

OUR OPINION

New tax could make sense in some cases

To tax or not to tax, that is the question. And so far, local municipalities have come up with a variety of answers.

In the waning days of 2004, the State Legislature passed and Governor Ed Rendell signed an act that allows municipalities and school districts to exchange the \$10 annual Occupational Privilege Tax for an Emergency and Municipal Services Tax of up to \$52 yearly. Carrying a more palatable name, the EMS tax has particular appeal to towns and boroughs that are the home base for large employers, many of whom don't live there.

Two of those, Jackson and Lehman townships, quickly jumped on the bandwagon, adopting the maximum rate. Other officials greeted the rare prospect of raising revenue from people who can't vote them out of office with a yawn, either because their town doesn't need the money or because they couldn't react quickly enough to this last-minute opportunity.

Proceeds from the EMS tax are to be used ostensibly only for "police, fire or emergency services; road construction or maintenance; or for the reduction of property taxes," a limitation that does not apply to school districts, although they are limited to \$10 per year.

It is often said that no one likes to pay taxes. While that may be the case, there is good reason for some municipalities to consider this one. Perhaps the best is that people who work in a town use services even if they don't live there. Roads must be maintained and plowed so they can get to work, fire and ambulance companies must respond if there is an emergency or accident, and property values may be degraded by the presence of an employer that doesn't pay property taxes.

Jackson Township, for example, hosts the State Correctional Institution at Dallas, which occupies 1,600 acres of tax-exempt land. It also is the site of frequent fire and ambulance responses, and it's safe to say we'd all be uncomfortable if guards couldn't get to work on snowy days. Lehman Township and Dallas Township both are home to schools and district administrative offices that require similar services, but the majority of whose employees do not live in the townships.

Is adopting this tax a wise move for all towns? No, but it certainly is a defensible action in those communities that provide a disproportionate share of services to people who otherwise offer little financial support.

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel

• On Jan. 13, 1861, Stephen Foster, America's first professional songwriter, dies at the age of 37 in the charity ward of New York's Bellevue Hospital. Despite scores of hits such as "Oh! Susanna," "Swanee River," "Camptown Races" and "My Old Kentucky Home," copyright laws were rarely enforced in music at the time, and Foster reaped few financial rewards.

• On Jan. 10, 1901, in the town of Beaumont, Texas, the first major oil discovery in the United States is made as a 100-foot drilling derrick named Spindletop produces a roaring gusher of black crude oil.

• On Jan. 12, 1932, Ophelia Wyatt Caraway, a Democrat from Arkansas, becomes the first woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate. Caraway had been appointed to the Senate two months earlier to fill the vacancy left by her late husband, Thaddeus Horatio Caraway.

• On Jan. 11, 1944, Franz Kettner, a private in the German army and a prisoner of war at Camp Hearne in Texas, is killed by a Nazi kangaroo court. Internment camps for German POWs were dominated by Nazi enforcers, who killed as many as 150 of their fellow prisoners during World War II. American officials often looked the other way because the Nazis maintained order in the camps.

• On Jan. 15, 1974, the first episode of "Happy Days" airs. The show, which portrayed the comic antics of 1950s Milwaukee high school student Richie Cunningham, was immensely popular and launched several spin-offs, including "Laverne & Shirley" and "Mork & Mindy."

• On Jan. 14, 1980, after being released from government control, gold soars to a new record price, exceeding \$800 an ounce.

• On Jan. 16, 1991, the U.N. deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait expires and the Persian Gulf War begins as aircraft from the U.S.-led military coalition begin bombing targets in and around Baghdad.

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Letters are welcome

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a daytime telephone number for verification.
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By using the drop box located in the Uni-Mart convenience store on Route 309 in Dallas, across from the Dallas Shopping Center.



Closed for the season. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

Volunteers sought for state's Breeding Bird Atlas survey

Help is especially needed in rural areas to complete 5-year study

The Pennsylvania Game Commission and Carnegie Museum of Natural History are looking for both casual and avid birdwatchers to help monitor nesting wild birds as part of the second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas.

Dan Brauning, Game Commission Wildlife Diversity Program supervisor, said help is particularly needed in more rural areas.

"If you're interested in helping in a rural area — one that you live in or are willing to travel to — we'd like to hear from you," Brauning said. "Even if you haven't watched birds much before now, there still is plenty of time to learn how to observe and identify them and to help in this important survey."

The atlas is the most extensive survey of the state's nesting birds ever attempted. Started this spring, the grid-based survey will continue for

the next five years and aims to track changes that have occurred in bird populations since the first atlas was completed in 1989. Since that time, eagles, ospreys and peregrine falcons have expanded their breeding numbers substantially. Also of interest will be charting whether long-term declines of many of songbirds reported in the first atlas continues.

"The new survey incorporates new methods to document secretive and rare species, and will provide a new look at distribution patterns as they relate to species abundance," Brauning explained. "The second atlas also will provide new information that will aid in the management of all bird species, and will include a special focus to update the historic locations of species of special concern statewide."

Although it follows and largely replicates the first atlas, which was conducted in Pennsylvania from 1983 to 1989, the second atlas project will provide new levels of understanding for the state's bird populations that will help

to ensure their conservation now and in the future. It is funded largely with federal State Wildlife Grant monies through the Game Commission and organized and coordinated by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History through offices at the museum's Powdermill Nature Reserve.

"Right now, the second Atlas is looking for as much help as it can muster from Pennsylvania's estimated 2.7 million birdwatchers," noted Bob Mulvihill, a field ornithologist at Carnegie Museum's Powdermill Nature Reserve, who is serving as the Atlas project coordinator. "This project's success depends on the participation of thousands of volunteer bird watchers."

The original Atlas was done with help from more than 2,000 volunteers. But there are more than 4,900 blocks to cover Pennsylvania's nearly 45,000 square miles, more volunteer assistance would help this important effort.

When it's finished in 2008, the second atlas will show changes in the occurrence and distribution of the state's nearly

200 species of nesting birds, and promises to provide much additional information about the state's breeding birds. Success in getting to the finish line and the quantity and quality of data collected will be directly influenced by the number of volunteers who participate, especially covering blocks in rural Pennsylvania.

Individuals interested in volunteering for Atlas survey work may register on the atlas website at www.pabirdatlas.org, or call atlas project coordinators at 724-593-6022. On the website, volunteers will be able to find out which region they're in and which regional coordinator to contact for help; print instructions, block maps, field cards and other forms needed for doing the Atlas; get birdwatching and bird identification tips; view complete results from the first Atlas; follow the progress of the second Atlas; and enter their observations of breeding birds.

To date, about 750 volunteers have registered and begun helping in more than 1,400 blocks in the second survey.

70 Years Ago
Jan. 11, 1935

FLYING ACES THRILL DALLAS ONLOOKERS

Residents of Dallas were thrilled Saturday afternoon when Lieut. John P. Kirkendall and Major William A. Kepner flew over Dallas and gave a flying exhibition for a few minutes before proceeding to the Scranton Airport where they landed and came to Dallas to visit Lieut. Kirkendall's parents, Postmaster and Mrs. George Kirkendall.

The home of Lee Hessler of Rice Street, Trucksville, was entered sometime Friday night while the family was absent and made good their getaway with a good amount of jewelry and other valuables. While playing cards on the first floor of their home one evening during the past week, burglars entered the home of William DeWitt of Trucksville, and escaped with \$19 in cash.

An ad from Gay-Murray Co. in Tunkhannock read: "Just several days ago, Sands Brothers at North Eaton killed a Berkshire hog which dressed 646 lbs. All of which reminds us that we have the Smoke, Salt, Knives, and Scrappers needed when you kill your 646 pounder."

Only Yesterday is compiled from the back-issue files of The Post.

60 Years Ago
Jan. 12, 1945

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF RATIONING IN U.S.

Yesterday was the third anniversary of rationing in the United States. During the early part of that period the Back Mountain was served by Wyoming War, Price & Rationing Board but on October 1, 1942 Dallas War Price & Rationing Board was established to better serve the 12,000 persons within Dallas area. On a slow day, clerks at the local board office in the Oliver Building receive an average of sixty telephoned inquiries and take care of 125 persons who visit the office in person with their rationing problems.

Wayne Harrison, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Harrison of Carverton road, had the misfortune to fall while skiing last weekend and cut his leg. He was taken to Nesbitt Hospital. Thirteen stitches were required to close the wound.

The great work being done by the International Red Cross for American war prisoners was enthusiastically praised this week by S/Sgt. Paul F. Nulton Jr., a German prisoner of war since late last May, in two cards and a letter to his mother, Mrs. Paul F. Nulton Sr. of Beaumont.

50 Years Ago
Jan. 7, 1955

MEASLES EPIDEMIC HITS LEHMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

An epidemic of measles at Lehman-Jackson-Ross elemen-

tary school has mounted steadily since school opened after the Christmas holidays, until 101 were reported ill Wednesday. Mrs. A.B. Simms, school nurse, reports that the epidemic is confined in the main to the first three grades.

Ray Henney, Kunkle, instructor of Vocational Agriculture at the Elk-Lake Joint high school, will see ten years of work at Rush crowned by a top honor for one of his students when Eldred Hitchcock receives the State Star Dairy Farmer's Degree at the Farm Show next week.

Kunkle Motors advertised "Volkswagen, America's Fastest-Selling Small Car." The ad went on: "Spells fine German craftsmanship, 30 and more miles per gallon. Needs no breaking-in. Needs no anti-freeze. Perfect for 2-car family."

40 Years Ago
Jan. 7, 1965

BOY RECOVERING FROM TOBOGGAN CRASH INTO WIRE

Robert Stanton, 15, of Dallas, is improving at Nesbitt Hospital from severe throat injuries incurred in a toboggan accident on the Rice Farm Saturday night. Stanton and Samuel Zachary, 15, were coasting through a field and tried to steer through a hole in a stone wall, and did not see barbed wire there. Bobby was rinded in the front and so he received the brunt of the injury.

Philip Davenport Husband, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Husband, Shavertown, checked into the world Friday, Jan. 1 at 1:12 a.m. at Nesbitt Hospital, becoming the first baby born in

the Wyoming Valley this year.

For the second consecutive week, a car struck a gas pump in Dallas. This time, Mrs. Jean Moledor, the school nurse at Lake-Lehman, lost control of her car coming down Church Street and mowed down the high-test pump at Al Williams' Atlantic station.

30 Years Ago

Editor's Note: The Dallas Post was shut down abruptly after the Dec. 23, 1974 issue by its owner, Greenstreet News. A new owner resumed publication Jan. 30, 1975, and "30 Years Ago" will return when we reach that date.

20 Years Ago
Jan. 9, 1985

WILLIAMS SIBLINGS EACH EARN TOP SCOUT HONORS

Elizabeth and Lee Williams were presented with scouting's highest awards during a Court of Honor held in Walsh Auditorium at College Misericordia. Elizabeth was presented with the Girl Scout Gold Award and Lee received the Eagle Scout Award.

Hope Beisel was honored as Employee of the Year at Offset Paperback Manufacturers. An employee since 1972, she has held a variety of positions, from shipping to accounting and her present job as executive secretary/administrative assistant.

Robert Mines was putting the finishing touches on a new location for Minotti's Sub Shop, in the 309-415 Plaza. The shop will move from Main Street so that more parking is available for customers.

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