



CHESTER COUNTY CHAMBER
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- Chamber of Influence -

b2brief

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From my desk to yours...



A reminder for those of you who may be reading this for the first time, this is my attempt at having a "less formal conversation" with you as a member on various topics that cross my desk in any given month. In this opening article, always titled "From My Desk", I will pick a topic or topics and just share some thoughts with you. The remainder of the publication will consist of news and opportunities I receive from organizations and businesses that may be good resources for you.

There has been no shortage of stories or media attention regarding the release of the State Budget by Governor Corbett. It came as no surprise that cuts would be made across the board to deal with the more than \$4 billion dollar deficit facing our state. For two years we have asked for a balanced budget with no tax increases. Governor Corbett has made some very controversial but necessary steps towards meeting this goal. We are concerned about how the cuts will impact our educational institutions and our non-profits. It certainly sets the stage for compelling discussions on consolidation, mandate relief, and reduced or eliminated services.

During a recent webcast by the Pennsylvania Business Council, it was noted that we will hear a lot of rhetoric on individual vs. business taxes and who is carrying the load. If you listen to some of the citizens groups, they are expressing claims that individual taxes are carrying any where from 80-90% of the load. In reality, this is closer to a 45%/55% split between business and individuals.

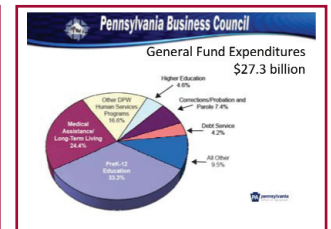
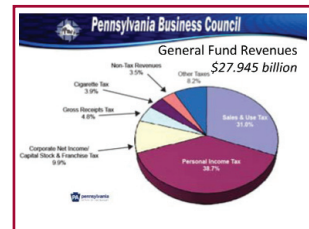
This should not be about business taxes versus individual taxes, in the end we will pay with either job loss or increased costs to the consumer if we don't get a handle on the budget. Obviously, the discussion is just beginning...stay tuned.

A broad look at the State budget revenues and expenses

Thank you to Dave Patti, Pennsylvania Business Council, for the budget graphs

Your President and CEO

Nancy Keefer CCE



US Congressional Assignments

Your Chester County delegation is hard at work in Washington. Below are the committee assignments for our representatives.

U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D)

Joint Economic Committee (Chair)
Foreign Relations Committee
Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Comm.
Special Committee on Aging

U.S. Senator Pat Toomey (R)

Banking Committee
Budget Committee
Commerce, Science & Transportation Comm.
Joint Economic Committee

Congressman Jim Gerlach (R-6)

Committee on Ways & Means

Congressman Pat Meehan (R-7)

Committee on Homeland Security
Committee on Oversight & Gov't Reform
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

Congressman Joe Pitts (R-16)

Energy & Commerce Committee

Pennsylvania Receives Detailed U.S. Census Data

To Be Used in Redistricting

Recently released data, which includes precinct level population, as well as race, voting age, and housing unit data, will be used to redraw federal and state legislative maps.

Overall, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had 3.4% population growth, far below the national state average growth of 9.7%.

Pennsylvania counties with population growth in excess of 15% over the last decade include Chester County, Forest County, Franklin County, Pike County, and Monroe County. 29 counties lost population from 2000 to 2010 with Beaver County, Cameron County, Cambria County, Elk County, Fayette County, and McKean County experiencing the highest percentage population loss.

The five largest counties by population in the Keystone State are, in order: Philadelphia County which had 0.6% growth; Allegheny County which saw a 4.6% decline; Montgomery County, which had 6.6% growth; Bucks County, which had 4.6% growth, and Delaware County, which had 1.5% growth. Turning to Pennsylvania's largest cities and townships, Philadelphia experienced population growth over the 10 year census period for the first time since the 1950 census.

From 2000 to 2010, Philadelphia grew 0.6%, from 1,517,550 residents to 1,526,006 residents. Philadelphia also maintained its standing as the nation's 5th largest city, although Phoenix, with 9.4% growth, closed the gap.

Meanwhile Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's second largest city, saw population decline 8.6%, from 334,563 residents to 305,704 residents. The next largest cities/townships were, in order: Allentown (10.7% growth); Erie (1.9% decline); Reading (8.5% growth); Upper Darby Township, Delaware County (1.2% growth); Scranton (0.4% decline); Bethlehem (5.1% growth); Bensalem Township, Bucks County (3.4% growth), and Lancaster (5.3% growth). Population growth in Allentown, Reading, and Lancaster appears to be largely attributable to growth in Pennsylvania's Hispanic population. Pennsylvania's Hispanic population nearly doubled from 2000 to 2010, growing an astounding 82.6%.

For more census information [click here](#)

ROUTE 29 "SLIP RAMP" Update

(Provided by Derrick Stokes, TMAACC)

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission announced that construction of the Route 29 E-ZPass Only Interchange located in Charlestown, East Whiteland and Tredyffrin Townships in Chester County will begin in March.

The project - funded wholly by toll revenues without any state or federal tax dollars - is being built by Allan A. Myers, LP of Worcester, Pa. The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission awarded the \$48 million contract to Myers on January 25, 2011.

The new Route 29 Interchange (Exit #320) will cover approximately one-half mile on the Turnpike mainline (I-76) and serve all four traffic movements, both eastbound and westbound entry and exit. Located 8 miles east of the Downingtown (Exit #312) Interchange and 6 miles west of the Valley Forge Interchange (Exit #326) the all-electronic toll facility will link I-76 with PA Route 29 (Morehall Road) near the western end of the proposed six-lane widening project between mileposts 320-326.

Increased traffic volumes in the areas of the Turnpike that serves Pennsylvania's metropolitan regions has contributed to growing congestion on the Turnpike and surrounding highways. One of the busiest four-lane sections of the east-west mainline, the turnpike between Valley Forge and Downingtown is used by nearly 50,000 motorists daily.

Some initial survey work is currently underway with additional construction activities scheduled to begin this week as the contractor starts to install message boards, advance warning signs and traffic control devices, and establish work zones on the local roads and on the Turnpike mainline.

Starting March 28, motorists traveling eastbound and westbound on the Turnpike should be prepared for nighttime lane closures Monday-Friday between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. The initial work will include setting temporary barriers for rebuilding the median area, and along the right edge line to create a safe work zone between milepost 317-321. Once the work zone is established, for about three-four weeks weather permitting, crews will excavate and repave the median for future traffic and motorists should be prepared for overnight left lane closures.

Although on some occasions traffic restrictions will be required, the contractor anticipates minimal disruption of Turnpike traffic during construction of the ramps and toll facilities located off-Pike. The contract also provides for local roadway improvements in the vicinity of SR 29 (Morehall Road) and the Turnpike overpass. These improvements include utility installations, drainage modifications, signing and pavement markings, roadway lighting and traffic signals with work being completed in various traffic stages. In addition, these ramps will provide another point of access for emergency vehicles and personnel responding to incidents in this area of the Turnpike.

The E-ZPass only interchange will offer motorists bi-directional access onto and from the Turnpike via Route 29, reducing traffic congestion at the Valley Forge and Downingtown Interchanges and along the Route 202 corridor. The project includes the construction of four bridges, one over both the Turnpike and Atwater Drive and two bridges over Yellow Springs Road.

Residents living adjacent to the Turnpike in the project area will receive the additional benefit of improved stormwater management, retaining walls, and local roadway improvements to improve their quality of life. The contractor anticipates the new all-electronic interchange will be fully operational and open to Turnpike traffic late 2012.

Turnpike motorists can also get up-to-date travel conditions by calling 866-976-TRIP (or 866-976-8747). This toll-free number gives audio advisories for the region in which you are traveling, including delays and closures. For a snapshot of conditions across the Turnpike, including access to traffic cams, traffic-flow monitors, audio advisories and more, visit the Interactive Travel Map at www.paturnpike.com/webmap.

Employment Resources Available

A new **Labor Market Information System** is available through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, which includes **Job Spidering** technology that pulls job postings from internet job boards according to search criteria that you select.

CareerOneStop is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and also provides an abundance of career development information. Accessible through this system is a new **Re-Employment Portal**, which provides guidance to those struggling with job loss and information to help those who've exhausted their unemployment benefits.

For information on chamber events [click here](#).

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