

# Keeping LANCASTER Current

AN HOURGLASS PUBLICATION

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**FYI**

**STRUCTURING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: A LOOK AT THE CITY OF READING** – [Issues PA](#) reports that in the coming year, [The Pennsylvania Economy League](#) will be taking a close look at municipal fiscal health, how it is impacted by state policy, and the impact on economic and community vitality.

Two [Pennsylvania Economy League](#) (PEL) studies for the city of Reading that predicted ballooning deficits helped prompt city officials to take action and avert a financial crisis. PEL's analysis that showed deficits would grow dramatically if left unchecked helped city leaders like current Mayor Thomas M. McMahon tackle the looming deficits and overcome skeptics who questioned the existence of a future sea of red ink, according to city officials. The 1999 report, noting there was no single solution, identified various opportunities and strategies to fix the city's financial woes. PEL warned that "quick fixes," such as the use of one-time revenues, were not the solution. Instead, **broad-based strategies such as tax increases, regional cooperation, and controlling employee benefits and wage increases were recommended.** It looks as though the city will have ended 2006 in the black. Still, city officials say, the underlying problem identified by PEL in its 1999 report and 2004 update remains. A structural imbalance between ongoing revenues and escalating expenses continues to exist.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ORGANIZATION CALLS FOR LOCAL TAX FAIRNESS, ADEQUATE HUMAN SERVICES FUNDING** - In a news conference at the state Capitol on Wednesday, county leaders from throughout Pennsylvania unveiled their list of 2007 key legislative priorities and called upon state leaders to strengthen their commitment to accomplish tax fairness for counties and the people they serve, while also adequately funding mandated human service programs. [CLICK HERE](#) for a press release from the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania outlining the group's legislative priorities for 2007.

**NEW REPORT EXAMINES LIABILITY CONCERNS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROPERTY ACQUISITION** - The [National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals](#) (NALGEP) and [Brownfield Communities Network](#) (BCN) Involuntary Acquisitions Task Force have produced a publication called [Superfund Liability: A Continuing Obstacle to Brownfields Redevelopment](#). The report examines local government property acquisition, one of the key tools needed to facilitate brownfields redevelopment. It finds that **liability concerns continue to hamper local government acquisition** of brownfield sites.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**6<sup>th</sup> Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities, February 8-10, 2007, Los Angeles** – [For more information.](#)

[DEP Accepting Applications for Watershed Restoration and Protection Grants](#) - Deadline to apply April 13<sup>th</sup>.

**15th Annual Congress for the New Urbanism -- May 17-20, 2007** - In the lively neighborhoods, walkable streets, and centuries-old architecture of Old City Philadelphia, the 15th Annual Congress for the New Urbanism will convene to discuss topics such as New Urbanism and the Old City, Landscape and the Environment, Design and Development, Infrastructure and Transportation, Codes and Public Policy, and Global New Urbanism. ... [For more information.](#)

## INTERESTING ARTICLES

[10 Steps to a Better York Region](#) – Urban expert David Rusk recently spoke to a packed house of community leaders in York about steps he thinks need to be taken to rejuvenate York City and prevent the decline of its suburbs.

[Will it be local school control or lower school taxes? Smaller school districts or lower school taxes?](#) That's the choice school-tax reformers have to make.

*Enabling informed growth management  
decision-making for Lancaster County*

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