



Senator Joe Scarnati



REPORTS TO YOU

25TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT • SUMMER 2015

Impact Fee Revenue Being Distributed

The 25th Senatorial District will be receiving a total of \$15,818,414.87 from 2014 Marcellus Shale Impact Fee (Act 13 of 2012) revenues. These funds are a portion of the more than \$223 million in impact fees that were collected statewide for calendar year 2014.

The shale industry has brought tens of thousands of family-sustaining jobs and economic growth to Pennsylvania. At the same time, it is generating significant funding to protect our environment, promote public safety and enhance our infrastructure. I'm pleased that this impact fee money will once again directly benefit local resi-

dents at a time when budgets are tight and state funding is limited.

Impact Fee Revenues Being Distributed to Counties and Municipalities in the 25th Senatorial District Include:

- Cameron County & All Municipalities – **\$603,641.12**
- Clearfield County & the City of DuBois, Brady Township, Huston Township, Sandy Township and Troutville Borough – **\$823,189.30**
- Clinton County & All Municipalities – **\$1,179,510.10**
- Elk County & All Municipalities – **\$1,010,652.19**
- Jefferson County & All Municipalities – **\$702,113.49**

- McKean County & All Municipalities – **\$941,309.51**
- Potter County & All Municipalities – **\$667,934.12**
- Tioga County & All Municipalities – **\$9,890,065.04**

This is the fourth round of impact revenue disbursements to local governments. To date, the impact fee has generated a total of more than \$850 million in new revenue.

The passage of Act 13 was a major achievement for our Commonwealth. Through the impact fee it is clear that we have found a way to balance the industry paying their fair share, while fostering strong economic growth across our state.

Basic Education Funding Commission Completes Report

The Basic Education Funding Commission has recently released their report recommending that the General Assembly adopt a new formula for distributing state funding for basic education to Pennsylvania's 500 school districts.

The 15-member group was created through legislation we passed last year, Act 51 of 2014. Over the past 11 months, the Commission has held 15 hearings and heard from a wide range of experts and advocates in the education field, as well as parents, from urban, suburban and rural school districts throughout the state.

The goal of the Commission was to create a funding formula that

would be a significant improvement over the current system for how Pennsylvania distributes state dollars toward education.

The new formula takes into account several student-based factors, including: Student count,

which is the average of the most recent three years of Average Daily Membership (ADM), poverty, English language learners and charter school enrollment. The formula assigned weights to each category to help determine the degree to

which each factor drives up the cost of educating a student.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the General Assembly to ensure that these recommendations receive swift consideration. It is very important that we work toward providing a predictable indication of the amount of state funding a school district will receive each year based on a ratio from the total state spending on education.



Budget Debate Takes Center Stage

Each year, crafting and passing a responsible state budget is among the most important responsibilities for lawmakers. Throughout discussions and negotiations for the 2015-16 budget, I remain committed to protecting Pennsylvania taxpayers, limiting state spending and providing increased access to good, fam-

ily sustaining jobs.

In the past, we have seen the positive results of budgets that respect taxpayers – including declining unemployment rates, low energy prices and lower taxes for middle class families.

By contrast, Governor Wolf is proposing a massive tax and spend budget that includes tax increases

totaling \$4.7 billion for the upcoming fiscal year – the largest increase in state history. He wants to increase the per-

sonal income tax by 21 percent, increase the state sales tax by 40 percent and increase state spending by 16 percent. His proposal would raise taxes by \$12 billion over the next two fiscal years – an additional \$1,000 for every man, woman and child in Pennsylvania.

The Governor also wants a new Marcellus Shale severance tax that would cap the funds our local municipalities receive for essential infrastructure upgrades, which would likely result in a loss of jobs, and hurt our local economy.

I am concerned that these proposed massive tax increases would be devastating to working families and small businesses, eliminate jobs and place a damper on the prospects for the creation of new ones in the future. Instead of asking more of taxpayers, we need to enact a plan that sets Pennsylvania on a path to responsible, sustainable budgets now and in the future.



Senator Scarnati speaks with reporters about the state budget proposal.

Taxpayer Protection Proposal Advances

Everyday hard working families across Pennsylvania are faced with tough spending decisions to make sure they are living within their means. At the state level, we need to make the same commitment to controlling spending that could hurt our state's economic future and our ability to compete.

That's why I supported legislation, known as the Taxpayer Protection Act, which will limit the growth of state government

spending in Pennsylvania. Senate Bill 70, which was recently approved by the Senate Finance Committee, would reasonably limit the growth of state spending through the lower of the following thresholds:

- Limit state government spending to the average change in personal income for the three preceding calendar years, OR
- Limit state government spending to the average inflation rate plus the average percentage change in

state population over the three preceding years (with exceptions for certain extraordinary circumstances).

Over the past several years the Republican controlled legislature has made it a priority to pass on time, reasonable and responsible budgets. Enactment of this landmark legislation would ensure that we continue to spend within our means without unduly burdening hardworking Pennsylvanians.

Real Alternatives 20th Anniversary Keynote Speaker

On March 23rd I offered the keynote speech at the Real Alternatives celebration of the 20th Anniversary of their Pennsylvania Pregnancy and Parenting Support Services Program. In just 20 years, the Program has grown to 28 service providers operating at 95 sites in 36 counties across PA, with over 600 registered counselors. As a pro-life advocate, I was honored to be a part of this great event.



PA Lumber Museum Featured in the Scarnati Report

This Spring I was very pleased to be a part of the re-opening of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum in Potter County. The Pennsylvania Lumber Museum is a recreated turn-of-the-20th-century lumber mill and camp with a visitors' center and themed exhibitions, operated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum Associates (PALMA).

The new facility is an outstanding space that includes expanded galleries, new interpretive exhibitions, community meeting areas and commercial style kitchen space. The latest edition of

my television show The Scarnati Report showcases this outstanding facility. To watch the show please

visit my website www.senatorscarnati.com and click on the Newsroom tab.



Senator Scarnati takes part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum in Potter County.



Capitol Hunger Garden Opens for 6th Season

This year I have taken over the role of co-chair of the Pennsylvania Legislative Hunger Caucus. Pennsylvania is a world leader in food production and processing, however, far too many state residents struggle daily with hunger and food insecurity. It has never been more important that we do all we can to help fight hunger.

One of the more visible projects of the Hunger Caucus is the Capitol Hunger Garden. Located on the State Capitol grounds between the Main Capitol Building and the Ryan Office Building, the Capitol Hunger Garden first broke ground in 2010 with the goal of creating a garden that would provide healthy food to help those in need and to serve as a

valuable tool to raise awareness of hunger issues in Pennsylvania.

This year we opened the garden for its 6th growing season. Since its inception, with the help of hundreds of volunteers, the garden has produced nearly 3,700 pounds of vegetables that have been donated to food banks, pantries and local soup kitchens, such as the Down-

town Daily Bread located in Harrisburg.

In addition to providing thousands of pounds of food for area food banks, the garden serves as a visible symbol of our bipartisan determination to help those in need and end hunger. For more information on the Capitol Hunger Garden, please visit my website.

Senator Scarnati and Representative Jake Wheatley, co-chairs of the Pennsylvania Legislative Hunger Caucus, take part in the opening of the Hunger Garden.



Property Tax/Rent Rebate Deadline Extended



The deadline to apply for Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been extended to December 31, 2015 to allow eligible individu-

als more time to take advantage of the program. This is a great program that can help make housing more affordable for those on a limited income.

The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians 65 years or older, widows and widowers 50 years or older, and those with disabilities 18 years or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, excluding half of Social Security income. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975.

The program was started in 1971 and is funded by the Pennsylvania Lottery and revenue from slots gaming.

Applicants may obtain Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms (PA-1000) and related information online at www.revenue.pa.gov or by calling, toll-free, 1-888-222-9190.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim forms and more information are also available at Senator Scarnati's District Offices. In addition, forms and assistance are available at Department of Revenue District Offices (listed in the government section of phone directories), local Area Agencies on Aging, and Senior Centers. It is important for individuals to know that they do not have to pay for this service.

Those who already applied for Property Tax/Rent Rebates may check the status of claims online at www.revenue.pa.gov or by calling, toll-free, 1-888-PATAxes.

Stay Connected with Me

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to serve you. Please call or stop by my district offices listed below to stay connected with me regarding state government issues. My staff is also happy to provide assistance with questions regarding legislation, government programs, agencies and services.

In addition, my Website: www.senatorsarnati.com, Facebook page: www.facebook.com/senatorsarnati and Twitter page: www.twitter.com/senatorsarnati can serve as great resources for information.



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