

OUR OPINION

Compromise needed on burning in Kingston Twp.

It is sometimes surprising what issues capture the public's attention and stir up the kind of citizen action that influences public policy. Here in the Back Mountain, the hottest topic of the summer — forgive the pun — is a proposed ban on all outdoor burning in Kingston Township. Tempers have flared and the rhetoric has heated up on both sides of this issue, which to many observers is an anachronism at the beginning of the 21st century.

How many of us, after all, still dig a firepit in the back yard, splash on a pinch of gasoline and watch as our yard and household waste goes up in smoke? Probably not all that many, particularly in the fancy new subdivisions with impressive mini-castles set on manicured lawns. But not everyone in Kingston Township, or in other Back Mountain communities, lives in such a controlled, sterile environment. Some of our neighbors still have property that is barely manageable, or are out of the reach of convenient disposal sites. What are they to do with fallen limbs and pickup beds full of waste if not burn it. Let's not forget that the beautiful vistas we love come with a cost in terms of upkeep that, if made unbearable, will result in their destruction.

There has to be an acceptable compromise to this challenge, and if you live in the township, you can be part of the solution by attending a special meeting Thursday, August 28 at the township building.

OTHER OPINION

'Digital Divide' is unhealthy for kids, Pennsylvania

By KEVIN DELICKER
Executive Director, Project E-Quality

Today, we stand astride a growing "Digital Divide" that affects Pennsylvanians: rural and urban, rich and poor, young and old.

This Divide is producing a situation whereby some people have affordable access to advanced telecommunications services, or "broadband," and others do not. In our information-driven economy, that means some people have opportunities for personal and professional enrichment that are not available to others, simply because they live in the "wrong" place.

Consider that, across the Commonwealth, small businesses in rural areas often pay twice as much for broadband as their urban competitors.

Public school students often use slower Internet connections in their classrooms than they use in their own homes, limiting their access to educational materials.

Senior citizens are moving into early institutional care because home-healthcare monitoring technologies, available elsewhere, are out of reach in their communities.

For years, this Digital Divide has been increasing. Today, we have the best opportunity in a decade to close the gap. Yet most Pennsylvanians are unaware of the quiet debate now underway in our state legislature.

The state's broadband law, known as "Chapter 30," expires at the end of 2003. Though well-intentioned, the law is broken and must be fixed.

At stake is Pennsylvania's economic future. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, eight of the top-10 fastest growing jobs in the United States during the next decade require broadband. If your community does not have it, cannot afford it or will not use it, your community cannot support these types of jobs.

Those of us committed to fighting the Digital Divide need to ensure that Chapter 30 is reauthorized and improved to fix three fundamental problems.

First, many Pennsylvanians cannot get access to broadband even if they ask for it and are willing to pay for it.

The current law does not guarantee that communities will get residential broadband choices until 2015. A new and improved Chapter 30 must enable those choices today, not 12 years from now.

Second, a little-known tax called the "mileage tariff" is creating an unreasonable disparity in the price of broadband services between rural and urban areas. Because of this tax, certain broadband connections can cost up to 100 percent more in rural towns than in cities.

This tax is especially harmful because it affects the type of broadband most often used by businesses, schools and hospitals for creating jobs, educating our kids and keeping us healthy. A new and improved Chapter 30 can fix this unfair tax shouldered by rural residents that harms Pennsylvania's competitiveness.

Third, a perceived lack of demand for technology contributes to Pennsylvania's growing Digital Divide as much as lack of supply. Many organizations across Pennsylvania, even in cities where broadband is accessible and affordable, do not use technology effectively because they do not know how. But this gap in understanding does not represent a lack of need.

This is especially true of Pennsylvania's public schools, which miss out on tens of millions of dollars in federal aid each year as a direct result of their collective underinvestment in technology. A new and improved Chapter 30 would provide creative opportunities for schools and other public organizations to become leaders instead of laggards in the effective use of technology applications — without raising taxes.

So far, few people outside the telecommunications industry have paid much attention to the Chapter 30 debate. If you care about Pennsylvania's future economic growth and quality of life, you should pay attention, too. Call your legislators and tell them to pass a new and improved Chapter 30 this fall. And tell them to address the issues we've outlined.

Kevin Dellicker is Executive Director of Project e-Quality, Harrisburg, PA.



Stark sentinel of Wyoming Road. Photo by Ron Bartizek.

LETTERS

Burning pollutes and is dangerous

Editor,

Once again I sat through the public meeting regarding the burning ban. I feel compelled to respond. Simply put, open burning contributes to pollution of our environment. Many of us live in neighborhoods where smoke can enter our homes, and affect our health. There are many people with allergies, asthma and other breathing problems (senior citizens included) that are affected by smoke. I have two asthmatics at home.

Burn barrels and the like individually put out more pollution than a public incinerator. Typically fires are not watched, covered and left to smolder hours after the main burn is over. Often the fires burn outside of the barrel and on one occasion I had to put out a fire that my neighbor left unattended (He left the house) that was actually headed for his home.

People burn garbage (Pam-

pers, plastic and the like), all of which are to be put at the curbside for weekly pickup. One neighbor heats his shop and pool with garbage fires in his shop. One person brought up the fact that wood burners also pollute and are not banned, but I haven't seen many people burn leaves, pine needles, trash etc. in their fireplaces and typically most intelligent people would make sure the fire is out completely upon leaving their homes. One person complained that a senior citizen's health would be hurt by having to transport yard clippings to a mulch pit or even to take it to the curb so the township may pick it up if that were available. May I suggest she contact local scout troops, who are constantly looking for service projects or her local bureau for the aging, who can network her to help programs.

Finally our police force and fire companies do not need to deal with complaints regarding

fires. Most federal and state agencies that deal with these issues seem to indicate that this nuisance is going by the wayside and it is time to get rid of burning of this nature. This is especially true when financial aid for things such as recycle, mulching projects and the like are giving preference to municipalities who comply with clean air ordinances.

Frankly I don't care what people think of my opinions on this matter and if they are offended so be it. I am fed up with smelling other peoples garbage, leaves and pine needle smoke. I do not want my property, be it ever so crumbled, endangered by carelessness. I would like to open my windows or air clothes outdoors or sit in my yard, for however little I'm home.

Ban Burning, Period!

Mike Pajka
Shavertown

Residents get chance to voice opinion

Editor

On Monday, August 11, at the Supervisors meeting the supervisors decided to wait until next month to decide their decision. They were fair in listening. This was not the case on Wednesday, August 13, 2002 at the Supervisors meeting. Mr. Goodwin, a supervisor decided to discuss the ban on burning, which we all thought was tabled to next months meeting. We had no chance to speak out, but two township residents presented facts to the supervisors, why we should not burn. One reason was because a resident in another state, has asthma, and sued the township because their asthma was caused due to open burning. The supervisors seem to favor the idea of a burn ban; one reason is because of maybe getting sued. What happens if one of us takes our branches to the municipal building and takes the branches out of the truck and hurt our back, or we fall on the grounds getting out of our truck to drop the branches off, we could all

sue. To the Supervisors the fact is that the township will always be under a threat of a lawsuit. You just have to depend on the goodwill of most of the general public, not to sue. So the statement with people suing because they had asthma, because of burning, proves nothing. The elimination of burning will not eliminate the threat of lawsuits.

I did find out that the planning commission came to them and made suggestions to them, because of one or two residents came to the planning commission and came up with some reasons why the township should have a burn ban. The planning commission are volunteers, the people of the township elect the supervisors and their decision should reflect the will of the people. The 350 residents that signed my petition did not seem to count, at Wednesdays meeting. This meeting on Wednesday was supposed to be tabled.

Also they changed the meeting date, and a lot of us are not aware of this. This meeting will

take place at the Kingston Township Municipal Building on Thursday, August 28 at 7:30. This new meeting, which is a public meeting, will again talk about the possibility of a burn ban. We must all try to attend this meeting, to show your support in the right to be able to burn branches, and paper, excluding garbage. We all have the right to our opinion and because of some unhappy people that just don't like smoke; they are willing to inconvenience other residents.

In my opinion, this is a shame that even just the idea that the township is even thinking of having a burn ban is totally unfair to the residents. To the residents that even suggested a possibility of having a burn ban caused a major uproar to some of the residents in the township. Again, since this had to happen I hope the township supervisors, can come to a reasonable compromise for all the people.

Sincerely,
Rosaria Shaver

Q. Where do you find the most Back Mountain news and photos each week?
A. Only in The Dallas Post

70 Years Ago - August 25, 1933

RAIN DRENCHES BACK MT.

A rainstorm of tropical proportions hit the county from every section of the county came reports of hardships caused by the most severe rain of the year and one of the heaviest remembered by local persons. Streams overflowed their banks to flood highways and meadows, train and street cars were running behind schedule.

Dallas can secure an adequate water supply for household consumption, fire protection and sewage disposal only through the construction of a nearby reservoir and drilling of new wells to the opinion of C.L. Hartwell engineer who addressed the meeting of Dallas Taxpayers Association.

Harold Warner, who is a member of the delinquent tax committee of Dallas borough taxpayers' association announces that more than \$1,009 in delinquent borough taxes have been paid.

60 Years Ago - August 27, 1943

FLAG POLE DEDICATED

William B. Healey, past commander of the American Legion, will be the speaker when members of the Service Mothers' Club of Trucksville dedicate their new flag pole at the highway intersection in Trucksville.

C.J. Brown is retiring after serving four terms as a member of Lehman Township School Board. Mr. Brown's father, the late Henderson G. Brown, served many years on the same board before his son was elected to office.

Miss Irma Goldsmith, Demunds Road, passed her examination and is waiting to be called for service in the Woman's Army Corp. She is a graduate of Dallas Township High School.

50 Years Ago - August 21, 1953

TOWNS VOTE ON MOVIES

Voters in Dallas Borough and Kingston Township will be given an opportunity during the coming election to vote on Sunday movies. Daniel Shaver, owner of Shaver Theatre, Shavertown and A. C. Devens, owner of Himmler Theatre, Dallas have petitions in circulation requesting the County Commissioners to place the issue on the ballots.

Rev. Arthur B. Mayo, newly appointed pastor for Trucksville Methodist Church, will preach the first sermon in his new parsonage, moving with his family into the parsonage on Harris Hill Road the preceding week.

40 Years Ago - August 22, 1963

LIGHT TO BE REMOVED

Request for removal of the traffic light at Harris Hill Road was presented to the Kingston Township Board of Supervisors recently by Arthur Smith on behalf of Coon Construction Company. Action was urged to enable construction crews to lay pipe under the intersection.

Ann Kitchen, 9, of Demunds Road, was Little Miss Lady of the Lake in the fourteenth annual Lady of the Lake contest.

Conclusion of a contract of sale of the empty Armour Tannery plant at Noxen continues to hinge on a fine legal point.

30 Years Ago - August 23, 1973

ORDINANCE CONSIDERS

About 35 interested residents heard Atty6. Blythe Evans, Jackson Township solicitor, read the proposed ordinance that specified that loud noises will be prohibited between the house of 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. in Jackson Township.

Condemnation of the Shavertown Elementary school brought 45 distressed parents and interested persons to the Dallas School District Board meeting.

20 Years Ago - August 17, 1983

PARISH RAISES \$250,713

A summer campaign to raise funds for a new parish community center at Our Lady of Victory parish, came to a successful completion with a total of \$250,713 reported in pledges.

The Back Mountain Youth Soccer Association will open its sixth season with a record number of players. The Association has grown from 75 boys and girls in 1978 to 740 in 1983.

THE DALLAS POST

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

P.O. BOX 366, DALLAS, TX 75201 • 570-675-5211
dallaspost@leader.net

Ronald Bartizek
EDITOR/GENERAL MANAGER

Justin Wisnosky
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.

Erin Youngman
REPORTER

Darlene E. Sorber
OFFICE MANAGER

Claudia Blank
AD PRODUCTION MANAGER