

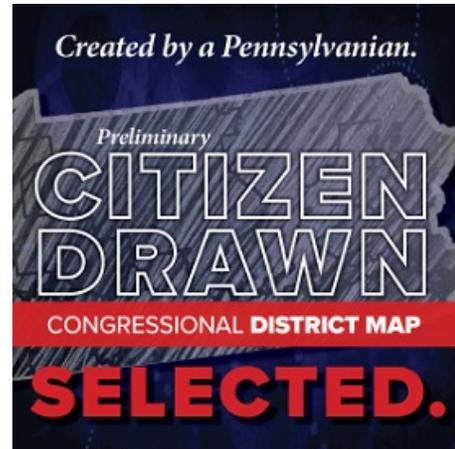
Capitol Christmas Tree Returns



Holiday spirit has returned to the state Capitol rotunda in the form of a 20-foot-tall Douglas fir! Donated by Crystal Spring Tree Farm in Lehigh, Carbon County, this year's Capitol Christmas tree is decorated with handmade ornaments from Pennsylvania senior citizens and preschoolers and illuminated with hundreds of LED lights. A metal-fabricated star made by employees at the state Department of General Services is placed on top.

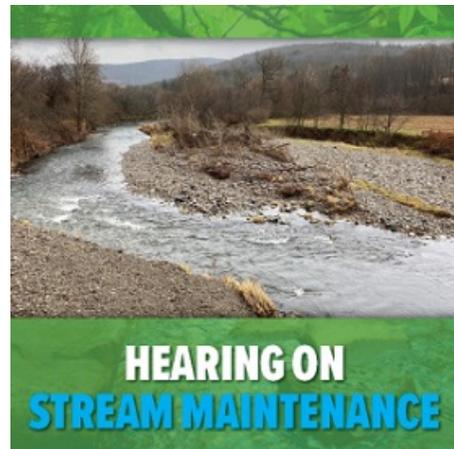
Citizen-Drawn Preliminary District Map Released

A citizen-drawn congressional redistricting map, which was one of the 19 verified statewide maps submitted to the House State Government Committee through its online mapping tool, is now available for public viewing and comment at PaRedistricting.com. The release of this map is a starting point in determining how congressional districts will be divided according to the latest census figures. Policymakers look forward to feedback from residents across the state. Namely how the proposed map would impact their community and their representation in Washington, D.C. At this point, I have tremendous concerns that Lebanon County is being split up. After the public comment period, the map will move through the legislative process. The House State Government Committee, of which I am a member, held an informational meeting on the map and is expected to take up map legislation at its next meeting on Monday. Besides having the opportunity to comment on the preliminary map, residents can also watch or read testimony from one of the 12 committee hearings held and view previously submitted statewide maps, communities of interest and public comments at PaRedistricting.com.



Policy Committee Hears Testimony on Challenges to Maintaining Creeks and Streams

The House Majority Policy Committee was in Wellsboro, Tioga County, this week for a hearing on the importance of maintaining creeks and streams to prevent flooding. The hearing was called after severe flooding in several communities in the northern tier over the summer. Testimony was offered by county and local officials in Tioga and Bradford counties; conservation officials from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), PA Fish and Boat Commission and local conservation districts; and farmers and landowners. Three major themes raised during testimony included the importance of working proactively to mitigate flood damage before it happens; frustration with DEP permitting delays and costs; and funding for stream maintenance projects. Lawmakers will use the information garnered at the hearing to develop policies to help municipalities and landowners better mitigate



flooding on their properties and in their communities. Video of the hearing and written testimony is available at [PAGOPPolicy.com](https://www.pagoppolicy.com).

FREE Course for Students Exploring Career in Law Enforcement

The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Bureau of Training and Education announced the “The Hill Impact Program,” a free program for students ages 15-18 who may be considering a career in law enforcement. This 15-week course will begin in February at the PSP training academy in Derry Township, Dauphin County. Classes will be held one evening every week and one Saturday each month. Students will have one-on-one interactions with state troopers while learning about various aspects of law enforcement in Pennsylvania. Any teen with a serious interest in attending is encouraged to contact Trooper Clint Long no later than Jan. 7, 2022, at ra-sprecruiter-acad@pa.gov or 717-497-4577. Class size is limited.

Tis the Season...for Holiday Scams

The Pennsylvania Department of Banking and Securities and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) are reminding consumers to be vigilant against fraud and scams associated with holiday shopping. Five common scams to watch out for this season include:

1. Hacked Account Scam –A scammer may use technology to make it seem like your financial institution is calling to inform you that your credit card or account has been compromised. They may have details like the last four numbers of your card or a listing of recent purchases. This is an attempt to establish credibility and create an urgency to prevent additional fraudulent activity, while seeking additional sensitive financial information. Your financial institution will not call you unsolicited and ask for details such as your Social Security number, account or credit card numbers, or password. Always contact your financial institution directly using the phone number from your statement, bank card or their website to verify any calls from the institution.



2. Unbelievable Price on Hard-to-Find Items – Everyone enjoys a bargain, but if the deal is too good to be true, it probably is! A scammer may offer a plausible, but ultimately fictional, reason for the price difference. Fraudsters will also tell you there are multiple people interested to urge you to buy immediately. Once you send the money, you will receive bogus shipping information or never hear from them.

3. Bank Deposit Holiday Hustles – Having your checking or savings account information used for depositing mystery shopper checks or other deposits from unknown sources can lead to financial loss and difficulty reestablishing banking services. When you endorse or sign a check, you are vouching for the legitimacy of those funds being available. A scam artist may send you a check for an amount to buy certain items to send somewhere, allowing you to keep a portion for yourself. If that check or funds are fraudulent, you will be liable for the entire balance.

4. Copycat Websites – Identity theft can occur despite precautions. Consumers can help reduce the chance of having their personal or financial information stolen by practicing safe online shopping. Malicious emails can appear to be from legitimate retail stores. Do not click on these links. Instead, bookmark the URL for your favorite stores to ensure you are accessing the appropriate site. If purchasing items online, be sure to monitor your accounts after for fraudulent or unauthorized charges.

5. Gift Cards – Gift cards can be a versatile and practical holiday gift but remember that no government agency will ever ask you to pay a fine, fee or penalty with a gift card. If you receive a call telling you to pay a debt or some other cost via gift card, that is a red flag of a scam. Hang up immediately. Once a scammer has the codes and pins from a gift card, it is extremely difficult to recover any funds.

Pennsylvanians who have fallen victim to a scam can contact their financial institution and local police department through non-emergency channels. Additionally, victims can file a complaint with the [FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).

Another resource is the free “See Something, Send Something” smartphone application, which enables people to report suspicious activity. Consumers are encouraged to capture photographs, screenshots and other information and send directly to the PSP. Tips can also be sent to tips@pa.gov.

Give the Gift of Education this Holiday Season with PA 529

The holiday season is the perfect time to save for the future with the PA 529 College and Career Savings Program. Getting started with PA 529 is easier than ever before. There's no minimum deposit to open an account and contributions of as little as \$1 can be made any time. Anyone can contribute to a child's PA 529 account with a Ugift code, and gift contributions may be PA state income tax deductible. There are two plans to help families save, including the PA 529 Investment Plan, with earnings tied to financial markets, and the PA 529 Guaranteed Savings Plan, where earnings are tied to tuition inflation. Families can choose the plan that best meets their savings goals. More information is available at PA529.com.



2022 PA Fishing Licenses, Permits, Gift Vouchers on Sale

Are you looking for the perfect gift for the angler in your life or do YOU want to get a jump on the next fishing season? Fishing licenses, permits and vouchers for the 2022 season are on sale now through the [HuntFishPA online portal](#), on the [Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission website](#), on your smartphone using the FishBoatPA mobile app, or by visiting one of nearly 700 retail license issuing agents. All 2022 licenses, permits, collectible license buttons, and vouchers you purchase are valid now through Dec. 31, 2022. To learn more, [click here](#).

