

## Adams County Commissioners Update – June 19, 2020

- Beginning July 2<sup>nd</sup>, TGIF will return. It is published normally every other Friday for the past 9 years. TGIF is a blend of updates, policy, shout outs, community information and things to do in Adams County. It has proved to be very popular with county staff and residents. With the on-set of the COVID pandemic, a more serious fact-based update was warranted, and *Adams County Commissioner Updates* filled that need. Adams County Commissioner Updates have been put out every Friday for the past three months in place of TGIF. The need for COVID information is certainly not going away; but the time seems right to blend in other county and community information again. I have missed ending every issue with: *“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”*
- Yesterday morning I received a call from a Littlestown resident asking if I was aware if there was going to be coordination between Adams County school districts in “returning to school guidelines.” She had seen an article regarding the subject in Bucks County with the Bucks County Commissioners names mentioned. My answer was that I assumed there would be coordination, and I knew that school district superintendents in our community do a very good job of communication and collaboration. I also said I presumed they would attempt uniformity as much as possible, knowing that there will be some variation given differences in each district. Although each school district in Pennsylvania is their own governmental entity, I told her I would make some inquiries as to her question.

After emailing all six Adams County Superintendents yesterday morning with question of returning to school uniformity guidelines, I quickly learned that our school districts are extremely frustrated with what they perceive to be lack of guidance from both the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PDOH) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). With only 60 days until the school year begins, they have a lot of preparation and planning to do, and not having clear general guidelines makes that task more challenging. They were all aware and complimentary of the Bucks County Health Department Guidelines. Note that Bucks County is one of a few large counties in Pennsylvania that have their own county health department and do not have total dependence on PDOH.

The Adams County Board of Commissioners are ensuring that our state legislators are aware of this dilemma and have reached out yesterday to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania to include this matter in their recent on-going COVID discussions with the Wolf Administration. One superintendent told me that parents overwhelmingly want their children to return to school. Although every school district has varying demographics, a foundation of solid general returning principles for school districts from the state would hopefully make that return safer and more seamless!

- With the Primary Election in our rear-view mirror, and a potentially large turn-out for the General Election expected in November, there are two large mail-in ballot take-aways that need to be addressed. I have previously mentioned several times that most counties had a huge problem with the time it takes to open the mail-in envelopes and prepare them for the scanner on election day. The scanners capability far exceeds the time it takes to open the envelopes and prepare the ballot. Hopefully, this issue will be addressed with pending legislation to allow opening just the envelopes prior to election day, with appropriate security measures in place, to provide less stresses and expeditious results. The ballots will not be scanned until election day.

The other mail-in matter is getting the message out that *having the mail-in ballot Postmarked prior to election day DOES NOT validate that ballot – it Must Be Received in the election office by 8PM election evening.* On election day it can be brought into the election office or dropped in the secure box at the front entrance. For the General Election the ballot can also be taken to the voters polling place.

- Have a great weekend and look for the return of TGIF on July 2! 😊

*Randy L. Phiel*  
*Adams County Commissioner, Chairman*  
*111-117 Baltimore Street*  
*Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325*  
*Phone: 717-337-9820*  
*Fax: 717-334-2091*  
[\*rphiel@adamscounty.us\*](mailto:rphiel@adamscounty.us)

