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moving FORWARD

WINTER 2007

A quarterly review of news and information about Pennsylvania local roads.

Airports: A Transportation Asset For All Municipalities



Airports—"A Non-Renewable Resource"

The true value of airports in the commonwealth transportation system is quite clear to those who rely on aviation every day for business, travel, employment, emergency transport, and recreation. In fact, the economic value of aviation alone is so compelling that it is perplexing to think that a growing number of airports are being slowly sacrificed for other development. It is often due to the fact that the benefits of an airport within a community are not fully understood that incompatible land use issues continue to emerge. Recently Governor Rendell stated, "A strong aviation network is critical to attract new businesses and jobs into

the area." It is estimated that aviation accounts for \$13 billion annually in the Pennsylvania economy and provides close to 300,000 jobs. This economic benefit reaches far beyond the airport boundary into local communities.

Awareness, Education, and Implementation

Pennsylvania's Bureau of Aviation (BOA) and the Aviation Advisory Committee (AAC) are working together to tackle both the lack of hazard zoning and incompatible land uses around PA airports. Their goal is to increase the adoption of zoning ordinances within the commonwealth to protect airport airspace from obstructions and encourage land development that is compatible

with the sight and sounds of airport operations. A statewide study was undertaken and resulted in a number of recommendations that ranged from increasing awareness to establishing penalties for failure to appropriately zone and protect public use airports.

Since increasing awareness is a logical first step toward improving zoning and compatible land use, efforts are already under way. The BOA is partnering with PennDOT's Bureau of Municipal Services to speak on this topic at a number of local government forums. At these meetings, PennDOT will be reaching out to the primary audience that can affect changes—local officials, representatives, and local government associations. Through these discussions, the goal will be to highlight why airports are valuable, non-renewable assets, explain the tools being developed to enhance this understanding to municipalities, and define the strategy PennDOT is pursuing to protect these assets.

The bureau plans to follow up awareness efforts with workshops geared at educating municipalities on zoning for airports and assistance in the development of draft ordinances. Once awareness and education efforts have reached the targeted audience, the Bureau of Municipal Services will begin to work individually with affected municipalities to achieve the ultimate goal—*enactment of an airport hazard zoning ordinance and compatible land use plan that protects Pennsylvania's non-renewable aviation resources.* ♦

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LTAP Advisory Committee: Conversations with the Outgoing and Incoming Chairmen

In January, John Dorin, mayor of Montoursville, Lycoming County, takes the reins as chairman of the LTAP Advisory Committee. He replaces Michael H. Fleming, public works superintendent of Fairview Township, York County, who served as chairman for the past two years.

Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) spoke to both men recently about their roles with the PennDOT LTAP Advisory Committee and what they believe the future holds for LTAP.

Michael H. Fleming, Outgoing Chairman

Michael H. Fleming has been the public works superintendent for Fairview Township, York County, since June 2000. Before that, he was the public works director in Dover Township, York County. He also serves on the York Area Municipal Planning Organization (MPO) and has been a past president of the Central Pennsylvania chapter of the American Public Works Association and the secretary-treasurer for the York branch of the APWA.



Tell us about your involvement in LTAP.

I began participating with the LTAP classes in the early '90s, and I have completed both the Roads Scholar I and II programs. I was first on the Advisory Committee between 1994 and 1999 and returned to the committee again in 2000. Originally, Gene Smeltzer, our PennDOT municipal services representative, suggested me to William J. Pogash, PA LTAP director, to serve on the committee. At the time, I was at Dover Township, and we required all employees to go through the Roads Scholar program. We hosted the classes and invited the surrounding municipalities to attend.

Why is LTAP important and how does it help local governments?

LTAP is an excellent training program at no cost. If you request a class from PennDOT, LTAP technical experts will come right to your municipality. For the price of donuts and lunch, which are optional, local governments can get training on roadway safety and maintenance—basically free. The technical assistance offered by LTAP has helped us tremendously due to limited funding and training with ways to make our roads safer, both for the employees who work on the roads and the motorists who use the roads.

What did you accomplish during your term as chairman of the Advisory Committee?

Since PSATS and Pennoni have become involved with LTAP, several classes have been reengineered: Work Zone Traffic Control, Traffic Signs, and Bridge Maintenance, to name a few. I've been involved in this reengineering, and I feel that this has been my greatest personal accomplishment as chairman. I've been able to sit in on the pilot classes and offer some thoughts and guidance when it comes to train-

ing municipal workers. When reengineering a course, we look at more current issues with the new classes. Some of the classes were old—prepared back in the '80s—and technology has changed, material has changed. It was time to bring the Roads Scholar classes up to speed with those changes.

Another thing I was involved in is appointing new people to the Advisory Committee. I personally felt that those people should be LTAP Roads Scholars who went through the Roads Scholar I or II program. Under my chairmanship, we've been taking strides to appoint new people on the board who have participated in the LTAP training programs, and I hope that will continue with future chairmen as well.

I've enjoyed being chair of the Advisory Committee, and I want to thank PennDOT for the opportunity to represent Pennsylvania's LTAP program. During my term, I was fortunate to be able to attend regional LTAP meetings outside of Pennsylvania, where I was able to borrow new ideas and training materials from other states.

Do you have any advice for John Dorin, the incoming chairman?

John will need to stay involved in the reengineering of new classes and the updates of classes. The people who work in PennDOT's central office are not always able to see the needs or training capabilities of the municipal workers. Because the workers patching our potholes and maintaining our roads sometimes do not have the same educational level as the people in PennDOT's central office, it helps if someone from the municipal level comes in and reminds the engineers that the highway workers are not going to understand the information if they talk over their heads.

When you look at the future of LTAP, what do you see?

In the past, the instructors used to have a collection of handouts and old videotapes for classes. We've now come to the point where the instructor walks into a class with all the training materials on a laptop computer. Technology has changed with regards to how the LTAP engineers come out and provide a road show to a municipality. We've talked about being able to have a highway worker go online and take the Roads Scholar program. Ten years from now or maybe even less, we may be able to do that.

If you could change anything about LTAP, what would it be?

We need to get elected officials more involved in the LTAP program so that they understand the responsibilities of roadmasters and/or street superintendents. Our water and sewer plant operators have to have a license to operate a facility. People who apply pesticides to kill weeds along township roads or in parks have to have a license. But to be a roadmaster in a second class township, all you have to be is an elected official, and that person may know nothing about posting stop signs or speed limit signs, setting up work zone traffic control, understanding Superpave, or preparing budgets. At some point in the future, there should be mandatory training for roadmasters and street superinten-

dents. This mandatory training may even necessitate legislation being passed to mandate training for roadmasters. With the liability on municipalities, training needs to be taken more seriously.

Do you have any parting words you'd like to share with municipalities?

If a municipality is not using LTAP, it's making a big mistake because the entire LTAP program—its road shows, tech assists, tech sheets, and library—is an excellent training tool offered at little or no cost to local governments. All you need to do is to host a class at your building for your employees and your neighboring municipalities. It's a great way to have training at your facility and at the same time discover ideas on ways to make your roads safer. I feel the LTAP program is very important. As an example, when I started working in local government, I didn't know anything about spacing speed limit signs, the proper size of signs, the right way to install signs and posts, or where to find the proper PennDOT-approved materials. LTAP helped me out quite a bit with all those needs. Don't be afraid to call and ask for help: 1-800-FOR-LTAP.

John Dorin, Incoming Chairman

John Dorin has been mayor of Montoursville, Lycoming County, for 24 years. Before that, he served four years on borough council. He is president of the Lycoming-Sullivan Counties Boroughs Association and a member of the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, including past terms as director and president. He is active in the Association of Mayors of the Boroughs of Pennsylvania, where he is a past president, is on the executive committee, and currently serves as legislative chair and lobbyist. He also is a past chairman of the Board of Trustees for Bloomsburg University and serves as vice chair of the Bloomsburg University Foundation Board and chairman of the university's Finance Committee.



Tell us about your involvement in LTAP.

My association with LTAP extends over two decades. As president of the Lycoming-Sullivan Counties Boroughs Association for the last 10 to 12 years and a member of the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, I received information that was constantly disseminated about the LTAP program both on a state level and at the municipal level. Even before being on the Advisory Committee, I knew about LTAP and was promoting LTAP.

I am deeply indebted to the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs for my appointment to the LTAP Advisory Committee, which dates back to 2000. I accepted the position in hopes of making a difference. I concluded that as a member of the Advisory Committee I would provide a voice from another area and another perspective.

Why is LTAP important and how does it help local governments?

I look around the state at how municipal budgets are being strained from a constant reduction of revenues and an increased cost of health benefits and services. The PennDOT LTAP program on highway and bridge technology becomes an important factor for supporting the growing demands of local government. LTAP is there to support

municipalities and doesn't ask for any remuneration in return. LTAP helps local governments stretch their budgets by providing additional help through its tech support and training programs designed to help maintenance personnel and local officials effectively do their job.

What are your goals as chairman?

Over the years, PennDOT LTAP has been recognized as the leading LTAP center in the United States and has continued to provide state-of-the-art services to its customers. This can only be attributed to past leadership in our LTAP program and the excellent support of PennDOT. As chairman, I plan to carry on that tradition of providing excellent training programs and innovative technology transfer initiatives. We already have a good foundation to work on; we are one of the leaders in the United States.

The PennDOT LTAP program is the best-kept secret in Pennsylvania. Over the past several years, the Advisory Committee recognized that communication with our municipalities was lacking. A number of initiatives to remedy this were investigated. As chairman, I will work with the Advisory Committee and PennDOT to set directions for creating greater awareness of the LTAP program. Pennsylvania is very large and diverse, and we have quite a number of municipalities. As chairman, I will try to find a way to reach out to all those municipalities, if that's possible, and I think it is. We are striving to do that now through contact with county associations of municipalities and municipal planning organizations, and I will continue that process. LTAP has a great entourage of technical people and vast resources of support; we just need to do some effective marketing to promote that.

If you could change anything about LTAP, what would it be?

Our municipalities are our customers. Without them, LTAP wouldn't be in existence. As chairman, I will recommend exploring the possibility of recognizing municipalities for their achievements by giving an annual leadership award to a township and a borough that we felt were the best contributors for the year. Doing things like that makes municipalities feel involved and a partner with LTAP. It's a very simple gesture, but just by building on those little things we'll find that we are expanding our information throughout the municipalities.

When you look at the future of LTAP, what do you see?

If past history is any indicator, I can only visualize a bright future for PennDOT LTAP. My analysis is based on a number of factors:

- 1) excellent support from PennDOT, 2) a strong Advisory Committee, 3) strong leadership overall, and 4) great support resources. If those four things gel and we continually expand on our resources, I can see nothing but a bright future. ♦

What Is the LTAP Advisory Committee?

The PennDOT LTAP Advisory Committee is comprised of a group of 15 elected and appointed municipal government officials who serve as program advocates and assist PennDOT by attending training courses, reviewing course materials and content, and functioning in an advisory role on a variety of LTAP issues.



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For more information, contact the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors at (717) 763-0930 or www.psats.org.



Chadds Ford Township, Delaware County

This year we've been upgrading our traffic signals with LEDs to save \$\$\$. We could not justify changing our amber lamps for now, however.

PECO charges a flat fee per month for calculated usage: duration of each lamp, number of lamps, LEDs, loops, etc. The calculations are based on PennDOT's original signal specifications, which included 150-watt lamps (for 12" lenses).

Lobec, Signal Service, and most of the other local signal maintenance firms have been using 135-watt (12") and 69-watt (8") lamps for several years. I have asked PECO to recalculate our fee based on the reduced wattage. This should save an additional 10 percent on any remaining incandescent lamps.

If you are still using some incandescent lamps in your traffic signals, I would suggest you review this information with your PECO (or utility) account rep.

Joe Barakat, Roadmaster
Chadds Ford Township