

Keeping LANCASTER Current

AN HOURGLASS PUBLICATION

Lancaster County Growth Management Issues Nov. 16, 2007

FYI

THE FACTS – WHY WE NEED A PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN LANCASTER COUNTY - read a newly published [position paper](#) by the Partnership for a Lancaster County Public Health Department, a [United Way of Lancaster County Community Impact initiative](#). The [paper](#) provides the background and the facts regarding the creation of a local public health department.

This campaign is driven by the results of a [feasibility study](#) conducted by the Drexel University School of Public Health released in spring 2005. **The Drexel study identified significant gaps in the coordination of public health services** in Lancaster County, including environmental hazards such as water quality and lead exposure, solid waste management and vector control, as well as emergency preparedness and coordination. The [study](#) also indicated that **a public health department in Lancaster County could coordinate public health-related activities throughout the county, collect and maintain information on public health-related activities and monitor the health status of the population, and be the go-to place for residents with public health related concerns.**

CONSOLIDATION OF EARNED INCOME TAX COLLECTION – a new [report](#) from [IssuesPA](#). Pennsylvania is unrivaled in the number of jurisdictions -- almost 2,900 -- levying local earned income taxes. According to the [Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development](#) (DCED), **municipalities and school districts in the Commonwealth use 560 tax collectors to collect and distribute more than \$1.9 billion in annual earned income tax revenue.** Tax collectors in Pennsylvania currently are working in what has been described as **the most fragmented tax collection system in the country.** A significant number of municipalities, **285, have a different earned income tax collector from their school district,** substantially increasing **duplication of effort** for employees, employers and collectors, with the interaction of as many as three local tax collectors required at times. That **fragmentation** combined with lack of standardized practices, coordination, reporting and accountability among and between jurisdictions and collectors **creates a complicated process.**

The [Pennsylvania Economy League of Southwestern Pennsylvania](#) estimates **\$237 million in local earned income tax revenue goes uncollected annually by municipalities and school districts.** Lack of uniform withholding, varying thoroughness of tax collectors' records, insufficient training and resources, and failure to coordinate all lead to loss of local revenue and pressure to increase taxes on those that do pay.

To put that annual loss of revenue in context: \$237 million is enough to put 3,000 more police officers on the streets and 3,000 more teachers in our classrooms – all without raising any taxes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[7th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities](#) –

February 7-9, 2008 – Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C. Presented by the [Local Government Commission](#) - The program will include a dynamic mix of plenaries, interactive breakouts, implementation workshops, specialized trainings, and optional tours of local model projects. **It will feature the latest on cutting-edge smart growth issues,** implementation tools and strategies, best practices, interactive learning experiences, new partners, new projects, and new policies.

[Reinventing Older Communities: How Does Place Matter?](#) - March 26 to 28, 2008 - Marriott

Philadelphia Downtown Hotel – Sponsored by the [Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia](#). Learn from the experience of leading developers, mayors, researchers, and other practitioners around the country who will share their successes, innovations, and challenges in reinventing their communities. The conference will be valuable to funders, lenders, planners, government officials, researchers and policymakers. More details will follow.

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

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