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**United Homeowners of Pennsylvania
and PHA Wellness Foundation**

Empowering homeowners



What's happening, Pennsylvania?

March, 2017

www.unitedhomeowners-pa.org

Homeowners need a *united* voice!

Edward Smith, UHoP Chairman

Sure, Pennsylvania motorists want to drive on good roads and to travel over safe bridges. But do we have to have the highest gasoline tax in the nation? Probably not. Sure, we want our interstate standard limited access East- West highway that connects to Ohio, Maryland, and Delaware to be well maintained – but does it have to be a toll road that raises rates every year? No, it does not.



Investor owned utilities (IOUs) such as Penelec and Peoples Gas have been given protected franchises in order to develop their infrastructure systems free from competition. Of course, homeowners need dependable electric power for many things and natural gas for home heating, but is every rate increase absolutely necessary? Probably not, and probably not in the amount granted by the Public Utility Commission (PUC). IOUs always ask for more than they expect and their rate request is always granted. Homeowners, as the largest stakeholder group affected by residential rate increases - should be intervenors in rate cases affecting residential rates. Those affected by rate increases as well as those who benefit should both be heard during PUC rate hearings. That is not the case, it is a one-sided proceeding.

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Homeowners need a *united* voice! (cont.)

Cable television (CATV) and satellite customers want good television viewing and internet connections but most believe the rates are higher than necessary and that the service could be better. They are probably right. CATV companies operate with franchises from local governments but are basically uncontrolled and charge what the market will bear. When the local school board decides it wants to launch a building program and wants to raise real estate taxes to float bonds, does the board look at all of the existing fees and taxes that are already in place and often being increased? No, they do not and neither does your county commission when they think they need to raise taxes.

Each tax, fee, or rate increase may of itself be nominal but the cumulative effect year after year may be burdensome in the extreme for many homeowners – especially retirees on fixed incomes and those facing economic distress. Each taxing authority acts independently. There is no oversight. Unchecked tax, rate, and fee increases hurt homeownership and homeowners.

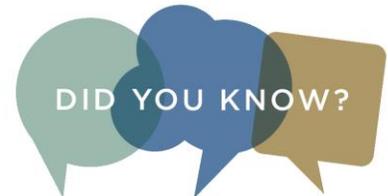
The State Legislature, as it considers tax and fee increases needs to hear from homeowners - united and speaking with one voice - as does the Turnpike Commission, the Public Utility Commission, and your local school board and county commission. United Homeowners of Pennsylvania can help with that.

***SEE PAGE 5 FOR A BREAKDOWN OF SOME OF THE MANY TAXES PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS AND HOMEOWNERS ARE REQUIRED TO PAY.**

Pennsylvania Facts and Figures

Dawn Rager, Social Media & Communications Director

- Pennsylvania is the first state of the fifty United States to list their web site URL on a license plate.
- In 1909, the first baseball stadium was built in Pittsburgh.
- Stewartstown hired its first police officer in 1876. He was also the town lamp lighter.
- Kennett Square is known as the Mushroom Capital of the World.
- Pennsylvania is the only original colony not bordered by the Atlantic Ocean.



Find more fun facts here:

<http://www.50states.com/facts/pennsylvania.htm>

Free Tax Return Preparation

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We Appreciate All That You Do!

For all Armed Forces Service Members from this area who were deployed to a designated combat zone in 2016 and have not filed their 2016 tax return.

***If you are just returning from a combat zone, you have until, at least, October 16, 2017 to file your 2016 tax return.**

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Pennsylvania confirms first fracking-related earthquakes

By Reid Frazier, The Allegheny Front

Excerpt taken from [StateImpact Pennsylvania](#)



A natural gas drilling rig in Greene County, Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania officials say they've confirmed the state's first fracking-related earthquakes took place last year in Lawrence County, northwest of Pittsburgh. As a result, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is stepping up its requirements for drilling in that part of the state, which is known for seismic activity.

In April 2016, Texas-based Hilcorp Energy Company was fracking a pair of wells in the Utica Shale near New Castle, Pennsylvania when seismic monitors nearby detected five tremors, measuring between 1.8 and 2.3 on the Richter scale. Quakes that small are too faint to be felt on the surface. But they were significant, if only because fracking-induced earthquakes had never been recorded in the state.

"At least within Pennsylvania, this is the first time that we have seen that sort of spatial and temporal correlation with [oil and gas] operator activity," says Seth Pelepko, chief of well-plugging and subsurface activities for DEP's oil and gas management program.

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In addition, Pelepko says there were "no faults identified along portions of the well bore where these seismic events were detected." [READ MORE HERE...](#)

[Earthquakes, by creating fissures, make more likely the upward migration of frack waste into drinking water tables.]

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Home Security System Member Service

Kelli Ruiz, Executive Director

UHoP is currently exploring the best home security systems to bring a new, more affordable approach to our members. We are offering a DIY home security system that will protect the average-sized home from intrusion, fire, smoke, carbon monoxide, glass breakage, flood and freezing. The equipment package is easily installed and offered at a negotiated special price to our members. There is no monthly cost or central monitoring. In the event of a detected danger, the system will automatically dial up to four numbers and can alert the owner of the specific threat for corrective action. In the event of intrusion, a siren and strobe light will alert the owner or neighbors. A security alert sign will be available for the front yard, as well. This system is ideal for the homeowner who would like a measure of security without the monthly cost of monitored systems. *Stay tuned for more information!*

Pennsylvania Under Siege by Chronic Illness

Dawn Rager, Social Media & Communications Director

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health's [website](#), chronic diseases are a major cause of disability and death in Pennsylvania, as well as throughout the country.

The seven leading causes of death are:

- Heart disease;
- Cancer;
- Stroke;
- Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (CLRD);
- Unintentional injury;
- Alzheimer's disease; and
- Diabetes.



These causes account for about 70 percent of all deaths per year in Pennsylvania. These chronic diseases cause havoc on our Medicaid system and cause financial difficulties for caregivers, as well.

Four modifiable health risk behaviors have been identified—lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption—are responsible for much of the chronic illnesses listed above.

Find out more in **The Chronic Disease Burden Report (2011)** provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, available [here](#).

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

-- Unknown

Cost-cutting measures proposed with \$1.8 million consulting contract to find solutions for Pennsylvania's deficit

United Homeowners of Pennsylvania (UHoP)

According to Philly.com, the state's budget deficit has reached a projected \$3 billion for this year, with less revenue coming in than anticipated. Governor Tom Wolf is turning to a consulting firm called McKinsey & Co. for a solution to balance Pennsylvania's budget. McKinsey & Co. is a widely known and respected global consulting firm that study markets, trends and emerging best practices.



Governor Wolf has stated he will *not raise* either the state sales or income tax to close the gap on the budget deficit. Additionally, he has announced his intentions to close Allegheny County's state prison, saving Pennsylvania taxpayers approximately \$81 million per year. He also announced that he would consolidate several state agencies to help alleviate the deficit problem. Lastly, it is expected the governor will, again, propose a tax on natural gas drillers to ease the financial burden of the state – a proposal United Homeowners of Pennsylvania strongly supports.

We commend Governor Wolf for exploring solutions; homeowners are already hampered by existing and ever-growing local and state taxes. We also commend Governor Wolf for finding ways to cut unnecessary government costs and consolidation to remedy the grim situation.

United Homeowners of Pennsylvania has requested a copy of the McKinsey & Co. report, when it becomes available. Along with the governor's budget, we hope to hash out additional cost-cutting areas that may help the Commonwealth to bridge the financial gap. *Stay tuned for more information!*

Current Tax Rates: Did You Know? (from the PA Department of Revenue)

Dawn Rager, Social Media & Communications Director

TAX	RATE
Personal Income Tax	3.07 percent
PA Sales, Use and Hotel Occupancy Tax	6 percent
Corporate Net Income Tax	9.99 percent
Gross Receipts Tax - Telephone and Telegraph	50 mills (Intrastate, Interstate and Mobile)
Liquid fuels (motor gasoline and gasohol)	\$0.582/gallon
Liquor Tax	18 percent

WAIT... THERE'S MORE!

Visit here to see what additional taxes and fees are required by PA residents and homeowners:

<http://www.revenue.pa.gov/GeneralTaxInformation/Current%20Tax%20Rates/Pages/default.aspx>

Meet Our Management Team.

Feel free to contact us, anytime, for information about UHoP and PHA Wellness Foundation or to discuss the issues that matter TO YOU! *We'd love to hear from you.*

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CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION.



Kelli Ruiz
Executive Director

"The time for you to join United Home-owners (to receive all our benefits) is now!"

kruiz@unitedhomeowners-pa.org



Dawn Rager
Social Media & Communications Director

"We're here to empower PA's residents and homeowners. Stay informed! Join us!"

drager@unitedhomeowners-pa.org

PA travel and weather information



<http://www.511pa.com/default.aspx>

511PA is a new, trapped traveler emergency communications tool that allows incident response teams to communicate via automated phone or text message directly with motorists who are trapped in a roadway backup. It also provides information about weather, road conditions and closures.

Download it for *FREE* to your cell phone today

Visit PA.GOV for important information about the Commonwealth's priorities, services currently available and to contact your elected officials.



An informed citizen is a powerful citizen. Tell your elected officials how they're doing!

We are a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization serving Pennsylvania's residents and homeowners -- *A responsible voice for nearly 4 million homeowners!* **Join us at NO COST TO YOU and enjoy FREE MEMBER SERVICES.**

