire event.

Important topics that were addressed repeatedly during the Summit included state funding, revitalization, sustainability, affordable housing, public safety and helping local leaders think boldly and progressively about how to make their communities better.

Remarks were provided by Governor Josh Shapiro thanking the membership and the local leaders from across the commonwealth for helping build strong communities. He also mentioned numerous partnerships with the administration and the support of local government investments and resources.

Rick Vilello, Deputy Secretary Community Affairs and Development for the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and essay judge for the John A. Garner, Jr. Civic Engagement Scholarship provided remarks about working together with local government officials and the services provided by the department.

We were honored to have Auditor General Tim DeFoor address upcoming pension and financial burdens in local government and solutions to address them.

Tim Shriver, founder of UNITE and leader of the Special Olympics International Board of Directors, spoke on a diverse collective of Americans working to ease divisions, prevent violence and solve problems in our country. Tim gave a moving discussion about how promoting a forward-looking mindset and focusing on your wellbeing can create change in your community. He encouraged attendees to reflect on their own communities and how they could foster positive change.

During the PSATC annual banquet, John Jablowski, Councilman, Wilkes-Barre Township, was recognized as the new president of the association. Followed by the evening's festivity by Philadelphia Freedom Concert, an Elton John Tribute Band, attendees enjoyed social networking and singing along with Elton John classics.

During The League Annual Business meeting, Mayor Doug Baker, City of Franklin, was sworn in as The League President.

During the historic walking tour of Bethlehem, attendees visited the Kemmerer Museum, the Sister House and the Moravian Museum.

Thank you for the generosity and support of the Richard J. Schuettler Center for Municipal Development at our Summit Royale Reception. The second annual silent auction was held on Saturday evening and continues to be a major success. This 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity continues to grow and assist local elected and appointed officials in obtaining knowledge and leadership skills necessary to meet the challenges of their office.

If you did not have an opportunity to participate, please feel free to visit [The League's website and complete the pledge form](#).

Please be sure to consider working with the [Business Leaders Network](#) and the [Summit sponsors](#) and thank them for their generous support of the conference. ☐

Fairview Park Rebuild (Bethlehem Video)



Main Summit Video



Fairview Park Playground Build





Public Finance

RISING INTEREST RATES AND POSITIVE ARBITRAGE

A REFRESHER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON ARBITRAGE REBATE REPORTING

BY MICHAEL STEINBROOK, DIRECTOR AT PFM ASSET MANAGEMENT LLC

Having just navigated a long period where short-term interest rates hovered at zero or near zero, local governments have had to face plenty of challenges in finding positive yields on investment products. But since mid-2022, many of the short-term investments available to local governments – including the more recent investment opportunities made available by Act 10 – have started to carry increasingly higher yields.

That is good news for municipalities because interest earnings can become a legitimate contributor to project budgets, especially following the onset of the pandemic and near-zero interest rates. But it has also placed local governments in a position of having to refresh their understanding of positive arbitrage and associated reporting responsibilities.

Because arbitrage can be such a complicated aspect of issuing debt, PLGIT prepared this article to review a few fundamentals about

arbitrage, cite some immediate related arbitrage concerns, plus provide some guidance on ways to manage the reporting process.

Arbitrage 101

Here's a bit of background: When a local government issues a bond for a building project or another purpose, it invests the proceeds so it can earn interest until the funds are used. "Arbitrage" refers to the difference between the arbitrage yield – the interest rate at which bonds are issued – and the investment yield, the interest rate at which bond proceeds are invested.

If the investment yield exceeds the arbitrage yield, the dollar difference in earnings is "positive arbitrage." That positive arbitrage must be rebated to the IRS unless certain exceptions are met.

Conversely, if the investment yield is less than the arbitrage yield, the dollar difference in earnings is "negative arbitrage" and no rebate is owed.

Current arbitrage categories

In the current rising interest rate climate, PLGIT's investment adviser and administrator, PFM Asset Management LLC (PFMAM), has been educating investors about positive arbitrage. At the moment, there are several critical categories of issues to consider:

First, new and recent bond issues with low borrowing rates (arbitrage yields) that are earning positive arbitrage or will soon earn positive arbitrage. Good credits and short-term borrowings are the most vulnerable. Any debt obligation with a bond yield of roughly 4-5% or less has an opportunity to earn positive arbitrage based upon current and reasonably expected market conditions.

Next, bond issues from 2019 to 2021 with unspent balances in project funds. If not previously waived, the three-year temporary periods already have or will expire in this higher interest rate environment. Issuers that waived temporary periods in 2019 to 2021 likely made a great strategic move.

Finally, bond issues eligible for an exception to rebate. The small issuer exception or one of the spending exceptions may apply to specific bond issues. If a bond is eligible for and meets the requirements of a spending exception, that can have significant value in this positive arbitrage environment. Consult your advisors and bond counsel to help determine which exceptions may apply to your bonds.

While these are specific arbitrage issues, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) also recommends several broader rules that local governments can follow to maintain regular oversight on their reporting responsibilities. (Source: gfoa.org. [Developing and Implementing Procedures for Post-Issuance Tax Compliance for Issuers of Governmental Bonds](#))

General strategies for managing bond proceeds

To be effective, a municipality should have clear procedures in place to address the substantive issues necessary to assure tax and other legal compliance as they relate to tax-exempt bonds. According to the GFOA, these procedures should include:

- A designated individual or individuals for coordinating activities;
- A due diligence review at regular intervals;
- Training for responsible individuals;
- The retention of adequate records;
- An identification of areas that are most susceptible to noncompliance;
- Procedures to correct identified noncompliance in a timely manner.

Arbitrage assistance

In paying arbitrage, issuers must adhere to a complex web of federal regulations. These rules define what funds are subject to rebate, how liabilities may be calculated, and when payments must be made. They also set strict deadlines for filing and stringent rules for record keeping.

For these and other reasons, issuers often turn to a service provider and their investment advisor for assistance managing arbitrage rebate. When considering whether to use an investment advisor, review their experience with arbitrage rebate management and ask questions.

You should understand precisely what an advisor recommends and how it benefits you. In the current positive arbitrage environment, getting the right advice could save you thousands of dollars.

For more information about arbitrage rebate, please contact your PLGIT representative. □



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PSATC President's Message



[JOHN J. JABLOWSKI, JR.](#)
[COUNCILMEMBER](#)
[WILKES-BARRE](#)
[TOWNSHIP](#)



PML.org/PSATC

Dear Commissioners,

As the grandson of Pennsylvania coal miners, I was raised to value the importance of a caring, engaged community where neighbor helps neighbor. The very DNA of the townships we represent is built upon hard work, strong values, and a sense of place.

Decades ago, the leaders of your community decided to move ahead or stay stuck in neutrality. Their decisions made your municipality what it is today. As leaders, we must take the strength of our past and shape the future with a new vibrant dynamic.

Today, the nature of "community" is changing. Let's not complain about "the way it used to be" but let's create "the way it will be" in our municipalities.

Our residents probably don't work in the mill or factory down the street anymore. The constituents in our townships aren't mining coal or working on the railroad. Likely, it's a remote worker sitting with a laptop working for a company hundreds of miles away and sipping a latte while wearing ear buds. Or, it's a retiree endeavoring to enjoy a well-earned retirement on a fixed income.

Since 1925, the Pennsylvania Association of Township Commissioners has helped empower first class leadership in the communities we serve. As we near our 2nd century, it is incumbent upon us to continue to evolve as the next generation of leaders emerges. In fact, we are closer to 2040 than 1990 and PSATC must reflect that reality.

Each of us knows the communities we serve and understands the unique characteristics that make Pennsylvania great. I celebrate the local values we each bring to the PSATC table, but the common thread is a commitment to improving the quality of life for our neighbors and our collective future.

Leadership is not a title, it's a commitment and one that I humbly take with respect and honor. PSATC has been built with the dedication of so many public servants and I'm blessed to build upon this legacy. Together with an outstanding Vice-Presidential team and an engaged Executive Committee, the future of PSATC rests in the actions we take (or don't take) to move our organization forward. The future of PSATC is what we make it. My simple

goal is to harness the great work being done daily in Pennsylvania's 93 first-class townships and magnify this dedication throughout our first-class family. PSATC is about how we, as first-class townships, work to help one another, share best practices, and learn from failures and drive success.

While our communities are vastly different than in 1925 when PSATC was founded, the very nature of what a community is all about still rings true.

Folks want a quality of life where you feel safe, have opportunities to engage and feel a new sense of place. Today, it's not your job that drives where you live but rather a quality of life. **A community is no longer where you make your living but where you choose to make your life.**

As leaders, let's value the importance of yesterday, but meet our responsibility to set a strong foundation for tomorrow. Let's learn together and empower one another to build healthier, stronger more vibrant communities.

John J. Jablowski, Jr.

John J. Jablowski, Jr.

Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners (PSTAC) President John J. Jablowski, Jr. will be serving his 4th term on Wilkes-Barre Township Council and has been active with the organization since 2015. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Marywood University and a bachelor's degree in political science with a Minor Degree in Pennsylvania Studies from Penn State University.



Annual Business Meeting and Banquet

Officials from The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners met on Friday, October 6 for their Annual Business Meeting and Banquet. These events took place during the Municipal Leadership Summit in Bethlehem.

During the business meeting, the Nominating Committee presented the slate of officers for 23-24 which was unanimously adopted by the membership. Nominations were as follows: President, John Jablowski, Wilkes-Barre Township; First Vice President Dennis Arthur, Tincicum Township; Second Vice President Todd Miller, Crescent Township; Third Vice President Dean Villone, Lower Allen Township; and Secretary/Treasurer Jennifer Caron, Lower Allen Township. The members also nominated the following legal counsel to the Executive Committee: Mike Pierce, East; Emily Mueller, West; and Lisa Coyne, Central.

At the Banquet later that evening, each officer was sworn-in to their new roles. Outgoing President, Sam Juliano thanked the membership and Executive Committee for their support during his year as president. Incoming President, John Jablowski, was introduced by his long-time friend, PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll. In his speech to the membership, President Jablowski spoke about the importance of building the PSATC membership and evolving to meet the needs of the future leaders of first-class townships.

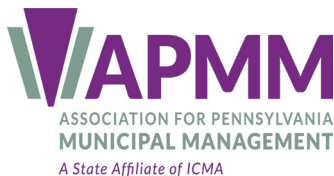
Also, during the banquet, a number of commissioners were recognized for either 12 or 24 years of elected service to their townships. Additionally, 2023 President Awards were presented to Dave Zarnick, Butler Township; Dean Villone, Lower Allen Township; and Sam Valenza, Upper Moreland Township.



APMM President's Message



[AMANDA SEROCK](#)
[MANAGER](#)
[CONCORD TOWNSHIP](#)



[APMM.net](#)

Greetings APMM Members!

I am sure many of you are right in the middle of a million loose ends to tie up before the end of the year. Between budgets, elections, staff schedules, postseason MLB night games (Go Phillies!), and home life, we all feel the spin of the holiday season as it approaches. Remember to breathe and remind yourself that somehow you will get it all done!

The APMM Executive Committee had a very productive meeting in September, and we have another meeting planned in November. Most notably at our September meeting, we approved a new partnership with Pioneering Community Change (Nancy Hess) which will enhance our communication strategies with our members through scheduled podcast events beginning in January. We are very excited to integrate our professional development training topics with this new medium so that our members can continue important discussions and connect after our educational events.

Additionally, our standing committees are off to the races! The new Promotional Committee, led by Sandra Zadell and Krista Watt, has been preparing a new Marketing Plan for implementation in 2024 along with new promotional ads and materials that will help grow our membership and sponsorships. Speaking of Membership, George Needles and Ryan Jeroski are leading our Membership Committee and gathering data to provide information on our membership and the best strategies for growth. The Professional Development Committee led by Stephanie Teoli Kuhls is also hard at work planning out our year of topics for the various educational events. Be sure to stay tuned for the return of our January Winter Workshop (virtual event) and our popular Executive Development Conference in February. The crescendo of the professional development committee planning is the 2024 APMM Annual Conference and Chair, Crandall Jones, has exciting plans to ensure our annual conference is the best one yet! Special thanks to our League staff for coordinating all these meetings, and to our APMM members who are all volunteering their time to enhance our organizational goals!

The 2023 ICMA Conference was fantastic, and it was so great to see so many APMM members in attendance, especially as it showed support for APMM member, Dave Burman, who was the Conference Planning Chair. Thanks again to John Brenner and Amanda Lane for organizing a wonderful dinner for all of us to connect in Austin. Congratulations also to Amanda Lane for being promoted to the position of Deputy Executive Director of Membership for The League! We are excited to work closely with Amanda as she will be the liaison for APMM.

If you have any new ideas or would like to be more involved with our organization, please reach out to me anytime. I am really excited about the future of our organization and all the great things to come!

Wishing everyone a safe, happy & healthy holiday season!

Amanda Serock

APMM Membership Update

New/Reinstated Members

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Mr. Jamar Kelly

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**Affiliate Member – Municipal Govt.
Employee**

New/Reinstated Members

Ms. Angela Madle-Long

Assistant Borough Manager
Borough of Bridgeport
Montgomery County
63 W. 4th Street
Bridgeport, PA 19405
610-272-1811 x221

amlong@bridgeportborough.org

Full Member – Assistant Manager

Ms. Cindy Schweitzer

Manager/Secretary
East Hempfield Township
Lancaster County
1700 Nissley Road
Landisville, PA 17538
717-898-3100 x241

manager@easthempfield.org

Full Member – Manager

Mr. James Price

Borough Manager
Crafton Borough
Allegheny County
100 Stotz Avenue
Crafton, PA 15205
412-921-0752 x19

jprice@craftonborough.com

Full Member - Manager

Dana Slizik

Assistant Township Manager
Collier Township
Allegheny County
2418 Hilltop Road
Presto, PA 15142
412-279-2525

dslizik@colliertwp.net

Full Member – Assistant Manager

Mr. Eden Ratliff

Township Manager
Kennett Township
Chester County
801 Burrows Run Road
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
610-388-1300

Eden.ratliff@kennett.pa.us

Full Member - Manager

Jamie Yurcina

Township Manager
Hopewell Township
Beaver County
1700 Clark Boulevard
Aliquippa, PA 15001
724-378-1460

manager@hopewelltwp.com

Full Member - Manager

Mr. Timothy Rine

Borough Manager
Borough of Lemoyne
Cumberland County
510 Herman Avenue
Lemoyne, PA 17043
717-737-6843

trine@lemoynepa.com

Full Member - Manager

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