

## GNPN Public Policy Summary October 13, 2016



Dear GNPN Members,

Below is a summary of key public policy issues impacting the Pittsburgh region's nonprofit sector. Key stories include:

### [Announcements](#) and [GNPN News](#)

- The Forbes Funds is thrilled announce the launch of UpPrize 2016. There are two challenge areas this year: access to healthy foods and innovative technology. Nonprofits are strongly encouraged to participate this year. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- Registration is now open for GNPN's Annual Meeting on November 18th. Visit [www.gnpn2016.eventbrite.com](http://www.gnpn2016.eventbrite.com) for information and to register.
- October 18: GNPN's Public Policy Committee will meet at 8:30 AM. RSVP to [streeter@forbesfunds.org](mailto:streeter@forbesfunds.org) if you plan to attend.
- PCTV is our Member Spotlight for September!
- The [Constituent and Town Hall Events](#) section contains a calendar of upcoming events hosted by local elected officials.

### [Pennsylvania Budget and State Government](#)

- Pennsylvania was \$200 million short in its first quarter revenue collections.
- Auditor General Eugene DePasquale released audit findings and recommendations for Pennsylvania's ChildLine system. According to *The Patriot-News*, "The report outlines eight major findings and 24 recommendations detailed in an audit completed to assess ongoing issues in the system, including an abundance of unanswered calls to the hotline, understaffing and high turnover and woefully inefficient and negligent handling and processing of suspected child abuse cases."
- The Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down the "local share assessment" tax that was paid by casinos to municipalities. The legislature is anticipated the address this so that municipalities do not experience revenue shortfalls.
- The Pennsylvania Supreme Court invalidated certain provisions of Act 13, which governs natural gas extraction in Pennsylvania.
- The Auditor General released findings from an audit of the Department of Human Services' EBT card program.
- House Speaker Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny) announced his intention to increase the funding for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC).

### [PA General Assembly Legislation](#)

#### New Legislation

- HB 2379- Ensuring a Drug-Free Home for our Kinship and Foster Children
- HB 2398- Amend the Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act to align with IRS reporting requirements

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- SB 1379- Legislation Based on Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) proposals to create a Pennsylvania Financial Services Credit Ladder

### [FLSA](#)

- There is still time for you to complete our survey regarding the upcoming changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act. We are working with Congressman Mike Doyle (D-PA) and his staff to understand the full impact of this change on nonprofits, their employees, and the delivery of important services in southwestern Pennsylvania. Click [here](#) to take the survey.
- HR 6094, which would delay implementation of the FLSA changes by 6 months, passed the House of Representatives at the end of September. However, the National Council of Nonprofits noted that "the White House made clear that President Obama would veto the measure if it reached his desk. With Congress recessing until after the elections, there is little time for it to block the overtime rule through legislative action."

### [Election 2016](#)

- The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported on the "surge" in voter registration applications submitted to Pennsylvania's Department of State.
- The Commonwealth Court declined to consider the legal challenge to the ballot question regarding judicial retirement ages.
- WITF highlighted the race for Pennsylvania Treasurer.
- The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported on a proposal in the House to let poll watchers serve in counties outside of their home counties.
- State and County officials defended the security of Pennsylvania's voting systems during a House State Government Committee hearing.

### [Nonprofit Sector](#)

- The Regional Asset District announced grants to local arts and culture groups.
- The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported on new software developed by the United Way to raise money from younger donors.

### [Pittsburgh Region News](#)

- The Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (ICA) approved Pittsburgh's budget with the stipulation that it find a replacement for the \$10 million previously paid by the Rivers Casino. Pittsburgh is currently negotiating an alternative voluntary payment arrangement with the casino to make up for the shortfall.
- WESA reported that Mayor Bill Peduto's relationship with the ICA is "improving."
- The Pittsburgh Region News section contains stories on diversity in the region's workforce and startup community.

### [Health and Human Services](#)

- City and State published a story marking two years of the Affordable Care Act's implementation in Pennsylvania.
- Pennsylvania Health Secretary Karen Murphy said the state needs to update its nursing home standards.
- *The Morning Call* reported that mentally ill individuals are ending up in jails due to a lack of alternative treatment centers.

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- WESA reported that the Pittsburgh region's approach to the opioid epidemic is viewed as a model program.
- According to the Western PA Diabetes Association, the Pittsburgh region has a slightly higher diabetes rate than the national average.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs will now be covering vitro fertilizations and adoptions for wounded veterans.
- According to Stateline, the opioid epidemic has created a significant problem in foster care systems.
- Just Harvest, 412 Food Rescue, Grow Pittsburgh, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Food Security Partnership and Hunger-Free Pennsylvania, were recognized for their work in fighting hunger.

### [Education](#)

- According to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, local school districts are unable to attract a diverse pool of teachers to the region.
- *The Morning Call* wrote about how the Every Student Succeeds Act will be implemented in Pennsylvania.

### [Housing and Community Development](#)

- Mayor Peduto announced a new program to ensure that city development contracts are awarded on merit, rather than through connections.
- WESA highlighted the work of the Pittsburgh Blight Working Group to improve neighborhoods.

### [Water, Energy, and Environment](#)

- New drilling regulations took effect in Pennsylvania this week.
- According to Public Source, "Nearly a third of major air polluters in Southwestern Pennsylvania are running without permits required by the U.S. Clean Air Act."

### [Corrections and Public Safety](#)

- According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, "Pittsburgh is on track to have another deadly year ... There were 43 killings in the city from January through August. That's two shy of the number recorded during the same period in 2014, when officials marked their highest homicide rate in six years."

### [Arts, Parks, and Culture](#)

- The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported on the changes taking place at WQED.
- The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra is currently on strike.

These stories, and many others, follow below.

### **Sections**

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**GNPN 2016 Annual Meeting**

**\*\* Registration Now Open \*\***

# **GNPN Annual Meeting**

**November 18, 2016**

**8:30 AM to 11:00 AM**

**Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland**

***Post Election: What did we learn?  
How can the community restore civil discourse?***

***Featuring:***

**Jim Crutchfield**  
*Chair*  
Public Source



**Laura Ellsworth**  
*Partner*  
Jones Day  
Pittsburgh Chamber of  
Commerce, Chair



**Michelle Figlar**  
*Vice President of  
Learning*  
The Heinz Endowments



**Larry Davis**  
*Dean, School of Social Work  
Director, Center on Race and  
Social Problems*  
University of Pittsburgh



**John Allison**  
*Editorial Page Editor*  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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Maher Duessel \* Multiscope**

**UpPrize**



**UpPrize** Social Innovation  
Challenge

### [UpPrize 2016](#)

The Forbes Funds is thrilled to announce the launch of UpPrize 2016. We are joined this year by BNY Mellon and Bridgeway Capital as the Challenge Partners. There are two challenge areas: access to healthy foods and innovative technology. Each Challenge areas has a total award purse of \$350K. The geographic area is also expanded to Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Applications will be accepted between October 1 and November 30. Nonprofits are strongly encouraged to participate. Visit [www.UpPrize.org](http://www.UpPrize.org) for more information and to enter. [Download the UpPrize information here](#). Also, please circulate the flier to your broad network of colleagues. It is open to all! You never know who may be thinking of a major innovation that will make our community better for all. If you have questions, email [hello@upprize.org](mailto:hello@upprize.org).

### **GNPN and The Forbes Funds News**

["Break it Down: The Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership." Phoebe Gilmore. Pittsburgh Magazine. October 12, 2016.](#)

"GNPN's services unite, develop and strengthen the nonprofit sector of southwestern Pennsylvania by increasing its efficiency, viability and public recognition."

["NEXT Up: Kate Dewey." Jennifer Baron. Next Pittsburgh. October 2, 2016.](#)

"[Monday October 3] Sam Balbier, executive director of the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership (GNPN), and I will be exploring with Rick how we can work together in support of this mission for our region. GNPN is part of The Forbes Funds and represents a coalition of more than 450 nonprofits. ... [Tuesday October 4] Later in the afternoon, Sam Balbier and I will meet with Joni Schwager, executive director of The Staunton Farm Foundation, about an issue of joint concern: the undercapitalization of behavioral health services in the region."

[Commentary: "Courage: The enduring characteristic of great leaders." Kate Dewey. Smart Business. October 1, 2016.](#)

"The circumstances of this election year raise an interesting question to anyone involved in an organization. What, you ask yourself, makes a good leader?"

### [PCTV is our Member Spotlight for October](#)

Pittsburgh Community Television (PCTV) is a nonprofit community television station dedicated to using media to make our community a stronger and better place to live. PCTV empowers nonprofits and individuals to create local media that captures what is unique about our region. PCTV provides the training, equipment, and facilities needed for nonprofits and individuals to create effective video programming regardless of resources or view point. Click [here](#) to learn more.

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Click [here](#) to view our current offering of services for GNPN Members!

### **Announcements and Events**

#### [Velocity Fundraising Series](#)

Are you missing out on dollars because your messaging and design aren't hitting the mark, or because your donors aren't responding? Would you know if you were? Given exceptional reviews and popular demand, Velocity: Accelerating Fundraising for Your Nonprofit is back this spring. Organizations in the 2015 Velocity program saw increases in average gift amounts, response rates, total gifts, dollars raised and more -- and they're now able to apply these successful messaging and design concepts to future fundraising campaigns. The 2016 Schedule of the five 90-minute training sessions:

- November 4: Multi-Channel Campaigns

Sessions will be held at the Kaufman Auditorium, Hill House Association, 1835 Centre Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

GNPN members: Use the promo code GNPN2016 to receive a discount!

Find out more information about the training series [here](#).

#### [Become a Community Producer for PCTV!](#)

Become a community producer for PCTV! Pittsburgh Community Television is a non-profit community television station dedicating to helping non-profits and individuals use media for community good. PCTV provides all the training, equipment, and facilities needed to produce a top-notch video for broadcast on Comcast 21, Verizon 47, and distribution on-line. If you're interested in a low cost way of promoting your organization and bringing more attention to your cause using video, PCTV can help. Everything starts with our orientation which is held at the beginning of every month. For more information or to register for a class, call 412-322-7570 or visit our website at [www.pctv21.org](http://www.pctv21.org). PCTV is located at 1300 Western Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

#### [October 28: Staunton Farm Foundation's Rural Behavioral Health Conference](#)

This year's conference, Staunton Farm Foundation invites individuals who work in the behavioral health field to come learn from peers to enhance therapeutic techniques, gain knowledge, and develop leadership skills. We are solely focusing on professionals this year and their needs in rural communities. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Nonprofit Vote Cohort**



*Signs at Catholic Charities' Downtown Health Center*

We are thrilled to be working with: Amachi Pittsburgh, Auberle, Catholic Charities of Pittsburgh, Community Human Services, the Consumer Health Coalition, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, Focus on Renewal, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Just Harvest, the Latino Family Center- Allegheny Intermediate Unit, National Council of Jewish Women- Pittsburgh Section, Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children, Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project, Seton Hill University, Wilksburg Family Support Center/ Office of Child Development, YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, and YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh.

Now that the voter registration deadline has passed, we are switching our focus to making sure that nonprofit clients, staff, board members, and supporters participate on Election Day. We will be circulating information about get out the vote efforts, so stay tuned!

### **Nonprofit Vote Resources**

Is your organization getting people engaged in the election? [Submit your organization's voter engagement progress](#) for the 2016 election cycle!

- Tweet about your activities and share photos using the hashtag #nonprofitvote. GPNP's Twitter handle is [@GPNPpgh](#); follow us for the latest news!
- Post about your activities on [GPNP's Facebook page](#).
- Join GPNP's [Linked In group](#) and post discussions.

Ask us questions about staying nonpartisan, getting out the vote, or anything else related to nonprofit voter engagement! Click [here](#) to view GPNP's Voter Engagement Resources page.

["Nonprofits, Voting, and Elections: A Guide to Nonpartisan Voter Engagement." Nonprofit Vote. August 2016.](#)

"This guide provides your 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization the knowledge you need to promote voter participation and engage with candidates on a nonpartisan basis. It begins with a review of the prohibition against partisan political activities. It then discusses the many nonpartisan activities 501(c)(3)'s may engage in to assist their constituents, staff and local communities to register and vote or connect with candidates."

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["Resources for Staff and Volunteers to Register and Vote." Nonprofit Vote. August 2016.](#)

"Along with our voter registration drive checklist, this tool provides ideas on when, where and how to get your staff and volunteers registered to vote."

Questions about voter engagement? Contact GPNP's Nonprofit Vote Coordinator Deaglan McManus at [mcmanusd@forbesfunds.org](mailto:mcmanusd@forbesfunds.org) or GPNP Public Policy Manager David Streeter at [streeter@forbesfunds.org](mailto:streeter@forbesfunds.org).

### **Pennsylvania Budget and State Government News**

["PA's first quarter financial shortfall could be election-related." Katie Meyer. WITF. October 8, 2016.](#)

"With the end of its first fiscal quarter wrapping up, Pennsylvania state government brought in about 200 million dollars less than expected. That's not great news for a commonwealth that's currently using a credit line from the state treasury to pay off its immediate costs. However, it's too early to tell if the shortfall will have any real financial impact. Revenues were weak across the board, but, the shortfalls were most severe in sales and corporate tax income."

["ChildLine hotline should hire ombudsman: among recommendations out of final state audit." Ivy DeJesus. \*The Patriot-News\*. October 12, 2016.](#)

"The report outlines eight major findings and 24 recommendations detailed in an audit completed to assess ongoing issues in the system, including an abundance of unanswered calls to the hotline, understaffing and high turnover and woefully inefficient and negligent handling and processing of suspected child abuse cases."

[Report: "Performance Audit Report: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services ChildLine." Auditor General Eugene DePasquale. October 12, 2016.](#) (pdf)

Click to download the Auditor General's full report.

["Pa. Supreme Court strikes down tax paid by casinos to host communities." \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. September 28, 2016.](#)

"Pennsylvania's highest court is striking down the tax that casinos pay their host communities, potentially devastating local budgets around the state. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that a 'local share assessment' is unconstitutional because it treats the state's 12 casinos unequally."

["Can lawmakers fix the casino law in time?" Matt Assad and Steve Esack. \*The Morning Call\*. October 1, 2016.](#)

"When the Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down a portion of the state's casino law, it potentially stripped more than \$140 million a year from towns that are using it to pay police officers, buy firetrucks and preserve farmland. The order takes effect in late January, so state legislators have little time to change an incredibly complex law, while navigating a minefield of lobbyists, angry municipal officials and well-funded casino executives who want different things."

["Pa. Supreme Court casino ruling could prove costly for counties, municipalities." Mark Belko and Karen Langley. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. September 30, 2016.](#)

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"Under the state's gambling law enacted in 2004, all casinos except those in Philadelphia and the resort venues in Nemaquin and Valley Forge are required to pay the greater of 2 percent of their gross terminal revenue or \$10 million a year to the host municipality. They paid 2 percent if revenues topped \$500 million a year or \$10 million if they did not. Since the law was enacted, every casino has paid the \$10 million."

["Court ruling leaves holes in Pennsylvania drilling law." Laura Legere and Don Hopey. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 2, 2016.](#)

"The Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision last week to throw out several contested sections of the state's gas drilling law rejected some of the good entwined with the bad. The ruling last Wednesday was a victory for environmentalists, municipalities and a doctor who challenged narrow parts of the law, Act 13, which had been updated in 2012 for the new era of shale gas extraction. But at several points in its decision the court discarded provisions designed to protect human health and drinking water after chemical exposure or well site spills because it found the law's limitations on those protections to be unconstitutional. The decision leaves legislators with the task of filling in the holes and it is not clear whether they will act."

["Pa. auditor: State paid welfare benefits to 2,000 dead people." Karen Langley. \*Philadelphia Inquirer\*. October 1, 2016.](#)

"His report found that between July 2013 and June 2014, 2,324 people who had been dead at least 60 days received a total of \$693,161 on their Electronic Benefits Transfer cards. The Department of Human Services, which runs the program, said that payment total was incorrect, adding that the Auditor General's Office did not provide it with the exact methodology it had used."

["Audit: PA has been giving food stamps to dead people." Eric Holmberg. \*Public Source\*. October 3, 2016.](#)

"Pennsylvania taxpayers paid nearly \$700,000 in public benefits to 2,324 people who had already died. And that was only what auditors found in one year between July 2013 and June 2014. It's the result of a policy that limits when caseworkers can review death notifications at the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services [DHS], which administers public benefit payments. Sometimes the agency wouldn't receive a death notification in a timely manner. In other cases, the agency simply did nothing when it did receive a death notification."

["Turzai wants more tax-credit scholarships for nonpublic schools." Martha Woodall. \*Philadelphia Inquirer\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

"Turzai (R., Allegheny) wants to boost the total corporate tax credits businesses can receive for contributing to scholarship and educational-improvement programs to \$250 million in the 2017-18 budget - \$75 million more than the current cap. ... His proposed legislation, which he said would be introduced this year, would increase the tax credits that businesses can take for contributions to the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program by \$50 million and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credits (OSTC) by \$25 million. The proposed EITC increase would be twice the size of the boost the legislature approved in the current budget."

["For Wolf, opioid crisis offers chance to flex political muscle." Angela Coulombis. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. September 29, 2016.](#)

" Gov. Tom Wolf has called it a public health crisis and an epidemic, crisscrossing Pennsylvania for more than a year to participate in roundtables and work sessions on how to combat prescription drug and heroin addiction."

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["Commentary: Let's make redistricting in Pa. more sensible." Fraklin Kury. \*Philadelphia Inquirer\*. September 30, 2016.](#)

### **PA General Assembly Legislation**

Below is a summary of recently introduced bills and legislative actions relevant to GNPN's work and members. If we've missed something, please email [streeter@forbesfunds.org](mailto:streeter@forbesfunds.org) and we'll add it to our tracking lists.

#### *New Legislation*

#### [HB 2379- Ensuring a Drug-Free Home for our Kinship and Foster Children](#)

*Prime Sponsor:* Representative Kristen Hill (R-York)

*Current Committee:* Children and Youth

"This legislation addresses our lack of knowledge of the magnitude of the resource parent drug problem by providing for testing, data gathering and analyses, and treatment options to retain otherwise qualified resource parents. My bill provides for a robust study to: 1) obtain valid, reliable data on the number of resource parents abusing drugs, and the types of drugs being abused; 2) determine the effectiveness and efficiency of mobile devices in recording, retrieving and analyzing results of caseworker observations on drug use; and 3) evaluate and recommend cost-effective treatment options for those resource parents abusing drugs." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

#### [HB 2398- Amend the Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act to align with IRS reporting requirements](#)

*Prime Sponsor:* Representative David Zimmerman (R-Lancaster)

*Current Committee:* Finance

"...legislation to amend the Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act to align with IRS reporting requirements. My legislation will provide our volunteer organizations state and federal reporting uniformity and reduce costly audits, while maintaining transparency. Currently, the Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act requires a nonprofit organization to file a financial statement with the Department of State when their annual contributions exceed \$25,000. However, the IRS reporting threshold is \$50,000. This bill provides our dedicated volunteer fire companies and ambulance associations uniform state and federal reporting compliance and reduce compliance costs. A typical audit could cost \$6,000 or more and a review \$3,500 to \$4,500. Please note that transparency will remain in effect. Nonprofits would still be required to file a Form 990-N, Form 990 or 990-EZ. Small nonprofit organizations are already financially burdened and increasing the auditing threshold would still meet IRS requirements while saving small nonprofit organizations considerable dollars." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

#### [SB 1379- Legislation Based on Consumer Financial Protection Bureau \(CFPB\) proposals to create a Pennsylvania Financial Services Credit Ladder](#)

*Prime Sponsor:* Senator John Yudichak (D-Carbon, Luzerne)

*Current Committee:* Banking and Insurance

"Under my legislation, we will follow the proposals set forth by the CFPB and implement strong guidelines for the lending industry in Pennsylvania. The protections include a minimum loan term of

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one year, no rollovers, no balloon payments, an annual interest rate cap of 36 percent, mandatory underwriting, credit reporting, credit counseling, and a required license review of lenders. The Secretary of Banking and Securities will have oversight over the program." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

### Federal Policy

["Congress passes stopgap spending bill, \\$1.1B to fight Zika." AP. September 28, 2016.](#)

"Averting an election-year crisis, Congress late Wednesday sent President Barack Obama a bill to keep the government operating through Dec. 9 and provide \$1.1 billion in long-delayed funding to battle the Zika virus."

["How Congress averted shutdown." The Hill. September 28, 2016.](#)

"Congressional leaders had the playbook for how to avoid a messy pre-election government shutdown all along. They just had to execute the plays."

### FLSA



#### [GNPN FLSA Survey](#)

There is still time for you to complete our survey regarding the upcoming changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act. We are working with Congressman Mike Doyle (D-PA) and his staff to understand the full impact of this change on nonprofits, their employees, and the delivery of important services in southwestern Pennsylvania. Click [here](#) to take the survey.

### *Federal Legislation*

#### [H.R. 6094- Regulatory Relief for Small Businesses, Schools, and Nonprofits Act](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI)

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Date Introduced: September 21, 2016

Latest Action: Passed the House September 28, 2016; Now under consideration in the Senate

This bill would cause a 6 month delay in implementing the new FLSA rules

### News

["Lawsuits, Legislation Seek to Block DOL Overtime Rule." National Council of Nonprofits. October 3, 2016.](#)

"Efforts are underway to prevent the Labor Department's Overtime Final Rule from becoming effective as scheduled on December 1. Last week, the House passed a bill that would delay implementation of the overtime rule by six months (until June 1, 2017). Senator Lankford (R-OK) has introduced a Senate companion bill, but the White House made clear that President Obama would veto the measure if it reached his desk. With Congress recessing until after the elections, there is little time for it to block the overtime rule through legislative action."

["Overtime Rule May Result in More Off-the-Clock Work." Allen Smith. SHRM. October 3, 2016.](#)

"Reclassified workers might be tempted to underreport hours worked"

[Slides from Schneider Downs' FLSA Presentation](#)

On July 28th, a team from Schneider Downs presented to GNPN members on compliance strategies for the new Fair Labor Standards Act rule on overtime pay. To sum up, nonprofits' compliance plans must be multifaceted and address internal technology, the impact on employees, communication, education, and internal policies. Click [here](#) to download the slides from the presentation.

["The Nonprofit Overtime Implementation Conundrum." National Council of Nonprofits. July 2016.](#)

"Results of the National Survey of Nonprofits with Government Grants and Contracts"

### Election 2016

["Voter registration soars on last day to apply." Angela Coulombis. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. October 12, 2016.](#)

"More than 300,000 voter registration applications were filed online during the past three weeks, according to the Pennsylvania Department of State. On Monday, an average of 3,200 landed each hour - and the 77,400 for the day marked a record since the state began letting voters register online in August 2015. By midday Tuesday, an additional 23,000 applications were filed. ... Voters also filed paper application forms and registered through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, so final figures - and whom they might benefit - won't be clear until the end of the month. The surge should come as no surprise. Groups from local party organizations on up to the presidential campaigns held hundreds of registration drives, and efforts intensified over the weekend."

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["Pa. court won't halt ballot question on judge retirements; another appeal vowed." \*Philadelphia Inquirer\*. October 6, 2016.](#)

"A Commonwealth Court judge has declared the court will not reconsider the legal challenge to a November ballot question that could extend the tenure of scores of Pennsylvania judges by changing their mandatory retirement age."

["Despite lack of spotlight, PA treasury race has stakes." \*Katie Meyer\*. WITF. October 12, 2016.](#)

"It's a big election year in Pennsylvania, and not just because the state's an important one in determining control of the presidency and Senate. There are also several down-ballot state contests, which have so far been largely drowned out by the top of the ticket. One of them is the race for state Treasurer, which is being fought out by Republican Otto Voit and Democrat Joe Torsalla."

["Democrats oppose poll watchers serving outside home counties." \*Karen Langley\*. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 10, 2016.](#)

"A proposal to change Pennsylvania law to let poll watchers serve outside their home counties has drawn opposition from Democrats, who say it would open the door to voter intimidation. The legislation, House Bill 29, is positioned for a final vote in the House, and a spokesman for the Republican majority leader said Friday that it might be brought up this month. A spokeswoman for the Senate majority leader said Republicans have not discussed the proposal, and Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, opposes it. But its prime sponsor, Rep. Rick Saccone, R-Elizabeth Township, said he is pushing hard for a vote. Mr. Saccone insists his bill is misunderstood. He says he is proposing the change because it would be easier to fill the volunteer positions if residents of one county could help in another county. Counties would still have to certify the poll watchers, he said."

["State, county officials vouch for Pa. election systems security in state House hearing." \*Charles Thompson\*. \*The Patriot-News\*. October 4, 2016.](#)

"Here's a few takeaways from Tuesday's House State Government hearing on election security...."

["WHY IT MATTERS: Issues at stake in election." \*AP\*. October 2, 2016.](#)

"A selection of issues at stake in the presidential election and their impact on Americans, in brief..."

["One pool of voters - people in the criminal justice system - gets attention." \*Samantha Melamed\*. \*Philadelphia Inquirer\*. October 7, 2016.](#)

"Pennsylvania has among the nation's most progressive voting laws: Virtually anyone who isn't currently incarcerated for a felony conviction can cast a ballot. But getting out that vote - even in a year when Pennsylvania is considered a key battleground - is another matter."

["Thousands eager to vote won't become citizens in time." \*Julia Preston\*. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 2, 2016.](#)

"...as the number of aspiring citizens grew this year, the backlog at the federal agency that approves naturalizations swelled. With the agency now reporting that it takes up to seven months to complete the process, Obama administration officials are reluctantly admitting that many - perhaps most - of the immigrants in the backlog will not become citizens in time to vote."

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[Commentary: "What to do if your right to vote is challenged at the polls." Colin Deppen. \*The Patriot-News\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

[Commentary: "How to become a poll watcher, and what you can \(and can't\) do as one." Colin Deppen. \*The Patriot-News\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

[Commentary: "The stark differences between the Trump and Clinton tax plans and how they address 'loopholes.'" Jim Tankersley. \*The Washington Post\*. October 4, 2016.](#)

[Commentary: "Chaos in Pennsylvania on Election Day? Probably not." Dave Davies. \*Newsworks\*. October 5, 2016.](#)

[Commentary: "To increase their profile, let's make the Pa. row office elections an 'off-year' election." Lowman Henry. \*The Patriot-News\*. October 5, 2016.](#)

### **Nonprofit Sector**

["Allegheny County funding to go to cultural groups." Natasha Lindstrom. \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. October 4, 2016.](#)

"Eight small arts and cultural groups are poised to get money for the first time in 2017 from the Allegheny Regional Asset District, a grantmaker whose taxpayer-funded coffer is growing larger each year."

["United Way courts young donors with technology developed in Pittsburgh." Joyce Gannon. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

"Eager to engage its millennial employees in charitable giving, Downtown-based paints and coatings producer PPG invited them to breakfasts and afternoon cookie-and-coffee breaks to get the word out about the company's annual workplace campaign to benefit United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. To make the actual donation process more accessible, the company pushed out internal emails and promotions linking directly to UPledge for Good - a new United Way giving platform designed largely to resonate with workers in their 20s and 30s by providing more options of where to donate and more details about where their money will go."

["Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services moving Uptown." Natasha Lindstrom. \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. October 11, 2016.](#)

"The organization - whose roots date to supporting workers blinded in industrial accidents in 1910 - has moved from spaces in Homestead and the Strip District into a renovated five-story brick warehouse on Locust Street overlooking the Downtown skyline. Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services has a roughly \$5 million annual budget and 85 employees, 14 of whom are blind or vision-impaired and work for the nonprofit's manufacturing arm, making aprons for the Army, charcoal filters for Navy submarines, towels for prisons and most of Pennsylvania's road signs. Last year, the nonprofit served more than 1,200 blind or visually impaired individuals and did vision screenings for almost 14,000 children."

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["Merged Animal Welfare Organizations To Become Largest In Western Pennsylvania." Katie Blackley. WESA. September 30, 2016.](#)

"Pittsburgh will be home to the largest open-door animal shelter in western Pennsylvania once the boards of two major nonprofits merge by Jan. 1, 2017. The Animal Rescue League and Western Pennsylvania Humane Society announced Friday that a vote earlier this week solidified the amalgamation."

### **Pittsburgh Region News**

["Peduto's budget plan wins conditional approval from ICA board." Adam Smeltz. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. October 6, 2016.](#)

"Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto's 2017 budget plans sailed to approval Wednesday from a financial oversight panel - with a single condition. The city has 120 days to verify it can secure at least \$10 million in gaming revenue next year 'so that the budget is whole,' said B.J. Leber, who chairs the Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority board."

["Mayor Peduto Says Pittsburgh's Relationship With ICA Improving." Paul Guggenheimer. WESA. October 12, 2016.](#)

"Now that Mayor Bill Peduto's 2017 budget has been approved by the Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority Board, there are other hurdles to be cleared before it becomes law. They include coming up with at least \$10 million in gaming revenue to balance the budget. In his monthly conversation with Mayor Peduto, 90.5 WESA's Paul Guggenheimer dives into that topic and other aspects of his spending plan."

["Pittsburgh, casino negotiating possible payment in lieu of taxes." Mark Belko. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. October 1, 2016.](#)

"The city is seeking to negotiate an agreement to maintain the \$10 million a year it gets from Rivers Casino even after the state Supreme Court struck down the law requiring such payments. Kevin Acklin, chief of staff to Mayor Bill Peduto, said Friday he has opened discussions with the North Shore venue about a possible payment in lieu of taxes, or PILOT, while the state Legislature works to fix the defects in the law ruled unconstitutional this week. The casino, Mr. Acklin said, indicated it would consider such an agreement only months after it had filed a lawsuit - one it later dropped - challenging the very law struck down by the court."

["Where are Pittsburgh's safest, most diverse and vibrant neighborhoods?" Eric Holmberg. Public Source. October 11, 2016.](#)

"As PublicSource mapped the diversity of Pittsburgh's 90 neighborhoods and spoke with residents, we found that not every diverse community was a healthy community. That sent us on a search for the most diverse and integrated neighborhoods that also have aspects of what everyone is looking for in a community: safety, good schools and affordability. The four neighborhoods that stood out were: Stanton Heights, Highland Park, Point Breeze North and Windgap."

["Is Pittsburgh as good as it thinks it is for startup businesses?" Dale Shoemaker. Public Source. September 27, 2016.](#)

"According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau figures, less than 6 percent of businesses that were open in the Pittsburgh metro area in 2014 were new businesses - or startups. Compared to

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cities of similar size, like St. Louis and Kansas City, as well as other major metros, Pittsburgh is lagging."

["Extra hurdles don't slow minority entrepreneurs in Pittsburgh's startup market." Kris Mamula. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 3, 2016.](#)

"Minority entrepreneurs face all of the challenges of others who set out to be their own boss, often with extra hurdles thrown in as Ms. Bridgett's experience shows. But those extra speed bumps haven't seemed to faze minority entrepreneurs in Pittsburgh's startup economy."

["Why does Pittsburgh's workforce lack diversity?" Dale Shoemaker. \*Public Source\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

"As a general trend, people who study race in Pittsburgh point to early 20th century segregation and the collapse of the steel industry as chief causes for the city's lack of workplace diversity. As the steel mills closed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, people began to leave the city in droves in search of work elsewhere. The lack of jobs available after mills closed similarly caused few people to move back into the city. And those jobs that were available tended to go to people who employers already knew - a type of sociometry, according to Larry Davis."

["Rothfus addresses Alle Kiski Strong Chamber about addiction programs, taxes, student debt." Jodi Weigand. \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. October 5, 2016.](#)

"Local business owners expressed concerns about business tax rates and the opioid addiction and overdose epidemic that's hitting communities during a chamber of commerce luncheon Wednesday with U.S. Rep. Keith Rothfus."

### **Health and Human Services**

["Two years on, assessing the Affordable Health Care Act's impact on PA." Carmen Del Raval. \*City and State\*. October 6, 2016.](#)

"Six years after the passage of the ACA, there is little debate over its biggest success in Pennsylvania: a state uninsured rate cut nearly in half - from 14 percent in 2013 to just 8 percent after the expansion of Medicaid two years later - and hundreds of thousands of covered Pennsylvanians, like Thornton, who would otherwise find health insurance unaffordable. All this has been accomplished without the deluge of new patients or vastly increased wait times for service that some had predicted, according to observers around the state."

["Pa. Health Secretary: State overdue to update nursing home standards." Gary Rotstein. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 5, 2016.](#)

"Pennsylvania is overdue to overhaul its laws and regulations covering nursing homes - everything from beefing up penalties and staffing to focusing on consumer-friendly information and patient satisfaction - to recognize 21st century changes in the long-term care industry, state Health Secretary Karen Murphy said Tuesday."

["With Pennsylvania mental hospitals full, jails become way stations." Riley Yates. \*The Morning Call\*. October 8, 2016.](#)

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"Jails were not intended to be way stations for the mentally ill, who often see their conditions deteriorate under the stresses of incarceration. But local prisons have increasingly become just that, as the population in need of services boomed after Pennsylvania closed most of its state mental hospitals without adequately investing in alternatives."

["Pittsburgh Region's Cooperative Approach To Fighting Opioids Held Up As Model." Mark Nootbaar. WESA. October 5, 2016.](#)

"[The report from the University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics outlines how the Pittsburgh region is dealing with the opioid crisis](#) by focusing on cooperation. It's relying on cooperation from everyone, from the emergency medical responder on the street, to the U.S. Attorney's office, and from Pitt's School of Medicine to the medical examiner's office."

["Western PA Diabetes Cases Slightly Higher Than National Average." Marcus Charleston. WESA. October 7, 2016.](#)

"Western Pennsylvania is part of this region, extending up from the South, known as the 'diabetes belt.' However, the nationwide increase of diabetes diagnoses in western Pennsylvania is 3 percent higher than the national average, according to Julie Heverly, executive director for the Western PA American Diabetes Association."

["Fertilization, adoption for wounded on VA tab." \*The Washington Post\*. October 6, 2016.](#)

"The Department of Veterans Affairs will begin covering costs for in vitro fertilization and adoptions for combat-wounded veterans struggling with infertility because of their injuries, giving thousands of young veteran families fresh hope of starting a family, advocates say."

["Drug-Addiction Epidemic Creates Crisis in Foster Care." Teresa Willitz. Pew Charitable Trusts. October 7, 2016.](#)

"The nation's drug-addiction epidemic is driving a dramatic increase in the number of children entering foster care, forcing many states to take urgent steps to care for neglected children."

["Many police departments don't carry overdose-reversal drug." Rich Lord. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 12, 2016.](#)

"They are two of the simplest ways to address surging deaths from opioids: Give law enforcement officers the overdose-reversal drug naloxone, and place collection boxes for extra painkillers in police stations. Yet in some of the counties hardest-hit by abuse of prescription drugs and heroin - Fayette, for instance - these simple solutions have yet to be tried. Use of naloxone in Allegheny and Westmoreland has just started to catch up with other parts of the state, and Washington County has raced ahead of its neighbors."

["Pittsburgh agencies recognized for innovative work to feed hungry." Anya Sostek. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

"A national think tank has included 15 state and local organizations in its newly expanded Good Food Org Guide. That listing, from the New Orleans-based Food Tank, includes five locally-based groups: Just Harvest, 412 Food Rescue, Grow Pittsburgh, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Food Security Partnership and Hunger-Free Pennsylvania."

[Commentary: "Does lack of HHS controls contribute to personal-care abuse of the elderly and disabled?" Joe Davidson. \*The Washington Post\*. October 5, 2016.](#)

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[Commentary: "SNAP Works for America's Children." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. September 29, 2016.](#)

### Education

["School districts struggle to attract diverse teachers." Elizabeth Behrman. \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. October 2, 2016.](#)

"Data show that about 85 percent of the nation's public school teachers are white. There are more than 9,600 white teachers in Allegheny County's public school districts, compared to 348 black teachers, 32 Hispanic teachers and 39 Asian teachers, according to state data from 2014-15. State data show there were more than 2,400 white teachers working in Westmoreland County schools in 2014-15, compared to 32 black or Hispanic teachers. Some schools are working hard to attract more teachers of color but say it isn't easy."

["What's in store for PA students with No Child Left Behind gone?" Jaqueline Palochko. \*The Morning Call\*. October 8, 2016.](#)

"Beginning next school year, the Every Student Succeeds Act, signed by President Barack Obama in December, will replace No Child Left Behind, shedding the universal yardstick by which student success has been measured. Under the new law, states and even school districts will have more control over how and when students are tested as well as how much time those tests take up in the school year."

["Some gains for Pa. students on state tests." \*Philadelphia Inquirer\*. October 1, 2016.](#)

"Across Pennsylvania, students posted 'modest gains' on standardized tests in 2016, Department of Education officials said Thursday. State standards tightened in 2015, and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) that year was a reset, officials said."

["State report card shows drop in scores for Pittsburgh schools." Molly Born. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 5, 2016.](#)

"The president of the Pittsburgh school board tonight said she was 'shocked' by the results of district's latest state report card showing two-thirds of its schools scored below 60 out of a possible 107 points. How the Pittsburgh Public Schools will compare to other districts in the state won't be clear until the Pennsylvania Department of Education releases School Performance Profile data early next week. But the district's director of research, Deb Friss, said she expects a drop across the state as the results of the more rigorous standardized test for grades 3-8 are part of the Student Performance Profile score for the first time."

["Despite challenges, Westinghouse student says, 'We will show them...'" Mary Niederberger. \*Public Source\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

"The achievement gap between black and white students in Pittsburgh Public Schools remains. What are students and district leadership going to do about it?"

["More high school grads shy away from four-year colleges." Tim Grant. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. September 30, 2016.](#)

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"High school students have become so mindful of financial planning for college in recent years that many who are academically eligible to attend a traditional four-year college are choosing to minimize their cost by enrolling in two-year community colleges instead."

["Faculty union gears up for a strike at state universities as it moves union offices off-campus." Jan Murphy. \*The Patriot-News\*. October 12, 2016.](#)

"The faculty union has invited the media to watch as its members pack up chapter offices on the campuses and move their belongings to rented or free off-campus locations. This is to avoid having to cross the picket line if no tentative agreement is reached by the union's 5 a.m. Oct. 19 strike deadline."

["A+ Schools names new director." \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 6, 2016.](#)

"A+ Schools named its interim executive director James Fogarty as the new head of the educational advocacy organization..."

### **Housing and Community Development**

["Mayor Peduto unveils tool to 'level the development playing field.'" Natasha Lindstrom. \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. October 13, 2016.](#)

"Starting in early 2017, a 12-point set of criteria created with input from hundreds of regional stakeholders will guide decision-making on city contracts and investments, Peduto said. This tool assigns numerical values to gauge a project's likely effects on areas such as housing, rainwater, air quality, energy, innovation and community."

["Blight Working Group Brings Residents Resources To Revitalize Empty Lots." Sarah Schneider. \*WESA\*. October 7, 2016.](#)

"The Pittsburgh Blight Working Group is a collaboration between the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the city, Neighborhood Allies, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, the Design Center and GTECH."

["Want grant money for your city? Be big, be distressed and, if you can, go west." Eleanor Kilbanoff. \*Newsworks\*. October 4, 2016.](#)

"The more economically distressed the city, the more likely it was to attract these development dollars. The top 10 cities include places that have struggled over the past few decades: Flint, Mi., Memphis, Tenn., New Orleans, La., and yes, Pittsburgh."

["What data and residents tell us about Pittsburgh's most and least diverse neighborhoods." \*Public Source\*. October 10, 2016.](#)

"Diversity is a new buzzword in Pittsburgh. And its 90 neighborhoods are often the city's claim to it - that they are strong and diverse and together create a welcoming, multifaceted city. But how diverse is Pittsburgh, really, if we look at it on the neighborhood level?"

["Building better cities one application at a time." Margaret Krauss. \*Newsworks\*. September 30, 2016.](#)

"Philadelphia and Pittsburgh publish their data, and invite people to build applications with it. The passage of Pittsburgh's open data law in 2014 accelerated the process of identifying problems and

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building solutions, said Debra Lam, the city's chief innovation and performance officer. It allowed the city to tap into a larger ecosystem of creativity and intellect, and makes the work of her office easier."

[Commentary: "Smart Growth advocate: 'Aspire to build places people love.'" Diana Nelson Jones. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 3, 2016.](#)

[Commentary: "The remarkable thing that happens to poor kids when you help their parents with rent." Max Ehrenfreund. \*The Washington Post\*. October 12, 2016.](#)

### **Water, Energy, and Environment**

["After bitter fight, new Marcellus Shale regulations set to take effect." Marie Cusick. \*State Impact\*. October 6, 2016.](#)

"After wending their way through a convoluted, controversial five-year process, [new regulations for Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale drillers](#) are set to take effect Saturday."

["No permit? No problem for major air polluters around Pittsburgh." Natasha Khan. \*Public Source\*. September 29, 2016.](#)

"Nearly a third of major air polluters in Southwestern Pennsylvania are running without permits required by the U.S. Clean Air Act, [according to](#) a Pittsburgh-based environmental watchdog group."

### **Corrections and Public Safety**

["Pittsburgh on track to have another deadly year." Liz Navratil. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. October 1, 2016.](#)

"Pittsburgh is on track to have another deadly year, officials said Friday. There were 43 killings in the city from January through August. That's two shy of the number recorded during the same period in 2014, when officials marked their highest homicide rate in six years. As in many previous years, most of the victims this year were black males."

["State Supreme Court allows criminal defendants to sue to get adequate funding for public defenders' offices." \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. September 29, 2016.](#)

"Pennsylvania's highest court will allow criminal defendants to sue a county as a way to prove a public defender's office isn't adequately funded to provide the constitutional right to an attorney, a victory for civil rights lawyers."

### **Arts, Parks, and Culture**

["WQED Multimedia looking for new initiatives." Maria Sciallo. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. September 29, 2016.](#)

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"Speaking at the public broadcast station's board meeting Thursday in Oakland, Mr. Peduto said WQED, like the city itself, is primed to play the phoenix, rising from the ashes."

["PSO musicians go on strike." Elizabeth Bloom. \*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\*. September 30, 2016.](#)

"The picket line formed quickly Friday morning, with dozens of musicians carrying signs, distributing fliers and making their case to the cars and pedestrians passing by Heinz Hall in Downtown Pittsburgh."

### Transportation

["Pittsburgh gets \\$10.9 million federal transportation grant." Michael Walton. \*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review\*. October 7, 2016.](#)

"The federal Department of Transportation has awarded Pittsburgh more than \$10.9 million in grant funding. The money will be used to fund transportation and infrastructure projects intended to improve mobility in the city, according to a statement from U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, D-Scranton."

["Beaver County Transit Authority to update fare collection system." Jared Stonesifer. \*The Times\*. September 28, 2016. \(Subscription Required\)](#)

### GNPN Public Policy Committee Meeting Dates

Below are the dates for GNPN's 2016 Public Policy Committee meetings. All GNPN members are welcome to attend and participate.

The meeting dates are:

- Tuesday October 18th from 8:30 to 10:30 AM
- Tuesday December 13th from 8:30 to 10:30 AM

The meetings will be held at The Forbes Funds' office located at 5 PPG Place, 2nd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to [streeter@forbesfunds.org](mailto:streeter@forbesfunds.org) so that you can be added to the meetings' security lists. Please email [streeter@forbesfunds.org](mailto:streeter@forbesfunds.org) if you have any questions.

### Constituent and Town Hall Events

Below is a list of public and constituent events held by legislators.

If you know of an event not listed, please email [streeter@forbesfunds.org](mailto:streeter@forbesfunds.org)

### [Representative Jeff Pyle \(R-Armstrong, Butler, Indiana\) Townhalls](#)

**When:** Thursday, October 20, 2016 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM

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**Where:** 200 Brose Rd, Cabot, PA 16023

**When:** Thursday, November 3, 2016 from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

**Where:** Coal Run/McIntyre Volunteer Fire Department, 2049 Coal Run Road, Clune, PA 15725

**When:** Thursday, November 17, 2016 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM **\*\*Tentative\*\***

**Where:** South Buffalo Township Volunteer Fire Department,, 695 Freeport Road, Freeport, PA, 16229

### [Representative Jim Marshall \(R-Beaver, Butler\) Senior Expo](#)

**When:** Friday, October 14, 2016 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

**Where:** 118 McMillen Ave, Beaver Falls, PA 15010

### [Representative Tommy Sankey \(R-Cambria, Clearfield\) Senior Expo](#)

**When:** Thursday, October 20, 2016 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

**Where:** 1700 Kennedy Ave, Northern Cambria, PA 15714

### [House Majority Leader Dave Reed \(R-Indiana\), Senator Don White \(R-Armstrong, Butler, Indiana, Westmoreland\), and Representative Cris Dush \(R-Indiana, Jefferson\) Senior Expo](#)

**When:** Thursday, October 20, 2016 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

**Where:** S&T Bank Arena, 497 E Pike Rd, Indiana, PA 15701

### [Senator Guy Reschenthaler \(R-Allegheny, Washington\) and Representative Mark Mustio \(R-Allegheny\) Senior Expo](#)

**When:** Friday October 21, 2016 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

**Where:** Sheraton Pittsburgh Airport Hotel, 1160 Thorn Run Rd, Coraopolis, PA 15108

### [Representative Donna Oberlander \(R-Armstrong, Clarion, Forest\)](#)

#### ***Veterans Expo***

**When:** Thursday, October 27, 2016 from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

**Where:** Trinity Point Church, 180, West Trinity Drive, Clarion, PA 16214

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Samantha Balbier  
Executive Director  
Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership  
The Forbes Funds, A Supporting Organization of The Pittsburgh Foundation  
5 PPG Place, Suite 250  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Phone: (412) 394-4275  
Email: [balbier@forbesfunds.org](mailto:balbier@forbesfunds.org)  
[www.gpnp-pgh.org](http://www.gpnp-pgh.org)

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