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A Service Program of the Pennsylvania Municipal League
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2020 League Officers

League President
Mayor Matthew Pacífico
City of Altoona

League 1st Vice President
Councilmember Derek Green
City of Philadelphia

League 2nd Vice President
Mayor Danene Sorace
City of Lancaster
Welcome to our inaugural joint Municipal Leadership Summit with the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners. Although virtual by necessity, we have an array of outstanding professional development opportunities. We are honored to welcome Lt. Governor John Fetterman, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Bryan Cutler, Majority Leader of the House Kerry Benninghoff, as well as Auditor General Eugene DePasquale. Our Keynote Speaker is former FEMA Administrator William Craig Fugate. Additionally, a very unique panel presentation is planned on 100 years of Women’s Suffrage.

It is very important that all of our members are represented and participate in the Resolutions Committee and Annual Business Meeting. This is your Summit and League, so please contribute and enjoy the virtual experience we have planned for you.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Schuettler
League Executive Director

Please join us on social media during the Summit using #MunicipalLeadershipSummit20
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Thursday, October 29

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. League Board Meeting

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 100 Years of Women's Suffrage
Dr. Mary Ellen Balchunis, PhD
State Representative Joanna McClinton
Moriah Hathaway, Executive Director, The Pennsylvania Commission for Women
Mayor Paige Cognetti, City of Scranton

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Opening Ceremony - Welcome
Lt. Governor John Fetterman
Auditor General Eugene DePasquale
Representative Kerry Benninghoff
Rick Schuettler, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Municipal League

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Panel
Moderator: Todd Eachus, Senior Director of Government Affairs, Comcast
Speakers: Lisa Birmingham, Vice President of Government and Regulatory Affairs, Comcast
Dana Brooks, Senior Manager of Talent Acquisition, Comcast
Chris Rouser, Vice President of Human Resources, Comcast

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Pandemic, Protests and Recession: Labor and Employment Issues
Moderator: Vijay Kapoor, Founder, The Kapoor Company
Speaker: Patrick J. Harvey, Esq., Attorney, Campbell Durrant, PC

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Managing Through an Economic Crisis: City of Easton Case Study
Jeffrey A. Mills, Cozen O'Connor
Ryan P. Hottenstein, Senior Vice President, FINANCIAL S$LUTIONS
Luis Campos, City Administrator, City of Easton
Mark Lysynecky, Finance Director, City of Easton

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Blight Success Stories
Karen Bousquet, Deputy Director, The Department of Community Planning & Economic Development, The City of Lancaster
Justin Eby, Deputy Executive Director, Lancaster County Housing & Redevelopment Authorities

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. PSATC Region Meet-Ups

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. League District Meet-Ups

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Virtual Halloween Trivia
Friday, October 30

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.  Opening Session
Rick Schuettler, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Matt Pacifico, Mayor, City of Altoona
U.S. Senator Bob Casey
PA Speaker of the House Bryan Cutler
Secretary Dennis Davin
Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn, Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR)
Joe Buscaino, President, National League of Cities

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.  Lisa Soronen
Lisa Soronen, Executive Director, State and Local Legal Center

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  Making Sense of the Markets
John Spagnola, Managing Director, PFM Asset Management LLC
Kyle Jones, Managing Director, PFM Asset Management LLC

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  Fireworks Panel Discussion
Moderator: John Brenner, Executive Director Designate, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Speakers: Chief Jay Delaney, Wilkes-Barre City Fire Dept.
Kerry Golden, Majority Executive Director, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Jerry Ozog, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute
Danene Sorace, Mayor, City of Lancaster

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  Storm Water Management Options
Michael Callahan, Stormwater Program Manager, Derry Township Municipal Authority
Rebecca L. Davis, Stormwater Program Manager, Lower Allen Township
E. Lee Stinnett, Esq., Shareholder, Salzmann Hughes, P.C.

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  Unemployment in Review Now and for the Future*
Deb Gross, Member Service Representative, U•COMP

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  Energy Solutions for Your Community*
Matthew Shortall, Senior Business Development Manager, Constellation

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  League Resolutions Committee Meeting

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.  Construction, Procurement and Privatization - What are the Problems and the Opportunities?*
Bill Warren, Partner, Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP

*Business Leaders Network Session
1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.  How to Make Sure Governments Aren't Leaving Money on the Table*
   Nicolie Lettini, MBA, VP of Indirect Services, eCivis, Inc.

2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  Pennsylvania's Aging Water Infrastructure - Challenges and Solutions for Municipalities, Utilities and Homeowners*
   Ashley Shiwarski, Director of Business Development, NLC Service Line Warranty Program by HomeServe

2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  Enhancing Opportunities for Public Safety: Updates from FirstNet, Built by AT&T*
   Jim Mullen, FirstNet Manager, AT&T

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.  Economics Session
   Moderator: John Brenner, Executive Director Designate, The League
   Speaker: Ed Fortunato, Chief Economist, Exelon Corporation

4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.  League Annual Business Meeting

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  PSATC Region Meet-Ups

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  League District Meet-Ups

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  Virtual Bingo Game

*Business Leaders Network Session
Saturday, October 31

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Opening Session**

Dave Zarnick, President Commissioner / PSATC President, Butler Township
Richard Vilello, Deputy Secretary, Community Affairs and Development, Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
Rick Schuettler, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Municipal League

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Legislative Update**

Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, Pennsylvania Municipal League, PSATC

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **Keynote Speaker: Craig Fugate**

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Tort Claims Act - How to be Prepared for All Exceptions, New and Old Alike**

Angela Tennis, Director of Insurance Services, PennPRIME
Brian P. Gabriel, Attorney, Campbell Durrant, PC

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **When to Involve the Solicitor: 5 Volunteer Fire Company Issues**

Speakers: Kate M. Diersen, Attorney, GRB Law
Emily J. Mueller, Attorney, GRB Law
Moderator: John Brenner, Executive Director Designate, Pennsylvania Municipal League

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Distributed Antenna System Discussion**

Speakers: Dan Cohen, Attorney, Cohen Law Group
Mike Roberts, Attorney, Cohen Law Group
Moderators: Rick Schuettler, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Municipal League
Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, Pennsylvania Municipal League, PSATC

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **PSATC Executive Committee Meeting**

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. **PSATC Annual Business Meeting**
Partnering with municipal government, one community at a time.

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Dr. Mary Ellen Balchunis, PhD
100 Years of Women's Suffrage

Former congressional candidate in PA7, the district described as "the most gerrymandered district in the nation", since declared unconstitutional, and one of the handful of Congressional campaigns hacked by Guccifer 2.0. Dr. Mary Ellen Balchunis is a former Political Science Professor at La Salle University, Fulbright Scholar, Nonprofit Executive Director, and Assistant to Mayor Goode in Philadelphia. She is the proud mother of an honors graduate at the University of Southern California's School of Dramatic Arts. Elected as former President of the Women’s Democratic Club of Delaware County and appointed Eastern Regional Director of the PA Federation of Democratic Women, she has served as Vice Chair of the Delaware County Democrats, Vice Chair of the Upper Darby Democrats; and served three terms on PA Democratic State Committee where she was also elected as Vice Chair of the Women's Caucus. Elected to the National Board of the American Society for Public Administration and appointed to their Executive Committee, Dr. Balchunis has served on numerous boards including United Cerebral Palsy, PHILADANCO, the Philadelphia Dance Company, the Philadelphia League of Women Voters, the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, and Dawn's Place for victims of human trafficking. She is the recipient of numerous awards including a national award for her work on Ethics in Government by the American Society for Public Administration.

Representative Kerry Benninghoff
Opening Ceremony – Welcome

Kerry A. Benninghoff believes government should improve the lives of those it serves, recognizing that every dollar government spends was taken from someone who worked hard to earn it. Representing the 171st legislative district, Kerry is passionate about cancer research and other healthcare initiatives, ensuring an educational system that gives our children a clear path to good-paying careers, being a voice for victims of crime, as well as standing up for seniors while building a better future for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Kerry believes taxes should be low and works hard to ensure your dollars are spent wisely. He is a watchdog for government waste, a longtime advocate for greater transparency and supporter of government reform. Kerry was elected by his colleagues in June 2020 to serve as Majority Leader. Prior to serving as Majority Leader, Kerry served on the Leadership team as Majority Whip and for two terms as the House Majority Policy Committee chairman. Kerry also previously served as chairman of the House Majority Finance and State Government committees. He is the founder and former chairman of the bipartisan Cancer Caucus. Prior to being elected to represent the 171st, Kerry worked in construction, cared for patients as a hospital orderly and served Centre County for two terms as county coroner. Kerry is a charter member of Leadership Centre County and formerly served on the board of directors of Easter Seals of Central Pennsylvania and the Bellefonte YMCA. He is a member of the Bellefonte Kiwanis Club, the Fraternal Order of Police, Bald Eagle Lodge No. 51, as well as an active member of Faith United Methodist Church in Bellefonte. He serves on the board of directors of Centre Home Care Inc. and also formerly served as co-chairman of the bicameral Penn State Forum on Higher Education. Kerry is a graduate of State College Area High School and attended Pennsylvania State University. He is a graduate of the Certified Coroners Training Program conducted in Hershey by the state of Pennsylvania.

Lisa Birmingham
Vice President of Government and Regulatory Affairs at Comcast
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Panel

Lisa is Vice President of External & Government Affairs for Comcast’s Keystone Region, which is headquartered in greater Pittsburgh and serves customers in more than 1,400 communities in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and northwest Maryland. She is responsible for a range of external activities including advocacy, community engagement, government relations and franchising. Prior to relocating to Pittsburgh in 2015, she held a similar role serving Comcast communities and customers in Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and Arkansas. Lisa practiced administrative law in Vermont for several years prior to joining the cable industry in 2003. With more than twenty years of advocacy experience, Lisa is a solid believer in problem solving through coalition building and collaboration. For decades, Lisa's personal passion has been supporting equity and opportunity for women and girls. She has been a crisis intervention counselor, an advocate and fundraiser, a teacher and teammate.

Karen Bousquet
Vice President of Government and Regulatory Affairs at ComcastDeputy Director at The Department of Community Planning & Economic Development, The City of Lancaster
Blight Success Stories

Karen Bousquet has worked for the City of Lancaster since June 2008, currently as the Deputy Director of Community Planning and Economic Development. Karen is focusing her efforts on property maintenance programs and supporting the lead poisoning prevention team. With 12 years of experience, she is pleased to have the continued opportunities to directly impact health in housing in the community.
John Brenner
President at National League of Cities
Opening Session

John S. Brenner currently serves as Executive Director Designate of the Pennsylvania Municipal League. The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association that serves Pennsylvania’s cities and urban municipalities. His role at the League includes coordinating the Business Leaders Network to promote the exchange of ideas between corporate leaders and the leaders of the Commonwealth’s communities. Mr. Brenner is a member of the PACE Resources Board of Directors. Elected the youngest mayor of the City of York on November 6, 2001, he was sworn in as the 23rd Mayor on January 7, 2002. Prior to that, he served as the City Controller for two years. He completed his second term as mayor on January 4, 2010. Mr. Brenner served as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute, a statewide nonprofit group charged with educating elected officials and the public about fire and life safety issues, prior to becoming Mayor. Involved in the community, Mr. Brenner is an Eagle Scout, the highest award in scouting; is a founding member of the York Young Professionals. He served as a firefighter and executive officer of the Lincolnway Volunteer Fire Company. He served as a Second Class Petty Officer in the United States Naval Reserve. He served as an Executive Board Member of the York-Adams Area Council of Boy Scouts of America, on the Board of Directors of the York County Chapter of the American Red Cross, as well as the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army. He served on the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities Board, and was the League President in 2005. Mr. Brenner also served on the Community Board of Directors of York County Economic Development Corporation, Board Chairman of Regional Economic Development District Initiative, Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust Board, Prevailing Wage Appeals Board, and served on the Board of the National League of Cities. In his spare time has taught swimming lessons to people of all ages. Previously, Mr. Brenner was a staff assistant to the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief of Staff to a state senator. He is past president of Northeastern Jaycees. He was named as a 2003 Outstanding Young Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania Jaycees, and “40 under 40” by the Central Penn Business Journal. He also received the 2005 Governor’s Award for Local Government Excellence, and in 2006, the York County Chamber of Commerce Local Elected Official of the Year award. Mr. Brenner holds a Master Degree in Government Administration from the University of Pennsylvania and a BA in Political Science from Lebanon Valley College. He has served as an Adjunct Professor at York College. In December 2008, Mr. Brenner received an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from York College of Pennsylvania. He is a native of Mt. Wolf, and a graduate of Northeastern High School. He, his wife Adrienne, their son Sam and daughter Tipton, reside in the City of York.

Dana Brooks
Senior Manager of Talent Acquisition at Comcast
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Panel

Dana has just completed her first year as the Senior Manager of Talent Acquisition and Talent Development at Comcast Inc. Dana has spent 25 amazing years as a strategic business partner in Human Resources. As a HR leader, Dana has proven transformational results in Talent Acquisition, workforce planning, organizational effectiveness, and leadership development. Dana has contributed to brands such as Bayer Healthcare, MTV Networks, Sirius Satellite Radio and Apple Inc.

Joe Buscaino
President at National League of Cities
Opening Session

Joe Buscaino is President Pro Tempore of the Los Angeles City Council, representing the city’s fifteenth Council District, and serves as the President of the National League of Cities (NLC). With a lifelong career in public service, Buscaino brings a broad range of expertise to NLC’s leadership including the critical issues of public safety and crime prevention, economic development, infrastructure, transportation, homelessness, technology and innovation, and youth civic engagement. He has served in several roles at NLC, including chairing the Board Legislative Action Committee and serving as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Services Committee, Board Membership Committee, Board Finance Committee, and Board of Directors. As president of NLC, Buscaino is focused on leading with urgency on the issues of housing instability and homelessness, strengthening the local-federal partnership, and supporting innovation-driven economies. Buscaino has served as a Second Class Petty Officer in the United States Naval Reserve. He served as an Executive Board Member of the York-Adams Area Council of Boy Scouts of America, on the Board of Directors of the York County Chapter of the American Red Cross, as well as the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army. He served on the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities Board, and was the League President in 2005. Mr. Brenner also served on the Community Board of Directors of York County Economic Development Corporation, Board Chairman of Regional Economic Development District Initiative, Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust Board, Prevailing Wage Appeals Board, and served on the Board of the National League of Cities. In his spare time has taught swimming lessons to people of all ages. Previously, Mr. Brenner was a staff assistant to the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief of Staff to a state senator. He is past president of Northeastern Jaycees. He was named as a 2003 Outstanding Young Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania Jaycees, and “40 under 40” by the Central Penn Business Journal. He also received the 2005 Governor’s Award for Local Government Excellence, and in 2006, the York County Chamber of Commerce Local Elected Official of the Year award. Mr. Brenner holds a Master Degree in Government Administration from the University of Pennsylvania and a BA in Political Science from Lebanon Valley College. He has served as an Adjunct Professor at York College. In December 2008, Mr. Brenner received an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from York College of Pennsylvania. He is a native of Mt. Wolf, and a graduate of Northeastern High School. He, his wife Adrienne, their son Sam and daughter Tipton, reside in the City of York.
Michael Callahan, CPSS
Stormwater Program Manager at Derry Township Municipal Authority
Storm Water Management Options
Michael Callahan has more than 10 years of experience in the discipline of soil science, much of which involves the application of soil morphology, classification and chemistry to peer reviewed research projects; onsite soil and site evaluations for septic and stormwater suitability; hydric soil delineation; wetland and stream delineations and restoration and agronomic evaluations. He has worked in research institutions, the federal government and the private consulting community. Callahan graduated from Penn State University with a bachelor's degree in environmental soil science and a master's degree in soil science. He is a certified professional soil scientist (CPSS), a licensed soil scientist (LSS) and a sewage enforcement officer. He is a member of the Soil Science Society of America, the National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists and the Pennsylvania Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association. He resides in Palmyra, Dauphin County, Pa.

Luis Campos
City Administrator at City of Easton
Managing through an Economic Crisis: City of Easton Case Study
Luis Campos serves as city administrator for the City of Easton, Pennsylvania. As city administrator, Luis is the chief administrative and operating officer. Luis’s responsibilities consist of managing all aspects of City Government working with the mayor and City Council. Prior to his current position, Luis served as director of administration for Northampton County. Luis has worked in The Governor’s Office of the Budget, The Governor’s Office of Administration and The Small Business Development Center at Lehigh University. In addition to his public sector experience, Luis has served in leadership positions for various private sector companies. Luis is currently on the Board of Governor’s for the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce (GLVCC), the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Fe Foundation, the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation and Third Street Alliance. In 2003, Luis was appointed by Governor Rendell to Chair the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs. In 2011, Luis was recognized by the Eastern Pennsylvania Business Journal in its “20 Under 40” publication. In November 2017, Luis was awarded with the GLVCC Community Partnership Award. Luis graduated high school from Blair Academy and earned his B.A. degree from Muhlenberg College and his M.A. at Lehigh University.

Paige Cognetti
Mayor at City of Scranton
100 Years of Women's Suffrage
The Honorable Paige Gebhardt Cognetti is the newly-elected Mayor of Scranton and the first female to hold the position. Mayor Cognetti came from her role as special assistant to the Pennsylvania Auditor General, the chief fiscal watchdog of the commonwealth. She advised on financial management, governance and transparency. Her areas of focus included public school districts, care for older adults, criminal justice reform and student debt. Mayor Cognetti previously served as a director on the Scranton School Board, overseeing a $160M budget and helping navigate the district’s dual crises of financial distress and public mistrust. She served in the Obama administration from 2009-2012 as a senior advisor to the Under Secretary for International Affairs at the U.S. Treasury Department. Mayor Cognetti has been a fundraiser and project director on numerous democratic political campaigns, received her BA in English Literature and Romance Languages from the University of Oregon Clark Honors College, and holds an MBA from Harvard Business School.

Dan Cohen
Attorney at Cohen Law Group
Distributed Antenna System Discussion
Dan Cohen is an attorney and founder of the Cohen Law Group. He has over 20 years experience in the fields of cable, telecommunications, and broadband. Mr. Cohen has assisted hundreds of local governments and private sector clients in these matters. He has been a frequent guest speaker at local, regional and national conferences, and has written articles on current cable and telecommunications issues. Mr. Cohen stays current with regulatory changes in this field at both the federal and state levels and has lobbied decision makers at both levels on behalf of his clients with respect to specific policy issues. He serves on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA). Prior to starting the firm, Mr. Cohen served on the Pittsburgh City Council for 12 years from 1990 to 2002. He served as chair of City Council’s Cable Television Committee for 10 years as well as on the mayor’s Telecommunications Committee. While on Council, he assisted the city in negotiating a cable franchise agreement with AT&T in 1999. He subsequently assisted the City in negotiating cable franchise agreements with Verizon in 2009 and Comcast in 2010. Outside of cable and telecommunications matters, on City Council Mr. Cohen also enacted the city’s first Ethics Act, drafted successful playground safety legislation, and promoted community policing. Mr. Cohen graduated from Yale College and Stanford Law School. He lives in Pittsburgh with his wife and three children.
Bryan Cutler
Speaker of the PA House
Opening Session
Serving his seventh term in Pennsylvania General Assembly, Bryan Cutler represents the 100th Legislative District in Lancaster County. In June 2020, he was elected by his colleagues to serve as the 139th Speaker of the House, having previously serving as the Majority Leader. Bryan's emergence as one of Pennsylvania's key leaders reflects his approach to life: Give back to the community that helped you. A lifelong resident of the Peach Bottom area, Bryan faced adversity as a high school student when both his parents were diagnosed with ALS (which eventually took both their lives) and he took on the responsibility of caring for them and his younger sister. The community helped out and embraced Bryan and his family, helping meet their every need. At a time when most young adults headed off to college, Bryan worked and put himself through a trade school to become an X-ray technologist. Soon after, he married his high school sweetheart, Jennifer, and graduated summa cum laude, from Lebanon Valley College with a health care management degree. Following several years of working at the local hospital overseeing the budgets and daily operations of several sections in the radiology department, he pursued a law degree, focused on health care law, from Widener Law School and become a member of the Lancaster Bar Association and began practicing law with the firm of Nikolaus & Hohenadel. The desire to give back to the community – which did so much for him and his family – drove Bryan to run for public office. He was elected in 2006. With his extensive background in health care and the industries that deliver these vital services, Bryan has been a constant advocate for policies to make the state’s health care system more accessible and affordable. He is an outspoken champion for ALS awareness and research, especially its impact on veterans. He also serves as a legislative appointee to the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation. Bryan's background in hospitals has also translated into writing laws to make the Commonwealth's hospitals work more efficiently. His bill to eliminate redundant hospital accreditation procedures for hospitals that already meet all state licensing requirements, was signed into law as Act 60 of 2013. The law has allowed Pennsylvania hospitals to spend more of their time and money serving their patients. Since coming to Harrisburg, Bryan has battled to ensure only the people eligible for human service assistance receive the help they need, while working to shut the door on fraud and abuse in the system. His leadership on a House welfare reform put him and his tireless activism for changes to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) led to the passage of Act 164 of 2012. This law implements fraud detection and prevention mechanisms through the use of an Income Eligibility Verification System and strengthens fraud reporting measures and whistleblower protections. In an effort to promote greater integrity for those that lobby state government, Bryan drafted legislation to strengthen lobbyist disclosure. The bill became Act 2 of 2018. Bryan's legislative achievements have all received strong bipartisan support and are a sign of his willingness to work together for the best interest of Pennsylvanians. Bryan's previous public service includes serving on his local township planning commission, regional planning commission and the local emergency management team. Bryan and his wife, Jennifer, have three children, Cheyanne, Caleb and Drew. The family lives on an 11-acre “hobby farm” in the same log cabin home where Bryan grew up. The Cutlers are active members of the Wrightsdale Baptist Church.

Secretary Dennis Davin
Managing through an Economic Crisis: City of Easton Case Study
Dennis M. Davin is the current Pennsylvania Secretary of Community and Economic Development, having been nominated by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and confirmed in May 2015. Previously, he served as Director of the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. Before his appointment, Secretary Davin served as Director of the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development (ACED), where he was responsible for creating and executing the economic development strategy for Allegheny County. He managed funding from local, state and federal sources to implement economic development activities such as site development, new job creation initiatives, community development, and affordable housing for approximately 1.25 million citizens in 130 municipalities.[3] One project he is specifically proud of is the Greater Allegheny Passage which is a trail system that goes from Point State Park in Pittsburgh all the way to Washington, D.C. in Georgetown.

Rebecca L. Davis
Stormwater Program Manager at Lower Allen Township
Storm Water Management Options
Rebecca Davis is an experienced Planning Coordinator with a demonstrated history of working in the government administration industry. She is a strong operations professional with a Bachelor of Science - BS focused in Environmental Science from Juniata College. She is also certified as a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional.

Chief Jay Delaney
Wilkes-Barre City Fire Dept.
Fireworks Panel Discussion
Jay Delaney is president of the Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs Association and is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fire Protection Association and the Luzerne County Community College EMS Program Advisory Board. Under former Gov. Ed Rendell, Delaney served on the Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners and was appointed by Gov. Tom Wolf to the Governor's Advisory Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation. He is a member of the Upper Pittston Sportsmen Club, a sustaining member of the Greater Pittston Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and the Parish of St. Benedict in Wilkes-Barre.
Eugene DePasquale  
**Pennsylvania Auditor General**

**Opening Ceremony – Welcome**

Eugene A. DePasquale began his second term as Pennsylvania’s 51st Auditor General on January 17, 2017. During his first term, Auditor General DePasquale delivered on his promise to be a tough, fair and independent fiscal watchdog for Pennsylvania taxpayers. So far, his audits have identified more than $1.05 billion in misspent or potentially recoverable state money including urging the state pension plans to cut another $100 million in Wall Street investment fees. His growing reputation as a national leader in fiscal accountability and government transparency were galvanized by eliminating the department’s 244-car fleet and being the first statewide elected official to put his travel expenses online for public inspection as well as all of his department’s monthly expenses. Auditor General DePasquale’s ongoing work touches the lives of all Pennsylvanians. He is most proud of the work that led to fixing the state’s child-abuse hotline, ChildLine, where more than 58,000 calls went unanswered before his audit; reducing the number of untested rape kits in Pennsylvania and across the nation; and recommending improvements in the state’s response to the opioid crisis. He continues to fight to protect children from abuse, end the backlog of untested rape kits, make college affordable for the middle class, and ensure seniors have access to the services they need. His audit of the Philadelphia Parking Authority helped crack down on sexual harassment policies creating a safer work environment for women. The audit also helped to ensure the Philadelphia School District is receiving the appropriate funding from the parking authority. At the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority is driving reforms to ensure residents have safe, drinkable water. Auditor General DePasquale continues to support improving safety and efficiency of transportation infrastructure. He was a key proponent of public transit reform that ensures riders in South Central Pennsylvania have a more efficient and effective system. His special report on the Democratic National Convention Philadelphia 2016 Host Committee’s $10 million state grant found that the lack of claw-back provisions allowed the committee to spend a $2 million surplus on pay outs to staffers and donations to charities. Since that report, the governor ordered a change to grant contracts to require such claw-back provisions. His work on charter school reform is frequently mentioned in the Washington Post and was featured on HBO’s Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. His progressive and aggressive approach to tackling tough challenges makes him a sought-after speaker and has earned him numerous statewide accolades, national recognition as a Hunt-Kean Leadership Fellow, and an appointment among The NewDEAL Leaders from across the country. Auditor General DePasquale was born and raised in Pittsburgh, where he graduated from Pittsburgh Central Catholic High School as a member of the state championship football team. He earned his undergraduate degree from the College of Wooster in Ohio, where he played baseball and football. He went on to earn his Master’s in Public Administration from the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), and his law degree from the Widener University School of Law. He lives in York County, where he enjoys following his son Ben and daughter Sarah as they pursue music and sports in college and high school. When he is not traveling as the state’s chief fiscal watchdog, he volunteers as head coach for Shiloh American Legion’s baseball team, at Dallastown High School as assistant football coach for running backs and strength & conditioning, and at West York High School as assistant baseball coach for outfielders and strength & conditioning. He also trains to defend his title as the only statewide elected official in the nation who is a four-time Spartan Race Trifecta finisher. In December 2017, he completed the Spartan Race Ultra World Championship — a 24-hour obstacle and endurance race in Iceland. In October 2018 and June 2019, he completed the arduous Navy SealFit 20X mental and physical fitness challenge. Before winning statewide election as Auditor General, DePasquale served three terms in the House of Representatives, where he built a proven track record of consistently working to make Pennsylvania government more ethical and open. The first member of the General Assembly to post his expenses online, he also fought for middle-class jobs, education funding and a ban on texting while driving.

**Kate M. Diersen**

*Attorney at GRB Law*

**When to Involve the Solicitor: 5 Volunteer Fire Company Issues**

As a school and municipal solicitor, Kate has a broad experience in a variety of issues that arise for the firm’s municipal and public sector clients. She assists municipal and school clients on issues that they face, as well as more complex matters such as labor and employment, compliance, and land use issues. Well-versed and experienced in running public meetings and hearings, she ensures compliance with the Sunshine Law and local meeting protocol. Also comfortable in a courtroom, she has successfully argued cases in front of local magistrates, the Court of Common Pleas, and at Commonwealth Court. Kate serves as solicitor to the Boroughs of Bradford Woods, Conway and Oakmont, as well as the Western Allegheny Municipal Authority and the Green Tree Borough Zoning Hearing Board. She also serves as Special Counsel to the City of Aliquippa’s planning commission. She is well-known and respected throughout the region as an active presenter at statewide conferences, meetings and webinars. In addition to her active role as solicitor, she also works with the firm’s Municipal Tax & Creditors’ Rights Group to ensure the fair and efficient collection of municipal taxes.

**Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**

*Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)*

**Opening Session**

Governor Tom Wolf has appointed Cindy Adams Dunn to be the sixth secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), returning to the agency where she worked under three governors in multiple positions over the last two decades. The Pennsylvania Senate unanimously confirmed Dunn as secretary of DCNR on June 2, 2015. Since November 2013, Dunn had served as the president and chief executive officer of PennFuture, a statewide environmental advocacy organization. Prior to her time at PennFuture, Dunn served as DCNR’s Deputy Secretary of Conservation and Technical Services from 2007-2013, where she led DCNR’s conservation landscape program.
and oversaw the community conservation partnerships grant program, which provides $30-$60 million annually for conservation and recreation throughout the commonwealth. Dunn’s other leadership posts at DCNR include director of the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, as well as director of the Office of Education, Communications and Partnerships. For two years in the mid ‘90s, Dunn joined DCNR for the first time as director of community relations and environmental education. Dunn’s other leadership roles include serving as the executive director of Audubon Pennsylvania from 1997-2003 and as the Pennsylvania program director for the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay for 10 years. Over the years, Dunn has been recognized with numerous awards for her leadership in conservation including: - The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay’s Frances E. Flanigan Environmental Leadership Award - Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs and Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year - Cumberland County Conservation District Conservationist of the Year - The Appalachian Audubon Society Conservationist of the Year Dunn holds a bachelor’s and master’s degree in biology from Shippensburg University. She and her husband, Craig, reside in Cumberland County. When not championing the efforts of DCNR, Dunn enjoys the natural and recreation resources the agency works hard to protect and promote through hobbies that include birding, canoeing, fishing, and hiking.

**Todd Eachus**

**Senior Director of Government Affairs at Comcast**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Panel**

Todd Eachus is Senior Director of Government & External Affairs in Comcast’s Keystone Region. Todd directs regional advocacy and legislative efforts and executes on franchising and community impact initiatives. Todd has been with Comcast for more than twenty-two years. Prior to joining the cable industry, Todd was a press secretary and senior legislative aide in the U.S. House of Representatives, handling a wide variety of issues including judicial affairs, foreign affairs, defense issues and telecommunications issues. Prior to that, he spent ten years in the United States Navy, flying in S-3 Viking jets, where he accumulated more than 2,000 flight hours and more than 450 carrier landings, serving aboard USS America in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf during operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Todd was elected twice and served eight years on the Marple Newtown School Board, chairing the facilities and technology committee and as president of the board for two years. He has also served as the Chairman of the Cable Association of Washington, DC, Delaware and Maryland, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Spanish American Civic Association in Lancaster, the Advocacy Committee of the Lancaster Chamber and on the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Municipal League. He has authored several scholarly pieces examining the nexus of news media and foreign policy in the post cold war and has been an adjunct professor of Political Communication at The George Washington University. Todd holds a BA degree in Political Communications from The George Washington University. He resides in Newtown Square, PA with his wife Karen, a public school teacher of 25 years.

**Lt. Governor John Fetterman**

**Opening Ceremony – Welcome**

Pennsylvania born and raised, John was born to teenage parents who were just starting out on their own. At the time, his father worked nights to put himself through college. John grew up in York, and later followed in his father's footsteps to Albright College, where he played offensive tackle for the Lions. At 23, John joined up with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and threw himself into the program, mentoring his ‘little’ – an 8-year-old boy who had recently lost his father to AIDS and whose mother was also battling the disease. Before she passed away, John promised that he would continue to look out for her son and make sure that he would graduate college. Fifteen years later, John and his ‘little’ had both held up their ends of the bargain, with his little's graduation from Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, PA. The disparity between his own life and that of his ‘little’ motivated John to quit his job and join AmeriCorps, where for two years he served in Pittsburgh's historic Hill District, helping to set up the first computer labs in the neighborhood and teaching GED classes to young mothers and fathers. He went on to earn a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where he focused on finding solutions in social work, business, and public policy to confront urban challenges and economic inequality. John then returned to Pennsylvania to start a GED program in the town of Braddock. John saw the beauty, grit, and determination that had been in the community’s roots for generations, and focused on turning Braddock, a town facing many obstacles, into a thriving and growing community. In 2005, encouraged by his students and motivated to do more to address the inequality that was plaguing his community, John ran for mayor. He managed to win the crowded primary by a single vote, and he’s been hard at work ever since. During the last 12 years as mayor, John has worked to build Braddock back from the verge of extinction. He’s applied a hands-on approach from AmeriCorps and his service experience to take steps to rebuild his community, bringing creative urban policy solutions to Braddock. He has worked with young people and artists to transform creative spaces downtown, and turned abandoned properties into urban gardens. John has worked to attract new residents and new jobs, as more than a dozen businesses have relocated into Braddock and the population has stabilized for the first time in decades. He is most gratified, though, by breaking the cycle of violence in his community that culminated with nearly 5½ years without the taking of a life. John is proud of what they’ve achieved in Braddock, but wanted to do more not only for his community, but for his commonwealth, and has emerged as one of Pennsylvania’s leading progressive voices for working people, running on issues like inequality, racial justice, and ending the failed war on drugs. He is honored to have been chosen by the voters of this commonwealth to serve as the 34th lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania. John, his wife Gisele, and their three children Karl, 9, Gracie 7, and August, 4, live in a restored car dealership in Braddock.
Ed Fortunato

Chief Economist at Exelon Corporation

Economics Session

Over the last seventeen years at Exelon, Edward has managed the proprietary trading book, the short-term analytics group, and has led the implementation of trading strategies in both the proprietary and hedging books and run the fundamental analysis group. As the chief economist he tracks economic trends and how they affect our company. Prior to working at Exelon, Edward served as the vice president of natural gas trading at Merrill Lynch Global Commodities, and as a senior energy trader at Edison Mission Energy. Edward has an MBA with high honors in finance from Boston University and a BBA from Baruch College. He is an active community member, involved with Our Daily Bread since first arriving in Baltimore. He is on Partners in Excellence and Marian House board and is the chair of the Loyola University Maryland's data science board. Ed lives In Ellicott City Maryland with his wife and dog.

Craig Fugate

Keynote Speaker

Keynote Craig Fugate

W. Craig Fugate served as President Barack Obama’s FEMA Administrator from May 2009 to January 2017. Previously, he served as Florida Governor Jeb Bush’s Emergency Management Director from 2001-2007 and Governor Charlie Crist from 2007-09. Fugate led FEMA through multiple record-breaking disaster years and oversaw the Federal Government’s response to major events such as the Joplin and Moore Tornadoes, Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Matthew, and the 2016 Louisiana flooding. Fugate set a clear and compelling vision, mission, and priorities for FEMA and relentlessly drove the Agency to achieve better outcomes for survivors. FEMA’s effectiveness in dealing with more than 500 Presidentially-declared major disasters and emergencies under Fugate’s leadership restored the faith of the American people in the Federal Government’s ability to respond to disasters. Prior to his tenure at FEMA, Fugate was widely praised for his management, under Governor Jeb Bush, of the devastating effects of the 2004 and 2005 Florida hurricane seasons (Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Dennis, Katrina, and Wilma). Craig currently provides senior level advice and consultation in the area of disaster management and resiliency policy through Craig Fugate Consulting LLC. Craig also serves as the Chief Emergency Management Officer at One Concern.

Brian P. Gabriel

Attorney at Campbell Durrant, PC

Tort Claims Act - How to be Prepared for All Exceptions, New and Old Alike

Brian represents public sector clients in matters relating to employment discrimination, civil rights, and personal injury law, as well as pension and other municipal matters. He has litigated cases involving alleged constitutional claims arising out of law enforcement activities, the exercise of police powers, and employment disputes, as well as lawsuits involving personal injury and property disputes. He provides counseling to clients in labor and employment matters, including issues that arise under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other state and federal statutes. He has represented clients in jury trials, bench trials, arbitrations, statutory appeals, and has briefed and argued cases on appeal before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Brian is an approved Neutral serving in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Programs for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Kerry Golden

Majority Executive Director, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee at Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Fireworks Panel Discussion

Kerry Golden is the Majority Executive Director of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. She has held this position for 27 years. Ms. Golden grew up on a farm in Franklin County, Pennsylvania and was an active 4-H member with mainly livestock projects. She received her B.S. in agricultural science from Penn State in 1991, with an emphasis in public administration. She also earned an M.Ed. in agricultural and extension education from Penn State in 1993. Ms. Golden is a legislative consultant on agricultural issues who drafts legislation and manages information distribution for the committee and Republican House members. For 13 years, she was also an adjunct instructor at Penn State Mont Alto where she taught agricultural issues and ethics. One of her more recent honors includes the Gold Medal from the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture for her impact on Pennsylvania agriculture policy and the resulting agricultural economy.

Derek Green

Council Member At-Large at City of Philadelphia

Keynote Craig Fugate

In 2015, Councilmember Derek S. Green, Esquire won the Democratic primary for City Council At-Large in Philadelphia by receiving the highest number of votes cast in the election, and, later that year, he was elected as a member of the City Council of Philadelphia. In 2019, he was elected for another term. As a member of City Council, Councilmember Green chairs the Committee on Finance and Disabillities and serves as the Vice Chair of the Committees on Aging and Law and Government. Additionally, he serves as the Chair of the Philadelphia Gas Commission, Board Director for the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Board Director for the Democratic Municipal Officials, Board Director for the National League of Cities, Regional Director for the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, and 1st Vice President for the
Pat Harvey has been providing daily labor and employment advice and representing employers in Federal and State trials, union negotiations, grievance and interest arbitrations, unfair labor practices, civil service proceedings, and local agency hearings for over twenty-five years. Pat began his career as a prosecutor in the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office and brings a depth of experience in handling workplace misconduct investigations and defending municipalities in discipline grievances. Pat specializes in handling sensitive investigations of elected officials and police misconduct and is frequently called on to defend municipalities in challenges to police discipline. Pat also brings a wealth of experience when acting as the municipal arbitrator in Police and Fire Act 111 and Act 195 proceedings. He has been chosen as the employer arbitrator in interest arbitration and as chief negotiator in Act 195 contract negotiations countless times. Pat also supervised a workers’ compensation defense department for over ten years and uses his disability experience in globally settling workers’ compensation injuries, drafting maximum leave policies and handling ADA, FMLA and heart and lung claims. Pat serves as counsel to the Pennsylvania Municipal League’s U-COMP Unemployment Trust. Deb is the U-COMP Member Service Representative for the Pennsylvania Municipal League’s U-COMP Unemployment Trust. Born in Buffalo, NY, she completed her Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees at the University of New Hampshire. After living and working in New Hampshire for 32 years, the last four of which were employed with the New Hampshire Municipal League, she moved to Pennsylvania. She has been employed by the Pennsylvania Municipal League for the last 15 years. Deb is also an animal enthusiast.

**Debbie Gross**

**U-COMP**

**Unemployment in Review Now and for the Future**

Deb is the U-COMP Member Service Representative for the Pennsylvania Municipal League’s U-COMP Unemployment Trust. Born in Buffalo, NY, she completed her Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees at the University of New Hampshire. After living and working in New Hampshire for 32 years, the last four of which were employed with the New Hampshire Municipal League, she moved to Pennsylvania. She has been employed by the Pennsylvania Municipal League for the last 15 years. Deb is also an animal enthusiast.

**Patrick J. Harvey, Esq.**

**Attorney at Campbell Durrant, PC**

**Pandemic, Protests and Recess: Labor and Employment Issues**

Pat Harvey has been providing daily labor and employment advice and representing employers in Federal and State trials, union negotiations, grievance and interest arbitrations, unfair labor practices, civil service proceedings, and local agency hearings for over twenty-five years. Pat began his career as a prosecutor in the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office and brings a depth of experience in handling workplace misconduct investigations and defending municipalities in discipline grievances. Prior to working in City Council, Councilmember Green served as a Deputy City Solicitor in the Housing and Community Development Division of the Corporate Group of the City’s Law Department. As a Deputy City Solicitor, he represented the Offices of Housing and Community Development and Neighborhood Transformation Initiatives, Commerce Department, and Vacant Property Review Committee and annually drafted, negotiated, and reviewed over $100 million in housing and economic development contracts funded by the City, PA Department of Community and Economic Development, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Additionally, Councilmember Green’s legal experience includes positions as an Assistant District Attorney in Philadelphia and Assistant Deputy Attorney General for the State of Delaware (Securities and Criminal Divisions). He is admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and State of New Jersey. He is also a graduate of the University of Virginia and Temple University School of Law and is a member of the Center for Progressive Leadership’s inaugural class of Political Leadership Fellows, and served as a faculty member and alumni Board Director. Furthermore, the Pennsylvania Law Weekly named Councilmember Green as a Lawyer on the Fast Track, Cheyney University honored him with the President’s Outstanding Community Leader Award, Community College of Philadelphia presented him with their Distinguished Leadership Award, Democratic Municipal Officials awarded him with their President’s Award, Urban Education Fund honored him with the Gimper Award for Outstanding Service, Bensalem High School honored him with its first Distinguished Alumni Award, Leadership Philadelphia selected him as one of the region’s key connectors and leaders, Metro Philadelphia selected him as one of six new young political leaders, and the Philadelphia Daily News named him one of the 10 under 40 rising political stars. In 2018, he was selected as NewDEAL Leader. Before becoming an attorney, Councilmember Green was a consumer and small business lender for Meridian Bank. He also served in a leadership capacity in a number of civic and professional organizations including President of the Center in the Park, Inc. and East Mount Airy Neighbors, Inc. (“EMAN”), First Vice President of the Germantown YMCA, Vice President of Young America Political Action Committee, Co-Vice Chair of the PA Bar Assoc.’s Legal Services to the Public Committee. Further, he served as a Board Director for the Green Tree School, Mt. Airy USA CDC, Urban League of Philadelphia, West Oak Lane Charter School, West Philadelphia YMCA, and served as pro bono counsel for the Family Life Centers of Canaan Baptist Church and Salem Baptist Church of Jenkintown. Councilmember Green and his wife, Sheila, co-founded the first Autism Support Class at Houston Elementary School to help other Autistic children like their son. To aid other families affected by Autism, they are a top regional fundraiser for Autism Speaks.

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Speakers

Moriah Hathaway
Executive Director at The Pennsylvania Commission for Women
100 Years of Women's Suffrage

Deb is the U-COMP Member Service Rep. Before becoming executive director of the Pennsylvania Commission for Women, Moriah served as the special assistant to the Governor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. She grew up in southwestern Pennsylvania and worked on several campaigns in the area. She is also a member of the Shippensburg University Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Ryan P. Hottenstein
Senior Vice President at FINANCIAL S&LUTIONS
Managing through an Economic Crisis: City of Easton Case Study

As a Vice President of Financial S&Lutions LLC, Mr. Hottenstein assists clients with the structuring and pricing of debt and derivative products and provides financial and operational consulting services. He previously served as Managing Director and Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Reading, Pennsylvania, where he was responsible for all city affairs and operations. Prior to becoming Managing Director, he served as Finance Director, where he oversaw all financial activity including the accounting/treasury, purchasing, tax and budget divisions.

Kyle Jones
Managing Director at PFM Asset Management LLC
Making Sense of the Markets

Kyle joined PFM's asset management business in 2012 and is the co-head of the Portfolio Strategies Group (PSG). He leads PSG's efforts in the investment strategy development process for many large and strategically important PFM client relationships. Kyle works primarily with clients of the separate account business by helping to devise customized portfolio strategies designed to meet their specific investment needs. In addition, he assists in the creation and delivery of our views and strategies to clients, prospects and third-party consultants. Kyle is a Fixed Income Investment Committee Member as well as a Credit Committee Member. Prior to joining PFM, Kyle spent 10 years at JPMorgan Chase in a variety of capacities, most recently as an investment specialist for their Institutional Sales business. Kyle serves on several community related boards and is active in his respective alumni associations. He is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and educational seminars.

Nicolie Lettini, MBA
VP of Indirect Services at eCivis, Inc.
How to Make Sure Governments Aren't Leaving Money on the Table

With almost two decades of experience in the cost allocation world, and after preparing over 750 complete cost plans (helping clients recover over $1 Billion in missed reimbursements), Nicky knows what it takes to build, manage, and maintain effective cost allocation strategies. As eCivis’ Vice President of Indirect Services, Nicky works to help clients merge their grants management and indirect costs to capture their true cost of services and attain more from their grant funding. Whether it’s building cost allocation plans or preparing indirect cost rate proposals, Nicky uses Allocate, SaaS-based cost allocation software, to fit each organization's structure and needs. In addition to Nicky’s commitment to her clients, she is also committed to staying abreast of local government rules and regulations including the Office of Management and Budget 2 CFR part 200 (formally OMB A-87) Regulations and has received formal training endorsed by the State of California.

Mark Lysynecky
Finance Director at City of Easton
Managing through an Economic Crisis: City of Easton Case Study

Mark Lysynecky is a highly accomplished financial professional experienced in strategic analysis and planning, reporting/ forecasting/ budgeting, risk assessment and financial control and systems implementation. He has provided effective financial oversight and business planning for organizations of varying sizes and types, from large multinationals to post-start ups, from marketing and sales teams to entire firms. Mr. Lysynecky is the Finance Director for the city of Easton.

State Representative Joanna McClinton
100 Years of Women's Suffrage

Joanna McClinton, Esquire, took the oath of office to serve the people of the 191st Legislative District on Aug. 25, 2015 after winning a special election two weeks prior. In Nov. 2018, she became the first African-American and woman to be elected as the House Democratic Caucus chair for the 2019-20 legislative session. The election to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives continues Rep. McClinton’s lifelong devotion to bettering the lives of others. A lifelong resident of southwest Philadelphia and graduate of Grace Temple Christian Academy, she became active in the community while completing a two-year internship with the radio station WDAS. Later, she studied
Political Science and Leadership in Global Understanding at La Salle University where she was a Dean’s List student, student leader and neighborhood tutor. Immediately after graduating from LaSalle, she enrolled at Villanova University School of Law where she used her legal training to serve the public. She was an intern at Regional Housing Legal Services, the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office and the Defender Association of Philadelphia. She was an assistant public defender for seven years. She became the assistant chief of the East Zone during her last year at the public defender’s office and helped attorneys with case preparation. In 2013, Rep. McClinton combined her passion for the community and love of the law by becoming chief counsel to state Sen. Anthony Hardy Williams. She worked behind the scenes in the senator’s Harrisburg and Philadelphia offices, developing policy and legislation. She also organized expungement fairs and public policy forums, and helped constituents with problems. Rep. McClinton is active in the community. She was a youth leader at her West Philadelphia home church, Open Door Mission for more than 10 years. As a youth ministry leader, she organized positive programs for children, mentoring them and reminding them that their dreams can come true. She is a volunteer with Outreach to Youth and Hands of Compassion American Sign Language Ministry. She was an elected Board Member of the La Salle University Alumni Association Board of Directors, where she helped initiate the Minority Alumni Advisory Group. She has served as the secretary of the Philadelphia Barrister’s Association, the city’s bar association of African American attorneys, and as president of the La Salle University African American Alumni Association. Rep. McClinton has been acknowledged for her commitment to public service and enhancing the quality of life for residents in Philadelphia and Delaware Counties by receiving several awards. They include: City and State PA’s 40 Under 40; the Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia’s Outstanding Young Lawyer of the Year award; Successful Women Achieving Goals’ Women of the Year award; Fun Time Magazine’s Women of Influence Award; the PRE-K for PA Champion award; the Spirit of a Dove Community Servant award; the Lucien E. Blackwell Guiding Light Community award; and the Black Gala Women of Excellence award.

Jeffrey A. Mills
Cozen O’Connor
Managing through an Economic Crisis: City of Easton Case Study

Jeffrey focuses his practice on real estate and has extensive experience in commercial and corporate finance, tax-exempt and taxable bonds, and general corporate representation. His work in real estate development includes handling acquisitions, divestitures, land use and zoning, leasing, financing, and obtaining economic incentives for commercial, retail, office, and industrial development. Jeffrey is also a nationally recognized Red Book Bond Counsel and a member of the National Association of Bond Lawyers. He has represented state and local governments, school districts, and agencies as issuers of revenue bonds and general obligation bonds for financing the development, construction, and operation of capital projects ranging from manufacturing facilities, water and sewer projects, public housing, health care facilities, and college and universities. He also acts as underwriter’s and special tax counsel for major investment banks in the underwriting of tax-exempt and taxable bonds. Jeffrey is a certified public accountant and has experience in dealing with the financial and tax accounting aspects of transactions.

Emily J. Mueller
Attorney at GRB Law
When to Involve the Solicitor: 5 Volunteer Fire Company Issues

Emily is a member of the firm’s School & Municipal Law and Municipal Tax & Creditors’ Rights group. As the Solicitor of Harrison Township, Mt. Oliver Borough and Thornburg Borough, she has extensive experience in all facets of local government, including running public meetings and hearings, ordinance and resolution drafting, contract review, and assisting clients with zoning and land use issues, property maintenance issues and employment matters. Additionally, Emily has considerable experience with assisting school and municipal clients with reviewing and responding to requests for public records under Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law and handling appeals before the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records. Emily has also assisted with reviewing and responding to public records requests made under the Federal Freedom of Information Act. Emily provides legal counsel to the firm’s Zoning Hearing Boards and Planning Commission clients, and also assisting the firm’s municipal clients with the collection of current and delinquent taxes and municipal claims, including representing clients in matters involving the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

Jim Mullen
FirstNet Manager at AT&T
Enhancing Opportunities for Public Safety: Updates from FirstNet, Built by AT&T

Jim Mullen Jr. is a Principal Consultant, spending 100% of his time focused on FirstNet Solutions in Pennsylvania. Jim joined the FirstNet Project team shortly after FirstNet awarded AT&T the 25 year contract on March 31, 2017. Jim provides support to agencies in 20 counties in central Pennsylvania. Jim will celebrate 20 years with AT&T this May. Prior to joining the FirstNet Project, Jim was a Senior Account Executive in AT&T’s largest Market Segment where he managed a base of customers, who spent over 85 million dollars a year with AT&T. He also spent 10 years as a Telecom manager and budget owning customer of AT&T. Jim served as a Volunteer Fire Fighter for over 10 years in his younger days and the passion and respect for First Responders never faded. Jim fought tirelessly to be a part of this great mission for Public Safety.
Jerry Ozog  
*Executive Director at Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute*

**Fireworks Panel Discussion**

Jerry is a professional advocate, educator, communicator, and program manager dedicated to administrative and operational excellence in emergency services. He is an innovative leader responsible for coordinating efforts to improve and sustain Pennsylvania’s emergency services organizations. He is passionate about teaching, research, analysis, and breaking down problems so better decisions can be made in crisis and routine situations. Jerry has developed several innovative educational programs and courses designed to improve relationships between local governments and emergency services organizations and administrative effectiveness. Jerry has lead teams and provided consultation and facilitation services to emergency services organizations and local governments. Jerry has been serving in the volunteer and career emergency service sectors for the past 35 years. He is an active Volunteer Firefighter for the Hampden Township Volunteer Fire Company and formally served as a Chief Officer and line officer for 16 years. He is a member of the Command and General Staff for the South-Central Task Force All Hazards Incident Management Team and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Incident Management Team. Jerry currently serves full time as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute, a statewide advocacy and education organization. He previously served as an Education Specialist for a national provider of emergency services insurance, a Director for a Community College Public Safety Training Center, Executive Director for a Regional EMS Council and Paramedic Coordinator for a Community Hospital. Jerry is also an Adjunct Instructor in the Integrated Emergency Management Program at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute and National Fire Academy. Jerry is a graduate of the prestigious Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy and the Master Exercise Practitioner Program at the Emergency Management Institute. He is a nationally certified Firefighter 2, Fire Officer 3, Fire Instructor 2 and Pennsylvania Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic. Jerry has earned a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. In 2004, Jerry graduated from Leadership Harrisburg Area, which is a community leadership-training program. In 2012, Jerry was awarded the Platinum Award for Servant Leadership from Leadership Harrisburg Area.

Matt Pacifico  
*Mayor at City of Altoona*

**Opening Session, Opening Ceremony – Welcome**

Mayor Matt Pacifico was first elected as Altoona's Mayor in 2013. On November 3, 2015, he was re-elected as the City's full-time Mayor, a newly-created position under the City’s Home Rule Charter. Mayor Pacifico has been instrumental in initiating a number of strategies to improve the City’s financial outlook and attract new business, which in 2017, helped Altoona successfully exit Act 47, Pennsylvania’s distressed municipality program. Making Altoona the fastest City to ever accomplish this feat. The Mayor works with state and federal representatives and officials to bring about positive change to the community. Mayor Pacifico serves on the Board of Directors of the Altoona Blair County Development Corporation, the Greater Altoona Economic Development Corporation, and the Altoona Redevelopment Authority. He is also actively involved in the Pennsylvania Municipal League where he currently serves as President, and the National League of Cities where he is a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Federal Policy Committee. Mayor Pacifico was appointed by Penn DOT Secretary, Leslie Richards to serve on the Pennsylvania Autonomous Vehicle Task Force. In 2017, Mayor Pacifico was named to the “40 Under 40 Rising Stars” for the City of Altoona and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Mayor Pacifico played an integral role at Pacifico Bakery serving as Operations Manager for 10 years, overseeing all functions of the business from mixing to shipping. Mayor Pacifico is a 1999 graduate of Bishop Guilfoyle High School and has two sons, Ethan and Angelo.

Mike Roberts  
*Attorney at Cohen Law Group*

**Distributed Antenna System Discussion**

Mike Roberts has extensive experience in assisting municipalities in wireless facilities regulation, wireless leases, franchise fee audits, cable franchise renewal, and right-of-way management. While he was in law school, Mr. Roberts worked as a law clerk at our firm, where he gained experience assisting local governments in cable, wireless, and broadband issues. He received both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Pittsburgh. While in law school, Mr. Roberts served as Features Editor for JURIST, a legal news and research service. He also studied international commercial law at the University of Zagreb in Croatia.

Chris Rouser  
*Vice President of Human Resources at Comcast*

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Panel**

As Vice President of Human Resources for Comcast’s Keystone Region, Christopher Rouser leads a team that manages Comcast’s employee experience, talent strategy, critical human resource processes, wellness, motivation, engagement and development. With more than 20 years of telecommunications industry experience, Rouser joined Comcast in 2013 as Director, Talent Acquisition & Management for the Company’s Western New England Region. He has also served as Senior Director, Human Resources for Comcast’s Freedom Region and Senior Director, Human Resources, for the Company’s Northeast Division. Rouser holds an MBA from Towson University and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Baltimore.
Rick Schuettler

Executive Director at Pennsylvania Municipal League

Opening Session, Lisa Soronen, Opening Ceremony – Welcome, Opening Session

Mr. Schuettler is Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Municipal League where he is responsible for operations of all League programs and services, including Trust/Benefit Services, Municipal Programs, Finance/Administration, Governmental Affairs and Communications. He currently serves as the 1st Vice Chair of the National League of Cities Mutual Insurance Company. Prior to his employment with the League, Mr. Schuettler served as the City of Pottsville's Administrator and a member trustee of the League's PennPRIME Municipal Insurance/Workers’ Compensation Trusts, as well as other League committees. He holds a B.S. Degree in Business Administration from King's College and has received numerous certificates in various local government and public administration courses from the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, National League of Cities, International City/County Management Association and the Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management.

Ashley Shiwarski

Director of Business Development at NLC Service Line Warranty Program by HomeServe

Pennsylvania's Aging Water Infrastructure- Challenges and Solutions for Municipalities, Utilities, and Homeowners

Ashley is a graduate of Robert Morris University with a Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics with a concentration in Secondary Education. Her diverse background includes customer service, financial sales, insurance and education. Prior to joining USP, Ashley was a Licensed Medicare Sales Agent with Aetna, where she helped establish the Medicare Supplement Inside Sales Department and was also chosen to lead a retention project in Dallas, Texas. Ashley was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and loves taking in all the city has to offer. Outside of work, Ashley enjoys spending time with her family and friends, who she believes are her life’s greatest treasures. She is a Six Sigma Yellow Belt and keeps busy by playing softball, biking around the city and volunteering with the Pittsburgh Chapter of Best Buddies.

Matthew Shortall

Senior Business Development Manage at Constellation

Constellation

Matthew Shortall is a Senior Business Development Manager for Constellation's Mid-Atlantic power team and serves numerous commercial, municipal and industrial clients, including many local government entities, manufacturers, water and sewer treatment utilities and educational institutions. Matt focuses on finding innovative energy solutions that drive down overall energy costs by combining client's power, natural gas, load response, solar power, renewable energy and energy efficiency services into one comprehensive energy management strategy. Matt leverages his experience in commodity and risk management as well as energy and environmental data management to help his customers reduce energy related risk and manage budget expectations. After many years working in energy consulting Matt joined Constellation in March 2008. Since joining Constellation Matt has worked with customers all of all sizes across the Mid-Atlantic. Matt holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Perdue School of Business, Salisbury State University as well as a MBA also from the Perdue School of Business.

Danene Sorace

Mayor at City of Lancaster

Fireworks Panel Discussion

Danene Sorace was elected to the position of Mayor in November 2017 and was sworn in on January 3, 2018. She is the second women to hold the office in the 202-year history of the city, the first being Mayor Janice Stork who held the office for two terms from 1990 until 1998. Her passions and goals for her time in office overlap, the things that she cares most deeply about are family and community life, social and economic justice, education and opportunity, and optimism about the future – especially the future of Lancaster City. Prior to her election to the position of Mayor, she was a member of the Lancaster City Council, and chaired the Finance Committee, and served on the committees for Public Works, and Economic Development and Neighborhood Revitalization. Danene is a first-generation college graduate, she holds a bachelor's degree in psychobiology from Albright College, and a master's in public policy with a concentration in health care policy from Rutgers University.

Lisa Soronen

Executive Director at State and Local Legal Center

Lisa Soronen

Lisa Soronen is the Executive Director of the State and Local Legal Center in Washington, D.C.. In her role at the State and Local Legal Center, Soronen files amicus curiae briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of members of the Big Seven—National Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, The Council of State Governments, National League of Cities, United States Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties and International City/County Management Association—in cases affecting state and local government. She filed an amicus brief on behalf of SLLC in Manuel. Prior to joining the SLLC, Soronen worked for the National School Boards Association and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, and clerked for the Wisconsin Court of Appeals. She earned a juris doctorate at the University of Wisconsin Law School.
John Spagnola  
*Managing Director at PFM Asset Management LLC*  
**Making Sense of the Markets**

John's responsibilities include serving on the Multi-Asset Class Investment Committee and providing investment advisory services to public, hospital, endowment and Taft-Hartley fund clients. He oversees the multi-asset class and discretionary investment consulting practice that serves clients with long-term needs. In 1984, John began his career in the financial services industry working for the First Boston Corporation in New York and Philadelphia. In 1992, he co-founded Spagnola-Cosack, Inc., an independent investment consulting firm. Over a 10-year period, assets under advisement grew to more than $3.5 billion. In 2003, PFM acquired Spagnola-Cosack, Inc. A graduate of Yale University, John played professional football for 11 seasons, including nine with the Philadelphia Eagles and one year each with the Green Bay Packers and Seattle Seahawks. He also served as a player representative and executive vice president of the NFL Players Association. He has taught courses on managing public funds for the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Magee Rehabilitation and St. Rose of Lima Parish, both in Philadelphia, the William Buckley Foundation at Yale University, the Board of Directors of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and on the Investment Committee of the Jefferson Health System in Philadelphia. In 2012, John was inducted into the Eagle Scout Hall of Fame by the Cradle of Liberty Council of Philadelphia.

E. Lee Stinnett, Esq.  
*Shareholder at Salzmann Hughes, P.C.*  
**Storm Water Management Options**

E. Lee Stinnett II is a Shareholder at Salzmann Hughes, P.C., where he concentrates his practice in the areas of environmental law, zoning and land use, general litigation, and municipal law. He joined the firm after graduating from The Penn State University Dickinson School of Law in 2009. During law school, Lee clerked for the Honorable Judge Kevin Hess with the Court of Common Pleas of Cumberland County. Lee serves as solicitor and special counsel to several municipalities and authorities, advising on issues ranging from land use and zoning to procurement. Lee regularly counsels both public and private providers of wastewater treatment services regarding regulatory permitting, enforcement matters, and negotiation of intermunicipal agreements. Additionally, he assists clients impacted by the Chesapeake Bay Initiative through negotiation of bilateral nutrient credit trading agreements to achieve compliance with Bay-related regulations. Lee has worked with municipalities throughout the state to form municipal authorities to manage and operate stormwater systems to comply with environmental requirements. In addition to environmental work, Lee provides representation on contract disputes in multimillion-dollar construction projects, land disputes, and employment matters. Lee has served on several Chesapeake Bay-related panels, including DEP workgroups for both MS4 and Chesapeake Bay matters and the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association Chesapeake Bay workgroup. He frequently lectures for the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, the Capital Region Council of Governments, and the Pennsylvania Council of Governments. For the past several years, Lee has also been asked to guest lecture at The Penn State Dickinson School of Law. Lee is a proud Big Brother with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region. He is a board member of the Hampden Township Zoning Hearing Board and the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy. Lee lives in Hampden Township with his wife, Lisa, and children, Tripp and Emme.

Amy Sturges  
*Director of Governmental Affairs at The League/PA State Association of Township Commissioners*  
**Legislative Update**

This year, Amy marked 23 years with the Pennsylvania Municipal League (PML). She currently holds the position of Director of Governmental Affairs. In this capacity, she represents the interests of municipal government before the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Administration. Amy is a graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Widener University School of Law.

Angela Tennis  
*Director of Insurance Services at PennPrime*  
**Tort Claims Act - How to be Prepared for All Exceptions, New and Old Alike**

Angela came to PennPrime with rich experience, having been in the insurance industry for over 30 years. Prior to her role as the PennPrime Claims Coordinator, she served as Chief of the Self-Insurance Division at the Bureau of Workers' Compensation. She also held several industry positions as a claims adjuster, customer service representative in personal lines, account executive in commercial lines, and worked with other self-insurance groups. As PennPrime’s Insurance Services Director, Angela’s vision is to keep our commitment to the member as the Specialist in Your Corner. She believes in helping our members be the best they can be for their residents and employees by being a guide and extension of their team in keeping their communities safe.
Richard Vilello
Deputy Secretary Community Affairs and Development at Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

Opening Session
Rick first joined the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) in March of 2015 as the Executive Director of the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services. He was appointed as Deputy Secretary for Community Affairs and Development in February 2017. As Deputy Secretary, Rick oversees the work of the entire deputate including: The Governor's Center for Local Government Services; The Center for Community Enhancement; The Center for Community and Housing Development; and The Center for Community Services. Before coming to DCED, Rick served four terms as Mayor of Lock Haven and was previously President of the Pennsylvania Municipal League.

Bill Warren
Partner at Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP

Construction, Procurement and Privatization - What are the Problems and the Opportunities?
Bill Warren is a member of the Real Estate Department and the Construction and Government Contracts practices. He has worked extensively on governmental procurement of technology, equipment, commodities and services, and public, nonprofit and private construction programs, and as a commercial litigator in the federal Middle District of Pennsylvania, and in a wide variety of state administrative law matters. Bill represents technology vendors, design firms, and contractors in state construction and technology procurement contract negotiations and dispute resolution processes. He also represents school districts, counties, cities, municipalities and authorities in contracting and construction matters. Prior to joining Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr, Bill was Chief Counsel in the Pennsylvania Department of General Services where he was responsible for the legal aspects of the Commonwealth's building construction, commodity procurement and leasing programs. Bill was thereafter appointed Chief of Litigation in the Office of the General Counsel, responsible for monitoring and supervising significant litigation involving the executive agencies such as Transportation, General Services, and Environmental Protection, Insurance, Revenue, and Public Welfare. Bill is admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and the United States District Courts for the Middle and Eastern Districts of Pennsylvania.

Dave Zarnick
President Commissioner / PSATC President at Butler Township

Opening Session, Opening Ceremony – Welcome
Dave Zarnick is a lifelong Butler Township resident and current President of the Board of Butler Township Commissioners. Dave has committed his life to community activism and serving others. He is the outgoing President of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners and immediate Past President of the Allegheny County & Western Pennsylvania Association of Township Commissioners. Through these various roles, and others, Dave has initiated partnerships between community organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and township residents.
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First Place Winner
Megan E. Gouldy
Trinity High School

Second Place Winner
Jamie M. Santiago
Scranton High School

Third Place Winner
Jonah S. Zolnak
Altoona Area High School

High School Essay Judges

David A. Greene, Esq.
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Local Government Commission

Dr. G. Terry Madonna
Director of the Center for Politics and Public Affairs, Professor of Public Affairs, and Director of the Franklin and Marshall College Poll
Franklin and Marshall College
Host/Moderator of Pennsylvania Newsmakers

Richard Vilello
Deputy Secretary for Community Affairs and Development
Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
Winning High School Essays

Theme: Civics and You

Participants are asked to reflect on the theme by writing about opportunities in their community that allow for civic engagement and encourage citizens to volunteer to help with local challenges.

1st Place High School Essay Winner

Megan E. Gouldy, Trinity High School

Civic engagement and community service are important responsibilities of citizens in every community. We use it to shape the society around us into a better and safer place. Every community around the world has its own unique needs and problems. A good citizen takes it upon themselves to enact the changes needed, and hopefully, others join them. Service to my community has always been an important part of my life. While I’m sure there are many causes worthy of people's time in central Pennsylvania, there are several that I would like to discuss that I have had the privilege of participating in.

When I was a young child, I convinced my family to babysit dogs from Susquehanna Service Dogs. I, along with other people from my community, attended sessions to learn about the training of these dogs. Susquehanna Service Dogs trains Labrador retrievers from puppies to help the physically and mentally disabled. Volunteers can adopt dogs as puppies to raise and train them, or like my family did, foster or babysit them for short periods of time. For many disabled people in the Harrisburg area (and around the world), having a service animal can be life changing, and none of this would be possible without the many volunteers who dedicate years of their lives to training these dogs. Working with this organization fueled my love of dogs, which then led me to another organization, Speranza Animal Rescue.

Speranza is a non-profit organization that is 100% volunteer run. It is a rescue, rehabilitation center and sanctuary for the most abused and neglected animals. They take dogs from the kill-list in other shelters, as well as from cases of abuse, regardless of medical costs or behavioral issues. They mobilize support from hundreds of volunteers, with many giving up their time on a daily basis, to care for these animals. They take in many types of animals, from dogs (usually pitbulls) to farm animals and even a turkey with facial deformities. They gained popularity when in 2016, they took in Libre, a Boston Terrier puppy, on the brink of death from neglect on a local farm. Against all odds, he survived, and his story was the inspiration for Libre’s Law, which passed in 2017 in Pennsylvania. Through them, I have volunteered at fundraisers and attended several protests against animal cruelty and in support of Libre’s Law. This law greatly improved Pennsylvania’s animal cruelty policies. I was fortunate to have participated in the push for this law, even attending the signing of the bill in Harrisburg. My family is still very involved with this organization. Unfortunately, Speranza continues to take in new animals every week from unimaginable, horrible situations. Today, this organization continues its mission one animal, one dog at a time.

The second opportunity I have had to serve my community is through scouting. The Boy and Girl Scouts have been operating for over a century and have long been creating projects that address the needs of their communities. I have been an active Girl Scout for thirteen years, since kindergarten. My troop has served at soup kitchens, packed boxes at a local food bank, and volunteered at nursing homes since we were in elementary school. In eighth grade, we handed out hundreds of care bags with snacks and toiletries at St. Patrick’s Cathedral soup kitchen in Harrisburg. As I entered high school, I realized that I too wanted to
create a large-scale project for my community. I was able to achieve this through the Girl Scout Gold Award. As I have always been passionate about reading, I decided to create The Reading Corner for children in an urban elementary school in Harrisburg. This is a room that I designed, decorated, furnished and stocked with thousands of dollars worth of books and educational materials to share my love of reading with children who may not have the same access to books that I have had. After spending nearly 100 hours over the course of a year, this was installed last spring at Benjamin Franklin Elementary School and I have since returned at the beginning of this school year to restock the shelves with additional books and school supplies. While I was setting up the reading corner, several young students came to help and were so excited to be able to read with their friends and take a book home that was theirs to keep, not just borrow. When I returned this year, the shelves were far emptier than I had left them, which I take as a sign that my project was a success. My plan is to return each year to replenish supplies before returning to college.

I think that anyone who chooses to incorporate civic engagement and community service into their life will find the experience immensely valuable and rewarding. It feels good to know that your community is a better place because of you, and that you have the power to enact change where it is needed. The service I have done has certainly had an impact on who I am and who I want to be. Many of these activities, especially my Girl Scout Gold Award project, have given me invaluable skills in leadership and planning, as well as the confidence that I can create real change in my community. It has also made an impact on my choice of a career. I plan to become a civil/environmental engineer, so that I can create solutions to problems that plague our world, specifically regarding energy sources and water pollution. Commitment to service and community is deeply ingrained in who I am and I believe this will serve me well in my future career.

2nd Place High School Essay Winner
Jamie M. Santiago, Scranton High School

Before my senior year, I considered myself a young, productive citizen of Pennsylvania. I did everything properly: I got the high grades, I volunteered, and I was politically engaged. In my mind, there were no other duties left for me to fulfill. But, Covid-19 was a storm that no one saw coming until it traveled 7,000 miles overnight, infiltrating the people and places around us. Just a few weeks before this, I had proudly started working at Moses Taylor Hospital as a dietary intern, yet when the pandemic spontaneously manifested, I realized that I was doing the bare minimum. Then, on May 25th, another storm hit in the form of George Floyd’s death, threatening to divide a recovering nation. Again, I was humbled by the changing definition of civic responsibility among myself, my community, and my country.

My first encounter with Covid-19 was a far away news story. My second encounter was across the hallway at my job. Hearing patients snuggling to simply breathe, I quickly realized that the illness had been underestimated. Awareness became fear for a lot of individuals and my job grew increasingly important since many of my co-workers refused to serve the floors. One, in particular, was designated the "Covid floor." Not long after its establishment, my teacher contacted me, letting me know that the organization through which I acquired the internship had canceled it as a requirement. Still, I opted to stay because I felt inclined. Never before had I experienced such a call to arms; they truly needed me in the first few weeks of the crisis, so I kept the job. Admittedly, each time that I served the Covid floor and the ICU, I did so in trepidation. The shortage of protective equipment meant nothing more than a flimsy face mask between me and a potentially fatal encounter. I would wash my hands over a dozen times each shift and disinfect for an hour as soon as I arrived home. However, my work was rewarding and fulfilling. Even though all that I did for Covid patients was bring them food, I took personal joy in their gradual recoveries. I happily delivered extra water bottles so they could soothe their throats and I often memorized their room numbers to keep track of their progress. I secretly cheered to myself whenever I delivered solid foods instead of the usual broth or cold drink. In my own small way, I made a difference and learned that I could always be doing more for my community. There is no set quota of duties that we should be doing; true civic responsibility is constant and ever-evolving.
Another type of sickness had been growing in America for much longer. It spanned decades and centuries, festering into racism. Despite its decline in power and liberty’s substitution of cotton as king, this disease evolved into fake smiles and shielded threats. Racism still prevailed in the roots of America, immortal to education as it passed through entire bloodlines. Sometimes it showed up in the actions or words of people, even those of powerful officials. While there had been many instances of brutality and hate crimes before May 25th, 2020, that incident pushed public discontent beyond its breaking point. In broad daylight, abuse was blatantly displayed by a Minneapolis cop through a ruthless crime, murder. After witnessing the suffering of Covid-19 patients, seeing a perfectly healthy man being deprived of his basic right to oxygen broke my heart. Twenty-nine years after Rodney King, it almost seemed as if nothing had changed. We still saw the same acts of brutality and the same rage of the unheard made its entrance. In spite of being against the riots, I understood the fury’s origin. The harsh reality forced me to ask questions and to discover alternative routes for raising awareness as well as solving the problem.

The answer lies in legislation. Instead of displacing hundreds of people and decimating small businesses, people need to educate themselves and vote for those whose platforms incorporate the change they seek. According to Barack Obama, "the elected officials who matter most in reforming police departments and the criminal justice system work at the state and local levels." Real change consists of anger directed in the right direction. As residents of a republic, we have a fundamental responsibility to exercise our vote to the fullest extent and that has never been more apparent. Violence only worsens the situation and further harms an economy already on its last legs. Being a good citizen today means supporting the Black Lives Matter movement while stimulating new conversations. I see this being stressed more and more in my hometown through teachers and authorities. Opportunities for progress come from discussing uncomfortable topics on a platform of mutual respect for the parties involved. All of our problems lead back to ignorance. Hatred, anger, and racism - in spite of everything - are all blind. As individuals and community leaders we must face these problems head on to prevent bigotry. John Lewis, a Georgia congressman who marched with Dr. King spoke on this situation. "Rioting, looting, and burning is not the way. Organize. Demonstrate. Sit-in. Stand up. Vote. Be constructive, not destructive."

3rd Place High School Essay Winner

Jonah S. Zolnak, Altoona Area High School

For me as a childhood cancer survivor, I believe that I must get involved with my community and try to give back to it because of what it has given me. As a result of that mindset, I have tried to involve myself in a vast array of different community service activities in my school and outside of it. Some of these activities, which I will be further elaborating upon, consist of participating with the local Brian Morden Foundation, helping out at the Hollidaysburg Veterans’ Home, teaching elementary kids German, teaching kids how to play percussion instruments, etc. All of these activities are very important to me, and I believe that they help me give back little by little.

In school, I participate in many clubs and groups that help provide some form of civic engagement. One example would be the Patriotic Student Alliance Club, in that club, I go to the Hollidaysburg Veterans’ Home to help serve a Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving meal to the veterans and their families. Also, for Christmas, I help deliver Christmas gifts to the veterans. I have helped out with the Hollidaysburg Veterans’ Home for three years, and every time I go there it brings joy to me to see the happiness of the veterans and their families, and I get to have conversations and learn the stories of some of the veterans. Another club I am involved in is Earthkeepers, where I help sweep the sidewalks in Altoona and remove garbage from the road sides and sidewalks. Also, with the Earthkeepers Club, I help with maintenance at the local teen shelter by trimming bushes, pulling weeds, and removing garbage from the area. While the Earthkeepers Club does not receive any recognition for our actions, I still am glad that I get to make just a tiny difference in my community. With Youth and Government, I helped out with a voter registration drive,
and it does not matter to me what party people register for. What is important to me is that they are involved with the political system either locally or nationally. Finally, AP German, I have the opportunity to teach local elementary school kids German. As a result of that, the children can have more cultural awareness than they would regularly have. Teaching these kids provides a vast amount of joy to me, and it makes me glad to see the children enjoying learning about another language and the culture of those people. School involvement in clubs and groups has always been an opportunity for me to get involved with different activities and people. With those different clubs and groups, I have been able to assist the community by helping at a veterans’ home, cleaning a sidewalk and maintaining a local teen shelter, by teaching children German, and registering my peers to vote.

Outside of school, I also participate in other forms of community activities. One of which is helping out with a local childhood cancer foundation called the Brian Morden Foundation. I have been involved with them since 2004, and I helped make gift/support bags for current childhood cancer patients, and I have helped raise funds for the foundation at high school football games. I have always enjoyed helping out with the foundation and making other people happy, especially those who had cancer. I also help out with a local music camp called "Make A Joyful Noise," at the Wehnwood United Methodist Church. I am a percussion mentor at the music camp, and I help teach people, mainly children, how to play different percussion instruments and how to read music. I have been participating in this each year since the Summer of 2014. One final form of civic engagement that I participate in is making and serving food to those in need in Altoona with the Wehnwood United Methodist Church. I help make food to help out the less fortunate and give them enough food to last through the weekend. It is always heartwarming to see the gratitude of these individuals, and that I have helped to make a bit of a difference in their lives.

I always thought that it was important to be active in the community and as a cancer survivor that reinforces that idea. Through my school, I have done many activities that have allowed me to be more involved with my community. For example, helping out at a veterans’ home, teaching kids, German, registering people to vote, and sweeping the sidewalks and maintaining the local teen shelter. Outside of school, I have helped out with the Brian Morden Foundation, I have taught kids how to play percussion instruments, and I helped serve meals to the less fortunate. In conclusion, you never know what challenges people may face, but just a few acts of kindness can make an impact on their lives. To me, I have always tried to put helping others before most things, and I do believe that I am engaged in the community and have made an impact. Thank you for your time, and I hope you consider my scholarship application.
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