

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

JANUARY 2015

GREG VITALI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE — 166TH DISTRICT

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Free tax help for seniors

Free electronic filing tax preparation assistance programs for seniors are available throughout the state. Two local locations are in Havertown and in Wayne.

Help will be available at the Oakmont Administration Center, 50 E. Eagle Road, Havertown, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 3 through April 15. Appointments must be made in advance by calling 610-853-5900, ext. 7050.

Help will be available at the Wayne Senior Center, 108 Station Road, Wayne, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 3 to April 14. Starting in March, help also will be available on Fridays. Appointments must be made in advance by calling 610-688-6246.

For other sites in the area, call 1-888-227-7669 or go to www.aarp.org/applications/VMISLocator/searchTaxAideLocations.action.

The returns are prepared by volunteers who are trained by AARP Tax-Aide in conjunction with the IRS.

Those using the program should bring government-issued photo ID, 2014 wage and earning statements, retirement statements, interest and dividend statements, medical, dental and prescription receipts, real estate and property tax receipts, and any other information concerning income and expenses from 2014. It is also recommended to bring a copy of 2013 federal and state tax returns.

LCB now allows home beer delivery

You now may have beer delivered to your home from restaurants, grocery stores, pizza and sub shops and other businesses that serve food. This is a result of a Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board ruling issued in December.

These businesses must have a retail license from the LCB, as well as a transporter license. They are allowed to deliver as much as a 12-pack of 16-ounce cans or bottles of beer, or 192 ounces.

Wine and liquor are not permitted for home delivery.

The transaction must be completed in advance using cash or a credit card. Payment on delivery is prohibited, but customers may tip delivery people.

As of mid-January, no businesses within the 166th Legislative District have secured a permit to deliver beer.

Gettysburg license plate now available

A new license plate that incorporates an image of the Pennsylvania Memorial Monument on the Gettysburg Battlefield is now available through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.



A one-time fee of \$54 is charged, with \$23 going to restore the Pennsylvania memorials at the battlefield. Regular Pennsylvania annual registration fees apply.

For more information or to order the plate, visit PennDOT's Driver & Vehicle Services website, www.dmv.state.pa.us/license_plates/special_fund.shtml. Help ordering the plate is also available in my district office.

Free notary service at district office

You can have most official documents notarized for free in my district office. Please call ahead to make sure the notary is in the office and can accommodate your type of document. Notary work is done most weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person, in the presence of the notary, and provide proof of identity such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card, or passport. Please let my staff know if witnesses are needed, in addition to the notary, for your documents. My office has a limit of five notarizations per person.

My office is on the second floor. If you are unable to climb stairs, please let us know when you call, and we can arrange to have the notary meet you on the ground floor.

Join my email update list

I maintain an email list for those who wish to receive periodic email updates from me about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. If you would like to be added to that list, please email my office at RepVitali@pahouse.net.

Receive newsletters electronically

I am sending newsletters via email in an effort to reduce postage costs and save paper.

If you want to receive only an electronic copy, go to my website, www.gregvitali.com, and click on "Sign up for e-newsletters."

2015 House of Representatives calendar available

You can download the 2015 House of Representatives calendar on my legislative website, www.gregvitali.com. It contains 12 seasonal color photos of the state Capitol Building.

New Pa. law aims to prevent heroin overdose deaths

A new state law allows family and friends of someone at risk of a heroin overdose to obtain a prescription for the antidote Narcan. Having the antidote on hand saves valuable time during an overdose, reversing the often deadly effects of heroin before medical help arrives.

Family members must get a prescription from a doctor. It can be filled at most pharmacies. The Department of Health recommends taking a DOH-approved safety course before administering it.

For more information, please visit the Pennsylvania Drug and Alcohol Programs website at www.ddap.pa.gov and click on the Reverse Overdose icon. For those without Internet access, please call 717-736-7513.

Get health care coverage through open enrollment

The open enrollment period for purchasing health care coverage in 2015 under the federal Affordable Care Act runs through Feb. 15. Open enrollment is for people currently without health coverage, or who obtained coverage in 2014 through the federal exchange.

Having health insurance is a requirement under the Affordable Care Act. The penalty under the ACA for not having health insurance in 2015 is the higher of two options: 2 percent of income, or \$325 per adult and \$162.50 per child, \$975 family maximum.

For those who do not need health insurance now, but will need it after the enrollment period closes because of loss of coverage, or because of a birth or death in the family, there is a special enrollment period of up to 60 days after a qualifying change in family or loss of coverage.

To learn more or to enroll, you may visit www.HealthCare.gov or call 1-800-318-2596.

Heating assistance program accepting applications

Pennsylvania's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program – LIHEAP – is now open and is expected to close April 3. LIHEAP helps low-income families pay their heating bills.

LIHEAP provides two types of grants – a cash grant sent directly to the utility companies to pay a portion of the resident's fuel bill and a crisis grant for households in immediate danger of being without heat due to a furnace failure or an unexpected fuel shortage.

LIHEAP cash grants – based on household income, family size, type of heating fuel and region – will range from \$100 to \$1,000 in 2014-15. LIHEAP crisis grants will range from \$25 to \$500.

To qualify for either a cash grant or a crisis grant, the income limit for a one-person household is \$17,505. This income limit increases by \$6,090 for each additional person in the household.

Residents who received a LIHEAP grant last season should have already received a postcard or a 2014-15 LIHEAP application with a registration number.

Those who did not receive LIHEAP last season may obtain an application by contacting my office, calling LIHEAP directly at 1-866-857-7095, or applying online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

Applications available soon for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program provides a state rebate of up to \$650 on 2014 property taxes or rent to income-eligible residents who are 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older.

To be eligible, your household income must be \$35,000 or less if you are a homeowner, or \$15,000 or less if you are a renter. When applying, you only have to count half your Social Security or federal railroad retirement Tier I retirement benefits toward your total income.

Social Security cost-of-living adjustments that push applicants over the limit no longer disqualify them because of a new law enacted last year.

You can obtain information about the program, an application and help applying through my office. Applications will be available in late February.

For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/1Bb2OgN>. You may also call 1-888-222-9190.

Vitali reappointed chairman of House Environmental Committee

I was reappointed Democratic chairman of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee for the 2015-16 session. I served as chairman of the committee during the 2013-14 legislative session.

In addition to advancing energy and environmental legislation, the committee oversees the state departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources.

This appointment puts me in a position to be a strong voice for good environmental policy.

I am preparing to introduce five energy-related bills in the upcoming months. They would:

- Require electric distribution companies, such as PECO and PPL, to buy more of their power from renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.
- Provide \$25 million per year to the currently unfunded PA Sunshine Solar Program. The program has provided rebates to homeowners and small businesses that install solar systems.
- Require electric and natural gas distribution utilities to implement energy efficiency and conservation plans.
- Impose a moratorium on additional leasing of state lands for natural gas drilling.
- Require rents and royalties from oil and gas leases on commonwealth-owned land to be used exclusively for conservation, recreation, dams or flood control projects.

The House has 24 standing committees, each dealing with a different subject matter.

Rebates available for alternative fuel vehicles

Pennsylvania's Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate Program provides rebates to Pennsylvanians who buy new plug-in hybrid, plug-in electric, natural gas, propane and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

The program provides \$2,000 rebates for large-battery system plug-in hybrid electric and battery-electric vehicles.

In addition, the program provides \$1,000 rebates for natural gas, propane and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. A \$500 rebate is available for electric motorcycles and scooters.

To qualify for a rebate, the vehicle must be registered in Pennsylvania, operated primarily in-state and be purchased no more than six months before the rebate application is submitted.

The deadline for all rebates is June 30, 2015. There is a 500-vehicle limit for the \$2,000 rebate.

Rebate applications are available in my office. Applications are also available on DEP's website, www.dep.state.pa.us. For assistance with the program, you may call 1-866-294-3854.

2015 Delaware County household hazardous waste and electronics drop-off events

Delaware County will have several household hazardous waste and electronics drop-off events this year. All events will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. rain or shine. HHW, computers, TVs and small electronics will be accepted at all events.

- Saturday, April 25 at the **Emergency Services Training Center**, 1600 Calcon Hook Road, Sharon Hill.
- Saturday, June 13 at **Marple Newtown High School**, 120 Media Line Road, Newtown Square.
- Sunday, Sept. 20 at **Penn State University Brandywine Campus**, 25 Yearsley Mill Road, Media. Use the main entrance at the traffic light on Route 352.
- Saturday, Oct. 17 at the **Emergency Services Training Center**, 1600 Calcon Hook Road, Sharon Hill.

Household hazardous waste includes household products that are labeled poisonous, toxic, flammable, caustic, corrosive, reactive or explosive. Items containing Freon will not be accepted.

For more information, call the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority at 610-892-9627 or visit www.co.delaware.pa.us/SWA.

Household hazardous waste drop-off events in **Chester and Montgomery counties** are expected to be announced in February. You can check for **Chester County's** HHW and electronic drop-off events by visiting www.chestercountyswa.org or calling 610-273-3771. You can check for **Montgomery County's** events at www.montcopa.org/recycling or by calling 610-278-3618.