

# **GREG VITALI**

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## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

AUGUST 2017

# **GREG VITALI**

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## ***Unpaid Tolls Will Soon Result in Auto Registration Suspension***

A new law effective Aug. 4 allows PennDOT to suspend the vehicle registration of any Pennsylvania motorist who has outstanding state toll violations or fees totaling \$500 or more, or possesses six or more separate violations.

Unpaid toll violations subject to a registration suspension include those incurred on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, including along the Northeast Extension, or on the tolled bridges that are part of the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission.

Once a driver's registration has been suspended, violators must pay all outstanding tolls and fees to the Turnpike Commission and an additional \$91 fee to PennDOT for registration reinstatement.

With EZ Pass, it has become easier for motorists to avoid paying tolls. Unpaid tolls cost the state millions of dollars per year.

Visit [www.paturndpike.com](http://www.paturndpike.com) for more information or contact my office for help with any unpaid violations.

## ***Pa. Driver's Licenses Still Valid for Federal Facilities Access***

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recently granted Pennsylvania a REAL ID enforcement extension through Oct. 10, 2017. Without this extension, you would not currently be able to use your Pennsylvania driver's license or state ID to enter federal facilities, military bases or nuclear power plants due to our state's noncompliance with the federal REAL ID Act of 2005. Currently, Pennsylvania driver's licenses do not comply with federal REAL ID requirements, but Gov. Tom Wolf approved a measure this spring clearing the way for appropriate changes to Pennsylvania's licenses and ID cards.

PennDOT estimates that REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and identification cards will be available as an option in 2019. This will allow residents to obtain one

before the final DHS effective date of Oct. 1, 2020.

The latest extension, however, does not change the Jan. 22, 2018 date when the federal Transportation Security Administration will require REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and ID cards to board domestic commercial flights. PennDOT will continue to seek additional extensions to ensure a smooth transition.

No one will be forced to obtain the REAL ID-compliant version; however, a non-compliant ID would not be sufficient for entering federal facilities or for air travel when Pennsylvania's extensions run out.

A U.S. passport qualifies as valid ID under REAL ID rules regardless of Pennsylvania enforcement extensions.

## ***Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebates Program Extended to Aug. 31***

The Alternative Fuel Vehicle Program, which provides rebates to purchasers of new plug-in hybrid, plug-in electric, natural gas, propane and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, has been extended from June 30 until Aug. 31, 2017.

Purchasers may submit applications for up to 6 months after the date of purchase. An alternative fuel vehicle must be new with an odometer reading of less than 500 miles at the time of purchase to be eligible for a rebate.

Rebates range from \$500 to \$1,750 depending on the

type of vehicle. Purchasers should be aware that funds may be depleted before their rebate application can be processed.

Flexible fuel, diesel and standard hybrid vehicles, as well as leased vehicles, are not eligible for a rebate.

More information is available by calling 866-294-3854 or online at [https://is.gd/AFV\\_Rebates](https://is.gd/AFV_Rebates).

## ***Registration Stickers for Vehicles Discontinued***

PennDOT has updated the annual vehicle registration process, which means motorists can update registrations online and print an owner's card.

As part of that change, the annual small registration sticker that drivers would place on their license plate has been discontinued.

This will save the state up to \$3 million per year in mailing costs.

Please note that you are still required to keep your registration updated and valid; you will just no longer have the small sticker to remind you.

If you don't want to process the registration online, my office staff can assist you.

You can learn more at [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov).

## ***College Avenue Bridge Replacement Update***

Work is ongoing to replace the structurally deficient College Avenue bridge over the SEPTA railroad tracks at Haverford Road in Haverford Township.

The project has been delayed in recent weeks. The delay was caused by the failure of PECO, Comcast and Verizon to submit paperwork in a timely fashion to work on SEPTA property. Despite these delays, this project is still scheduled to be completed in November 2017, according to PennDOT.

The \$5.2 million state-funded project includes improvements underway for the traffic signals at the intersection of College Avenue and Haverford Road, and the addition of left turn lanes on College Avenue at this intersection.

Once construction is complete on the College Avenue bridge, replacement of the Ardmore Avenue bridge is expected to follow.

## ***Villanova University Pedestrian Bridge Update***

Intermittent lane closures and restrictions can be expected throughout the rest of the year along Lancaster Avenue between Route 320 and Ithan Avenue for work on a new pedestrian bridge to connect Villanova's campus with its new development projects.

Once completed, Villanova University will own and maintain the new bridge. The entire project, which is expected to cost \$3.7 million, is scheduled for completion in early 2018.

## ***Deadline for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Extended***

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The deadline to apply to the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2016 was extended from June 30 until Dec. 31, 2017.

The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people with disabilities 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters. Half of Social Security income and all Social Security cost-of-living increases are excluded, and the maximum standard rebate is \$650.

Claimants must reapply for rebates every year because

they are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid each year. Spouses, personal representatives or estates may file rebate claims on behalf of deceased claimants who lived at least one day in 2016 and meet all other eligibility criteria.

The state began distributing rebates July 1 to those who have already applied to the program.

The application is available on the Department of Revenue's website at [www.revenue.pa.gov](http://www.revenue.pa.gov) or at my office.

My office can also help complete and submit the application.

## ***Upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Collections***

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There will be several household hazardous waste collections in southeastern Pennsylvania through the end of the year. All events will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine.

### **Sunday, Sept. 17**

Penn State University – Brandywine Campus  
25 Yearsley Mill Road  
Media, PA 19063

### **Saturday, Sept. 23**

Spring-Ford 9th Grade Center  
400 South Lewis Road  
Royersford, PA 19468

### **Saturday, Oct. 7**

Emergency Services  
Training Center  
1700 Calcon Hook Road  
Sharon Hill, PA 19079

### **Sunday, Oct. 22**

Lower Merion  
Transfer Station  
1300 North Woodbine Avenue  
Penn Valley, PA 19072

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

For more information about collections in Delaware County, call the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority at 610-892-9627 or visit [www.co.delaware.pa.us/SWA](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/SWA).

For more information about collections in Montgomery County, call the Montgomery County recycling hotline at 610-278-3618 or visit [www.montcopa.org/recycling](http://www.montcopa.org/recycling).

## ***Online Search Could Reveal Unclaimed Property***

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The state Treasurer's Office is holding \$2.3 billion in unclaimed property, and it is estimated that about one in 10 Pennsylvanians has unclaimed property.

Unclaimed property may include closed bank accounts, uncashed checks, including paychecks, lost stocks and bonds, contents of safe deposit boxes and expired gift cards/gift certificates.

To find out whether you have unclaimed property, you can search your name, as well as your friends and family in the Unclaimed Property database at [www.patreasury.gov/Unclaimed/search.html](http://www.patreasury.gov/Unclaimed/search.html) or call 800-222-2046. There is no charge to claim your unclaimed property.

You can also contact or stop by my office. My staff will be happy to help you search the Pennsylvania Treasurer's Office website for unclaimed property for free.

## ***Free Notary Service at District Office***

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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.

## ***New Law Increases Protections for Animals***

New legislation, commonly known as Libre's Law, sets forth new rules and penalties related to animal cruelty in Pennsylvania.

Under the new law:

- Owners can no longer leave their dogs outside on a lead for more than nine hours in a 24-hour period.
- Veterinarians and humane society police will have limited civil immunity for reporting suspected animal cruelty.
- Abuse of horses will be treated the same as that of domestic pets.

- An animal must be forfeited upon conviction for a felony-level cruelty case, which includes any intentional act of abuse that causes serious bodily injury or death.
- A misdemeanor conviction under the law, which includes any intentional act of abuse that causes injury, could result in forfeiture of a pet.
- A summary-level animal cruelty conviction, which now covers neglect, could also result in forfeiture of a pet.

## ***PA ABLE Program Helps Families with Disabilities***

Tax-free savings accounts to help support and increase independence for people living with a disability are now available through the state Treasurer's Office.

The Pennsylvania Achieving a Better Life Experience Savings Program (ABLE) can provide people with disabilities a way to be more financially independent and save up to \$14,000 each year.

The program may be used to pay for a wide range of disability expenses, including basic living, housing, education, health, transportation, legal expenses and more.

ABLE accounts grow tax free and, when used for qualified disability expenses, are tax exempt.

They also can help protect eligibility for means-tested federal benefits and state disability, medical assistance, health and student aid benefits, and allow others to give funds to the eligible individual without the gift affecting benefits.

Please visit [www.PAABLE.gov](http://www.PAABLE.gov) or call 855-529-2253 for more information.

## ***DCED Offers Low-Interest Business Loans***

The Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority is offering fixed-rate loans at a 2 percent interest rate to qualifying businesses.

Developers and entrepreneurs can use these loans for, among other things, land and building acquisitions, construction and renovation, machinery and equipment.

Lending limits vary from \$100,000 to \$2,250,000 based on the type of business being financed.

Interested businesses should contact the following offices for information on applying:

- In Delaware County, the Delaware County Economic Development Oversight Board, at 100 West 6th Street, Suite 100 in Media, 19063 can be reached at 610-566-2225.
- In Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Development Corporation Human Services Center at 104 West Main Street in Norristown, 19401 can be reached at 610-272-5000.

To learn more about the program, which is administered by the Department of Community & Economic Development, please visit [www.dced.pa.gov/PIDA](http://www.dced.pa.gov/PIDA) or contact my office.

## ***SEPTA Issues Reloadable Fare Card***

SEPTA is undergoing major changes to their ride-card technology and phasing out the token system.

New SEPTA KEY fare cards, available for all riders, can be tapped on a screen at a SEPTA station, bus or train. The new card features "Travel Wallet," which allows riders to put money on the card to pay for transit rides. The appropriate reduced fare and cost of a transfer will automatically be deducted from the new card each time the red validator pad is tapped.

SEPTA Key was released in June, and more than 200,000 cards have been issued.

Seniors and riders with disabilities can use the SEPTA Key Reduced Fare Card, which also is reloadable but includes a photo of the rider.

For more information visit the SEPTA website [www.septa.org](http://www.septa.org) or call 215-580-7800.