



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

November 7, 2008

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

ELECTIONS: THE BEGINNING AND THE END

Tuesday's election held a very special meaning for township officials. Some were running the elections; others were running for election and some doing both. Congratulations go out to election officials across the state for processing over 5 million ballots, with few problems, despite the keen eye of the media looking for any evidence of election mismanagement. Congratulations also go out to all of those who woke up a little late on Wednesday morning knowing they would be spending the next four years meeting the needs of their neighbors as township officials.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: THE NEXT LEGISLATURE TAKES SHAPE

While none of the members of the state Senate were up for election, all 110 seats in the House of Representatives were up for grabs on Nov. 4th. The Democratic Party took advantage of all of the election dynamics and added nine seats to their house majority. In January, Democrats will hold a 67-43 advantage over Republicans in the House of Representatives. The House will be welcoming 46 new members to the body. Four of those new members have served on township boards; one is married to a township supervisor. Nearly a third of the new state representatives are women. Next year, the Legislature will have more women serving than ever before in this state's history. Two-thirds of the new members of the House have a background with local government experience.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS SELECT TOP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Newly elected House Democratic members came together on Thursday and selected their top leadership positions for the next two years. Current Speaker of the House, Andy Dillon (D-Redford Chtr. Twp.), was re-elected unanimously to that position. Speaker Dillon not only won re-election on Tuesday, but he also easily fended off a vote to recall him from office on the same ballot. Also elected to leadership positions were Kathy Angerer (D-Dundee Twp.) as Majority Floor Leader and Pam Byrnes (D-Lyndon Twp.) as House Speaker Pro Tempore. Other Democratic leadership positions will be selected in the future and the Republicans are expected to make their choices next week.

HOUSE COMMITTEE APPROVES 911 COMPROMISE

The House Energy and Technology Committee on Thursday adopted a substitute to HB 6070, sponsored by Rep. Jeff Mayes (D-Bangor Chtr. Twp.), a bill that extends a sunset to allow counties to assess fees on phone lines for 911 services. The bill extends the current statutory authority for counties until December 2014 and allows them the authority for the first time to place the 911 fees on cell phones and voice over Internet protocol (VOIP) type phones. Counties would be allowed to assess a fee of 42 cents a month through approval of a resolution by the county commission. The bill also allows a \$3 per month fee if approved by voters of the county. HB 6070 in its original form caused significant controversy as it would have required counties to gain approval of the State Public Service Commission and voters before implementing 911 fees. The substitute bill was reported unanimously out of committee and moves to the House floor. MTA supports the bill in its current form.

GOVERNOR LOOKS TO CUT THE BUDGET

After just starting the new fiscal year at the state level, Gov. Jennifer Granholm has already announced that budget cuts will be needed. The announcement was made based on the worsening economic activity in the state and nation. The governor stated that she would be issuing an Executive Order detailing the cuts, but not until the end of November or December. The governor is waiting for the economic forecast from the University of Michigan, which will be released at the end of the month. Many are speculating that the state will need to cut \$300 to \$600 million for the current year. National retail sales reports showed a sharp decline in October. This is a key indicator for revenue sharing for local governments, which is based solely on sales tax collections.

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