



## PennVest information provided at Penn State

BY BONNIE DOMBROSKI  
Staff Writer

A seminar was held on Friday, April 29 at the Hayfield House on the Wilkes-Barre campus of Penn State University for the purpose of providing information concerning PennVest to interested municipal officials.

On the panel were Sen. Charles Lemmond, Sen. Raphael Musto, Rep. George Hasay, Deputy Director of DER Pat Solano, Mark Leevan from the PennVest Board, and Paul Maher, Administrative Assistant to Congressman Paul Kanjorski.

Representatives from several Back Mountain communities, including Tunkhannock, Jackson Township and Lehman Township were on hand as well as officials from as far away as East Stroudsburg.

"The need for upgrading and replacing water supply systems is well documented," said Senator Lemmond in his opening remarks. "These concerns have led to the development of PennVest, a \$300 million bond issue." Lemmond went on to say the panel hoped to get accurate information to those who need it most—officials at the local level.

Lemmond introduced Sen. Musto, one of the 13 members of the PennVest Board, as the first speaker. Musto explained that most of the financial assistance provided by PennVest would be in the form of low interest loans, rather than grants.

Musto said that interest rates would be set between one percent and six percent, depending on the county unemployment rate in relation to the state unemployment rate.

The gathered officials were told by Musto that just because a project is included in the Capital Budget, House Bill 2035, does not mean it is automatically approved. Musto said it is anticipated that over \$3 billion worth of projects will start out in the budget but that only \$150 million of funding is available through PennVest.

Mark Leevan, who served on the Water Facility Loan Board until it went out of existence when the PennVest Authority Board was formed, regarded this opportunity to meet with officials as a chance to give his "poor phone ear a bit of a break".

Leevan said that the Board will be able to answer questions on procedures and will help municipalities fill out applications when asked. According to Leevan, the Authority hopes to get the funds on the street now so that construction can start on some projects by summer.

Leevan said it may seem confusing to design and implement the program at the same time, but that this is being done to save time.

Leevan explained that the 13-member PennVest Board will have a staff to assist them and to make recommendations and that other government agencies such as DER and Department of Community Affairs will be on hand to lend their experience and expertise.

The Board has adopted guidelines which are currently being reviewed by the office of the Attorney General, Leevan said. These would include impact on health, public safety, and the environment and other factors such as economic and social development and adequacy and efficiency of existing systems.

Leevan said that the Board is beginning to accept applications now and applications submitted by May 15 will be acted on at the first meeting. According to Leevan, the decision will be made either to approve, disapprove, or defer an application and the applicants will be notified immediately.

This is an ongoing program which is anticipated to last at least 25 years with money available throughout the life of the program, said Leevan. Loan money received can be used to pay fees for construction, material, design, engineering costs, accountants' fees, legal fees, land acquisition, and preparation of the applications according to Leevan.

Jackson Township Supervisor Thomas Adams questioned Leevan about the use of PennVest funds with money allocated by grants from EPA. Leevan said there is nothing in the legislation that restricts what kind of matching funds can be used so that PennVest funds can be used in conjunction with federal grants.

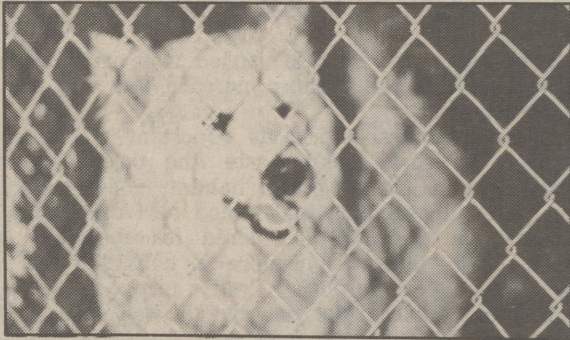
In closing, Sen. Lemmond said that priority will be given to reviewing the applications of those communities that are at risk of losing federal funding.

### Nursery school holds fair

The Trinity Nursery School, Dallas, held a Spring Country Fair on Thursday, April 28, for students and parents of the nursery school.

The country fair featured a baby parade (brothers and sisters of the nursery school children). Also included were face painting, art in the park, a picture spot, games, refreshments, balloons and petting area. The community outreach activity of the fair was a wishing well for Amber Nicely.

Pictured above are Rebekah and Jacob Burke.



### Most adoptable pets

The S.P.C.A.'s Most Adoptable Pets for this week are: a white, male Samoyed that was picked up as a stray; and many fluffy, cuddly kittens who are waiting for some loving homes. The S.P.C.A. has many lovable pets for adoption. Call 825-4111 for more information. (Linda Shurmaitis Photo)



### College to host Porter musical

College Misericordia will host "A Cole Porter Celebration" on Thursday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. in the College's Walsh Auditorium. The evening of toe-tapping songs will be performed by the College Misericordia Chorus and a professional orchestra. "A Cole Porter Celebration" is free and open to the public. Members of the Misericordia Chorus practice a number from "A

Cole Porter Celebration," which will be held at College Misericordia on Thursday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. in the College's Walsh Auditorium.

## Fresh

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Mrs. Williams said that the children may be a little apprehensive, but for the most part they look forward to the time spent away from the city. It seems to work out best when the host family keeps to their own routine and includes some special treats so the children are not overwhelmed by the extra activities.

Friendly Town communities can offer assistance and support to Fresh Air children in many important ways. Local civic organizations can sponsor Friendly Town committees. Club members may serve on the committees or the

organization can underwrite local expenses such as postage, mileage and phone bills.

Community groups can plan summertime picnics for host families and their Fresh Air children. Community sponsorship broadens participation and is invaluable to a successful Friendly Town program.

For further information on how to become involved in the Fresh Air Fund, contact Fran Williams at 696-2126. Because according to the Fresh Air Fund, the Fresh Air experience is more than a stay in the country, good meals, healthy exercise, and new friends. It's a gift that can change a youngster's life.

## Rates

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frequent and causing more dollars paid to the insured.

Gordon also explained that rates can be compared that for the males it is similar to one bushel of apples going out while for the girls it is only a half bushel of apples going out. This is a total of one and a half bushels.

If equalized it would mean males paying for three quarters of a bush and females paying for three quarters of a bushel, even though the females are not using three quarters of a bushel. Thus, the females while not using three quarters of a bushel will be paying for apples used by the males with insurance going up for both.

To return to the CAT Fund as commonly called in Pennsylvania, Slocum explained that the original fee charged was \$5.00 which was to be deposited in a fund to pay all claims over \$100,000 to \$1,000,000. Despite the increase in the fund per car owner from \$5.00 to \$8.00, the fund now has \$200,000,000 claims against it.

Who's going to pay these claims? Companies don't want the fund, the government doesn't want the fund.

The insurance companies in no way could pay claims at the \$24.00 fee. Customers wanted the CAT Fund eliminated but it hasn't been nor has it been raised to \$24.00.

Before the fund is eliminated, there needs to be a solution, explained Slocum, but that solution has not been determined.

In a conversation with Charles Gordon, he told The Post that only that day he had received correspondence stating that the Senate had approved by a 44-4 vote to

abolish the CAT Fund but the House has not recognized such a decision to date.

"If the CAT Fund is turned over to insurance companies, the companies will have to charge a sufficient rate to pay the claims, a rate I am sure will be far in excess of \$24.00. The rate at this time is impossible to predict."

Both Gordon and Slocum agree that insurance companies would have to charge a much higher rate than the \$24.00 proposed by the state.

Donna Phillips, Back Mountain native, now residing in Kingston, said she feels that insurance rates are outrageous. She and her husband are the parents of two girls and one boy within the age range or close to the age range of male and female drivers whose insurance rates vary.

"It's a shame that equalizing rates should punish children for being children," Donna said.

She believes there should be a method by which a young person's insurance rates would not be increased until he or she has an accident. It should then be done according to the individual.

"I have a son now old enough to drive but he hasn't yet applied for a permit and I'm in no rush to hurry him because it's too expensive for the insurance. The rates have become ridiculous," Donna said.

She wishes the insurance companies could come up with an alternate system than the present one. She doesn't have the solution but a system that does not punish the young individual.

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