

T

G

I

F

from
Adams County

written by: **Commissioner Randy Phiel**

March 29, 2019

In this issue...

Page 2

Municipal Tax Collector
Bank Fees Relaxed
Insurance Risk
Management
Retiree Health Insurance
Modification



Page 3

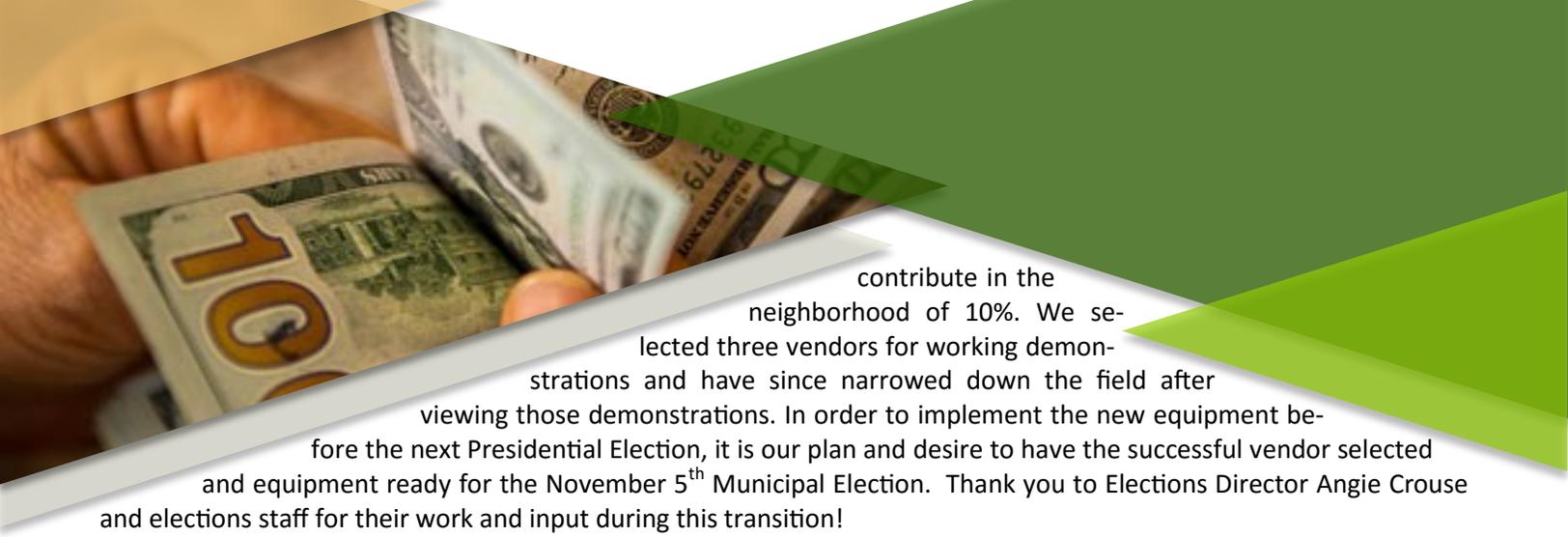
Recycling News
The End



Improved Cell Phone Service

By now you may have heard that as a result of the Wolf administration court settlement with the Stine campaign, all Pennsylvania counties must obtain new voting equipment that leaves a paper trail. Despite strong protests, even counties like Adams, that have workable machines that already have a paper trail, must be updated under threat of state decertification. Adams County voters not having a voice because of state decertification is unacceptable. The estimated cost for Adams County is \$500,000. After a massive outcry from counties regarding largely unfunded cost, the state has recently raised their original funding contribution from 10% to an estimated 50% over 5 years. At our recent CCAP Spring Conference state officials were urged to front-load the stipend over 2 years. We were told that request would be taken back to the Governor. The Federal government is also expected to





contribute in the neighborhood of 10%. We selected three vendors for working demonstrations and have since narrowed down the field after viewing those demonstrations. In order to implement the new equipment before the next Presidential Election, it is our plan and desire to have the successful vendor selected and equipment ready for the November 5th Municipal Election. Thank you to Elections Director Angie Crouse and elections staff for their work and input during this transition!

Municipal Tax Collector Bank Fees Relaxed

County Treasurer and ex-tax collector Crissy Redding initiated a discussion between a few county tax collectors and a local bank to learn more about fees being charged to the municipal tax collectors. Municipal tax collectors have a necessary, but often thankless job. Since they are performing a function on behalf of the County, the Treasurer asked the bank to consider waving certain fees charged to the tax collectors. She was successful in her efforts. Congratulations! The Treasurer's efforts speak to the importance of local partnerships and collaboration.

Insurance Risk Management Affects Cost

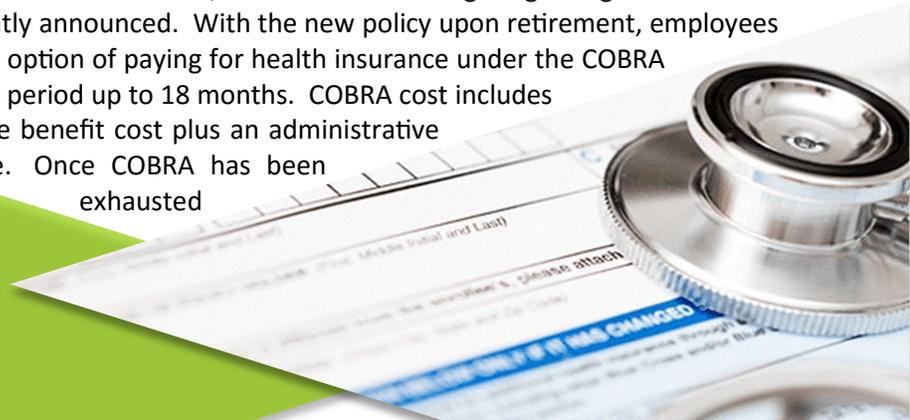
Controlling costs is always of concern to the County Commissioners, especially when there is a means of controlling the cost. The premium of our Workers Compensation insurance has been edging upward with this year being the largest increase in many years. To examine why this has taken place after we have had a number of years with near level premiums; we invited CCAP risk management specialist Andrew Smith to meet with us. Andrew met with Commissioner Jim Martin, HR Deputy Director Danette Laughman and Chief Clerk Paula Neiman for the review.

Premiums are based on what is called a three year look-back; that would be 2016, 2017, and 2018. Just like it happens with our personal insurance, during this particular look-back, county employee vehicular accidents were the largest contributor to a rate increase. With everyone's help we can all work toward lower premiums. The continuance of driver safety renewal classes was strongly recommended to help us "drive" premiums lower. County staffer Tom Leedy is a certified driver safety instructor and will continue to offer his expertise with staff training.

If our claims during 2019 and 2020 are significantly lower than the 2017 peak, we will see an improvement in the cost of our insurance program. So far for 2019 we have experienced claims at a lower level than previous years. If we can stay on this path through 2020 we will likely be celebrating a noticeable premium reduction. We realize not all accidents can be prevented. The Board challenges all staff to help us control costs and practice safe driving skills. It pays to be safe!

Retiree Health Insurance Modification

Under advisement from the County's financial advisor, a decision and change regarding a retiree health insurance option was recently announced. With the new policy upon retirement, employees will now have the option of paying for health insurance under the COBRA law for a period up to 18 months. COBRA cost includes the entire benefit cost plus an administrative fee. Once COBRA has been exhausted



there are options in the marketplace for health insurance benefits until the retiree is 65 and becomes Medicare eligible. Any employee considering retirement is urged to investigate these options prior to retirement. Current retired employees utilizing county health insurance will remain grandfathered under the previous policy. The Human Resources department and the Department of Aging is a valuable resource for these services.

Recycling News

Adams County is in the process of completing its annual Act 101 state recycling report for 2018. Cindy Sanderson from the County's Planning Office coordinates this intensive effort each year, in collaboration with municipal officials. Adams County is on track this year to exceed its 2017 totals by an amazing increase of almost 10,000 tons! Recycling data is reported by residential and commercial sources and encompasses curbside and drop-off recyclables, scrap metals, yard wastes, covered devices (TVs and computers), etc.

It's worth noting that Adams County has made great strides in the recycling of covered devices, since limited opportunities exist for covered device recycling in the wake of state funding issues. Proudly, Adams County recycled 114 tons of covered devices in 2018 through municipal collection contracts and events. Way to go Adams County – Keep Recycling!



The **End**

Last evening we attended the Callie Awards Dinner recognizing 5 Adams County Women for significant achievement. Congratulations to all the women of Adams County who were recognized with Callie Awards for their contributions to our community. A special shout to family friend Emma Sanders for receiving the Callie Young Women Award. I know she had some very proud parents, grandparents and friends in attendance.

Some other great community events we recently attended were Destination Gettysburg's Annual Dinner Meeting, Children's Advocacy Center/Survivor's Gala Benefit, Chamber Legislative Luncheon, Adams County Fruit Growers Annual Dinner, Fairfield Fire Co. Awards Dinner and United Fire Annual Awards Dinner. This morning we attended the Adams County Housing Summit at HACC. Next Wednesday is the College Community Breakfast and on Thursday the Adams County Farm Bureau Annual Dinner Meeting at Great Conewago Presbyterian Church in Hunterstown. It's that time of year when we are invited to a multitude of events and we strive to attend as many events as we can! Commissioner Martin maxed out attending 3 events last evening.

I was down in Montgomery County on Monday and saw bunches of daffodils' along the road in full bloom. I also noticed my yard is beginning to get a green tint. I am thinking about cleaning off and arranging the porch furniture tomorrow now that snow is probably a memory and it going to be near 70 degrees tomorrow. I just need to keep those pesky robins from trying to nest on the porch during March and April; thus leaving their mark on my porch furniture. If you come by my house and see silver reflective tape fluttering in the breeze along the edges of my porch roof - we are not having a party - it is because they are good bird deterrents. My guess is in the next 2-3 weeks we will be cutting some grass. Nothing like the smell of fresh cut grass to signal spring is really here.

I appreciate all the interest, opinions, advice and good wishes when I mentioned my current search for a new Golden Retriever puppy. There certainly are a lot of pet lovers out there. I am now in the process of slowly and methodically taking my time to find the right pup with well vetted parentage. This weekend I am going to see a local family and their dogs that has bred and shown Golden Retriever's for 40 years. I will keep you posted on my progress.

No matter what you do get out there and experience all the historical, recreational, agricultural, natural and cultural opportunities that beautiful Adams County has to offer!