

Forward Township Newsletter

Issued April 1, 2021

1. A Message from Tom DeRosa:

Dear Residents: I am pleased to announce that we intend to complete our Five-Year Road Completion Project in 2021. A few years prior to the Five-Year Project it was typical for the Township to fix roads using the “tar & chip” approach. That approach was largely abandoned because that type of fix was not durable, and sometimes the excess gravel (chips) resulted in a road surface that it was easy to slide on.

During the Five-Year Road Completing Project all roads paved were done using the more durable (and safe) “asphalt” approach. As a result, we have now asphalted 70% of all Township roads.

We are expecting higher costs due to the increased cost of oil products. However, we should be able to complete the project if we have no major unforeseen problems.

The roads scheduled to be paved with asphalt this summer are as follows:

Forward Township Roads Schedule to be Paved in 2021								
Road	Length*	Width*	Road	Length*	Width*	Road	Length*	Width*
11th St.	473	19	Ferry St.	424	18	McKeever St.	544	14
12th St.	449	19	Forward Rd.	570	16	Morgan Run	87	16
13th St.	728	23	Gallatin Rd.	740	15	Munger Ln.	1033	13
14th St.	606	19	Grant St.	420	21	Nevins Ln.	464	21
15th St.	574	19	Guthrie Ln.	280	16	Oliver Dr.	2090	21
16th St.	800	90	Hillcrest St.	601	19	Penn St.	458	12
Aminda Ln.	353	19	Julian Dr.	196	17	Pine Ave	1147	18
Ashely	140	17	Kerr St.	550	19	Pond Ln.	343	24
Boat Club Rd.	210	21	Kimberly Ln	1056	24	Regina Dr.	595	21
Brauft St.	478	19	Laura Ln.	1056	24	Rhodes St.	251	21
Cabin City Rd.	543	17	Liggett Ave.	578	14	Richmond St.	369	18
Cherry Ln.	434	14	Locust Ave.	423	16	Ridgeview Ave	900	20
Drake St.	1047	17	Lumber Jack Ln.	298	17	Staffen Ln.	187	17
Elm Dr.	431	16	Malerie Ln.	1188	17	Stokes Dr.	615	20
Tunnel Hollow	1000	15	William Pen	4094	23	* = feet		

Have a great summer and stay healthy. Please be patient – the above roads will get done.



Tom DeRosa, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

2. Supervisors Board Meeting: The Forward Township Board of Supervisors have arranged to have their Board Meetings on Monday, April 12, 2021 and on Monday, May 10, 2021 conducted online via the ZOOM app. There will be no live audience. Instructions regarding how to “attend” the Zoom meeting are as follows:

- 1.. Go to this website <https://zoom.us/download> and click the download button
- 2.. Run the zoominstaller.exe after its finished downloading
- 3.. Follow the installer instructions till Zoom is installed
- 4.. Click this link to open the zoom meeting <https://zoom.us/j/92319750103>

3. March 20, 2021 Permit-To-Carry Event: There was a “Permit-to-Carry” (a concealed handgun) Event conducted in the Forward Township Municipal Building on Saturday, March 20, 2021 between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM. The Event was staffed by about 10 people from the Sheriff’s department.

This was the 5th consecutive year a Permit-To-Carry Event was conducted in the Forward Township Municipal Building. Prior to this year the maximum number of permits issued at one of those Township Events was 352 – this year the Sheriff’s staff issued 647 permits. That is an 84% increase over the highest number ever issued here! No one anticipated this increase.

Needless to say, the increased number of applicants resulted in a traffic problem. The incoming traffic was so heavy it started to block the right-hand lane on Route 51S. To eliminate this dangerous situation the police had to temporarily block the entrance (from Route 51) to Guffey Road.

I have been asked: Why do we bother having a Permit-To-Carry Event in the Township? Answer: If we did not have a local event a Forward Township resident would need to go to the Sheriff’s office in downtown Pittsburgh to secure a Permit. That means that each applicant from Forward Township is looking at about 1 ½ hours of driving (down & back) and about a \$15.00 fee to park downtown. Over the past five years I estimate that about 550 + Forward Township residents have secured a Permit-To-Carry at the one of the five Events held here.

My first Observation: It occurred to me that if each of the 550 Forward Township residents who were issued a Permit-To-Carry in the Township Municipal Building (over the past five years) had made the trip (down & back) to the Sheriff’s office downtown, they would have driven spent approximately 962 hours (550 trips x 1.75 hours both ways) driving 11,550 miles (550 trips x 21 miles x 2 one-way trips). And, they would have paid \$11,000.00 (550 trips x \$20.00) in parking fees. Even if you don’t count the cost of the gasoline it makes having a Permit-To-Carry Event here in Forward Township seem worth the effort.

My First Observation about my First Observation: Maybe my wife knows what she is talking about when she says I have too much free time on my hands.

If you want to get a Permit-to-Carry, coming to an event like the one held on March 20, 2021 is, without a doubt, absolutely the best way to do it. The alternative is to go downtown to the Sheriff’s office, and hope it is not too busy. If it a busy day you could have quite a wait. If you arrive Sheriff’s office in the *afternoon* on a very busy day, it is entirely possible the Sheriff’s staff may not have the time to process your application at all!

About a month ago, an individual, who shall remain unnamed, said to me, with some sarcasm evident in the tone his voice: “Why does any law-abiding citizen want a Permit-To-Carry (a concealed

weapon) for anyway? Just give me one good reason!” There are many possible good responses to that question & statement. Following is just one that most people would probably not be aware of:

In Pennsylvania you must have a Permit-to-Carry if you are in possession of a “concealed” handgun. “Concealed” in the case of a firearm may mean something other than what you think – for example, a firearm in a car, regardless of where it is located in the car, is considered, by law, to be *concealed*. It could be openly displayed on the front seat of your car, but being that it is in a car, it is considered *concealed*. So, even though it sounds a little weird, the following is true:

Assume I had been to the shooting range and that I had left my handgun (in full view of anyone who looked) on the passenger seat of the car. And assume that handgun was on the passenger seat of the car when my wife went for groceries. Because Pennsylvania law considers a handgun located *anywhere* in a car to be “concealed”, if my wife did not have a Permit-To-Carry (a concealed handgun) she would be in violation of the law.

Given the above: it goes without saying that almost anyone who has a handgun will, at some point, want to transport that handgun to some location using their vehicle. It would be hard to transport that gun legally without a Permit-to-Carry.

Why have a Permit-To-Carry in Forward Township? There are a number of good reasons a person might want to have a Permit-To-Carry. Given that getting one often involves a trip downtown to the Sheriff’s office, and that many residents wanted a Permit, it seemed like a good idea to make it as convenient for them as possible.

A THANK YOU: I would be remiss if I did not send a big **THANK YOU** to **Sheriff Mullen**, his **Chief Deputy Kevin Kraus**, and **Deputy Sheriff Ryan Foster**. This event does not happen without considerable effort on their part. Thanks guys. We really appreciate your efforts on our behalf.

NOTE: Sheriff Mullen is retiring at the end of this year. There are two individuals who are running to be the Democratic candidate on the November ballot. Sheriff Mullen is very actively supporting **Chief Deputy Kevin Kraus**. The Allegheny County Democratic Committee is actively supporting **Chief Deputy Kevin Kraus**.

4. Tax Rebates: Residents of Allegheny County may be eligible to receive a Rebate for **Two** types of Tax Rebate programs. There is a **STATE** rebate **and** an Allegheny **COUNTY** Rebate program.

You can get a rebate from **BOTH** the **STATE** (see section below) and the **COUNTY** (see Section below). A section about each of those programs is presented below.

A: The “State” Tax Rebate Program:

The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue operates the Property Tax / Rent Rebate program. The Property Tax/Rent Rebate program benefits *eligible* Pennsylvanians who are:

1. age 65 and older; or
2. widows and widowers who are 50 years of age and older;
3. and people with disabilities age 18 and older.

Keep this in mind: The deadline to apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2018 is June 30, 2019. Although this deadline has been extended in the past, you cannot count on that happening this year.

The amount of the rebate for an *eligible* person is determined by the following schedules:

Home Owner: Income			Potential Rebate	Renters: Income			Potential Rebate
\$0	to	\$8,000	\$650	\$0	to	\$ 8,000	\$650
\$8,001	to	\$15,000	\$500	\$8,001	to	\$15,000	\$500
\$15,001	to	\$18,000	\$300				
\$18,001	to	\$35,000	\$250				

You can use the following steps to access more information about the Property Tax / Rent Rebate program :

1. Double-click one the following web address, which should take you to Pennsylvania Department of Revenue web page that provides all the information and forms you will need to apply:
www.revenue.pa.gov/GeneralTaxInformation/PropertyTaxRentRebateProgram/Pages/default.aspx
2. Go to Google and enter the following words: *property tax rent rebate Pennsylvania*
3. Rebate Forms and the Instructions are also available at the Municipal Building.

You can now file for the State Rebate online at: [myPATH - Property Tax/Rent Rebate Application](#)

B. The County Tax Discount: Allegheny County offers a discount on the **County Real Estate Tax**. Act 77, Senior Citizen Tax Relief, entitles qualified senior citizen homeowners to a flat 30% discount on the real estate tax on their primary residence.

The applicant must meet all three requirements:

1. Property Ownership: Must have owned and occupied a primary residence in Allegheny County continuously for the past 10 years. A property owner who has moved within the past 10 years, and has continued to own and occupy the new property as a primary residence shall be eligible.
2. Age: Must be age 60 or older, or, if married, either spouse must be age 60, or be a widow or widower age 50 to 60 years, or Permanently disabled and age 18 to 60 years.

NOTE: The applicant must meet the required age by December 31, 2020 to qualify for tax relief in 2020.

2. Income: Gross household income must be \$30,000 or less. For the Gross Income calculation use only 50% of your Social Security Benefit, SSI, and Railroad Retirement Tier 1 Benefits (except Medicare benefits).

Once approved, you DO NOT need to apply again. You will continue to receive tax relief as long as you are the property owner/occupant and your household income does not exceed \$30,000.

Important: *You must apply for this relief by the deadline of June 30, 2021.*

For more information about Senior Tax Relief, either call the County Treasurer's office at 412-350-4100 or go to the following web address: <https://alleghenycountytreasurer.us/real-estate-tax/real-estate-tax-2/>

This Statement Applies to BOTH the STATE and COUNTY tax relief programs: If you need help securing the benefits of the STATE and / or COUNTY tax relief program call one of the following:

Senator Jim Brewster's office: (412) 664-5200

I was going to forego this rather lengthy article about the tax rebates, but I changed my mind. Reason: I know that several people who saw a similar announcement in the Newsletter last year, and as a result, applied for and received a rebate. Maybe I will shorten it next year and provide the full article only to those who ask.

5. Senator Brewster Introduces Ban on Per Diems and Other Lawmaker Perks:

With an eye toward bolstering trust in elected officials, State Senator Jim Brewster** announced today he has introduced a series of bills that will ban per diem payments, automatic pay raises, car leases, and gifts of any value for state lawmakers.

** Senator Brewster represents all of Forward Township + other parts of Allegheny County and some of Westmoreland County.

“It’s long past time to eliminate these legislative perks that have cost taxpayers millions and cost their elective representatives the public confidence that is critical to effective government,” Brewster said. “We will have tough decisions ahead as we rebuild our economy and trust has to be restored and sacrifice has to be shared.”

“I think the time is ripe for some serious self-reflection in the General Assembly that will give us momentum this time,” he said.

His bills include:

SB 361 – Replaces yearly, automatic cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) by a once-per-decade raise consideration following the decennial U.S. Census and calculated by the Consumer Price Index.

SB 362 – Replaces per diem payments with reimbursement for actual expenses upon sufficient documentation.

SB 363 – Ends state vehicle leases for members of the General Assembly, instead reimbursing for actual mileage and tolls for documented government travel.

SB 364 – Bans gifts of any value to members of the General Assembly. No member could solicit or accept, for their personal use or for another's use; a gift, favor, entertainment, hospitality, loan, or any other item of monetary value.

The bills have been referred to the Senate State Government Committee.

My comment: **WOW.**

6. Did you use a Mail-In-Ballot in 2020? If you voted by mail last year you should have received a “Annual Request to Vote by Mail” letter from the Allegheny County Elections Division. There were two main statements included in that letter:

1. If you do not return the *Form* included in the “Annual Request to Vote by Mail” letter to the Elections Division, or take the action described in item 2 (immediately below) you will be removed from the list of people who will be sent a Mail-In-Ballot in 2021.
2. As an alternative to returning the completed abovementioned *Form* to the Elections Division you can apply for a Mail-In-Ballot at “**VotesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot**”.

Just a side comment: **VotesPA.com** is a very easy to use website where you can find the answer to almost any voting related question. On that site you can perform a number of functions such as: register to vote, check the status of your registration, change you address, etc.

3. If you received the Annual Request to Vote by Mail letter, and you do not want to vote by mail in 2021, just Do Nothing – you will automatically be removed from the list of people who will be sent Mail-In-Ballots.

If you voted by mail in 2020 and you did not receive that letter, or if you have any questions about voting by mail, you can call 412-350-4500.

7. Primary Election on May 18, 2021: The last day to register to vote is May 3, 2021. And, like every other Primary and General Election we will hear someone say: “I’m not going to bother going to vote. What difference does my vote make?” If you hear that comment, consider the following situations:

1. In the November 2020 General Election in Iowa a seat in the House of Representative, there were **393,922** votes cast. Mariannette Miller-Meeks won that election by **6** votes.

My experience is that if you make the person who said “*What difference does my vote make?*” aware of that election result from Iowa they (lame) say, “Yes, but that is from halfway across the country. If that happens to you, refer them to the following more local situation.

- .. In the November 2020 **132,23** votes cast in the 45th Pennsylvania Senatorial District (that District includes Forward Township). Jim Brewster won that election by **73** votes.

Here is something to consider about **both** of those situations: I bet there were **Hundreds** (at least) of people in **BOTH** of those election areas who said, “*I’m not going to the polls because my vote won’t make a difference anyway*”.

Please go vote on May 18th. If you do not do it because it is your civic duty, do it to say Thank You to all of those men and women in the United States Military who gave their lives so that we could.

Register to Vote: The last day to register so that you can vote in the upcoming election is May 3, 2021. Probably the easiest way to register is to go online at “VotesPa.com”. You can complete the entire process on that website.

Note: VotesPa.com is a great website. You can get the answer to almost any voting related question on that site.

Note: If you cannot access the internet, I can send you a paper voter registration form. Remember, for your registration to be valid it must be received (not postmarked) by May 3rd.

8. A little Township History: The Gallatin Tigers soccer team won the “National Challenge Cup” championship in 1942. It was the first amateur team to win the prestigious award.

Per Wikipedia: “The **1942 National Challenge Cup** was the 29th edition of the United States Football Association's annual open cup. Today, the tournament is known as the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup. Teams from the American Soccer League II competed in the tournament, based on qualification methods in their base region.

The “National Challenge Cup” was the **first truly national cup competition** in the United States, as previous cups had been effectively relegated to regional status by the difficulties in coordination and travel caused by the size of the United States in the early 1900s.”

Call the title what you will, the Gallatin Tigers were the **National Champs** of the United States of America in 1942. At that time, the “The National Challenge Cup” in soccer was the equivalent of the World Series in baseball and the Super Bowl in football.

The home field of the Gallatin Tigers home field was what is now known as Gallatin-Sunnyside Park. I am told most, if not all, of the players lived in Forward Township

9. Multiple Email Addresses: Some people like to have the Newsletter sent to different email addresses (their phone, workplace, wife’s email address, etc.). There is no cost to sending an email, so that is not a problem. If you would like the Newsletter sent to more than one email address, just provide me with that additional address.

10. Coyotes in Forward Township: You would not need to go back very many years to reach a point in time when there were no coyotes in Forward Township. But, they are more and more becoming a part of the local wildlife scene.

In past Newsletters, I noted that a local elderly man was an avid coyote trapper. And, he only traps in a very small area near his house. I believe he has trapped six altogether.

Because small dogs and cats are snacks for coyotes, I thought I would throw in a few facts about this relatively new member of the local wildlife scene.

Hunting Coyotes in Pennsylvania: There is No closed season – you may shoot one during any hunting season There is No limit. Coyotes may be taken if you have either a hunting license or a furtaker license, and unlike when you hunt for other game, you do not need to wear orange clothing.

Important for the Non-Hunter: if you think a Coyote is threatening you, another human being, or a pet, you may kill it *without* a hunting license.

Personal Comment: Coyotes are amazingly shy and stay away from human beings if they can possibly do so. **So:** if a coyote openly threatens you, or any human being, and you kill it, I would do the following: Call the Game Commission and have it checked for rabies.

Personal Comment: Pet food and water should be kept indoors to avoid attracting coyotes to your yard.

11. A little humor: Much of politics, and much of the information I talk about, is so dry, and a lot of the time, without humor. To vary from that normal discourse, I decided to add in something that was recently sent to me. Hope it makes you smile.

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small.

The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible.

The little girl said, 'When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah'.

The teacher asked, ' What if Jonah went to hell?'

The little girl replied, 'Then you could ask him'.

12. Information for Articles: A lot happens in Forward Township that comes to my attention by way of your emails and telephone calls. If you think of something that you think that should / could be included in the Newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would very much appreciate it.

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