



**Center for Beef Excellence
Beef Bytes
August 21, 2009**

Dear Friends,

It was great to see so many friends at Ag Progress Days. The event offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with others in the industry. See the attached photo of Debbie visiting with Betsy at the Grange booth.



Opportunity/Good News

The Center for Beef Excellence launched their new web site complete with weather, production calculators, and commodity pricing. Check them out at www.beefexcellence.com

USDA Rural Development has \$1.7 billion in Recovery Act funds available for projects that help to stimulate business activity and growth in rural communities by creating and saving jobs and contributing to growth. These funds are available to organizations, corporations, partnerships, non-profit groups, public bodies and individuals through the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan program until September 15, 2010 or until all funds are expended. Contact the Rural Development State Office at (717) 237-2299 for more information and loan application assistance.

Enjoy the last week of August and please let the Versant Team know how we can serve you.

Sincerely,

MeeCee

Articles of Interest

- 08-21-2009 [**USDA: Red Meat Production in Pennsylvania Down 8 Percent in July**](#)
(Press Release)
- 08-21-2009 [**Exhibit shows kids milk's path to the table**](#)
What: A new interactive children's exhibit, "Marvelous Milk: From the Farm to Your Table." Where: Agricultural & Industrial Museum, 217 W. Princess St. in York When: It opened Thursday. How: The exhibit was supported by a \$55,000 grant from Rutter's Activities: Milk a life-size cow who was named Annabelle, thanks to Brianna... - [YORK DAILY](#)
- 08-21-2009 [**Researchers look to genetics to feed world**](#)
ROCK SPRINGS - Farmers will face a 100 percent increase in demand for food worldwide by 2059, and researchers in the dairy industry say genetic technology will be the key to stepping up production. Of the United Nations' projection that 100 percent more food is needed, 20... - [ALTOONA MIRROR](#)
- 08-20-2009 [**Dairy farmers don't set prices**](#)
Thursday, August 20, 2009 I don't think the recent article, "Dairy farmers in crisis" told enough about what really goes on in the dairy business. I don't think the public realizes who truly feeds this country. Dairy farmers don't set the price they receive for milk, as is the case for produce, beef, and hay farmers.... - [EASTON EXPRESS](#)
- 08-20-2009 [**State AG suing Peach Bottom over CAFO laws**](#)
The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office is taking Peach Bottom Township to court over the way the municipality regulates large farming operations. On Aug. 12, the attorney general filed a six-count lawsuit against the township in Commonwealth Court, alleging violations of Pennsylvania's... - [YORK DAILY](#)
- 08-20-2009 [**Showing steers is all in the family**](#)
Williamson, Pa. - The Franklin County Fair's 4-H Club Junior Steer Show is a family affair. Youth participants from ages 8 to 18 competed in Tuesday's show at the fair, often bringing generations of experience with them and, in some cases, sharing the stage with their brothers and sisters.... - [WAYNE. RECORD](#)

- 08-19-2009 [USDA: Milk Production in Pennsylvania Up 0.4% in July](#)
(Press Release)
- 08-18-2009 [Agriculture Secretary Honors Four Longstanding Pennsylvania Farms](#)
(Press Release)
- 08-18-2009 [Dairy farmers meet with state, national representatives](#)
Media Center An estimated 400 farmers gather at the Levi Fisher farm near Leola on Monday to discuss agricultural issues with U.S. Rep. Joe Pitts and state Sen. Mike Brubaker. * An estimated 400 farmers gather at the Levi Fisher farm near Leola on Monday to discuss agricultural issues with U.S. Rep. Joe Pitts and state... - [Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 08-17-2009 [Keep our food safer](#)
by Tanya Dierolf Monday August 17, 2009, 1:01 AM Our nation's capital is abuzz with debate over health care and food safety reform. One issue on the fringe of both discussions is the safe use of antibiotics. Preserving the effectiveness of antibiotics in human and... - [PATRIOT](#)
- 08-17-2009 [Farmers face bad news](#)
Farmers face bad news State government cuts target Department of Agriculture, while new Penn State report shows farming income in decline. * Story * Comments Text Size Print Share * Email to a friend * Add This Feeds * Local News Article Rating Current Rating: (... - [CARL SENTINEL](#)

Legislative Interests

[SB 850](#) [Corman](#) Act to provide from the General Fund for the expenses of the Executive, Legislative & Judicial Departments, the public debt & the public schools for the fiscal year July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

Printer Number(s):[P0953](#)

Bill History: 08-15-09 G Last day for Governor's action
08-05-09 G Approved by the Governor (Act: 1A)
08-10-09 G Bill, together with Governor's Line Item Veto Message, laid on the table
08-19-09 G Bill, together with Governor's Line Item Veto

Message, Removed from the table
08-19-09 G Laid out for discussion
08-19-09 G Tomlinson motion to reconsider PHEAA Approp
line item - Failed
08-19-09 G Erickson motion to reconsider DPW Approp Line
Item - Failed
08-19-09 G Orié motion to reconsider DPW Approp Line Item -
Failed
08-19-09 G Alloway motion to reconsider DPW Approp Line
Item - Failed
08-19-09 G Baker motion to reconsider DMVA Approp Line
Item Failed
08-19-09 G Yaw motion to reconsider PHFA Approp Line Item
Failed
08-19-09 S Over in Senate
08-24-09 S Set on the Senate Calendar

Weekly Letter

August 21, 2009

Dear Clients,

The state budget stalemate hit 50 days and counting this week, with the Senate GOP riding into town for a showdown with Governor Ed Rendell. The GOP posse had a message for the gunslinger-in-chief (no, not Brett Favre): we're gonna override parts of your budget veto, pardner! Now draw! Rendell, channeling Clint Eastwood, was nonplussed. "Go ahead. Make my day."

Having an almost-bullet proof Senate Democratic caucus proved to be all Rendell needed to stave off this particular showdown, as the Senate GOP fell 3 votes shy of overriding the governor's blue line on six different line items, including child welfare payments, college tuition assistance, and aid to domestic violence prevention services. And so the Senate was forced to ride back to camp and fight it out another day.

And so the stalemate, which has now lasted longer than the album version of Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir", drags on with little end in sight. With the Personal Income Tax increase now off the table, most capitol insiders have now fixed their gaze on the state sales tax, or more specifically, which exemptions can be closed to help generate some revenue. While it is hard to see any support for taxing food and clothing, expect any final budget deal to include some tinkering with other exempted items, perhaps legal services. Just don't expect it until the snow falls.

The next significant signpost on the budget impasse highway is August 27, when school districts across Pennsylvania miss their first big chunk of state lucre. While most schools will be keeping the doors open with reserve fund money or bank loans, some alternative education programs have already disappeared – at least temporarily – into the abyss.

As debate swirls around a plan to legalize table games at the state's slots parlors, at least a few House Democrats would like to legalize poker tournaments in fire halls as a way to help our volunteer firefighters buy new hoses and trucks and whatnot. Ah, sweet gambling. Is there no fiscal problem you cannot solve in our dear commonwealth? Casino owners who feared that the state would legalize slots at every corner bar and tavern should also track this new development closely.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has become the gift that keeps on giving for Pennsylvania residents. This week, the state finalized its application for the first pot of weatherization money, estimated to be \$258 million over three years. With that money, the state hopes to weatherize an additional 30,000 households, and create just shy of 1,000 new jobs. Fiberglass insulation magnate Pink Panther is reportedly pleased with the latest development.

Auditor General Jack Wagner continued his gubernatorial bid this week by doinking the Department of Public Welfare right on the noggin. According to Wagner and his team of auditors, DPW failed to receive the proper paperwork for 45% of welfare assistance claims in one program alone. For its part, the department said "Yeah, we know, we are fixing that. It's cool. Can you go pick on the Department of Health for a while?"

Doomsday approaches in Philadelphia, and we do not mean the start of the baseball playoffs. Unlike the streaking defending World Series champs, the city itself is poised to fall apart completely, or so says Mayor Michael Nutter, if a long awaited plan to raise the city sales tax does not pass the state senate, like, yesterday. Nutter started the layoff notices this week, and promises more pain shortly.

It has been over two decades since a young Tom Cruise ran through the streets on Johnstown wearing his "Ampipe High School" letterman jacket. One state lawmaker wants to rewind the clock and make J-town a hotbed of filmmaking. The state's film tax credit, currently under fire in the state budget war, is causing some folks to dream big, obviously. If the tax credit survives, one can only hope to see a remake of "Slapshot" being produced in Cambria County soon.

Pennsylvania public schools are the only ones in the nation to register test score gains in reading and math across the board over a six-year period, according to the Center on Education Policy. As you might expect, this was a great piece of news for the governor, who is trying to score more state support for education this year. Some lawmakers will look at

this report and say "Sure, looks like it is working, let's keep doing what we are doing." Others will undoubtedly say "Great, we are number one. Grab the trophy and let's go home."

Which brings us to our next installment of "Dancing with No Money", this week starring – the children! You know, they are our future. Teach them well. Let them lead the way. The budget impasse is starting to put a stranglehold on day care programs across the state, with some facilities gearing up to close their doors and leave thousands of parents with many appetizing options: miss work, take child to work, beg neighbor to watch child, teach child to watch self. In suburban Philadelphia, a camp designed for kids who have been affected by violence is about to close up shop as well, which would not be a huge deal, except for the fact that a bill banning violence has not yet passed Philly City Council.

Opponent of the proposed Consumer Workforce Council have long advocated, according to them, better wages and health benefits for home care workers, which would be swell if they actually ever provided better wages and health care benefits. During testimony on the topic last year, one provider opined that home care workers should join the state's adultBasic health insurance program. This week, it was announced that the waiting list for that program has now topped 300,000 Pennsylvania adults. So if you are a home care worker, get in line now. You should receive your coverage in June of 2017.

Legislation to put distressed municipal pension plans under state control is careening toward approval, which is apparently bad news for the city of Pittsburgh. Last week, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl asked for his city to be exempted from the law, arguing that the new contribution rates would fiscally strangle his 'burgh. This week, a Pittsburgh-based state Senator said "forget it." Then later in the week, top Senate GOP members signaled that they will also include Philadelphia in the bill, thereby endearing themselves even more to Mayor Michael Nutter.

Kudos to George Wolff, one of Pennsylvania's political luminaries, who this week had an award named after him by the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medicine Association. We cannot think of a more deserving tribute for a man who has given so much to so many over the years. Congratulations, George!

And finally this week, Governor Rendell is poised to sign a new law that would prohibit people from performing surgery on their dogs. The law would ban homemade "debarking" procedures, as well as ear and tail cropping, as well as kitty liposuction and facelifts for Bassett hounds.

That is all from your soggy seat of state government this week. We will be back next week to tell you all about why the budget has still not passed. Until then, from all of us at Triad, have a great weekend!

Around the Capitol

GOVERNOR RENDELL NAMES NEW PRESS SECRETARY -Governor Ed Rendell named Gary Tuma as his new press secretary last Friday. "Gary Tuma is a veteran newsman who brings a variety of perspectives to the job – he has been a reporter covering the Capitol, a press secretary at a cabinet agency, and a press secretary in the legislature," Governor Rendell said. "Gary is a well respected, hard working and experienced press secretary, and I couldn't be more pleased that he is joining my administration."

HOUSE REPUBLICANS REVIVE GOP-KOTIK SPENDING PLAN- A House Republican budget plan being revived as a bill, instead of a proposed coalition amendment with House Democrats, in another push to pass what they say is a balanced, no-tax-increase spending plan. The \$27.5 billion plan is the same spending breakdown that House Minority Leader Sam Smith, R-Punxsutawney, presented earlier this month as a bipartisan amendment that was crafted with a handful of conservative Democrats. That amendment was to be sponsored by Democratic Rep. Nick Kotik of Allegheny County, but he withdrew the amendment on the House floor and refused to let his Republican colleagues introduced the plan. The latest proposal is in House Bill 1943. It includes an increase of \$150 million for basic education as well as some other increases to social services over the levels in Senate Bill 850. Those include additional funding for libraries, hospitals and a number of disability programs. But Democrats say the Republican proposal still does not adequately fund the state's essential programs.

ANIMAL CRUELTY BILL HEADS TO GOVERNOR'S DESK -On a vote of [179-10](#), the state House of Representatives on Wednesday concurred with changes made by the Senate to [legislation](#) that would impose new guidelines on several types of surgeries that are performed on Pennsylvania's dogs. According to the bill sponsor, Rep. Thomas Caltagirone, D-Berks, the sweeping reforms made to the state's animal cruelty law last year provides little to no oversight over what has become a common practice – dog breeders and owners, with no formal training, personally performing surgical procedures on dogs. Caltagirone said his bill would strengthen the animal cruelty law by prohibiting owners and breeders from performing debarking - cutting or destroying a dog's vocal cords - and caesarean sections on the dogs in their care. The bill now heads to the governor, who is expected to sign the bill into law.

BUDGET UPDATE - Earlier in the week, budget negotiators said progress had been made in budget talks but the sides are still about \$1 billion apart. Senate Republicans still are saying their top spending offer is \$27.6 billion. Recent House Democratic and gubernatorial proposals add up to \$28.6 billion, in terms of programs contained in last year's budget. Both

sides said table games and a potential cigarette tax hike were part of the revenue discussions, but that another billion dollars of combined cuts or revenues separated the negotiators and prolonged the budget impasse. But by the end of the day Wednesday, it looked to all watching the events transpiring in the state Capitol that no progress has been made in budget negotiations.

LAWMAKERS HAVE HELD INFORMAL BUDGET TALKS, BUT DEADLOCK REMAINS-

House Democrats and Senate Republicans confirm that legislative leaders have quietly met informally for budget negotiations since Gov. Ed Rendell signed a "bridge" budget, although spokesman for each group said the discussions led to little progress. "Informal discussions have been going on daily since the stop-gap budget was signed," said Bob Caton, spokesman for Speaker of the House Keith McCall (D-Carbon)

OVERRIDES FAIL; SENATORS LEFT PONDERING NEXT MOVE - The Senate's failure Wednesday to override any of Governor Ed Rendell's line-item vetoes left Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi (R-Delaware) calling on the state's chief executive to re-engage the legislature, the only way the senator said Republicans and Democrats could reach a budget deal. On the other side of the aisle, Democrats were left asking their GOP Senate colleagues to agree to new revenue sources, a move they called necessary to come to an agreement. Three weeks after the governor signed a "bridge" budget to pay state workers, Republicans and Democrats appear stuck in the same bargaining position.

BOSCOLA: OTHER D'S SUPPORT OVERRIDES, BUT WON'T VOTE FOR THEM-Senator Lisa Boscola (D-Lehigh) said she isn't the only Democrat who thinks some of Governor Ed Rendell's line-item vetoes should be overridden. She's just the only one to vote to do so.

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE- The voter registration deadline for voting in the Sept 29 special election to replace Sen. Rob Wonderling is Aug 31. The Democratic candidate is [Anne Henning Scheuring](#) and the republican candidate is Rep. Robert Mensch.

PA PRESS CLUB WILL HOST SHIRLEY ANN WARSHAW- PA Press Club Luncheon will host Shirley Ann Warshaw, Presidential Scholar & Gettysburg Professor. The luncheon will be held at the Harrisburg Hilton, One N. 2nd Street, Harrisburg, on Aug. 24, 2009 at 12:00 pm. The cost is \$25 per person and must be paid in advance. If you would like to make a reservation please contact 717-540-0296 or info@papressclub.org.

CLASSES START AT THE COMMONWEALTH MEDICAL COLLEGE -The Commonwealth Medical College began with a leap, the school's dean and president told the hundreds of faculty, staff, parents and students at the school's inaugural convocation Sunday. "What binds us together is faith," Robert D'Alessandri, M.D., said. "To get us here today, everyone took a leap of faith." Sunday's convocation at the Mellow Theater at Lackawanna College was another milestone for the school, the first medical degree-granting school to open in the state since 1962. The 65 students in the medical degree program have been in Scranton for more than a week, attending orientation sessions and becoming acquainted with the area. Classes begin today.

Legislative Developments

- **House Session Schedule**

- The House remains on a 6-hour call of the Chair.

House Appropriations will hold an Off the Floor meeting on Monday, Aug. 24, 2009 in Room 140 Main Capitol. The agenda will be announced.

House Agriculture and Rural Affairs will hold a public hearing at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 24, 2009 at Peen State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, Maggie Hardy Magerko Auditorium, Uniontown on the Pennsylvania Dairy Industry.

House Health and Human Services, subcommittee on Mental Health will hold a public hearing at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2009 in Room 205 Ryan Office Building, to investigate reporting processes and operating procedures for Mental Retardation Group Homes.

House Appropriations will hold an Off the Floor meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2009 in Room 140 Main Capitol. The agenda will be announced.

House Health and Human Services will meet at 11:00 a.m. on Wed. Aug. 26, 2009 in Room 60 East Wing to consider **HB 816 (Pashinski)** Act establishing State funding for the Heart Disease and Stroke Program within the Department of Health; **HB 1358 (Quinn)** Act providing for copies of patient test results to be sent directly to patients.

House Appropriations will hold an Off the Floor meeting on Wed. Aug 26, 2009 in Room 140 Main Capitol. The agenda will be announced.

House Health and Human Services will hold an informational meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Wed. Aug 26, 2009 in Room 60 East Wing and the Department of Health will give a briefing of the H1N1 Virus (Swine Flu)

House Children and Youth will hold a public hearing at 10:00 a.m. on Thurs., Aug. 27, 2009 in Room 60 East Wing on the Federal Law relating to foster care, adoption and related initiatives.

House Appropriations will hold an Off the Floor meeting on Thurs. Aug.27, 2009 in Room 140 Main Capitol. The agenda will be announced.

senate session schedule

- The Senate is expected to reconvene at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, August 24, 2009, Tuesday, August 25 and Wednesday, August 26.

The Senate Finance Committee will hold a meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 24, 2009 in Room 461 Main Capitol to discuss **HB 1661 (Dermody)** Act providing for a temporary moratorium of court-ordered countywide reassessments.

Other Articles

08-21-2009

[Pennsylvania lawmakers discuss budget impasse](#)

State legislators and Gov. Ed Rendell are about seven weeks behind and \$600 million apart on finalizing a \$27- or \$28-billion budget. That's not counting what some have estimated as a \$3 billion revenue shortfall for

the last fiscal year that ended June 30. It also doesn't... - [POCONO RECORD](#)

08-20-2009 [**Rep. Sam Smith - PIT Increase is Dead; Democrats Switch To Legal Services Tax**](#)

(Press Release)

08-20-2009 [**Senate fails to override vetoes; social services money still tied up**](#)

HARRISBURG - A Senate Republican effort to override Democratic Gov. Ed Rendell's vetoes on spending items failed Wednesday, ensuring Pennsylvania's money-starved social safety net will keep fraying as the state began the eighth week of a budget stalemate... - [AP](#)

08-20-2009 [**Mercury Found in Every Fish Tested, Scientists Say**](#)

When government scientists went looking for mercury contamination in fish in 291 streams around the nation, they found it in every fish they tested, the Interior Department said, even in isolated rural waterways. In a statement, the department said that some of the streams tested were... - [NY TIMES](#)

08-18-2009 [**Senate to Consider Line-Item Veto Overrides**](#)

(Press Release)

08-18-2009 [**Bill would take over Pennsylvania pensions in trouble**](#)

HARRISBURG -- The sponsor of a House bill that provides for state takeover of "severely distressed" municipal pension systems said Monday he opposes exempting the city of Pittsburgh. "Why should you start making exceptions?" said Rep. Tom Caltagirone, D-Reading. "If you have something that helps them, why should they not be... - [TRIB](#)

08-17-2009 [**Lawmakers debate expanding sales tax**](#)

HARRISBURG - Expanding the state sales tax base to cover more goods and services is an idea circulating at the edges of this summer's bitter state budget fight. The state sales tax, along with the personal income tax and corporate income tax, are the largest revenue generators for state coffers.... - [POTTS. REP.](#)

08-17-2009 [**Results differ from studies on planned table games**](#)

The studies are similar. The projections are dramatically different for the state and its casinos. The Pennsylvania Equine Coalition released a table games impact study Wednesday. In it, Thalheimer Research

Associates predicts an 8 percent to 13 percent drop in slots play if Pennsylvania gets table games.... - [The Intelligencer](#)

08-16-2009

[No mercury in most children's vaccines](#)

After hearing the warnings about the mercury we ingest when eating fish and how toxic heavy metals are, it might seem like a bad idea to use mercury in vaccines that are injected into the human body. But scientists say that the mercury used with some vaccines, known as ethyl... - [POST-GAZ.](#)