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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Office of Legislative Information
G01 South Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

For Approval - Pam

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Pamela Landis (717) 787-7895

HARRISBURG, March 14 -- Beaver County has been awarded a \$1.2 million grant to help Pittsburgh Intermodal Terminals Inc., Butler, expand, according to state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

"The money is coming from the Business Infrastructure Development program," Laughlin said. "It's going to go a long way in helping our local community become an vital economic force in the region, the state and the country."

Pittsburgh Intermodal Terminals Inc. is a firm that transports materials by rail, river barge and truck as well as warehousing customers' products, Laughlin said.

"The company already has purchased a 120,000 square-foot building and 28 acres of land at the site for the expansion," Laughlin said. "The purchase and the improvements total \$1.2 million."

Under the grant, \$600,000 will be used to construct a ramp-bridge to provide access to the site. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation will participate in the construction by investing \$3.7 million.

The county will provide the \$600,000 balance of the grant as a loan to the company for the construction of barge dock improvements, a rail spur and handling area, Laughlin said.

Total private investment will come from Pittsburgh Intermodal Terminal and USR Realty Development, a division of USX Corp. Those two companies will invest more than \$3.7 million.

"USR will invest \$2.5 million for site improvements, including on-site water, sewer and roadway construction," Laughlin said. "Our community is going to get a great benefit from this program. The company has promised to create 49 new jobs over the next three years, bringing their workforce to 114 people. This is just another example of how we can make our community an economic force through cooperation from all levels of government and industry."

(MORE)

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The BID program is designed to promote economic development in the state by assisting in infrastructure improvements.

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op26/3/14/89/laughlin/bid

State Senator

JAMES E. ROSS

Serving Beaver and Lawrence Counties

District Office

855 Second Street
Beaver, PA 15009
(412) 774-0444

District Office

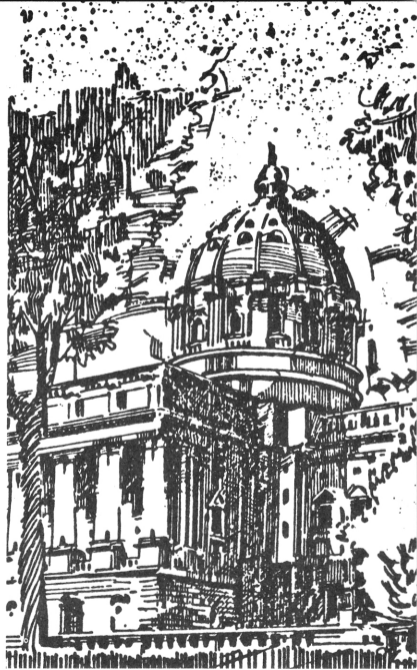
515 Lawrence Avenue
Ellwood City, PA 16117
(412) 752-1444

Harrisburg Office

Senate Post Office
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0030
(717) 787-3076

For your information

As per your request





Senate of Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SENATOR JAMES E. ROSS
PHONE: 717-787-3076

CONTACT: STEVE BANHOLZER
PHONE: 717-787-5166

REPRESENTATIVE SUSAN LAUGHLIN
PHONE: 717-787-4444

HARRISBURG, MARCH 14, 1989 -- Senator James E. Ross and Rep. Susan Laughlin, state Democratic lawmakers from Beaver County, today announced they have succeeded in getting the Casey Administration to approve an additional \$600,000 to build a new bridge and access road to the Ambridge Industrial Park.

"Representative Laughlin and I are elated that this project will be totally funded by state monies," said Ross. "Access to the park is necessary to attract business and industry to the area."

Last year Ross was the prime sponsor of legislation that provided over three million dollars or 80 percent of the funding for the project.

The recent grant of \$600,000 which comes from the Business Infrastructure Development Program (BID) provides the additional 20 percent needed to complete the job.

The 140 acre site has 14 buildings with 1.5 million square feet of space, railroad access and a 400-foot dock.

USR Realty Development, a division of USX Corp., is converting the former American Bridge Co.'s facilities for use by other businesses.

Ross and Laughlin said the BID program was designed to help expand and improve business facilities in the state.

BID grants are administered by the state Department of Commerce.

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HARRISBURG, March 31 -- Eligible Pennsylvanians are urged to file their Property Tax/Rent Rebate applications early, according to state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

Laughlin said people should file their applications before May 15 to ensure they will receive their checks in the July mailing.

Early filing enables the state Department of Revenue to notify the applicant of any errors so that the application is completed in time for the mailing, Laughlin said.

The final application deadline is June 30.

The rebate program, funded by the Pennsylvania Lottery, offers eligible senior citizens 65 years or older, widows and widowers 50 years or older, and the permanently disabled 18 years or older a percentage rebate on their rent or property taxes.

The current income limit is \$15,000 for a household. Those who qualify will receive rebates up to \$500 and an inflation dividend, which is automatically issued in December, up to \$125.

Applications can be obtained at the Department of Revenue offices, area agencies on aging, senior citizen centers, legislators' offices or by calling the department at 1-800-SRCLAIM.

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HARRISBURG, June 1 -- Economy Township Volunteer Firemen's Association has been awarded two \$25,000 low-interest state loans, according to state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

Laughlin said the money comes from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency's Office of Fire Safety Services.

The two loans will help defray costs of the purchase of two 1989 Ford Type III Box ambulances, Laughlin said. The cost of each ambulance is \$64,025.

"I'm pleased to see our local fire departments' taking advantage of the many state programs available to update their services," Laughlin said. "These loans are good example of government money going to directly help the people of Beaver County."

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op26/6/1/89/laughlin/fire

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HARRISBURG, June 28 -- Two Beaver County firms today were awarded nearly \$500,000 in tax credits to help refurbish and expand their facilities, according to state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

Laughlin said a \$250,000 tax credit was given to Value Ambridge Associates, Ambridge, and a \$224,820 tax credit was given to J&L Structural, Aliquippa.

"The award comes from the state Department of Community Affairs through their Neighborhood Assistance Enterprise Zone program," Laughlin said. "Both companies are located in Beaver enterprise zones."

Under the program, companies receive tax credits to improve the physical structures of their buildings located in enterprise zones.

"The program is intended to help these companies with their improvements anticipating that it also will spur further economic development," Laughlin said.

J&L will use the money to perform a variety of renovation projects on its buildings, Laughlin said: "By improving their appearance, not only will they be providing jobs for the renovation, they also will serve as an example to other companies of a thriving business in Beaver County," she said.

Value Ambridge already is in the middle of an aggressive redevelopment program to make the Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center a first-class, multi-tenant industrial park.

Laughlin said the company will use the tax credit to install a parking lot and renovate existing lots and buildings.

"With the completion of this project, the Ambridge Center will be a quality place where businesses can locate," Laughlin said. "Because of the tremendous growth in Pittsburgh, our area will be an ideal candidate to take advantage of the strong demand for industrial sites."

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op26/6/28/89/laughlin/grant

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HARRISBURG, March 16 -- A plan to let consumers limit the number of annoying telephone solicitations they get was introduced this week by state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

Laughlin has proposed legislation (H.B. 827) which would allow people to have their telephone companies put an asterisk next to their name in the telephone book.

"That asterisk would put telephone solicitors on notice that people don't want to be bothered by them," Laughlin said. Many companies and organizations that solicit by telephone use phone books as resources.

"If a company does call a person who has an asterisk beside their name, the company would have 30 seconds to tell the customer who they are, what group they represent and what they are calling for," she said.

Failure to do so could result in fines up to \$10,000. The practice would be enforced by the Bureau of Consumer Protection in the Attorney General's office. The telephone companies would not be responsible for enforcement.

"I've received a lot of complaints from people who are bothered by unsolicited telephone calls," Laughlin said. "They are so frustrating, and they usually call at the worst time -- just when you sit down to dinner with your family."

Under the bill, cost of placing the asterisk next to a name in the phone book would be determined by the Public Utility Commission.

The bill was referred to the State Government Committee for consideration.

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op26/3/16/89/laughlin/asterik

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HARRISBURG, May 2 -- A bill which would help financially-strapped communities to continue to get state funding was introduced recently by state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

Laughlin said her bill would continue the Financially Disadvantaged Municipalities Matching Assistance Act and make changes to expand the program. The program is due to expire June 30 under the state's Sunset provisions.

"This is a good program, deserving renewal," Laughlin said. "The program helps financially-strapped communities meet grant requirements."

The program provides communities with a matching grant they may need to qualify for another grant.

Laughlin noted that under many grant programs, local communities must commit matching funds. "For communities hard hit in the pocketbook, that's an impossible task," she said. "Communities are caught in a Catch-22. If they can't provide the matching money, then they don't get the money. But if they had the money, they wouldn't need the grant."

Under Laughlin's proposal, the program, which is administered by the state Department of Community Affairs, would be expanded to allow Enterprise Zones, like those in Ambridge, Aliquippa and Harmony, to participate.

"Many municipalities still aren't out of the woods yet when it comes to their finances, and many communities still have much work that needs to be done," Laughlin said. "Continuation and expansion of this program will help make sure the work that needs to be done can be done."

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op26/5/1/89/laughlin/fin/bill

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HARRISBURG, June 22 -- Legislation introduced this week by state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway, would provide local municipalities with help during a natural or man-made disaster.

Laughlin said she introduced the legislation (H.B. 1755) in response to concerns over whether the local communities receive enough financial help after a disaster.

Under her legislation, the state would provide loans or grants to communities hit by a disaster. The grants would be provided to municipalities to repair and replace property. The grants would be provided for in a Local Emergency Relief Fund.

"This bill would give communities money to clean up and rebuild," she said. "Although there often is federal and state assistance available, many disasters that occur don't get the aid because they don't receive the official 'disaster' designation. But they still need help."

Laughlin said her bill would supplement the cleanup from these smaller disasters, such as waterline breaks. "This bill would provide help for those smaller disasters," she said.

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HARRISBURG, June 27 -- Legislation aimed at protecting children from lead poisoning received unanimous approval today from a House panel, according to state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

Laughlin said the House Health and Welfare Committee approved legislation (H.B. 438) she sponsored which establishes a Lead Poisoning Program in the state Department of Health.

"I'm pleased my legislation got the support of the committee," Laughlin said. "I expect the measure will receive quick approval in the House."

Under Laughlin's legislation, the state would establish a program aimed at addressing the health problems surrounding lead poisoning.

"The presence of lead poses a very real health threat to our children," she said. "The absorption or ingestion of lead is a well-documented health hazard, particularly among our children."

Laughlin's legislation would expand current projects and programs on lead poisoning and provide additional funding for the programs.

"The health department would identify certain areas where residents are at a substantial risk of lead poisoning," she said. "Children under the age of five who live in high risk areas would undergo a periodic screening for lead poisoning."

Laughlin's proposal also mandates the state provide medical treatment for people with lead poisoning. "We also want the state to have a program where lead is removed from the environment in such places as painted walls."

The programs would be funded through a one-half of one percent state sales tax on paint. "In order for us to have these programs, we need to properly fund them," Laughlin said. "Paint in older homes generally is the source of lead poisoning."

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op26/6/27/89/laughlin/lead

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HARRISBURG, June 27 -- State Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway, has co-sponsored legislation which would require the state Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to determine how significant traffic signal repair or replacement costs are for local governments.

Laughlin said she co-sponsored the legislation in an effort to find a way to replace antiquated traffic signals in her district.

"Since last year, I've been involved in a somewhat exasperating search for funding to repair the traffic signal at Eighth Street and Melrose Avenue in Ambridge," Laughlin said. "Because PennDOT believes that local governments are responsible for any maintenance of these systems, they are unwilling to offer any real help."

Laughlin said this legislation would require PennDOT to determine the extent of the problem. "If we could determine the most significant problem, the possibility exists that we could address it," she said.

Laughlin noted that the problem for many municipalities is that often times they are not able to get replacement parts for these traffic signals. "It's a real safety concern for all of us," she said. "I believe we have a responsibility to find out what we can do to correct it."

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op26/6/27/89/laughlin/traffic

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HARRISBURG, PA., June 30 -- The state House this week passed legislation aimed at making health care for Medicare patients more affordable, according to state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway, a co-sponsor of the measure.

The bill, which has 82 legislative co-sponsors, has been referred to the Senate for consideration.

Under the legislation (H.B. 700), reasonable rates for visits and procedures performed by health care practitioners -- as set by the federal government through Medicare -- would be accepted as payment-in-full for all services.

In 1986, Medicare participants paid \$61 million in medical charges above what Medicare paid health providers for their treatment.

Medicare pays 80 percent of reasonable medical fees and the patient must pay the balance. "What happens is health care officials sometimes charge more than what the federal government has said it will pay for a service," Laughlin said. "And the patient ends up paying an even higher balance than the remaining 20 percent that Medicare didn't cover."

Medical care costs have increased more rapidly than nearly anything else, Laughlin said. "Those bearing the brunt of the higher costs usually are older people, who live on fixed incomes."

Because older people have limited incomes, often times they don't seek needed medical treatment for fear of having to pay too much, she said. "The unanswered question has been: How many people didn't seek medical care because they couldn't afford it? This legislation attempts to address that problem."

Under the measure, all health care practitioners would be affected, including doctors, dentists, eye doctors, physical therapists and pharmacists.

Also, if a health care official violates this law, he or she would be subject to fines. If the violations continue, the health care

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official could lose his or her license to practice in the state.

"We were able to pass this bill because senior citizens, who were most concerned about the legislation, advocated for it very forcibly," Laughlin said. "There's a growing awareness by those of us in the state Legislature that older citizens have special needs that need to be addressed. Beyond how it affects senior citizens though, this legislation is good for all of us."

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op26/6/30/89/laughlin/mom

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HARRISBURG, July 10 -- The state Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has announced a move to allow seven characters on specialized vanity license plates, according to state Rep. Susan Laughlin, D-Conway.

Laughlin said PennDOT previously only allowed six characters to be used on the vanity plates.

"These plates have become very popular over the last several years," Laughlin noted. "With an additional character, more people can take advantage of the speciality plates."

Use of vanity plates is restricted to passenger cars and light trucks.

Applications for vanity or regular license plates, and other PennDOT forms are available in Laughlin's district office at 555 Merchant St., Ambridge.

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