



***Beef Bytes
Center for Beef Excellence
April 9, 2010***

Dear Friends,

As a former ag teacher, I was really touched by this good news story. Grab a tissue and read on...

<http://www.hillcountryherald.com/2010/03/lot-44-from-mills-county-texas/>

Congratulations to Sam Landis for being re-elected as president of the PA Winery Association. If you don't know Sam, besides being a second generation wine maker at Vynecrest vineyards, he is an ace pitcher for the Reds.

<http://www.vynecrest.com/>

Know anyone looking for a summer internship opportunity? The American Seed Trade Association has one summer internship position available. Please encourage any qualified individuals you may know to apply. We are counting on you (our members) to help spread the word and create a large pool of excellent candidates for us to choose from. For your referral, the summer intern position description is below and posted on ASTA's Web site at

http://www.amseed.com/meeting_classifiedads.asp.

I know like the Versant Team, you all have been enjoying the warm weather.

Sincerely,
MeeCee

Articles of Interest

[HB 2260](#) [Houghton](#) Amends Title 3 (Agriculture) providing for the registration, licensing & use of a PA Preferred trademark; establishing the Pennsylvania Preferred Trademark Licensing Fund; and providing for penalties & for enforcement.

Printer Number(s): [P3223](#)

- 04-07-2010 [**CBF Statement on the 2009 Bay Barometer Report**](#)
(Press Release)
- 04-06-2010 [**PA Farm Bureau Praises Rejection of Plan to Place Tolls on Interstate 80**](#)
(Press Release)
- 04-05-2010 [**USDA: Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup for April 5, 2010**](#)
(Press Release)
- 04-05-2010 [**Department of Agriculture: Inside PDA Newsletter for April 2, 2010**](#)
(Press Release)
- 04-05-2010 [**New vehicle regulations have farmers crying foul**](#)
New agricultural transportation regulations about to go into effect have some Pennsylvania farmers saying they feel more like truck drivers than food producers. A federal Department of Transportation audit found state regulations of agricultural vehicles were "deficient" compared to other states because... - [SCRANTON TIMES](#)
- 04-05-2010 [**Progressive Agriculture Organization will sponsor bus trip to Washington, D.C.**](#)
Officials of the Progressive Agriculture Organization (Pro Ag) announced that they are sponsoring a bus trip to Washington, D.C., April 13. Arden Tewksbury, manager of Pro Ag, said that various meetings are being scheduled with officials from different departments within the United... - [SOMERSET DAILY](#)

Weekly Letter

Last Sunday, the White House held its annual Easter egg hunt. In a break with tradition, President Barack Obama's staff did not use real eggs, but instead plastic ones filled with vouchers for free health insurance. He was immediately sued by the Easter Bunny.

For public policy fans (and really, who amongst us is not?) there was only one news story this week that mattered, and it had nothing to do with Tiger Woods or Donovan McNabb. Early this week, the Federal Highway Administration released the Kraken, saying "no way, no day, and don't ask us again" to Pennsylvania's application to toll Interstate 80. The rejection throws the future of transportation infrastructure and transit funding into utter, abject chaos. Governor Ed Rendell, when he finished beating his head off the concrete,

immediately called for a special session of the legislature to address the \$2 billion-and-counting funding hole. Do not hold your breath for smooth sailing on this issue.

House GOP Transportation Chairman Rick Geist came out of the box quickly with a plan to fix the hole by relying heavily on public/private partnerships. Later that day, Auditor General and gubernatorial candidate Jack Wagner unveiled his plan for a complete overhaul of PA's roads, bridges, rail and mass transit. Conspicuously absent from either of those plans was a real, dedicated funding source, which kinda makes everything else moot. Guys, we've identified the problem already, we are good on that end.

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review this week ran an exclusive, breaking, earth-shattering story that was so broad and well-researched, the Pulitzer has been renamed the Tribulizer. According to the Trib's vast research on elections, as many as 1 million Pennsylvania registered Independent voters will NOT be able to vote in the Primary Elections! Oh, the humanity! Not to trivialize the plight of the Indies, but this is not exactly a shock, since PA election law on this matter hasn't really changed since...oh...forever.

DEP Secretary John Hanger this week announced the final push for new rules governing the amount of total dissolved solids that can be discharged into our waterways. Hanger says the final board vote for the new rules will be held on May 19. The DEP is concerned that all of this new natural gas drilling is going to put additional strain on the waterways of the state. He did not mention, however, that these new rules will govern pretty much every other industry in the state at the same time. So while gas drillers are busy preparing for the new rules, we wonder if anyone else is paying attention.

Hanger also made news this week as he and a bunch of wind energy industry types announced that 2009 was a banner year for wind power in the Keystone State. Overall, the industry now generates about 748 megawatts of energy a year, roughly equivalent to what a traditional coal-fired plant puts out every five or so minutes. Still, if you've ever gotten out of your car at the Somerset Turnpike Plaza and had your ball cap blown all the way to Donegal, you know Pennsylvania has plenty of wind to go around. So we might as well use it for something productive.

It was a busy week in the Pennsylvania gaming industry, as a group from Cumberland County announced it will seek to secure the state's final remaining resort casino license for a Holiday Inn near Mechanicsburg. Penn Harris Gaming LLC is comprised of some local business folks and some folks who recently yanked a bid to secure a license at the Crowne Plaza in Reading. All due respect to the Holiday Inn: no one has ever called your hotel a "resort" before, and the amenities called for by state law do not include the beach volleyball court behind the sports bar. Move along now.

The mythical creature known as the Foxwoods Casino in Philadelphia simply cannot catch a break. This week, gajillionaire casino mogul Steve Wynn announced that he is pulling out of the deal, just weeks after jetting into town as the savior of the project. That is a mighty big bag he just left Foxwoods holding, and nobody can predict what might happen next, except that Foxwoods may need a crash cart, stat!

Then, the battle of the casino jobs happened. A Gettysburg developer and potential licensee said a slots license would create about 900 jobs at his proposed facility. Fair enough, sounds like a solid number, consistent with industry standards. But then an anti-casino group called "Horsehockey!" on the claim, saying that putting a casino in Adams County would actually cost jobs. This leads us to believe this group has never set foot inside a casino, and believes the facilities are staffed with some sort of robot employees, or perhaps Oompa Loompas.

Meanwhile, Hollywood Casino at Penn National was awarded a table games license this week and will immediately add 52 jobs, most of them to be filled by card-dealing robots.

It was an interesting week for education, as Philadelphia Controller Alan Butkovitz released his report of the city's charter schools. It was not a very glowing tome. Among the findings were questionable business practices, shoddy accounting, sweetheart rent deals and one instance of an administrator who worked for more than 365 days in one year, something that is very difficult to do if you're job does not entail you being on the planet Venus. Butkovitz's report will surely be a point of contention in Harrisburg when the charter school funding debate begins again.

In slightly better education news, the non-profit Great Schools (a Bill and Melinda Gates production) found that Pittsburgh area schools ranked 7 th out of 58 similarly sized markets across the nation in areas such as student achievement. If you do not believe this news will make it into County Executive Dan Onorato's campaign ads, well, you probably aren't paying much attention to the governor's race. You may also believe that robots work in casinos.

But fortunately for you, we are paying attention to the Primary races! This week the late entrant into the race for the Democratic nod, State Senator Anthony "Hardy" Williams, entered the ad war after nabbing \$1.5 million in campaign cash. Notably, most of that money came from three guys who really want to see school choice enacted. School choice, as some may know, is not exactly standard campaign stump material in a Democratic Primary, so we'll be interested to see how that works out for him.

Meanwhile, the aforementioned Onorato was up in Erie telling voters that the race is all about jobs, and more specifically, how good he is at creating them. Onorato expounded on the success of using capital funds (read: state debt) to return old industrial sites into

shovel-ready job creators. Onorato also reminded Erie residents that they sit next to Lake Erie, which probably came as a shock to very few of them.

That is all for this week from sunny and windswept Harrisburg. From the Versant crew, have a great weekend!

Around the Capitol

The long awaited decision from Secretary Ray LaHood and the U.S. Department of Transportation finally came to fruition this week although the news wasn't what Governor Rendell and the PA Department of Transportation wanted to hear. The PA Turnpike Commission's proposal to toll Interstate 80 was soundly rejected by the Federal Highway Administration which cited that the Governor's plan to use the monies not only for the repair and maintenance of I-80 but also for other road and bridge repairs and funding for mass transit was a violation of the usage of these proposed funds. They can only be used on projects for I-80. Back to the drawing board. Governor Rendell has announced plans to convene a special legislative session to address the significant funding loss, a \$500 million hole. While the rejection will not affect transportation projects already slated for this year, future year projects are in jeopardy. The Governor announced that the funding rejection would translate into 100 bridges remaining unrepaired and 300 miles of unrepaired roads.

Governor Rendell announced an \$8 million investment in 20 alternative fuels projects from the Alternative Fuel Incentive Grants program earlier this week. The programs incorporate the use of alternative fuels such as biodiesel, natural gas and electricity and, according to the Governor, will create infrastructure that will allow more Pennsylvanians to make fuel saving vehicles a part of their daily lives thereby reducing our reliance on foreign oil. To learn more about these grants.

Legislative Developments

House Session Schedule

April	19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28
May	3, 4, 5, 24, 25, 26
June	7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

The House stands in recess until Monday, April 19, at 1:00 p.m. or to the call of the Chair.

Monday, April 12 [House Republican Policy Committee](#)

10:00 a.m., Chester County Intermediate Unit, 455 Boot Road, Downingtown Public hearing on Pennsylvania's pension systems.

Monday, April 12 House Transportation Informational Meeting

10:30 a.m., Essroc Cement Plant, Conference Room 3938 Easton Nazareth Highway, Nazareth – Information briefing on the cement industry and its future in Pennsylvania.

Monday, April 12 Senate Appropriations; Off the Floor, Rules Committee Conference Room

SB 629 Amends the Public School Code, in professional employees, further providing for definitions; and providing for school social workers. SB 918 Amends Title 53 (Municipalities) consolidating & amending the 3rd Class County Assessment Board Law, the 4th to 8th Class & Selective County Assessment Law & provisions of The County Code, etc. & making related appeals; SB 1026 Amends Title 34 (Game) further providing for elk hunting licenses; SB 1155 Amends Title 16 (Counties) adding provisions for required fiscal security through bonding, blanket bonding & insuring of elected & appointed county officers & employees; providing for amount & payment of premiums, etc. & making repeals; SB 1186 Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs) further providing for burial details for veterans; HB 975 Amends Engineer, Land Surveyor & Geologist Registration Law, adding definitions; further providing for general powers of board & for procedure for licensing professional geologist; providing for requirements & practice by firms.

Tuesday, April 13 House Transportation Public Hearing – 9:30 a.m., Philadelphia Convention Center, Room 204 A & B, 1101 Arch Street, Philadelphia
Hearing, in conjunction with the Lifesaver 2010 Conference, regarding PA seat belt requirements and distracted driving issues.

Tuesday, April 13 House Judiciary Informational 10:00 a.m., Room 205 Ryan Office Building (Note: change from public hearing to informational meeting)
HB 1575 Amends title 23 (Domestic Relations) further providing for immunity from liability, for complaint files and for amendment or expunction of information.

Tuesday, April 13 House Liquor Control 10:00 a.m., Room 140 Main Capitol
Joint public hearing with Senate Law and Justice Committee to examine the causes behind recent beer registration raids and how the registration provisions and other aspects of Liquor Control enforcement may be outdated and how to remedy them.

Tuesday, April 13 House Democratic Policy Committee 10:30 a.m., Lycoming College, Wendle hall, Room D-001, 700 College Place, Williamsport
Public hearing, hosted by Rep. Mirabito, on Environmental Impact of Marcellus Shale and Chesapeake Bay.

Tuesday, April 13 House Education 1:00 p.m., Duquesne University, Room 613 Duquesne Union Building, 600 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh
Public hearing on accelerating science, technology, engineering in math education (STEM)

Wednesday, April 14 Local Government Commission – 8:45 a.m., Room 14, East Wing
Monthly Business Meeting

Wednesday, April 14 House Consumer Affairs 9:30 a.m., University of Pittsburgh, Room 54B, William Pitt Union, 3959 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh
Joint public hearing with the House Education Committee on:
HB 1286 Act establishing requirements relating to publishing and selling of certain college textbooks.

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Joint public hearing with the House Education Committee on:
HB 1286 Act establishing requirements relating to publishing and selling of certain college textbooks.

Wednesday, April 14 House Liquor Control 9:30 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building -- Joint public hearing with the Senate Law and Justice Committee on the PA Liquor Control Board and budget.

Wednesday, April 14 House Republican Policy Committee 10:00 a.m., Blair Mill Inn, 3855 Blair Mill Road, Horsham
Public hearing on Child Labor Laws.

Senate Session Schedule

April	12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21
May	3, 4, 5, 24, 25, 26
June	7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30

The Senate stands in recess until Monday, April 12, at 1:00 p.m. or to the call of the Chair.

Monday, April 12 [Senate Judiciary](#) (RESCHEDULED) 9:00 a.m., Philadelphia Bar Association, 1101 Market Street, 11th Floor, Philadelphia (Rescheduled to 4/19/10) – public hearing on Philadelphia’s criminal justice system.

Monday, April 12 Senate Government Management and Cost Study Commission; 12:00 p.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building
Auditor General Jack Wagner tentatively scheduled to testify before the Commission.

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Aging and Youth – 9:30 a.m., room 8E-A, East Wing
SR 288 Resolution designating April 16, 2010 as “Healthcare Decisions Day” in Pennsylvania.

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Environmental Resources and Energy 9:30 a.m., Room 156, Main Capitol
Public hearing to consider the nomination of John Quigley as Secretary of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Consumer Protection & Prof. Licensure 10:00 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building -- Public hearing regarding electric rates

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Finance 10:00 a.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing
Public hearing to consider the nomination of the Honorable C. Daniel Hassell for Secretary of Revenue

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Labor and Industry 10:00 a.m., Room 461 Main Capitol
SB 1249 Amends the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act further providing for definitions and for applicability to certain buildings; HB 9 Amends the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps Act, further providing for supervisors and for expiration; HB 1196 Amends PA Construction Code Act further providing for definitions and for administration and enforcement; and providing for applicability.

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Law & Justice 10:00 a.m., Room 140 Main Capitol
Joint public hearing with Senate Law and Justice Committee to examine the causes behind recent beer registration raids and how the registration provisions and other aspects of Liquor Control enforcement may be outdated and how to remedy them.

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Judiciary 11:30 a.m., Room 8E-B, East Wing
SB 944 Amends Title 15 (Corporations & Unincorporated Assoc.), extensively regulating unincorporated nonprofit assoc. in areas of organic nature, structure, formation, alteration, mgmt., participation, function, liability & dissolutions; SB 985 Amends Title 20 (Decedents, Estates & Fiduciaries), in ownership of property and legal title and equitable estate, further providing for right to dispose of a decedent's remains; SB 1185 Amends Title 42 (Judiciary), in juvenile matters, further providing for disposition of dependent child; SB 1221 Amends Title 51 (Military & Veterans Affairs) providing for assignment of custody and visitation rights during military deployment; SB 1237 Amends Title 61 (Penal & Correctional Institutions) establishing Prison Industry Enhancement Authority; providing for employment of prisoners by private industry & for subcontracts with correctional agencies, guidelines & location; SB 1275 Amends Title 61 (Penal & Correctional Institutions), in Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, further providing for violation of terms of parole; SR 253 Resolution directing the JSGC to establish an advisory committee to study the problem of human trafficking & to make a report to the Senate on the issue of human trafficking & recommend any changes in the State law, policies & procedures; HB 90 Amends Title 23 (Domestic Relations) providing for prevention of abduction of children.

Tuesday, April 13 Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs 12:00 p.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing
SB 672 Amends the Animal Destruction Method Authorization Law, further providing for prohibited means of destroying animals, for use of carbon monoxide systems and for penalties; and providing for local law enforcement.

Wednesday, April 14 Senate Consumer Protection & Prof. Licensure 9:00 a.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing
Public hearing to discuss the privatization of weights and measures enforcement in the Commonwealth.

Wednesday, April 14 Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Prepared. 9:00 a.m., Room 8E-B, East Wing
Public hearing to consider the nominations of Col. Michael R. Evans, Col. Timothy J. Hilty, Col., Jeffrey R. Elliott and Col. Andrew P. Schafer as Brigadier General in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

Wednesday, April 14 Senate Law and Justice 9:30 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building -- Joint public hearing with the House Liquor Control Committee on the PA Liquor Control Board and budget.

Wednesday, April 14 Senate Education 12:00 p.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building
SB 982 Amends the Public School Code, further providing for State appropriations for approved private schools and for chartered schools for the deaf and blind.

Other Articles

DOH: TOBACCO USE PREVENTION AND CESSATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE: PUBLIC MEETING

The Department of Health announced that the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Advisory Committee will hold a public meeting on May 12, 2010 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Room 812, Health and Welfare Building, 625 Forster Street, Harrisburg. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the tobacco use prevention and cessation priorities for the State Fiscal Year 2010-2011. For additional information contact Mary K. Parker, Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control, Room 1032, Health and Welfare Building, 625 Forster Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120-0701, (717) 783-6600. <http://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol40/40-15/652.html>

04-09-2010 [**AG Wagner Says Turnpike Commission has \\$2.23 Billion in Debt Tied to Swaps**](#)

(Press Release)

04-09-2010 [**State Rep. favors tolling Rte. 422**](#)

By: Jenny DeHuff NORRISTOWN — State Rep. Paul Drucker, D-157th, of Montgomery and Chester counties, said he will push for the proposal that would authorize the tolling of Route 422, during an editorial board meeting at The Times Herald on Thursday. Drucker, in his second year in the General Assembly, admitted he was not... - [*LANS. REPORTER*](#)

04-08-2010 [**Commonwealth Foundation Commentary: Ten Tips To Balance the Budget**](#)

(Press Release)

04-07-2010 [**Geist Unveils Bold New Plan to Meet PA's Transportation Infrastructure Needs**](#)

(Press Release)

04-07-2010 [**Mundy: Marcellus Shale drilling hearing explores environmental risks, mitigation**](#)

(Press Release)

04-07-2010 [**State crisis brews after I-80 toll plan nixed**](#)

Feds' decision means a 'transportation funding nuclear winter,' lawmaker says. HARRISBURG Faced with federal rejection of the state's attempt to turn Interstate 80 into a toll road and with a \$472 million hole in his budget by June 30, Gov. Ed Rendell on Tuesday called on state lawmakers to convene a special... - [*MORNING CALL*](#)

04-06-2010 [**Governor Rendell Will Call Special Session to Address Transportation Funding**](#)

(Press Release)

- 04-05-2010 [**DEP: 88 Growing Greener Projects to Improve Economic, Environmental Health of PA**](#)
(Press Release)
- 04-05-2010 [**Cell phone and texting ban to be discussed in state Senate**](#)
It's easy to pick up a cell phone and return that business call, order a pizza for dinner or chat with a relative while you're driving. But more studies are showing how risky that behavior is -- even with a hands-free device. And it may soon be illegal for drivers in Pennsylvania to text and talk on... - [YORK DAILY](#)
- 04-05-2010 [**No solution in sight for spike in pension costs**](#)
HARRISBURG - All the ramifications of the looming spike in public pension costs are just beginning to be understood as legislative committees hold hearings on the topic. Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, which took over operation of the former Scranton State School for the Deaf last year, will be affected in a... - [POTTS. REP.](#)
- 04-05-2010 [**Application for I-80 tolling remains flawed**](#)
To the editor: I was disappointed to read comments by Gov. Ed Rendell that he was optimistic of federal approval of the tolling of Interstate 80 within two weeks following his recent meeting with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. In December, I, along with state Rep. Merle Phillips, Russ Fairchild and... - [NEWS ITEM](#)